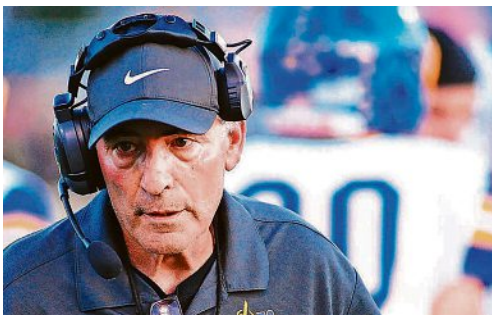




East Canton coach Miller explains why he stays in the game

SPORTS, 1B

THE CANTON REPOSITORY

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DEATH DELAYED PART 3



Hamilton County Prosecutor Connie Pillich announced in June that the Cincinnati police officer who shot Ryan Hinton, son of Rodney Hinton, was “legally justified.” PHIL DIDION/THE ENQUIRER

Politics or law?

How Ohio prosecutors influence death penalty cases

Haley BeMiller, Kevin Grasha and Stephanie Warsmith State Bureau | USA TODAY NETWORK

When she took office in January, Hamilton County Prosecutor Connie Pillich became the first Democrat in nearly a century to serve as the county’s elected prosecutor.

Pillich is also Catholic. And like many Catholics, she has moral misgivings about the death penalty.

“If it is sought, it will be because I allow it to be sought,” Pillich said in a recent interview.

In May, Pillich was confronted with a case for which the law seemed clear.

Prosecutors say Rodney Hinton Jr. intentionally drove a car into a sheriff’s deputy and killed him because he was distraught after watching video footage of Cincinnati police fatally shooting his son. The deputy, Larry Henderson, was working traffic control for a University of Cincinnati graduation.

Pillich consulted with her legal mentors, a spiritual advisor and her husband, who also is Catholic. To her, the choice



Trumbull County Prosecutor Dennis Watkins speaks about death penalty cases during an interview at his office in June. Watkins recently wrote a letter to Gov. Mike DeWine urging him to resume executions in Ohio.

ADAM CAIRNS/COLUMBUS DISPATCH

was obvious. Ohio specifically allows the death penalty in cases where law enforcement are targeted or killed on duty.

Hinton’s attorneys contend he has a serious mental illness and shouldn’t be executed. Still, Pillich’s decision underscored a belief shared by many prosecutors across Ohio: The death penalty is the law, and they must comply with the law.

But critics argue the death penalty is not always applied evenly by prosecutors. At different times over the past 40 years, Hamilton and Cuyahoga counties dominated Ohio’s capital cases and death sentences.

Murderers in Trumbull County were more likely to end up on death row than those in similarly-sized Clermont and Licking counties.

See DEATH PENALTY, Page 4A

Remains of Godbey found and identified, police say

Nancy Molnar
Canton Repository
USA TODAY NETWORK

CANTON – The remains of Ryan T. “JJ” Godbey have been positively identified after being found in a remote wooded area in southern Stark County.

Police Chief John Gabbard said in an Oct. 20 news release that Canton investigators, assisted by agents from the Canton FBI office, had recovered the remains of the 26-year-old city resident who was reported missing June 22 by his family.

He said officers located human remains on July 23 while searching the wooded area based on information collected during the investigation.

“DNA testing by the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation has now confirmed that the remains are those of Godbey,” Gabbard said.

Police had charged Daniel Z. Mattay of Canton with murder on Aug. 27. He remains incarcerated at the Stark County Jail.

Mattay, 34, has pleaded not guilty to murder, felonious assault, strangulation, domestic violence, tampering with evidence and gross abuse of a corpse.

See GODBEY, Page 6A

Stark DD asking for tax hike on ballot

Grace Springer
Canton Repository
USA TODAY NETWORK

PLAIN TWP. – The Stark County Board of Developmental Disabilities is asking voters to approve an additional levy to address a budget deficit and avoid abrupt programming cuts.

The 1.6-mill continuous additional levy would increase the agency’s revenue by more than \$21 million a year.

If passed, the measure would cost a property owner another \$56 per year in

new taxes for each \$100,000 of their home’s valuation, according to the Stark County Auditor’s Office.

The measure is Issue 1 on the Nov. 4 ballot.

The agency says it needs the money to fund increased provider costs. Rates have increased 38% in the last two years since the state legislature raised hourly pay for providers.

In addition, Stark DD’s total number of clients has risen from 3,185 in 2010 to 5,006 this year. The number of Medicaid waiver recipients has risen from

969 in 2010 to 1,944 this year.

Because of advancements in care, people with disabilities are living longer and getting diagnosed earlier in life.

William Green, superintendent of Stark DD, is urging voters to fund disability services.

“We represent over 5,000 people with intellectual disabilities and that’s where that funding goes. It goes to their lifelong support,” Green said at a recent Canton City Council meeting.

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