

I read with interest Mr. Holden's letter to the editor of Nov. 7. He needs to check his facts, but more importantly he does raise a good point and I believe one should seriously question those candidates who are running for district attorney. It is an important job.

Mr. Holden said that Rob Bovett's experience as a special prosecutor dealt only with forfeitures and public records. Not so. I was district attorney for 12 years. During that time some cases needed attention where it was better to seek outside prosecution assistance to avoid any appearance of impropriety (for example, when a relative of someone in the office or law enforcement community is charged with a crime it is appropriate to have outside counsel evaluate and prosecute the case).

On a number of occasions I asked Rob Bovett to serve as a special prosecutor for the district attorney's office. In fact, one of the criminal cases handled by Rob involved a relative of an officer in the police department then managed by Mr. Holden. I respected Rob's work so well that I appointed Rob as a permanent special prosecutor. He was invariably prepared, organized and effective in taking cases to court. He has taken many types of cases to court and is well respected by the courts and legal community. I am in a unique position in Lincoln County as I had the opportunity to supervise and closely observe Ms. Barnett (12 years) and Mr. Bovett (eight years). I am familiar with their work and how they conduct themselves in and out of the courtroom. In my opinion, Mr. Bovett did an outstanding job as a special deputy district attorney. I trust his legal ability and would choose him hands down.

More importantly, there is much more to being a district attorney than taking cases to court. In fact, I believe Ms. Barnett has initiated and taken only one case to a jury trial in her seven years as district attorney. Given the large volume of criminal cases in Lincoln County, it is more important for a district attorney to maintain an effective team of prosecutors. That way a district attorney creates a prosecution team with both depth and flexibility. Also, the longer you can keep a deputy district attorney in the office the more experience they gain and, ultimately, the more taxpayers get for their tax dollars. In the seven years Ms. Barnett has been district attorney 15 lawyers have left the office, two last month in fact. Many have gone on to other district attorney offices, not to seek more lucrative positions (the salaries in Lincoln County are competitive with similarly sized counties) but to do the job they love and continue their careers as prosecutors. They just wanted to work somewhere else. That turnover rate is astounding and points to a serious problem in the office. The turnover rate for support staff is even more overwhelming and equally disturbing. The employee exodus from the district attorney's office is a cause for great concern.

For these and many other reasons, Ms. Barnett has lost the confidence of the law enforcement community she is supposed to lead. We need someone who is interested in the job, not self-promotion. We need someone who will not let politics enter into decision-making. We need a team player and a good manager. We need a leader. I ask you to support Rob Bovett.

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