

For Immediate Release
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Democratic Candidate for Prosecutor Says Vaillencourt Flipflops on Enforcement

Livingston County's current prosecutor has flipflopped regarding his responsibility to enforce the Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's stay-at-home orders, causing confusion and threatening the safety of county residents, Democratic candidate Ragan Lake says.

In a news release Friday, Lake noted that Vaillencourt first told mlive.com that the governor's orders were vague and not legally enforceable. Then a few hours later, he issued a statement as head of the Prosecutors Association of Michigan saying the executive orders were valid and should be enforced.

"Vaillencourt seems to change his mind depending on which group he thinks is listening. When he feels there are individuals who believe the orders shouldn't be enforced, he says it's fine to ignore the orders. But when he's with his fellow prosecutors from across the state who know better, he changes his tune," Lake said.

"Voters have a right to know – what does Vaillencourt really believe? He hasn't renounced his earlier statement. Does he believe the orders should be obeyed and enforced in Livingston County or not?"

Lake said Livingston County needs a prosecutor who won't politicize the law and that she would bring an impartial legal eye to enforcement of the executive orders, pointing out that on the whole they are legally solid.

"Alleged violations of one of Governor Whitmer's executive orders needs to be reviewed as they arrive to determine whether a violation has occurred and whether and how that person should be held accountable. Even in some instances where a clear violation has occurred,

criminal prosecution might not be the best way to handle the situation. A solution should be structured that is proportionate to the violation.

“Rather than looking at this from the perspective of punishment, enforcement of these orders should be viewed as a teachable moment. People should be made aware of the executive orders and their importance to a successful response to the current crisis.

“It is law enforcement's duty to ensure public safety and part of that duty sometimes carries with it the responsibility of promoting awareness of public safety initiatives.

“The prosecutor should lead the community in recognizing the importance of complying with these orders, so there will be greater understanding of them, more compliance, and fewer violations – and ultimately a safer community.”

Lake, an assistant Wayne County prosecutor, is the only Democrat seeking the nomination for county prosecutor.

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