Circuit judge denies Weddle's request to move campaign finance case

MACEE SWAFFORD
SENTINEL-ECHO

LONDON — Former London Mayor Randall Weddle will face his campaign finance case in Laurel County after a circuit judge denied his request to move the proceedings to Franklin County.

In an order entered Oct. 15, Laurel Circuit Court Judge Michael O. Caperton denied Weddle's motion for a change of venue, ruling the case should remain in Laurel Circuit Court.

The motion was filed April 8, with the Commonwealth filing its response April 14. Weddle subsequently filed a reply July 1, and the court held a hearing on the matter July 15.

The case stems from a four-count indictment returned by a Laurel County grand jury on March 31 following an investigation by the Kentucky Registry of Election Finance and the Kentucky Attorney General's Office.

According to the court order, the indictment accuses Weddle of using his personal American Express credit card to make campaign contributions in the names of other individuals in December 2022.

The order details two sets of reported contributions. On Dec. 27, 2022, Weddle is accused of contributing $8,000 to the Andy Beshear for Governor campaign in the names of four other individuals and $25,000 to the Kentucky Democratic Party in the names of five other individuals.

On Dec. 30, 2022, he is accused of contributing another $10,000 to the Beshear campaign in the names of five individuals and $50,000 to the Kentucky Democratic Party in the names of 10 individuals.

The four reported contributions totaled $93,000.

Weddle's attorney argued the case should be moved to Franklin County because the alleged contributions were not solicited, made or accepted in Laurel County. Weddle claims to have been aboard a yacht outside the United States when the transactions occurred, according to the court order. He returned to the United States on Dec. 31, 2022.

The defense maintained that the contributions were made outside the country, solicited from California and potentially accepted in Franklin County, where the Beshear campaign and Kentucky Democratic Party were located.

However, the Commonwealth argued Laurel County was an appropriate venue because the credit card used for the transactions was issued to Weddle at his Laurel County address.

In denying the motion, Judge Caperton wrote that the defendant's physical location at the time of an electronic donation was not the determining factor in establishing where the contribution was made.

The judge noted that the

SEE **WEDDLE,** PAGE **A10**

Andy Barr supporters show support for final rally in London



Senate President Robert Stivers shows his support for U.S. Senate nominee Andy Barr. | MACEE SWAFFORD

MACEE SWAFFORD
TIMES-TRIBUNE

LONDON — A day before Election Day, Republican U.S. Senate nominee Andy Barr joined with supporters from Whitley, Laurel, and more for a pre-election rally this past Monday at the London-Corbin Airport.

The event, hosted by Keep America Great PAC, brought together local and state elected officials and supporters from across the region as Barr made his final campaign stops ahead of Tuesday's General Election. Barr was seeking to fill the U.S. Senate seat held by retiring Sen. Mitch McConnell and faced Democratic nominee Charles Booker.

At press time, Barr had unofficially won the contest with 784,000 votes to Booker's 611,987.

Kentucky Senate President Robert Stivers was in attendance at Monday's rally, and spoke about the importance of the election and the experience needed to represent Kentucky in Washington, D.C.

"All elections are important," Stivers said. He emphasized that voter turnout would be critical, encouraging attendees to reach out to friends and family and make sure they participated in the election.

"This is all about turnout now. There is nothing else you can say. It's been said, but it's time that you call your brother, your sister," he said.

Barr thanked Stivers and the local officials in attendance, saying he would rely on their knowledge and relationships to advocate for Southern and Southeastern Kentucky if elected.

"I want to be an economic development senator," Barr said. "I want to work with your great Senate President and the county judges — of bringing more jobs and opportunity to this area."

During his remarks, Barr outlined his vision for Kentucky, highlighting the state's manufacturing, energy, tourism and transportation industries as opportunities for future economic growth.

Barr encouraged supporters to remain engaged through the final hours of the campaign, stressing the importance of the Senate race to the direction of the country.

"Get out and vote. Tell your friends, your neighbors, the people you're going to church with, the people you work with, what is on the ballot, what is on the line," Barr said.

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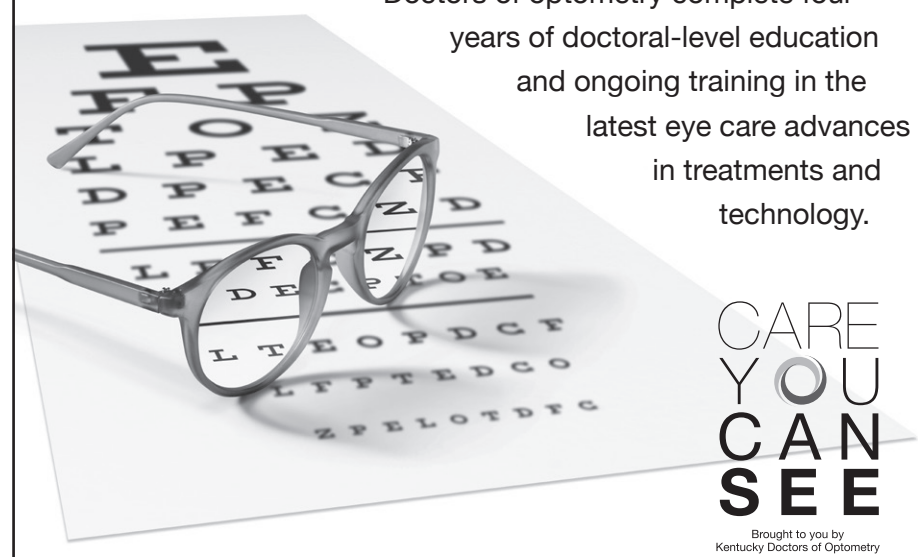
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