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**JUDGE WARREN'S PROPOSAL FOR TOUGHER  
CRIMINAL CONTEMPT PENALTIES ENACTED INTO LAW**

**Oakland County, MI** (January 12, 2007) – Oakland County Circuit Judge Michael Warren's proposal for increasing the penalties for criminal contempt was enacted into law late last year. After passing nearly unanimously in the State Legislature, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed into law the measure, which will come into effect on March 30, 2007.

Sponsored by State Representative David Law, the law will increase the fine for criminal contempt from \$250 to \$7,500; triple the jail sentence from 30 days to 93 days; and make it clear that a contemnor can be placed on probation.

Testifying before the State House Judiciary Committee and State Senate, Warren stated that the amendments were necessary because the sanctions are seriously outdated. "The current fine of \$250 has existed since 1846. In today's money it is approximately \$6000; and the 30 day jail sentence is comparable to driving on a suspended license. The weakness of the penalties have too often dissuaded judges and parties from pursuing contempt proceedings."

Warren believes the updates will serve to improve the administration of justice by defending the integrity of the court system, will uphold the rule of law by reinforcing the fundamental First Principle that we are a government of laws and not men, and will deter further wrong-doing by addressing contempt proceedings. He cautions that if litigants understand they can blatantly lie under oath (even when extrinsic evidence clearly proves the falsity of the statements) and violate court orders without consequence, it will degrade the rule of law and encourage more serious criminal behavior.

Warren is an expert in matters of criminal contempt. He has written a practice guide for lawyers entitled "Contempt of Court (How to Kit)" with the Institute of Continuing Legal Education, as well as a number of guest commentaries regarding the law, education, and civics in *The Detroit News*, *The Detroit Free Press*, *The Oakland Press*, and other newspapers.

As he further notes: "If truth does not matter in our courts of law, how can it matter elsewhere? If we will not enforce the law in our own courts, how can we expect that it will be adhered to outside of them? In the end, the courts must stand against contempt of court or stand for nothing at all."

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**An electronic photograph of Judge Warren is available. For a copy, please contact Marcia Travis at [travism@oakgov.com](mailto:travism@oakgov.com)**