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## Ramsey County Democrats endorse Bostrom, Choi for sheriff, county attorney

They seek county attorney, sheriff jobs

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Ramsey County Democrats endorsed former St. Paul City Attorney John Choi in his bid for county attorney and Assistant St. Paul Police Chief Matt Bostrom for sheriff Saturday.

One candidate from each race said they intended to drop out after not getting the endorsement. That leaves Choi among three candidates running for county attorney. Bostrom will challenge Bob Fletcher, who has been sheriff for 16 years.

The county convention at Roseville Area High School lasted more than six hours. Some delegates grew frustrated as ballots were thrown out for the sheriff's endorsement, causing the day to stretch on.

In the end, Choi won the Democrat-Farmer-Labor endorsement on the first ballot and Bostrom on the second (a total of four ballots for sheriff were cast, with two thrown out).

The other candidate for sheriff, Laura Goodman, director of public safety for St. Catherine University, said she planned to withdraw from the race if she lost the DFL endorsement. Fletcher said he would

not seek a political endorsement.

The sentiment from Bostrom, Goodman and the supporters who spoke on their behalf Saturday was the same: It's time for a change.

"He (Bostrom) stands for everything that Fletcher is not," said state Sen. Mee Moua, a Bostrom campaign co-chair.

Bostrom sounded more "gloves off" than he has previously.

"Together we can end this regime. ... We can put an end to the unethical leadership at that agency," he said.

Fletcher said he could not respond, "lacking any specifics" from Bostrom.

After the convention, Bostrom said "mudslinging" is not who he is and he doesn't intend to make it a negative campaign.

On Saturday, Fletcher was readying his new Payne Avenue campaign office, and his supporters went knocking on constituents' doors.

"Partisan politics has no place in the sheriff's race, and the voters have spoken time and again that they want an independent sheriff," he said.

After winning the endorsement for county attorney, Choi told the crowd he was "really humbled." He is running against Tammy Pust, a Roseville City Council member and partner at the law firm of Parker Rosen; and David Schultz, a partner at the Maslon Law Firm.

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Susan Gaertner, the current county attorney, is running for governor. Choi's last day as city attorney was Friday; he said he stepped down because he didn't want his campaign to interfere with the office. He will practice law at McGrann Shea Carnival Straughn & Lamb.

Assistant Ramsey County Attorney Dave Pinto said he would drop out of the race if he lost the DFL endorsement. Schultz also sought the endorsement but said he would remain in the race. Pust had stated early in her campaign that she would not seek political endorsements for the nonpartisan position of county attorney.

Candidates needed 60 percent to get the endorsement, and Bostrom had 55 percent on the first ballot. In a challenge after the second ballot, it was discovered that more people had voted than the number of delegates, said Mike Rothman, the convention's parliamentarian. It happened because nine people had mistakenly been issued delegate badges during registration, he said.

The discovery led the chair to throw out the first two ballots for sheriff; the ballot for county attorney was cast after the proper number was sorted out. In the final ballot, Bostrom got 63 percent of the vote.

Emily Gurnon contributed to this report.

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