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DA Vows to Push on in Priest Case

Robert M. Carney is investigating accusations that the Rev. Alan Jupin stalked man

By Mike Goodwin
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Schenectady - Rejecting demands that he quit the case, District Attorney Robert M. Carney said Monday that he is seriously investigating accusations that a priest stalked a man last year to stop him from filing a sexual abuse complaint with the Albany Roman Catholic Diocese.

"I'm not stepping away from the case," Carney said, but he would not discuss whether he expected charges to be filed.

Timothy Sawicki, a 44-year-old Schenectady County teacher, filed a lawsuit in Schenectady County last May alleging four priests abused him in the 1970s and that one of the priests, the Rev. Alan Jupin, stalked him in 2002 and 2003 to persuade him from filing a complaint.

Sawicki said prosecutors haven't returned his phone calls for months and he wants Carney off the case.

"I just feel it is a big sham," said Sawicki, who revealed his name for the first time Monday.

In addition to Jupin, who was pastor at Our Lady of Fatima in Schenectady, two other priests named in the lawsuit -- the Rev. Louis Douglas, who had been pastor at St. Catherine of Siena in Albany and later retired; and the Rev. Donald Ophals, who was pastor at St. Francis DeSales in Troy -- denied Sawicki's accusations and took leaves of absence.

Carney's probe into the alleged criminal stalking -- started in May at the request of the Albany Bishop Howard Hubbard -- marks the first time since the national priest sex scandal erupted two years ago that a Capital Region prosecutor has opened a case involving priests accused of molesting children decades ago.

Last spring, Carney said the underlying accusations of sexual abuse -- while probably not prosecutable because the statute of limitations has passed -- will likely be "intertwined" with the allegations of stalking and harassment.

On Monday, Sawicki's lawyer, John Aretakis, sent a letter to the district attorney demanding a special prosecutor be assigned.

Aretakis said inaction could allow the one-year statute of limitations to expire in the case.

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