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Deval fund-raisers urge DA to reopen case on LaGuer

By DAVE WEDGE

Two top campaign volunteers for Gov. Deval Patrick who formed a committee to free convicted rapist Ben LaGuer want Worcester District Attorney Joseph Early Jr. to reopen the controversial case.

"We believe that Benjamin LaGuer is innocent of all charges," a letter from Patrick fund-raisers Susan Wadia-Ells and John Hosty to Early reads.

The letter refers to Patrick's past support of LaGuer, who was convicted of brutally raping a 59-year-old Leominster woman in 1983. LaGuer, 44, is serving a life sentence but claims he is innocent.

Patrick was criticized during last year's campaign for supporting LaGuer's parole bid and donating to his cause. But the governor dropped his support after DNA

tests linked LaGuer to the crime and has said he believes "justice has been served" in the case.

The letter, which is from the "Free Ben LaGuer Committee," points out that several DNA experts hired by LaGuer's defense team have reported that evidence was mishandled and forensic tests were flawed. A few weeks ago, the committee, which is co-chaired by Wadia-Ells and Hosty, asked the state Inspector General to include the LaGuer case in its review of botched tests at the state police Crime Lab.

"We urge you to request an open and transparent independent investigation of the crime and the evidence used against Mr. LaGuer," the letter to Early states.

Representatives from Early's office could not be reached last night.

www.BenLaGuer.com