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## **Kendel Ehrlich considers running for Arundel executive seat**

### **Former Md. first lady says Leopold's resignation presents 'unique situation'**

By Kevin Rector, The Baltimore Sun

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Former Maryland first lady Kendel Ehrlich is considering running to fill the Anne Arundel County executive seat that was recently vacated by John R. Leopold, saying Saturday that she feels "uniquely qualified for a unique situation."

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The County Council has 30 days to fill the seat left by Leopold, who stepped down as county executive Friday after being suspended from his position following his conviction on two counts of misconduct in office.

Ehrlich, an attorney and the wife of former Gov. Robert Ehrlich, who has sparked rumors she would run for the top Arundel seat in the past as well, including in 2009, said Leopold's fall has left many county residents and employees frustrated and ready for change.

"There's not a lot of fondness for politicians to begin with, and then something like this comes along and people shake their heads. It's embarrassing," she said.

Leopold, a two-term Republican, was found guilty of misconduct for directing his police protection detail to collect dossiers on his political rival, collect campaign checks and put up signs during his 2010 campaign for re-election, and for having officers and his scheduler drain a urinary catheter bag he used after having back surgery.

John Hammond, the county's chief administrative officer, is serving as acting executive.

Ehrlich said she will not run for election in 2014, when Leopold was set to reach his two-term limit, and will not be raising money or campaigning. But she said she loves the idea of helping the county right its course.

"We could bring a little dignity back to the county," she said. "I think the women in particular, and even more specifically the female county employees, would breathe a sigh of relief."

Ehrlich said she plans to attend a candidates' forum hosted by the West County Republican Club on Thursday — applications for Leopold's position must be filed by Friday — and plans to use this week to feel

out whether she could secure the four council votes needed to win the seat.

"I don't want to put myself in a bad position, but if I'm told I can get four votes, than maybe we'll be talking again," she said.

The fact that she does not intend to run in the 2014 election would help her look out for the best interests of the county, instead of making political calculations, she said.

"I could do this job and manage my family and not be involved in raising money, and not be worried about the decisions I'm making based on politics," she said. Ehrlich said her husband, the former governor, "loves the idea."

Some council members, including Council Chairman Jerry Walker and Vice Chairman John Grasso, have also expressed interest in the seat, as have other legislators, including state Del. Steve Schuh of Gibson Island. There is no law preventing the councilmen from casting votes for themselves.

Republicans hold a 4-3 majority on the council. The county charter says Leopold must be replaced by a registered voter of the same party who has lived in the county for the past four years, officials said.

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