

# Newswatch



**By Star-Bulletin Staff**

Tuesday, May 20, 1997



## **Rodrigues' political role could disqualify him**

Rules covering involvement in politics and current court cases might disqualify United Public Workers leader Gary Rodrigues from service on the Judicial Selection Commission, according to a GOP lawmaker.

State Rep. Gene Ward said yesterday he has asked Daniel Mollway, executive director of the state Ethics Commission, for an interpretation of two rules covering appointees to the nine-member board.

His request follows a challenge by the House Republican caucus last week, which asked Senate President Norman Mizuguchi to withdraw Rodrigues' appointment.

Mizuguchi named Rodrigues to serve on the commission which screens nominees from which the governor fills each vacancy for state judge. The commission also has power to approve or deny reappointment.

The criteria for commission service include language that no commissioner shall take an active part in political management or in political campaigns. Ward said Rodrigues is a participant in Democratic political campaigning.

Ward also questioned whether Rodrigues' active part in court cases challenging privatization of government functions also violates a Judicial Selection Commission rule. The rule states that if a commissioner has a substantive matter pending before any judge, he may not participate in proceedings to retain the judge.