

Crowd Rallies to Support Embattled Sheriff

Supporters Say They'll Support Headley No Matter What

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FRANKLIN, Tenn. -- Hundreds of people came out Thursday morning to show their support for embattled Williamson County Sheriff Ricky Headley. Between 300 and 400 people gathered and heard a sheriff's deputy and a citizen speak.

Three days ago, Headley was booked in his own jail on four counts of official misconduct.

"He was serving the public in a capacity of sheriff and using his office and his power to do something inappropriate," said Tennessee Bureau of Investigation spokeswoman Kristin Helm.

Supporters of Headley rallied to his defense.

"He's been good for the community, and we want to keep him around here," said one supporter.

In a 20-minute exchange, the group of citizens decked out in Headley hats and T-shirts, claimed the county's sheriff was railroaded and begged him not to step down.

"I think he's going to be cleared, and everybody makes a mistake," said supporter and dispatcher Phyllis Phillips.

"What did Christ say? He said let he who is without sin cast the first stone. Ricky Headley is a great guy," said another supporter.

If convicted of a felony, Headley would automatically be removed from office. But outside that, he'll stay in office, his attorney said.

"He said that he wasn't going to resign before. He certainly isn't going to resign now. Particularly since this is just the same charges all over again," said David Raybin.

Though an ouster suit is rumored to be in the works, no one will confirm it. Headley's attorney said he would bet it would never happen.

"I don't think there will be any kind of ouster suit with a criminal case pending. I've never seen anything like that," Raybin said.

A sheriff can be ousted in two different ways: The district attorney can initiate it and the county attorney can also file suit, but the board of professional responsibility has essentially recused the Williamson County attorney because he has represented Headley in the past.

Headley will be arraigned on the new charges on Oct. 23.

Channel 4 News confirmed late Thursday that additional charges in Davidson County could be filed against Headley on Friday.