

Reinecke's

survival

test nears

By Sydney Kossen
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Lt. Gov. Ed Reinecke's pending trial on Federal perjury charges has compounded the miseries of conservative Republicans.

He has been privately pleading with them not to turn their backs on his campaign for governor.

Publicly Reinecke maintains an image of confidence. He cites recent published polls showing him still ahead of Controller Houston Flournoy, chief rival in the June 4 primary.

Clearly, though, Reinecke's support is eroding. And he is slipping in the polls.

Reinecke faces what may be a survival test next Saturday in San Mateo at an endorsing convention of United Republicans of California, made up of some 9000 hard-core right wingers. Keynote speaker will be Rep. John Ashbrook of Ohio.

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a 1972 presidential contender billed in the San Mateo program as the GOP's "voice of conscience."

Reinecke tries to incite voters against Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski. He contends that Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts would gain if he loses the election because "Kennedy would not like to see a Republican Administration in California in 1976."

Many Republicans have applauded Reinecke's declaration, "I am absolutely not guilty."

Yet to many he invokes memories of former Vice President Agnew crying out

in California last year that he, too, was innocent and would not resign.

"It's a deep dilemma for us," says Michael Dvorjevich of San Rafael, UROC convention cochairman and former California Young Republican president.

"Under normal circumstances, Reinecke would be the frontrunner for our endorsement. In my lifetime we have never had a situation like this."

The California Republican Assembly, an older conservative volunteer movement, voted to back Reinecke earlier this year. That came before he was indicted on charges of lying to the Senate Judiciary Committee about the dates of ITT's offer to help finance the 1972 GOP National Convention.

Reinecke's would-be supporters were puzzled anew Friday when his trial was delayed by a Federal judge in Washington at the request of defense counsel.

No new trial date has been set. "It could be very well past the primary," said District Judge Barrington D. Parker.

The trial had been scheduled for the week of May 13. Last weekend Reinecke told newsmen he would not seek a delay and that he was counting on a verdict of innocent before the election June 4.

Now only the May 13 hearing date for motion still stands. This includes Reinecke's request to shift the trial from the District of Columbia to California. In quest of the change of venue, Reinecke's lawyers may have to go all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, usually a long, slow route.

F. Joseph Donohue, Reinecke's Washington attorney, has said a trial date after June 1 would be all right because a "case of

such magnitude" requires more time to prepare.

"It is Mr. Jaworski's timing that has thrust this into

the political arena," Reinecke said. "I asked for this to be completed last year and they promised that it would be by Oct. 1."