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■ 2008 ELECTION

Groob declares for rematch

By Patrick Crowley

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In a rematch of the 2004 election, Democrat Kathy Groob is taking on Republican Sen. Jack Westwood of Crescent Springs.



Groob

Groob, a Covington resident and marketing executive with Paul Hemmer Cos. in Fort Mitchell, filed campaign papers Thursday in Frankfort.

She described Westwood as ineffective and out-of-touch

with the needs of Northern Kentucky and residents of his 23rd Senate District.

"Our economy is in crisis, education is badly underfunded, and health-care reform is still being ignored," she said.

"The status quo represented by Jack Westwood, and his legacy of inaction, is no longer good enough. Westwood has had his chance and

To run against Westwood again

failed to deliver any meaningful legislation in the 12 years in which he has held office."

Westwood said from Frankfort that he can and will defend his record, adding that Groob has already failed once in trying to beat him.

"She's just going to try to attack my record, but I've been very effective," Westwood said, adding that his bill increasing vocational training opportunities for high school students – legislation designed to reduce the state's dropout rate – passed the Senate Education Committee on Thursday.

"The voters have already spoken once," he said. "And they chose me over her."

Westwood, a retired educator serving his third four-year term, defeated Groob four years ago with 53 percent of the vote.

The 23rd Senate District encompasses Covington, Ludlow, Park Hills,

Bromley, Fort Mitchell, Fort Wright, Crescent Springs, Villa Hills, Edgewood, Erlanger, Elsmere and one precinct in Crestview Hills.

Groob said that "during the past four years, citizens of Kenton County have endured multiple tax increases and an assault on small-business owners."

Groob was referring to former Gov. Ernie Fletcher's tax modernization plan, which did lower some taxes but also raised taxes and fees on small businesses.

Kenton County Republican Chairman Greg Shumate said Westwood has been a "very effective legislator for Northern Kentucky" who will win reelection.

"People have recognized that Jack has been effective and have demonstrated their commitment to Jack through his many re-election campaigns," Shumate said.

Democrats think they have momentum on their side given the November gubernatorial race, when Democrat Steve Beshear won statewide and carried Kenton County in defeating Republican incumbent Ernie Fletcher.

Shumate disputed that, pointing out that in November five of the six Republicans on the statewide ballot – including Secretary of State Trey Grayson – carried Kenton County.

"The momentum that the Democrats believe they have is fictitious," Shumate said.

Kentucky Democratic Vice Chairman Nathan Smith of Fort Mitchell said the race will be one of the most closely watched and hotly contested in the state.

"We are going to be very engaged," said Smith, who served with Groob in leadership positions with the Kenton County Democratic Party.

"The state party is totally committed to making sure Kathy Groob is the next state senator from the 23rd District."