

Groob takes credit for scuttling redecorating

Sen. Westwood downplays her influence claims

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COVINGTON – State senate candidate Kathy Groob is taking at least some of the credit for the cancellation of a \$440,000 renovation of senators' office space in the State Capitol Annex in Frankfort.

Groob, a Covington Democrat, said Thursday that her opponent – Sen. Jack Westwood, R-Crescent Springs – opposed the project because of election year pressure and not because of concerns over spending during a difficult financial situation for state government.

“Senate Redecorating Project CANCELLED!” Groob’s campaign declared in an e-mail to reporters and supporters. “Kathy’s Leadership Pays Off.”

“This week Kathy Groob demonstrated her leadership abilities by raising a public outcry ... while Jack Westwood and the old-guard Senate leadership remained silent, hoping for the storm to pass,” Groob’s campaign



Groob

wrote in the statement. “In a transparent attempt to rescue Jack Westwood and his cronies from the political heat generated by Kathy, the project was suddenly cancelled late (Wednesday).”

Groob, who has dubbed the situation “Re-Decorategate,” issued a press release last week slamming the redecoration after the project was reported by the Lexington Herald-Leader. And she was quoted Thursday in newspapers, including The Kentucky Enquirer, criticizing the project.

But Westwood and another Northern Kentucky lawmaker, Sen. Damon Thayer, R-Georgetown, said Groob had nothing to do with Senate President David Williams, R-Burkesville, cancelling the project.

The Republican lawmakers said they and their colleagues raised concerns about the project because of the tight budget – most state government agencies and departments are cutting back – and after hearing criticism from constituents.

“I had already sent a letter to David Williams opposing the project by the time I heard about

her comments,” Westwood said. “The timing (for the project) is just not right. We are obviously in uncertain election times. This is a good time to tighten our belts and try to save money.”

Thayer, who also asked Williams to postpone the project, was dismissive of Groob’s claims. He compared them to comments made by former Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who said she came under sniper fire while visiting war-torn Bosnia while first lady. After news reports and eyewitness accounts surfaced indicating Clinton was not under fire, she recanted.

“Kathy who?,” Thayer said mockingly. “This is the typical bogus political rhetoric coming out of Democrats this season. We heard it from Hillary Clinton and now we are hearing it from Kathy Groob.”

Westwood pointed out that the scuttled project was the final phase of a \$2 million renovation of Senate offices.

“I was not even going to benefit from the current project,” Westwood said. “I think it was mostly for Democrats, along with some Republicans. But now that it’s off the table, that’s fine with me.”