

INSIDE

Calendar can help you plan your weekend. **B6**

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Groob: Vote on casinos

By Patrick Crowley
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COVINGTON — Democrat Kathy Groob, convinced that voters want to decide the casino issue in Kentucky, is making gambling a central part of her state Senate campaign.

"I'm going to be the No. 1 advocate for this when I get down to Frankfort," Groob said. "It's one of the top issues in the state. Polling shows it, but I don't need polling to tell me that because I'm out talking to people every night, and they want to vote on it."

Groob is challenging Sen. Jack Westwood, R-Crescent Springs, in Kenton County's 23rd Senate District. The race is a rematch of 2004, when Westwood won a

Challenger differs with Westwood on statewide gambling initiative

third four-year term.

Westwood said he does not support putting gambling on the ballot and questions how much revenue it would generate for the state. Estimates have put the state's take at about \$400 million from a dozen casinos, but Westwood said he expects the figure would be half of that.

"I'm not sure gambling would have that big of an impact on a \$9-billion-a-year budget," Westwood said. "A better way of creating revenue is through economic development, attracting businesses, creating jobs

and enabling people to be taxpayers."

Despite the support of Gov. Steve Beshear and other lawmakers, gambling did not come to a vote in the General Assembly session that ended in April. Groob, who favors gambling as a way to generate more tax revenue, blames Westwood and other Senate Republicans for inaction on the bill.

"(Westwood) has let the people of Kentucky down by continuing to block the necessary funding to support our schools and justice system by not allowing the people to vote on expanded gaming," Groob said



in a statement this week.

"He's never taken a leadership role," she said in an interview.

Westwood said that Groob "must not realize" that the issue never has been voted on

in the Senate.

"I didn't block anything," he said.

The effort to bring casino gambling to Kentucky is apparently not dead. At least two bills are expected to be filed in the 2009 session that would allow slot machines at the state's racetracks.

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Casinos: Let's vote, says Groob; not so fast, says Westwood

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Those tracks include Turfway Park.

Groob favors legislation that would allow the voters to decide the issue through a statewide constitutional ballot. She said the state is in desperate need of new revenue, pointing to last week's report that the state gave early release to nearly 900 inmates in May to save money.

"We need to let the people decide on this important revenue issue once and for all," she said.

Westwood said Groob is politically exploiting the prisoner release, which the legislature approved in a bipartisan agreement late in the legislative session.

"Unfortunately, Kathy Groob is trying to promote a policy decision for her own political future," Westwood said.

Firefighters' endorsement

State Senate candidate Kathy Groob, a Covington Democrat, has been endorsed by a Covington firefighters union.

The Covington Firefighters Local 38 is backing Groob in her challenge of Sen. Jack Westwood, R-Crescent Springs. Groob previously served on Fort Mitchell City Council.

"Kathy is the clear choice because she understands the needs of firefighters and has a proven commitment to public safety," local president Mike Holtman said in a statement distributed by the Groob campaign. "We know we can count on Kathy to fight for firefighters in Frankfort."