

# THE KENTUCKY ENQUIRER

March 25, 2008

Editorial

## One last bet on putting casinos in Ky.

Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear is trying one last time to put a referendum on the ballot to find out if Kentucky voters want casino gambling in the state. The odds appear slim, but Beshear rallied a number of politicians, educators and business leaders to pressure legislators to pass a bill.

Flanked by 20 legislative supporters, Beshear held a press conference in the State Capitol Rotunda on Monday, saying there was time for one last legislative push.

The governor has touted casino gambling as a way to close the gap between Kentucky's fiscal needs and its reality. Under the proposed two year budget, that gap is about \$900 million.

### What do you think?

Do you think the Kentucky General Assembly should allow the public to vote on casino gambling? Add a comment to our online message board at [Cincinnati.Com](http://Cincinnati.Com) Search: **conversations**.

His current plan, cut back in earlier compromises, calls for nine casinos, with horse tracks, including Turfway in Florence, eligible to host five of the operations. Estimates of the annual yield to the state from casinos is \$300 million to \$500 million.

Gambling may not be the best way out of the state's financial distress, but it is better than ignoring the problem, which is what some in the General Assembly seem inclined to do.

Some of those playing dodgeball, apparently in hopes that the issue will go away, are in the Northern Kentucky delegation. State Sen. Jack Westwood, R-Crescent Springs, comes to mind. From Pat Crowley's story in the Kentucky Enquirer: "I don't hear a lot of people in the Senate expressing any real desire to vote on this bill," Westwood said.

Westwood said he is uncertain about the issue until he sees the version that passes the House.

How can any fair-minded person oppose letting the process go forward. All of Kentucky needs to know either way, and casino gambling will have a huge impact on Northern Kentucky. As we have said before,

the legislature should let the people of Kentucky vote on whether or not they want casino gambling.

Westwood and other obstructionists in the General Assembly could clearly support the concept of letting the voters decide without being for or against casino gambling itself. He could actively work to see that a referendum bill with good wording gets through the Senate sooner rather than later. He could match his genuine concern for fetal development with greater concern for economic development.

The legislature will be in session for only one more week. It's time for leadership. The only reasons to postpone this referendum are bad ones.