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Carter touts aide Zoeller as successor

Attorney general visits Clarksville

BY BEN ZION HERSHBERG • BHERSHBERG@COURIER-JOURNAL.COM • MAY 16, 2008

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Indiana [Attorney General](#) Steve Carter came to Clarksville today to promote the effort of Southern Indiana native Greg Zoeller, his chief deputy, to become the Republican nominee to succeed him in the office.

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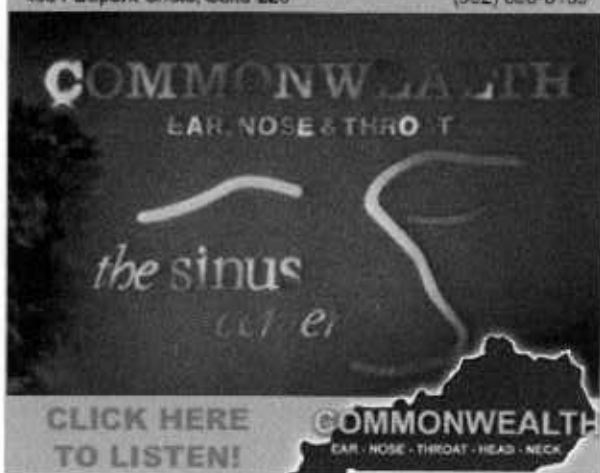


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Carter, who has decided not to run again, joined Zoeller at the Falls of the Ohio Interpretive Center in advance of the party's June 3 state convention, where the candidate will be nominated.

Republican Gov. Mitch Daniels has endorsed Zoeller's opponent, Valparaiso Mayor Jon Costas.

Zoeller said today that he wasn't worried about the governor's endorsement because the party's 2,086 convention delegates will make the choice.

"I will argue my case to that jury," Zoeller said. "And I'm a pretty good lawyer."

Jay Kenworthy, communications director for the Indiana Republican Party, said it's not unusual to have contested nominations for attorney general at party conventions.

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It is rare to have one candidate endorsed by the governor and another by the incumbent attorney general, Kenworthy said, but that's because it's unusual to have a [Republican](#) attorney general who isn't running again at the same time a Republican governor is in office.

Party leaders don't believe the battle for the nomination will divide the party in November, Kenworthy said.

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In his endorsement of Costas on May 11, Daniels said that he admires both candidates but that Costas provides geographical balance to the ticket. He noted that Tony Bennett, who is seeking the nomination for state superintendent of public instruction, is the Greater Clark school superintendent and, like Zoeller, is from Southern Indiana.

Daniels said Costas is "a proven vote-getter" from northwestern Indiana.

Costas, in a telephone interview today, said he didn't start thinking about running for attorney general until about five or six weeks ago, after Carter said he wasn't seeking re-election and friends called to encourage him to run.

Shortly thereafter, Costas said, he met with the governor, who also encouraged him.

Costas, who is in his second term as mayor, said he would focus on consumer protection of senior citizens if elected to the state office. He said he will develop more goals for the office as he learns more about it.

Zoeller, a New Albany native, has been Carter's chief deputy since 2001, managing the 140-lawyer department. He also is chief of the litigation division and of the office's advisory services.

Earlier in his career, Zoeller worked for Vice President Dan Quayle in Indiana and Washington.

Reporter Ben Zion Hershberg can be reached at (812) 949-4032.

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