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Ivey Vows To Wield Gavel If Elected



SARAH DUDIK | GADSDEN TIMES

Kay Ivey, a Republican candidate for lieutenant governor, addresses the Gadsden Kiwanis Club during a lunch meeting Wednesday at the Hardin Center in Gadsden.

By Andy Powell, Times Staff Writer
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State Treasurer Kay Ivey said as lieutenant governor, she would have the power of the gavel in presiding over an Alabama Senate she said has been “dysfunctional.”

However, Ivey promised to preside fairly.

Ivey, now seeking the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor after opting out of the race for governor, spoke Wednesday to the Gadsden Kiwanis Club.

Ivey said in her two terms as state treasurer she has worked with both the House and Senate and believes her experience in state government will help her as lieutenant governor.

“When one issue can tie down a legislative process the way gambling has done for the last three sessions,” Ivey said, “something’s not right. Part of it is the need for transparency and the other part of it is the need for an effective organization and the effective use of the gavel.”

Ivey said the lieutenant governor “carries a mighty sword with the effective use of the gavel — a mighty sword. It needs to be used fairly so all parties get to be heard and have their day in court as they represent the people of Alabama.”

She said if she's elected and gets to preside, “We will be in order, and we will be civil.”

Ivey said as state treasurer, she has reduced administrative costs in her office by almost \$5 million and made the operations of the office more transparent by posting financial information on the office's Web site.

“I will serve you well and be fair, and we will not have the bogged-down, stalemate, lockdown in the Senate that we've experienced in the last (few) sessions,” Ivey said.

Ivey abandoned the crowded Republican race for governor the day before qualifying, and material she distributed at the speech discussed the governorship. Asked how the change affected her campaign, Ivey said she is running on the same issues — jobs, improving education standards and reducing government costs.

She said taxes will have to be raised or expenses cut, and she favors reducing spending.

“I say we can reduce spending with our money in a focused manner and target the essential services on which every department and every educational enterprise is intended,” she said.

Ivey served as assistant director of the Alabama Development Office and said she will work with the governor to recruit businesses to the state.

She said firms considering Alabama need to be assured there will be no new taxes and no new fees.

Asked about the state's Prepaid Affordable College Tuition plan, Ivey said she supports legislation sponsored by Rep. Craig Ford, D-Gadsden, that will provide funding for the financially ailing program so all students can be served. She called it a “workable thing.”

Ivey called herself a “strong advocate” to ensure that those enrolled in the program, which is administered by her office, will be covered. She said funds are available for

tuition for only 62 percent of those enrolled in the program. Before the economy went sour, the coverage rate was 95 percent.

Ivey said one problem has been that tuition increases have been higher than the rate of return on investments.

However, she promised the program will continue to make payments for tuition and pointed out it has not missed a payment.

Ivey wants to see legislation allowing charter schools in Alabama. She said communities that want charter schools should be allowed to have them because that would mean more local control.

She said charters are not needed where there are “pockets of excellence” but are needed in other areas of the state.