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## Moran, Tiaht face off for Kansas Senate position

By Hannah Blick

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There could be trouble in paradise for Kansas Republicans.

Reps. Jerry Moran and Todd Tiaht are both seeking next year's Republican Party nomination for Sen. Sam Brownback's seat. Brownback will be running for governor of Kansas, according to a July 16 article on the Wichita Eagle's Web site.

According to Joe Aistrup, professor of political science, if the two continue running for the position, Kansas government could lose out on a stable figure.

"It's a tough situation for a candidate to withdraw from a race, but not impossible," he said. "The filing date is June 2010, so if they are going to, they need to do it sooner rather than later — I would say by January."

Aistrup said the race will come down to the money each representative is able to raise.

"Right now it appears that Jerry Moran has a leg up on Tiaht," he said, referring to the more than \$3 million Moran has collected, versus Tiaht's \$1.5 million.

"Moran has a substantial amount of funding, and at this stage in the game that's crucial. The ability to raise money is vindictive to what conservatives are supporting him."

Aistrup also said Moran's recent endorsements from Johnson County mayors could give him another boost at the polls. Johnson County is home to about 170,000 registered Republicans, which is more than one-fifth of the state's total, according to the Eagle.

Kansas Democrats have not declared a campaign hopeful for the position yet, but Rep. Sydney Carlin, D-Manhattan, said there should be a nominated Democratic candidate after August 2010.

"I think the Democrats are looking with great interest at the seat," she said.

Tiahrt has represented the Fourth Congressional District in south-central Kansas, which centers around Wichita, since 1994. He is known for more socially conservative viewpoints and is endorsed by groups like the Traditional Values Coalition, Family Research Council and Kansans for Life, according to the Eagle.

Moran has been in the First District seat, which includes western Kansas, since 1996. He has been endorsed by Republican Sens. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma, Mike Johanns of Nebraska and John Thune of South Dakota. According to the Eagle, Moran “touts his ability to build relationships in Congress to get things done” and has fought what he saw as big-government initiatives, like the No Child Left Behind Act and the introduction of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

George Weston, chair of the Kansas Federation of College Republicans, said he thinks whichever candidate wins the primary will be sure to win the election. Weston, also a K-State graduate student in sociology, said he hopes both representatives will stick in the race, though.

“I think since they’ve already invested so much into it, they would keep going for it,” he said.

Weston said the economy will be the biggest issue Moran and Tiahrt will have to confront as they campaign for Brownback’s seat, along with health care. He said K-State students should pay attention to which candidate will best stimulate job growth in Kansas for future graduates.

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