

Supreme Court to consider drive for Jacksonville-area casino

Written by Administrator

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Attorney General Ashley Moody has asked the Florida Supreme Court to scrutinize a proposed constitutional amendment that would open the door to casinos in North Florida, after a political committee backing the measure surpassed the required number of signatures to start the review process.

According to Moody's request, Florida Secretary of State Laurel Lee told the Attorney General's Office on Dec. 10 that the "Limited Authorization of Casino Gaming" initiative had exceeded the 222,898 signatures required for judicial review.

The Florida Voters in Charge committee backing the measure is racing to meet a Feb. 1 deadline to submit a required 891,589 signatures to make it onto the November 2022 ballot. The committee had submitted 425,523 valid signatures as of Friday, according to the state Division of Elections website.

The casino proposal has pitted gambling behemoth Las Vegas Sands Corp., which has contributed more than \$27 million to the committee, against the Seminole Tribe of Florida, which currently is the sole operator of Las Vegas-style casinos in the state.

The ballot initiative would allow voters to decide whether to allow existing parimutuel operators in North Florida to add casino games to their operations. The measure, if approved, would open the door to casinos along the Interstate 10 corridor in North Florida and is geared toward a facility in the Jacksonville area.

The Supreme Court's review will consider whether the initiative meets requirements such as having a single subject and not being misleading to voters.

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