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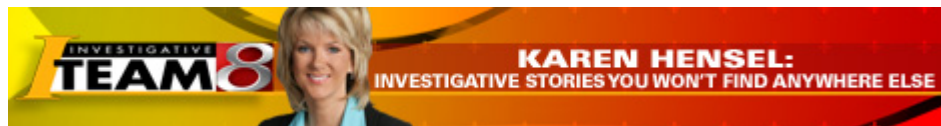
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Group Pushing to Legalize Electronic Gambling

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There was a drive to legalize video gambling machines in Indiana Monday night.

The games have been popular for years but they've never been legal here. Supporters say the time is ripe to change that.

On a night when most are rallying behind the blue and white, a small group of Hoosiers tried to build a different kind of team, one

that will champion video gambling machines.

"We're just trying to legitimize something that's already been going on," Brad Klopfenstein said.

To those behind the push, an early spring crackdown still stings. The state raided legion halls and the like, looking for the games.

"Usually people have kind of looked the other way but here, especially this year, we've seen stepped-up enforcement by the state excise police," Klopfenstein explained.

"It really got our members motivated to try to push this issue," Don Marquardt, President of the Indiana Licensed Beverage Association said.

The Indiana Licensed Beverage Association represents bars and restaurants that legally sell booze. Its leaders think the time is ripe to legalize the video devices, too. So they are trying to build a unified front with meetings across the state.

That may be a challenge. Consider the VFW hall hosting Monday's event. There, tip board gambling is already allowed. The VFW would love to augment that with video machines, but not necessarily if that makes it a partner with private bars.

"But our money goes to the local community, that's where we differ.



They're talking about bar owners and fraternal organizations," said Ron Martin, State Commander of the VFW.

Can the two co-exist? These leaders hope so and will keep criss-crossing the state to make it happen.

Video gambling supporters say they already have a lawmaker willing to sponsor the measure in the state house.

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