

Kentucky's race for U.S. Senate is on

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KENTUCKY LANTERN

RICHMOND Railing against the “woke left” and embracing President Donald Trump, Kentucky Republican U.S. Rep. Andy Barr confirmed his run for U.S. Senate Tuesday by unveiling a video.

He later announced his candidacy in person, introduced by his young daughter Mary Clay to a crowd of supporters gathered on the lawn of an old mansion in Richmond.

Entering his first statewide race, the six-term congressman from Lexington stressed his bona fides as both a Kentuckian and Trump loyalist.

After his announcement speech, Barr told reporters he had asked Trump for his endorsement. “I have, and I’d be honored to have it, and I continue to work to earn it. That’s what I said to the president,” Barr said.

“I’m in a unique position as a member of the U.S. House to actually advance the agenda, to defend the president, to fight for ... these America First policies.”

Kentuckians will send someone new to the U.S. Senate in November 2026 to fill the seat that Republican U.S. Sen. Mitch McConnell will be leaving after 42 years.

Barr already faces former state Attorney General Daniel Cameron in the Republican



Supporters gather in Richmond Tuesday evening to hear U.S. Rep. Andy Barr, a Republican from Lexington, announce he is a candidate for U.S. Senate.



Former gubernatorial candidate Daniel Cameron speaks during the 143rd Fancy Farm Picnic on Aug. 5, 2023.

primary to succeed McConnell. Cameron, who has twice run statewide — winning the attorney general race in 2019 and losing the 2023 governor’s race to Democratic incumbent Andy Beshear — announced his candidacy in February moments after McConnell announced he was retiring. Also mulling entering the Republican primary is Lexington businessman Nate Morris.

Barr starts his race with a fundraising edge. He reported raising \$1.8 million in the first quarter of 2025 and has \$5.3 million on hand, according to federal campaign finance reports. Cameron reported having raised \$508,000 for his Senate run as of March 31.

On the Democratic side, state House Minority Floor Leader Rep. Pamela Stevenson, of Louisville, has announced. Frequently mentioned as a possible candidate is Rocky Adkins, a se-

nior adviser to Beshear and former state House Democratic floor leader.

Barr told reporters he had spent the first few months of this year assessing his statewide support “and everywhere we turned it was a green light.”

“We’re not looking past the primary, but ultimately, the general election electorate is going to select the next senator from Kentucky. ... I know that this Commonwealth of Kentucky overwhelmingly elected President Trump and Kentucky deserves a United States senator who will support President Trump and his agenda, and he knows that I am with him.”

Familiar Trump themes

In announcing, Barr echoed some familiar Trump themes. He denounced “insane DEI initiatives,” referring to diversity, equity and inclusion programs that Trump has banned in the federal government and is moving to end elsewhere. Barr also picked up on Trump’s presidential campaign’s emphasis on transgender issues, vowing to “lock up the sickos who allow biological men to

share locker rooms with our daughters.”

Describing himself as “an eighth-generation Kentuckian, the grandson of World War II veterans,” Barr said he is “a man who loves my family and friends, who lives and breathes everything Kentucky, bourbon, horses and Kentucky basketball.”

Barr already has received an endorsement from longtime U.S. Rep. Hal Rogers of Somerset, whose district includes much of Eastern Kentucky. Rogers sent a statement in support of Barr to some media outlets, saying “I have no doubt that Andy Barr will fight every day to protect Eastern Kentucky and Kentucky coal in the Senate. Kentuckians can count on Andy to have our back and always do what’s right.” Rogers’ long history of funneling federal money into local projects and law enforcement agencies has earned him the friendship of the region’s elected officials.

Republican legislators attending Barr’s announcement included Sen. Phillip Wheeler of Pikeville, Sen. Scott Madon of Pineville, Rep. Kim King of Harrods-

burg and Sen. Amanda Mays Bledsoe of Lexington.

Barr said he was holding the event in Madison County because conservative voters there “always have been and always will be the firewall of our campaigns.”

Barr was first elected to the U.S. House in 2012, defeating Democratic incumbent Ben Chandler. Currently, he is a senior member of the House Financial Services Committee and chairman of the Financial Institutions and Monetary Policy Subcommittee. He also serves on the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

In December, Barr lost a Republican caucus vote to be chairman of the powerful Financial Services Committee, which oversees U.S. banking and monetary policy. He had earlier said a House committee chairmanship would preclude his running for the Senate, McClatchy reported.

The Republican primary looks to be contentious between Barr and Cameron, particularly as they seek a coveted endorsement from Trump. Cameron had Trump’s backing for his failed 2023 race. Barr has consistently emphasized his support for the president’s agenda and for his billionaire adviser Elon Musk. At a White House event earlier this month, Trump said while acknowledging Barr’s attendance: “Good luck with ev-

everything. I hear good things.”

A possible third GOP candidate, Morris, the Lexington businessman, has gained the eye of Trump allies, including the president’s son, Donald Trump Jr. Morris’ support for the president’s tariff plans was included in a recent White House press release.

Democrats respond

Kentucky Democratic Party Chair Colmon Elridge in a statement said Barr in Congress has done “absolutely nothing” while the Trump administration “cripples our economy, sends prices skyrocketing, targets Kentucky’s signature industries and threatens to gut health care that 1.5 million Kentuckians rely on.”

“Today, he managed to launch his U.S. Senate campaign with a two-minute video that grovels for Trump’s endorsement and ignores the very real problems Kentuckians face every day,” Elridge said.

Barr’s Senate candidacy now opens the race for Kentucky’s 6th Congressional District — a seat in central Kentucky that Democrats are hoping to flip. The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) previously listed Barr’s current seat as one of the districts it views as in play heading into midterm elections in 2026.

On Tuesday, the DCCC said Barr’s decision creating an open seat makes Kentucky’s 6th District “even more winnable,” noting that Democrat Beshear carried the district by a wide margin. “Kentuckians deserve a representative who will put their interests first — fighting to lower costs, create good jobs, and protect their health care, not another rubberstamp for their D.C. party boss’s agenda of tax breaks for billionaires,” said the DCCC statement.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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The Boyd County Public Schools’ Local Planning Committee will conduct a PUBLIC FORUM on May 01, 2025 at 5:30 p.m. at the Media Center, Located at Boyd County High School, at 14375 Lions Lane, Ashland KY, 41102.

This meeting is an informal gathering to encourage local participation through community suggestions relative to future utilization of existing school facilities and construction of new school facilities. These community suggestions or recommendations will be closely monitored by the Local Planning Committee. This meeting will be immediately followed by a meeting of the Boyd County Public Schools’ Local Planning Committee.

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