

KENTUCKY NEWS

Beshear: Focusing on everyday concerns is key for Democrats vying for office

BY BRUCE SCHREINER
ASSOCIATED PRESS

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Democrats looking to expand their hold on the nation’s governorships should be focused on offering solutions for Americans feeling stressed by high costs for housing, health care and other essentials, Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear, who is tasked with electing more Democratic governors, said Monday.

Three dozen races for governor are at stake in the November midterm elections as Democrats, looking to build on their 2025 victories in Virginia and New Jersey, try to gain ground in statehouses. While making their case on economic issues, Democrats should be more forthcoming in discussing how their values, including their faith, shape their policy proposals, Beshear said.

And they should go on offense against Republican President Donald Trump, who has “absolutely no solutions” for the challenges that families are facing, Beshear said during a sit-down interview with The Associated Press. Beshear is leading the Democratic Governors Association heading into the midterms.

Beshear, who frequently cites his Christian faith when explaining his policy stands, said opening up to voters can take on many forms — sharing an experience that motivated them to seek office, talking about their upbringing or explaining how their faith



JON CHERRY/Associated Press

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear poses for a portrait following an interview in Frankfort.

or values shape their views.

“I believe that Americans are craving authenticity right now,” Beshear said. “They want to know you. They want to at least know what drives you. Because if they’re going to cast their vote for you, believing that you will make their life better, they want you to know that something is driving you to do that that is real and important to you.

“I call that the ‘why,’” he said. “Democrats are very good at the ‘what.’ We put out huge policy papers, but we don’t talk enough about the ‘why.’ And so if that’s somebody’s faith, then yes, they ought to be talking about it because that’s intrinsically them.”

The term-limited Beshear was noncommittal when asked whether he intends to enter the Democratic race for the White House in 2028.

Beshear rose to prominence after winning three elections in Republican-trending Kentucky — once for attorney general and twice for governor. He defeated Trump-backed opponents both times he won the governorship. Beshear will travel the country this year campaigning for Democratic gubernatorial candidates, including the party’s nominees in several presidential swing states.

Beshear predicted his party will pick up more governorships in 2026, with a strategy focused on such core issues as jobs, health care, housing, education, public safety and transportation.

The Republican Governors Association countered that Democrats will be on the defensive in 2026.

“Americans in states across the country have seen the stark difference in Republican

versus Democrat leadership,” RGA Deputy Communications Director Kollin Crompton said in a statement Monday evening. “It’s a fact that Republican-led states are more affordable and safer, while Democrat-led states are in fiscal crisis, more expensive” and plagued by crime and homelessness.

“Looking ahead to 2026 — Democrats running at the gubernatorial level have records they cannot defend,” Crompton added.

For Democrats, their messaging includes portraying their party’s governors as a crucial line of defense in pushing back against Trump’s sweeping policies that are making life more difficult for Americans, Beshear said.

“When we elect Democratic governors, it helps the people of that state immensely,” Beshear said. “Democratic governors create good jobs with wages where you cannot only support your family, but you can afford to take that family vacation every once in a while. Democratic governors expand health care, they don’t contract it. And Democratic governors push back against the overreach of this Trump administration that is impacting people’s lives on a daily basis.”

In Kentucky, Beshear called for greater state investments in housing, education and health care in a speech last week that outlined his budget proposals to the Republican-super-majority legislature.

Operation River Raid cracks illegal catfish harvest network
State investigation yields 25 arrests

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

After a 10-month multi-agency investigation, game wardens with the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources have identified 25 individuals to be charged with a range of violations in connection with the illegal commercial harvest and sale of catfish from public waters as well as the unlawful operation of pay lakes across Kentucky.

Dubbed Operation River Raid, the enforcement effort spans from Paducah to Ashland and represents one of the most significant cases of illegal wildlife harvesting and distribution in recent state history.

"This case reflects our commitment to safeguarding Kentucky's natural resources," said Col. Jeremy McQueary, director of the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Division. "Illegal commercialization of wildlife — especially through the exploitation of native fish populations — undermines conservation efforts and lawful recreation. We will not tolerate it."

The investigation is anticipated to result in more than 700 criminal charges across six counties: Livingston, Marshall, Boyd, Bath, Lawrence and Powell.

Wardens plan to present more than 100 felony counts to local grand juries, seeking indictments. Charges remain pending as investigators continue reviewing evidence and case materials. Authorities allege that the defendants failed to report the harvest of a total of more than 300,000 pounds of catfish, a violation of Kentucky law.

"A critical piece of

information to properly manage any fishery is accurate harvest rates," said Dave Dreves, director of the Fisheries Division. "That is why commercial fishers are required to report their harvest each month. This egregious underreporting undermines our ability to properly monitor catfish populations, especially trophy catfish."

Officials believe the illegal activity involved harvesting catfish from public waterways and transporting them for sale to unregulated or illegally operated pay lakes. This practice not only violates state law but also harms fish populations and lawful businesses, and it threatens the long-term sustainability of Kentucky's natural resources.

Operation River Raid is the result of coordinated efforts by multiple agencies, including game wardens and state Fisheries Division employees as well as district and circuit courts from numerous counties. Investigators utilized surveillance, intelligence sharing and field inspections across multiple counties to disrupt these illegal activities.

Because of the active nature of the case, specific names and details are being withheld until court proceedings are underway.

"This case sends a strong message," added Maj. David Marques, assistant director for the Law Enforcement Division. "If you profit from poaching or operate outside the law, we will find you and you will be held accountable."

The public is encouraged to report suspected poaching activity to Kentucky Fish and Wildlife by calling 800-25-ALERT, texting “KFWLAW” and your message to tip411 (847411) or by contacting their local Kentucky Game Warden at the Find My County Contact webpage on the department’s website which is fw.ky.gov.

Unemployment falls across Kentucky

BY CKNJ STAFF

Unemployment rates fell in 119 counties and rose in Pike County between November 2024 and November 2025, according to the Kentucky Center for Statistics, an agency within the Kentucky Education and Labor Cabinet.

Woodford County recorded the lowest jobless rate in the commonwealth at 3.5%. It was followed by

Fayette, Oldham and Shelby counties, 3.7% each; Bourbon, Caldwell, Scott, Todd and Washington counties, 3.8% each; and Campbell, Franklin, Graves, Harrison, Jessamine, Nicholas and Spencer counties, 3.9% each.

Martin County recorded the state’s highest unemployment rate at 8.4%. It was followed by Lewis County, 7.8%; Magoffin County, 7.6%; Pike and Wolfe counties, 7.2% each; Elliott and Jackson

counties, 7.1% each; Carter and Lawrence counties, 6.6% each; and Knott County, 6.4%.

Taylor County’s rate of 4.9% was down two-tenths of a percent from November 2024 and also beneath the Lake Cumberland region average of 5%. The data says 10,498 county residents are working and 543 were seeking employment in November.

Kentucky’s county unemployment rates and

employment levels are not seasonally adjusted because of small sample sizes. Employment statistics undergo sharp fluctuations due to seasonal events such as weather changes, harvests, holidays and school openings and closings.

Unemployment statistics are based on estimates and are compiled to measure trends rather than actually count people working.

\$9.5M project planned at Barren River Lake Park

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Barren River Lake State Resort Park is set to receive \$9.5 million in upgrades aimed at improving visitor comfort and modernizing facilities, according to a news release from the governor’s office.

The project includes about \$6 million in renovations to the park’s lodge, with plans to update guest rooms with new finishes, flooring, bathrooms and mini refrigerators, the release said. The lodge restaurant, lobby and meeting rooms also are scheduled for improvements. An additional \$3.5 million will be used for new HVAC and mechanical systems, including installation of a new chiller to improve temperature control in guest rooms and common areas.

All lodge rooms will close temporarily beginning next month to allow construction to proceed. The renovated lodge rooms are expected to reopen in the fall once work is completed.

Kentucky State Parks Acting Commissioner Mark Kellen said the improvements are intended to keep the park competitive and appealing to visitors.

“This investment in Barren River Lake State Resort Park shows our ongoing commitment to providing the best recreational opportunities for Kentuckians and visitors,” Kellen said in the release.

The park, which covers more than 1,000 acres, is near the Lucas community in Barren County but also extends into Allen and

Monroe counties in southcentral Kentucky.

Funding for the project is part of broader state action on park improvements. During the 2024 legislative

session, Gov. Andy Beshear signed House Joint Resolution 56, which released \$71 million for capital construction projects across the state parks system, including

the Barren River Lake upgrades. He also signed House Bill 6, allocating more than \$66 million for improvements at various state parks.

TAYLOR COUNTY DISTRICT COURT LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Robert Lee Rakes of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Administrator of the Estate of Hazel Marie Rakes, of Campbellsville, Kentucky on this day December 15, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 15, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Nathan D. Williams of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Kay Calhoun of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Administratrix of the Estate of Chanda Elyse Calhoun of Campbellsville, Kentucky on this day December 18, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 18, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Elmer George of Lebanon, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Debra Hughes, of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Alice Florence Wolf of Campbellsville, Kentucky on this day December 4, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 4, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. John D. Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Kevin D. Young and Kyle W. Young, both of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of Mary L. Young of Campbellsville, Kentucky on December 23, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 23, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Angela Call of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Sabrina Cox of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Administratrix of the Estate of Ricky Allen Cox of Campbellsville, Kentucky on December 22, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 22, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Nathan D. Williams of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Angela Cracraft of Cynthiaana, Kentucky has qualified as Administrator of the

Estate of Vivian Dorease Robinson of Campbellsville, Kentucky on December 17, 2025. All creditors must file claims by June 17, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Brian T. Canupp of Cynthiaana, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Whitney Elisse Clark of McDonough, Georgia has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Robert Fred Clark, Jr. of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 7, 2026. All creditors must file claims by July 7, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. James Owen Fenwick III of Lexington, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Carol Lee Allen of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Robert Neal Allen of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 7, 2026. All creditors must file claims by July 7, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. J. Keith Cartwright of Madisonville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Tracy Phillips Gibson of Kansas City, Missouri has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Patricia K. Phillips of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 19, 2026. All creditors must file claims by July 19, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Craig Cox of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Allan Ray Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky, Deborah K. Demers of Midway, Kentucky and Martha Phillips Arnett of Lexington, Kentucky has qualified as Co-Executors of the Estate of Phil Allan Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 16, 2026. All creditors must file claims by July 16, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. John D. Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Leslie Richardson of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Executor of the Estate of Pamela Price Richardson of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 9, 2026. All

creditors must file claims by July 9, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. Angela M. Call of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Abbie Parker of Elk Horn Kentucky has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Jackie Lee Parker of Elk Horn, Kentucky on January 14, 2026, 2025. All creditors must file claims by July 14, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. John D. Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that DeAnna Cooper of Campbellsville, Kentucky has qualified as Executrix of the Estate of Marsha Lee Estes of Campbellsville, Kentucky on January 16, 2026. All creditors must file claims by July 16, 2026. Fiduciary represented by Hon. John D. Bertram of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

Ruth Hutchison and Vidus Lee Pendleton, Co-Executors, of the Estate of Ricky English has filed FINAL Settlement this December 15, 2025. A hearing for confirmation and approval will be held on February 11, 2026. Any exception to such settlement must be filed before that time. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Court Clerk.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT SHELBY BRADLEY OF CAMPBELLVILLE, KENTUCKY HAS QUALIFIED AS GUARDIAN IN REGARDS OF Hunter Corbin, of Campbellsville Kentucky, on this day December 3, 2025. All creditors much file by June 3, 2026. Guardian represented by Hon. Caleb Hanes of Bowling Green, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Clerk

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT KARLA ELAINE STEVENS OF CAMPBELLVILLE, KENTUCKY HAS QUALIFIED AS GUARDIAN IN REGARDS OF Kalvin Eugen Stevens, of Campbellsville Eugeny, on this day January 14, 2026. All creditors much file by July 14, 2026. Guardian represented by Hon. Mackenzie Smith of Campbellsville, Kentucky. Susie Skaggs, Taylor Co. Circuit Clerk

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF VACANT TAYLOR COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SEAT

The Taylor County Board of Education is seeking applications for appointment to fill a vacancy on the Board representing seat Division # 1. This appointment will be effective until December 31, 2026. A winning candidate from the November 2026 regular election will assume this office in January 2027 for a regular 4 year term.

Responsibilities include: setting policy to govern the District; hiring/evaluating the Superintendent; and levying taxes and adopting the District budget. Board members must:

- Be at least 24 years old and a Kentucky citizen for the last three years;
- Be a registered voter in the particular District of the vacancy;
- Have completed the 12th grade or have a GED certificate;
- Meet all other legal qualifications (KRS 160.180); and
- Complete required annual in-service training.

Applications are available at Taylor County Board of Education, 1209 E. Broadway, Campbellsville, KY 42718 or online at www.taylor.kyschools.us. Mail applications to: Superintendent, ATTN: Board Vacancy, 1209 E. Broadway, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

Deadline for applications to be received at the Taylor County Board Office will be Thursday, February 12, 2026.

LEGAL NOTICE

NOTICE OF VACANT TAYLOR COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION SEAT

The Taylor County Board of Education is seeking applications for appointment to fill a vacancy on the Board representing seat Division # 4. This appointment will be effective until December 31, 2026. A winning candidate from the November 2026 regular election will assume this office until the next regular election to be held November 2028.

Responsibilities include: setting policy to govern the District; hiring/evaluating the Superintendent; and levying taxes and adopting the District budget. Board members must:

- Be at least 24 years old and a Kentucky citizen for the last three years;
- Be a registered voter in the particular District of the vacancy;
- Have completed the 12th grade or have a GED certificate;
- Meet all other legal qualifications (KRS 160.180); and
- Complete required annual in-service training.

Applications are available at Taylor County Board of Education, 1209 E. Broadway, Campbellsville, KY 42718 or online at www.taylor.kyschools.us. Mail applications to: Superintendent, ATTN: Board Vacancy, 1209 E. Broadway, Campbellsville, KY 42718.

Deadline for applications to be received at the Taylor County Board Office will be Thursday, February 12, 2026.