

## The Paducah Sun

**Edwin J. Paxton**, Editor & Publisher, 1900-1961  
**Frank Paxton**, Publisher, 1961-1972  
**Edwin J. Paxton Jr.**, Editor, 1961-1977  
**Jack Paxton**, Editor, 1977-1985  
**Jim Paxton**, Editor, 1986-2000  
**Fred Paxton**, Publisher, 1972-2000  
**Jim Paxton**, Editor & Publisher, 2000-2018  
**William L. Evans, Jr.**, Publisher, 2018-2025

**James T. S. Paxton**, Publisher  
**Jeff Bidwell**, Executive Editor  
**Jaron Von Runnen**, Editor

### WRITE TO US

The Paducah Sun welcomes letters for readers. Published letters must include a daytime phone number, signature and address. All are subject to editing for clarity and brevity. Writers should limit letters to a maximum of 300 words; shorter letters are preferred. Letters may be mailed to Viewpoints, The Paducah Sun, 408 Kentucky Ave., Paducah, KY 42002-2300. Writers are limited to one letter per month. Writers may email letters to [tburgess@paducahsun.com](mailto:tburgess@paducahsun.com).

### GUEST EDITORIAL

## Climate alarmists call worst-case scenario 'implausible'

BY LAS VEGAS  
REVIEW-JOURNAL

Questioning apocalyptic climate forecasts is now the conventional wisdom.

For years, radical climate activists have painted a bleak view of the future. Most scientists believe that burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases, which remain in the atmosphere, and that these gases trap additional heat, which warms the planet. This has led to concerns about "global warming." But when the Earth didn't warm as quickly as some dire prognosticators projected, the term "climate change" became more widely used.

Many Democrats argued it was a life-and-death issue.

"I've seen firsthand what the reports made clear: the devastating toll of climate change and its existential threat to all of us," Joe Biden said in 2023. Former Vice President Kamala Harris once called climate change "an existential threat to us as a species."

Those claims were always dubious, a cover for an agenda that sought more central planning over the U.S. economy.

As Bjorn Lomborg wrote in 2024, over the past century, the average number of annual fatalities from climate-related disasters has "plummeted by an astounding 98 percent. It is crucial to consider that the world's population quadrupled during that same period."

But real-life data and decades of failed doomsday predictions didn't slow the alarmism. "Earth has 12 years to avert climate change catastrophe, warns U.N. report," CNN reported in 2018.

Based on such claims, progressives in America and around the world pushed a revamp of the world's energy production. In many Western countries, they succeeded. Wind and solar power plants replaced coal and natural-gas power plants. The result has been higher prices for less reliable power.

This decades-long effort has indeed reduced emissions in America and the European Union compared with 1990 levels, the year set in the Kyoto Protocol. But it hasn't stopped a sharp increase in global emissions. In 1990, global emissions were 22.7 billion tons. In 2024, they topped 38 billion tons.

Even so, a group of climate scientists now say the worst-case scenario projections, commonly referred to as RCP 8.5 and often used to justify drastic action regarding energy use, "have become implausible." This lays the groundwork for the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to set aside this projection going forward.

In a different world, those who pushed these doomsday scenarios would face professional consequences.

In this world, they'll claim that this isn't new information.

Leftists frequently talk about trusting "the science." It's time for them to take their own advice.

Stop using implausible scenarios to scare young people and the gullible with claims about global catastrophe due to future global temperature increases.

©2026 Las Vegas Review-Journal. Visit [reviewjournal.com](http://reviewjournal.com). Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

## A leader should exit before fatigue sets in

BY KUMBLE  
SUBBASWAMY

Gov. Andy Beshear's recent public expression of lost confidence in the leadership of the University of Kentucky has put an uncomfortable question on the table: When is it time for a long-serving university president to step down? As someone who spent a decade as chancellor of UMass Amherst, and before that served as provost at the University of Kentucky itself, I have some perspective on this question shaped in part by having navigated it myself.

Let me be clear about what is not in dispute. President Capilouto has been a highly successful leader. Under his tenure, the University of Kentucky has made undeniable progress, and the benefits of strategic continuity and consistency of vision are real. Long-serving presidents bring stability, institutional memory, and the ability to see ambitious plans through to completion. These are not small things.

But there is a reason the average tenure of a university president today is less than six years. The job has become extraordinarily difficult, arguably the toughest leadership position in the country. The expectation of total transparency and meaningful shared governance increasingly collides with the demands of running what is, in effect, a quasi-corporate

mega-institution. Personnel decisions, real estate transactions, the now fully professional business of college athletics, the competitive enterprise of healthcare all require speed and confidentiality that sit uneasily alongside the democratic traditions of the academy. Striking the right balance is exhausting work, and it gets harder the longer you do it.

I know this because I lived it. Let me confess something that few sitting presidents can say publicly: the pesky investigative reporters, the querulous union officials, the overbearing shared-governance bodies, and the noseey citizens who filed what felt like endless Freedom of Information Act requests were the bane of my existence. They consumed enormous amounts of my team's time and slowed us down. And yet, those very checks kept me and my colleagues from taking well-intentioned but questionable shortcuts and circumventing longstanding rules and conventions that would have eroded the community's trust in our administration. During the latter part of my tenure I delegated more and more to trusted lieutenants, and I had to ensure that everyone operated with an unflinching commitment to transparency and integrity. Those guardrails were not obstacles to good leadership; they

were conditions of it.

The lack of transparency that Governor Beshear and others have complained about at UK is a warning sign I recognize. Over time, the constant presumption of malfeasance wears a leader down. The temptation to seek expedient solutions, to skip the consultation, to withhold the document, to treat oversight as an obstacle rather than a safeguard grows stronger with each passing year. It is not a moral failing; it is a natural consequence of fatigue. But it is dangerous, because once trust between an administration and its stakeholders begins to erode, it is very hard to rebuild.

The psychology of staying too long is also worth understanding. A successful president may genuinely worry that departure will cost the institution its momentum. Team members who have grown comfortable under the current arrangement may reinforce that concern. The Board, reluctant to undertake the uncertainty of a national search, may encourage continuity. And if the leader is near or past traditional retirement age, there can be a quiet reluctance to relinquish the authority and identity the position provides, especially if no serious life beyond the presidency has been cultivated.

What matters now is how this chapter ends. There has already

been speculation about the governor's power to force a leadership change, and Kentuckians need only recall the less-than-gracious exit at the University of Louisville under a previous governor to understand why that path serves no one well—not the university, not the Commonwealth, and not the president's own legacy.

The greatest service a successful long-serving president can perform is to begin planning a succession from a position of strength, on their own terms, rather than waiting until external forces make the decision for them. That is not an admission of failure. It is the final act of good leadership—ensuring that the institution one has built up can continue to thrive under new stewardship, with fresh eyes and renewed energy. The best leaders are remembered not for how long they stayed, but for how well the institution flourished after they left.

Kumble Subbaswamy, Ph.D., a Lexington resident, is a former provost at UK, and former chancellor of the University of Massachusetts. He is currently senior advisor to Stand Together for Higher Ed ([standtogetherhighered.org](http://standtogetherhighered.org)), a national organization of higher education faculty and staff.

©2026 Lexington Herald-Leader. Visit [kentucky.com](http://kentucky.com). Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

## ICE detentions should not be profit center for state's jails

BY KYLE ELLISON

In 1860, Dr. William Sneed, who had been the chief surgeon at Kentucky's penitentiary, warned of any "effort to make the inmates a source of revenue for the State."

Flash forward 166 years to a story in the Louisville Courier-Journal reporting that eight Kentucky county jails were holding 1,100 immigrants on behalf of the federal Department of Homeland Security and ICE. For this service, the jails in Boone, Campbell, Christian, Daviess, Grayson, Hopkins, Kenton and Oldham counties receive payments of as much as \$88 per day for each federal prisoner.

Let's do the math. At the \$88 a day rate, those eight counties could pull in over \$35 million dollars a year. No wonder more immigrants are detained in Kentucky than in any state on its borders.

These eight jails are among the largest and newest of Kentucky's 74 county jails. They were designed and built to hold prisoners from outside the county. Big jails require more staff and higher bond payments, so counties have incentive to bus in high-profit federal prisoners from out-of-state.

These jails don't serve local demand. Sixty percent of the total 4,300 prisoners in these jails are federal or state prisoners. The prisoners are there because they

bring income.

Meanwhile, county jails are run with little oversight or regulation. Six of the eight jails are overcrowded. There's no penalty for running an overcrowded jail, so the more prisoners the better.

Consider the Grayson County jail. That jail has 563 federal inmates in a 536-bed jail. (One hundred and fifty of those federal inmates are immigrants on hold by ICE.) Including local and state prisoners, Grayson was operating at 124% of capacity at the end of April.

This isn't an unusual occurrence. It was, in a way, the plan from the beginning. The Grayson County jail was designed and built to pay for itself by holding prisoners from other agencies. Only 66 of a total 665 prisoners there at the end of April were held on county charges. Many of the prisoners have been held there for months.

It is a system without much meaningful oversight. None of our county jails, except Louisville Metro jail, issue any kind of annual report. Without news media or others filing requests under the state open records law and citizens who talk with inquiring reporters, we would know nothing of what happens inside these walls. "Out-of-sight-out-of-mind" is standard operating procedure.

This is not just an issue with county jails holding ICE detainees. Forty-five of our 74 county jails are overcrowded.

For many years Kentucky Department of Corrections Jail Inspectors have cited them for overcrowding, but the citations had few consequences.

Thirty-five% of people serving state felony time are housed in lower cost county jails instead of a state prison. This is a grossly inhumane practice because jails were never intended for long term confinement. Jails have limited rehabilitation programs. The Grayson County jail was built with no secure outdoor area, so prisoners are never allowed outside. These jails generally lack the minimal living space options to protect sick, weak, mentally ill or non-criminal prisoners from exploitation.

Is it any surprise that 268 people have died in county jails since 2019?

The practice of building county jails as money-making propositions has created an outsized population of inmates in Kentucky. There are 20,000 people in 74 county jails and half those beds are "rented out" to state or federal agencies. Three thousand federal prisoners (including 1,100 immigrants) and 7,000 state prisoners are in county jails along with 10,000 prisoners facing county charges. Sixty thousand people are on state probation or parole. If all these people were in one place, it would be Kentucky's third largest city.

Only five states have higher percentages of incarcerated citizens than

Kentucky, according to 2024 figures.

We don't need more county jails and we don't need more tough-on-crime bills coming out of the legislature. Kentucky's crime rates have fallen for the past five years and are lower than the national average.

Still the bills and the jails keep coming. An army of vested interests drives legislators to pass more "tough-on-crime" sentencing laws (such as the "Safer Kentucky Act" of 2024) without providing additional funding for humane living conditions, treatment programs or staffing.

Kentucky quickly forgot what Dr. Sneed knew so many years ago when he opposed leasing inmates to private entities for their labor. It is immoral to run jails and prisons as profit and loss businesses. Blood should not be turned into money.

Kyle Ellison has followed incarceration issues since 1972 when he became a Kentucky Department of Corrections probation and parole officer in Louisville. He worked for the Department of Corrections for 16 years. Seven of those years were as a training officer for prison and jail staff all over the state, giving him the chance to research the prison history of Kentucky.

This commentary was originally published by the Kentucky Lantern, a nonprofit news site covering state government and politics, at [kentuckylantern.com](http://kentuckylantern.com).