

GOVERNOR

THE ISSUES

CANDIDATES WERE ASKED TO ANSWER EACH QUESTION IN 45 WORDS OR FEWER

STEVE BESHEAR

Party: Democrat
Born: Sept. 21, 1944
Residence: Clark County
Occupation: Governor, attorney
Web site: Stevebeshear.com



GATEWOOD GALBRAITH

Party: Independent
Born: Jan. 23, 1947
Residence: Lexington
Occupation: Criminal defense attorney
Web site: Gatewood.com



DAVID WILLIAMS

Party: Republican
Born: May 28, 1953
Residence: Burkesville
Occupation: Attorney
Web site: Williamsfarmer.com



NEW DIRECTION

You've held or campaigned for elected office for many years. Why should voters consider you a new direction for Kentucky?

Voters are tired of the obstructionist, divisive politics of Washington, D.C. In Kentucky, I've brought both sides together to balance our budget nine times, reform our pension system and overhaul our economic incentives to attract and retain jobs for Kentucky.

We are non-partisan and don't care who gets the credit for doing what is right for Kentucky. Neither party can produce a candidate who can disengage from the partisan gridlock and work with the "other side." We can work with both parties.

I actually have a plan to make Kentucky the best state for job creation. Beshear has no plan and no agenda. Someone has to step up and tackle the unemployment crisis we face. I am prepared to do that.

ABORTION

Should doctors be required to show a pregnant woman her ultrasound before performing an abortion?

Since this bill is different every year, I would need to see the bill before making a decision. However, when a woman considers the difficult decision of whether or not to have an abortion, this decision should be between her, her physician and her God.

No.

Yes, and I have fought for that legislation. I am 100 percent pro-life and proud to be endorsed by Kentucky Right to Life. Beshear is proudly pro-choice. There's a clear difference here on abortion issues.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

What chief responsibility would you give to your lieutenant governor?

As a former mayor of Kentucky's largest city, Jerry Abramson has a proven record of success in economic development, job creation, infrastructure investment and working with local officials. I want him to use those skills to translate that same success statewide.

Unlike past tickets, Dea Riley will be a working lieutenant governor whose chief project is economic development, for which she is well trained and experienced. She understands economics and a "return on investment" strategy which should pay dividends for Kentucky.

Richie Farmer is running the most successful economic development program in state government. Kentucky Proud has taken a relatively small investment and turned it into millions in retail sales for farmers. Richie is a great asset for marketing Kentucky.

GAMBLING

Should Kentuckians be given the opportunity to vote for or against expanded gambling?

I remain committed to giving our signature industry, which employs 100,000 Kentuckians, the resources it needs to compete. I am open to taking this to a vote of the people or passing legislation in the General Assembly to bring expanded gaming to our racetracks.

Yes. The Kentucky Constitution must be satisfied by a referendum on the matter. Our Constitution is the blueprint for the operation of our government and, as usual, it lets the people decide.

I do not personally support expanding gambling, but if it is to be expanded it should only be by a vote of the people. Governor Beshear demonized me on this issue but failed to propose anything that could pass his own party, let alone mine.

DRUGS

To fight meth, some have proposed requiring a prescription to purchase cold medicine that contains pseudoephedrine. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

Stopping methamphetamine production is a critical goal; however, I am concerned about requiring a doctor's visit and a prescription just to get a common cold remedy. Whatever measures we take must be fair to the majority of law-abiding Kentuckians who use this medication.

I support this proposal. I am a criminal defense attorney and have seen first-hand the dangers of the meth trade. With other cold medicines available, I do not consider policing this substance as an unreasonable intrusion by the government.

I voted for this in the past and would likely do so in the future. I do believe there are other possible solutions, such as a meth offender registry, that could be of use. We need to do something about this scourge on our society.

TEACHERS

Should individual teachers be rewarded or penalized if their students consistently perform better or worse than average on standardized tests?

Grading teachers simply based on student testing isn't fair. However, teachers should receive extra pay for extra work — taking on leadership positions in their school or helping other teachers. In addition, if a teacher is ineffective they should be removed from the classroom.

We support rewards, but penalties must be viewed with extreme caution.

I think teachers who go above and beyond the call of duty to help students achieve their full potential should be rewarded. Teachers unions hate this idea, and Steve Beshear would never allow it to pass because of that.

COAL

Do you support or oppose the federal government's recent, more aggressive restrictions on mountaintop-removal coal mining?

Mountaintop removal is an exception to the rule that land must be returned to its approximate original contour. If we faithfully enforce those laws we will be able to protect our environment, including our water resources, while still making economic progress.

Dea and I are against mountaintop removal as too extreme a method of coal extraction. We support coal but not that method of mining.

I strongly oppose Barack Obama's war on coal. Steve Beshear has endorsed Obama for president — twice — and has not approved a surface mining permit in four years. I would be a strong pro-coal governor.

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Do you support or oppose allowing charter schools in Kentucky?

I am in favor of some type of legislation that will make charter schools a tool for our school districts to use if they think it will help.

We support charter schools in Kentucky. What have we got to lose?

I support the use of voluntary charter schools to give local parents and teachers more tools to help students where the other options have failed. I am passionate about education, and it would be a top priority for me as governor.

PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Do you support or oppose requiring face-to-face interviews for all people applying for public assistance, including the Medicaid program?

My administration has numerous tools to fight fraud in the Medicaid program. However, I believe face-to-face interviews can serve as a barrier to Kentuckians getting needed assistance, especially in the Kentucky Children's Health Insurance Program.

We support such interviews. The era of unsubstantiated entitlements is over.

Strongly support. It would reduce fraud and save taxpayer dollars.

DROPOUT AGE

Do you support or oppose increasing the school dropout age from 16 to 18?

Support. Led by first lady Jane Beshear, my administration has proposed legislation to raise the dropout age, but it has been repeatedly opposed by my opponent. We will continue to fight for this important measure.

We oppose such a rule. What we don't need are dissatisfied 16- and 17-year-olds hanging around a school where they don't want to be. Let's interest them with our Commonwealth Incentive, which should entice them to want to stay. See Gatewood.com.

I oppose this because it does nothing to address the real issue — early intervention. We aren't losing kids at 16; we are losing them at 6, 7 and 8 when they fall behind in reading and math skills.

PAYDAY LOANS

Seventeen states have capped payday loan interest rates at a 36 percent annualized rate. Will you advocate for or against this proposal in Kentucky?

My administration implemented a database to help limit the use of payday loans. I also support a 36 percent cap.

We support such a cap of 36 percent on payday loans.

Kentucky already restricts people to two payday loans totaling no more than \$500, and we recently passed a tracking system to ensure people aren't getting more than the law allows. The current law is sufficient, and we should give the database a chance to work.

TAXES

Will overhauling Kentucky's system of taxing individuals and businesses be a top priority for you as governor?

I do not favor any broad-base tax increases on families or businesses at this time. Our economy is fragile as we begin to emerge from the recession. I will not threaten the survival and recovery of our businesses or burden our struggling families.

Yes! It must be done. The present system is unsustainable. A "consumption" tax on goods and services is called for with food and medicine exempted. We believe we can eliminate our state income tax. We should strive to keep it at 6 percent or below.

Yes, and my tax reform plan will make Kentucky the best place for job creation. Steve Beshear has no plan despite the crushing unemployment we've endured on his watch. Unemployment has nearly doubled since he became governor. Unacceptable.

ETHICS

State law prevents lobbyists from donating to legislative candidates but not candidates for other state offices. Is it appropriate for candidates for governor to accept campaign contributions from lobbyists?

I pledged to restore honesty and integrity to the governor's office, and have done just that, implementing the toughest ethics code in the nation. I am open to ideas to make our system more open, ethical and transparent.

No!

I've proposed eliminating lobbyist contributions in all statewide elections. It isn't fair that candidates are competing with different campaign finance rules, and statewide candidates can do without the lobbyist contributions. Gov. Beshear has taken lobbyist contributions, but I wouldn't if elected governor.

PENSIONS

National banks and credit agencies say Kentucky's state pension system is one of the worst funded, with many billions of dollars in liabilities despite some past reform attempts. What specific actions will you take to fix this?

A 2008 special session addressed these critical issues, reforming employee benefits, improving system governance and creating a payment schedule for getting our systems' funding back on track. If we stick to that schedule, our system will be on solid footing once again.

Assemble an accurate picture of Kentucky's financial situation, which is in flux. Change from a defined-benefit to a defined-contribution package to help stem the bleeding. Make the legislators fund their own pensions. Stop corruption and put the savings into the program.

I've fought to move future state workers into a 401(k)-style system like you find in the private sector. It would solve our problem in about 20 years. Beshear has no plan for reform. Doing nothing will lead to bankruptcy or crushing tax increases.

CREDENTIALS

Why are you the best candidate to be governor of Kentucky?

I have balanced the budget without broad-based tax increases and protected education, health care and public safety. I have addressed long-term challenges — reforming the pension system and modernizing incentives to create and save over 27,000 jobs. I bring together both sides to make government work.

I am not influenced by special interests or their monetary contributions. I am not beholden to any party dogma or groups who expect special consideration because they gave me money. Our policies will be based on science and truth, not fear, lies and partisanship.

My plan will make Kentucky the best place for job creation. I want to eliminate state income taxes, paid only by honest, hard-working people who don't have the means to move their income out of state. We can do better.