



A Plan to Clean Up Kentucky Government

A note from Andy —

Kentuckians deserve to have confidence in our elected leaders. Working families are worried about affordable health care, public education, and good-paying jobs. Our people should know that Frankfort is working to solve the challenges they're facing—not furthering the self-interests of lobbyists and insiders.

It is easy—and frankly understandable—to be cynical about politics right now. Matt Bevin is depending on this cynicism. The only way he gets re-elected is by making voters so disgusted with the system that they think all elected officials are corrupt and that this is just the way things are: that a mansion at a steep discount from a campaign donor is normal,¹ a taxpayer-funded \$215,000 raise to a friend of the governor is acceptable,² or refusing to release tax returns is ok.³

None of these things should be tolerated. We can and will do better. As attorney general, I've promoted transparency by strongly advocating for open records and meetings. I've also stopped efforts to close the capitol building off to Kentuckians. Jacqueline Coleman⁴ and I⁵ also both released our tax returns to show we have only objective—working for the people of Kentucky.

I want Kentuckians to know that I will be a governor for everyone: Republican, Democrat, Independent, rich, poor, western Kentucky, eastern Kentucky, rural, urban, and everyone in between. I am releasing a comprehensive ethics plan because our people should be able to trust that their government is working for them.

Thanks,

Andy

¹ ["Bevin appoints supporter to commission reviewing mansion deal,"](#) WFPL, 07/14/2017

² ["Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin gave \\$215K raise to an old Army buddy,"](#) Louisville Courier-Journal, 09/12/2018

³ ["Beshear files for governor, urges opponents to release taxes,"](#) Associated Press, 01/15/2019

⁴ ["Jacqueline Coleman's 2018 Tax Returns"](#)

⁵ ["Andy Beshear releases tax returns,"](#) WHAS, 03/04/2019



Here's how the Beshear/Coleman vision to clean up our government will make sure working families always come first:

Terms Limits & Lobbying Reforms: Kentucky needs a new set of reforms to fix its most daunting challenges. Unfortunately, there are just too many insiders and lobbyists in Frankfort working to protect the status quo, instead of helping working families. Frankfort lobbyists dramatically outnumber lawmakers,⁶ so it is no surprise that legislation often favors the well-connected over everyday Kentuckians. Andy Beshear has been fighting to limit the influence of special interests in Frankfort, even personally arguing in front of the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold Kentucky's ban on lobbyists giving gifts to lawmakers.⁷

In order to root out corruption and ensure our public officials serve the interests of working Kentuckians—not the wealthy and connected—we need to enact meaningful reform to bring more voices into our political process and get results for working families.

- **Setting Term Limits:** Kentucky should set term limits for all members of the legislature. This plan proposes term limits of four terms for state representatives and two terms for state senators. Kentucky already has term limits for executive officers, and 84% of Kentuckians support federal term limits.⁸ By expanding term limits to cover legislators, we can start to end the cycle of corruption in Frankfort. Implementing term limits will open up the legislature to a whole new generation of Kentucky leaders and ideas.
- **Lifetime Ban on Lobbying for Legislators:** Too often, a revolving door moves lawmakers and regulators from making and enforcing our laws to working for outside groups that help special interests, at the expense of taxpayers. To stop this practice, there should be a lifetime ban on lobbying for former legislators. Part of the reason why our government does not get results for working Kentuckians is that officials are looking out for themselves and their future careers as highly-paid lobbyists.
- **Strengthening & Increasing Independence of Executive Branch Ethics Commission:** A strong and independent Executive Branch Ethics Commission is a much-needed watchdog against corruption and unethical behavior in Frankfort. Unfortunately, Matt Bevin has weakened the Executive Branch Ethics Commission,⁹ which the Lexington Herald Leader Editorial Board called “a really, really bad idea.”¹⁰ A Beshear/Coleman administration will strengthen and increase the independence of the Executive Branch Ethics Commission by reforming the appointment process so the governor must make at least two of the appointments to the commission based off a list of nominees provided by

⁶ [Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission](#), Accessed 07/11/2019

⁷ [“Appeals Court Upholds Ban On Lobbyists Giving Gifts To Ky. Legislators,”](#) WFPL, 05/31/2019

⁸ [“Voters Overwhelmingly Support Term Limits for Congress,”](#) McLaughlin & Associates, 11/20/2018

⁹ [“Bevin ignores recent Kentucky history at his own peril,”](#) Lexington Herald Leader

¹⁰ [“Bevin ignores recent Kentucky history at his own peril,”](#) Lexington Herald Leader



the attorney general and the state auditor.

- **Disclose When a Public Official is Seeking Private Employment:** While there might not be anything wrong with a public employee looking for work in the private sector, the problem occurs when the public servant takes actions designed to benefit potential private employers during the course of their job search. To help address this, high-level public officials should disclose when they are seeking private employment so taxpayers know if they are taking any actions to benefit their job prospects.
- **Review & Strengthen Lobbyist Gift Bans:** While there are already restrictions in place that prohibit lobbyists from giving gifts to lawmakers,¹¹ these rules should be reviewed for loopholes and strengthened if needed.

Transparency: Too many Kentuckians are working hard but still falling behind. They deserve to know whether their elected officials are working for them—or working the system to enrich themselves. Yet, our current ethics regulations do little to help them answer that question. It's time for reform.

- **Releasing Two Years of Tax Returns:** All candidates for governor and lieutenant governor should release two years of their most recent tax returns so Kentuckians can see how much money candidates earn and where it comes from. They should be filed with the executive branch ethics commission and posted online. Once elected to office, governors and lieutenant governors should release their tax returns annually.
- **Enhancing Personal Disclosure Forms:** All candidates for state office, senior level appointees, and cabinet members should complete the same personal financial disclosure that candidates for federal office—including presidential candidates—complete. That must include disclosure of every business a candidate has a financial interest in, along with every investment and property transaction they have made. By mandating that all candidates and officeholders complete these disclosures, we will learn how they made their money and be able to verify that they are not using their office to enrich themselves. Updates should also be required of candidates and officeholders to cover any additional property sales or personal business deals.

Appointees and Cabinet Officials: Kentuckians work hard. They deserve a fair shake—not more of their hard-earned taxpayer dollars going to reward the well-connected. Unfortunately, the current administration has treated many government appointments as perks for supporters¹² instead of finding the best public servants.¹³ Our government should work for Kentuckians, and

¹¹ [KLEC](#), Accessed 07/11/2019

¹² ["Bevin appoints supporter to commission reviewing mansion deal,"](#) WFPL, 07/14/2017

¹³ ["Kentucky Gov. Matt Bevin gave \\$215K raise to an old Army buddy,"](#) Louisville Courier-Journal, 09/12/2018



we should find the best people possible to ensure that our commonwealth is run efficiently, cost-effectively and delivers real, positive results for Kentuckians.

- **Financial Reporting for Appointees:** Appointees should report outside employment, business activity and new investments while they are serving in the cabinet. In order for the public to be aware of any potentially problematic activities, all appointees must report their business and financial activity to the public to ensure that they are not making decisions to benefit their own bank accounts.
- **Appointee Pay Raise Reform:** Pay raises for cabinet appointees should only be allowed to take effect during the next administration, not for the current officeholder. While thousands of teachers, public safety officers, and other hard-working Kentuckians received no raise, Governor Bevin gave his old friend, Charles Grindle,¹⁴ a massive \$215,000 raise.¹⁵ In order to ensure this never happens again, pay raises for cabinet appointees can only go into effect during the next administration.
- **No Property Transactions or Business Deals Between the Governor and Appointees:** A governor should not buy from or sell property to an appointee. A governor should also not do personal business with an appointee. While governor, the potential conflicts of interest are endless, as Kentucky saw when Governor Bevin bought a mansion from a donor and appointee at a steep discount. Property sales are just another way for people to buy and sell influence in government—and the practice of a governor conducting personal business with an appointee should be prohibited.

Government Business/Contracts: There should be clear accountability when state government awards any contracts. Again, Kentuckians work hard for their money. They deserve to know that every penny is accounted for and that it is being spent efficiently and in a way that actually benefits their families. This should be simple. No more no-bid contracts without a clear explanation for why this is the best possible action for Kentucky taxpayers. Voters should have every assurance that every contract or business deal that the Kentucky government enters into is fully above board, accountable and transparent.

- **No Taxpayer-Funded Contracts Or Tax Credits to Businesses Run By Kentucky's Governor or Executive Employees:** Any company in which the governor or executive employees have a financial interest should not be eligible for taxpayer-funded government contracts or tax credits. It is unfair to small business owners and working families that well-connected companies and individuals receive the funding and the

¹⁴ ["How Gov. Bevin gave one employee a \\$215K raise: What you should know,"](#) Louisville Courier-Journal, 08/29/2018

¹⁵ ["Gov. Bevin gave one state employee a big raise,"](#) Lexington Herald-Leader, 09/07/2018



associated tax breaks.

- **Waiting Period for Organizations Run By Former Cabinet Officials:** There should be a waiting period for organizations formed or run by recent cabinet officials before they can receive government contracts and grants. The Bevin administration has used taxpayer-funded contracts to directly help out current and former cabinet members. As an example, the Bevin administration supports giving a \$8.5 million no-bid contract¹⁶ to an organization run by a Bevin administration official who is already receiving a taxpayer-funded salary.¹⁷
- **Increased Transparency for No-Bid Contracts:** There should be increased transparency and public information when government officials select a no-bid contract. While there are already certain rules in place that govern no-bid contracts, Kentuckians deserve additional information as to why a no-bid contract should be awarded. All no-bid contracts that are awarded should be made publicly available online in a specific place solely for no-bid contracts.¹⁸

¹⁶ ["Ky. lawmakers balk at plan to hand \\$8.5 million to nonprofit created by state officials,"](#) WDRB, 06/12/2019

¹⁷ ["Kentucky pays state money to nonprofit led by state official despite lawmakers' concerns,"](#) WDRB, 07/09/2019

¹⁸ ["Ky. lawmakers balk at plan to hand \\$8.5 million to nonprofit created by state officials,"](#) WDRB, 06/12/2019