

## GLI 2019 Statewide Candidate Survey

### Matt Bevin for Governor

**1. What is your strategy for attracting new businesses and jobs to regions like Greater Louisville and encouraging current Kentucky businesses to grow and expand?**

When I ran for this office in 2015, I published a Blueprint for Kentucky with seven specific priorities: (1) Enacting Pro-Business Right-to-Work Legislation, (2) Modernizing Kentucky's Tax Code, (3) Resolving our Pension Crisis, (4) Reforming Kentucky Government, (5) Modernizing Kentucky's Education System, (6) Improving Kentucky Healthcare, and (7) Fighting Federal Government Overreach. While each of these seven priorities are distinct issues, there is one common thread amongst all of them – improving in each of these areas will lead to creating a business-friendly environment that will, in turn, create jobs.

Our Administration's job creation plan is working. Government is operating more efficiently with much lower budgets. We have repealed or simplified more than 1,300 job-killing regulations. We invested \$100 million in job training that leveraged over \$121 million in additional local investments. We invested record amounts in education with SEEK funding at an all-time high and our Work Ready Scholarship program providing job-relevant education for any Kentuckian who lacks a degree. Since my inauguration, we have announced more than 1,200 new or expanded facilities and announced investments of over \$21 billion. We have reported over \$111 billion in exports of Kentucky goods. Results matter! Today, our economic development efforts, coupled with the policies noted above, have resulted in over 55,800 new jobs created and Kentucky's unemployment rate at historic lows.

**2. What is your plan for addressing Kentucky's public pension crisis?**

As I have often said, Kentucky has a moral and legal obligation to honor the commitment made to teachers and other state employees. The longer we go without fully addressing the issues, the more costly the problem will be to solve. It is important to note, that since my first year in office, I have been the most transparent political leader with Kentuckians regarding the magnitude of the pension problem, the structural issues that must be addressed, and have proposed the most comprehensive fixes for those problems. Unfortunately, we have been unable to fully get agreement in the General Assembly as to the best course of action. I am confident in our second term, the magnitude of the problem will require all policymakers to arrive at the consensus we need. We cannot continue to offer future employees the same defined benefit plan that current and past employees were promised.

**3. What is your vision for comprehensive tax reform in Kentucky?**

I agree with business leaders that tax reform must be a top priority. That is why tax modernization was one of my original seven points in the 'Blueprint for a Better Kentucky.'

As a person with an extensive business career, I understand the critical importance of enacting tax reform that makes us more competitive with our neighboring states. I have pushed for that and we have certainly made progress. The Tax Foundation has improved our ranking by 16 spots when compared to other states, but we have more we must do in this area. I am committed to pushing for additional reforms to make us even more attractive to job creators.

**4. Would you support a constitutional amendment allowing local governments to levy a sales tax?**

Local tax reform must be on the table as we discuss the fairest and most competitive tax code for our Commonwealth. In order to fund pension promises and invest in necessary infrastructure at the local level, the General Assembly must provide options for local governments that are more business-friendly. Constitutional Amendments are the purview of the General Assembly and Kentucky citizens. Constitutional Amendments do not come to the governor for approval. I will support local tax reform that makes our Commonwealth more attractive for job growth and investment.

**5. Do you support or oppose expanded gaming in the Commonwealth, including sports betting and casino gaming?**

The most effective way to create revenue for the Commonwealth is through pro-business tax reform that incentivizes investment and job growth and getting rid of job-killing red tape and overly-burdensome regulations. As governor, I have maintained my focus in these areas and will continue to focus on these efforts. While some short-term revenue could be gained from gambling, much of the benefit will be lost due to the social and regulatory costs that accompany this expansion. Long-term benefits for the business community are better achieved through good tax and regulatory policy.

**6. Do you support an increase to the state gas to provide more funding for infrastructure projects?**

This is an area where I have taken a position of bold leadership. It is never popular to advocate for additional user fees, but we must face reality with regard to our transportation infrastructure. I support taking bold actions to ensure we have the revenue necessary because transportation infrastructure is critical for economic development and supporting my vision for Kentucky to become the manufacturing and engineering center of excellence in the United States. Increasing road funding is necessary and I am confident Kentuckians will see a return on that investment. We just undertook our "Bridging Kentucky" initiative. We will repair over 1,000 of our bridges which fell into disrepair under my predecessors. Improvements in our infrastructure will continue to increase our economic momentum where we have had record investment into Kentucky and record job creation.

**7. As Governor, would you seek to preserve or end the Medicaid expansion in Kentucky?**

I proposed and was granted federal approval for Kentucky HEALTH, the most innovative state health care waiver, designed to offer each Medicaid beneficiary the ability to customize a path based on individual needs that will lead to better health, engagement in their communities, improved employability, and success through long-term independence.

The program gets its name from its mission. The word HEALTH stands for “Helping to Engage and Achieve Long Term Health.”

The goal of the program is to:

- Address the needs of the whole person to help improve beneficiary health and well-being.
- Help beneficiaries be more active and informed about healthcare and how to use it.
- Connect beneficiaries to employment and training services using programs, resources, and tools that are already available in our communities.
- Be more cost-effective and accountable.
- Provide beneficiaries new skills to transition them successfully to commercial health insurance.
- Save an initial estimated \$2 billion in state and federal taxpayer dollars over the demonstration, according to initial estimates.
- Help make the Medicaid program affordable for the Commonwealth to maintain, even with the economic issues facing Kentucky.

**8. What steps would your administration take to improve Kentucky’s legal liability climate for employers?**

Unlike my opponent, I have boldly acknowledged that Kentucky is in dire need of legal reforms to help prevent frivolous and costly lawsuits from stifling innovation and business investment. I strongly support a Constitutional Amendment that creates reasonable limits to non-economic damages and reasonable reforms to limit the abuse that has made Kentucky a target of unscrupulous lawyers that prey on the desperation of some citizens. Our system must be fair to both sides and based on actual damages rather than a jackpot justice system based outside of reality.

**9. What steps would you take as Governor to improve education, including early childhood, K-12, and higher-education?**

Despite the false and misleading rhetoric of my opponent, I have a proven record of supporting education and investing in students and teachers. We currently have the highest per-pupil spending in K-12 in Kentucky’s history. Our investment of \$100 million brought an additional \$121 million investment in workforce training. There has been a 158 percent increase in dual credit, where students in high school are earning college-level credits. We have made more than 350 training programs available to Kentuckians tuition-free to help increase the skills of our workforce. While accomplishing this, we have ensured 100 percent of lottery funds are dedicated to education and have fully-funding teachers’ pensions for the first time in history.

**10. What strategies would you pursue to close skills gaps in Kentucky and increase the Commonwealth’s workforce participation rate?**

The strategies outlined above – tax reform, less regulation, greater investment in education and workforce investment – are working! August, 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor statistics show that Kentucky has its LARGEST labor force EVER with 2,071,392 in the labor force. In 2019 alone, Kentucky has added nearly 8,000 to our labor force.



**11. What do you view as a solution to Kentucky's rising incarceration rates and corrections costs?**

I have been a strong advocate of sensible reforms to our criminal justice system that will maintain public safety, but also provide work opportunities and second chances that will allow people who have made mistakes a path to productivity and self-reliance. I have led the way with reforms in state government by banning the box, signed expungement legislation and have personally been recognized nationally for our efforts in shepherding these reform efforts.

