

LT COLONEL (RET)

AMY McGRATH

C O N G R E S S



ENDING *Either/Or*

**AMY McGRATH'S PLAN
TO MOVE THE CENTRAL KENTUCKY ECONOMY FORWARD**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Today's political polarization, both here in Kentucky and in Washington, DC, is doing nothing to help Central Kentuckians. We need to get past the "either/or" mentality of Democrat-vs.-Republican in our politics – but we also need to avoid thinking in either/or terms when it comes to choices about our economy, our communities, and our way of life. These aren't a matter of urban vs. rural, Lexington vs. everyone else, new industries vs. old, white collar vs. manufacturing, or technology vs. tradition. We can, in fact, have both progress and preservation; develop new industries while retaining our history, culture and way of life; pursue metro and rural development without having to leave one behind in order to push another forward; and recognize the need for an active federal government – but one that invests in our communities and not just others.

We need a strategy that will combine the resources and strengths that our region already has with the technological investments to build a New Economy in which everyone can participate, whether in Lexington or anywhere else in Central Kentucky.

For example, hemp was Kentucky's first cash crop, before tobacco. But cutting-edge science and technological advances are developing all sorts of new uses for the plant, like plastics for car paneling and interiors. This makes Central Kentucky uniquely positioned to capitalize on these markets: We already have the second-highest acreage of hemp production in the country. We also have strong manufacturing and logistics industries – particularly in the automobile sector. And we have one of the premier research universities in the country to help discover and develop advanced uses. Bring all these together – agriculture, manufacturing, and technology – and you help all three.

In short, there doesn't need to be a trade-off between retaining the heritage of our past and embracing the future – between reviving our old economy and embracing the new one – between our urban center and our suburban and rural areas – there can and should be a synergy between them. We're all in this together – and I intend to bring that kind of thinking to building our economy ... and to our nation's capital, where it's really needed. Here's my plan:

Investing in the New Economy

Central Kentucky is well-positioned to take advantage of all the New Economy has to offer, if we are strategic in coordinating our resources and our strengths. Our established industries – our advanced manufacturing, logistics systems, and strong research universities – combined with our growing technology industry, aerospace research and manufacturing, and aviation – have our region poised for continued growth in which all of our communities will be able to participate and thrive. Lexington's advantages give it the potential to serve as an incubator for the entire region; so far it is succeeding – now we need to make sure all of Central Kentucky shares in the benefits. You shouldn't have to choose either to be in Lexington or outside the economy of the future. My plan makes broadband more accessible across our district, invests in a smarter electricity grid, makes our highways more electric-friendly, expands federal funding for our colleges and universities, improves access to capital for small businesses and promotes entrepreneurship, and supports a bipartisan, commonsense national immigration policy.



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Promoting the Manufacturing Economy

The future doesn't belong exclusively to programming and science jobs in Lexington office towers. Manufacturing jobs have been the backbone of the middle-class economy and should remain so. To ensure that this sector continues to grow and create jobs for Central Kentuckians, we need to leverage the resources we already have with the technologies that will power growth for everyone in our region. My plan leverages the Toyota plant to create spin-off industries in auto manufacturing and supply, and promotes aerospace and aviation, diversifying and integrating our regional economy, and fighting for our largest overlooked industry: our military.

Reviving the Resource Economy

Energy and agriculture have been mainstays of Central Kentucky's economy since our area was first settled. These industries face growing pressures in today's economy, but building industries of the future doesn't have to mean abandoning the industries and communities that have shaped our past. My plan starts with embracing an "all of the above" strategy: We need to repay the sacrifice of generations of people now bearing the brunt of changing global energy markets by investing in coal communities. Meanwhile, producing more solar power through both large-scale farms and smaller rooftop panels will reduce electricity costs. We also need initiatives to create partnerships in biofuel research and bulk up our energy efficiency programs. And we need to approach our food systems economy with the same regional approach. My plan supports small local producers, and diversifies our agriculture with a value-added strategy – promoting distilleries, wineries, our horse industry, and historical and adventure tourism.

Preserving Our Communities and Way of Life While Building the Future

My plan invests in our communities and infrastructure. And it invests in our people through workforce development and job training, improving access to health care through a bipartisan fix to the Affordable Care Act, a real effort to address the opioid crisis, providing the supports like family leave and childcare that families need to enable them to work, raising the minimum wage to reward work, and protecting financial opportunity for veterans and everyday Kentuckians. I will work to make sure that the New Economy and new jobs don't change what we love about Kentucky. I'll work in Congress to protect our communities, our families, our workers, and those who served this country in uniform; after all, when you think about it, that's what I've been doing my entire career.

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We need a strategy that will combine the resources and strengths that our region already has with the technological investments to build a New Economy in which everyone can participate, whether in Lexington or anywhere else in Central Kentucky. I will go to Washington to work across party lines in order to help build the jobs here at home that really matter.

Underlying that is a vision for jobs and the economy that builds on both traditional sources

– such as agriculture – and new ones like technology for economic growth. Instead of debating whether to preserve rural communities and agricultural economies, grow manufacturing jobs, or train everyone for a high-tech future, my plan is based on the conviction that not only can we do all three: We must. We need all these industrial strands in our economy and our communities – just like we need people with a variety of skills and abilities. I couldn't have gotten off the ground or performed any mission without the natural resources that powered my jet aircraft, the workers who manufactured it, the Marines who maintained it or the sophisticated electronics that helped me complete the mission. Our economy won't get or stay off the ground without all these – resource industries, manufacturing, and investments in human capital and high-tech – either.

America didn't become the greatest country in the world with an us-versus-them, either/or mentality: We've always recognized that our strength lies in diversity – E pluribus unum – and we're all in it together.

It's time to get that spirit back.

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In This Together

What does that mean for the economy? I believe it means we can have new growth industries and new jobs without sacrificing our heritage and way of life. We can promote technology, grow manufacturing, and preserve agriculture. It's not either/or. Let me show you just one example of how that can work.

We all know that tobacco has a long history in Kentucky. The U.S. is the leading tobacco-producing country in the world, and Kentucky leads the U.S. in burley, fire-cured, and dark air-cured tobacco production, and is second in total tobacco production. The crop is one of Kentucky's top five agricultural exports.¹ Although total volume of tobacco production in our state saw a surge in 2017,² overall tobacco production in this country has decreased significantly since the 1980s – from nearly 180,000 tobacco-growing farms to only about 10,000 in 2012, with half of those farms in Kentucky.³

Many growers therefore have begun to look for alternative cash crops – and for those willing to transition to another crop, industrial hemp has enormous potential. Hemp naturally thrives in the same environment as tobacco – and, in fact, hemp was actually Kentucky's first cash crop, before tobacco, and for many years our state led the nation in hemp production. Today, Kentucky is already the second-largest supplier in the country; Kentucky farmers planted just 33 acres of hemp in 2014, when the federal government loosened hemp regulation – but that number had grown to 3,200 acres last year.⁴ Meanwhile, Colorado – our biggest competitor – is moving aggressively into growing marijuana. But cultivated marijuana, which is a different variety of the same plant as hemp, risks being accidentally pollinated by hemp plants instead of other marijuana plants, which greatly reduces the potency of the resulting marijuana that is

harvested. That will restrict hemp growing in Colorado and leaves Kentucky positioned to become the national leader in hemp production.

That's good news for our farmers.

But it can be even better than that.

Hemp has always had a wide range of traditional uses, from manufacturing (originally the first choice for paper) to medicinal. But cutting-edge science and technological advances are developing all sorts of new uses for the plant. For years, hemp has been used in plastics manufacturing in Europe for products like car paneling and interiors. This has the potential to be the way of the future in automobile production: Hemp has better strength-to-weight ratios than steel, and is about 30% lighter, which reduces fuel costs for drivers. Plus, it's biodegradable, unlike the 25% of parts left as waste in conventionally manufactured cars. In 2016, hemp's industrial applications counted for nearly one-fifth of national product sales in the United States, bringing in \$125.5 million.

This makes Central Kentucky uniquely positioned to capitalize on these markets: We already have the second-highest acreage of hemp production in the country. We also have strong manufacturing and logistics industries – particularly in the automobile sector. And we have one of the premier research universities in the country to help discover and develop advanced uses. Bring all these together – agriculture, manufacturing, and technology – and you help all three.

In short, there does not need to be a trade-off between retaining the heritage of our past and embracing the future – between reviving our old economy and embracing the new one – between our urban center and our suburban and rural areas – there can and should be a synergy between them. We're all in this together – and I intend

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to bring that kind of thinking to building our economy ... and to our nation's capital, where it's really needed.

Here's my plan for doing that.

Investing in the New Economy

New technologies are creating all sorts of new industries and new opportunities, including most of the fastest-growing and highest-paying jobs in the country. Technological advances also pose challenges to existing jobs and industries.

Central Kentucky is well-positioned to take advantage of all the New Economy has to offer, if we are strategic in coordinating our resources and our strengths. Our established industries – our advanced manufacturing, logistics systems, and strong research universities – combined with our growing technology industry, aerospace research and manufacturing, and aviation – have our region poised for continued growth in which all of our communities will be able to participate and thrive. Our challenge is to make sure they do – and that the benefits of growth and success are widely shared, not just centered in one place or amongst a fortunate few.

Central Kentucky has the opportunity to be a leader in this New Economy – and create more economic growth that will also ripple outward – because of a confluence of assets. Those assets center in Lexington – the University of Kentucky and its business spin-offs, the city's financial institutions and law firms, and the resulting wealth for investment – but can and should extend outward to the entire region. The New Economy starts in the city; we need to make sure it doesn't end there. Lexington's advantages give it the potential to serve as an incubator for the entire region; so far it is succeeding – now we need to make sure all of Central Kentucky shares in the benefits. You shouldn't have to choose either to be in Lexington – or outside the economy of the future.

1. Tech investments will improve quality of life, attract businesses and tourism, and lower costs.

While Lexington provides the amenities and quality of life we have come to expect from metropolitan areas, many communities in Central Kentucky have yet to fully transition to the 21st century technologies that enrich the lives and broaden the economic opportunities of their residents. Technological investments throughout the district can connect more communities to the New Economy without diminishing what makes them unique.

Making Broadband More Accessible

Such investment starts with the internet. But our state has some of the lowest connectivity rates in the country. Rural Kentucky consistently ranks poorly nationally for connectivity, and 16% of residents have no access to broadband internet service.⁵ While this is better than the national average – up to a quarter of Americans live without a broadband connection – this lack of high speed internet or, in many cases, any internet at all, has left many in the state's rural areas with increased barriers to economic development and higher quality of life.⁶

Kentucky Wired was launched to remove these barriers; the middle mile infrastructure project headed by former Governor Steve Beshear and Representative Hal Rogers aims to create six regional rings of connectivity to reach all 120 counties in the state, with the first ring scheduled to be operational this fall and the full system being completed by the end of 2020. Aside from increased connectivity, economic opportunity, and quality of life for newly connected areas, there are several benefits to Kentucky Wired's middle mile strategy. Private companies will be more likely to invest in the final mile now that the middle mile will be there; they now have new access to an existing market, with the most expensive infrastructure investment taken care

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of by the state. And for consumers, the project provides for open access, and thus better service.

Despite roadblocks in the execution of this project, Kentucky Wired will bring unprecedented middle mile infrastructure to every corner of the state – but we need to make sure that our region is next in line for construction and to accelerate this project. Only the Golden Triangle region of our district will be covered by the initial ring, so to ensure that everyone in Central Kentucky has timely access to this new network and the opportunities that accompany it – no matter which side of I-75 they live on – I will work with Representative Rogers to prioritize our region and connect Eastern Kentucky and Central Kentucky to each other. I want to make sure Kentucky Wired connects all of Kentucky to the New Economy as soon as possible.

Making the Electricity Grid Smarter

The next step beyond expanding broadband is developing a smart grid. The electricity grid is the backbone of our economy, our national security, and our way of life. Our grid is aging rapidly and if we do not improve it, it will become more vulnerable to disruption from not only power outages, but also terrorists and hackers. Building a secure and resilient grid is a must to counter

the threats of the future and to power our nation. To have the reliable electricity, broadband, and security we need to compete in the 21st century, we need to improve our grid infrastructure.

Improving access to smart metering – the collection of data on electricity consumption allowing more efficient monitoring and usage for both consumers and utilities – and other efficiency enhancements reduces costs for consumers and enhances renewable energy integration throughout the grid. Kentucky has begun to make progress developing and integrating more efficient energy distribution, but we still have a way to go. To facilitate grid improvements in our district, I will work to secure more funding for smart grid development through:

- Renewing funding for the Renewable and Distributed Systems Integration Program;⁷
- Modernizing regulation to foster investment in dynamic, demand-response pricing, which is more cost effective for consumers;⁸ and
- Creating new public-private partnerships to drive regional and local smart infrastructure investments.

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The electricity industry and its consumers cannot make the investments our grid needs without the help of the federal government.⁹ Programs like the Smart Grid Investment Grant and its successor, the Grid Modernization Initiative, have started the necessary work of improving our grid nationwide, but we need to do more. I will work in Congress for a federal program to completely modernize our nation's electricity grid.



Making Our Highways More Electric-Friendly

In yet another example of how the high-tech and the traditional inter-relate, everything we just discussed about modernizing our internet and electricity infrastructure is equally true of our traditional transportation infrastructure, and all of these increasingly will be interconnected: Self-driving vehicles and drones will need highways and roads they can transmit information to and from, and we need to make sure the highway systems are secure and reliable as they become literally more technology-driven. We can do much more to improve energy efficiency – and support Kentucky's coal communities – by building up our infrastructure to support electric vehicles. And we need to create the infrastructure to make these vehicles – and their accompanying lower fuel costs – more accessible and convenient to Kentucky and interstate drivers. Additionally, to maintain our position as a regional and national logistics hub, we need the foresight to ensure that our interstate highways can support logistics

operations that are themselves increasingly moving to electric power.

We need to start by ensuring that electric charging stations are accessible throughout the district. As an added benefit of these stations, charging up in Kentucky towns will deliver dollars locally as we power electric vehicles with Kentucky-based coal and solar energy. I will work for this in Congress by:

- Exploring opportunities to coordinate the procurement of electric vehicle supply equipment across federal, state and local agencies;
- Working with state and federal regulators to promote access to charging stations, like California's EV Charging Stations Open Access Act, which requires charging stations to be equally accessible to everyone regardless of membership and to accept credit card payments; and
- Creating and promoting all necessary legislation and regulations to enable the commercial sale of electric vehicle charging as transportation fuel so that it doesn't face disadvantages compared to traditional transportation fuels.

To solidify our continued status as a logistics hub as technology advances in this sector, I will spearhead an "electric highway" initiative through the district along the I-64 and I-75 corridors to improve intercity transportation for electric vehicle drivers. To develop this network here in Kentucky and the greater eastern corridor, I will:

- Collaborate with officials in Cincinnati, Louisville, and Northern Kentucky to improve regional electric vehicle supply equipment availability;
- Work with both state and federal legislators to create financial incentives like tax credits and grants for the construction of public charging stations;
- Work with commercial facility operators and retailers to highlight the business case for

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convenient access to electric vehicle parking and charging station access;¹⁰ and

- Maximize federal funding for these projects through the federal Clean Cities initiative, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration's joint Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement Program, and the EPA.

2. Expanding federal funding of colleges and universities will create jobs and strengthen our communities.

The technologies fueling our New Economy – our startups, our energy resources, our jobs – begin at our research universities. Simply put, federal research investments spur industry growth – just look to the iPhone and Tesla batteries, both of which received enormous support in the early stages of their development.

The University of Kentucky has developed many of these technologies – like Mosquito Mate, an innovative pest control solution with the potential to provide significant control of diseases like Zika and Dengue.¹¹ Its researchers have been the first in the United States to extract high-grade, rare earth metals – used in components for smart phones, computers, and even missiles – from coal, an industry currently only operating on a large

scale in China.¹² Multiply these developments by the amount of research constantly beginning and continuing at all of our district's universities and colleges, and we have the potential to drive growth, create jobs, and develop entirely new industries for our state and our country. For instance, Berea College has long been a leader in solar energy research and implementation. To accomplish all this and make life better for all Kentuckians, we need investments in research at the federal level.

The University of Kentucky is highly dependent on federal funding from several sources. It receives this support for good reason, too: The University's NIH-based Centers of Biomedical Research Excellence¹³ support aging, cancer, and translational science research. In addition to funding from the National Institutes of Health, the University receives support from several agencies including the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Science Foundation to support research on cardiovascular diseases, stroke, diabetes, obesity, and substance abuse – all national public health problems that are particularly acute in Kentucky.¹⁴ Eastern Kentucky University and Berea College are also reliant on federal money for research and financial aid for their students, including through Pell Grants.

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Thriving colleges can attract more students to the area, employ more local people, and use more local suppliers for their facilities – creating thriving communities. To keep our colleges and universities healthy and to help them grow, I will work in Congress to drive greater and more consistent investment in research to our district by:

- Supporting an increase in NASA funding. Kentucky universities receive less in research and development funding from NASA than universities in Ohio and Indiana, despite our region's unique leadership positioning in the exo-medicine and aerospace industries;¹⁵
- Working to better leverage our state's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research (EPSCoR) funding for aviation and aerospace research;
- Creating research partnerships with the private sector, like for the University of Kentucky and Lockheed Martin, the largest private R&D-conducting firm in aerospace and aviation – and largest winner of DoD contracts – in the state, which happens to be based in Lexington;
- Supporting continued funding for Department of Energy grants, which provided \$7 million for the University of Kentucky's rare earth elements and can be used to drive research for renewable energy; and¹⁶
- Helping Kentucky-based startups get in front of the right people in federal agencies. In today's economy, you don't need to be SpaceX to develop innovative and disruptive technologies, and that is what our district's startups are doing today. That's why a wider range of federal agencies need to be aware of, and promote, the space business exo-medicine research taking off in Lexington – not just NASA, but also the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, and the Department of Defense – so that Central

Kentucky can compete on a level playing field with more well-known and better-funded regions.

In addition to these strategies, we need to reverse or improve the recent GOP tax bill, which harms higher education in our state and our nation, all to give a tax cut to a few billionaires like President Donald Trump and those contributing to our Congressman, Andy Barr. The grants and contracts awarded by the National Institutes of Health in Fiscal Year 2016 directly supported 2,886 jobs and \$431.6 million in economic activity in Kentucky.¹⁷ This translates to almost 13 jobs created for every \$1 million in NIH funding. While President Trump's skinny budget and its proposed cuts to federal research funding were only



the first step in his attempts to slash domestic investment, any funding cuts to NIH or other major research supporters would have an adverse effect on the University of Kentucky's health and Central Kentucky's economy.¹⁸ I will work in Congress for more centrist tax and spending priorities – shifting tax cuts from Trump's and Barr's billionaire friends to the working Kentuckians who deserve them, and creating investment in the job-creating institutions and companies in our district that need them.

3. Improving access to capital and cultivating our entrepreneurial ecosystem will grow our small businesses.

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To grow Central Kentucky's economy and support our businesses, we need diverse business development strategies. Again, this is not either/or:

- Attracting new business boosts our industries' economic impact.
- But most sustainable job growth comes from growing local, small businesses.

To create well-paying, long-term jobs for Kentuckians, we can't just depend on landing the next Toyota plant. We need to foster an environment that is conducive to entrepreneurship, whether the new business is a tech startup in the city or a new family-owned restaurant on Main Street.

Improving Capital Access

Our state should do all it can to boost and support our entrepreneurs, but the federal government has a role in, and benefits from, our state's economic expansion as well, and we must ensure that they are holding up their side of the deal. The Kentucky Capital Access Program (KYCAP), now funded solely by our state, should be receiving federal funding and support, along with its auxiliary loan participation and collateral support programs.

- I will push for renewed funding for the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), which had previously been funding the KYCAP until its expiration in September of 2017. This one-time program pumped millions into Kentucky's economy to support and grow our entrepreneurs and small businesses. While it is our state's responsibility to leverage these funds and maximize their reach, the federal government's role in this program is vital and should be extended.
- Additionally, funding for the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) program – which

supports small businesses that show the potential to be competitive in technology commercialization through federal seed funding – should be reauthorized to continue to provide support for our small businesses and advance our nation's research and development initiatives.

- Along with supporting the SBIR, we need to expand the Federal and State Technology Partnership (FAST) program, which aids small businesses in managing SBIR proposals and



contracts, with emphasis on socially and economically disadvantaged firms competing for these contracts.

- And finally, we need full funding for the Community Development Financial Institutions Fund and the Small Business Administration, which are catalysts for growth for so many small business owners and startups in our region.
- We also need new federal grants for small business development in our communities. I will propose a new federal entrepreneurship grant program. These grants will be large dollar, but will be given out in small-dollar amounts to new and veteran-owned small businesses: \$1 million in one community can benefit fifty small businesses, and it is through grants like these that we will build Central Kentucky from the roots up, while creating jobs and improving quality of life.

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Nurturing Entrepreneurship

Promoting the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Lexington will create more jobs there and in neighboring counties. But our rural counties also will benefit from support in this area. Not only do rural counties have higher rates of entrepreneurship than urban metropolises like Silicon Valley: These rates are actually the highest in the most rural areas. Rural counties still have the highest rates of self-employed business owners, even when excluding farmers.¹⁹

In addition to improving access to capital, to grow Central Kentucky's entrepreneurial ecosystem, we need to invest in education and training for our small business owners and their workers through:

- Greater investment in our universities' STEM programs;
- Public-private partnerships with our community colleges;
- Expanding successful initiatives at the high-school level like Advance Kentucky; and
- Promoting apprenticeships and certifications to help our state's future workers learn the right skills and gain the right tools to drive our state's new economy – and not only in tech.

We need pathways to employment in startups, advanced manufacturing, and other vital industries like health care to enable our young people to work anywhere in the state, whether that means moving to Lexington or staying right at home.

These investments and initiatives must not only help prepare our workers for this new economy; we need to make sure that our future business owners are equally prepared to drive our region to grow to its potential. This means supporting our incubators – like Able Engine and the Kentucky Science and Technology Corporation – that are fostering the environment our region's startups

need to grow and providing new business owners and innovators with the guidance and mentoring that they need to succeed. This also means bolstering our accelerators, like Accelerating Appalachia, which targets our state's Appalachian region and cultivates the businesses that are creating jobs there, whether in software, textiles, or agriculture.

We also need to make sure that entrepreneurs and small business owners are rewarded by making our tax system friendlier to our small businesses and encouraging people with goals of self-employment to meet those goals:

- To provide consistency and confidence for our entrepreneurs, we need to ensure that the small business estate tax exemption is maintained and broadened to include more small businesses; and²⁰
- For our residents who want to start their own businesses but are unemployed and lack the resources to do so, we can look to other states and bring the Self-Employment Assistance Program to Kentucky. This program provides unemployed people who want to start a business with funds equal to the unemployment benefits they receive, and waives the unemployment benefits' requirement to be actively seeking waged or salaried work so that they can focus on launching their business. Currently operating in six states, the Self-Employment Assistance Program helps reduce unemployment rates and spur the local economy by creating new businesses;^{21,22} I will work in Congress to broaden this program.

4. Promoting tolerance boosts our economy and creates higher-quality jobs.

I could fly an F-18 just fine as a woman, and don't appreciate people standing in my – or other people's way – because of who we are. I say, look at what we can do. In the military, what matters most is hard work and performance, not one's background, gender, or religion. This should be true for all of America as well.

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Again, this is not an either/or: Being accepting of our neighbors doesn't mean abandoning our culture – it's already part of our culture. Just look at Midway, which has managed to maintain its small-town feel and sense of community while welcoming anyone willing to get the job done, and as a result is thriving as a 21st century city. We need to help our region grow to its potential, and that means hiring the best of the best, regardless of their field, what they look like, or where they come from.

In particular, we need immigrants every step of the way in our increasingly technology-based economy. Immigrants in Kentucky contribute a billion dollars in taxes every year: \$719.3 million in federal taxes and \$343.1 million in state and local taxes in 2014. Kentucky's immigrants also own businesses that create jobs; immigrant entrepreneurs in Kentucky generate hundreds of millions of dollars in business revenue. In 2015, 8,690 immigrant business owners accounted for 4.6 percent of all self-employed Kentucky residents and generated \$283.5 million in business income.²³

One of every five Fortune 500 companies based in Kentucky was founded by first- or second-generation immigrants, and international students and researchers are responsible for the

bulk of scientific contributions in the U.S.²⁴ But immigrant communities here in Kentucky not only help pave the way forward for our technology and economy. They also fill gaps in service for our most underserved areas as well. We need to support and expand the federal programs that let foreign physicians practice in rural areas, which are underserved by American doctors and often have gaps in care. These programs include the International Medical Graduates program, the J1 visa – which requires physicians to practice for two years in underserved areas after completing training – and the National Health Service Corps' loan repayment and scholarship programs. Thirteen counties in our district have at least one Health Professional Shortage Area in primary care, mental health, dental, and, in many counties, all three. These areas can be served by practitioners participating in any of the programs. Meanwhile, the University of Kentucky depends on the ability to attract top students and faculty from around the world to conduct research and boost technology commercialization, and has students and faculty from well over one hundred countries.²⁵

I will work across party lines in Congress to develop a commonsense, national immigration policy that welcomes those willing and able to

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contribute to the American Dream – just as our state and nation always have.

Promoting the Manufacturing Economy

The future doesn't belong exclusively to programming and science jobs in Lexington office towers. Manufacturing jobs have been the backbone of the middle-class economy, and should remain so. To ensure that this sector continues to grow and create jobs for Central Kentuckians, we need to leverage the resources we already have with the technologies that will power growth for everyone in our region.

1. Basing growth around anchor manufacturing like the Toyota plant will boost the creation of more and more spin-off suppliers.

The Toyota plant in Georgetown is a powerhouse for growth in Central Kentucky, and we need to do all that we can to maximize its potential for spinoff industries and job creation. As I mentioned earlier, these new industries and jobs can start with industrial hemp, which can be used in all sorts of products, including in manufacturing.

But there are many other potential automotive-related supply and manufacturing businesses that we can grow here in proximity to the Toyota plant. Electric vehicle battery manufacturing in particular has significant economic potential for our district. The manufacturing of these batteries will become a \$240 billion global industry in the next couple of decades, and electric vehicle sales will account for almost 40% of all vehicle sales globally in that same period. We need to leverage Toyota's new initiative with battery-maker Panasonic and the auto manufacturer's large presence in our region to try to bring a new battery manufacturing plant to our district. Central Kentucky is an ideal location due to its proximity to the plant as well as to major highways and logistical hubs.

2. Kentucky's aerospace and aviation must be elevated to propel these sectors forward.

Kentucky has the second largest aviation and aerospace exports in the country.²⁶ A number of suppliers for GE Aviation, based in Ohio, are located in Kentucky; NASA Kentucky and Lockheed Martin both operate in Lexington, along with the University of Kentucky. Belcan Corporation, a major consulting and staffing firm for the industry, is headquartered in Cincinnati and has an office in Lexington. We need to promote and raise awareness of the vast aviation and aerospace industries in our state, and ensure that Kentucky is at the forefront of federal research funding. Advocating for these industries will help our small- and medium-sized businesses expand and grow, attract new companies, and promote high-paying career opportunities – and who better to do that than a Marine fighter pilot in Congress?

Our aviation and aerospace sectors import over \$300 million each in products from outside of the state, so there is significant potential for Kentucky firms to expand into these supply chains. Just as I discussed above in regard to the auto industry, we need to grow the number of aviation and aerospace manufacturing and supply firms in our region. The two largest supply chain “leakages” for aerospace products include semiconductor manufacturing and iron, steel, and ferroalloy manufacturing. The revenues from these gaps are flowing out of the state when they should be going to our people, here at home. To ensure that Kentucky's dollars and jobs go to Kentucky's people, we must advocate to expand our existing iron and steel mills and attract semiconductor manufacturing for aerospace products to the district.²⁷

I will push to extend Southwest Ohio's federally designated aerospace manufacturing region – which already includes Northern Kentucky south into Central Kentucky, where those

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suppliers for Boeing and GE Aviation are located – to help strengthen these industries all the way from Cincinnati to Lexington and beyond. Twelve federal agencies provide economic development assistance, technical assistance, and private matching funds to designated manufacturing communities. Including these companies – as well as the engineering and aerospace clusters in Lexington and the dozens of other suppliers outside of the city – in this community would help us promote these industries on a larger scale and bring economic benefits to the region as a whole.

3. Diversifying and integrating our regional economy.

There are additional industries in which we can expand growth regionally. Growing strong partnerships with our neighboring regions will deepen the connections our regional and local economies share with those of the nation and the world. Louisville is an obvious and strategic partner for Lexington's metropolitan area, but Cincinnati is within two hours from most parts of the district and isn't thought about enough in the context of Central Kentucky's economy. In addition to our proximity, we share key industries – bio-health and advanced manufacturing – major universities, and I-75. We need to leverage the things we have in common to grow our industry clusters and expand our research and workforce.

In addition to supporting advanced manufacturing in the Golden Triangle and the metro area's growing high-tech economy, we can launch partnerships between the bio-health fields in the Lexington and Cincinnati metropolitan areas through the University of Kentucky and Miami University so that our region can benefit from the resources and expertise that we have instead of competing with and isolating each other. Strengthening the logistics cluster we share with Louisville and Cincinnati would benefit the region by coordinating resources to improve our infrastructure and further develop our capacity.

With I-75 and I-64 going to Cincinnati and Louisville and connecting to many of the region's ports, freight services, and airports, everyone along these corridors will benefit from a robust and reliable logistics cluster with the ability to meet further growth.

There's a lot the federal government can be doing to help with this:

- For starters, I want to change Washington, DC. I mean, really change it: I think we should consider moving the locations of many federal agencies – especially those slated to expand – and situate them around the country instead of in DC, the way the military does. Bringing a federal office to our district would create jobs and auxiliary services the way military bases have been doing for years.
- Overall, we need to develop our local markets and ensure that we are connecting our rural areas to our small towns to our metro areas, and not just sending our resources direct-to-global and right out of Kentuckians' hands. Federal policy has tended to write off small producers and farms as unproductive. In the long-term, this devastates rural communities and the people who live there. We need to return the USDA and other government agencies to helping small producers, not just large ones – to helping our people – to look for and develop new opportunities.
- Our district and our state need strategic regional planning that's comprehensive in scope – not just comprised of individual local initiatives, and not just focusing on isolated issues, but connecting economic development with workforce, education, and health.
- For example, we need more people getting degrees to fill the jobs in our prospering STEM industries, like advanced manufacturing and aviation. We need to look to successful initiatives like Advance Kentucky, and create programs like community college partnerships with private

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industries and apprenticeship programs through schools that will help produce the workforce the region needs.

- We also need to make sure we are not turning away qualified candidates for these jobs just because they are immigrants: Not filling these jobs harms businesses and hinders growth in our communities.
- And we need to coordinate education and training with organizations and individuals on the ground in our communities who know what works. The Appalachian Regional Commission once excelled at this, but has faded with the passing years and reduced funding. I will fight in Washington to restore this needed funding.

of Defense's primary center for the Chemical Defense Equipment Program, but the logistics side of its operations is facing possible BRAC closure. To ensure that the Depot remains an economic powerhouse for our district, we need to diversify its economic impact, specifically in the areas of:

- Logistics spin-offs near the base;
- Renewable energy development; and
- Becoming a regional maintenance hub for military aircraft, particularly fixed-wing and rotary aircraft.

To achieve these goals, we need to help Kentucky



4. Fighting for our largest overlooked industry: our military.

Any discussion about jobs shouldn't ignore one of Kentucky's largest economic engines: our military.

In addition to its primary and most vital role of defending our nation, the military is also a \$10 billion industry in Kentucky, making it the second-largest in the state. The Bluegrass Army Depot, the state's third largest military base, employs over 700 people and has \$225 million in economic impact to our state. The Depot is the Department

attract more missions, veterans, and research. We need to leverage our existing resources and partnerships by identifying and coordinating or strengthening partnerships between the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, the Depot, and the district's universities to drive research and commercialization. For instance, I will work to bring federal grants to our district to expand the chemical waste removal industry at the Bluegrass Army Depot. By applying our traditional resources and skills to newer technologies, we can maintain the energy culture we have for so

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long kept alive in our state, while looking towards Kentucky's future economic growth. We also need to prioritize working with the Department of Defense to award more contracts in the district. This is fortunately one of the Bluegrass Army Depot's strengths: The Depot is a leader in defense contracts for waste management, and its chemical demilitarization program is the second-biggest defense industry in the state, contributing \$1.5 billion between 2012 and 2015.

Our military bases, and the Bluegrass Army Depot in particular, are invaluable hubs for workforce development. I will work to leverage the Depot's strategic position by promoting:

- Programs to attract military spouses to the state;
- An initiative to establish the Depot as a regional training hub;
- Career tracks and apprenticeships for engineers via the Depot; and
- The integration of the Depot's Human Resources and Recruiting with the aerospace and aviation sectors in the region.²⁸

Reviving the Resource Economy

Energy and agriculture have been mainstays of Central Kentucky's economy since our area was first settled. These industries face growing pressures in today's economy, but building industries of the future doesn't have to mean abandoning the industries and communities that have shaped our past.

1. Embracing an "all of the above" energy strategy

Utilizing Our Coal Resources

Kentucky coal is an industry of hardworking people. We need to repay the sacrifice of generations of people now bearing the brunt of changing global energy markets – for their sacrifice literally fueled the growth of the nation. Now the nation needs to be investing in coal communities.

- I will reach across the aisle to bring this investment to our communities that need it the most, supporting Rep. Hal Rogers' bipartisan Reclaim Act and additional funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission.
- I will support debt forgiveness for our state's

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coal-fired power plants because our state's utility consumers are bearing the brunt of the debts.

Kentucky's coal communities are often forgotten, but we need to support them if we want to move forward as a region. Coal is becoming more expensive than natural gas and other fuel sources regardless of what the federal government does or doesn't do about it. But while global markets shift to other sources, we can still support local coal-generated electricity in the meantime, and even use it in ways that promote the future of energy and transportation. We can do this by working with Toyota and Panasonic, the auto company's new partner in battery manufacturing, to install charging stations that use local coal-generated electricity to fuel electric vehicles.

But there is more we can do for our coal communities. Although their potential is often overlooked, these communities have valuable expertise and resources for the New Economy. Areas with experience in energy transfer can translate that knowledge and existing infrastructure to solar-generated electricity. And the remaining coal in the state can be investigated for other uses, including for the extraction of rare earth elements, as is currently being researched at the University of Kentucky, and which would put Kentucky on the map as a potential competitor with China.²⁹

We also need to evaluate the lands opening up from divesting coal companies and lead partnerships to repurpose these lands for Kentucky's sustainable forestry industry. Sustainable forestry is a \$1.7 billion industry, and Central Kentucky is poised to take part. There are already 90 Christmas tree farms across the state, and other tree products like lumber and furniture that have been successfully produced in similar geographic areas like western North Carolina have potential to expand in our region.

Taking Advantage of the Sun

The Kentucky Energy and Environment Office recently released a paper outlining the connections between lower electricity costs and economic growth.³⁰ Producing more solar power through both large-scale farms and smaller rooftop panels will reduce electricity costs locally and across the district.

- To generate the electricity that will run through our improved grid and power our vehicles, I will work to promote the Green Power Partnership program. This program assists companies, universities, and state and local governments to purchase green power, working with private firms to convert former mining sites into solar farms, and creating new legislation to provide grants for residential and commercial solar panels.

- I will work to bring federal grants to our district for the advancement of solar technology. Clark County is already becoming a leader in this area; our other rural counties should, as well. By applying our traditional resources and skills to newer technologies, we can maintain the energy culture we have for so long kept alive in our state, while looking towards Kentucky's future economic growth.

- I will spearhead efforts to support and expand renewable energy research, and solar research in particular, via our state's military bases. Kentucky's renewable energy industries have seen remarkable growth over the last several years, but we still have room to be innovative in maximizing these technologies. The Department of Defense is a leader in energy technology and has several bases in our state.

Boosting Biofuels

We also need an initiative to create partnerships in biofuel research, which is being propelled by the aviation industry, including such projects as

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Boeing's tobacco-based, biofuels research in South Africa.

We are uniquely positioned for this opportunity: The University of Kentucky has the research capabilities and the capacity to provide plane manufacturers with the biofuel research they have been investing in, and Kentucky has the experience in tobacco production to keep up with demand. Along with the multiple suppliers for Boeing and Lockheed Martin in the region, Central Kentucky just makes sense for a partnership like this, and I will work with both public and private sector leaders to coordinate and develop this industry.

Dialing Up Our Efficiency

Finally, we need to bulk up our energy efficiency programs and incentivize efficiency in residential and commercial buildings.

Energy efficiency, including retrofitting housing, not only reduces energy costs for those who live there and use efficient products, it also creates significant economic impact. Energy efficiency employs more people than the electricity creation industry, with 2.2 million people working nationally in heating, lighting, fuel efficiency, construction, and weatherization, and making, selling, and installing efficient products.³¹ And the market potential is enormous: In Appalachian Kentucky alone, we could retrofit 1,000 houses and small businesses per year and still have enough to keep working for decades. You just can't get much more sustainable than that.

The USDA REAP grant has been used for efficiency as part of rural development. We need to ensure that these grants continue to go to and support this work.

2. A regional agricultural strategy

We need to approach our food systems economy with the same regional approach that we will

use for energy. Small farmers and ranchers are struggling nationwide as fewer – yet much larger – commercial farms eat up more and more agricultural revenues.

Supporting Small Local Producers

Supporting small-scale producers does not necessarily mean looking to the past. A regional agricultural strategy means strengthening the connections between the producers, processors, and retailers in our communities. And this means leveraging the emerging local foods movement to spur farm-to-table and farm-to-retail products to deliver locally grown products to locally operating restaurants and stores. Once again, preserving traditional ways of life and embracing new trends and opportunities do not have to be inconsistent.



This also means supporting farmer's markets and expanding the ways people can use them. One way to do this is to launch an initiative to make farmer's markets more accessible by promoting "prescriptions" for fruits and vegetables from doctors in underserved areas or food deserts. This can be complemented by supporting these markets' ability to accept SNAP funds, including through outreach to markets that aren't aware of this option and by making Food and Nutrition Service's SNAP fund transaction policies more financially feasible for markets. Several states have passed or introduced programs that double the value of SNAP funds spent on fruits and

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vegetables through the use of a small state fund that is distributed to farmer's markets to provide matching dollar incentives for the dollar value of SNAP benefits spent on fruits and vegetables; this should become a nationwide initiative.

In addition, public institutions are large buyers and can have a real impact on local food economies. The University of Kentucky, for example, had a contract requiring Aramark to source 20% of campus food locally. I will work to encourage all of Kentucky's federal installations, state and local governments, and universities to buy local, where their buying power can act as an economic driver for the communities they serve.

Giving New Life to Old Crops

We need to do more to help farmers who want to transition off tobacco, and develop other uses for the crop for those who choose to stay in the industry. Once again, this is not an either/or. As I noted earlier, tobacco has a long history in Kentucky, and while it does not provide the same livelihood for farmers that it once had, it has the potential to maintain some role in Central Kentucky's economy. For example, the University of Kentucky has been conducting research on the crop's potential as a biofuel, and one strain of tobacco is being developed in South Africa to make jet fuel.

For those willing to transition to another crop, however, industrial hemp has enormous potential in Kentucky, as I've already discussed, but this will need larger investments from the government to get off the ground. That's why:

- We need to enact the Industrial Hemp Farming Act and the full legalization of hemp so that we no longer must rely on European imports of the crop – and to create production and manufacturing jobs in Kentucky.
- I will help bring our industrial hemp growers together in a partnership with the University of

Kentucky's hemp research team and automotive suppliers in the region to develop biodegradable composites for car manufacturing. We need to look at the success they've had in Europe, where the partnership between Faurecia, a leading French supplier of seating, interiors, and clean mobility for automobile manufacturing, and Interval, a major French agricultural cooperative, has culminated in the innovative products NAFILean and NAFILite, hemp-based composites that are used in automotive manufacturing. Faurecia is a major supplier in North America and has industrial sites in Louisville and southern Ohio.

- Along with targeted efforts to leverage hemp with our manufacturing industry, I will work with the U.S. Hemp Farming and Business Roundtable to establish a robust hemp industry in our district and a strong and inclusive business environment for everyone who produces and uses the crop.
- We need to kick start Kentucky's hemp industry by coordinating investment into the construction of the state's first hemp manufacturing factory through a subsidy, grant, or a combination of the two.

Diversifying Our Agricultural Economy

Like our other industries, agriculture is not an either/or challenge and can't be addressed with an either/or solution. In addition to locally grown produce and value-added goods, we need to diversify our agricultural economy further. Fortunately, Kentucky is uniquely positioned in that it has an enormous agricultural tourism sector, and we need to approach this sector with an "all of the above" strategy.

Kentucky has a diverse agri-tourism industry, which encompasses trips to working thoroughbred breeding farms and racetracks, seasonal activities like apple-picking and going to Christmas tree farms, visits to distilleries and wineries, and farm stays. We need to promote and channel funding to Kentucky's agricultural

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marketing campaigns, Kentucky Farms Are Fun and Kentucky Proud, and our farmer's markets to advocate for our region's vital farms and ranches. But this strategy must also be robust enough to push agri-tourism into the new economy. This means promoting our agricultural history and culture by promoting our farms and our state fair, while also driving the sector forward by growing new industries and entering new markets.

Distilleries: The distilling industry leads in economic impact across Kentucky, and totals over 15,000 jobs, an annual payroll of \$797 million, and a total economic output of \$8.5 billion.³² As the home to the world's best bourbon, we need to maximize Central Kentucky's distilling industry and ensure that it is protected and strengthened by prioritizing Kentucky's exports in trade deals and guaranteeing that our workers and companies are on a level playing field in the global marketplace.

Wineries: Our district has over a dozen wineries, but, overall, Kentucky has some of the most complicated liquor licensing laws in the country – half of the Sixth District is comprised of wet counties, while the other half are dry.³³ Streamlining these laws would enhance clarity when purchasing wine, beer, and spirits and increase sales. In addition, we need to work

with state legislators to permit consumers to take partially consumed bottles of wine home from wineries and vineyards in the way they are currently permitted to from restaurants. Finally, advocating to expand the types of establishments that can apply for and hold licenses to serve beer and wine would improve consumer access to these Kentucky products and allow in-state sales to grow more quickly.³⁴

Horses: Kentucky's equine industry and horse tourism bring valuable dollars to the Bluegrass region. It is imperative that we support our horse industry by supporting federal protective legislation for horses and promoting greater investment in horse racing and breeding. I also see the potential for greater tourism spin-offs from the industry, including family tourism for places like Old Friends Thoroughbred Retirement Farms, which show how much our region and our industry care for our retired racehorses, and the Kentucky Horse Park, which brings millions of visitors from around the country and the world.

Historical and Adventure Tourism: We need to jumpstart our historical and adventure tourism and bring new recognition to some of Kentucky's oldest treasures. I will push for a two-fold program to promote our state's historic and natural attractions. This initiative will link our

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region's historic sites – such as Waveland and White Hall in Lexington and Richmond, Blue Licks Battlefield State Park in Carlisle – within a greater network of state sites and parks to amplify their significance. Secondly, it will include branding Kentucky as an outdoor recreation-friendly state along the Appalachian trail corridor and linking the trail to other sites in the state that hikers and tourists can visit. As a result of unthinking cuts to the Department of Interior budget, the Daniel Boone National Forest has gone into disrepair and become a threat to surrounding communities; we need to invest instead in improvements like park rangers to keep them safe and amenities to improve access, and I will fight to do so in Congress.

Preserving our Communities and Way of Life While Building the Future

Economic growth necessarily means economic change. New inventions create new industries, and new ideas produce new businesses. Usually, this leads to more and more jobs – but other times these new jobs replace older ones. Many people see these changes as troublesome because they can cost jobs and change the character of communities.

But, again, we shouldn't have to choose between progress and preservation. Kentucky communities built during the frontier era, or before the Civil War, didn't close down and disappear when electricity was introduced. They shouldn't have to do so in the Internet Age, either, when new possibilities are opening up everywhere. Just as these communities have retained their traditional character from the 18th to the 19th to the 20th Centuries, we can, and must, ensure that they do so throughout the 21st. I will work to make sure that the New Economy and new jobs don't change what we love about Kentucky. I'll work in Congress to protect our communities, our families, our

workers, and those who served this country in uniform; after all, when you think about it, that's what I've been doing my entire career.

1. Investing in our communities

We need to approach community development from within the hearts of our communities. A thriving, healthy downtown will lead to improved sales and services, job creation, and a healthier community.

- I will work in Congress to re-fund the Main Streets program. Kentucky has been supportive of this tried-and-true program, but it needs federal support to continue to uplift downtown infrastructure and real estate so that small retail businesses, restaurants, and service providers can not only survive in their communities, but thrive.



In addition to Main Street funding, our communities need more, and more consistent, funding from the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development to support the great work of our nonprofits – which align services, enhance energy efficiency, and improve our communities – as well as the construction and maintenance of affordable housing throughout the district.

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Our local economies rely on our infrastructure. If our roads are decaying or our broadband is slow, that affects our bottom lines, our quality of life, and the economic health of our communities.

To ensure that our region's logistics and tourism sectors are healthy and expanding, we need to make investments in our roads.

- We need to ensure that federal investments are coming to our district to improve I-64, I-75, and Mountain Parkway to ensure they can handle growth in the future.
- We need to invest in secondary roads, not just corridor highways. Building up our internal connections will improve our regional economic links.
- We also need better public transit to improve commuting, cut costs, and provide a reliable method of getting in and out of Lexington. More shuttle routes between Lexington and counties with high commuter populations, and between our colleges and universities and their surrounding areas, will make Central Kentucky a more attractive place to live and work.
- In addition to improving our roads, we need to expand the Class I and Class III railroads running through the district by advocating to add more freight rail stops in our industry-heavy areas. These freight lines carry hundreds of millions of dollars of goods through our region every year, and adding more stops in our communities would provide vital points from which our businesses can move and export goods, as well as expand the auxiliary services that surround a freight stop, like more logistics services.
- To finance major infrastructure improvements, we need federal leadership and investment – not the phony plan President Trump recently announced that requires states rather than the federal government to come up with the money. When President Eisenhower, a Republican,

recognized the need for a national network of highways to keep the country safe and the economy moving, he also recognized the need for the federal government to pay for it. We need today's federal officials – both the President and Congress – to recognize this as well.

- In the current shortsighted atmosphere in Washington, it's necessary to think outside the box – and Kentucky provides a way. Individual counties and communities don't have the ability to finance huge projects like these by themselves, especially outside of Fayette. To address this, we need a federal public-private partnership, or P3, law modeled on Kentucky's. I will propose legislation to allow these partnerships to be used as a financing mechanism for infrastructure projects on the federal level.

2. Investing in our people

Here in Central Kentucky, people need well-paying jobs. And they shouldn't have to move away to find them. We need to make Kentucky's workers the ones that employers want to move to.³⁵ Education and training need to meet people where they are, and must include better access to childcare for students and workers, more online courses, and community colleges offering students their first class for free to improve student engagement. We need a regional approach when thinking of workforce development. We need more than local individual programs to address the gap between the jobs employers need to fill and the workforce that is prepared to fill them. And we need a system that will react to employers' and industry needs and that provides services at all levels so that everyone has access to high-quality, useful training to get the tools they require.

Strengthening the Link Between Workforce and Education

Kentucky has a significant problem in this area:

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a lack of skilled labor. In a 2013 *Forbes* report on the best states for business and careers, Kentucky ranked 45th for its labor supply.³⁶ Kentucky's labor problem has origins relatively early in the education pipeline. According to a survey entitled "Bridging the Gap," more than 40% of the 1,084 Kentucky companies surveyed said they need more employees with bachelor's degrees, and a similar number said they needed more workers with industry or professional certifications. Currently, however, only 51% of Kentucky's workforce has education beyond high school, compared to 60% nationally.³⁷ The biggest shortages are medical professionals, engineers, and skilled tradespeople like electricians and plumbers.

Companies that participated in the survey were not critical of Kentucky's schools, however. With programs like Advance Kentucky and a renewed focus on STEM-heavy curriculums, many students are getting a good start. Where we are failing – and the gap we need to fill – is the link between education programs and the workforce.

Last year, the legislature extended the state's lottery-funded scholarships to include apprenticeship and dual enrollment programs.³⁸ This is a step in the right direction, but there is more we can do. To mend the education-to-workforce pipeline, we need to create programs to subsidize employers to provide internships for

young adults from underserved communities – rural and inner-city – so that they can get real, hands-on experience in the industries that are thriving in their communities. We also need to create more partnerships between local schools and companies, which occur less frequently in Kentucky than nationally, as well as internships and apprenticeships, to ensure that students are prepared for the jobs of tomorrow, not yesterday or today. Manufacturers in Central Kentucky have been creating apprenticeship programs and partnering with local community and technical colleges to develop programs that will help fill the growing number of manufacturers' job openings.³⁹ We need to develop similar programs for other industries as well.

I will work in Congress to expand support for programs like this. But to provide effective education and workforce development without just throwing money at the problem, we need to implement performance-based funding for these programs. By emphasizing programs' successes – like certifications earned and employment secured by participants – and rewarding what works, we will produce the highest-quality training for workers and the best value for taxpayers.

Incentivizing employers to create an ecosystem of continued learning will reduce employee turnover and hiring costs, while adding value to their employees and work product. To foster this environment, I will:

- Support the Workforce Investment Act's On-the-Job Training Program, which reimburses half of a trainee's wages during training so that employers are motivated to hire employees and train them in-house;
- Expand the Work Opportunity Tax Credit,
- Expand training and hiring grants for employers; and

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- Push for incentives to hire individuals who face higher barriers to employment, especially veterans.

Improving Access to Affordable Health Care

I'm the daughter of one of the first women to graduate from the University of Kentucky medical school in the 1960s. So, to me, access to health care is not only an issue about economics and policy – it is a personal and a moral issue.

Under former Governor Steve Beshear, Kentucky became a leader in state implementation of the Affordable Care Act with Kynect, our state-based marketplace.⁴⁰ Kynect's implementation played a huge role in the drop in the rate of uninsured adults in our state from 21% in 2013, the year before the ACA's major coverage expansions took effect, to only 6% in 2015 – one of the largest reductions nationally.⁴¹

The Affordable Care Act was an improvement over what we had before, but should not be a stopping point. We need to improve it, and Republicans like Andy Barr have proven that they will not be the ones to get the job done. The House bill that Barr said he would "enthusiastically vote for" would have thrown 23 million Americans – and 251,800 Kentuckians – off health coverage.⁴² Every major medical and

health organization in America has opposed each of the Republican bills this year. Their efforts would especially hurt veterans, where 1 in 10 use Medicaid, and mental health conditions like PTSD would be considered a pre-existing condition. The American Medical Association not only opposed the GOP efforts, but went so far as to say it violated their medical standard of "do no harm!"

Ironically, the "repeal and replace" effort is also terrible for jobs. Under Senator McConnell's original Senate bill, Kentucky would have experienced a net loss of 231,400 jobs, all of this so that the wealthiest Americans could have another massive tax cut. The GOP has been unapologetically trying to revert back to a time when people would have to mortgage their homes if they got sick.

We need health insurance that is both accessible and affordable, that offers choice and improves our families' health. I remain committed to working in a bipartisan way to fix the problems with the Affordable Care Act, which brought down Kentucky's uninsured rate in a dramatic way. But any fixes must maintain current essential health benefits, not impose any annual or lifetime coverage caps, and must continue the ACA's prohibition against insurers charging higher premiums based on factors such as health status

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or pre-existing conditions (like pregnancy).

I favor approaches that take us in the general direction of all Americans having health insurance coverage because basic health care is a right. I detail those approaches separately in my health care plan – but the key point is this: Once again, this isn't an either/or issue. The voters expect us to put aside our partisan differences and work together to address rising premiums and deductibles, while maintaining the current guarantees for pre-existing conditions.

Addressing the Opioid Crisis

The opioid crisis, and substance abuse more generally, is a public health crisis, and a huge national problem that needs a multi-level response. Along with being a public health and moral issue, this is a workforce issue. Individuals suffering from substance abuse issues could be working to support their families and communities instead. According to the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, the opioid crisis is the driving force behind job vacancies reaching an all-time high in Kentucky, hurting the state's ability to attract new businesses.

More than 1,200 Kentuckians died of drug overdoses in 2015 in the escalating scourge of heroin and prescription opioid abuse. The following year, overdose deaths jumped to 1,404, up 39% in just three years.⁴³ In response, Kentucky received \$109 million in federal funds for substance abuse treatment programs through the state's expanded Medicaid program. In addition to the Medicaid expansion, under Governor Beshear, Kentucky introduced reforms in 2012 that have led to reduced painkiller prescriptions and more systematic prescription monitoring. Substance abuse is also a major driver of chronic homelessness; Recovery Kentucky, a program that stemmed from former Governor Beshear's Recovery Task Force, provides housing and addiction support services for approximately

2,000 people with substance abuse issues from 17 centers, saving the state's taxpayers millions of dollars in emergency room bills and jail costs.

We need to expand successful programs like these. The federal government ought to be supporting them as part of a comprehensive declaration of emergency to fight the opioid epidemic. Instead, we're still waiting for more than lip-service out of Washington.

In addition, we need to expand funding for the agencies working to improve the lives of Kentuckians and Americans. This includes expanding funding for Health and Human Services, which has made the opioid crisis a top clinical priority and is working to help individuals achieve long-term addiction recovery by improving access to prevention, treatment, and recovery support services nationwide.⁴⁴ We must also do more to guarantee that Kentuckians are benefiting from these efforts, and receiving the funding and support Kentucky needs to ensure that vital services are provided for every community, every family, and every individual who needs them. We can do this by supporting the Family And Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act, which would not only provide for up to 12 weeks of paid leave for new parents, but would also partially cover paid leave for drug treatment and for caregivers to those receiving treatment. Paid leave for those seeking or receiving treatment would be included under serious medical needs and could help those with substance abuse issues retain employment and avoid incarceration.⁴⁵

Helping Families to Work

Many other factors outside of our working environments affect our work. Issues like childcare, care for family members when someone gets sick, and temporary disabilities that affect our ability to do our jobs are anxieties that all of us must deal with at some point. Here in Kentucky, we have a lot of room to improve when

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it comes to easing some of these anxieties and helping people enter and stay in the workforce.

For example, the Center for American Progress ranked Kentucky 32nd in the nation for 36 factors affecting the state's women – most notably, the state received a D grade for women's economic security. One of the most significant contributors to this poor grade – and this affects Kentucky's men, too – is that Kentucky does not have any policy providing for paid family, medical, or temporary disability leave.⁴⁶ This means that the most vulnerable workers lack even the most basic protections if they need to take time off to take care of family or recover from an illness. We need to ensure that workers can rely on knowing that they still have their jobs when these situations inevitably occur, and we can do this by supporting policies that help people in these situations and encourage them to return to work, not punish them. On the federal level, I will work to expand eligibility for the Family and Medical Leave Act and support the Family And Medical Leave Insurance (FAMILY) Act, which would establish national paid leave insurance for new mothers and fathers, as well as those who are caring for family members who are experiencing serious medical issues, cover all workers, and allow for greater wage replacement for low-income workers.⁴⁷

Lack of access to high-quality and affordable childcare and early child education is one of the biggest impediments to entering the workforce in rural communities across the United States.⁴⁸ In Central Kentucky, the average cost of center-based childcare for a one-year-old is \$553 per month,⁴⁹ totaling over 30% of the average annual income for single mothers.⁵⁰ As a working mother, I know how important childcare can be. All working families need and deserve to have access to high-quality care centers and preschools and the vouchers or subsidies they need to ensure that their children get off to the right start. We need to expand this access, especially to

our rural areas, by pushing for continued and expanded funding for the federal Child Care and Development Fund, which was not guaranteed new federal funds in its 2014 reauthorization.⁵¹ Furthermore, we need to:

- Improve reimbursement rates for childcare providers nationwide;
- Renew childcare assistance for families on welfare and the first year they leave welfare;⁵²
- Launch an initiative to promote childcare businesses in Central Kentucky; and
- Ensure that childcare providers have access to the technical and financial support they need.

To encourage federal support for family access to childcare, I support the Child Care for Working Families Act,⁵³ which will increase access to childcare assistance by investing in quality of care, raising provider compensation, and supporting family, friend, and neighbor care (FFN). The Child Care for Working Families Act will help to ensure that these providers – the informal, unlicensed assistance that family members and neighbors provide to families who need childcare – are equipped with the resources and tools they need and that the families who use them continue to receive subsidies, as they would for more formal childcare.⁵⁴

To eliminate the “cliff effect” – in which working families suddenly lose their assistance and are in turn disincentivized from growing their incomes – we need to make sure that these programs are structured to reward people for climbing the economic ladder and to ease them off these supports. Structuring assistance programs effectively to reduce poverty will lead to more people in the workforce, more money in the pockets of consumers, and reduced costs as people are incentivized to achieve self-sufficiency instead of to rely on welfare. We need to allow – and encourage – people to grow their incomes

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by making it easier to work and by enabling them to keep more money in their pockets so that they can participate in and contribute to our region's economic growth, instead of being left behind and barely making ends meet.

In addition to extending certain assistance programs through the first year a family leaves welfare, I will work to:

- Reduce the “cliff effect” by implementing higher co-payments for continued childcare service, in lieu of abruptly ending support once the eligibility threshold is reached;
- Raise the eligibility level for childcare assistance to at least 200% of the federal poverty level to allow more working families to qualify for childcare subsidies;
- Raise the asset limit to enable working families to grow their savings, without losing their eligibility for assistance. Low asset limits have proven to be ineffective in lowering caseloads and associated costs – administrative costs actually decreased in states that raised their asset limits – while significantly impeding the upward mobility of low-income families.⁵⁵ Kentucky already exempts vehicles from the TANF asset limit, but we can expand upward mobility to more working families nationwide by exempting child support and raising the limit of savings in certain accounts, like 529 College Savings Plans;⁵⁶ and
- Improve income supports, like lowering eligibility levels for the Earned Income Tax Credit for unmarried workers without children. This population of low-income workers has actually experienced deeper poverty due to their lack of eligibility for the EITC or the virtually ineffective benefits they do receive from it.⁵⁷ Under the new tax code, which didn't affect the credit for this population, an unmarried individual working full time at the federal minimum wage would only receive a \$37 credit. For this person, who

makes \$14,500 working full time – about 120% of the federal poverty line – raising the minimum tax credit to \$1,000 would be a significant supplement to their income.⁵⁸ Additionally, lowering the minimum age for eligibility to 21 would help our working young adults get on their feet without being driven immediately into



poverty upon entering the workforce.

Structuring assistance programs to incentivize working and saving will make them more effective in helping those who rely on them to lift themselves out of poverty. But, no matter how well these programs are structured, if they aren't adequately funded, the amount of people able to receive these supports will be severely limited. President Trump says that we have too many people receiving public assistance and wants to cut funding to TANF and other welfare programs, like SNAP and CHIP, even though, here in Kentucky, we aren't even supporting one-fifth of those who qualify. To help working families get on their feet so that they can participate in and grow our economy, we need to guarantee that they will continue to receive these vital supports.⁵⁹

Finally, we are facing a monumental population shift across the nation, in which more and more families will not only have to worry about childcare, but also care for aging parents as well. Our elder care systems will need to expand to

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accommodate our aging, retired population, and ensure that every community has access to affordable, high-quality care. To prepare for this growing field, we need to:

- Work to develop our payment and insurance systems so that they are more effective in their design for long-term care;
- Utilize the advances we have made in medicine and behavioral health to keep our elderly as healthy and active as possible to stave off the need for long-term care;
- Improve the organization of community services to make preventative and long-term care more accessible; and
- Work to shift the way we see aging so that this population can remain integrated within our communities.⁶⁰

Raising the Minimum Wage to Reward Work

I believe that we need to raise the minimum wage. But raising the minimum wage isn't just about improving the quality of life for our low-skill workers. A higher minimum wage will help grow our economy by rewarding work and putting more buying power in the pockets of everyday Americans who, more often than not, don't receive health insurance coverage from their

employers, have student loans to pay, and families to support.

While our national economy has grown and inflation has risen, our federal minimum wage has remained largely the same. Between 2003 and 2013, wage growth was either stagnant or had contracted for almost everyone in the bottom three quarters of the wage distribution scale.⁶¹ This means that our economy is growing but wages are not, and our wage-earners are being left out of this growth.

Not raising the minimum wage has its price: A 2015 report by the UC Berkeley Labor Center found that 56% of combined state and federal spending on public assistance goes to working families.⁶² These are families who are in the workforce and are still reliant on public assistance. Increasing wages would not only help these working families, it would also reduce federal and state costs for welfare and supplemental programs like TANF, SNAP, and the EITC because wage-earners would need to rely on these programs less. That's why many economists favor gradual, moderate increases in the minimum wage – and so do I.

In Kentucky, we need to advocate for a state minimum wage increase. Twenty-nine states have minimum wages above the federal minimum

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wage of \$7.25 per hour – but Kentucky is not one of these states. We can, and should, do better for Kentucky workers and their families. We need to immediately raise the minimum wage at the federal level to \$10 per hour, and aim to further increase that to \$15 per hour in the years after that. This would help Central Kentucky's low-skill workers without unduly harming the small businesses that call our state home or scaring off larger companies that operate here.

Protecting financial opportunity for veterans and everyday Kentuckians

We need to do more to support the veterans and service members who have honorably served our nation. We should start with preventing predatory payday lending and unregulated manufactured home dealers – two problems that particularly target and afflict military families and veterans – and on which Andy Barr has shown that he is on the wrong side of the fence. Predatory lending harms all communities and local economies, but it can be devastating to the individuals who fall victim to these tactics – individuals who are very often service members. In these transactions, it is usually the lenders who win. In 2015 alone, Kentucky payday lenders made a whopping \$117 million in fees off of the \$68 million they lent.⁶³

- I will work in Washington to protect the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau and its new payday lending rule, which will protect the over 200,000 Kentuckians who use these loans every year against the cycles of debt that come with predatory lending tactics.

- I will also work to preserve the Consumer Finance Protection Bureau's authority to enforce the Military Lending Act. Andy Barr voted to remove this authority and greatly reduce the protections it gives to service members and their families, and we can't let that happen. Furthermore, I will strengthen these regulations by introducing legislation to increase fines for

payday lenders that break the rules – and I will work to extend the interest cap for service members to all Americans.

- I will sponsor an outreach program directed to military bases and low-income communities to educate people on the risks of predatory lending and its alternatives. When I was in the service and my colleagues and I heard of a new marine who was strapped for cash, we would pool our money to provide them a loan, so they wouldn't have to go to the payday lenders. Many faith-based and non-profit organizations in our state provide this same service – I will do all I can to amplify their outreach by putting the federal government behind them.

- I will also work to protect both your ability to buy a home and your livelihood – so you're not forced to trade one for the other. Andy Barr's legislation to carve out manufactured home dealers from mortgage regulations will leave our neighbors open to predatory lending. A manufactured home is still a home; we need a representative in Congress who will work to protect it like their own.

- Finally, I will propose reforming Dodd-Frank regulations to help middle-class Kentuckians – instead of pandering to the banking industry. Our priorities shouldn't be rolling back important regulations on major banks, they should be expanding protections for private student loan borrowers and giving hardworking people more control over their credit reports.⁶⁴

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