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**Statement by Terry Brooks, Executive Director of
Kentucky Youth Advocates on Frankfort's Revenue Debate**

Yesterday's considerable conversations around the impending budget crisis underscore a clear leadership challenge for Kentucky's policymakers. In the upcoming session of the General Assembly, the Governor and the legislature need to embrace and enact a balanced approach to the budget that includes new revenue.

The crushing national recession continues to wreak havoc on Kentucky. As a result, the needs of families are growing at the same time that the state has fewer resources to help them. The problem presented by the recession is simply too big to solve with only one approach. Spending cuts alone will hurt families who are already struggling to stay afloat. In addition, relying heavily on cuts hurts Kentucky's investments in areas like education, transportation, and workforce development and jeopardizes our future growth as a state.

While we applaud the Governor for recognizing that Kentucky needs increased revenue to balance a budget that is adequate, gaming is not a sustainable revenue source for the future of the Commonwealth. Now is the time to fix the well documented and persistent long-term revenue problem for the future – while adding additional revenue to fill the shortfall.

“Very painful choices” is a frequent – and almost glib -- phrase coming out of Frankfort these days when discussing the 2010-2012 budget. Those choices invariably reference decisions that will threaten the well-being of working families by simply cutting spending even further. Yesterday's dueling press conferences serve as a strong reminder that now is the time to look past easy solutions and gimmicks and to make the “painful decision” to tackle real tax modernization as a way to help Kentucky today and tomorrow.

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is the home of Kentucky's Tax and Budget Initiative, a member of the nationwide State Fiscal Analysis Initiative.