



**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Terry Brooks

cell: 502-235-2396

**Statement by Terry Brooks, Executive Director, Kentucky Youth Advocates,  
on Governor Beshear's Call for a Special Session**

We are disappointed that the Governor's call today for a special session does not allow the legislature to consider revenue increasing options. The \$996 million gap is twice as big as the gap we faced in the last two years and too deep to close with budget cuts alone. The governor should amend the call so that targeted and strategic revenue options are on the table. Only then will legislators have the ability to eliminate the deficit with a balanced package of solutions and improve the economic resilience of the Commonwealth.

While making cuts will be unavoidable, any cuts to programs and services must be made in ways that minimize harm rather than making broad cuts across the board. For example, every effort must be made to preserve cost-saving prevention programs such as supports for families in turmoil and at-risk juveniles or community-based mental health interventions. Across the board cuts to programs and services will disproportionately impact the most vulnerable citizens of our Commonwealth.

Leaders in Frankfort have known for over a decade that Kentucky suffers from a structural imbalance in which the investments we need to maintain our public structures are growing faster than revenues. The main reason for this imbalance is that our tax system is more suited to the state's industrial past than to today's emerging service-dominated economy. Without a broader, updated revenue stream, our fiscal problems will continue to intensify. We call on the Governor along with House and Senate leadership to make a commitment to comprehensive tax reform in the 2010 legislative session that will modernize our tax structure to make it adequate to meet our current needs and prepare us for a prosperous future.

Last November, when facing a budget deficit half the size, the governor's office said nothing should be off the table in order to address the deficit in a fiscally responsible manner. We urge the Governor to honor that commitment by amending the call for the special session.

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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