



OP-ED: EMPLOYERS HAVE IMPORTANT ROLE IN *Combating Kentucky's Opioid Epidemic*

The following piece is an op-ed authored by Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center Executive Director Beth Davission published in many Kentucky publications. Read the full piece at kychamberbottomline.com.



BETH DAVISSON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
KENTUCKY CHAMBER
WORKFORCE CENTER

Kentucky employers have a growing front-line awareness of the devastating impact the opioid epidemic is having on our state. They know that this epidemic is more than a public health issue. It is also a serious workforce issue that must be addressed — with employers playing a key role — if they are going to meet their challenges of finding and retaining workers.

The need is urgent as employers are feeling the impact firsthand. Economic research has found a strong link between rising opioid prescriptions and declining workforce participation rates, estimating that nearly half of men age 25 to 54 who are not in the workforce take pain medication daily and that there is a higher rate of absenteeism among opioid abusers who work.

The scope of the problem is the focus of a recent Kentucky Chamber of Commerce publication, "Opioid Abuse in Kentucky: The Business Community's Perspective," that reports Kentucky's drug overdose rate was fourth highest among the states in 2017, when 1,565 Kentuckians died of an overdose, and the rate of opioid prescriptions that year was seventh highest in the nation.

The report noted: "To put these numbers in perspective, while 1,565 Kentuckians died from a drug overdose in 2017, 782 people died in traffic accidents, and 263 were murdered. Even more alarming: the problem continues to get worse. The number of Kentucky drug overdose deaths in 2017 represented an 11.5 percent increase over 2016."

[SEE OPIOID EPIDEMIC, PAGE 3](#)

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UPDATE: BUSINESS COMMUNITY PLANS TO FILE AMICUS BRIEF IN *Unemployment Insurance Case*

The Kentucky Court of Appeals recently ruled that employers can no longer use a non-lawyer representative in unemployment proceedings, saying it violates the separation-of-powers provisions of the Kentucky Constitution.

This decision is among the broadest case law decisions, reversing previous case law and imposing additional costs on employers in Kentucky.

The court determined that its decision would be applied prospectively and remanded the case before it to the Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission for proceedings where attorney representation would be required.

In response to the ruling, the Kentucky Office of Unemployment Insurance gave the following statement saying that while the case is being appealed, there will be no change to the current practice:

“The Court's decision, if it becomes final, will affect employers as it invalidates

the state's current statute allowing non-attorneys to represent an employer in administrative proceedings related to unemployment insurance claims. The Kentucky Unemployment Insurance Commission is taking the appropriate steps to seek the Kentucky Supreme Court's review of the decision. In the meantime, there will be no changes to the current practice of allowing representation by non-attorneys in these administrative proceedings.”

The Kentucky Chamber, along with the Kentucky Society of Human Resources and other groups plan to file an amicus brief opposing the Court of Appeals decision.

CONGRATULATIONS TO *Kentuckian Kelly Craft as U.N. Ambassador*



KELLY CRAFT
UNITED STATES
AMBASSADOR TO THE
UNITED NATIONS

Kentuckian Kelly Craft was confirmed to the position of United Nations ambassador following a vote by the full U.S. Senate.

Craft, who has been serving as U.S. Ambassador to Canada since August 2017, is a native of Glasgow, Kentucky. She is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and a well-known

Republican donor who has served in previous administrations as she was a U.S. delegate to the United Nations in 2007 under President George W. Bush.

Craft is the wife of former Kentucky Chamber Board Chair Joe Craft, the CEO of Alliance Coal.

STAY TUNED

Stay tuned for more on this issue at kychamberbottomline.com.



IMPORTANCE OF CHANGING THE CULTURE SURROUNDING OPIOIDS *Stressed at Kentucky Opioid Summit*

In June, Kentucky business leaders gathered in Lexington to hear personal stories of addiction as well as expert discussions about how employers can help solve the opioid epidemic at the Kentucky Chamber's inaugural Kentucky Opioid Summit.

Kentucky Chamber President and CEO Dave Adkisson said the business community wants to be a part of turning the tide on the state's opioid epidemic by getting people back on track and back to work, which benefits the individual, their families, and the community.

Adkisson stressed the importance of treatment and added when employers take a stand against the stigmas surrounding the struggles of addiction, it sends a clear message to employees and others that businesses are committed to being a part of the solution.

At the summit, individuals who have struggled with addiction shared their stories about how they got back on track to help employers know how best to help those with substance use disorders.

Most notably, Rex Chapman spoke about his struggles with opioids following his career at the University of Kentucky and 12 years in the NBA. Chapman said he knew he was "in love" after just two days of taking the medication. His addiction reached a point where he was taking 40 Vicodin and 10 Oxycodone per day before he went to treatment for the first time. Now, he has been in recovery for five years and is using his story to help others.

Executive Director of the Grayken Center for Addiction at Boston Medical Center

Michael Botticelli, who also served as director of National Drug Control Policy under the Obama Administration and has personally experienced substance use disorder, stressed that people struggling with addiction often don't seek help because they are afraid of what their employer will think and the negative impact it may have on their job. Botticelli added it is important to build a culture where people feel more comfortable coming forward and asking for help because often individuals don't say anything until it is too late.

And Eric Bailly, business solutions director for Anthem, said the opioid crisis is absolutely a workplace concern as 70% of those with substance use disorder are employed. Bailly added that the costs to businesses come as a result of lost time, turnover and retraining, and medical expenses. He encouraged businesses to take actions in order to stamp out the stigma surrounding the issue.

As for the next steps employers can take in this crisis, the Kentucky Chamber plans to continue its efforts to help the business community to get involved in solving the opioid crisis through its work with the new Opioid Response Program for Business and the Opioid Response for Business Task Force.

READ MORE

Read more about the expert discussions and testimony heard at the Kentucky Opioid Summit on [The Bottom Line](#).



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PENSION RELIEF FOR UNIVERSITIES AND OTHER AGENCIES BECOMES

Law After Special Session

In July, Gov. Matt Bevin signed into law a bill that provides the state's regional universities and other quasi-governmental agencies with a freeze of employer contributions and options to exit the underfunded pension system.

The bill was finally passed on the fifth day of the special session called by Gov. Matt Bevin to tackle the pension issue as agencies including universities, rape crisis centers, health departments, and others face bankruptcy and other financial hardships due to pension costs.

House Bill 1 allows those groups the opportunity to exit the Kentucky Retirement System (KRS) and move new employees of their institutions into a new plan, more like a 401k, to ensure pension costs do not continue to hinder their budgets. No agency is forced to exit under this plan. If an entity decides to exit



the system, they will pay off their unfunded liability to the pension plan over a set number of years or in a lump sum payment so the system is not left with the cost of their employees.

The legislation also implements a freeze of the 49 percent employer contribution rate those entities have been paying into the system for their employees. The bill has an emergency clause, meaning it went into effect immediately.

FROM THE FRONT

Opioid Epidemic



In addition to the devastating impact of opioid abuse on Kentuckians and the state's efforts to build and sustain a quality workforce, the criminal justice system also experiences the negative effects – at a high personal and financial cost.

As the cost of incarceration is \$18,406 annually per inmate, the approximately 4,500 additional inmates in prison for drug offenses in 2016 cost Kentucky taxpayers more than \$82 million per year – and this doesn't include those previously incarcerated or sent to prison since 2016.

We encourage employers across the Commonwealth to become part of the Response Program for Business.

MORE INFO

More information is available in the report *Opioid Abuse in Kentucky* on how the program can help your business. View the report at kychamber.com.

LET'S RECOVER KENTUCKY'S WORKFORCE

Are you an employer looking for added support to navigate effective policies in the areas of hiring, treatment, recovery, and prevention to combat the addiction epidemic of today?

The Kentucky Chamber Workforce Center is proud to launch the Opioid Response Program for Business. Work with our team to help audit your existing policies and make recommendations for the best practices to maintaining a drug-free workplace while supporting a recovery-friendly culture. This program is no cost to the employer. Please contact workforcecenter@kychamber.com for more information.

Kentucky Supreme Court Election

TO TAKE PLACE IN NOVEMBER

Kentucky state Senator Whitney Westerfield announced in May that he is running for the open Supreme Court seat in the 1st District, encompassing 24 counties in western Kentucky.

Westerfield, of Hopkinsville, has served in the state Senate since 2012, where he currently serves as the Chairman for the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Kentucky Court of Appeals Judge Christopher Nickell is also running for the open seat.

Nickell practiced law for 22 years, serving as a Kentucky

trial attorney, prosecutor and public defender, as well as an instructor at Murray State University before taking on the position of Kentucky Court of Appeals Judge.

The seat was formerly held by Supreme Court Justice Bill Cunningham, who announced his retirement in December 2018. Governor Matt Bevin then appointed Justice David Buckingham, who is not running in the November election to finish the remainder of Cunningham's term. That term ends in 2022.

The nonpartisan election will take place in the statewide general election on **Tuesday, November 5.**



Christopher Shea Nickell
KENTUCKY COURT OF APPEALS JUDGE



Whitney Westerfield
KENTUCKY STATE SENATOR



KENTUCKY JUSTICE CABINET SECRETARY TILLEY SAYS STATE CAN'T PUNISH PEOPLE TO SOBRIETY, NOTES KEY ROLE OF

Business Community in Opioid Crisis

As the state continues to struggle with the scourge of opioids and heroin, Kentucky Justice Cabinet Secretary John Tilley says the approach to tackling both addiction and incarceration must be changed.

In a powerful illustration, the Justice Cabinet Secretary noted that in one year, America sees more deaths from drug overdose than the total number of lives lost in the Vietnam War.

In an interview with The Bottom Line, Tilley said there are thousands of individuals locked up in Kentucky due solely to their addiction rather than receiving treatment. Instead, Tilley said, Kentucky should be adopting a public health-first approach to the issue.

The cost of the opioid epidemic to the state, Tilley said, is incalculable when you look at the costs of incarceration, health care, and other aspects.

When looking at incarceration, Tilley said it costs Kentucky roughly \$25,000 per inmate per year. When asked what it costs to put someone in treatment, he said while the numbers are all over the board, it is still a fraction of the cost of incarceration.

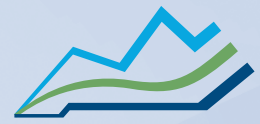
“Tilley said it costs Kentucky roughly **\$25,000 per inmate per year**. When asked what it costs to put someone in treatment, he said while the numbers are all over the board, it is **still a fraction of the cost of incarceration**.”

The culture surrounding the issues of substance abuse and criminal records and how that impacts the employment of individuals struggling with these issues has started to shift with the passage of expungement legislation and other initiatives to get people back to work and back on their feet.

Tilley said it is critical for the business community to remain involved on these issues to assist in recovery and/or reentry and also pointed to data that shows individuals in recovery or those with criminal records make better employees. He also noted the re-offense rate of someone without employment is 53 percent.

WATCH ONLINE

Watch the full interview segment with Kentucky Justice Cabinet Secretary Tilley on kychamberbottomline.com.



Kentucky Chamber

14th Annual BUSINESS SUMMIT | ANNUAL MEETING

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Snap Shots

JULY 11-12
LOUISVILLE MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN



Annual Dinner Keynote: General John Kelly, 45-year marine veteran and former White House chief of staff to President Trump



Kent Taylor, founder, CEO and chairman of Texas Roadhouse, and Elizabeth McCoy, CEO of Planters Bank



Kentucky Chamber Chairman and LG&E President, CEO and Chairman Paul Thompson



Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles and Gen Canna Executive Vice President of Revenue Garrett Bain on the impact of hemp on Kentucky's economy



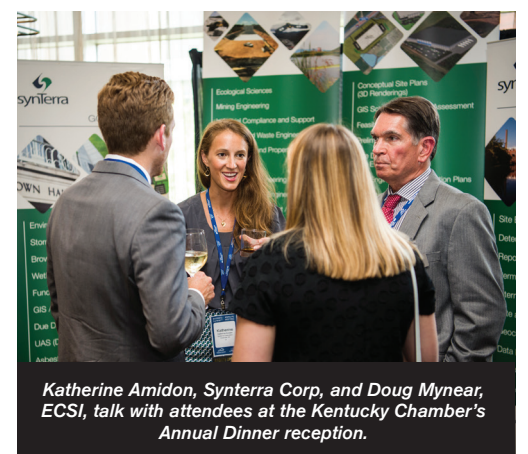
University of Louisville President Neeli Bendapudi and Kentucky Chamber Chair-Elect Nick Rowe



Kentucky Distillers Association Senior Director of the Bourbon Trail Adam Johnson and Kentucky Department of Tourism Acting Deputy Commissioner Jay Hall



Eric Ellis, president and CEO of Integrity Development Corporation, on diversity inclusion and respect



Katherine Amidon, Synterra Corp, and Doug Myneer, ECSI, talk with attendees at the Kentucky Chamber's Annual Dinner reception.



Mike Randle, owner and publisher of Southern Business & Development Magazine, on manufacturing in the South



Chamber President and CEO Dave Adkisson at the Chamber's 2019 Annual Dinner



Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary John Tilley on the cost of opioid, drug and substance abuse on business

VIEW MORE PICTURES

Go online and visit www.kychamber.com/BSAM for more event photos and to learn more about the Business Summit.



Kentucky Chamber Communications Director Jacqueline Pitts and Governor Matt Bevin discuss his re-election campaign

GOVERNOR BEVIN ADDRESSES CROWD AT *Chamber Business Summit*

At the Kentucky Chamber Business Summit, Chamber Communications Director Jacqueline Pitts interviewed Governor Bevin on issues such as pro-growth policies supporting record-breaking investment, his approval rating, and his opponent's absence.

Regarding his campaign for governor, Bevin said he plans to run on the job he has done during his first four years in the office. He told the crowd he plans to focus on addressing the pension crisis and additional tax code modernization.

Governor Bevin elaborated on his position on tax reform explaining the state corporate and income taxes should be zero, stating that relying more on consumption-based taxes will allow more dollars to flow through the economy and best address the financial ills of Kentucky.

Bevin announced Kentucky has just reached \$20 billion in private capital invested in Kentucky, and the governor said he believes people are investing private capital in Kentucky because they see there is an administration taking financial problems seriously and that there are good things to come from Kentucky.

Regarding tackling increased infrastructure funding, the governor said it needs to get done in 2020. He acknowledged that no one likes taxes being raised, but explained Kentucky must invest boldly in infrastructure. He explained regardless of the amount of the gas tax increase the same people will be mad. He said that we cannot just think about what will get us by in the short term with funding; we need a long-term plan.

The governor also spoke about the opioid epidemic and touted the grant recently awarded to the University of Kentucky intended to reduce overdose deaths and addiction in Kentucky. Related, he spoke about the importance of rehabilitating and re-assimilating those leaving prison.

In closing Bevin said, "You don't owe me your vote... vote your values, not your party. Vote for who you think will fight for you." He further asked the crowd, "Who would you want working on your behalf? Would you leave your business to me or Andy Beshear?"

READ MORE

Read more about the interview with Governor Matt Bevin on kychamberbottomline.com.

Scott Jennings & Matt Jones Discuss

KENTUCKY POLITICS AT CHAMBER BUSINESS SUMMIT

During the Kentucky Chamber's 14th Annual Business Summit, politics was a hot topic of discussion on a panel featuring RunSwitch PR Co-Founder and CNN contributor Scott Jennings and Kentucky Sports Radio's (KSR) Matt Jones, moderated by Kentucky Chamber Director of Communications Jacqueline Pitts.

Kicking off the conversation, Pitts brought up the news of Amy McGrath announcing she will challenge Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in the 2020 Senate race. Jones said within just the first few days of her campaign, McGrath raised \$3.5M but has made notable mistakes such as changing positions on issues.

Jennings agreed with Jones that authenticity is key and McGrath has shown she is not authentic and said that even if people do not like, or agree with, McConnell, he is authentic and does what he says he will. Predicting that President Trump will win by at least 30 points in Kentucky in 2020, Jennings said there is not a chance that a Democrat can win the Senate election.

Switching gears to the governor's race, Pitts noted that Attorney General Andy Beshear, the Democratic nominee for governor, declined the Chamber's invitation to appear at the Business Summit. Jones said he supported Beshear, but it was a mistake for not appearing before people who may disagree with him. He said not coming to groups like the Chamber, is a "massive" mistake and questioned who advised him.

Jennings said national politics are playing in the governor's race, and agreed that the race could be a toss-up, but in a Republican state, he believes Bevin will still win.

Pitts asked Jennings what the governor's biggest weakness is and Jennings said it was the lack of enthusiasm from Republicans that should worry the governor, but noted how far left the national Democratic party has shifted and advised that Bevin should show the clear difference in the parties nationally.

Jones said that the governor's biggest weakness is his personality and had it not been for being "rude" he would be at almost 50% approval rating and noted that the economy in the state has boomed, but even with that, his rhetoric has hurt him, —



Scott Jennings, co-founder and partner of RunSwitch PR and CNN contributor, Jacqueline Pitts, director of communications for the Kentucky Chamber, and Matt Jones, host of Kentucky Sports Radio and Hey Kentucky!

especially his comments on teachers. Discussing Beshear, Jones said the Attorney General is "boring and kinda like vanilla ice cream" but said he would be a good governor.

Jennings noted Beshear is not as colorful as many politicians and will not show up and actually tell you what he is wanting to do. Jones said if he were Bevin, he should want to do debates and forums because he is a skilled debater.

Moving to the attorney general's race, Pitts asked Jennings if Republicans should be concerned if Greg Stumbo were to return to the attorney general's office. Jennings mentioned the various scandals that have plagued Stumbo and warned all Kentuckians should be concerned if he were to return to office.

Jones said either candidate has a chance to win, but most people do not know the Republican candidate, Daniel Cameron, but said he does think there will be Democratic governor and a Republican attorney general.

Wrapping up the conversation, Jones said the Kentucky governor and U.S. Senate race will both be interesting to watch, but if Democrats lose, it will be hard for the Democratic party to continue in Kentucky running against the most unpopular senator and governor in the nation.

Jennings joked that for someone who is so unpopular, McConnell has won quite a few elections, and people enjoy having such a large influence for Kentucky.

Thank you for your investment.

The following is a list of new members of the Kentucky Chamber. Please help us thank these companies for investing in the Chamber's mission by giving them your business.

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Addiction Recovery Care
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UPCOMING EVENT

KENTUCKY ENTREPRENEUR HALL OF FAME *Induction Celebration*

Hosted by the Kentucky Chamber, Awesome Inc and Sustainable Business

NOVEMBER 20
LOUISVILLE MARRIOTT DOWNTOWN

The Kentucky Chamber, Awesome Inc and Sustainable Business Ventures will host the Kentucky Entrepreneur Hall of Fame (KEHOF) Induction Celebration, presented by Chase, on Wednesday, November 20, 2019 at the Louisville Marriott Downtown. The ceremony honors the legacies of Kentucky's most successful entrepreneurs, while recognizing the inspirational impact they have on the future entrepreneurs of the Commonwealth.

KEHOF exists to raise awareness of the impact that entrepreneurship has made in Kentucky and to encourage others to pursue similar ambitious endeavors. Join us on this special evening of networking, celebration, and recognition. We start with a reception, followed by dinner and the inductee celebration.



Sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Contact **Andrea Flanders at 502-848-8723** for details or questions.

REGISTER

Individual tickets and tables of 10 are available.
Register at entrepreneurhof.com.



CHAMBER CONSIDERS *Expanding Headquarters*

The Kentucky Chamber is exploring a building expansion to accommodate our growing staff and program offerings.

The building's last expansion took place in 2008, and much has changed since then.

Programmatically, the Chamber has expanded its work with school principals, launched a Workforce Center to bridge the skills gap, and is starting work on solutions for Kentucky's opioid crisis.

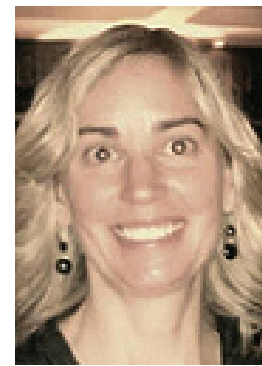
Chamber staff has increased from 25 to 42 individuals.

A campaign is currently underway to raise funds to expand the Chamber's facility in order to accomplish this expansion goal.

HELP US GROW

Please contact Kelly Wolf at 502-848-8725 for more information on how you can get involved.

Welcome New Board Members



Gabby Bruno
FORD MOTOR COMPANY
Louisville



Brett Mattison
AEP—KENTUCKY POWER
Ashland



Steve Merrick
SOMERSET HARDWOOD FLOORING
Somerset



Bruce Tassin
ST. JOSEPH HEALTH
Lexington

NATIONAL ORGANIZATION RECOGNIZES TWO KENTUCKY CHAMBERS AS

2019 Chamber of The Year

In July, two local chambers of commerce in Kentucky were named 2019 Chamber of the Year in their categories by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE). Only four chambers were named Chamber of the Year nationally.

Greater Louisville Inc. (GLI) and the Murray-Calloway County Chamber of Commerce both won the 2019 Chamber of the Year in their respective size categories.

The award is given by the Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives (ACCE) and the organization only invites a limited number of the 7,000 chambers in the nation to apply. The application process involves a rigorous review of a chamber's structure, finances, member engagement, services, and programs.



Past Board Chairs CELEBRATE THE CHAMBER'S SUCCESS

The Kentucky Chamber hosted a dinner to recognize past Kentucky Chamber Board Chairs and to honor Dave Adkisson's retirement after 15 years as president and CEO.

Thanks to the 18 of 23 living Chairs who came to celebrate the many years of success under their leadership!



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| Big Ass Fans | Computer Services, Inc. Dba CSI | Hyster-Yale Group Inc. | Louisville Water Company | Steptoe & Johnson PLLC |
| Boeing | Cooper Standard Automotive, Inc. | Johnson & Johnson Services, Inc. | Marathon Petroleum Company LP | Stock Yards Bank and Trust |
| Braidy Industries | Dana Incorporated | Kentucky Community and Technical College System | Merck & Co. | Sullivan University System |
| Brenntag | Dean Dorton Allen Ford, PLLC | Kentucky Farm Bureau Insurance | Meritor-Florence | Sumitomo Electric Wiring Systems |
| Carespring Healthcare Management, LLC | Deloitte Consulting | Kentucky League of Cities, Inc. | Mississippi Lime | Transit Authority of River City |
| Century Aluminum of Kentucky, LLC | Dickinson Wright PLLC | Kinetic by Windstream | Mubea North America | Washington Penn Plastic Co., Inc. |
| Churchill Downs | Domtar Paper Co. | Lakeshore Learning Materials | Piramal Pharma Solutions | WellCare of Kentucky |
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| Clariant | Galt House Hotel & Suites | | Regal Beloit America, Inc. | Whitaker Bank |



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KENTUCKY'S EMPLOYERS FIGHT SCOURGE OF OPIOIDS



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