



Statement
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Detrimental Budget Cuts Will Stall Kentucky's Progress

**Statement by Terry Brooks,
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On Final Budget**

The national recession has caused a lot of suffering in Kentucky, and its effects have made balancing the state budget a particularly harrowing task. The needs of Kentuckians are increasing, as evidenced by the rising numbers of residents who are eligible for Medicaid and families who are depending on [food stamps](#). At the same time, the state has fewer resources to mitigate the increased need. However, it is shortsighted to think that our only option is to continue with cuts such as those outlined in the final budget.

In many ways, this session has been about a few wise investments and many lost opportunities. While policymakers clearly faced a challenge to balance the budget during the recession, we were pleased to see some thoughtful investments that will help Kentuckians now and save the state money down the road. For example, the final budget includes funding to suspend KCHIP premiums, reducing barriers to keep kids healthy and saving struggling families an additional expense. It also provides allocations for smoking cessation programs for Kentuckians on Medicaid – which will make residents healthier now and save taxpayer dollars in the long run.

However, policymakers missed a key opportunity to apply this same level of thoughtfulness to tax breaks. The Governor failed to include a bill that would require the examination of tax breaks for business and individuals on the call for the special session. Until we examine which tax breaks benefit Kentucky and which do not, we will continue to throw precious state resources down the drain.

The essential question remains. Will policymakers put politics aside and prioritize the needs of Kentuckians when the next inevitably difficult budget session arrives? The Commonwealth needs a budget reflecting a [balanced approach](#) that takes a hard look at spending and includes new revenue. Only then will we have a budget that truly has the power to move Kentucky ahead in a 21st century economy.

For more information about taking a balanced approach to solving the state's economic problems, see KYA's report: [Needs of Kentuckians Rise during Recession, Balanced Approach Needed to Meet Demand](#)

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is the home of Kentucky's Tax and Budget Initiative. We work to promote an adequate, sustainable and transparent budget upon which we can build strong public structures and the long-term economic vitality of the Commonwealth. Funding is provided by the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Stoneman Family Foundation.