

Beshear, Lawmakers Support Stronger Protections for Kentuckians in Utility Rate Cases

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 26, 2018) – Attorney General Andy Beshear is supporting the actions of two Eastern Kentucky lawmakers seeking stronger protections for utility customers before a state regulatory agency.

Rep. Chris Harris, of Forest Hills, and Rep. Angie Hatton, of Whitesburg, are filing legislation giving the Public Service Commission (PSC) broader authority to hold utilities more accountable when considering potential bill increases for Kentuckians.

The legislation mandates the PSC consider whether proposed or current rates are affordable for residential customers; simplifies bills by reducing the number and amount of charges that are recovered through line items and customer charges; allows the PSC to consider whether a utility is providing its customers good or bad service in setting rates; and provides stronger oversight by requiring periodic management and operations audits of the Commonwealth's largest utilities.

"The provisions proposed in this legislation would help us keep utility bills as low as possible," Beshear said. "Given our utilities are provided a monopoly for their area, they must provide good service at affordable rates, all while keeping their management costs to the bare minimum."

Beshear said his office filed testimony on affordability in the recent Kentucky Power/AEP rate case when his office sought to hold the company's increase at zero. The PSC issued a series of rulings in January resulting in an average 4 percent decrease in monthly electric bills for Eastern Kentucky families who take service from the utility.

Reps. Harris and Hatton continue to fight for affordable utility bills for their communities, which is why they are proposing greater safeguards for all citizens in PSC hearings.

"With this legislation we're changing the rules to help consumers and reign in the utilities," Rep. Harris said. "Protecting the public, not profits for the utilities, must be our primary focus going forward."

"The current rates are creating hardship for most folks in Eastern Kentucky, yet the rates are allowable by the current guidelines and must be approved by the Public Service Commission," Rep. Hatton said. "Therefore, we must change the guidelines. This legislation will allow the PSC to reject rates that customers can't pay and requires audits of utility companies' expenses. I'm counting on my fellow legislators to have some compassion and support this bill. Our people need this if they are to survive."

"Utilities serve a vital role in people's lives, they are a driving force of Kentucky's economic engine, fueling our businesses, schools and homes," said Roger McCann, executive director of Community Action Kentucky. "Their importance is what makes it vital that we consider our citizens' ability to pay their bills and keep the power on. Our vulnerable populations of people with fixed or low incomes, seniors, children and those with medical needs have a particularly tough time trying to keep up with increasing costs. They deserve to have their concerns heard and considered, and I support this effort to make it happen."

Beshear worked with the two lawmakers, along with many community and public officials in Eastern Kentucky, to hold down any rate increase in the recent Kentucky Power/AEP case.

Beshear's Office of Rate Intervention serves as a watchdog for

consumers in matters relating to health insurance, natural gas, water, sewer, electric and telephone rates. Under Kentucky law, the office is responsible for representing the interests of Kentucky consumers before governmental ratemaking agencies, concentrating on utility cases before the PSC.

On Jan. 11, Beshear and a bipartisan coalition of 18 state attorneys general, state agencies and consumer advocates called on the federal government to ensure Kentuckians, not public utilities, receive the benefits of the recently reduced federal corporate tax rate.

On Jan. 8, Beshear's office recommended that the PSC reduce the current rates Duke Energy charges Kentucky customers by \$16 million.

In 2017, Beshear announced that his Office of Rate Intervention entered into a settlement with LG&E and KU that will save Kentucky rate-payers \$90 million annually – \$33.2 million of that is for residential customers.

Overall in 2016 and 2017, Beshear's office helped save families over \$291 million in increases to their utility bills.

Kentucky Ranks 5th Nationally in New Class of Board-Certified Teachers

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Feb. 20, 2018) - Today Kentucky celebrated the 316 newly certified National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs), the fifth largest class of NBCTs in the nation. With 3,601 NBCTs, Kentucky ranks seventh in the nation for the percentage of teachers who are board-certified (8.6 percent) and eighth in the nation for the total number of board-certified teachers.

This large class of newly board-certified teachers, the second largest in Kentucky's history, represents the first to be certified in the 3.0 version. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has revised the certification process to be more flexible and accommodating; it can be completed in one to three years while maintaining high and rigorous standards. Kentucky currently has over 700 teachers that are candidates in the new certification process.

Kentucky has consistently ranked in the top 10 nationally for the number of board-certified teachers. James Adams, executive director of the Education Professional Standards Board (EPSB), described board certification as "the highest credential in the teaching profession." Adams added, "The progress that Kentucky continues to make towards the legislative goal of having at least one NBCT in every school is something to celebrate. This innovative goal is important for our students."

Kentucky has strong statewide support for National Board Certification. NBCTs are entitled to an annual \$2,000 salary bonus for the life of their certificate. Upon successful completion of board certification, Kentucky teachers currently holding a Rank II certificate are eligible to apply for Rank I.

Peggy Brookins, a National Board Certified Teacher and the president and CEO of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards said, "I could not be more proud of Kentucky's 316 new National Board Certified Teachers. This is an accomplishment for the teachers but I can't overstate the impact it will have on students. NBCTs have an oversized impact on student learning and these teachers, 70 percent of whom teach in high-needs Title I schools, are working with students who need them most. Every student deserves a teacher whose practice meets the highest standards in the field. Great work, Kentucky!"

National Board Certification is voluntary and open to all teachers who have three years of classroom experience and a baccalaureate degree. "The fact that this rigorous process requiring nearly 400 hours of time and effort to achieve is voluntary, speaks volumes about the dedication that these teachers have to reaching high standards for themselves and their students," said Hal Heiner, secretary of the Kentucky Education and Workforce Development Cabinet. "Congratulations to these newly board-certified teachers on achieving this impressive milestone in their careers. Certification shows a strong commitment to their profession, schools and students to provide the best education possible to the children in Kentucky."

National Board Certification is available in 25 certificate areas from preschool through 12th grade.

"Achieving National Board Certification takes hard work and dedication, and shows our teachers' strong commitment to their profession and to improving teaching and learning for all Kentucky's students," said Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt. "We know that teachers are the biggest factor in the success of our students, and it is an honor to recognize educators who are helping their students grow, while serving as an example of what it means to be a lifelong learner."

At today's event Senator Max Wise presented the NBCTs with a proclamation from Governor Matt Bevin proclaiming the day "National Board Certified Teacher Day" in the Commonwealth. Each teacher was given an official pin from the National Board at the event.

"Teachers are the power behind National Board Certification. The standards, assessments, and organization are run by teachers and for teachers," said Holly Bloodworth, NBCT, president of the Kentucky NBCT Network.

Bloodworth led the reciting of the Five Core Propositions,

**Vote For
Raymond Rose**
on May 29, 2018.
#1 on the Ballot



I am Raymond Rose, and I'm running for Magistrate in District #3. I will do my best to maintain all the roads and the cemeteries.

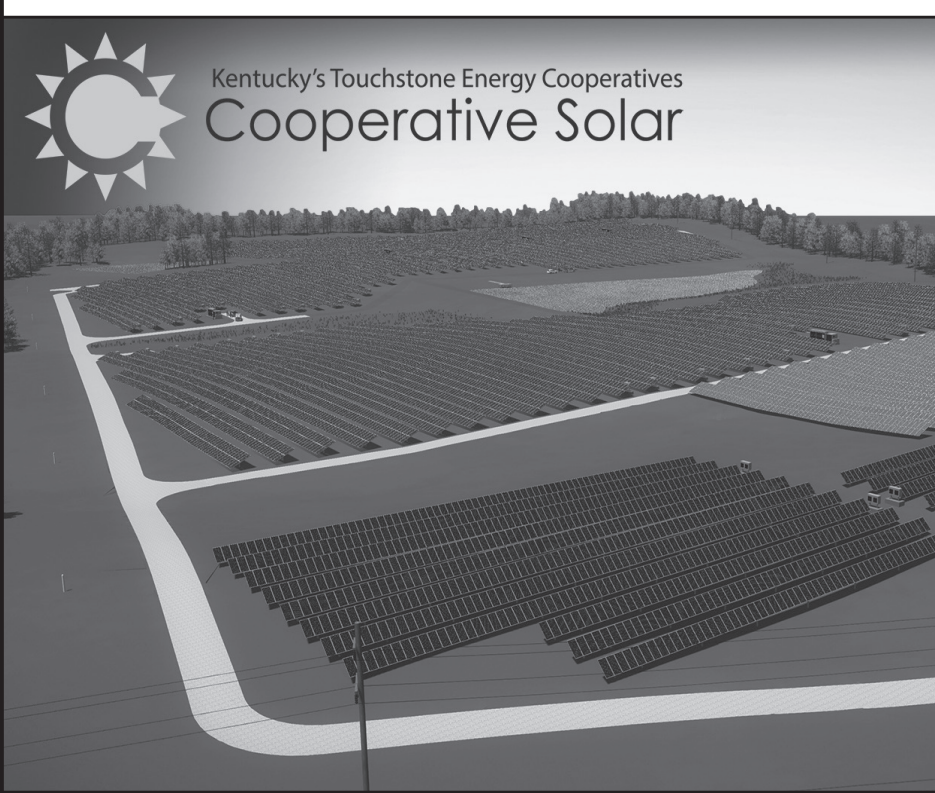
I am for the people of District #3.

Paid for by Raymond Rose.

the foundation of board certification, considered the education profession's Hippocratic Oath, at today's ceremony.

The Kentucky Department of Education, Kentucky National Board Certified Teacher Network, and the Education Professional Standards Board have worked collaboratively with the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards for three years as a site in the Network to Transform Teaching funded by the U.S. Department of Education Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant.

This farm is growing



renewable energy

Cooperative Solar Farm One offers Jackson Energy members a convenient way to tap into renewable solar energy without having to install or maintain panels on their home.

Find out how to grow your own renewable energy savings by visiting www.cooperativesolar.com.

Jackson Energy

Working for You

1 800-262-7480