**2020 U.S. KENTUCKY SENATORIAL RACE**

**Bennie J. Smith**

1. **What sets you apart from the other candidates?**

I am uniquely qualified to represent Kentucky as your next U.S. Senator in a variety of ways. First, I was born on Derby Day in Danville aka "The City of Firsts" where the constitutional convention took place to bring Kentucky into statehood. Next, I am 1 of 2 descended from slaves and kings and queens from Kemet. As one who has experienced segregation and integration during my early childhood years, I've had the great opportunity of embracing and appreciating cultural diversity. I'm the only candidate that can play a "mean" sax and will ensure our kids and future generations have the opportunities to participate in the arts from elementary through their formative high school years. Finally, I'm a people person who has the right temperament for this job and will be an engaging representative who will have an open door policy to ALL Kentuckians. I will always remember that I work for the people...not the other way around.

1. **What will you do to ensure that all Kentuckians have quality and affordable health care?**

I will ensure all Kentuckians have to secure quality affordable and accessible Health Care, and feel it's a fundamental right to be able to stay healthy and feel good about having a quality of life that reverses the current trend of unhealthy Kentuckians. The ACA aka OBAMACARE and KYNECT can give our citizens options that will guarantee they have the medical and dental care they need for their families' overall health. Those choosing ACA will know that it can be tweaked so they can still qualify with pre-existing conditions and additional steps will be taken to lower their premiums and prescription drug costs. No one has to have to choose between medicine, rent or food.

1. **How are you going to bring Kentucky into the future?**

Unfortunately, Kentucky or most of its leaders operate with an 80's or 19th century mindset...depending on who you talk to. However, we need to get with the times and offer innovative ideas that bring us into the 21st century thinking. With that being said, I will propose an overhaul of our education system statewide and nationwide and dismantle standardized testing to offer our kids more enhanced teaching and learning models that educates our kids on more progressive and advanced standards. We have to integrate Black and African History into the curriculum to overcome the systemic whitewashing of accurate history of this country and world affairs.

We definitely have to create and bring renewable energy and energy efficient technology jobs to our urban, rural and Appalachian areas in an effort boldly and aggressively address climate change by reducing fossil fuels and green gas emissions. Emphasis will be on solar panels and wind turbines.

Additionally, I propose to being light and rapid rail passenger train service to The Commonwealth to offer new jobs and jobs skills training for sustainability and reconnect towns and cities locally and statewide. This is one of the few ways we retain our talent here and lure other outside talents as well.

1. **How do you plan on addressing income inequality in Kentucky?**

My main priority is to raise the living wage to between $15 - $20 per hour in order to raise our poor and low income citizens up out of poverty while companies are generating profits through the roof. Also want to raise teachers' pay and reduce classroom sizes so every student can be reached individually to ensure their development and success. Next I would offer incentives for jobs skills training in various trades and other options to fulfill the job openings currently available. Not enough workers have the skills or experience to fill these positions.

1. **What are your goals if elected?**

My #1 goal is to change the external and internal impression of Kentuckians and give everyone the opportunity to excel and be great while giving them the dignity and respect they deserve regardless of what part of the state or which side of the tracks or town they came from.

Sign Election Security Legislation to prevent further interference into our elections by Russia and other outside entities.

I want to sign the VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN ACT and support preventive actions against sexual harassment, abuse and assaults. Address sex and human trafficking issues.

I want to invest more in infrastructure to repair roads, highways and bridges. Aggressively bring broadband internet service to rural and Appalachian areas. Lure more companies to the Commonwealth.

Reduce student debt and grant students an opportunity to attend college or technical schools either FREE or for reduced tuition based on income levels.

Address issues concerning our veterans, seniors and homeless citizens.