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OPINION

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Will You Be Ready

by John Ferrucci

Last week while driving on a back country road I witnessed something that caused me to take a moment. There was a car about thirty feet or so ahead of me. My window was down and music was playing on the radio. When two squirrels ran out together right in front of that car and in a nanosecond they were lifeless on the side of the road.

Nothing unusual about road kill, but actually seeing the moment that their life's ended made me think, is my house in order? If the Lord called on me today to lead me home would I be ready to receive him, or would I be turned away because of my worldly actions.

Jesus said, no man knows the day or the hour but the Father. Death will come as a thief in the night so we must always be prepared.

In this tumultuous time in our history we have seen more and more natural disasters occurring worldwide, fires, floods, storms, of sorts are happening, and the world is close to the brink or a world war, and rumors of war. Could we be entering Armageddon? So I ask, is your house in order?

One time while my wife and I were hiking a trail up to an observation tower we ran across a family with two young children. They were some steps behind us as we all started our decent back to the parking lot when I had an idea. I took a dollar from my wallet and dropped it on the side of the path. Then another a few feet from there, we hurried to gain some space from them then stood on the path and listened. All of a sudden we heard the children yell with excitement, then again. Their joy causes us to look and smile at on another. Momentarily they came running past us with their parents in the rear calling out to them to slow down and wait for us. Those children finding that treasure is something they will remember all their lives. That simple act gave so much happiness.

There's still time; visit a lonely soul in a nursing home, give up your seat for a senior on a bus or train. A few kind words to a Veteran could mean so much. So many simple acts of kindness are all it takes.

Jesus said when you did for your brothers so did you do unto me. Be kind pray daily and walk the straighten path, so when the moment comes his hand will reach out to you, God Bless.

‘We Need More Jam’

By Jim Waters



My late neighbor Hunter Vance's political philosophy was that politicians – whether local magistrates or United States senators – should “put the jam jar on the lower shelf so the little man can get his.”

Barren County lawyer and former state representative Marion Vance – Hunter claimed him as a distant relative – even composed “Put the Jam on the Lower Shelf” as the campaign theme song for an unsuccessful U.S. Senate bid recorded by Pat Kingery and His Kentuckians.

The YouTube version is scratchy but clearly speaks to the favored method of political campaigning throughout much of Kentucky's history: “Now look good people you can see for yourself, Vance'll put the jam on the lower shelf; Put the old age pension in the old folks' hands, I tell you he's the man, yes sir he's the man.”

What happens, though, when the jam jar's empty?

Elkton Republican and budget chair Jason Petrie's

House Bill 8 lays out a plan to create more jam in Kentucky by eliminating the state's individual income tax within the next decade.

It starts by using accumulated surpluses from federal COVID relief funds and solid economic growth in recent

years to immediately reduce the rate from the current 5% to 4% next year.

Future reductions will be triggered by continued growth in state revenues, ensuring adequate resources to cover the budget as income tax rates drop.

The legislation also expands the sales tax to include some luxury services.

States Kentucky competes with for economic growth have lowered or eliminated income taxes and have produced a lot more “jam” than our commonwealth during the past half-century, although for Nemes, a Louisville Republican and an attorney, it seems like the Bluegrass State's been stagnant for at least twice as long.

“We don't need to put the jar on the low shelf over and over again,” Nemes boomed in a speech during a House floor debate on creating a tax policy which rewards rather than punishes income and thus productivity. “We've been doin' it for a hundred years. We need more jam

in Kentucky.”

Nemes, who received a thunderous ovation for his comments, spoke after his obviously-confused colleague, Covington Democratic Rep. Buddy Wheatley, claimed, “my rationale tells me that a graduated income tax is the best way to even gain population.”

But the data doesn't support Wheatley's inner rationale.

Nemes pointed to Tax Foundation numbers indicating states with a 0% tax on income grow their populations twice as fast as the national average.

Kentucky only grew “a paltry 21% in its economy, its GDP, from 2000 to 2020 – that's the third-worst in the country,” Nemes said, supporting his conclusion: “We need more jam.”

Rep. Michael Meredith, R-Brownsville, whose district sits mere miles from Tennessee – which has already virtually eliminated its income tax – talked about a “tale of two states over the last three or four decades.”

But his most effective narrative was a tale of two cities, noting that a half-century ago, the mirror- border communities of western Kentucky's Hopkinsville and Clarksville, Tenn., each had 25,000 residents.

Now, Census numbers

report Clarksville now has nearly 167,000 residents, which, as Meredith noted, would be the third largest city in Kentucky if it were within our borders.

Hopkinsville added just over 6,000 residents compared to Clarksville's whopping population growth of nearly 142,000 during the same period.

“The people choose to live in Tennessee because they have a tax code that promotes that growth, and that population growth,” Meredith said.

Hopkinsville and Clarksville were also the same size back when Kingery crooned: “Put Vance in office, he'll stand the test; smear the jam around the little man's nest.”

By moving in the direction of eliminating the income tax, expanding the sales tax to nonessential services – all while avoiding taxes on groceries, utilities and medicine – Kentucky will create more jam, spread it around the little man's nest while many more “birds” come and nests get built.

Jim Waters is president and CEO of the Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions, Kentucky's free-market think tank. Read previous columns at www.bipps.org. He can be reached at jwaters@freedomkentucky.com and @bipps on Twitter.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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