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Kentucky's incumbent governor Ernie Fletcher (R) was soundly defeated in the November 6, 2007, election, by Steve Beshear (D), a former lieutenant governor of the state, who took 59% of the vote. A Baptist minister, Fletcher was perhaps the most outspoken supporter of creationism to serve as a governor anywhere in the country in recent years. He expressed disappointment about the verdict in *Kitzmiller v. Dover*, for example, saying that local school districts ought to be able to teach "intelligent design" if they wish (*Cincinnati Enquirer*, December 25, 2005).

Subsequently, in his State of the Commonwealth address in January 2006, Fletcher contended that under Kentucky law, teachers already have the freedom to teach "intelligent design" in the public schools. He was apparently referring to a portion ([KRS 158.177](#) [4] [PDF]) of Kentucky's Education Code authorizing teachers to teach "the theory of creation as presented in the Bible" and to "read such passages in the Bible as are deemed necessary for instruction on the theory of creation." The *Louisville Courier-Journal* (January 11, 2006) reported that according to a November 2005 survey of the state's 176 school districts, none were teaching or discussing "intelligent design."

Reaction to Fletcher's comments on the part of the state's newspapers was negative. For example, a *Kentucky Post* (January 11, 2006) editorial responded, "His plug for teaching intelligent design in public schools is manifestly unwelcome, if what he meant was that science teachers ought to incorporate it into their curriculum. If schools offer comparative religion classes as electives and teachers wish to address intelligent design in such classes, that's another matter. But this is instruction that most families can take care of just fine in their own homes or churches."

The topic of "intelligent design" arose again during a televised debate between the gubernatorial candidates at Northern Kentucky University on October 3, 2007. According to WKYT (October 3, 2007) in

Lexington, Kentucky, Fletcher [commented](#) [5], "I think there's nothing wrong with teaching that, in fact, I think to teach that is part of our founding heritage and I think it's very important," while Beshear retorted, "I believe that science ought to be taught in schools and religion ought to be taught at home and in the churches and in the synagogues." Beshear takes office on December 11, 2007.

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