

Editorial: Creationist Tourism

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Gov. Steve Beshear needs a vacation. Indeed, he should have taken it this week.

Other than extreme fatigue, how else can one explain his embrace of a project to build a creationism theme park in Northern Kentucky (near the Creation Museum) and the apparent willingness of his administration to offer tourism-development tax incentives to developers of the park?

Even if technically legal (in that the law allowing the tax breaks doesn't discriminate against other religious or anti-religious views), a state role in a private facility that would be built by a group called Answers in Genesis and espouses a fundamentalist view resting on biblical inerrancy indirectly promotes a religious dogma. That should never be the role of government.

Moreover, in a state that already suffers from low educational attainment in science, one of the last things Kentucky officials should encourage, even if only implicitly, is for students and young people to regard creationism as scientifically valid. Creationism is a nonsensical notion that the Earth is less than 6,000 years old. No serious scientist upholds that view, and sophisticated analysis of the Earth's minerals and meteorite deposits generally lead to an estimate that the planet is about 4.5 billion years old. Furthermore, creationism teaches that the Earth (including humans) was created in six days, thus rejecting the well-established science of evolution.

But if the Beshear administration is determined that Kentucky should cash in on its stereotypes — and wants to fight Indiana to snare the theme park — why stop with creationism? How about a Flat-Earth Museum? Or one devoted to the notion that the sun revolves around the Earth? Why not a museum to celebrate the history and pageantry of methamphetamines and Oxycontin? Surely a spot can be found for an Obesity Museum (with a snack bar).

And while we're at it, let's redo the state's slogan. Let's try: Kentucky — Unbridled Laughingstock.