

# COMMUNITY

## US Senate Candidate Amy McGrath discusses 2026 election during Morehead stop

**By Cecil Lawson**  
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Retired US Marine Corps fighter pilot Amy McGrath announced her bid for US Senate on October 1.

McGrath is a familiar figure in Kentucky politics. She ran as the Democratic candidate against 6th District Congressman Andy Barr in 2018, and again against Senator Mitch McConnell in 2020.

She is a graduate of the US Naval Academy, and first woman to fly combat missions for the US Marine Corps in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Earlier this year McConnell announced his retirement from the Senate after 30 years in office, leaving an open seat. Several interested candidates from both Republican and Democratic Parties have announced their intentions to run for the seat. McGrath joined the race earlier this month.

McGrath had a busy day in Morehead last Tuesday attending a proclamation signing for Domestic Violence Awareness Month at DOVES of Gateway, visiting with customers at the Fuzzy Duck Coffee Shop, touring the Rowan County Veterans Museum, meeting with officials UK St. Claire Medical Center, and later attending the Rowan County Democratic Party Fundraiser Dinner at the Morehead Conference Center.

She took a few moments to sit down with this reporter to discuss her recently-announced campaign for US Senate.

A priority for McGrath is criticizing President Donald Trump's tariffs and recent legislation which could have negative effects on Kentucky.

Rural hospitals in Kentucky are facing some uncertainty following the passage of Medicaid cuts in the "Big Beautiful Bill" in July and potential cuts to premium tax credits with the Affordable Care Act (also known as Obamacare).

"Hospitals are facing this uncertainty because of lawmakers in Washington, who for whatever reason, they have voted against the interests of the people in Kentucky. It's not a partisan thing, it is what it is." She noted that for a hospital like UK St. Claire, Medicaid makes up 30-35 percent of its income. "And it's not just the health care, it's the jobs - that's where the uncertainty comes in."

"This bill is the worst bill for Kentucky in my lifetime," McGrath said of the Big Beautiful Bill. "To me it's not about party. It's about getting people in office who will not do that. We have to hold these guys accountable who did. It's really only one side that voted for this bill. Let's be honest about it. I'm running for Senate because Kentucky has an opportunity here with this open seat, to elect somebody to that seat who is decent and has the courage to stand up to party leaders and the establishments of her own party or the other party. Unfortunately, that is not what you're seeing on the other side. Why? Because they all voted for his thing that hurts Kentuckians."

Kentucky may also be negatively affected by tariffs on exports such as farm products and bourbon, and that could be deeply felt in the region. The Independent Stave Company has two facilities located in Rowan County, and Eastern Light Distilling is projected to start operations in Rowan County next year.

McGrath had strong words on the Trump administration's tariffs.

"They are stupid. It's a stupid policy. Everybody knows it. There's no economist out there that said this was a good thing. Nobody voted for these tariffs. This is the power the President is taking that Congress is supposed to have constitutionally. Here's the issue, these guys in Washington are too cowardly - I have another word, but I can't say it - to stand up and say no, these tariffs are wrong, because they are the same party. To them, it's all about their party and their politics and not about the industries and the people. Tariffs are the most perfect example of that."

She also noted the Kentucky's soybean farmers used to have their product sold to China but now, because of tariffs, they will not happen this year. "We then have the US government either having to bail out the armers, or worse, send the money to Argentina, who are selling the Chinese their soybeans. We will lose that market forever, all because of these stupid policies that are not effective."

She continued that tariffs hurt auto manufacturers in Kentucky as well as everyday Kentuckians. She cited rising meat prices and new car prices. "They are hidden taxes on you. And guess who they cut taxes for? Elon."

On the foreign policy front, McGrath's criticisms continued. "Right now the Senate has ceded its power to the Presidency in so many ways, and foreign policy is just one of them."

She pointed out that Congress has the power to declare war, but it currently does not seem to care. "That's dereliction of duty."



Photo courtesy of Amy McGrath for US Senate

she said. "You can't hand that to the President."

McGrath added that the country has now swung from what she described as "overreach" to walking away from its global responsibility. She said the country has now abandoned its allies in Europe and even placed tariffs on them and has saddled them with "really bad diplomats." She quoted General James Mattis, who served as Secretary of Defense in Trump's first term, who said that gutting agencies such as the US Agency for International Development (USAID) would lead to the US "buying more bullets." She described these actions as "dumb."

She further described the Middle East as a "chaotic mess," and she said that despite President Trump's stated goals of ending the wars in Gaza and Ukraine [this interview was conducted just prior to the recent Gaza cease-fire], these conflicts have gotten worse.

McGrath said it was "deeply dangerous" that the United States was not supporting its NATO allies in the way it should. "Those commitments have kept our country safe," she said.

McGrath is entering a crowded field in the Democratic Primary in May. At least three other Democratic candidates have publicly announced their intentions to run: Pamela Stevenson, state representative from Louisville and former US Navy veteran; Logan Forsythe, Lexington attorney and former US Secret Service agent; and Josh Willett, former CIA agent and defense contractor.

When asked how she would distinguish herself from the other candidates, McGrath said she was "battle-tested," in three combat deployments and in politics, against "Washington insiders" and against Mitch McConnell himself.

"I think it's important to have those experiences," McGrath.

She also noted that her Democratic contenders for the Senate seat have all served their country. "That has been their life - service." She noted that the Republican contenders in the Primary are "life-long politicians" who all "in-

terned for Mitch McConnell."

During the 2024 Presidential election, more than 70 percent of voters in Eastern Kentucky threw their support behind Donald Trump. In some counties that support was 80 and 90 percent.

When asked what she would say to those voters, McGrath said she would ask, "Is this what you voted for? Are these tariffs, these hidden taxes, what you voted for? A lot of people didn't vote for that. They didn't vote to have 35 rural hospitals close or are at risk of closing. They didn't vote to have their premiums on Kynect skyrocket 100 percent or more. These guys promised not to touch Medicare and Medicaid. It's promises made, promises broken."

She continued, "I'm not running against Trump. I'm simply saying, what's happening in our country isn't what a lot of people voted for. They didn't vote for this chaos that's happening right now. You can only stop it by putting people into office who will be voice for the people, who are going to have the courage to stand up. These guys are afraid of Trump. I ain't. I've always said, if he does something good for Kentucky, I'm for it. But these tariffs ain't. And this bill that was passed, what it does for Kentucky is not good."

McGrath noted that the 2026 mid-term election will be a completely different race, with an open Senate seat and so much going on across the country.

She said when she ran against McConnell in 2020, she was up against "this huge McConnell machine of dark money - and COVID, which really didn't allow a normal campaign."

She looks forward to being able to get out and hit the campaign trail. "Kentucky is a state that wants to see people, they want to feel it, they want to look you in the eye. That's what I'm excited to do."

"So many people are hurting right now, so many people are tired of politics and politicians. I want to speak to everybody, people who agree, people who disagree, people who have a separate take, who are fearful. That's what this is about," she added.

Some observers see the 2026 election as a potential bellwether on voters' attitudes toward the current administration in Washington, and Democrats have recently stated that they see it as an opportunity for their party to provide an alternative to what they describe as the "chaos" unleashed by the Trump administration. McGrath weighed in on this.

"Take a look at the country right now - the other side is in charge at the federal level. They run the House of Representatives, and the Senate Congress, and the White House, and some would say even the Supreme Court. They have all the power. And what do you see happening? This chaotic mess, not only on the domestic side with tariffs hurting our people, a bill that rips health care away from Kentuckians, with no plan on the backside. The raids you see happening around the country, with men in masks throwing down 20-year veterans to the ground and dragging them.

"In foreign policy, the chaos our allies don't know what to make of us right now, our enemies are emboldened. I saw something I never thought I would see in the past couple of months. Our military rolled out the red carpet for Vladimir Putin. What?! I wanted to puke. I couldn't believe it. And then I saw a fly-by - for Vladimir Putin. That's crazy.

"The things that I fought for and stood for as a veteran, a strong country, a strong military, we stand by our allies and partners, we stand for democracy and freedom, we don't bow down to dictators, we don't roll out the red carpet for them. That is gone, and as a veteran that is very concerning to me."

When asked what needed to happen if Democrats can gain control in Congress in 2026, McGrath said the first thing that needed to happen was getting rid of tariffs, to take the burden off everyday Americans. Over the longer term, she said they must work on rebuilding a government that people can trust.

"If you get people in office that have courage, we can do it. If you institute things like term limits, we can do it," she said. She also suggested another long-term effort would be to take agencies such as FEMA and the CDC and make them independent like the Federal Reserve and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, to remove them from "the whims" of political parties.

"This is about the people of Kentucky. We have a great opportunity here to bring this seat back to the people. It was held by Mitch McConnell, who I think everybody agrees now was not working in the interest of the people," McGrath concluded. "It's about our health care, about our schools, about our kids, it's about the price of goods here and the quality of life that we all want to live, our safety. That's what this is about."

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COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
FLEMING CIRCUIT COURT  
CIVIL ACTION NO. 24-CI-00186  
ELECTRONICALLY FILED

PEOPLES BANK OF KENTUCKY, INC. PLAINTIFF

VS. NOTICE OF MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE

DAVID WAYNE ELDRIDGE, I;  
THE UNKNOWN SPOUSE, IF ANY, OF  
DAVID WAYNE ELDRIDGE, I;  
GINN'S REAL ESTATE LLC DEFENDANTS

In obedience to an Order of sale entered on the 5th day of August, 2025, in the above action, I will, as Master Commissioner proceed on:

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2025  
FAMILY COURT ROOM  
FLEMING COUNTY JUSTICE CENTER  
FLEMINGSBURG, FLEMING COUNTY, KENTUCKY  
AT 10:00 A.M.

to sell the real estate and mobile home located at 706 Mt. Vernon Camp Rd., Wallingford, Fleming County, Kentucky 41093. This property is described in a Deed of record at Commissioner's Deed Book 7, Page 6, Fleming County Clerk's Office, with the PVA calling for 44.89 acres with cabin. Parcel Mapping number: 086-00-00-021.01.

This sale is to satisfy Judgment in the sum of \$14,880.09, plus interest, taxes, court costs and attorney fees. The purchaser may pay in full at the sale if he/she chooses to do so. Otherwise, the purchaser immediately after the sale shall pay not less than 10% of the purchase price, and execute bond with surety, who is a Kentucky resident with net worth of greater or equal to the amount of the bond and who is approved by the Master Commissioner, and who must be present at the sale and execute the sale bond and affidavit of surety at the sale, for the balance of the purchase price, payable to the Fleming Circuit Court Clerk within thirty days with interest at 12% per annum on the balance from date of sale until paid in full. The bond shall have the force of a judgment and a first lien shall be retained on the property as security for the payment of said bond and interest. The purchaser shall at his/her own expense carry fire and extended coverage insurance on all insurable improvements located on the real property from the date of sale until the purchase price is paid in full, with loss payable to the Master Commissioner. The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes assessed against the property for 2025 and all subsequent years. The title interest of the parties to this lawsuit will be conveyed without warranty by the Master Commissioner to the purchaser and the purchaser shall be entitled to possession upon payment of the purchase price in full after confirmation of the sale by Fleming Circuit Court, subject to any equity of redemption if the property does not sell for two-thirds of its appraised value.

Buyer is advised to have a title search completed on the property and must file any exceptions to the sale within ten (10) days. The purchasers will be required to have any persons evicted or property removed from the premises. The sale is subject to any terms and conditions that may be announced on the day of sale.

JOHN C. PRICE  
MASTER COMMISSIONER  
FLEMING CIRCUIT COURT

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