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| **Matt Bevin shocks Jack Conway to become next governor of Kentucky** |

**BY SAM YOUNGMAN** November 3, 2015

He never led until the end, and that's when it counted.

Republican Matt Bevin, who trailed in every public poll since winning the Republican primary in May by 83 votes, shocked Democrat Jack Conway on Tuesday to become the next governor of Kentucky.

With help from national Republicans he has shunned repeatedly, Bevin was able to overcome a campaign of missteps and self-inflicted wounds to become the first Republican governor since Ernie Fletcher's 2003 victory and only the second since Louie Nunn left office in 1971.

Bevin was able to defy pundits, political insiders and polling — including one released by his own campaign in October that showed him losing — and emerge a winner Tuesday night.

In the end, it wasn't even close. Bevin won 106 of the state's 120 counties on his way to a nine-point victory. In Fayette County, Conway came away with a margin of less than 11,000 votes. And in Jefferson County, the Democrat's margin was about 37,000 votes. Neither was enough to offset the massive margins Bevin built outside of the state's two largest cities.

With the state's electorate still largely disdainful of President Barack Obama, Bevin capitalized on a political environment made toxic for Democrats during a summer of enormous social change.

He was quick to rush to the defense of Rowan County Clerk Kim Davis when she was jailed briefly for defying a federal judge's order to issue marriage licenses after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage.

In the closing days of the race, Bevin focused on that saga and other social issues, honing in on rural voters' contempt for Obama and career politicians. In a gracious victory speech, Bevin praised his rivals and called for Kentuckians to unite around the common goal of making the state a beacon for the nation. "This is our opportunity to come together as one," he said. "We have much work ahead of us."

After being introduced by running mate, Lt. Gov.-elect Jenean Hampton — the first black person to win a statewide race in Kentucky — Bevin spoke of the challenges that lie ahead, saying it was time "to get the overalls on, get the boots on and get out of bed."

"This is the chance for a fresh start," he said. "It truly is, and we desperately need it."

Conway took the stage at the Frankfort Convention Center before 9 p.m. Tuesday and told his supporters he had called Bevin to congratulate him on the victory. Conway said he told Bevin that he "remained positive about moving this state forward, and that if he ever needed any assistance, that this Democrat was at his disposal."

The election of Bevin completed a remarkable comeback for a man who was overwhelmingly defeated during last year's Republican U.S. Senate primary, in which Bevin, picking up the Tea Party mantle, tried and failed to defeat U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell in a bruising race.

The tension between McConnell and Bevin and the people who surround them continued through this race, but McConnell was quick to put the past behind him and do what he could to help his former opponent win.

Bevin, who continued to focus his efforts on Tea Party and evangelical voters throughout the general election, was at times his own worst enemy. The Republican spent much of the fall race pushing back against charges, dusted off from the race against McConnell, that he was a "pathological liar" and an "East Coast con man." Additionally, Bevin spent months trying to reposition himself from some of the far-right ground he staked out during the primary on issues such as early childhood education and the state's Medicaid expansion.

Bevin repeatedly accused Conway and the media of lying about him for saying that he wanted to "kick a half a million people off their insurance" despite his adamant response in February when he was asked if he would reverse Gov. Steve Beshear's executive order expanding Medi caid eligibility to 138 percent of the federal poverty level.

"Absolutely," Bevin said at the time. "No question about it. I would reverse that immediately."

In the months that followed his surprise primary win, Bevin sought to soften that position.

Along the way, he seemed to pick counterproductive fights with everyone who wasn't already on his team.

The Republican Governors Association, which made a massive last-minute financial push to put Bevin over the finish line, pulled out of the race in late September after Bevin had refused to continue his habit of self-financing his campaigns. Adding to the negative optics, the group's decision came just after Bevin drew mockery from Democrats by stopping by the state Democratic Party's headquarters to complain to a receptionist about the sign outside.

In late September, just hours after Bevin's campaign announced that presidential candidate and junior Kentucky U.S. Sen. Rand Paul would campaign for the gubernatorial candidate, Bevin went on Kentucky Sports Radio and said he would support Ben Carson over Paul in the race for president. Paul still campaigned with Bevin the following Saturday, but the crowd in Frankfort was sparse. And despite McConnell's efforts to help his one-time nemesis, Bevin's running mate, Hampton, declined to say if she thought McConnell should resign as majority leader when she was asked in October.

**Questions (You must use complete sentences)**

1. Who were the two candidates running for governor?

2. Which candidate won and what was his party affiliation?

3. Who was Matt Bevin’s running-mate and how did she make history?

4. Name an issue that Matt Bevin supports.