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## *Emerge America* Launches New Statewide Kentucky Affiliate

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### *Organization to Recruit and Train Women for Elected Office*

**Emerge America**, a national, non-profit organization model that was established in 2002 to recruit and train Democratic women who want to run for public office, today announced the launching of **Emerge Kentucky**. **Emerge Kentucky** will recruit Democratic women statewide and put them through an intensive seven-month training and networking program based upon the **Emerge America** curriculum. **Emerge Kentucky** will begin its first class of women candidates in February 2010. The application process will begin this November.

“Kentucky ranks 45<sup>th</sup> among the states for women in elected office and there are no women representing Kentucky in Congress -- we must do better,” said **Emerge Kentucky** Board Chair, Jennifer A. Moore. “We have received an enthusiastic response from women across Kentucky about the program. Our board of advisors and board of directors is an impressive list of women committed to improving the political landscape for women in Kentucky.” Moore served as the chair of the Kentucky Democratic Party in 2007 and 2008 at the selection of Governor Steve Beshear. She is a partner in the Louisville law firm, [Grossman & Moore PLLC](#).

In addition, **Emerge Kentucky** has hired Kathy Groob as its executive director. Groob is a former city councilwoman from Ft. Mitchell and ran for the state senate in 2008. She is a political consultant with [November Strategies](#) in Covington and is the publisher of [ElectWomen Magazine](#). “I know firsthand how difficult it is for women to run for office,” said Groob. “When women go through the **Emerge** program, they will be ready to run and Kentucky will benefit greatly from additional women holding leadership positions.”

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Emerge America President and Founder; Andrea Dew Steele describes the political climate in Kentucky as difficult for women. "Today, even though women are 51% of Kentucky's population, 53% of the state's registered voters, and 30% of those living in poverty, only 15% of statewide elected officials are women. This is because women have not traditionally been included in the power structure of Kentucky's state government," said Steele. "By getting more women in elected office, Kentucky can start reshaping policy to improve the lives of Kentuckians everywhere. ***Emerge Kentucky*** will help them do just that by filling the political pipeline with well-trained, well-skilled Democratic women who are ready to step forward, run, and win elected office!"

***Emerge Kentucky*** was established to address the shortage of elected women officials in Kentucky by recruiting Democratic women to train, and providing them with the support they need to win. ***Emerge Kentucky*** will provide comprehensive training and make a long-term investment in these future leaders by honing their political skills, expanding their knowledge of local issues, and connecting them with mentors. Currently, only 15% of Kentucky's general assembly members are women. Out of 120 county judge executives, only six are women and the Governor recently appointed two of them.

***Emerge Kentucky's*** advisory board includes the following members: former Governor Martha Layne Collins, Auditor Crit Luallen, First Lady Jane Beshear, Senator Denise Harper Angel, Senator Kathy Stein, Senator Robin Webb, Reps. Linda Belcher, Leslie Combs, Kelly Flood, Joni Jenkins, Martha Jane King, Mary Lou Marzian, Sannie Overly, Ruth Ann Palumbo, Dottie Sims, and Susan Westrom, Judge Executive Carolyn Belcher, Jennifer Chandler, Teresa Isaac, Eleanor Jordan, Lillian Press, Mary Karen Stumbo, Mayor Elaine Walker, Lois Combs Weinberg, and Virginia Woodward.

Board members from across Kentucky include: Gina Berry, Ashley Jackson, Priscilla Johnson, Virginia Johnson, Kathleen Lape, Chris McGarvey, Wanda Mitchell-Smith, Kerry Morgan, Melinda Niemann, Vicki Prichard, Kennita Roy, Linda Scholle Cowan, Loren Wolff, and Kathy Wright.

For information about ***Emerge Kentucky***, to volunteer, contribute or for program application information contact Kathy Groob at 859-291-9001 or visit [www.EmergeAmerica.org](http://www.EmergeAmerica.org).

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