

## Former Aide to Robert Kennedy to Speak

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**LEXINGTON, Ky. (Sept. 3, 2004)** -- Peter Edelman, a former U.S. assistant secretary of [Health and Human Services](#) and aide to Robert F. Kennedy, will speak at the University of Kentucky at 7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 8, on the topic "Social Policy Then and Now and the Legacy of Robert F. Kennedy."

Edelman will speak in 230 UK Student Center. A reception will be held after the talk. The event is free and open to the public.

Edelman, a Georgetown University law professor and author of "Searching for America's Heart: RFK and the Renewal of Hope," is being hosted by the Appalachian Studies Program at UK. His speech will kick off a four-day event that will commemorate Robert Kennedy's 1968 visit to Eastern Kentucky.

The event, dubbed "RFK in EKY" will feature on-location, community theater reenactments of events held during Kennedy's two-day visit to Kentucky. Edelman, who served as Kennedy's legislative aide, will accompany the touring group and speak at Barwick and Pippa Passes on Sept. 9.

"I am just delighted that Robert Kennedy's 1968 trip to Eastern Kentucky is being reenacted now. It couldn't be taking place at a more important time. It reminds us how much hard work is still needed to see that all Americans share in the prosperity of this great nation," Edelman said of his upcoming visit to Kentucky.

In 1996, Edelman resigned his position in Health and Human Services to protest Bill Clinton's signing of the Welfare Reform Act. His article regarding the reform legislation in the March 1997 issue of [Atlantic Monthly](#), titled "The Worst Thing Bill Clinton Has Done," received a Harry Chapin Media Award.

The RFK in EKY event will feature four days of speeches and community theater aimed at giving

residents an historical perspective on many of the issues still facing residents in Appalachian Kentucky, according to Nell Fields, project coordinator with [Appalshop](#) in Whitesburg.

Fields said the theater events will include volunteer cast members from some of the Eastern Kentucky towns that Kennedy visited in 1968 as part of hearings for the Senate Subcommittee on Manpower, Employment, and Poverty. A Perry County attorney, Jack Faust, will portray Kennedy.

“The major thing is to accomplish a theatrical event, but it’s also been a wonderful educational opportunity for schools and college students we have worked with. It helps people clarify issues today,” Fields said.

RFK in EKY is directed by John Malpede, founder of the [Los Angeles Poverty Department](#) theatre workshop. The award-winning, non-profit community group seeks to create performance works that express the reality, hopes, and dreams of people who live and work on skid row in downtown Los Angeles.

Edelman wrote in a January 2002 issue of [The Nation](#) that our country’s welfare system is “in many ways the canary in the coal mine that signals the quality of our national commitment to low-income families.”

He said that he hopes his participation in the RFK in EKY events will help catalyze a larger involvement in the shaping of social policy.

“It reminds us, as Robert Kennedy was fond of saying, that one person can make a difference, and that people working together in larger numbers can make a huge difference. This is an especially crucial time to be communicating those kinds of reminders,” Edelman said.

Sponsors for Edelman’s visit to campus include the [Appalachian Studies Program](#), the [College of Education](#), the departments of [Sociology](#) and [Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation](#), and the [Appalachian Center](#). Information about the RFK in EKY series is available at the [Appalshop Web site](#).