

Wrapup on bills through seventh week of session

BY AARON REED
STATE SENATOR

The Kentucky General Assembly is in Week 2 of the veto period. Under the Kentucky Constitution, the Governor has 10 days—excluding Sundays—to sign the bills delivered to him, allow them to become law without his signature, or veto them. Several notable House bills are with the Governor.

HB 48 aims to reduce burdensome regulations within public schools by streamlining evaluations, training, and reporting requirements. It extends the required summative evaluations for tenured teachers from every three to every five years, ensures districts provide teacher contracts upon request, and establishes a four-year recurring professional development schedule. The bill also reduces the frequency of certain annual trainings, including active shooter response, child abuse prevention, suicide prevention, and seizure disorder training. It limits the Kentucky Board of Education from imposing new reporting requirements on schools unless authorized by state or federal law. Additionally, it encourages school districts to implement induction programs for first-year teachers and requires identifying districts that have not done so.

HB 157 creates a Friends of Kentucky Agriculture special license plate to support the Agricultural Program Trust Fund. The plate costs \$28 initially and \$23 to renew.

HB 193 streamlines Kentucky's dual credit and work-ready scholarship programs by consolidating them into a single statute. The bill simplifies administration for schools, colleges, and state agencies while ensuring students have clear access to available opportunities. It allows high school

students to take up to eight career and technical education dual credit courses and four general education courses, all covered by dual credit scholarships. Additionally, it removes the penalty that reduced scholarship amounts by 50% for unsuccessful course completion and shifts scholarship distribution to a first-come, first-served basis rather than prioritizing seniors over juniors.

HB 208 requires local school boards to prohibit student use of personal telecommunication devices during instructional time, with exceptions for teacher-authorized use. It also expands school internet restrictions by requiring social media platforms to be blocked on school networks.

HB 216 allows Department of Agriculture employees, excluding those in the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy, to apply for or receive funds, awards, or contracts from the office. It amends ethics statutes to conform, applies retroactively, and includes an emergency provision.

HB 240 strengthens early literacy by requiring a universal reading screener for kindergarten students in the last 10 days of school. Beginning in the 2025-26 school year, students who do not meet reading benchmarks may be retained in kindergarten or shall remain in first grade for an additional year. Students turning seven by August 1 are exempt from kindergarten retention, and placement decisions for special education students will be made by their admissions and release committee. The bill also requires schools to reevaluate reading improvement plans for retained students.

HB 241 as amended, expands flexibility for Kentucky school districts by addressing virtual learning and lost instructional days. It allows the education commissioner

to grant up to five additional NTI (disaster relief) days for districts facing closures due to weather, illness, or disasters. Districts can extend school days up to seven hours to meet the 1,062-hour requirement in fewer than 170 days. If unable to finish by June 4, districts may request a waiver for up to five instructional days, with employees receiving full credit for waived or extended days. The bill also removes KDE's authority to cap enrollment or funding for district-run virtual programs, allowing nonresident students to enroll—capped at 2% of the district's in-person average daily attendance. HB 241 also includes language from SB 268, a bill I sponsored, for a pilot program for Cloverport Independent School District that permits continued virtual learning with enrollment limits through 2028, with additional safeguards if performance drops.

HB 303 creates academic and career pathways to help military health care personnel transition into civilian health care roles. It allows colleges to offer bridge programs that credit military training, reducing time to earn credentials. Programs must align with the Department of Defense SkillBridge Program, and professional licensure boards will collaborate to support licensing. Schools must report annually on program outcomes, ensuring a smoother transition for military medical professionals into the workforce.

HB 315 bans foreign entities from proscribed countries from acquiring agricultural land in Kentucky or participating in state agriculture programs. They may purchase land for non-agricultural use if developed within five years. The attorney general enforces compliance, with violations leading to state seizure and foreclosure. A Senate committee substi-

tute allows foreign-owned companies to lease land for agricultural research, ensuring operations like Syngenta can continue while maintaining restrictions on foreign land ownership.

HB 342 requires Kentucky high school students entering ninth grade in the 2026-2027 school year or later to complete one credit in financial literacy.

HB 455 establishes the Office of Election Investigations and Security within the Office of the Attorney General and requires an annual report to the Legislative Research Commission.

HB 537 strengthens the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund by ensuring that all money from opioid-related settlements, lawsuits, or bankruptcies goes directly into the fund. It removes outdated references to past legal cases and gives the attorney general the authority to set rules on how certain funds are distributed. The bill improves oversight and ensures settlement money is used to fight addiction and support recovery efforts across Kentucky.

HB 684 updates Kentucky's election procedures, voter accessibility, and candidate filing rules. It allows fewer precinct officers for consolidated precincts and requires election boards to notify schools by December 1 if buildings will be used as polling places, though schools are not required to close. Caregivers of qualified voters may cast excused in-person absentee ballots, and county clerks can issue and reissue mail-in absentee ballots. Ballot drop-box and audit surveillance footage may be disposed of after 60 days unless needed for legal purposes.

HB 694 directs employer contributions for retiree health in the Teachers' Retirement System (TRS) to be used to reduce the pension fund's unfunded liability once the retiree

health fund is fully funded. If the retiree health fund falls below 95% funding, those contributions will return to the health fund until it is fully funded again. The TRS Board may recommend changes to reduce employee or employer contributions once both the pension and retiree health funds are fully funded. This shift in contributions is expected to accelerate the pension fund's path to full funding by approximately two years.

HB 695 limits the Cabinet for Health and Family Services' authority to modify the Medicaid program without General Assembly approval and mandates legislative notification of implementation barriers. It requires the cabinet to procure new Medicaid managed care contracts by Jan. 1, 2027, and directs the submission of a waiver application for a community engagement program. The bill reinstates prior authorization requirements for behavioral health services as of Jan. 1, 2020, and modifies coverage and reimbursement for psychoeducational services. It also establishes the Kentucky Medicaid rebate sequestration fund and ensures Medicaid pharmaceutical rebate funds carry forward into future fiscal years. Senate revisions to the bill remove limitations on Medicaid coverage for psychoeducational services and exempt federal CMS-imposed Medicaid changes and university hospital payment programs from requiring General Assembly approval. It allows beneficiaries receiving behavioral health services before enactment to continue care for 180 days without prior authorization. It requires monitoring and reporting of behavioral health and substance use disorder service costs, flagging increases over 10% from the previous year. Additionally, it mandates a behavioral health

and substance use disorder treatment scorecard for Medicaid managed care organizations and limits the number of Medicaid managed care organizations to three while barring noncompliant organizations from new contracts if they failed to meet fiscal year 2025-2026 requirements under previous legislation. The measure also requires a feasibility study for managed long-term services and supports.

HJR 15 returns the granite Ten Commandments monument for permanent display on the Capitol grounds. It was given to the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1971 by the Fraternal Order of Eagles.

You can track these bills and meetings in several ways. Stay updated on legislative proceedings by visiting legislature.ky.gov, or finding the status of legislation by calling 866-840-2835. You can also get legislative meeting information at 800-633-9650 and watch live at KET.org/Legislature, or access archived footage on the LRC YouTube Channel at THIS LINK or KET.org/legislature/archives.

You can follow the legislature on social media. For updates, follow me on Facebook Aaron Reed Kentucky Senator #7, Instagram aaronreed5326, X @AaronReed4KY, or track the Senate Majority Caucus at @KYSenateGOP on X and Instagram. Press releases from the Senate Majority Caucus and information on members are also available at our website, kysenategop.com.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you in the Kentucky Senate. If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas, please reach out to my office if I or my staff can be of any assistance to you or your family by emailing me at Aaron.Reed@kylegislature.gov or by calling me toll-free at 1-800-372-7181.

HAPPENINGS IN ANDERSON COUNTY

CLEAN UP DAY SET FOR APRIL 22

The Main Street Clean Sweep, sponsored by Bluegrass Greensource, will be held on Saturday, April 22, at 3:30 p.m. at the First Baptist Church of Lawrenceburg.

The Main Street Sweep will be hosted by the Anderson County Junior Conservation Board. The group is made up of students in grades 7-12 interested in preserving our natural resources.

The group has led this litter abatement initiative since 2017. Everyone is invited to come out to the church and help beautify the community.

The church is located at 111 N. Main St., Lawrenceburg.

PLEASANT VIEW HONORS PASTOR

Pleasant View Baptist Church will honor their pastor on his 15th anniversary on Sunday, April 13, at 11 a.m.

The morning speaker will be the Rev. Les Harris of Sycamore Chapel in Peeewe Valley with HIS congregation.

All are invited. Lunch will be served immediately after the morning worship.

The church is located on 789 Clore Jackson Road in Shelbyville.

Pleasant View hosts Easter Sunrise

Pleasant View Baptist Church will hold an Easter sunrise service at 7 a.m. on Sunday, April 20.

The community is invited. The church is located at 789 Clore Jackson Road in Shelbyville.

EASTER SERVICES AT VAN BUREN BAPTIST

Van Buren Baptist Church address is 1488 Fairmount Road, Lawrenceburg.

The church is located off US 249 and US 62.

Easter Service on Sunday, April 20, will start at 9 a.m. with breakfast to follow at 10 a.m. The regular morning service at 11 a.m.

Everyone is invited on this special day.

NEW HOPE HOSTS DISCIPLESHIP PROGRAMS

Women's discipleship study will start on April 27 at 6 p.m. It will study "Armor of God" by Priscilla Shirer.

The men's discipleship study will also start on April 27 at 6 p.m. "Victory in Spiritual Warfare" by Dr. Tony Evans will be studied.

NEW HOPE TO HOST CONCERT

The contemporary Christian group Sidewalk Prophets will present an acoustic set at New Hope Baptist Church in Versailles on May 14 at 7 p.m.

See church website for ticket info! Everyone is invited to attend.

NAMING RIGHTS FOR ANDERSON COUNTY ATHLETICS

Is your business interested in obtaining the naming rights for Anderson County High facilities?

Bid packages are currently being accepted for the high school gym; weight room; soccer field; and softball field.

For more information, contact athletic director Corey Sears at corey.sears@

anderson.kyschools.us

ANDERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY TO MEET

The Anderson County Historical Society will meet on Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 6p.m. at the Anderson Public Library, 101 North Main Street in Lawrenceburg, Kentucky.

For the April 8 meeting we will enjoy a presentation by Steve Vest, who will speak about his new book, "George Graham Vest--The Life and Times of Dog's Best Friend". It's about one of his family members from the late 1800s

About the book: George Graham Vest--The Life and Times of Dog's Best Friend provides a detailed look at Vest, who was born and raised in Frankfort, Kentucky but later practiced law in central Missouri, serving the "Show Me State" in the Missouri House of Representatives, the Confederate Congress, the Confederate Senate, and later the U.S. Senate, with more than 30 years in public office. Vest was known as a champion for the rights of Native Americans, helped establish Yellowstone National Park, and was called a man of genius by his contemporaries whose skill in debate was never equaled.

About the author: Stephen M. Vest is the editor and publisher of Kentucky Monthly, a Governor Award in the Arts (Media) honoree. Founded in 1998, Kentucky Monthly has more than 100,000 readers. He is the author of Unexpected Inheritance (Butler Books,

2014), a memoir about being raised by older parents and a hard-to-please grandmother, two collections of columns, including THAT Kind of Journalist (2008), and the publisher of the 2012 anthology Kentucky's Twelve Days of Christmas with editor James B. Goode. Vest holds journalism and English degrees from the University of Louisville and Murray State University (MFA-Creative Nonfiction). His work has appeared in newspapers nationwide, including The Journal of Kentucky Studies, Still, and the anthology Of Woods and Waters (2005) by Ron Ellis. A frequent speaker, Vest teaches communications at Campbellsville University, public speaking at Midway University, and feature writing and storytelling at Eastern Kentucky University. He and his wife, Kay, live in Frankfort, Kentucky. They have four grown children--Christopher, Katy, Molly, and Sydney. /div>

Everyone is invited to attend.

ANDERSON HISTORY MUSEUM HAS NEW HOURS

The Anderson County History Museum is located at 108 E. Woodford Street, in a former Carnegie Library built in 1908. It is filled with local artifacts that tell Anderson County's history.

It is now open on Tuesdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can also make an appointment to visit the museum on other days by calling Historical Society President George Geoghegan, or the Anderson

Public Library.

The contact information is posted on the door at the museum. Admission is free.

KSP POST 12 TRAFFIC SAFETY CHECKPOINTS


FRANKFORT — The Kentucky State Police (KSP), Post 12 Frankfort, which provides coverage for Shelby, Spencer, Franklin, Anderson, Scott, Woodford, and Fayette counties, will be conducting periodic traffic safety checkpoints at approved locations in accordance with Kentucky State Police Policy and Procedures Manual.

These checkpoints will be conducted in an effort to enforce the traffic laws of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Special attention will be paid to occupant protection (seatbelt adherence), sobriety, insurance, and registration violations.


SEND IN YOUR NOTICES

Nonprofit groups send in your social announcements and news to news@theandersoncountynews.com. The deadline is at Noon on Friday before the next publication. Send in your news as early as possible so we can run it several times.


The Anderson News


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114 N. MAIN STREET




 **Drop off news releases or other items for The Anderson News.**

Celebrate National Handmade Day with a

**CRAFT SUPPLY**

**SWAP**

Saturday, April 5th @ 1-3pm

**TEEN VIDEO GAME CLUB - Weds. 4/9 @ 3:30pm**

For the full list, visit our website at aplkentucky.libnet.info/events

Library hours: Mon, Tues, Thurs 9am-8pm
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