

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the 2nd Meeting of the 2026 Interim

July 8, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on State Government was held on July 8, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex.

Representative David Hale, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Representatives DJ Johnson, Co-Chair; David Hale, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Cassie Chambers Armstrong, Greg Elkins, Keturah J. Herron, Scott Madon, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Steve Rawlings, and Lindsey Tichenor; and Representatives Shane Baker, Ryan Bivens, Josh Branscum, Josh Calloway, Al Gentry, Jim Gooch Jr., Peyton Griffie, Erika Hancock, John Hodgson, Thomas Huff, Mary Beth Imes, Matthew Koch, Matthew Lehman, Chris Lewis, Matt Lockett, Marianne Proctor, Rebecca Raymer, T.J. Roberts, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Dana Feldman, Executive Director, Office for Consumer and Environmental Protection, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Morgan Bray, Program Coordinator, Food is Medicine, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Robert Long, Deputy Secretary/General Counsel, Personnel Cabinet; Brandon Adams, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Employee Insurance, Personnel Cabinet; Mark Williams, Director of UK Organic Farming Unit, University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture; Tim Woods, Professor, Agriculture Economics, University of Kentucky; Jody Ensman, Well-being Manager of UK HR Health and Wellness, University of Kentucky; Carole Catalfo, Policy Specialist, Kentucky Public Pensions Authority (KPPA), and Victoria Hale, General Counsel, KPPA.

LRC Staff: Daniel Carter, Jesse Farler, Christina Gordley, and Peggy Sciantarelli.

Approval of Minutes - June 23 meeting

A motion was made by Senator Madon and seconded by Representative Bivens to approve the minutes of the June 23, 2026, meeting. The minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Administrative Regulation 105 KAR 1:170 (Membership form requirements)

Carole Catalfo, Policy Specialist, KPPA, and Victoria Hale, General Counsel, KPPA, explained the agency's proposed amendment to 105 KAR 1:170. The regulation was reviewed and amended by the Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee on April 13, 2026, and referred to the State Government Committee on May 6, 2026. Representative Gentry made a motion to approve the amendment, which was seconded and passed by voice vote without objection.

University of Kentucky Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) Voucher Program

Mark Williams, Director of UK Organic Farming Unit, University of Kentucky Department of Horticulture; Tim Woods, Professor, Agriculture Economics, University of Kentucky; and Jody Ensman, Well-being Manager of UK HR Health and Wellness, University of Kentucky, discussed details, goals, service area, impacts, and benefits of the University's Horticulture Research CSA program. The program, piloted by UK in 2007 and developed through USDA funding, has since been implemented in part by over 30 different employers. Its mission is to improve the health and well-being of the UK community through awareness, education, and intervention. UK HR Health and Wellness currently partners with 13 Kentucky farms and allows participants to choose from more than 130 pickup options. The program improves employee health, supports Kentucky farmers, keeps food dollars local, demonstrates measurable return on investment, and serves as a national model.

In response to Chair Hale, Dr. Williams explained participants are considered shareholders. They pay up front with an expectation of receiving food for a certain number of weeks, accepting the risk of irregularities. Ms. Ensman said UK HR Health and Wellness offers either \$100 or \$200 incentive vouchers for weekly delivery of vegetables during the growing season.

In response to Co-Chair Johnson, Dr. Woods explained how each dollar invested in UK's program equates to an estimated \$3.17 generated for Kentucky farmers.

In response to Representative Lehman, Ms. Ensman said funds used for the incentive program derive from UK's self-funded health plan. The student health plan is funded separately and does not provide CSA vouchers for students at this time.

In response to Senator Tichenor, Dr. Woods said the number of vouchers redeemed—over 6,200—does not reflect the total number of beneficiaries. The program not only directly benefits the employee but the health of others in the household as well.

In response to Representative Raymer, Dr. Woods said cost of shares in the CSA program ranges from approximately \$450-\$850. The option for a smaller share at a lower cost allows for increased participation.

In response to Representative Lockett, Dr. Woods said although the CSA program differs from programs like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or the Woman, Infants and Children Program (WIC), he believes there are ways employers can be creative in terms of providing sliding scale or means-based vouchers.

Community Supported Agriculture & Wellness Rewards

Guest speakers were Dana Feldman, Executive Director, Office of Consumer and Environmental Protection, Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Morgan Bray, Food is Medicine Program Coordinator for the Kentucky Hospital Association and the Kentucky Department of Agriculture; Robert Long, Deputy Secretary/General Counsel, Personnel Cabinet; and Brandon Adams, Deputy Commissioner, Department of Employee Insurance, Personnel Cabinet.

Ms. Feldman recognized Commissioner of Agriculture Jonathan Shell for starting the Food is Medicine initiative in conjunction with the Kentucky Hospital Association. She thanked the General Assembly for supporting 26 RS SJR 23, legislation that declares Kentucky a “Food is Medicine” state and directs the Personnel Cabinet, in consultation with the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, to integrate CSA purchases into the wellness rewards programs offered to public employees and retirees covered by the Kentucky Employees Health Plan. She and Ms. Bray discussed the rationale for including CSA boxes as a state employee wellness incentive, intended outcomes, evaluation metrics, benefits for farmers and local food systems, and strategies to overcome challenges to CSA implementation.

Mr. Long said SJR 23 requires the Personnel Cabinet to integrate CSA boxes into the wellness rewards program of the Kentucky Employee Health Plan. The Cabinet anticipates full compliance with the joint resolution by January 1, 2027. Due to size of the KEHP member population, a voucher system like UK’s would be difficult to implement and would involve significant upfront cost. Including CSA boxes as a KEHP wellness benefit can be deployed immediately at little or no cost to the health plan.

In response to Chair Hale, Ms. Feldman said the biggest challenge to implementation is to ensure plan participants are aware of the new wellness benefit when it becomes available. The Department of Agriculture plans to increase awareness by participating in

benefit fairs prior to KEHP open enrollment and through marketing. Mr. Long said the Cabinet will be happy to include the Department of Agriculture and information about the CSA program when the cabinet hosts wellness fairs during open enrollment for 2027.

In response to Representative Witten, Ms. Bray said she believes both the Department of Employee Insurance and the Department of Agriculture would welcome an opportunity to promote Kentucky businesses and communities as recipients of money generated through the wellness rewards program.

In response to Senator Tichenor, Ms. Bray said the food-is-medicine initiative has not yet considered the possibility of incorporating Medicaid recipients into the program.

Adjournment

Chair Hale announced that the next meeting of the committee would be on Tuesday, August 18. There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned.