

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT

Minutes of the 3rd Meeting of the 2026 Interim

August 18, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The third meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on State Government was held on August 18, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative DJ Johnson, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Michael J. Nemes, Co-Chair; Representatives David Hale, Co-Chair; DJ Johnson, Co-Chair; Senators Julie Raque Adams, Greg Elkins, Scott Madon, Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Christian McDaniel, Robby Mills, Steve Rawlings, and Lindsey Tichenor; and Representatives Shane Baker, Ryan Bivens, Josh Branscum, Beverly Chester-Burton, Jennifer Decker, Anne Gay Donworth, Al Gentry, Jim Gooch Jr., Erika Hancock, John Hodgson, Thomas Huff, Mary Beth Imes, Matthew Lehman, Chris Lewis, Matt Lockett, Savannah Maddox, Marianne Proctor, Rebecca Raymer, T.J. Roberts, Aaron Thompson, James Tipton, Nick Wilson, and Susan Witten.

Guests: Joni Bryan, Founder/Executive Director, The 917 Society; John Steffen, Executive Director, Kentucky Registry of Election Finance (KREF); Carlos Luna, General Manager, Tyler Technologies; David Yates, Jefferson County Clerk; Jeff Hancock, Franklin County Clerk; Stephanie Campbell, Director of Operations, Jefferson County Election Center; Karen Sellers, Executive Director, State Board of Elections (SBE); and Taylor Brown, General Counsel, SBE.

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

Approval of Minutes - July 8, 2026 Meeting

A motion was made by Senator Madon and seconded by Representative Lockett to approve the minutes of the July 8, 2026 meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

2027 BR 106

Representative Hodgson, primary sponsor, explained 2027 BR 106, a resolution urging Congress to restore the citizenship question to the decennial United States census, report citizen and noncitizen population counts, and base representation on citizen population. Representative Gooch and Representative Tipton spoke in support of the resolution.

Representative Hancock questioned how the resolution might affect funding at the federal level and whether it would violate the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. Representative Hodgson said he did not believe it was the intention of the 14th Amendment to count noncitizens, and he has seen estimates that counting noncitizens for apportionment in the 2030 census could shift the balance of congressional seats by as many as 40 seats.

Representative Donworth questioned whether Congress has the ability to base representation and taxation solely on the number of citizens.

The 917 Society

Joni Bryan, Founder/Executive Director, The 917 Society, spoke at length about the mission, purpose, activities, programs, history, organizational structure, impact, and significance of the organization. The 917 Society is a Nashville-based nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting civic literacy by distributing free pocket-sized US Constitutions to 8th-grade students nationwide. The Society seeks a resolution or letter of support from the Kentucky General Assembly recognizing it as an approved civic education resource and asks that the Kentucky Board of Education announce availability of this free, privately funded resource.

In response to Representative Tipton, Ms. Bryan said they previously encountered resistance to distribution of the booklets because the cover included a QR code, which has since been removed. The booklets are available in both public and private schools.

In response to Senator Nemes, Ms. Bryan said the constitutions are printed in the USA—in Nashville, Tennessee.

In response to Representative Branscum, Ms. Bryan explained how schools can request copies, and she described the qualities that make The 917 Society an approved education resource.

In response to Representative Lehman, Ms. Bryan said congressional members do not receive enough copies of the Constitution to provide to all the schools. The 917

Society's distribution of the Constitution improves civic education by making it real and tangible to students, and the organization's online resources are accessible at no charge.

Representative Decker applauded Ms. Bryan for her work and stated there is need to put more emphasis on the Constitution.

In response to Representative Hancock, Ms. Bryan said the QR code was removed because it had been hacked in some states to bring up undesirable sites. She described the free classroom contests and other free online resources offered by The 917 Society in partnership with teachers, educational institutions, and other groups. She emphasized the organization's approach is nonpartisan and does not influence students in any particular direction.

Representative Donworth expressed concern about some of the social media posts that are accessible via teaching materials on the organization's website.

Senator Tichenor thanked Ms. Bryan for her work and asked her to provide an email address for use of school principals who wish to take advantage of the free resources.

Representative Roberts thanked Ms. Bryan for her work and said The 917 Society does not appear to be a partisan organization. He noted that the marketing material printed on the back of the Constitution booklet includes references from all political perspectives.

Representative Raymer thanked Ms. Bryan and stated she had already informed the school superintendent in her district about the free resources.

Campaign Finance Electronic Reporting System

John Steffen, Executive Director, KREF, and Carlos Luna, General Manager, Tyler Technologies, gave an update on the campaign finance electronic reporting system.

Mr. Luna discussed updates to the import and export processes and reported on progress in addressing areas of concern called to his attention by the committee in August, 2025, citing e-mail notifications before a filing deadline; linking contributors to a candidate instead of an election; and displaying election information on the filer dashboard.

Mr. Steffen expressed confidence in the improvements being made in the system. He said he looks forward to the upcoming release and is thankful for the assistance and cooperation provided by Carlos and his team.

In response to Representative Decker's concern about the backlog in reviewing and approving submitted reports, Mr. Steffen stated he did not have an explanation for the backlog.

Representative Lockett spoke about the difficulty in report filing and identifying campaign contributors. Mr. Steffen said the searchable database is constantly being improved, and some of the concerns about navigating through the system will be addressed in the upcoming release.

In response to Representative Tipton, Mr. Steffen and Mr. Luna discussed the cost of the system, including the original contract price and yearly maintenance cost. Mr. Steffen stated all fines are paid into the general fund, and monthly maintenance is based on the percentage of the system that is in use.

Chair Johnson acknowledged the challenges faced by KREF. He expressed appreciation for the improvements that have been made and complimented KREF for its e-mail notification system.

Update from Office of Jefferson County Clerk

David Yates, Jefferson County Clerk; Jeff Hancock, 1st Vice President, Kentucky County Clerks Association/Franklin County Clerk; and Stephanie Campbell, Director of Operations, Jefferson County Election Center, addressed the committee regarding reassignment of hundreds of residents of neighboring counties to Jefferson County's voter rolls due to recent implementation of new statewide mapping technology required by state law.

Mr. Yates said county clerks and the State Board of Elections have been in the process of examining voter assignments against precinct and county boundaries to identify where houses are assigned incorrectly. As a result of the new mapping system, 290 voters have received notification that their voter registration was changed to Jefferson County, and registration of 35 voters previously registered in Jefferson County has been transferred to Bullitt, Shelby, and Oldham Counties. Clerks are following the law, but the voter registration changes have prompted questions about payment of property taxes, school choice, and other areas of concerns, including constitutional issues. He plans to file an action in Franklin Circuit Court asking for clarification on implementation of the new

mapping system. Mr. Hancock added that the issue is not Jefferson County specific, affecting all 120 counties.

Senator Raque Adams questioned how to respond to an inquiry she received from an Oldham County resident whose registration was changed to Jefferson County. Mr. Yates said a person who resides in Jefferson County must vote in Jefferson County. His office will conduct town halls to provide information and a forum for discussion.

Representative Tipton advised that the issue has more ramifications than assignment of voting location. He described the problems that resulted in 2024 when some Spencer County residents were notified that they had to vote in Shelby County.

Senator Tichenor said 290 of her Oldham County constituents have had their registration reassigned to Jefferson County. The situation raises questions regarding legislative district representation and also affects local races. She also questioned timing of the changes, in view of the upcoming regular election.

In response to Representative Chester-Burton, Mr. Yates said the courts would need to make determinations involving candidates who file for election.

Representative Decker emphasized the need to provide guidance and information regarding applicable rules and appeal rights. She suggested that members view a video prepared by Marion County Clerk, Chad Mattingly.

Mr. Hancock said keeping the mapping technology system up to date and in compliance would require funding from the legislature.

Mr. Yates said his office had audited 587,000 registered voters. The audit was provided to SBE, and he has submitted an RFP for third party review. He has been traveling and looking at best practices in other states.

Representative Hodgson urged that county clerks, when detecting an anomaly regarding voting location, not send letters to voters until all involved elected officials have been notified. In addition, he suggested establishing a formal or informal procedure with KCCA and SBE. Mr. Yates said that will be the policy of his office going forward.

Chair Johnson said he expects the legislature will consider this issue during the 2027 Regular Session.

Voter Roll Maintenance

Karen Sellers, Executive Director, State Board of Elections (SBE), and Taylor Brown, General Counsel, (SBE), updated the committee regarding voter list maintenance.

Mr. Brown discussed provisions of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (NVRA); the voter registration purge program required under KRS 116.112; the powers, duties and membership of the State Board of Elections in KRS 117.015; membership in the Electronic Registration Information Center (ERIC); voter list maintenance agreements with non-ERIC states; removals governed by KRS 116.113; removals at voter request or due to duplicate registration; and SBE's use of postcard mailings for list maintenance.

In 2025, the voter registration purge program resulted in 225,311 ineligible voters being removed from voter rolls. In 2023, the first time SBE conducted a purge pursuant to NVRA and KRS programs, more than 127,000 registrations were removed. Since 2020, SBE has sent out more than 1,000,000 postcards for list maintenance.

In response to Representative Hodgson, Mr. Brown confirmed SBE reports to state and federal authorities the removal from the voter rolls of persons declared as noncitizens.

Adjournment

Chair Johnson announced that the next meeting of the committee would be on Tuesday, September 15. There was no further business, and the meeting was adjourned.