HOUSE BILL 5

Senate Judiciary Committee

March 13, 2026

KENTUCKY COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM

A WORKFORCE AND PUBLIC SAFETY PROPOSAL

- Expanding education and workforce training programming **ultimately reduces recidivism, improves public safety, and strengthens the economy**. Success means that our communities are safer and our workforce is more robust. It also **reduces costs to the state and, most importantly, prevents future victims.**
- We know that investments in reentry work. DOC has expanded reentry services and continue to do so. **Kentucky's historic low recidivism rates demonstrate the success of those investments.**
- Per KRS 196.032, DOC's primary objective is to maintain public safety and hold offenders accountable while reducing recidivism and criminal behavior and improving outcomes for offenders under its supervision. DOC is required to create and implement policies and programs to achieve these objectives.

THE NEED IN KENTUCKY

- **Incarcerated Populations**
  - Approximately **12,000** state prison inmates are incarcerated in 14 state correctional facilities, in addition to some 7,000 state prison inmates housed in county jails.
  - Nearly **70% of people released** from state custody over the past two years have not been re-incarcerated.
  - **95%** of the current incarcerated population will be released.

- **Workers Needed**
  - Kentucky needs to fill nearly **250,000 jobs annually**. Over the next 10 years, the state will need to fill more than **2 million jobs** to keep up with labor market demand.
  - Kentucky's **labor force participation rate is 58.2%** as of August 2025.
  - **325 employers** from across Kentucky hire for fair chance employment.

CURRENT PROGRAMMING FROM KCTCS COLLEGES

- **9 KCTCS colleges** are working in **14 state correctional facilities** and **1 federal prison**.
- **At least 1** Associate Degree is currently offered in every facility.
- Transfer Associate of Arts and Associate of Science degrees are offered **in all facilities**.
- Technical degree(s) are offered **in 6 facilities**.

IMPACT OF REENTRY INVESTMENT

- Preventing a return to prison is key to **reducing the prison population, reducing state costs, and improving the safety of our communities**.
- Vocational training increases post-release employment and earnings, which raises tax revenues and reduces dependence on public benefits.
- Reducing recidivism and overall incarceration positively impacts households and children, reducing intergenerational harms of incarceration. **Successful reentry reduces burdens on child welfare systems, public benefits, and the juvenile justice system.**
  - Kentucky has one of the highest rate of children who have or have had a parent who is incarcerated, with estimates around 10% or more of children impacted. A family with a father who is incarcerated is 38% more likely to experience poverty. **A child who has a parent who is incarcerated is six times more likely to be incarcerated themselves.**
- Lower recidivism results in fewer victimizations and fewer police responses. Each avoided arrest saves officer time, booking costs, and downstream processing. State and county budgets spend heavily on repeat supervision and incarceration.
  - Lower recidivism results in less supervision violations and repeated court processing which inflates costs for courts, probation and parole, and county jails.

PROPOSED NEW CAMPUS

- KCTCS in partnership with KYDOC is proposing a model prison education program to support inmate re-entry into society, reduce recidivism, accelerate workforce development and increase savings to society.

- The project will leverage an existing KCTCS accredited prison education program at BCTC and include a 51,530 square foot, modern, flexible in-person training facility to educate up to 400 inmates annually nearing the completion of their sentencing.

Program Delivery

- Advanced manufacturing technology
- Welding
- Diesel mechanics/technology
- Carpentry
- HVAC
- CDL
- Electric lineman technician/fiber optics
- Computerized machining and manufacturing
- Additive manufacturing
- Heavy equipment operations
- Computer engineering technology