

# **INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY**

## **Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2025 Interim**

**June 10, 2025**

### **Call to Order and Roll Call**

The first meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary was held on June 10, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Brandon J. Storm, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

### **Present were:**

Members: Senator Brandon J. Storm, Co-Chair; Representative Daniel Elliott, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, Matthew Deneen, Michael J. Nemes, Reginald L. Thomas, and Phillip Wheeler; Representatives Kim Banta, Jared Bauman, John Blanton, Lindsey Burke, Jennifer Decker, Stephanie Dietz, Peyton Griffie, Nima Kulkarni, Chris Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Jason Nemes, T.J. Roberts, Pamela Stevenson, and Mitch Whitaker.

Guests: Hon. Thomas Wingate, Chief Circuit Judge, 48th Judicial Circuit, Division 2; Danny Rhoades, Executive Officer, Department of Court Facilities, Administrative Office of the Courts; Kem Marshall, Franklin County Circuit Court Clerk; Carol Henderson, Budget Director, Administrative Office of the Courts; Hon. Stephanie Burke, District Court Judge, 30th Judicial District, Division 14; Hon. Julie Ward, Circuit Court Judge, 17th Judicial District, Division 1; Angela Darcy, Executive Officer, Department of Pretrial Services, Administrative Office of the Courts; Jason Dufek, Manager, Division of Workforce and Practice, Administrative Office of the Courts.

LRC Staff: Roberta Kiser, Stephanie Larkin, Randall Roof, Joshua Shelepak, and Robert Wright.

### **Approval of Minutes of November 7, 2024 Meeting**

A motion was made by Representative Blanton and seconded by Representative Elliott to approve the minutes of the November 7, 2024, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

### **Disaster Response**

Hon. Thomas Wingate, Chief Circuit Judge, 48th Judicial Circuit, Division 2; Danny Rhoades, Executive Officer, Department of Court Facilities, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); Kem Marshall, Franklin County Circuit Court Clerk; and Carol Henderson, Budget Director, AOC, discussed disaster recovery for court facilities. Mr. Rhoades detailed damage to court facilities incurred during the April 2025 flooding and provided an update on the temporary

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location for Franklin County court operations. Mr. Rhoades detailed damage to the Franklin County courthouse, upcoming repairs, and associated costs. Judge Wingate detailed the effort to save physical files from the flood waters and provided a history of the Franklin County courthouse.

In response to Senator Deneen, Mr. Rhoades stated funds from the asset preservation maintenance pool will be utilized to repair damage to the Hardin County courthouse. Mr. Rhoades also provided an update on the utilization of FEMA funding for facility repairs.

In response to Representative Decker, Mr. Rhoades and Judge Wingate provided an update on the temporary use of the non-affected floors of the Franklin County courthouse.

In response to Senator Storm, Mr. Rhoades provided an update on the remediation of water-damaged files removed from the Franklin County courthouse.

In response to Representative Kulkarni, Mr. Rhoades provided an update on the digitization of court files. Ms. Henderson discussed the Court of Justice reserve account established by 2025 Regular Session SB 25.

In response to Representative Whitaker, Judge Wingate discussed the digitization of court files.

### **Pretrial Discussion**

Hon. Stephanie Burke, District Court Judge, 30th Judicial District, Division 14; Hon. Julie Ward, Circuit Court Judge, 17th Judicial District, Division 1; Angela Darcy, Executive Officer, Department of Pretrial Services, AOC; and Jason Dufeck, Manager, Division of Workforce and Practice, AOC, provided an overview of pretrial services. Ms. Darcy provided an introduction to the Kentucky pretrial services system, outlined the main laws pertaining to pretrial release, and discussed staffing and areas of service. She discussed the databases used by Pretrial Services, outlined pre-arraignment release protocol (PAR), and the process when PAR is not an option for defendants. Ms. Darcy detailed how Pretrial Services provides court coverage. She also reviewed pretrial release rates, total interviews and same-day custody status, and pretrial success rates for the years 2018 - 2024. Judge Ward discussed the pretrial process in Circuit Court. Judge Burke discussed the pretrial process in District Court.

In response to Representative Bauman, Judge Burke, Judge Ward, and Mr. Dufeck discussed the pretrial process for illegal immigrants.

In response to Representative Banta, Mr. Darcy stated Pretrial Services does not preform drug tests and Judge Burke discussed conditions placed on defendants at release.

In response to Representative Elliott, Judge Burke and Judge Ward discussed the setting of bond in District Court and Circuit Court, respectively.

In response to Representative Roberts, Judge Burke, Judge Ward, and Ms. Darcy discussed the pretrial process for illegal immigrants. Ms. Darcy agreed to share information regarding the percentage of felony releases in 2024.

In response to Representative Kulkarni, Ms. Darcy discussed pretrial success rates and how Kentucky's pretrial success rates compare nationally.

In response to Representative Decker, Ms. Darcy discussed Pretrial Services' discussions with defendants who are unable to afford a drug test.

In response to Senator Deneen, Judge Burke, Judge Ward, and Mr. Dufeck discussed the longevity of warrants when defendants fail to appear.

In response to Representative Dietz, Mr. Dufeck discussed personnel shortages and agreed to provide related information.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:43 PM.