INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Minutes of the 5th Meeting of the 2026 Interim

October 1, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fifth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary was held on October 1, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT 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, Gerald A. Neal, Michael J. Nemes, Aaron Reed, Reginald L. Thomas, and Phillip Wheeler; and Representatives Lindsey Burke, Stephanie Dietz, Patrick Flannery, Nima Kulkarni, Derek Lewis, Chris Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Mary Lou Marzian, Kimberly Poore Moser, Jason Nemes, Jason Petrie, T.J. Roberts, Pamela Stevenson, Mitch Whitaker, and Nick Wilson.

Guests: Senator Shelley Funke Frommeyer, Senate District 24; Gracie Kelly, Government Affairs Director, Kentucky League of Cities (KLC); Emma Wilson, Government Affairs Associate, KLC; Jane Sternecky, Legislative Counsel, Uniform Law Commission (ULC); K. Gail Russell, ULC; Senator Craig Richardson, Senate District 3; Dustin Pugel, Policy Director, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy; Christian Postel, CEO, Lexington Leadership Foundation; Representative Michael Meredith, House District 19; and Jim Henderson, Executive Director, Kentucky Association of Counties (KACo).

LRC Staff: Randall Roof, Stephanie Larkin, Matissa Robinson, Eric Rodenberg, Joshua Shelepak, and Robert Wright.

Approval of Minutes of September 3, 2026 Meeting

A motion was made by Representative D. Lewis and seconded by Co-Chair Elliott to approve the minutes of the September 3, 2026, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

26 RS SB 132 - AN ACT relating to massage therapy

Senator Funke Frommeyer; Gracie Kelly, Government Affairs Director, Kentucky League of Cities (KLC); and Emma Wilson, Government Affairs Associate, KLC discussed 26 RS SB 132. Senator Funke Frommeyer discussed concerns involving illegitimate massage parlors

and human trafficking. Ms. Wilson discussed provisions of the bill related to local government authority over business licensing, zoning, inspections, hours of business, and sanitation while preserving state regulation of professional massage therapy licensure. Ms. Kelly discussed provisions of the bill related to increasing the penalty for practicing massage therapy without a license and statutory defenses available to human trafficking victims.

In response to Representative Roberts, Ms. Kelly discussed local licensing fees. She also discussed the distinction between local business regulation and statewide professional licensure standards.

In response to Senator Nemes, Ms. Kelly discussed current penalties for unlicensed massage therapy and the distinction between unlicensed practice and trafficking-related conduct.

In response to Chair Storm, Senator Funke Frommeyer and Ms. Kelly discussed existing criminal laws relating to unlicensed massage therapy and affirmative defenses available to victims.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Ms. Kelly discussed existing criminal laws related to unlicensed massage therapy and provisions related to additional local government regulatory authority.

In response to Senator Carroll, Ms. Kelly discussed procedures related to local business license revocation when minors perform massage services.

27 RS BR 360 - AN ACT relating to heirs property

Senator Thomas; Jane Sternecky, Legislative Counsel, ULC; and K. Gail Russell, ULC, discussed 27 RS BR 360. Senator Thomas discussed issues that arise when property passes through multiple generations without probate, resulting in numerous heirs with fractional ownership shares. He stated that the proposed legislation is intended to simplify notice requirements, protect fair market value, and preserve generational wealth.

Ms. Russell and Ms. Sternecky discussed provisions of the proposed legislation related to due process protections, including independent appraisal, an opportunity for co-tenants to buy out a partitioning owner, and open-market sale procedures when property cannot be divided.

In response to Representative Flannery, Senator Thomas discussed provisions of the proposed legislation related to factors courts could consider when determining whether property can be partitioned.

Child Support

Senator Richardson; Dustin Pugel, Policy Director, Kentucky Center for Economic Policy; and Christian Postel, CEO, Lexington Leadership Foundation, discussed 26 RS SB 337. Senator Richardson discussed provisions of the bill related to child-support benefits received through Kentucky Transitional Assistance Program (KTAP).

Mr. Pugel discussed federal law related to child-support pass-through policies, implementation of legislation similar to 26 RS SB 337 in other states, and the legislation's potential benefit to Kentucky families.

Mr. Postel discussed the effects of current child support pass-through policies and the legislation's potential benefit to Kentucky families.

In response to Representative Marzian, Mr. Pugel discussed the history of child support cost recovery policies. He described how payments are processed for families receiving KTAP.

In response to Co-Chair Elliott, Senator Richardson discussed coordination with the Office of the Attorney General and possible implementation issues related to the legislation. Mr. Pugel discussed the estimated amount of child support that could be passed through to families.

In response to Representative Nemes, Mr. Pugel discussed payments made by parents who are current on their child support payments.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Mr. Pugel discussed how pass-through payments would be distributed and provisions of the legislation related to per-child and per-case limits.

In response to Senator Carroll, Mr. Pugel discussed the interaction between child support payments and KTAP eligibility and benefits.

In response to Senator Nemes, Mr. Pugel discussed provisions of the legislation related to total pass-through amounts.

Reshaping the Shared Responsibility of County Jails
Representative Meredith; and Jim Henderson, Executive Director, KACo, discussed 26 RS HB 557.

Mr. Henderson discussed increasing county general-fund contributions to jail operations.

Representative Meredith discussed provisions of the legislation related to county jail costs, incentives for regional jails, reimbursement for pretrial felony detainees who later receive credit for time served, medical costs, and prioritizing regional jails. He also detailed the differences among full-service, regional, closed, and life-safety jails.

In response to Representative Nemes, Representative Meredith discussed credit for time served and possible incentives affecting pretrial detention. He also discussed the broader state and county roles in incarceration.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Representative Meredith discussed closed-jail counties, transportation costs, and possible structural changes to county jail operations.

In response to Representative Wilson, Representative Meredith discussed reimbursement based on jail costs, alternatives to pretrial detention, and contracting for state and federal inmates.

In response to Co-Chair Elliott, Representative Meredith discussed medical costs for state inmates and the anticipated fiscal impact of medical reimbursement.

In response to Representative Petrie, Representative Meredith discussed the status of jail-related litigation, as well as changes in state and local inmate populations, and the long-term sustainability of the county funding jail model.

Adjournment
With no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned.