

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY

Minutes of the 6th Meeting of the 2025 Interim

November 6, 2025

Call to Order and Roll Call

The sixth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary was held on November 6, 2025, at 11:00 AM in Room 149 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Daniel Elliott, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Daniel Elliott, Chair; Senator Brandon J. Storm, Co-Chair; Senators Danny Carroll, Matthew Deneen, Michael J. Nemes, Aaron Reed, Robert Stivers, and Phillip Wheeler; and Representatives Kim Banta, Jared Bauman, John Blanton, Lindsey Burke, Jennifer Decker, Stephanie Dietz, Patrick Flannery, Peyton Griffie, Nima Kulkarni, Chris Lewis, Savannah Maddox, Mary Lou Marzian, Jason Nemes, Jason Petrie, T.J. Roberts, Wade Williams, and Nick Wilson.

Guests: Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert, Kentucky Supreme Court; Angela Darcy, Executive Officer, Department of Pretrial Services, Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC); Jason Dufek, Manager, Department of Pretrial Services, AOC; Kirstin Porter, Director, Division of Reentry Services, Department of Corrections (DOC); and Dr. Ryan Quarles, President, Kentucky Community & Technical College System (KCTCS).

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

Approval of Minutes of the October 16, 2025, Meeting

A motion was made by Co-Chair Storm and seconded by Senator Wheeler to approve the minutes of the October 16, 2025, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

State of the Judiciary

Chief Justice Debra Hembree Lambert, Kentucky Supreme Court, discussed matters of significant relevance to the judicial branch. Chief Justice Lambert discussed the Supreme Court's temporary home and travel oral argument schedule; outlined the judicial branch's new funding approach and an impending FY26 budget shortfall; reviewed judicial branch employee salaries, stating current salaries present a serious challenge to attracting and retaining talent and requested additional funding to support a 15% across the board salary increase for all elected and non-elected Kentucky Court of Justice (KCOJ) employees;

Committee meeting materials may be accessed online at <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/CommitteeDocuments/8>

detailed the branch's partnerships to upgrade court technology, including a partnership to create a fully electronic court record; detailed disaster recovery efforts, requesting a one-time funding increase to offset \$8.5 million in flood-related damages to court facilities in Franklin and Hardin Counties; an increase to the fund that helps court facilities operate, and funding to upgrade security systems in court facilities; detailed several statewide programs designed to improve the lives of Kentuckians; outlined the Kentucky Judicial Commission on Mental Health (KJCMH), noting KJCMH has convened 14 statewide forums focused on recommending legislative and practical changes to improve involuntary hospitalization under KRS 202A; and emphasized the judicial branch's request to partner with the legislative branch to strengthen the judicial system.

In response to Senator Wheeler, Chief Justice Lambert discussed consultations with national authorities regarding the size and needs of Kentucky's courthouses.

In response to Representative Kulkarni, Chief Justice Lambert stated she is unaware of plans to adopt new rules related to virtual court; and detailed benefits related to introducing behavioral health liaisons.

In response to Representative Nemes, Chief Justice Lambert further discussed the KJCMH's statewide forums and potential recommendations.

In response to Co-Chair Storm, Chief Justice Lambert confirmed she believes that court designated workers can be utilized in truancy prevention programs.

The Corrections - KCTCS Reentry Program

Co-Chair Storm; Representative Decker; Kirstin Porter, Director, Division of Reentry Services, DOC; and Dr. Ryan Quarles, President, KCTCS, discussed a proposal to expand reentry programming by funding a model campus at a state prison where low-risk prisoners nearing release can enroll to receive education.

Representative Decker discussed the need for the proposed campus, citing statistics related to Kentucky recidivism.

Dr. Quarles discussed KCTCS's purpose and how the proposed campus is an extension of that purpose; emphasized the need for the proposed campus, citing statistics related to Kentucky labor market demand; outlined current KCTCS programming in state and federal correctional facilities; reviewed statistics related to KCTCS prison education program enrollment; and detailed the proposed campus, stating the proposed campus builds upon an existing facility and prison education program.

Ms. Porter discussed the DOC's statutory requirements and how the proposed facility

satisfies statutory requirements; and stressed the impact of reentry investment on recidivism, stating lower recidivism results in fewer instances of victimization and fewer police responses.

Co-Chair Storm recognized Representative Decker and Dr. Quarles for their work on the proposal.

In response to Senator Reed, Representative Decker recalled testimony praising a similar prison vocational training program.

In response to Senator Nemes, Dr. Quarles discussed the proposal related to allowing inmates to go off-site for apprenticeship programs; stressed this proposal is not a criminal justice reform effort. Representative Decker discussed provisions of the proposal related to the transfer process for the proposed campus.

In response to Senator Carroll, Dr. Quarles discussed outcomes of similar programs in other states.

In response to Chair Elliott, Dr. Quarles stated the Danville KCTCS campus would provide staffing and program assistance at the proposed campus.

In response to Representative Roberts, Dr. Quarles discussed ineligible offenses for the proposed program.

Update on 2022 RS SB 90

Angela Darcy, Executive Officer, Department of Pretrial Services, AOC, and Jason Dufek, Manager, Department of Pretrial Services, AOC, provided an update on 2022 RS SB 90.

Ms. Darcy provided an overview of the Behavioral Health Conditional Dismissal Program (BHCDP), its goals, services provided, and funding sources; outlined the eligibility criteria for 2022 RS SB 90; detailed BHCDP's 2024 annual report, highlighting the addition of recovery housing; discussed current BHCDP locations, stating it is AOC's goal to substantially expand the number of BHCDP locations in 2026; highlighted BHCDP's barrier relief funding, detailing what the fund provides to participants; outlined BHCDP's partnership with Kentucky Adult Education (KYAE); and detailed how AOC plans to improve the BHCDP in 2026, highlighting current community partnerships.

Mr. Dufek detailed statistics related to BHCDP eligibility factors, including program exclusions, BHCDP demographic information, clinical assessment completion rates and clinical assessment results, statewide referrals, completed assessments, signed agreements to participate by year, and rates of program completion by year.

In response to Chair Elliott, Ms. Darcy discussed the overall success rate for program participants.

In response to Representative Banta, Ms. Darcy discussed the difference between BHCDP and the proposed DOC-KCTCS reentry program.

In response to Co-Chair Storm, Ms. Darcy discussed provisions of 2022 RS SB 90 related to the sunset date of the bill; discussed DUI offenses and prosecutorial overrides to the program on DUI convictions.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:57 PM.