

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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VETO MESSAGE FROM THE
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
REGARDING SENATE BILL 25 OF THE 2025 REGULAR SESSION

I, Andy Beshear, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, pursuant to the authority granted under Section 88 of the Kentucky State Constitution, do hereby veto the following parts:

Page 21, line 17, after “created”, delete the rest of the line.

Page 21, line 18, delete “within[” and eliminate the strikethrough of “and is an independent office that shall be administratively attached to” and delete “]”.

I am vetoing these parts because they move the Commonwealth Office of the Ombudsman from an independent office administratively attached to the Auditor of Public Accounts to an office within the Auditor of Public Accounts. This move comes one year after the General Assembly removed the Ombudsman from the Cabinet for Health and Family Services for the stated reason of making the Ombudsman entirely independent. This bill makes the Ombudsman’s office less independent than ever, and in one place even defines the Ombudsman as the Auditor. Moving the Office of the Ombudsman to operate at the will of the Auditor removes any independency of that office.

Page 22, line 18, after “parents”, delete the rest of the line.

Page 22, line 19, delete “by the ombudsman”.

I am vetoing this part because its micromanagement requires the Ombudsman’s approval of the manner in which the Cabinet for Health and Family Services prints materials on how to contact the Ombudsman’s office.

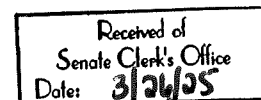
Page 23, line 10, after “confidentiality”, delete the rest of the line.

Page 23, line 11, in its entirety.

Page 23, line 12, delete “the office to carry out its duties and to support recommendations”.

Page 23, lines 15 through 21, in their entirety.

I am vetoing these parts because they give the Ombudsman unfettered discretion and power to decide when he or she may disclose information made confidential under the law. I am also vetoing these parts because they give the Ombudsman a blank check for expenses for any work the Ombudsman does related to an agency, requiring the agency to pay amounts it cannot negotiate or control, and have not been appropriated.



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Page 24, lines 20 through 23, in their entirety.

Page 24, line 26, after “auditor”, delete the rest of the line.

Page 24, line 27, delete “(c) The ombudsman”.

I am vetoing these parts because they mandate that every state agency must give the Auditor, for free, any software and access rights that the Auditor “deems advisable,” and makes those agencies pay for the costs for it. This will violate several contracts between the Commonwealth and its vendors. I am also vetoing these parts because they define the Ombudsman as the Auditor, erasing any independence of the Ombudsman’s office.

Page 26, line 14, after “confidentiality”, delete the rest of the line.

Page 26, lines 15, in its entirety.

Page 26, line 16, delete “to support its recommendations”.

I am vetoing these parts because they give the Auditor unfettered discretion and power to decide when he or she may disclose information made confidential under the law.

Page 30, lines 8 through 22, in their entirety.

I am vetoing these parts because they allow the Ombudsman’s office to dictate to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services and all of its agencies and offices, even those not attached to the cabinet, the way the cabinet and those offices must design and display on their websites a separate website for the Ombudsman’s office or a banner linking the Ombudsman’s office website. Since the legislature moved the Ombudsman’s office to the Auditor’s office last year, the Ombudsman’s office is no longer part of the cabinet. I am also vetoing these parts because giving the Ombudsman’s office access to all group email inboxes that broadly receive “complaints” about any subject may open the door to matters outside the scope of the Ombudsman’s duties.

Page 38, lines 14-27, in their entirety.

Page 39, lines 1-26, in their entirety.

I am vetoing these parts because Section 56 of the Kentucky Constitution requires that when the General Assembly passes a bill the Clerk of the last chamber signing it must immediately present the bill to the Governor for signature and approval. The Constitution does not allow the legislature to make the rules for how bills are delivered to the Governor. These parts would also allow the constitutionally-mandated delivery of a bill to the Governor to be satisfied by a Clerk delivering a copy of a passed bill to any state employee in any executive branch office or building, by leaving the copy at the door of the office or building if either is closed, or by putting the copy in a locked drop box outside of the building where the General Assembly meets. Obviously, this is not presenting the bill to the Governor as the Constitution requires.

Page 41, lines 19-27, in their entirety.

Page 42, lines 1-2, in their entirety.

I am vetoing these parts because they are unnecessary, as executive branch cabinets and departments already submit regular reports to the legislative branch under current laws, and numerous groups like the Legislative Oversight and Investigations Committee already review government operations to evaluate their efficiency. These parts will create the opposite of efficiency, and signals the legislature's belief that groups it created are not sufficient to perform the same tasks.

Page 54, line 12, after "to the", delete the rest of the line.

Page 54, line 13, delete "Cumberland Area Development District[" and delete the strikethrough of "Center for Rural Development" and delete "["].

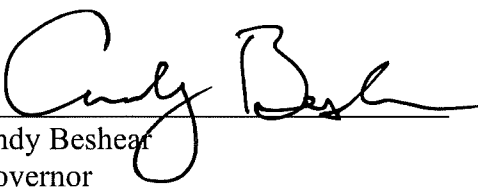
Page 54, line 14, after "center", delete "[", and delete the strikethrough of "in collaboration with the Lake Cumberland Area Development District", and delete "]"

I am vetoing these parts because the Department of Local Government has already entered into an agreement for this project and disbursed the entire \$8 million that the General Assembly appropriated in fiscal year 2025 for the project.

Page 76, lines 10 through 21, in their entirety.

I am vetoing these parts because they contain a new General Fund appropriation to the biennial budget in the 2025 Regular Session – a \$750,000 appropriation for a special audit of the Kentucky Communications Network Authority. There are much higher priorities for the use of the Budget Reserve Trust Fund including the provision of funding assistance to the Kentucky communities responding to and recovering from the February 2025 flooding disaster.

This, the 26th day of March 2025.



Andy Beshear
Governor