



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

Kentucky State Office Building
501 High Street
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
Phone: (502) 564-2611
Fax: (502) 564-2517

VETO MESSAGE FROM THE
GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
REGARDING HOUSE BILL 504 OF THE 2026 REGULAR SESSION

PART I, OPERATING BUDGET
A. JUDICIAL BRANCH
1.a.(3) Civil Filing Fees

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

Page 2, line 9, after “civil filing fees, the,” delete “additional”, and after “income resulting from the fee”, delete “increases.”.
Page 2, line 10, after “fiscal year”, delete “;”.

I am vetoing this part because it would alter longstanding Judicial Branch funding language that appears to be inconsistent with legislative intent and prior Judicial Branch budget bills. The legislature has publicly stated that this part would create an additional \$5,000,000 to the Kentucky Supreme Court from civil filing fees, but as written the part would condition the entire \$20,468,100 deposit authority on the generation of new revenue from increased civil filing fees and would limit the deposit amounts to the specific amount of that new revenue. This would create substantial fiscal uncertainty for the Judicial Branch by jeopardizing a well-established funding stream to support core court personnel and operations.

PART III, GENERAL PROVISIONS
18. Budget Implementation

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

Page 14, lines 8 through 22, in their entirety.

I am vetoing this part because it would create unnecessary financial reporting requirements in addition to the reports the Kentucky Supreme Court already requires. This part would also give the Legislative Branch the authority to audit the Judicial Branch even when the General Assembly is not in session and does not exist. The Kentucky Supreme Court Rules already mandate monthly comprehensive financial statements showing detailed spending for each budget unit. These statements include receipts and disbursements by each budget unit, spending category and funding source. The Rules also require that financial statements be audited

annually by an independent auditor under contract with the Administrative Office of the Courts. The Judicial Branch publishes its required annual audit in November of each year, including on the Court of Justice website, which allows sufficient time to collect, analyze and prepare the audit report.

The part that says General Fund appropriations shall not be transferred to the Budget Reserve Trust Fund Account also conflicts with language earlier in the bill directing the balance of any appropriation not spent at the end of the fiscal year to be continued into the next fiscal year.

PART III, GENERAL PROVISIONS

19. Budgetary Priorities

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

Page 14, line 23, delete “Funds appropriated in this Act are deemed sufficient to”.

Page 14, line 24, delete “maintain the mandatory functions of the Court of Justice.”.

Section 110 of the Kentucky Constitution endows the Chief Justice of the Kentucky Supreme Court – not the General Assembly – with sole authority to make determinations about personnel appointments for the Judicial Branch as are deemed necessary to support the operations of the Court of Justice. Section 110 also requires the Chief Justice to submit the Judicial Branch budget. The Judicial Branch notified the legislature that the funding levels in House Bill 504 are insufficient to maintain the mandatory functions of the Court of Justice, including current services and personnel. The Judicial Branch has publicly stated that it projects a General Fund deficit of \$12,600,000 in the next fiscal year and \$17,000,000 the following fiscal year.

This, the 13th day of April, 2026.



Andy Beshear
Governor