INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON LICENSING, OCCUPATIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Minutes of the 4th Meeting of the 2026 Interim

October 15, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The fourth meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Licensing, Occupations, and Administrative Regulations was held on October 15, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Senator Julie Raque Adams, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Senator Julie Raque Adams, Co-Chair; Representative Matthew Koch, Co-Chair; Senators Cassie Chambers Armstrong, Karen Berg, Donald Douglas, Jimmy Higdon, Jason Howell, Stephen Meredith, Michael J. Nemes, and Matt Nunn; and Representatives Chad Aull, Emily Callaway, Mike Clines, Stephanie Dietz, Daniel Fister, Patrick Flannery, Al Gentry, Tony Hampton, Samara Heavrin, Thomas Huff, Kevin Jackson, Nima Kulkarni, Michael Meredith, Amy Neighbors, Rebecca Raymer, Tom Smith, and Nick Wilson.

Guests: Janet Johnson, RD, LD, International Board-Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC); Doraine Bailey, IBCLC, Kentuckiana Lactation Improvement Coalition (KLIC); Jim Higdon, Co-Founder, Cornbread Hemp; Kerstin Meyer, Public Policy & Coalition Affairs Manager, Cornbread Hemp; Annie Rouse, Kentucky Hemp Association; and Katie Moyer, Kentucky Hemp Association.

LRC Staff: Bryce Amburgey, CaraBell Preece, Jasmine Williams, and Lisa W. Moore.

Approval of Minutes of the September 17, 2026, Meeting

A motion was made by Representative Fister and seconded by Representative Hampton to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2026, meeting. Minutes were approved by voice vote without objection.

Lactation Consultants

Representative Callaway explained 2027 RS BR 52, proposed lactation consultant legislation. She noted lactation consultants played a pivotal role in assisting her in

breastfeeding her child for over a year. Doraine Bailey, KLIC, IBCLC, and Janet Johnson, RD, LD, IBCLC, explained the importance of licensing lactation consultants in Kentucky.

Ms. Bailey said breastfeeding is recognized nationally and internationally as the best first step for lifetime health. Kentucky continues to lag significantly behind the national average for breastfeeding initiation (81% to 86%) and any breastfeeding at 6 months (55% to 63%).

Research shows that 40% of US parents are not meeting their breastfeeding goals. Online resources cannot address individual concerns and they should be addressed by skilled clinical lactation care provided by IBCLCs.

Ms. Johnson said licensure is critical because IBCLCs are highly trained and provide clinical lactation care. Licensing protects employers and referring physicians from liability and helps the public identify and access qualified professionals. The Kentucky Board of Nursing (KBN) has agreed to house IBCLC licensure, ensuring quality oversight, low-cost implementation, and trusted colleagues for appropriate patient care.

Responding to Chairman Koch, Ms. Johnson said the Kentucky licensure board would be placed under the KBN, but an international board sets the standards. Ms. Johnson said only six states in the country have licensure requirements for IBCLCs. Chairman Koch said we need to monitor compacts in the future with the surrounding states.

In response to Senator Chambers Armstrong, Ms. Johnson said insurance should cover lactation consultation by a licensed lactation consultant. Insurance companies will not credential consultants to provide clinical care unless they meet certain requirements, such as passing a background check and providing appropriate licensure, to ensure public safety. Ms. Bailey noted that licensed IBCLCs increase insurance participation and reimbursements, reducing the costs to clients.

Responding to Senator Meredith, Ms. Johnson said there is no other credentialing organization for the profession. Ms. Bailey said there is another organization that provides a similar level credential that requires a nursing license, but they are not recognized in Kentucky. Kentucky is focusing on the IBCLC credential.

Responding to Representative Kulkarni regarding working with surrounding states within the interstate compact framework, Ms. Bailey said there are cross-border communications with Cincinnati, Nashville, Huntington, and Evansville.

Senator Berg said breastfeeding is the most important thing to provide a healthy start in a child's life. Lactation consultants are needed for working women.

Hemp Products

Jim Higdon, Co-Founder, Cornbread Hemp, said Congress extended the deadline to December 11, 2026, for establishing basic guidelines for the hemp industry at the federal level. The hemp industry is hopeful that proposed guardrails will be implemented, including mandating good manufacturing practices and third-party lab testing, banning foreign imported hemp and synthetic hemp, raising the age for all products to 21 and older, and limiting the potency cap of THC per serving.

Mr. Higdon discussed 2027 legislative session hemp priorities and state guidelines. The main priority is to restore on-premise sales of cannabis-infused beverages (CIBs) in bars, restaurants, and events, which was prohibited by SB 202 in 2025. Another policy goal is to allow hemp manufacturers to sample and sell beverages on-premise in the same manner allowed for bourbon distilleries.

2025 RS SB 202 failed to ban the consumption of CIBs by operators of motor vehicles. Cornbread hopes the General Assembly will address the issue in the upcoming legislation session to address public safety and prevent a potential tragedy.

Mr. Higdon said Kentucky's regulated industries are natural allies and Cornbread supports Kentucky's bourbon, craft beer, and medical marijuana industries. He said Kentucky stakeholders in regulated industries must find common ground in policy solutions to shared problems, and reject attempts to use the General Assembly to suppress competition in the free market.

Mr. Higdon said Cornbread is participating in the Medicare CBD pilot program authorized on April 1, 2026, that allows distribution of full spectrum CBD products with up to 3mg THC per serving to certain Medicare beneficiaries through their primary care providers.

Kentucky Hemp Industry Update

Annie Rouse and Katie Moyer, Kentucky Hemp Association, provided an update on the hemp industry. Ms. Rouse said Kentucky needs updated hemp rules because the industry is not regulated efficiently. Existing regulatory controls are managed among the Kentucky Department of Agriculture, Department of Alcohol Beverage Control, and the Department for Public Health in the Cabinet for Health and Family Services.

Ms. Rouse said the Kentucky hemp industry is seeking relief to protect intrastate commerce of hemp products grown, processed, and sold in Kentucky. Without intrastate protections, businesses will close, farmers will lose a diversified crop, and Kentuckians will lose access to needed products.

Ms. Moyer suggested dedicating a portion of taxable hemp revenue to a Kentucky Hemp Fund established within the University of Kentucky's Cannabis Center. She said there is overwhelming public support in favor of full spectrum products with THC. The industry employs more than 3,000 people across Kentucky, and hemp product sales in licensed liquor stores account for up to 25% of store revenue.

Chairman Koch noted hemp is regulated but is pulled in many different directions. He said testing should mimic the bourbon industry and consumers need to know exactly what is in every bottle. He said regulations would benefit from being streamlined under one regulatory agency for the future. Senator Higdon agreed that hemp should be regulated by one oversight agency.

In response to a question, Mr. Higdon said synthetic products will be banned on November 11, 2026. Kentucky law mandates third party testing on all hemp products. He noted the product must match the label. Ms. Rouse said they have recommended certified testing labs to ensure the appropriate testing of all products such as liquids, flour, etc.

Senator Berg was proud that Cornbread Hemp and its products were represented in Florida.

Responding to Chairman Koch, Ms. Rouse said all the products are grown easily in agriculture fields. Like tobacco, the products are started in greenhouses and then transported to fields. Mr. Higdon said all Cornbread Hemp farming is conducted outdoors and greenhouses are only used for seed propagation.

Adjournment

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