

COMMISSION ON RACE & ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Minutes of the 1st Meeting of the 2026 Interim

June 17, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The first meeting of the Commission on Race & Access to Opportunity was held on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 3:00 PM ET/2:00 CT, in Room 129 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Kevin Jackson, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Kevin Jackson, Co-Chair; Senator Amanda Mays Bledsoe, Co-Chair; Senator Karen Berg; and Representatives George Brown Jr., Samara Heavrin, and Nima Kulkarni; and Larry Forester.

Guests: Lawrence B. Weathers, Lexington Police Chief; Paul Humphrey, Louisville Police Chief; and Michael Delaney, Bowling Green Police Chief.

LRC Staff: Brandon White and Logan Schaaf.

Discussion on Crime and Community Policing

Lawrence B. Weathers, Lexington Police Chief; Paul Humphrey, Louisville Police Chief; and Michael Delaney, Bowling Green Police Chief, discussed crime trends, prevention, and community engagement.

Chief Weathers provided a history of the changing nature of policing since the 1990s, emphasizing the shift over time to community-based policing. Chief Delaney highlighted Bowling Green Police Department's community engagement teams and noted homicide solve rates have increased from 33% to 100%. Chief Humphrey discussed the increase in gun violence in Louisville over the last 5 years, including efforts to stop this violence, particularly through improved police-community relations.

Responding to Co-Chair Mays Bledsoe, Chief Humphrey discussed recruiting, emphasizing current officers setting good examples and bringing in new recruits. Chief Weathers highlighted social media recruiting. Chief Delaney provided an overview of the recruiting pipeline, from the junior police academy to the Cadet-1 program.

Responding to Chair Jackson, Chief Delaney expanded on the Cadet-1 program, noting 80 to 90% of Cadet-1 recruits remain in law enforcement, whether as police officers, dispatchers, or other jobs related to law enforcement.

Responding to Representative Kulkarni, each police chief discussed relations between their police departments and immigrant communities, emphasizing improved communications and clarity regarding the differences between local law enforcement and federal immigration operations.

Representative Brown thanked the police chiefs for their service.

Responding to Representative Heavrin, Chief Humphrey emphasized the role of police as a first connection between a citizen and the government. Police officers often see a person's problems and needs before anyone else, so communication between citizens, police, and other government agencies is critical. Chief Weathers discussed the importance of quality-of-life issues like housing and health to crime prevention.

Responding to Senator Berg, Chief Weathers highlighted the role of Lexington police officers as connectors, from citizens to government and nongovernmental resources.

Responding to Chair Jackson, Chief Delaney said he would like to see better juvenile programs to keep people out of trouble, particularly on weekday evenings and weekends. Chief Weathers highlighted better mentorship programs and pipelines for recruiting new officers. Lexington operates a Police Explorer Program, which spans from ages 14 to 18, and graduates can be hired when they turn 21. Chief Weathers said he would like to create a cadet program to bridge this 3-year gap. Chief Humphrey emphasized the importance of building the juvenile detention center in Louisville and improving public relations.

Responding to Representative Brown, the police chiefs discussed gun violence, highlighting the increasing availability of firearms through both legal and illegal channels.

Adjournment

With no further business before the commission, the meeting was adjourned.