

INTERIM JOINT COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY AFFAIRS, AND PUBLIC PROTECTION

Minutes of the Second Meeting of the 2026 Interim

July 20, 2026

Call to Order and Roll Call

The second meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection was held on July 20, 2026, at 11:00 AM ET/10:00 AM CT in Room 154 of the Capitol Annex. Representative Bobby McCool, Chair, called the meeting to order, and the secretary called the roll.

Present were:

Members: Representative Bobby McCool, Co-Chair; Senator Matthew Deneen, Co-Chair; Senators Karen Berg, Gary Boswell, Gary Clemons, Jimmy Higdon, Matt Nunn, Aaron Reed, Craig Richardson, and Mike Wilson; and Representatives Chad Aull, John Blanton, Steve Bratcher, Adrielle Camuel, Myron Dossett, Chris Fugate, Jim Gooch Jr., Adam Moore, T.J. Roberts, Scott Sharp, Ashley Tackett Laferty, and Walker Thomas.

Guests: Distinguished Veterans: John Ross, U.S. Army; Kevin Bratcher, U.S. Navy; Keith Cain, U.S. Marine Corps; and Kenneth Dale, U.S. Air Force; Scott Alvey, Executive Director, Kentucky Historical Society (KHS); Jonathan Noffke, Director of Historical Resources, KHS; Andrew Dickson, Military History Consultant, KHS; Erik Elzy, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky State Pipe Trades Association; and Ben Collier, Business Manager, United Association Local 248.

LRC Staff: Jessica Zeh and Logan Schaaf.

Approval of June Meeting Minutes

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

Honoring Kentucky Veterans

Four Distinguished Veterans were honored by the committee with legislative citations and VMAPP Challenge Coins. John Ross, U.S. Army; Kevin Bratcher, U.S. Navy; Keith Cain, U.S. Marine Corps; and Kenneth Dale, U.S. Air Force, were introduced by Senator Clemons, Representative Thomas, Senator Boswell, and Representative Bratcher, respectively.

America250KY: Impact of Kentucky's Military Legacy

Scott Alvey, Executive Director, Kentucky Historical Society (KHS); Jonathan Noffke, Director of Historical Resources, KHS; and Andrew Dickson, Military History Consultant, KHS, delivered a presentation on Kentucky's celebration of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, focusing primarily on military history.

They discussed commissions and recent events commemorating America250 throughout the Commonwealth, including military and veteran-themed exhibits and collections, often facilitated by the Military History Museum Advisory Committee, a partnership between KHS and the Department of Military Affairs.

Responding to Representative Blanton, the KHS staff discussed the means by which they may be able to locate records on one of Representative Blanton's ancestors, a Revolutionary War veteran, as well as Kentuckians who were killed in action during the World War Two Normandy landings. They also noted an upcoming exhibit at the Kentucky Military History Museum on the 85th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Senator Higdon praised the KHS for all its work, particularly on the Historical Marker Program.

Senator Boswell discussed the story of Camp Calhoun and its role in the Civil War, and urged the KHS to commemorate it.

Bill Discussion of 26RS SB 159 - AN ACT relating to missing and unidentified persons.

Co-Chair Deneen, District 10, discussed 2026 RS SB 159 which would amend KRS 15.440, relating to eligibility for Law Enforcement Foundation Program funds, to require units of government to possess a written policy and procedures manual that requires local police departments to submit missing and unidentified persons case information to the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System according to specified criteria.

Co-Chair Deneen highlighted provisions from the bill, emphasized its importance for grant eligibility, and said he hopes to see this bill passed in the 2027 Regular Session.

Kentucky Backflow Issues

Erik Elzy, Executive Director of Government Affairs, Kentucky State Pipe Trades Association; and Ben Collier, Business Manager, United Association Local 248, discussed issues relating to backflow, when contaminated water reverses flow into a drinking water supply. They recommended the establishment of a statewide backflow prevention

program, which could establish professional standards, provide accountability through oversight and enforcement, and ensure consistent testing and maintenance.

Representative Bratcher emphasized the importance of backflow prevention.

Responding to Representative Moore, Mr. Elzy said other states have backflow prevention programs, but many are not properly enforced, leading to notable incidents.

Responding to Representative Camuel, Mr. Collier said every facility with both drinking water and plumbing has potential backflow issues, but the risk varies by circumstance and type of facility.

Senator Clemons emphasized the importance of backflow prevention and enforcement.

Responding to Representative Blanton, Mr. Elzy and Mr. Collier said the enforcement of backflow prevention is most important, as different standards of installation and maintenance can cause problems when not uniformly and properly enforced across the Commonwealth.

Announcement

Co-Chair Deneen praised USA Cares for their work on behalf veterans.

Adjournment

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