



INTERIM RECORD

A SUMMARY OF INTERIM ACTIVITIES

2025

April

Volume 38, No. 1

PUBLISHED BY
LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH COMMISSION
LEGISLATURE.KY.GOV/LEGISLATION/PAGES/DEFAULT.ASPX

Lawmakers pass hundreds of bills during 2025 legislative session

by LRC Public Information

FRANKFORT — The gavel struck a sentimental note when it fell for a final time on March 28: It not only marked the end of the 2025 legislative session but also the last official action of the Kentucky General Assembly inside the state Capitol – at least for the next few years.

The granite and marble sentinel has stood watch over Frankfort for more than a century. However, the building will close this summer for a massive, multi-year restoration project, and lawmakers will convene in a temporary structure on the Capitol campus during the work.

“Tomorrow will likely be the last time a majority of us will serve in this role in this building,” House Majority Floor Leader Steven Rudy, R-Paducah, said during a floor speech on the penultimate day of the session, reminding members to clean out their desks before leaving for the year.

Like most years, the building played host to an historic session in 2025, one in which lawmakers passed more than 140 bills and debated hundreds more over the 30-day period.

A measure on tax reform carried momentum from the start as lawmakers voted to cut Kentucky’s income tax rate from 4% to 3.5% beginning next year. Despite some criticism, the legislation won bipartisan support this session, and the governor signed the bill into law in February.

As the weeks continued, bills on college diversity programs, workplace safety, transgender-



Lawmakers passed scores of bills and overrode a series of gubernatorial vetoes during the final weeks of the 2025 Regular Session.

related services, maternal health, Medicaid, and environmental regulations all won final passage following hard-fought debates in committee and on the chamber floors.

The governor issued more than two dozen vetoes on those topics and more. But in the end, lawmakers once again demonstrated the independence of the general assembly, overriding

virtually all the governor’s vetoes during a full day of floor proceedings on March 27.

Other bills passed with greater consensus, including measures to boost the film industry, combat underage tobacco use, curb cell phones in schools, and fight sexual extortion.

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Teenagers will likely remember 2025 as the year when lawmakers coalesced around a bill reduce the age for a learner's permit, and college athletes are poised to benefit from updates to Kentucky's name, image and likeness law.

Those bills are among a pile of legislative winners this year. From nuclear energy to the Ten Commandments, lawmakers have touched on a long list of issues, and here's a final look at some of the most watched legislation from 2025:

Administrative Regulations – House Bill 6 targets regulatory overreach by state agencies. It will prohibit administrative agencies from imposing rules that have an economic cost of more than \$500,000 over a two-year period. The bill includes some exceptions for public safety emergencies, federal requirements, court orders and regulations for health facilities. The governor vetoed HB 6, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Antisemitism on Campus – Senate Joint Resolution 55 would direct Kentucky colleges and universities to adopt policies for combating antisemitism. The resolution has been signed by the governor.

Artificial Intelligence – Senate Bill 4 will boost oversight and create standards and guidelines for using artificial intelligence in state government and elections. It seeks to protect citizens, foster innovation and address concerns related to AI-generated misinformation in campaigns. SB 4 is the result of a legislative task force that met throughout 2024 to study artificial intelligence. The governor has signed the bill.

Cannabis-Infused Beverages – Senate Bill 202 calls for state regulations on intoxicating drinks derived from cannabis that have begun appearing in gas stations and vape shops. It will grant the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control authority over the licensing, distribution, and retail sale of cannabis-infused beverages, using a three-tier system similar to the one for alcohol. The legislation will also limit the amount of intoxicating cannabinoids in such drinks and prevent anyone under the age of 21 from buying the drinks. SB 202 has been signed by the governor.

Cell Phones in Schools – House Bill 208 calls on school districts to establish a policy for limiting the use of cell phones during instructional time with some exceptions for emergencies and instructional purposes. The legislation has been signed by the governor.

Chevron Deference – Under Senate Bill 84, courts can no longer defer to a state agency's interpretation when dealing with ambiguity in statutes, administrative regulations or orders, a practice known as Chevron deference. The governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.

Child Abuse – Under Senate Bill 120, school coaches will receive training on the duties and procedures for reporting child abuse. The legislation will also add language to sports participation forms telling parents and students about the right to report abuse and how to make a report. The governor has signed SB 120.

College Faculty Performance Reviews – House Bill 424 calls for presidents and faculty at Kentucky's public universities to undergo performance and productivity evaluations at least once every four years. The university boards will establish the evaluation process for each institution. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Conversion Therapy – House Bill 495 nullifies an executive order that the governor issued in September banning the use of state funds on conversion therapy for minors. Another provision prohibits the use of Medicaid funds on hormone treatments or surgeries related to transgender care. The governor vetoed HB 495, but the veto was overridden.

Disabilities and Parental Rights – Senate Bill 26 clarifies that disability alone cannot be used as a basis for denying adoption petitions, terminating parental rights, or determining placement of children. This bill was signed by the governor.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – House Bill 4 seeks to end diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives – known as DEI – at public postsecondary institutions in Kentucky. The legislation forbids differential treatment in hiring, admissions, scholarships and other areas based on religion, race, sex, color or national origin. It will also prevent campuses from requiring or incentivizing students to participate in DEI training, and it prohibits public institutions from using resources on DEI training, offices and initiatives. The governor vetoed HB 4, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Drone Surveillance – House Bill 19 aims to protect individuals and their property from unauthorized drone surveillance when they have a reasonable expectation of privacy. It will allow a person who is subjected to unauthorized surveillance to initiate a civil action in court. The

bill includes some exceptions for aerial mapping, insurance investigations and others. HB 19 has been signed by the governor.

Early Literacy – House Bill 240 will require schools to administer a reading assessment to kindergarten and first grade students within the final 14 days of the academic year. Schools have an option to require students to repeat kindergarten if they fail to meet grade-level benchmarks. However, the bill stipulates that a first-grader who fails to meet the benchmarks must repeat the year. The governor vetoed the legislation, but the veto was overridden.

Environmental Regulations for Waterways – Senate Bill 89 changes how state law defines waterways in Kentucky to align with recent changes on the federal level. The governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.

Film Industry – Senate Bill 1 establishes the Kentucky Film Office to administer the state's film incentive program, help market the state to the film industry and develop workforce training. The measure was signed by the governor.

Financial Literacy – House Bill 342 requires high school students to earn one credit in a financial literacy course before graduation. The governor has signed this bill.

Foreign Land Purchases – House Bill 315 prohibits certain hostile foreign entities from acquiring agricultural land in Kentucky. The governor has signed HB 315 into law.

Gift Card Scams – Under Senate Bill 130, individuals who tamper with gift cards to steal the redemption information and drain the card balance can face a class D felony charge. SB 130 has been signed by the governor.

Government Efficiency – Senate Bill 25 aims to improve efficiency in state government. It will establish a Medicaid oversight board to optimize health outcomes in an efficient and effective manner. It also bolsters the authority of the state auditor's office and calls on executive branch agencies to submit biannual reports to the legislature with suggestions for improving efficiency. The governor issued line-item vetoes for this bill, but lawmakers overrode most of them.

Income Taxes – House Bill 1 will cut Kentucky's income tax rate from 4% to 3.5% beginning next year as part of a long-term effort to gradually reduce

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and eliminate Kentucky's income tax. The governor has signed HB 1.

Insurance Fraud – Senate Bill 24 will expand the definition of property and casualty insurance fraud to help crack down on unscrupulous contractors who charge unnecessary or fraudulent fees to inflate an insurance claim. The governor has signed SB 24.

Kentucky History Month – House Bill 313 designates June of each year as Kentucky History Month. The legislation has been signed by the governor.

Learner's Permits – House Bill 15 reduces the minimum age for getting a learner's permit in Kentucky from 16 to 15 years old. Drivers can obtain an intermediate license at age 16 if they have held a learner's permit for at least 180 days and have completed at least 60 hours of supervised training. The governor has signed this measure into law.

Legislative Interference – House Bill 399 will create criminal penalties for interfering with a legislative proceeding if the intent is to prevent the general assembly from conducting business. Interference in the first degree will be a class A misdemeanor, which escalates to a class D felony for a third or subsequent offense. The governor vetoed this legislation, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Manufactured Housing – House Bill 160 would prohibit local governments from adopting or enforcing zoning regulations that treat manufactured homes differently from site-built homes in single family residential zones. Manufactured homes would still need to meet strict standards for size, age and foundation. HB 160 has been signed by the governor.

Maternal Health – House Bill 90 creates a regulatory framework for freestanding birthing centers to operate in Kentucky. The final version of the bill also seeks to clarify Kentucky's abortion law to ensure that women experiencing a miscarriage, ectopic pregnancy, molar pregnancy, or other life-threatening complications can receive care. Another provision calls for hospitals, birthing centers and other obstetric care centers to offer perinatal palliative care to women who receive a prenatal diagnosis of deadly fetal abnormalities. The governor vetoed HB 90, but the veto was overridden.

Moments of Silence and Moral Education – Senate Bill 19 requires public schools to hold a moment of silence and reflection for students at the start of each school day. Under a recent addition to the bill, school districts could excuse students for up to one hour each week to attend moral instruction from approved off-campus programs. The governor

vetoed SB 19, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Name, Image and Likeness – Senate Bill 3 updates Kentucky's name, image and likeness law for college athletes. Specifically, it will align the law – adopted in 2022 – with national standards, particularly in the aftermath of the House v. NCAA court case, which could open the door to universities directly compensating student athletes. The governor has signed SB 3.

Nicotine – Senate Bill 100 seeks to curb underage nicotine use by licensing nicotine retailers and providing more oversight of nicotine sales. Retailers operating without a license could face a misdemeanor charge, and possibly a felony for a third offense. The governor has signed SB 100.

Nuclear Energy Grants – Senate Bill 179 will establish a nuclear energy grant program under the Kentucky Nuclear Energy Development Authority and set aside millions to support the effort. SB 179 has been signed by the governor.

Protective Orders – House Bill 38 creates tougher penalties for people who repeatedly violate protective orders. Offenders could face a class D felony if they violate an order three times within five years and the third violation involves the use or threat of violence. The governor has signed HB 38.

School Calendars – House Bill 241 aims to help school districts that have missed a significant number of days due to severe weather. It will allow districts to change their calendar from 170 instructional days to a variable 1,062 hours, clearing the way for schools to extend their school days with more instructional hours. It also allows the state education commissioner to grant up to five disaster relief days for alternative instruction or waive up to five days for districts unable to achieve 1,062 hours by June 4. HB 241 became law without the governor's signature.

School Communications – Senate Bill 181 calls on school districts to implement traceable communication systems that will serve as the sole means for staff and volunteers to communicate electronically with students. Parents would have access to review communications sent to their child. Another provision of the bill would allow schools to provide students with age-appropriate training to combat child sexual abuse. The governor signed SB 181.

School Innovation – Senate Bill 207 will create a waiver process for public school districts to request exemptions from some state laws or regulations –

all part of an effort to provide schools with more flexibility to innovate. The governor vetoed the bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Sexual Assault Response Training – House Bill 219 would require medical providers in emergency departments to receive sexual assault response training. HB 219 has been signed by the governor.

Sexual Extortion – Senate Bill 73 seeks to clamp down on sexual extortion by creating tougher penalties for offenders and more legal remedies for victims. It also requires schools and colleges to educate students and parents about the issue and display resources for reporting. The governor has signed the measure into law.

Squatting – House Bill 10 seeks to crack down on squatting by providing a more concrete procedure for property owners and law enforcement to quickly remove unauthorized occupants from private property. It also spells out criminal penalties for squatters who damage property. The governor has signed HB 10.

Teacher Maternity Leave – Senate Bill 9, among several provisions, calls on school districts to provide teachers up to 30 days of paid maternity leave. The bill has been signed by the governor.

Ten Commandments – House Joint Resolution 15 will return a granite monument inscribed with the Ten Commandments to the Capitol grounds for permanent display. It was first gifted to the state in 1971 by the Fraternal Order of Eagles, but was returned to group decades ago following a court ruling. HJR 15 has become law without the governor's signature.

Transgender Services in Prison – Senate Bill 2 prohibits public funds from being spent on certain procedures, treatments and surgeries related to gender transition in Kentucky prisons. The legislation became law without the governor's signature.

Workplace Safety – House Bill 398 aims to align Kentucky's workplace safety and health regulations with federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration rules. It also calls for limits on Kentucky policies so that they are no more stringent than those on the federal level. The governor vetoed HB 398, but the legislature overrode the veto.

Lawmakers will return to Frankfort in June for the interim period, during which they can hold committee hearings on issues and consider proposals for the 2026 legislative session.



2025 Kentucky General Assembly

Senate

Julie Raque Adams (36)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 283
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Cassie Chambers Armstrong (19)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 255
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Karen Berg (26)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 255
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Gary Boswell (8)

3130 Reid Road
Owensboro, KY 42303
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Jared Carpenter (34)

PO Box 100
Berea, KY 40403
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Danny Carroll (2)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 228
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Matthew Deneen (10)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 209A
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Donald Douglas (22)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 204
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Greg Elkins (28)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 298
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Shelley Funke Frommeyer (24)

PO Box 511
Alexandria, KY 41001
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Rick Girdler (15)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 252
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

David P. Givens (9)

PO Box 12
Greensburg, KY 42743
(LRC) 502-564-3120

Keturah Herron (35)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 255
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Jimmy Higdon (14)

344 N Spalding
Lebanon, KY 40033
(LRC) 502-564-8100
Home: 270-692-6945

Jason Howell (1)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 290
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Scott Madon (29)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 215
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Amanda Mays Bledsoe (12)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 203
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Christian McDaniel (23)

PO Box 15231
Latonia, KY 41015
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Stephen Meredith (5)

1424 Byrtle Grove Rd
Leitchfield, KY 42754
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Robby Mills (4)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 242
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-3120

Gerald A. Neal (33)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 254
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-2470

Michael J. Nemes (38)

209 Sandy Dr
Shepherdsville, KY 40165
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Matt Nunn (17)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 298
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Steve Rawlings (11)

3350 Easton Lane
Burlington, KY 41005
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Work) 859-757-7037

Aaron Reed (7)

1016 Mt Vernon Dr Ste 3
Shelbyville, KY 40065
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Work) 502-233-3689

Craig Richardson (3)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 228
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Brandon Smith (30)

PO Box 846
Hazard, KY 41702
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Home) 606-436-4526
(Home FAX) 606-436-4526

Robert Stivers (25)

207 Main St
Manchester, KY 40962
(LRC) 502-564-3120
(Capitol) 502-564-3120
(Work) 606-598-2322
(Work FAX) 606-598-2357

Brandon J. Storm (21)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 204
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Reginald L. Thomas (13)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 254
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-2470
(Capitol) 502-564-2470

Lindsey Tichenor (6)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 298
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Robin L. Webb (18)

102 S Hord St
Grayson, KY 41143
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Home) 606-474-5380

Stephen West (27)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 228
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Phillip Wheeler (31)

702 Capital Ave.
Annex Room 215
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Gex Williams (20)

702 Capital Ave.
Annex Room 284
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Mike Wilson (32)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 242
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-2450

Max Wise (16)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 242
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-2450

David Yates (37)

702 Capital Ave.
Annex Room 254
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

* Members of the Kentucky General Assembly may also
be contacted by calling 502-564-8100.

2025 Kentucky General Assembly

House

Chad Aull (79)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 457E Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Josh Calloway (10)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 413 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Chris Freeland (6)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 373C Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Shane Baker (85)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 357E Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Adrielle Camuel (93)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 429F Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Chris Fugate (84)	PO Box 202 Chavies, KY 41727 (LRC) 502-564-8100 (Home) 606-233-5660
Kim Banta (63)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 329F Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Beverly Chester-Burton (44)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 467 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Al Gentry (46)	8406 Cloverport Dr Louisville, KY 40228 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Jared Bauman (28)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 383 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100 (Home) 502-544-1846	Mike Clines (68)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 357C Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Jim Gooch Jr. (12)	806 Princeton St Providence, KY 42450 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Ryan Bivens (24)	4109 Sonora Rd Hodgenville, KY 42748 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Jennifer Decker (58)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 357D Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Deanna Gordon (81)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 367 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
John Blanton (92)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 307A Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Stephanie Dietz (65)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 316D Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Peyton Griffee (26)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 424G Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Tina Bojanowski (32)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 451A Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Steven Doan (69)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 432A Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Daniel Grossberg (30)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 413C Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Adam Bowling (87)	PO Box 2928 Middlesboro, KY 40965 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Ann Gay Donworth (76)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 457C Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Vanessa Grossl (88)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 413 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Josh Branscum (83)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 357B Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Myron Dossett (9)	491 E Nashville St Pembroke, KY 42266 (LRC) 502-564-8100 (Home) 270-475-9503	David Hale (74)	11 Hales Ln Wellington, KY 40387 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Steve Bratcher (25)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 424G Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Ryan Dotson (73)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 316 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Tony Hampton (62)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 424 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Josh Bray (71)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 392 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Robert Duvall (17)	PO Box 1297 Bowling Green, KY 42102 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Erika Hancock (57)	PO Box 4311 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Randy Bridges (3)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 395 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Daniel Elliott (54)	PO Box 2082 Danville, KY 40423 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Mark Hart (78)	202 W 4th St Falmouth, KY 41040 (LRC) 502-564-8100 (Home) 859-654-4278
George Brown Jr. (77)	424 E Fourth St Lexington, KY 40508 (LRC) 502-564-8100 (Home) 859-312-7513	Daniel Fister (56)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 432C Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Samara Heavrin (18)	474 Mulberry St., Apt. B Leitchfield, KY 42754 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Lindsey Burke (75)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 472 Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Patrick Flannery (96)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 373B Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	John Hodgson (36)	PO Box 74 Fischerville, KY 40023 (LRC) 502-564-8100
Emily Callaway (37)	4621 Outerloop #234 Louisville, KY 40219 (Work) 502-797-0606 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Ken Fleming (48)	702 Capital Ave Annex Room 358B Frankfort, KY 40601 (LRC) 502-564-8100	Kim Holloway (2)	274 State Route 339 E Mayfield, KY 42066 (LRC) 502-564-8100
				Thomas Huff (49)	PO Box 1331 Shepherdsville, KY 40165 (LRC) 502-564-8100

2025 Kentucky General Assembly

Mary Beth Imes (5)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 376
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Kevin Jackson (20)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 351B
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

DJ Johnson (13)

PO Box 1122
Owensboro, KY 42302
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Kim King (55)

250 Bright Leaf Dr
Harrodsburg, KY 40330
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Matthew Koch (72)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 384
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Nima Kulkarni (40)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 429E
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

William Lawrence (70)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 424E
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Matthew Lehman (67)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 429H
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Chris Lewis (29)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Derek Lewis (90)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 416
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Scott Lewis (14)

PO Box 454
Hartford, KY 42347
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Matt Lockett (39)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329D
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Savannah Maddox (61)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 316E
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Mary Lou Marzian (41)

2007 Tyler Lane
Louisville, KY 40205
(Home) 502-541-1376
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Candy Massaroni (50)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 413H
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Bobby McCool (97)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 367C
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Shawn McPherson (22)

801 East Main St
Scottsville, KY 42164
(LRC) 502-564-8100

David Meade (80)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 332C
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-4334

Michael Meredith (19)

PO Box 292
Brownsville, KY 42210
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Suzanne Miles (7)

PO Box 21592
Owensboro, KY 42304
(LRC) 502-564-2217

Adam Moore (45)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 429C
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Kimberly Poore Moser (64)

PO Box 143
Independence, KY 41051
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Amy Neighbors (21)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 395
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Jason Nemes (33)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 372
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

David W. Osborne (59)

PO Box 8
Prospect, KY 40059
(LRC) 502-564-4334
(Work) 502-645-2186

J.T. Payne (11)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 424
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Jason Petrie (16)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 392
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Michael Sarge Pollock (51)

PO Box 164
Campbellsville, KY 42719
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Marianne Proctor (60)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Felicia Rabourn (47)

PO Box 47
Campbellsburg, KY 40011
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Rebecca Raymer (15)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329H
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Steve Riley (23)

189 Blue Sky Dr
Glasgow, KY 42141
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Rachel Roarx (38)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 451A
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Work) 502-724-7529

T.J. Roberts (66)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 424
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Steven Rudy (1)

350 Peppers Mill Dr
Paducah, KY 42001
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Scott Sharp (100)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 432B
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Tom Smith (86)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 413G
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Sarah Stalker (34)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 451C
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Pamela Stevenson (43)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 472
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Ashley Tackett Laferty (95)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 460
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Nancy Tate (27)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 351A
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Walker Thomas (8)

4335 Cadiz Rd
Hopkinsville, KY 42240
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Home) 270-889-8091
(Home FAX) 270-885-5335

Aaron Thompson (98)

PO Box 462
Greenup, KY 41144
(LRC) 502-564-8100

James Tipton (53)

8151 Little Mount Rd
Taylorsville, KY 40071
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Timmy Truett (89)

4172 HWY 2003
McKee, KY 40447
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Ken Upchurch (52)

PO Box 969
Monticello, KY 42633
(LRC) 502-564-8100
(Home) 606-340-8490

Joshua Watkins (42)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 429G
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Bill Wesley (91)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 402
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Mitch Whitaker (94)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329
(LRC) 502-564-8100

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Richard White (99)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 329
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Wade Williams (4)

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 416
Frankfort, KY 40601

Lisa Willner (35)

(LRC) 502-564-8100

702 Capital Ave
Annex Room 457
Frankfort, KY 40601
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Nick Wilson (82)

PO Box 573
Williamsburg, KY 40769
(LRC) 502-564-8100

Susan Witten (31)

PO Box 43861
Louisville, KY 40253
(LRC) 502-564-8100

* Members of the Kentucky General Assembly may also be contacted by calling 502-564-8100.



Committee Meetings

Minutes for Statutory Committees that met recently may be found at the following sites:

Interim Joint Committee on Agriculture:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Ag/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/A&R/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Banking and Insurance:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/B&I/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Economic Development and Workforce Investment:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/EDWI/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Education:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Education/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Families and Children:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/IJCF&C/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Health Services:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/IJCHS/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Judiciary/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Licensing, Occupations, and Administrative Regulations:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/LO&AR/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Local Government:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Loc_Gov/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Natural Resources and Energy:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/NR_&_E/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on State Government:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/St_Gov/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Tourism, Small Business, and Information Technology:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/TSBIT/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Transportation:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Trans/minutes_all.html

Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/interim/Vets/minutes_all.html

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2025 Interim

LEGISLATIVE RECORD

Published monthly by the Legislative Research Commission, the *Interim Record* is designed to inform the citizens of Kentucky of the between-sessions work of the General Assembly.

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Jay D. Hartz

Director

Legislative Research Commission

Katie Comstock

Deputy Director for Committee and Staff Coordination

Mike Wynn

Assistant Director for Communications

Joe Cox

Publications and Printing Officer

Dana Kelley

Jennifer Ellen Noran

Publications and Design Specialists

Public Information Staff:

Steve Gatewood

David Hargis

Jordan Hensley

Susan Kennedy

Bud Kraft

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LEGISLATIVE KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECORD

700 Capital Avenue
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601