

# RECORD A SUMMARY OF INTERIM ACTIVITIES

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## Lawmakers pass more than 200 bills during 2024 Regular Session

LRC Public Information

FRANKFORT — The Kentucky General Assembly passed a new state budget, an omnibus crime bill, a measure to improve maternal health and many other bills in the 2024 legislative session.

Lawmakers filed more than 1,200 bills this year – the highest number in more than two decades – and passed 212 before the session drew to a close on April 15.

The Senate also held the first-ever confirmation hearing for a new state education commissioner, voting 36-1 to confirm Robbie Fletcher, superintendent of Lawrence County Schools, to the job.

Few bills garnered more attention than House Bill 6, the \$128 billion budget plan for the state executive branch. It was among several major

budget bills that will fund community projects, transportation and the judicial and legislative branches of government over the next two years.

Supporters said HB 6 will provide historic investments in education, public safety, economic development and other key priorities. But critics argued that the plan should have channeled more funds to public schools and to improve conditions in juvenile justice.



Senate Majority Floor Leader Damon Thayer, R-Georgetown, (right) receives accolades from Sen. Jimmy Higdon, R-Lebanon, as he completes his final day on the Senate floor on April 15. Thayer is not running for reelection this year.

Another priority measure for majority lawmakers – the Safer Kentucky Act – won final passage following impassioned debate throughout the session on public safety, incarceration costs and the appropriate response to homeless camps.

The legislation, House Bill 5, seeks to crack down on repeat, violent offenders. It will also allow prosecutors to file a manslaughter charge against anyone who sells or distributes fentanyl that causes a fatal overdose. Other provisions seek to curb unlawful street camping and set limits on charitable bond organizations.

The much-discussed "momnibus" legislation, a comprehensive bill that aims to support maternal and infant health and reduce the high mortality rate for mothers in Kentucky, also won support in the final days.

The measure will require most health plans to cover pregnancy, child birth and postpartum care along with in-home treatment for substance use disorder. It also calls on most plans to cover labor and delivery costs and all services and supplies related to breastfeeding.

The bill's fate remained uncertain when lawmakers adjourned for the veto recess in May; it was still stuck on the Senate floor with several proposed amendments. However, the legislation was attached to a

separate bill on maternal health – Senate Bill 74 – and cleared both chambers on the final day without much opposition.

Throughout the session, the House and Senate found plenty of other issues to debate – education, housing, elections, guns and even the official state rock. Big data and artificial intelligence gained significant attention this year, as did questions

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### Lawmakers pass bills,

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over the future of nuclear energy in Kentucky. Other legislation focused on sold and can demand that their data is deleted under the bill. The governor has autonomous vehicles, child protection, horse racing and elections.

Here's a final look at some of the most discussed bills from the year:

Aerospace Industry: Senate Bill 127 seeks to support Kentucky's aerospace and aviation industries by fostering public-private partnerships and enhancing workforce development across the state. The governor has signed SB 127.

Adoption Records: House Bill 87 will allow some family members to inspect adoption records if they are related to someone who was adopted or to the birth parents who gave up a child for adoption. The records can only be inspected after both birth parents or the adoptee have passed away. The governor has signed this legislation.

Animal Abuse: House Bill 258 seeks to strengthen state laws against torturing a dog or cat. That includes stiffer penalties for first-time offenders, who could face a class D felony rather than a misdemeanor charge under the bill. HB 258 has been signed by the governor.

Autonomous Vehicles: House Bill 7 creates a regulatory framework for operating autonomous vehicles in Kentucky. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Breast Exams: House Bill 115 will eliminate co-pays and cost-sharing requirements for high-risk individuals who need follow-up diagnostic imaging to rule out breast cancer. The governor has signed this bill.

Cancer Detection: House Bill 52 will require health benefits plans to cover preventive cancer screenings and tests without requiring patients to pay a deductible charge for the services. This measure has been signed by the governor.

Capitol Statues: House Bill 513 requires the Historic Properties Advisory Commission to receive approval from the Kentucky General Assembly before adding or removing any statues, monuments or art on permanent display in the Capitol rotunda. The governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.

Child Care Subsidies: Senate Bill 240 clarifies that foster parents who work remotely can receive child care subsidies. The governor has signed this bill.

Child Protection: House Bill 278 will ramp up the criminal penalties for offenders who sexually abuse, assault or exploit children. The bill also seeks to prevent people convicted of sex crimes or violent felonies from working in public schools. Another provision in the final bill will require age verification to access adult websites. HB 278 has been signed by the governor.

Child Sex Dolls: House Bill 207 creates felony penalties for possessing, trafficking, importing or promoting the use of a child sex doll. It also expands laws against child pornography to include computer-generated images of an identifiable minor. The governor has signed this bill.

Civics Education: House Bill 535 calls on the Kentucky Board of Education to create academic standards for civic literacy in high schools. That includes lessons on America's founding, the U.S. Constitution, principles of government and civil liberties, among others. This legislation has been signed by the governor.

**Consumer Data Protection**: House Bill 15 establishes new privacy protections for digital consumers. It will allow consumers to review and correct any data that companies collect on them. Consumers can also refuse to have their data signed HB 15.

**Crime Victims**: Senate Bill 319 calls for the Crime Victims Compensation Board to make their application process available online, to publish the application in additional languages, and to establish a tracking process for claims. It also clarifies who is eligible to file claims and removes the five-year statute of limitations to file claims. The governor has signed this measure.

Cursive Handwriting: Senate Bill 167 calls for elementary schools to teach cursive handwriting and ensure that students are proficient in cursive by the end of the fifth grade. This legislation has been signed by the governor.

Education Funding: House Bill 2 proposes a constitutional amendment that would allow the general assembly to provide financial support for education outside Kentucky's system of public schools. Proposed constitutional amendments do not go to the governor for a signature, but still need ratification by Kentucky voters in an election before taking effect.

Emissions Standards: Senate Bill 215 forbids state agencies from adopting or enforcing California's emission standards on motor vehicles. SB 215 became law without the governor's signature.

Firearms: House Bill 357 forbids government agencies from creating a list of privately owned firearms – or their owners – unless the information relates to a criminal investigation. The bill also prevents credit card companies from creating unique merchant codes for gun stores. HB 357 became law without the governor's signature.

Foster Care: Senate Bill 151 allows family members who take temporary custody of a relative's child to become certified as a "child-specific foster home." That will help them to access more state resources and support. The governor has signed this measure.

Gas Stations: House Bill 581 prevents local governments from passing or enforcing rules that treat retail gas stations differently from electric vehicle charging stations. The governor vetoed this legislation, but the veto was overridden.

Health Care Background Checks: Senate Bill 145 will allow health care providers enrolled in the Medicaid program to conduct employee background checks through Kentucky's child and adult abuse registries. The governor has signed this bill.

Health Care Liability: House Bill 159 protects health care providers from criminal liability when a medical error harms a patient. The bill exempts harm resulting from gross negligence or wanton, willful, malicious or intentional misconduct. The governor has signed HB 159 into law.

Horse Racing Commission: Senate Bill 299 will revamp the Kentucky Horse Racing Commission to create a fully independent agency called the Kentucky Horse Racing and Gaming Corporation. In addition, the bill will dissolve the state Department of Charitable Gaming next year and place oversight of charitable gaming under the new corporation. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Hunting and Fishing Licenses: Senate Bill 5 changes a statute on hunting Continued on page 3



Legislators convene in the House during the 2024 legislative session.

and fishing licenses for landowners. Prior state law allowed Kentuckians to hunt and fish without a license on their own farmland if the property is at least five acres. However, SB 5 eliminates the acreage requirement. The governor has signed this bill.

Juvenile Offenders: Senate Bill 20 seeks to curb youth gun violence. Among several provisions, it clears the way for juveniles to stand trial as adults if they use a firearm in the commission of certain felonies and they are at least 15 years old. SB 20 became law without the governor's signature.

**Kratom**: House Bill 293 aims to regulate kratom, an herbal drug frequently sold online and in convenience stores. The bill prohibits sales to people under 21 and provides guidelines for manufacturing and labeling the product. The governor has signed this measure.

**Kindergarten Readiness**: House Bill 695 will establish an adaptive kindergarten readiness pilot project within the Kentucky Department of

Education. The program will offer reading, math and science instruction through an online platform. HB 695 has been signed by the governor.

**Legislative Vacancies**: Under House Bill 622, vacant seats in the U.S. Senate will be filled through a special election rather than an appointment by the governor. The winner of the election will serve for the remainder of the unexpired term. The governor vetoed HB 622, but the veto was overridden.

**Local Housing Ordinances**: House Bill 18 prevents local governments from requiring property owners to accept tenants who use federal housing assistance. The governor vetoed this legislation, but the veto was overridden.

Loss of Income Insurance: House Bill 179 clears the way for employers to offer their workers an option to purchase paid family leave insurance. Workers who buy the insurance would receive temporary wage replacement when caring for a sick family member, a new child or other eligible needs.

This bill has been signed by the governor.

Louisville Metro Government: House Bill 388 includes multiple provisions to revamp certain aspects of Louisville Metro Government. That includes one section that changes elections for the metro council and the mayor from partisan to non-partisan. The governor vetoed HB 388, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

Maternal Health: Senate Bill 74 aims to support maternal and infant health and reduce the high mortality rate for mothers in Kentucky. It will require most health plans to cover pregnancy, child birth and postpartum care along with in-home treatment for substance use disorder. It also calls on most plans to cover labor and delivery costs and all services and supplies related to breastfeeding. Another provision aims to provide expectant parents with more data on health care facilities and maternal outcomes across the state. SB 74 has been signed by the governor.

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### Lawmakers pass bills,

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Mathematics Education: House Bill 162 seeks to improve numeracy in Kentucky. It will reform early education math standards and provide more professional development for teachers. The bill would also create multitiered support systems for struggling students. HB 162 has been signed by the governor.

Medicinal Cannabis: House Bill 829 seeks to update some aspects of Kentucky's upcoming medicinal cannabis program. It will allow schools to opt out and allow local governments to apply a small fee to the program, among other changes. The bill has been signed by the governor.

**Missing Adults:** Senate Bill 45 calls on Kentucky State Police and other state officials to operate a new alert system that helps find missing people over the age of 17. The governor has signed this legislation.

Nicotine Products: House Bill 11 will align state law with FDA regulations regarding the sale of tobacco products. Specifically, it will prohibit the sale of tobacco products to individuals under the age of 21. It will also create penalties for retailers who violate the restrictions. The governor has signed HB 11.

Non-Citizen Voting: Senate Bill 143 proposes changes to the state constitution that would prevent anyone who is not a U.S. citizen from voting in Kentucky elections. Proposed amendments do not go to the governor for a signature, but still need ratification by Kentucky voters in an election before taking effect.

**Nuclear Energy**: Senate Bill 198 establishes the Kentucky Nuclear Energy Development Authority to support and facilitate the development of a nuclear energy ecosystem across the state. The governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.

Official State Rock: House Bill 378 changes the official state rock from Kentucky agate to coal. It also changes the official mineral from coal to calcite and the official gemstone from the fresh-water pearl to Kentucky agate. The governor has signed HB 378.

**Pseudoephedrine**: House Bill 386 eases purchase limits on pseudoephedrine to help people with chronic allergies legally obtain enough of the medication to meet their needs. HB 386 became law without the governor's signature.

**Recording Food Operations**: Senate Bill 16 forbids people from capturing or distributing unauthorized video, audio or photos from a commercial food manufacturing facility or an animal feeding operation. Violators could face

a class B misdemeanor on the first offense and a class A misdemeanor for a subsequent offense. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto

Research Consortiums: Senate Bill 1 creates an endowment fund to support collaborative research consortiums among public universities in Kentucky. Administered by the Council on Postsecondary Education, the program will focus on research projects that seek to improve quality of life through medicine, health and economic development. The governor has signed this legislation.

Safer Kentucky Act: House Bill 5 seeks to crack down on repeat, violent offenders. It will also allow prosecutors to file a manslaughter charge against anyone who sells or distributes fentanyl that causes a fatal overdose. Other provisions seek to curb unlawful street camping and set limits on charitable bond organizations. The governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.

**School Bus Behavior**: House Bill 446 seeks to address disciplinary issues on school buses. Under the bill, every bus rider – and at least one of their parents or guardians – will need to sign a transportation agreement with the district. The agreements will outline expectations for students and parents and explain the consequences for misbehavior. HB 446 has been signed by the governor.

School District Task Force: House Concurrent Resolution 81 will establish the Efficient and Effective School District Governance Task Force to study the organizational structures of Jefferson County Public Schools and develop possible recommendations to ensure effectiveness. Lawmakers overrode the governor's veto of this bill.

**School Notifications**: Senate Bill 11 seeks to speed up notifications to schools when a student has been charged with a crime. The governor has signed this bill.

**Sex Offenders and Social Media**: Senate Bill 249 will require sex offenders who have been convicted of abusing a minor to use their legal name on social media platforms. SB 249 has been signed by the governor.

**School Safety**: Senate Bill 2 seeks to enhance school safety by allowing some veterans and former police officers to serve as school "guardians." It also calls on school districts to assemble trauma-informed teams to improve mental health interventions. SB 2 became law without the governor's signature.

**Speech Therapy**: Senate Bill 111 eliminates some insurance coverage limits on speech therapy for stuttering. The legislation has been signed by the governor.

**Student Transportation**: House Bill 447 calls on the Kentucky Board of Education to update regulations so that school districts can use smaller passenger vehicles instead of buses for transporting students to school and related activities. The governor has signed this legislation.

**Truancy**: House Bill 611 calls for school officials to file a complaint with the county attorney when a student misses 15 days of school without an excuse. For students in elementary school, the parent would be held responsible. This measure became law without the governor's signature.

Vaping in Schools: House Bill 142 bans all tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products in Kentucky public schools. It will also require school districts to adopt disciplinary procedures for students who violate the bans. The governor has signed HB 142.

**Veteran Suicide Prevention**: Under House Bill 30, the Kentucky Department of Veterans Affairs will create a suicide prevention program for service members, veterans and their families. HB 30 has been signed by the governor.

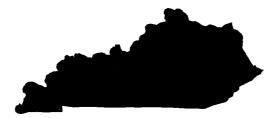
Vintage Distilled Spirits: House Bill 439 creates a regulatory and licensing structure for the commercial sale of vintage distilled spirits in Kentucky. It will also allow some confiscated alcohol to be auctioned – instead of destroyed – with proceeds benefiting alcohol wellness efforts. The governor has signed this bill.

**Window Tinting**: Senate Bill 46 allows windshield tinting on vehicles as long as at least 70% of light can still pass through the material. The governor has signed this legislation.

Youth Employment Programs: Senate Bill 128 allows non-profit organizations to employ 12- and 13-year-olds for the purpose of learning life and employment skills. To participate, organizations will need to first receive approval from the state Department of Workplace Standards, and the work could not exceed 18 hours a week. SB 128 became law without the governor's signature.

Youth Medical Records: House Bill 174 stipulates that parents have access to their child's medical records. Right now, children ages 13 and older must sign a waiver for parents to have access. This

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### 2024 Kentucky General Assembly

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\* 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:

#### **Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee:**

 $\underline{https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/statutory/Admin\_Regs/minutes\_all.html}$ 

#### **Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee:**

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/statutory/Cap Proj/minutes all.html

#### **Government Contract Review Committee:**

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/statutory/GovContr/minutes\_all.html

### Investments in Information Technology Improvement & Modernization Projects Oversight Board:

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/statutory/IITIMPOB/minutes all.html

#### **Public Pension Oversight Board:**

https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/committees/statutory/PP Ov. Bd/minutes all.html

### Lawmakers pass bills,

#### from page 4

legislation became law without the governor's signature.

Unless bills include an emergency clause or special effective date, they are scheduled to take effect on July 15.

Lawmakers will return to Frankfort in June for the interim period, when they can hold committee hearings on issues and consider proposals for the 2025 legislative session.

Kentuckians can continue to track the action through the general assembly webpage, which will provide a weekly calendar of committee meetings during the interim period. Citizens can also share their views on issues with lawmakers by calling the General Assembly's toll-free message line at 1-800-372-7181.

## LRC Publications 2024 Price List

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Daily Record Mailed: \$165

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#### **Administrative Regulations**

Administrative Register (monthly): \$120.00

#### **Acts of the General Assembly** (2023)

Regular Session: \$80 (2 volumes)

Special Sessions: Priced after printing

#### **Journals**

House and Senate Complete Set, House Set, Senate Set: Priced after printing

(All prices subject to 6% Kentucky sales tax within Kentucky and subject to change)

2024 Interim

### LEGISLATIVE RECORD

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The Kentucky Legislative Research Commission is a 16-member committee of the majority and minority leadership of the Kentucky Senate and House of Representatives. Under Chapter 7 of the Kentucky Revised Statutes, the LRC constitutes the administrative office for the General Assembly. Its director serves as chief administrative officer of the Legislature when it isn't in session.

The Commission and its staff, by law and by practice, perform numerous fact-finding and service functions for members of the Legislature, employing professional, clerical and other employees required when the General Assembly is in session and during the interim period between sessions. These employees, in turn, assist committees and individual legislators in preparing legislation. Other services include conducting studies and investigations, organizing and staffing committee meetings and public hearings, maintaining official legislative records and other reference materials, providing information about the Legislature to the public, compiling and publishing administrative regulations, administering a legislative intern program, conducting orientation programs for new legislators, and publishing a daily index and summary of legislative actions during sessions.

The LRC is also responsible for statute revision, publishing and distributing the Acts and Journals following sessions, and for maintaining furnishings, equipment and supplies for the Legislature. It also functions as Kentucky's Commission on Interstate Cooperation in carrying out the program of The Council of State Governments as it relates to Kentucky.

#### 2024 Interim

### LEGISLATIVE KENTUCKY GENERAL ASSEMBLY RECORD

700 Capital Avenue Frankfort, Kentucky 40601