Legislative Update

FBCA Annual Bench and Bar CLE

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2026 Regular Session

- Convened January 6, 2026 and adjourned April 15, 2026.
- A total of 1,293 bills were introduced, including 354 Senate bills and 939 House bills.
- A total of 444 resolutions were introduced including 264 Senate simple resolutions, 24 Senate joint resolutions, 15 Senate concurrent resolutions, 67 House simple resolutions, 49 House joint resolutions, and 25 House concurrent resolutions.
- The Governor vetoed 13 Senate bills, 1 Senate joint resolution, 17 House bills, and 1 House joint resolution.
- The Governor Line Item vetoed (which means that those bills contained appropriations) 1 Senate bill and 6 House bills. The General Assembly overrode all of the substantive line item vetoes.
- The General Assembly overrode the vetoes of 12 Senate bills, 17 House bills, and 1 House joint resolution.
- A total of 171 Senate bills, 3 Senate joint resolutions, 2 Senate concurrent resolutions, 120 House bills, and 5 House joint resolutions, became law.

House Bill 4 – Grooming a Minor

- House Bill 4 criminalizes efforts to manipulate a minor into sexual contact with an adult, a practice known as "grooming."
- "Grooming behavior" is defined as "a course of conduct directed at a minor that is intended to establish an emotional connection with a minor through manipulation, trust-building, or influence to facilitate future acts of sexual conduct or normalize or desensitize the minor to acts of sexual contact.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 312 – Concealed Carry

- House Bill 312 allows Kentuckians aged 18 to 20 years old to obtain a provisional concealed carry permit after undergoing a background check and firearms training.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

Senate Bill 122 – Alternative Sentencing

- Senate Bill 122 aims to keep families intact when a parent is convicted of a felony.
- It requires Kentucky courts to consider alternative sentences for certain nonviolent felony convictions when the defendant is a primary caretaker of a dependent child.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 305 – Crystal Rogers Act

- House Bill 305 seeks to preserve the integrity of grand jury proceedings by strengthening penalties for illegally recording or sharing information on a grand jury proceeding.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 778 – Child Welfare

- House Bill 778 makes multiple changes to Kentucky law related to child welfare.
- The bill is designed to ensure safe and adequate foster care placements and that children in foster care are not placed with someone on the sex offender registry.
- Also under HB 778, child injuries caused by ingestion or inhalation of a controlled substance are included in the definition of neglect for the child abuse statute.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 366 – Computer-generated Images

- Amends KRS 531.335 relating to possession or viewing of matter portraying a sexual performance by a minor to provide that the sexual performance may be by a computer-generated image of a minor.
- Provides that any person convicted of possession or viewing of matter portraying a sexual performance by a minor shall not be released on probation or parole without serving 85% of the sentence imposed.

Senate Bill 66 – Impaired Driving

- Under Senate Bill 66, a person's refusal to take a preliminary breath test will not result in the suspension of the person's license.
- The bill also removes a person's refusal of a blood test as an aggravating circumstance.
- The bill requires law enforcement to inform persons suspected of driving under the influence of their rights with respect to breath and blood tests, and if they do not do so, the refusal cannot be used in court.
- The bill will require the Transportation Cabinet to maintain records of moving traffic convictions for 10 years.
- It will also add clonazepam, cyclobenzaprine and fentanyl to the list of drugs that, when detected in a driver's blood, could lead to an impaired driving conviction.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 104 – Impeding a First Responder

- Senate Bill 104 seeks to prevent interference or harassment of first responders.
- It creates a 25-foot safe zone around police, firefighters and others while they are performing their official duties.
- Individuals who remain in the zone could face criminal charges if they ignore an initial warning to move back and intend to impede, threaten or harass a first responder.
- *SB 104 became law without the Governor's signature.*

Senate Bill 251 – Death Penalty Regulations

- Senate Bill 251 gives the Kentucky Department of Corrections the option to implement execution protocols and procedures through internal policy, memorandum or similar action regarding the death penalty.
- Currently, the department is required to promulgate administrative regulations to prescribe and implement execution protocols.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

House Bill 78– Firearms Liability

- House Bill 78 codifies federal standards outlined in the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act of 2005.
- Establishes liability protections for manufacturers and sellers of firearms and ammunition and trade associations from facing lawsuits when guns or ammunition are used unlawfully or in the commission of a crime.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

House Bill 185 – Employment Matters

- House Bill 185 requires licensing authorities that consider criminal background checks as part of the application process to establish some qualifying procedures.
- The new law gives persons convicted of a crime an opportunity to obtain a determination of whether the crime will disqualify the individual from a position of public employment or an occupation for which a professional license is required before pursuing training or employment for that occupation or position.
- Requires the hiring or licensing authority to request additional information for consideration from the individual and afford the individual an opportunity for an in-person, telephone or videoing hearing.
- Amends KRS 335B.020 to require consideration of specified items submitted by the applicant in determining whether a conviction directly relates to the position of public employment sought or the occupation sought.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 542- Eminent Domain

- House Bill 542 improves transparency between landowners and officials seeking to condemn property with a conservation easement or location in an agriculture district.
- Officials must provide a written sworn report to the court supporting the condemnation due to lack of feasible alternative locations.
- The bill also prohibits a condemner from engaging in false, intimidating, or misleading negotiation tactics.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 50 – Disposition of Property

- Amends various statutes related to changes in descent and distribution of property in intestacy. Also, statutes related to estate administration, including matters related to presentation of the original Will and required oaths, privacy protections, and dispensing with administration in specified cases.
- Provides set fees for recording a Will and other documents regardless of length.
- Adopts the Kentucky Qualified Dispositions in Trust Act. Adopts the Uniform Electronic Wills Act, the Uniform Electronic Estate Planning Document Act, the Uniform Directed Trust Act, and the Uniform Trust Decanting Act.
- Creates a new section of KRS Chapter 186A to provide for a transfer of a motor vehicle on death of an owner through a "beneficiary designation form" taking effect January 2, 2028.
- Establishes that transfer on death of a motor vehicle is a nontestamentary transfer and is not subject to any tax under KRS 138.460.

House Bill 58 – License Plate Readers

- House Bill 58 limits the use of license plate readers to public safety purposes, such as regulating parking, controlling access to secured areas, deterring crime and conducting criminal investigations.
- The bill provides that only public agencies, law enforcement or the Transportation Cabinet may use license plate readers.
- It allows the Transportation Cabinet to also use readers for toll and revenue collection and certain enforcement needs.
- HB 58 also requires data captured by automatic license plate readers to be deleted after 90 days, with limited exceptions for criminal investigations and other needs.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 422 – Logan's Law

- House Bill 422 clarifies the insanity defense in criminal law.
- The bill also prevents juries and courts from applying the insanity defense inconsistently when returning verdicts for multiple counts arising from a single course of conduct.
- In addition, HB 422 makes repeat violent offenders ineligible for mandatory reentry supervision.
- The bill was filed after Ronald Exantus, the man who killed 6-year-old Logan Tipton in 2015, was released early from prison last year on mandatory reentry supervision.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 521 – Stalking

- House Bill 521 seeks to modernize state stalking laws to align with contemporary legal standards and better address behaviors thar occur through electronic communications and social media.
- The bill also enhances the penalty for stalking to a Class C felony when the court has previously issued a protective order for the victim or the defendant has been convicted or plead guilty within the previous 5 years against the same victim or victims.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 10 – Gubernatorial Pardons

- Senate Bill 10 proposes to amend the Kentucky Constitution to limit the governor's ability to grant pardons and commute sentences for 90 days surrounding a gubernatorial election.
- *The bill has received final passage in the General Assembly and will now head to the ballot for consideration by Kentucky voters.*

Senate Bill 170 – Status Offenders

- Senate Bill 170 creates a four-year pilot program in up to 10 school districts to help address barriers to school attendance.
- It also aims to strengthen the diversion of status offenders using Responsive Interventions to Support and Empower (RISE) teams and increase family involvement.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 6 – Child Care Modernization

- House Bill 6 calls for a board overhaul of the regulatory framework for Kentucky's childcare sector.
- Specifically, it seeks to modernize the system, enhance data collection, and improve access and quality of services.
- The bill was amended to include other provisions that would provide more flexibility to state agencies that oversee Kentucky's childcare industry, allowing officials to consider certain mitigating factors before issuing a plan of correction, suspension or revocation of a license to a childcare center.
- Another provision calls on the University of Kentucky to establish the Kentucky Kindergarten Readiness Performance-Based Child Care Incentive Pilot Program, which will gauge the effectiveness of using financial incentives to encourage kindergarten readiness.
- *SB 104 became law without the Governor's signature.*

Senate Bill 101 – Student Violence

- Senate Bill 101 mandates that school boards expel students in grades 6 through 12 for at least 12 months if the student recklessly, with a deadly weapon or dangerous instrument, or intentionally caused or attempted to cause physical injury to a school district employee on school property or at a school function.
- The bill includes some exceptions for students with disabilities.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 7 – School Bus Safety

- House Bill 7 allows school districts to install traffic cameras on school buses to help enforce laws against stop-arm traffic violations.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 1 – School District Governance

- Senate Bill 1 revamps the governance structure of Jefferson County Public Schools by creating more specific responsibilities for superintendents and boards of education in large, complex school districts.
- The legislation also lists the legal justification for why the General Assembly has a compelling interest in intervening in large districts like Jefferson County. It follows a similar measure that passed the legislature in 2022, but was later struck down in the courts.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

Senate Bill 4 – School Leadership

- Senate Bill 4 creates a new training program that provides leadership development and mentorship opportunities for new school principals in Kentucky.
- Under the final version of the bill, an employee of any Kentucky school district is prohibited from running for a school board seat in a large school district.
- The legislation also reduces the number of school board members in Jefferson County from seven to five.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

Senate Bill 2 – School Administrator Salaries

- Senate Bill 2 prohibits school administrators from receiving a percentage pay increase that is greater than the percentage pay increase provided to classroom teachers in that district unless the increase is due to a significant change in job duties.
- The bill includes a waiver process for certain circumstances.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 67 – School Communications

- House Bill 67 seeks to clarify a law adopted last year regarding communications between school employees and coaches and students to help protect the students.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 562 – Alternative Diplomas

- House Bill 562 creates new alternative diploma options for high school students with intellectual disabilities, allowing the students to be considered graduates rather than dropouts.
- It also calls for the state Department of Workforce Development to create a one-stop shop that identifies all employers in Kentucky that will recognize the new alternative diploma as a valid high school diploma.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 490 – Postsecondary Employment

- House Bill 490 allows the governing boards of public postsecondary institutions to remove faculty members for bona fide financial reasons such as financial exigency, low enrollment or misalignment of revenue and costs.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

Senate Bill 185 – Kentucky State University

- Senate Bill 185 aims to transform KSU into a four-year residential polytechnical institution, emphasizing technical, industry-based applied learning.
- KSU will continue to provide liberal arts courses aligned with the state's workforce needs and the institution's historical mission as the state's only public historically Black college and university.
- Other provisions seek to stabilize the university's finances and give the Kentucky Council on Postsecondary Education additional oversight as KSU implements the transition.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 5 – Prison Education Programs

- House Bill 5 establishes the Kentucky Community and Technical College System Prison Education Program, seeking to reduce recidivism and support workforce development.
- KCTCS will partner with the state Department of Corrections to build and operate a vocational training campus at Northpoint Training Center.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 69 – Autism Trust Fund

- Senate Bill 69 creates the Autism Spectrum Disorder trust fund administered by the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services.
- The fund can accept grants, appropriations and other types of contributions to support research and services.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 139 – Elections

- House Bill 139 combines provisions from three elections bills being considered by the General Assembly during the 2026 Legislative Session.
- The legislation prohibits felons and non-citizens from appearing on voting rolls and aligns Kentucky's campaign contribution limits to match the federal limits.
- The bill also removes Social Security cards and food stamp cards from the list of secondary identification options that voters can use at the polls if they do not have a standard photo ID.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

House Bill 136 – Campaign Finance

- House Bill 136 allows the use of campaign funds to pay for the “reasonable costs” of security measures for candidates, office holders and family members.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 59 – Tax Money

- Senate Bill 59 prohibits tax dollars from being used to advocate for or against a public question on the ballot.
- It also establishes criminal and civil penalties for violators.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

House Bill 2 – Medicaid Reform

- House Bill 2 seeks to align Kentucky's Medicaid program with the One Big Beautiful Bill Act that Congress passed last year.
- For example, the bill will implement federal community engagement requirements for certain able-bodied adults.
- Other sections of the bill address cost-sharing eligibility reviews, non-emergency transportation services, accountability for managed care organizations and delivery of dental services.
- HB 2 also enhances transparency by creating a performance dashboard and requiring regular program audits
- *The Governor vetoed portions of the bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.*

Senate Joint Resolution 116 – Physician Shortages

- Senate Joint Resolution 116 directs the University of Kentucky, the University of Louisville and Eastern Kentucky University to coordinate in a search for actionable solutions to physician shortages and to explore and expand health care opportunities in medically underserved areas.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 176 – Prior Authorization

- House Bill 176 seeks to streamline the prior authorization process for health insurance claims by creating exceptions for certain health care providers.
- Signed into law by the Governor.

Senate Bill 97 – Prostheses and Orthoses Coverage

- Senate Bill 97 seeks to expand existing prosthetics and orthotics insurance coverage to include devices designed specifically for physical activity such as running, swimming or biking.
- Signed into law by the Governor.

House Bill 164 – Hearing Aids

- House Bill 164 requires a health benefit plan to provide coverage, subject to applicable co-pays, deductibles, and out-of-pocket limits, for the full cost of one hearing aid per hearing-impaired ear up to $2,500 every 36 months.
- An insured may chose a higher priced hearing aid and may pay the difference in cost above $2,500.
- Signed into law by the Governor.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 9 – Medicaid Delivery Study

- Senate Concurrent Resolution 9 calls for a study of accountable care models used for Medicaid programs in other states.
- The study will also look at opportunities to implement such a model in Kentucky through a pilot program.
- The goal of the study is to control costs and improve health outcomes.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 134 – Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners

- House Bill 134 aims to expand the availability of sexual assault nurse examiners across Kentucky.
- It calls for a statewide coordinator to recruit nurses, facilitate training and improve collaboration between hospitals, law enforcement and rape crisis centers.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 169 – Eating Disorders

- House Bill 169 requires health insurance plans that provide behavioral or mental health care coverage to also provide coverage for the diagnosis and treatment of feeding or eating disorders.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 178 – Mental Health Care

- House Bill 178 provides the statutory framework for the psychiatric collaborative care model, allowing primary care providers, care managers and consulting psychiatrists to work together on a patient's mental health care.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 90 – Behavioral Health

- Amends KRS 533.272 to extend the pilot behavioral health conditional dismissal program until January 1, 2031.
- Limits the participation to 20 counties.
- Extends existing reporting requirements on recidivism to include information based upon 3, 4, and 5 years of data and to include information on defendants charged with a qualifying offense in counties not participating in the program based upon similar size and general location of a county that is participating.
- Amends KRS 533.288 to extend the Behavioral Health Conditional Dismissal Program Implementation Council until December 31, 2031.
- Amends KRS 210.040 to replace the term “institutions” with “facilities.”
- Establishes that the Cabinet for Health and Family Services is responsible for providing care that includes emergency and other medical care provided outside a state facility for patients in state-operated mental health facilities.

House Bill 510 – Organ Donors

- House Bill 510 requires additional verification steps before organ procurement can begin to protect patients during the organ donation process.
- It also clarifies that donor consent must be properly documented and that a patient must be formally declared dead before organs can be harvested.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Fraudulent Contractors – Senate Bill 153

- Senate Bill 153 will help protect Kentucky homeowners from abusive and fraudulent contractors following severe weather.
- It clarifies that vandalism committed for the purpose of an insurance claim is fraud.
- It also establishes the process for establishing a post-disaster registry for roofing, siding and tree-removal businesses, and prohibits door-to-door solicitations during declared emergencies.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

House Bill 264 - Real Estate Fraud

- House Bill 264 seeks to combat real estate scams. It creates a legal presumption of fraud when someone advertises residential or commercial property for sale, lease or rent without ownership or authority.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 57 - Nuclear Energy

- Senate Bill 57 creates the Nuclear Reactors Site Readiness Pilot Program to help energy providers obtain licenses and permits related to site work for nuclear power projects.
- The program will provide up to $25 million in grant funding to each of three projects in Kentucky.
- *Signed into law by the Governor.*

Senate Bill 199 – Pesticide Labeling

- Under Senate Bill 199, pesticides that display a warning label approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will have met legal standards concerning the duty to warn consumers about potential health effects.
- The bill applies only to products that have an agricultural use label.
- *The Governor vetoed this bill, but the veto was overridden.*

Budget

- Invests $6.2 billion in the general fund over the biennium toward Medicaid with an additional $290 million allocation in reserve if necessary.
- Increases public pension and retirement system contributions, reducing long-term liabilities.
- 2% salary raises for state employees in both the 2026-27 and 2027-28 fiscal years.
- Increasing the funding formula for schools, also known as SEEK, to $4,626 per pupil in the 2026-27 fiscal year and to $4,792 per pupil in the 2027-28 fiscal year.

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