

# KENTUCKY YOUTH ASSEMBLY 2019

## YOUTH GOVERNOR'S AGENDA

To help facilitate broader understanding of policy issues facing our Commonwealth, our KYA Governors and their Presiding Officer teams have published the Youth Governor's Agenda.

The Youth Governor's Agenda is a list of policy issues organized into 6 policy areas:

- **Environmental Health**  
Developing and managing the economy and resources of our Commonwealth
- **Education and Educators**  
Reforming K-12 education systems and rights of educators in our Commonwealth
- **Institutional Reform**  
Improving community development and civic and cultural engagement
- **Labor and Economics**  
Ensuring the health and well-being of all Kentuckians and Kentucky families
- **Public Health and Safety**  
Developing public policy to better protect Kentucky Youth
- **Social Equity**  
Reforming and improving the criminal justice system

There are 4 issues per policy area on the agenda (24 total). Each issue includes a one-page briefing:

- **Background on Issue**  
Summary and background information on the issue
- **Questions to Address in Bills**  
Guiding questions/problems that any BILLS on the issue should look to answer/solve
- **Sources for Research**  
Links to research, articles, and other resources for your delegations

### HOW TO USE THE AGENDA

- The best way to use the Agenda is to have bill sponsors review each issue and consider how they would best answer/solve the "Questions to Address".
- While multiple bills may address the same issue, each bill will likely have a different answer or solution to the problems that must be addressed.

### YOUTH GOVERNOR'S AGENDA FAQ

#### Do we have to write bills on these topics?

These topics are not mandatory (only recommended by your KYA Presiding Officers), nor are they tied to awards, but these topics will be taken into account by each Youth Governor when determining which Commonwealth bills they choose to sign into law.

#### Does the Agenda take a position on an issue?

The agenda does not take positions on issues (or endorse any issue or solution), but rather provides "Questions to Address in Bills" so delegates can research their own positions when drafting their BILLS.

# 2019 AGENDA ISSUES

## Policy Area | Environmental Health

Page

Water Pollution	2
Co2 Emission Reduction	3
Tax incentives	4
Renewable Energy	5

## Policy Area | Education and Educators

Sex Education	6
Mental Health Curriculum	7
Vocational Education	8
School Resource Officers	9

## Policy Area | Institutional Reform

Family Rehabilitation	10
Prison Reform	11
Cash Bill Reform	12
Drug Rehabilitation	13

## Policy Area | Labor and Economics

Gas Tax	14
Service Tax Reform	15
Appalachian Transition	16
Abnormal Facet Taxes	17

## Policy Area | Public Health and Safety

Abortion	18
Opioid Abuse	19
Tobacco Use	20
Female Hygiene	21

## Policy Area | Social Equity

Affirmative Action	22
Animal Abuse	23
Foster Care	24
Job Security	25

Prepared by your **2019 KYA Presiding Officers:**

Position	HS KYA 1	HS KYA 2	HS KYA 3	HS KYA 4
<b>Governor</b>	Sammy Smith	Joseph Hettinger	Nick Skidmore	Cammeron Durham
<b>Speaker of CW House</b>	Jack Clark	Nasim Mohammadzadeh	Hassan Kashif	Aidan Aldridge
<b>Pres. of CW Senate</b>	Benjamin Waltman	Lauren Langhi	Larah Ballard	Peyton French
<b>Secretary of State</b>	Anna Scharre	Patrick Haycraft	Autumn King	Addison McCoun
<b>Chief Justice</b>	Sky Carroll	Sarah Pederson	Caleb Webb	Meredith DePuy
<b>Attorney General</b>	Ashlea Eversole	Emily Hale	Liam Gallagher	Hailey Finch
<b>Sec. of Exec. Cabinet</b>	Maddie Stokes	Reyna Russell	Mia Stirling	Vendela Norris
<b>Editor-in-Chief</b>	Connor Ford	Marcello Teixeira	Tristan Winstead	Kayleigh Macumber
<b>Lt. Governor</b>	James Gunsar	Claire Moore	Beau Norton	Haider Nasir
<b>Speaker of BG House</b>	Sadie Townsend	Abby Moss	Shamitha Kuppala	Gavin Alfon
<b>Pres. of BG Senate</b>	Leah Smith	Alex Young	Josh Groves	Allie McIntyre

## Policy Area 1 | Environmental Health

# WATER POLLUTION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Jack Clark, Speaker of the CW House | HS KYA 1  
Ben Waltman, President of the CW Senate | HS KYA 1

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE:

Due to the runoff of metals and harmful minerals in Kentucky waterways, there are many counties in Kentucky that suffer from extremely polluted water. Kentucky has the 49th worst nutrient loss (fertilizer runoff) in the country, and ranks in the bottom half of reduced ecosystem impacts from polluted waters. Many citizens do not have the funds to afford their own water filtration or to buy bottled water, and are forced to drink below quality water that often comes out muddy from the tap. Parts of the state, such as Harlan County, are under a constant boil-water advisory, meaning that tap water is not safe to use without boiling beforehand. Poor water quality also puts a further financial burden on those affected. The U.S. Department of Energy has stated that appliances such as water heaters do not reach their full potential life span due to sediment buildup.

A large contributing factor to the poor water quality of Kentucky is the violations of environmental law done by mining companies and water treatment companies alike. Water treatment companies are described as “serious violators” of the Clean Water Act, and the Environmental Protection Agency consistently finds violations of the Safe Water Drinking Act in Appalachian Kentucky counties. Martin County alone contributed 50 of this violations since 2008. Dangerous mining practices such as mountaintop removal lead to minerals running off into rivers and streams. In 2014, Frasure Creek Mining was exposed for falsifying clean water reports according to an environmental group, Appalachian Voices. This is mainly due to the fact that a declining populous and compounding maintenance issues have left water companies with a lack of funds to properly address these issues.

Despite many federal regulations for water and state level stipulations in addition to that, there continues to be a range of water abuses in Kentucky. With enforcement of many of the regulations based on cooperation it can be difficult to proactively prevent water pollution. Additionally, many of the people in the eastern areas of our state most affected by water pollution lack the resources to report it and challenge violators. This host of complications undermines the effectiveness of many of our regulations. The issue of water pollution in our state threatens many and is a key topic to be addressed to protect our Commonwealth’s citizens.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Can companies be trusted to abide by water pollution regulations?
2. How can we better enforce current environmental protection laws that apply to water in our state?
3. Is there room for more regulations to prevent water pollution? Are they necessary or possibly unenforceable?
4. Should water pollution regulations only apply to large companies or smaller farms and businesses as well?
5. Does the relationship between Government and polluting companies need to remain one of cooperation or change in the case of water pollution?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

“Clean Water in Eastern Kentucky”

<https://www.povertylaw.org/clearinghouse/stories/cromer>

“Kentucky Coal Company Falsified Water Pollution Reports”

<https://thinkprogress.org/kentucky-coal-company-falsified-water-pollution-reports-environmental-group-alleges-308c03528ee7/>

“Community Impacts of Mountaintop Removal”

<http://appvoices.org/end-mountaintop-removal/community/>

“Eastern Kentucky’s Struggle With Water Symbolizes America’s Crumbling Infrastructure”

[https://www.huffpost.com/entry/appalachia-eastern-kentucky-water-shutoffs\\_n\\_5a7c91b2e4b0c6726e10b620](https://www.huffpost.com/entry/appalachia-eastern-kentucky-water-shutoffs_n_5a7c91b2e4b0c6726e10b620)

“A Western Kentucky Coal Plant Polluted The Water, But Won’t Pay Any Fines”

<https://wfpl.org/db-wilson-polluted-kentucky-waters-but-wont-pay-any-fines/>

“What Our 50-State Scorecard Says About Farming and Water Pollution (and What the Farm Bill Should Do About It)”

<https://blog.ucsusa.org/karen-perry-stillerman/what-our-50-state-scorecard-says-about-farming-and-water-pollution-and-what-the-farm-bill-should-do-about-it>

“Muddy, nasty water.’ Why these Eastern Kentuckians are afraid to drink from their taps.”

<https://www.kentucky.com/news/local/watchdog/article221657625.html>

## Policy Area 1 | Environmental Health

# CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Emily Hale, Attorney General | HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Kentucky faces a severe issue of permitting the mass amounts of carbon dioxide flooding the air. Kentucky is 12th in the nation for emitting over 100 million metric tons of carbon dioxide in the year of 2016 alone. The company that emits the most CO2 per megawatt is located in Kentucky and also known as Big Rivers Co-op. These extreme carbon emissions are contributing to climate change of Kentucky that leads to a yield in state crops, a threat to aquatic ecosystems, increased flood risks, and a lack of forest productivity. Many others companies in Kentucky are found for their large counts of carbon dioxide emissions. This is in part because of the role carbon-rich coal plays in Kentucky's energy portfolio.

A growing debate of Kentucky is how to balance the hope of a growing economy while protecting the environment. However, in recent years the statistics show that the growth of the economy has increased while the rate of carbon dioxide emissions have decreased. Thus, the citizens wanting to reduce carbon dioxide emissions argue that it will have a significant impact on the economy. In response, the issue of cost and investments will play a significant role for the emissions to be decreased.

The supporters of the coal industry bring awareness to the fact that federal regulation is costing jobs and hurting local economies in places like eastern Kentucky. However, around the United States, carbon dioxide emissions have had a 13% decrease and coal is accounting for only 39% of power produced in the nation. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency announced new premature rules for power plants on their carbon dioxide emissions under section 111(d) of the Clean Air Act.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. How will be people maintain affordable and stable electricity costs with the new rules of the EPA?
2. Which solution would be most efficient (a system wide solution or plant-by-plant solution)?
3. What is the impact/effects of the new rule of the EPA? How can it be reformed to changed to benefit the citizens of Kentucky?
4. To what extent are carbon dioxide emissions needing to be lowered?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Energy-Related Carbon Dioxide Emissions by State"

<https://www.eia.gov/environment/emissions/state/analysis/>

"Kentucky's Carbon Dioxide Emissions Rate is the Highest in the U.S."

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/wfpl.org/kentuckys-carbon-dioxide-emissions-rate-highest-u-s-report-says/amp/>

"Kentucky's at the Top of the List for Carbon Dioxide Pollution"

<https://www.wkms.org/post/kentuckys-top-list-carbon-dioxide-pollution#stream/0>

"What Kentucky's New Law on Carbon Dioxide Emissions Actually Means"

<https://www.google.com/amp/s/wfpl.org/what-kentuckys-new-law-carbon-dioxide-emissions-actually-means/amp/>

# **TAX INCENTIVES**

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Nick Skidmore, Governor | HS KYA 3  
Beau Norton, Lt. Governor | HS KYA 3

## **BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

Providing tax incentives to a certain kind of industry can promote growth in that sector, while taxing their operations can cause that market to shrink. For several decades, Kentucky has spent millions of dollars to support fossil fuel industries, while we have done little to incentivize the growth of alternative energy sources.

In 2009, Kentucky spent \$642.5 million on coal energy subsidies, comprising 1.7% of the total state budget. At the same time, the state was only gaining \$527.7 million in tax revenue from the coal industry, meaning our subsidization of the coal industry was leading to a \$114.8 million net budgetary loss.

Many of the subsidies have used job growth as their justification, but as the coal industry continues to falter, some question the legitimacy of this argument. Just since 1979, coal has lost 78.8% of its jobs, and as of 2008, only 1% of our states employment still lies in the coal industry. Pro-coal proponents argue that subsidizes help slow this job loss and allow us to maintain the seventh cheapest energy prices in the country. Environmental advocates say that coal subsidies would be better spent on renewable energy sources, which already employ 1540% more workers than coal does, and which is seeing growth in some sectors as high as 24.5% annually.

## **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS**

1. How will we be able to give coal workers jobs now that the industry is in decline?
2. What can be done to balance the Kentucky energy budget?
3. What different jobs could coal-workers do in the renewable energy industry?
4. How will we alleviate economic strife in regions that depended on the coal industry?

## **SOURCES FOR RESEARCH**

Eblen, Tom. "Against Energy Subsidies? Lawmakers Complaining about Solar Should Dig into This." Kentucky, Lexington Herald Leader, 2012,

[www.kentucky.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/tom-eblen/article199286744.html](http://www.kentucky.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/tom-eblen/article199286744.html).

Konty, Melissa. "The Impact on Coal in the Kentucky State Budget." The Impact on Coal in the Kentucky State Budget, 2011, [maced.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MACED\\_Impact\\_of\\_Coal\\_Report.pdf](http://maced.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MACED_Impact_of_Coal_Report.pdf).

"U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." Independent Statistics & Analysis, US Energy Information Administration,

[www.eia.gov/state/?sid=KY](http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=KY).

"Clean Energy Is Building a New American Workforce." EDF, Environmental Defense Fund, Jan. 2018,

[www.edf.org/energy/clean-energy-jobs](http://www.edf.org/energy/clean-energy-jobs).

Worland, Justin. "Coal Mining Jobs Are Being Replaced By Clean Energy." TIME, Time USA, [time.com/coals-last-kick/](http://time.com/coals-last-kick/)

# RENEWABLE ENERGY

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Meredith DePuy, Chief Justice | HS KYA 4  
Peyton French, President of CW Senate | HS KYA 4

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Since 2009, the coal mining industry has rapidly decreased from roughly 80,000 jobs to 51,000 jobs as of June 2019. As an energy-intensive economy, in which the commonwealth is a part of the top states in consuming the most energy to produce a dollar of gross domestic product, and having the industrial sector of Kentucky consuming most energy in the state, areas including Northern Kentucky have looked for other routes, such as solar energy.

Kentucky lacks a renewable energy standard, with hydroelectricity being the main source of renewable energy (nonetheless making up 6% of the energy in the state.) Kentucky appears to be behind in terms of renewable energy policies as only thirteen states, including Kentucky, lack standards.

While having an average of 4.5 hours of sunlight everyday, Kentucky has multiple solar power generation facilities across the commonwealth, which together accounted for 0.1% of the state's electricity generation in 2018. Kentucky lacks wind resources suitable for developing utility-scale power projects, and no commercial wind power facilities have been built in the state.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. How would renewable energy change the exports and economics of Kentucky? Would the coal jobs central to our commonwealth be affected?
2. How can we advertise renewable energy effectively to Kentucky citizens?
3. Should there be restrictions on non-renewable energy? If so, what is it?
4. Should there be a renewable energy standard in Kentucky? If so, what should it be?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Brown, Russ. "Northern Kentucky at the Forefront of Switching to Clean, Renewable Energy." Lane Report | Kentucky Business & Economic News, The Lane Report , 15 Mar. 2019, [www.lanereport.com/111465/2019/03/northern-kentucky-at-the-forefront-of-switching-to-clean-renewable-energy](http://www.lanereport.com/111465/2019/03/northern-kentucky-at-the-forefront-of-switching-to-clean-renewable-energy).

"Bureau of Labor Statistics Data." U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 9 July 2019, [data.bls.gov/timeseries/CES1021210001](http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/CES1021210001).

"State Renewable Portfolio Standards and Goals." National Conference of State Legislatures, NCSL, 1 Feb. 2019, [www.ncsl.org/research/energy/renewable-portfolio-standards.aspx](http://www.ncsl.org/research/energy/renewable-portfolio-standards.aspx).

"U.S. Energy Information Administration - EIA - Independent Statistics and Analysis." Kentucky - State Energy Profile Analysis - U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), Eia, 16 May 2019, [www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=KY](http://www.eia.gov/state/analysis.php?sid=KY)

# **SEX EDUCATION**

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Tristan Winstead Editor in Chief| HS KYA 3

## **BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

Planned Parenthood defines sexual education as “high quality teaching and learning about a broad variety of topics related to sex and sexuality, exploring values and beliefs about those topics and gaining the skills that are needed to navigate relationships and manage one’s own sexual health.” Typically, sex ed is taught during a general health class. Curriculums can include lessons on abstinence, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases, contraception, human anatomy, pregnancy and labor, hormones, reproduction, etc.

However relevant and important this topic may seem to students daily lives, there is no specific curriculum for sexual education in the state of Kentucky. According to SIECUS, no Kentucky public school is required to teach about contraceptives, such as condoms or birth control. However, Kentucky schools do follow a set of standards that include education on “how decision-making relates to responsible sexual behavior (e.g., abstinence, preventing pregnancy, preventing HIV/ [sexually transmitted diseases] STDs), and impacts the physical, mental, and social well being of an individual.”

According to the NBIC and NIH, states that “tend to emphasize abstinence less tend to have lower teen pregnancy and birth rates.” In spite of this research, the Kentucky Department of Education says that abstinence only education is the surest way to prevent pregnancy and the spread of STDs in high school age students.

## **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS**

1. Should abstinence be taught, to any degree, in Kentucky public schools?
2. What other areas of study could be added to the curriculum?
3. How can educators ensure students are being taught adequately and equally about their own and the opposite genders body functions and anatomy?

## **SOURCES FOR RESEARCH**

Planned Parenthood

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/for-educators/what-sex-education>

[https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/3713/9611/7930/Sex\\_Ed\\_in\\_the\\_US.pdf](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/3713/9611/7930/Sex_Ed_in_the_US.pdf)

Siecus Public Policy Office

<https://siecus.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Kentucky05.pdf>

Kentucky Department of Education

[https://education.ky.gov/CTE/ctepa/Documents/2019-2020\\_CTE\\_POS.pdf](https://education.ky.gov/CTE/ctepa/Documents/2019-2020_CTE_POS.pdf)

National Center for Biotechnology Information

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3194801/>

# MENTAL HEALTH CURRICULUM

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Nasim Mohammadzadeh, Speaker of the Commonwealth House | HS KYA 2  
Lauren Langhi, President of the Commonwealth Senate| HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Kentucky's youth and young adults and, in 2017, 15 percent of Kentucky high school students reported having seriously considered suicide within a 12-month period, according to the Kentucky Department of Education. The Department of Health and Human Services reported that approximately 29% of Kentucky adolescents expressed depressive symptoms.

Mental health issues have been on the rise in Kentucky, making it more and more imperative that mental health curriculum be included in Kentucky education. In May of 2019, Bullit, Warren, and Henderson counties in Kentucky received 9 million dollars of grant money in order to fund mental health education. Additionally, the School Safety and Resiliency Act was passed in this past fiscal year and was implemented on July 1st of 2019. The act aims to expand suicide prevention education in Kentucky. Although this is a valiant effort, it is important to note that suicide is not the sole mental health issue plaguing Kentucky students. It is important that Kentucky aims to prevent mental health issues before students resort to suicide, and expanding mental health curriculum in the Commonwealth is a step towards doing so.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS:

1. How can Kentucky create and implement positive mental health curriculum statewide in order to reach all students?
2. What mental health topics should be included in the Kentucky core curriculum?
3. Should mental health have its own curriculum or would it be better enforced under another topic?
4. How can the Kentucky core curriculum be reformed to include mental health courses?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH:

"Kentucky School Districts Focus on Improving Mental-Health Resources"

<https://www.publicnewsservice.org/2019-05-22/mental-health/ky-school-districts-focus-on-improving-mental-health-resources/a66485-1>

"How Does Teaching Mental Health In Schools Benefit Students?"

<https://health.usnews.com/health-care/patient-advice/articles/2018-08-24/how-does-teaching-mental-health-in-schools-benefit-students>

"Kentucky Adolescent Mental Health Facts"

<https://www.hhs.gov/ash/oah/facts-and-stats/national-and-state-data-sheets/adolescent-mental-health-fact-sheets/kentucky/index.html>



# **VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:**

**BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS:**

**SOURCES FOR RESEARCH:**

# **SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICERS**

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:**

**BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS:**

**SOURCES FOR RESEARCH:**

## Policy Area 3 | Institutional Reform

# FAMILY REHABILITATION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Maddie Stokes, Secretary of the Executive Cabinet | HS KYA 1  
Anna Scharre, Secretary of State | HS KYA 1

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

According to the Prison Policy Initiative, Kentucky has one of the nation's highest rates of imprisonment, with over 41,000 Kentuckians currently incarcerated in federal and state prisons. With the second highest rate in the nation of children living with at least one incarcerated parent (15%) as well as one of the nation's highest rates of incarceration, young Kentuckians are highly susceptible to the adverse effects of parental incarceration and recidivism.

Recent research has indicated that the effects of parental incarceration on early childhood health and development can be traumatic, resulting in lifelong instability and an increased likelihood of future incarceration for children of the incarcerated. Classified alongside the witnessing of a death, drug and alcohol abuse, and violence in the home, parental incarceration can lead to the development of toxic stress, thereby inhibiting childhood development and increasing the risk of lifelong disease and cognitive impairments. Furthermore, imprisonment of parental figures can lead to financial instability which impacts later access to education, social interactions, and class mobility. Such detriments are even more pronounced among communities of color, distinguishing these groups from others and further entrenching racial disparities in the Commonwealth. How are we, therefore, to address this crisis in Kentucky's criminal justice system before yet another generation of Kentuckians is lost?

In recent years, Kentuckians have advocated for the institution of programs aimed at increasing social interactions and community-based learning in prisons so as to ease the reentry process among former prisoners. In doing so, many argue, legislators can effectively reduce recidivism as well as family disruption among inmates. Furthermore, New York and San Francisco have recently introduced the Family Responsibility Statement (FRS) in parole determination, allowing decision-makers to consider family obligations when determining prison sentences so as to minimize the so-called "ripple effect" of parental incarceration in prisoners' communities. Similarly, many Kentuckians seek to implement the consideration of family ties in the daily decision-making process of Kentucky's criminal justice system.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What role should the government play in terms of post-incarceration family rehabilitation?
2. What is corruption and where does it manifest within families in need of rehabilitation?
3. Can we administer, classify, or rectify what types of offenses or incidents need consideration for family rehabilitation?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Parental Incarceration, Children's Health, and an Opportunity to Shift the Future"

[https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/health\\_and\\_wellness/che/parental\\_incarceration\\_childrens\\_health.pdf](https://louisvilleky.gov/sites/default/files/health_and_wellness/che/parental_incarceration_childrens_health.pdf)

"Kentucky profile"

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/KY.html>

"Families and Mass Incarceration"

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/6148/>

"Children of Incarcerated Parents"

<https://youth.gov/youth-topics/children-of-incarcerated-parents>

"Kentucky Reentry"

<https://www.kentuckyreentry.org/>

## Policy Area 3 | Institutional Reform

# PRISON REFORM

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Joe Hettinger, Governor | HS KYA 2  
Claire Moore, Lt. Governor | HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

In 2019, the number of people in Kentucky's prison system surpassed 25,000 for the first time. The system is growing at quadruple the national average, despite the consistently low crime rate. Overcrowded prison systems are a danger to public safety, and Kentucky is predicted to soon run out of inmate beds. Less than three years ago, Governor Matt Bevin appointed a task force to look at how potential changes on how to make these large numbers decline. However, while many efforts to solve this issue have been made, there has been little to no success in solving this serious issue in Kentucky.

The prison population increased greatly during the opioid crisis in Kentucky. This has led many to believe that the overcrowded prison systems are due to the long sentences of people who have committed crimes such as shoplifting, fraud, or drug possession. Officials have questioned how nonviolent offender reform can help the large number of inmates in our state's prison system to decline.

The question of whether or not the prison system should be reformed has also been brought up recently in our society. The judicial system controls over seven million people in the United States, with over half of those being incarcerated, while the other half are on probation. Direct your bill ideas this year towards how you as Kentuckians can better our prison system.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. How can we as citizens help better the judicial and prison systems?
2. Would all types of nonviolent crime be affected by a reform on nonviolent offender's prosecution?
3. How can we make criminal sentences more consistent?
4. What are some adjustments you believe should be made to the prison system and the way it rehabilitates our incarcerated?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Kentucky Lawmakers Say Criminal Justice Reform Possible In 2019"

<https://wfpl.org/kentucky-lawmakers-say-criminal-justice-reform-possible-in-2019/>

"Kentucky has nowhere to put more inmates. Here's why a bill to fix that flopped."

<https://www.kentucky.com/news/politics-government/article206579859.html>

"In Kentucky, all sides agree on need for criminal justice reform. But how?"

<https://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Justice/2018/0315/In-Kentucky-all-sides-agree-on-need-for-criminal-justice-reform.-But-how>

"Criminal Justice Reform legislation likely in 2019"

<https://spectrumnews1.com/ky/louisville/politics/2018/10/28/criminal-justice-reform-legislation-likely-in-2019>

"Governor Announces New Council on Criminal Justice Reform"

<https://dpa.ky.gov/News-and-Public-Information/DPAintheNews/Pages/New-Council-on-Criminal-Justice-Reform.aspx>

## Policy Area 3 | Institutional Reform

# CASH BAIL REFORM

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Autumn King, Secretary of State | HS KYA 3  
Mia Stirling, Secretary of Cabinet | HS KYA 3

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Historically, the cash bail system was used as a means to ensure defendants who posed a threat to society were kept detained, and to ensure defendants' required attendance at court proceedings. However, there is an ongoing movement across the nation, and in Kentucky, pushing to reform this system, as it disproportionately affects people in lower socioeconomic classes and can have adverse public safety results.

It is estimated that, nationally, 34% of felony defendants are kept in jail pre-trial solely because they are unable to pay bail. According to the Prison Policy Institution, 80% of defendants who could not afford bail were among the poorest half of Americans. In Kentucky, in 2016, there were 64,123 non-violent, non-sexual defendants who were kept detained because they could afford bail. However, there were also 43 high-risk, violent, or sexual defendants released after posting bail.

Kentucky has already made strides in reform by banning for-profit commercial bail bonding services and creating the Kentucky Pretrial Services Agency in 1976. However, the pretrial system is still bail-centric.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What alternatives, if any, could effectively replace the cash bail system?
2. What factors, opposed to bail, should determine a defendant's pretrial proceedings?
3. How should the risk of a defendant committing another crime be easily and accurately assessed?
4. How can we ensure public safety while simultaneously protecting individuals' liberties in implementing a new system?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Alexei. "California Considers an End to Bail: 'We're Punishing People Simply for Being Poor'." *Sacbee*, The Sacramento Bee, [www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article130682914.html](http://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article130682914.html).

"Bail Reform: The Record." *The Marshall Project*, [www.themarshallproject.org/records/1439-bail-reform](http://www.themarshallproject.org/records/1439-bail-reform).

Kushner, Rachel. "Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 17 Apr. 2019, [www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/magazine/prison-abolition-ruth-wilson-gilmore.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/17/magazine/prison-abolition-ruth-wilson-gilmore.html).

"Reform Opportunities in Kentucky's Bail System.pdf." *Scribd*, Scribd, [www.scribd.com/document/388004383/Reform-Opportunities-in-Kentucky-s-Bail-System-pdf](http://www.scribd.com/document/388004383/Reform-Opportunities-in-Kentucky-s-Bail-System-pdf).

## Policy Area 3 | Institutional Reform

# DRUG REHABILITATION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Kayleigh Macumber, Editor in Chief | HS KYA 4

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

The opioid crisis has become a problem so vast that it can seem difficult to pinpoint a solution. In 2015, Kentucky peaked as the third highest state in the nation for drug overdose fatalities. With increasing numbers of Kentuckians falling victim to addiction and overdose, those with the power to do so must begin an urgent campaign for this crisis' end.

The cycle of addiction impacts more than the person addicted; addiction impacts the family that has to absorb the front of the trauma, it impacts the economy that suffers losses in workforce numbers, it impacts the quality of a community, and it holds the power to destroy a person's life. Drug abuse costs America \$740 billion annually, and with Kentucky being among the states facing the worst of it we attribute a great percentage of that cost.

Furthermore, the uncontrolled nature of the opioid crisis has led to outbreaks in Hepatitis C and HIV. Injected Drug Users (IDU) are so desperate for access to needles that they will use dirty and oftentimes infected needles off the street. 319 cases of the HIV outbreak in 2016 occurred in Kentucky.

In the scramble to combat the opioid crisis, there has not been enough emphasis put on institutional reform as a solution. By allocating more funding to addiction research, public rehabilitation centers, and specialized addiction counseling. Poverty is closely tied into the addiction crisis. Parents and adults that cannot stay clean long enough to pass a drug test fail to get employed and fall victim to the endless cycle of addiction.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What financial measures does Kentucky need to take in order to increase the success rate of its rehabilitation centers?
2. Are there laws preventing the creation of more modern rehabilitation methods?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2017). Trends & Statistics.

Thomas, Scot. "Addiction Statistics: Drug & Substance Abuse Statistics." American Addiction Centers, [americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics](http://americanaddictioncenters.org/rehab-guide/addiction-statistics).

National Institute on Drug Abuse. "Kentucky Opioid Summary." NIDA, 30 Mar. 2019, [www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state/kentucky-opioid-summary](http://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state/kentucky-opioid-summary).

KSPAN - KSPAN - Drug Abuse Prevention Resources, [www.safekentucky.org/index.php/menu-drug-abuse/drug-abuse-prevention-rsources](http://www.safekentucky.org/index.php/menu-drug-abuse/drug-abuse-prevention-rsources).

## Policy Area 4 | Labor and Economics

# GAS TAX

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:**

**BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

**QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS**

**SOURCES FOR RESEARCH**

## Policy Area 4 | Labor and Economics

# SERVICE TAX REFORM

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Patrick Haycraft, Secretary of State | HS KYA 2  
Reyna Russell, Secretary of the Cabinet | HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

This past summer, the state legislature voted to place a six percent tax on services. This tax placement has effectively made the price of operations for conference-holding nonprofits (like the KYYMCA) be overall more expensive. However, the legislation does state that nonprofits are exempt from this tax when writing off purchases that directly benefit their community.

But, the service tax does extend to the purchasing of facilities to use for conferences. To correlate with this point, a plethora of other services have this tax extended to them as well; including, but not limited to: janitorial services, driving services (i.e. when a driver is provided to transport groups), hotel and motel transactions shorter than thirty consecutive days, and natural gas related services. This is also not accounting for the changes made to the general economy of the Commonwealth via the tax being extended to pet services (which is providing a strong push factor for those living near the border states to pursue their pets needs in another states' economy), membership fees, admission prices (of which both provide a provide dislike to the general public in terms of purchasing gym memberships, streaming subscriptions, etc.).

But what is very concerning is the taxation of those first few items listed. The extra taxation of janitorial services, driving services, and hotel and motel transactions have and will continue to cause the prices of conferences like the Kentucky Youth Assembly to rise. This, in turn, is placing stronger economic limiting factors on the ability of young students to attend conferences. Without a look of possible tax avenues (such as the legalization of marijuana or gambling) being opened, the state has created another way to gain tax dollars directly from the pockets of the Commonwealth's citizens without effectively creating new avenues to generate tax revenue.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Should the state legislature pursue new avenues to garner more tax revenue?
2. Should there be a tax placed on services at all?
3. What select areas are the most efficient in terms of generating tax revenue?
4. How should the problem of nonprofit conferences having to raise prices be addressed?
5. How could the Commonwealth's tax system be reformed?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Kentucky To Tax More Services Starting July 1" (Avalara)

<https://www.avalara.com/us/en/blog/2018/06/kentucky-to-tax-moreservicesstartingjuly1.html>

"FAQ Sales and Use Tax" (KYGov)

<https://revenue.ky.gov/Documents/FAQSalesandUseTax61515.pdf>

"Consumer Use Tax" (KY Department of Revenue)

<https://revenue.ky.gov/Individual/Consumer-Use-Tax/Pages/default.aspx>



## Policy Area 4 | Labor and Economics

# APPALACHIAN TRANSITION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Larah Ballard, President of Commonwealth Senate, HS KYA 3

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Fifty four of one hundred and twenty counties in Kentucky are considered Appalachian. According to the Appalachian Regional Commission's 2010-2014 Poverty Rate report, the average poverty rate in the US was 15.6% compared to 19.7% in the combined central Appalachian regions of Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Kentucky has the worst poverty rate in the region, with a 25.4% rate in the Appalachian portion, versus an 18.9% rate for the rest of the state. A just transition for Appalachian Kentucky is long overdue, and it is time for our legislators to represent all of Kentucky, not just the less rural or less mountainous parts.

One of the main poverty issues of Appalachia stems from the fact that the employed population makes significantly less money than the rest of the US. In 2014, the per capita income of the Appalachian region of Kentucky was only \$30,308, while the average per capita income of the US was \$46,049. Increased investment in Appalachia is necessary to repair the issues of employment and poverty.

Strategies for Appalachian economic improvement that have been effective thus far include ensuring meaningful investments, supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses, starting initiatives for energy efficiency, increasing locally grown/produced foods, supporting preservation of forests and other natural resources, and promoting local tourism.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What does a "Just Transition" for Appalachian Kentucky look like, and how can new legislation play a role in it?
2. How can our government fund and promote meaningful investments in Appalachian Kentucky?
3. How can lawmakers encourage better paying jobs in Appalachian Kentucky?
4. Is the Appalachian region of Kentucky fairly represented in our state government? If not, how can legislators change this?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Strategies for Appalachian Transition" Mountain Association for Community and Economic Development:

[https://maced.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MACED\\_strategy\\_briefs\\_web.pdf](https://maced.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/MACED_strategy_briefs_web.pdf)

"Strategies for Economic Improvement in Appalachia's Distressed Rural Counties" The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, February 2012:

[https://www.arc.gov/assets/research\\_reports/StrategiesforEconomicImprovementinAppalachiasDistressedRuralCounties21.pdf](https://www.arc.gov/assets/research_reports/StrategiesforEconomicImprovementinAppalachiasDistressedRuralCounties21.pdf)

"Appalachian Poverty" FAHE:

<https://fahe.org/appalachian-poverty/>

"Just Transition" Kentuckians for the Commonwealth:

<http://kftc.org/campaigns/just-transition>

# ABNORMAL TAXATION METHODS

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Haider Nasir, Lieutenant Governor | HS KYA 4  
Cameron Durham, Governor | HS KYA 4

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Kentucky is in an economic dilemma that must be addressed and fixed as soon as possible. Kentucky doesn't have enough money to pay its financial bills, seeing that our state has a \$50.3 billion financial hole. To fill it, each Kentucky taxpayer would have to send \$39,200 to the state. This number has only been increasing since the early 2,000's and our state is falling deeper into an economic recession. Kentucky only has \$12 billion of assets available to pay bills totaling \$62.3 billion. This is an economic catastrophe that is only getting worse. Our commonwealth is facing a pension crisis because our state cannot afford to pay our teachers the retirement plan that they were promised. In 2000, Kentucky's public retirement plans were fully funded. Since then, they've accumulated nearly \$43 billion in debts — making Kentucky's pension system one of the worst-funded in America.

We as a Commonwealth, need to reevaluate on how we can receive our state income. An example that can possibly resolve this predicament are abnormal taxes. An example of one of these "so called" abnormal taxes could be government income earned from collegiate gambling. A state that benefits from a unique source of government income is Pennsylvania. In 1936, Pennsylvania created an alcohol tax to help rebuild flooded cities. After the reconstruction of these cities, Pennsylvania kept the tax and currently receives almost \$200 million a year towards government income. States in dire need of economic reform need to consider all possible options to help bring prosperity and monetary stability for their allocative funds.

Kentucky can implement our own unique forms to increase government general funds. These forms of taxations will help expand our states economy and overall help Kentucky to withdraw from our steep slope towards recession.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Is the tax relevant to Kentucky?
2. Will the tax impact the consumer (Kentuckians) in a negative way?
3. Is the tax feasible for the state of Kentucky?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"2017 Financial State of Kentucky"

[https://www.statedatalab.org/state\\_data\\_and\\_comparisons/detail/kentucky](https://www.statedatalab.org/state_data_and_comparisons/detail/kentucky)

"Strange and Unusual Taxes Throughout History"

<https://www.efile.com/unusual-strange-funny-taxes-throughout-the-world-and-history/>

"The Effect of Recessions on Gambling Expenditures"

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3501160/>

## Policy Area 5 | Public Health and Safety

# ABORTION

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Sadie Townsend, Speaker of BG House | HS KYA 1  
Leah Smith, Pres. of BG Senate | HS KYA 1 1

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Kentucky has passed and signed four anti-abortion laws into legislature. These include House Bill 148, Senate Bill 50, House Bill 5, Senate Bill 9. The contents of these bills include: Abortion Discrimination, Abortion Reversal, the Fetal Heartbeat, and a bill to ban abortion.

House Bill 148 is a bill to ban abortion in Kentucky. This bill was passed by the Kentucky legislature but is not able to go into effect because of the U.S. Supreme Court decision of 1973. The Roe vs. Wade court case legalized abortion. Many of the anti-abortion advocates in Kentucky are hoping that the more conservative U.S. Supreme Court will overturn or amend the Roe vs. Wade court case. Advocates in opposition say that the passing of this bill will make people seek out illegal and unsafe abortions.

Senate Bill 50: The Abortion Reversal Bill requires physicians to inform women that the effects of prescription drugs for the induction of abortion could be reversed. The states of Idaho and Arizona have similar laws.

House Bill 5: Abortion Discrimination Bill will keep the mother from aborting the child if they are doing so because of the race, gender, or a disability of the unborn child. The doctor can deny the abortion if any of those are the reason for the abortion.

Senate Bill 9 would ban abortion after the fetal heartbeat is detected. The heartbeat of a child could be detected as early as six weeks into the pregnancy, which could be earlier than some women know they are pregnant. This bill along with House Bill 5 are blocked from going into law until the final ruling.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Would it be beneficial for Kentucky to completely ban abortion?
2. Should there be any limitations to abortions?
3. What other states have abortion bans and what is their affect?
4. What can Kentucky do to ensure the safety of pregnant women?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Here's a Rundown of Kentucky's new anti-abortion laws - and what's next" Lisa Gillespie 2019  
<https://wfpl.org/heres-a-rundown-of-kentuckys-new-anti-abortion-laws-and-whats-next/>

Kentucky General Assembly  
<https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/19RS/hb5.html>

"Early Abortion Bans: Which States Have Passed Them?" Mara Gordon, NPR News and Alyson Hurt, NPR News- June 26, 2019  
<https://khn.org/news/states-abortion-bans-early-pregnancy-women-health-heartbeat/>

# OPIOID ABUSE

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Marcello Teixeira, Editor-in-Chief | HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

In 2017, there were 1,160 reported opioid-involved deaths in Kentucky. A rate of 27.9 deaths per 100,000 persons, compared to the average national rate of 14.6 deaths per 100,000 persons. In Kentucky the Heroin-Fentanyl epidemic is the leading cause of opioid overdoses and is creating a new problem for the commonwealth. The past medical drug Heroin which was used as a pre modern Morphine has made its way to the streets as an opioid drug which people inject to create an altered state of mind. However the people dealing these drugs want to make more profit, use a process called cutting to create more product by adding outside chemicals. The most popular is a very little chemical, Fentanyl, which in 2018 alone caused 1,160 deaths in Kentucky.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What precautions can we take to prevent opioid abuse?
2. What ways can we help people currently suffering from opioid abuse?
3. Should opioids be put as a priority in the states war against drug abuse?
4. How does opioid abuse affect the families of those on drugs?
5. What education should we put in schools to prevent exposure to opioids?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Office of Drug Control Policy

[ps://odcp.ky.gov/Pages/The-Heroin-Epidemic.aspx](https://odcp.ky.gov/Pages/The-Heroin-Epidemic.aspx)

Kentucky Opioid Summary

<https://www.drugabuse.gov/opioid-summaries-by-state/kentucky-opioid-summary>

Office of Drug Control Policy

<https://odcp.ky.gov/Pages/Overdose-Fatality-Report.aspx>

# TOBACCO USAGE

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Caleb Webb, Chief Justice | HS KYA 3  
Liam Gallagher, Attorney General | HS KYA 3

## BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Although rates of tobacco usage are in decline from previous decades, cigarette smoking remains the primary preventable cause of death in the United States. More than 480,000 people die annually from smoking-related causes, including more than 41,000 deaths from secondhand smoke. Smokers live 10 years less than non-smokers, on average.

Even in non-fatal cases, smoking is deleterious to individuals and to the economy. Over 16 million Americans have smoking-related diseases, resulting in as much as \$170 billion annually in medical costs. Smoking is known to be able to cause damage to nearly every organ in the body. It is associated with a wide range of diseases including:

- Heart disease
- Stroke
- Lung disease
- Diabetes
- Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- Multiple types of cancer, including lung, mouth and colorectal cancer
- Greater risk of preterm birth, low birthweight and premature infant death

The tobacco epidemic is particularly evident in the Commonwealth of Kentucky and its high schools. 14.3% of Kentucky high schoolers admitted to smoking cigarettes, and 26% reported usage of some form of tobacco product.

The addictive chemical nicotine is derived from the tobacco plant. This, using an electronic cigarette or e-vape is still tobacco usage. Atria, the holding company that owns Marlboro cigarettes, also holds stock in JUUL, an e-cigarette company.

While tobacco usage is clearly damaging for individuals and draining on the economy, the question that needs to be asked is where the cutoff point in usage is. How do we balance public health interests and the freedom of individual consumers?

## QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What are the economic advantages and disadvantages of tobacco?
2. Does the government have an apparent public interest in an outright ban?
3. Should the age to buy tobacco products be raised?
4. Should there be an age limitation to buy tobacco products at all?
5. Is vaping safer than cigarette usage?
6. Why was tobacco regulated in the first place?

## SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Extinguishing the Tobacco Epidemic in Kentucky | CDC." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 11 Apr. 2019, [www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/state-fact-sheets/kentucky/index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/state-fact-sheets/kentucky/index.html).

"Public Health Impact: Smoking." America's Health Rankings, United Health Foundation, 2019, [www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Smoking/state/KY](http://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/annual/measure/Smoking/state/KY).

# FEMALE HYGIENE

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Vindela Norris, Secretary of Cabinet | HS KYA 4  
Addison Mccoun, Secretary of State | HS KYA 4

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

In the Commonwealth of Kentucky as like most of the country, we have not abolished the “Pink Tax”. A pink tax refers to extra charges placed on products and services directed toward women. In Kentucky, our sales tax is 6% to the American dollar and an average cost of a feminine hygiene product is \$7. With all that information in mind, a box of 30 tampons cost \$7.42. According to research, a woman’s lifetime supply of tampons roughly adds up to \$1,773.33 in Kentucky.

In order to help women around our Commonwealth save some money when it comes to a need, the pink tax repeals the tax on these products. Minnesota, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New York, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, Connecticut and Florida have all outlawed the tampon tax. So, with outlawing pink tax in Kentucky, it would help save women almost \$400 a year for their needs.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. How would outlawing the pink tax help our Commonwealth?
2. What would this do to our economy?
3. What are examples of feminine hygiene products?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

National Public Radio

<https://www.npr.org/2018/03/25/564580736/more-states-move-to-end-tampon-tax-that-s-seen-as-discriminating-against-women>

Pandia Health

<https://www.pandiahealth.com/blog/2018/10/24/the-true-cost-of-your-period>

Dictionary

<https://www.dictionary.com/e/pop-culture/pink-tax/>

# **AFFIRMATIVE ACTION**

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Sky Carroll, Chief Justice | HS KYA 1  
Ashlea Eversole, Attorney General | HS KYA 1

## **BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy’s Executive Order #10925 required to “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants are employed and that employees are treated during employment without regard to their race, creed, color, or national origin.”

The order was the first time the phrase had been used. Over time, the definition and understanding of affirmative action has changed. Currently, Merriam-Webster defines it as “an active effort to improve the employment or educational opportunities of members of minority groups and women.” Therefore, the understanding changed from equal opportunity for all to increased opportunity for minority groups.

In November 2013, Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear issued an Executive Order pertaining to affirmative action. The goal of the order was to bolster minority employment and opportunity by certain percentages each year. However, the plan provided statewide provisions against discrimination, unequal opportunity, and harrassment i the workplace based on a multitude of factors such as race, sex, gender identity, religion, yet required individual agencies to submit their own affirmative action plans.

The opinions on the definition of affirmative action are divided, as well as its definitive use that actively works to increase opportunities for minority groups.

## **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS**

1. Should Kentucky be using affirmative action to increase opportunities for minority and discriminated groups or just provide equal opportunity for all?
2. What actions could Kentucky take to ensure it is being enforced everywhere?
3. How drastically does Kentucky need an affirmative action plan?

## **SOURCES FOR RESEARCH**

“Executive Order 2013-841” Governor Steve Beshear

<https://personnel.ky.gov/Documents/Affirmative%20ActionPlanExecutiveOrder.pdf>

“Executive Branch Affirmative Action Plan”

<https://personnel.ky.gov/Documents/Affirmative%20Action%20Plan%204-23-14.pdf>

“Affirmative Action” U.S. Department of Labor

<https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/hiring/affirmativeact>

“More History of Affirmative Action Policies from the 1960s”

[https://www.aaed.org/aaed/history\\_of\\_affirmative\\_action.asp](https://www.aaed.org/aaed/history_of_affirmative_action.asp)

# ANIMAL ABUSE

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Abby Moss, Speaker of the BG House | HS KYA 2  
Alex Young, President of the BG Senate | HS KYA 2

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Earlier this year, Kentucky was ranked last in laws protecting animals against abuse and cruelty. This ranking by the Animal Legal Defense Fund was Kentucky's 12th year being ranked worst for animal protections. Kentucky's lack of adequate laws and protection for animals has caused for many instances and types of abuse to go unreported and unpunished.

With Kentucky being ranked last of all fifty states for laws against animal abuse and cruelty, we have many major areas needing improvement. Today in our Commonwealth, veterinarians are prohibited from reporting suspected abuse. There are also no restrictions on future ownership or possession of animals following a conviction of animal abuse and cruelty, along with no provisions for sexual assault. These are merely just a few of the inadequacies within state law. Lack of animal protection is also heavily prevalent in Kentucky animal shelters. In 2016, it was found that more than half of the state's county controlled shelters were breaking the Humane Shelter Act. Animal abuse exists in homes, farms, and shelters all across the state.

The abuse within our state must be addressed, no matter the location or instance. Kentucky is home to a diverse population of wildlife and animals. All of these animals deserve to be protected by the law. As good citizens of our state, it is our responsibility to protect and defend the lives of all animals that reside within it.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. Why is Kentucky continually ranked last in animal protection laws?
2. How can animal protection laws be better enforced?
3. How and why does animal abuse occur in our state?
4. What must be addressed in current Kentucky statutes to help better protect animals?
5. What additional policies and laws are needed in order to protect

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

"Animal abuse cases reveal weak state protection laws" WHAS 11.

<https://www.whas11.com/article/news/local/animal-abuse-cases-reveal-weak-state-protection-laws/417-590834004>

"Kentucky Ranked Worst State For Animal Protection Laws". LEX18.

<https://lex18.com/news/covering-kentucky/2019/01/08/kentucky-ranked-worst-state-for-animal-protection-laws/>

"Kentucky Shelters: Falling Short, Failing Animals". Kentucky Center For Investigative Reporting.

<https://kycir.org/2017/03/07/kentucky-shelters-falling-short-failing-animals/>

"2018 U.S. Animal Protection Laws Rankings". Animal Legal Defense Fund.

<https://aldf.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Animal-Protection-Laws-of-the-United-States-2018-full-report.pdf>



# FOSTER CARE

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Josh Groves, BG President of the Senate | HS KYA 3  
Shamitha Kuppala, BG Speaker of the House | HS KYA 3

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

For decades, the question of where to put children without legal families has been a prominent issue around the globe. Prior to 2019, the foster care regulations of Kentucky have been ineffective and disorganized. However, a Kentucky legislative session in May 2019 was able to pass several reforms regarding basic rights of foster children, biological parent procedures, and frequency of transfer of children, as seen in House Bills 158 and 446.

As of March of 2019, Kentucky had over 10,000 children in the foster care system who spend an average of two years in this system. While foster parents get an average of \$24 per day with a foster child, parents who adopt children get tax credits, which can equal up to thousands of dollars. Although legal improvements have been made to foster care procedure, progress remains to be made regarding funding for foster parents, availability of foster families, and consent of child and relatives.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What financial and welfare incentives do foster parents receive, and where could funding be found?
2. What process is required for a foster child to change homes?
3. What rights do biological parents have regarding a child previously put in foster care?
4. What differences are there between federal and state foster care regulations?
5. What are the cost differences between fostering and adopting?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Meade, David. "Legislature Keeps Momentum in Commitment to Overhaul Foster, Kinship Care Programs." *Kentucky Today*, 10 May 2019, <http://kentuckytoday.com/stories/legislature-keeps-momentum-in-commitment-to-overhaul-foster-kinship-care-programs,19372>.

Dawahare, Richard. "Kinship Care Bill Is an Affront to Struggling Kentucky Families." *Kentucky*, Lexington Herald Leader, 28 Feb. 2019, 06:19, [www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article226943434.html](http://www.kentucky.com/opinion/op-ed/article226943434.html).

Meade, D, et al. "House Bill 446." *Kentucky General Assembly*, 26 Mar. 2019, <https://apps.legislature.ky.gov/record/19rs/hb446.html>

# JOB SECURITY

**ISSUE BRIEF AUTHORS:** Gavin Alfon, Speaker of the BG House| HS KYA 4  
Allie McIntyre, President of the BG Senate| HS KYA 4

### BACKGROUND ON ISSUE

Although politicians have made strides toward a prejudice-free and safe state for people of all races, sexual orientations, and ethnic backgrounds, many are concerned with the fact that there are no explicit, statewide rules and regulations that protect members of the LGBTQ+ community. Acts of discrimination against members of the LGBTQ+ community occur most often in a work environment. Approximately one-fourth of LGBTQ+ members are expected to experience some type of oppression during their work career. This discrimination can vary from acute psychological harm to serious physical harm.

Although numerous instances of discrimination occur inside the workplace, there are still numerous incidents that happen before members of the aforementioned minority can hold a job position in the workplace. This most often occurs due to a preexisting prejudice a business owner holds against the community. This results in many members of this minority's group experiencing difficulty in finding a job. Most recently, there was a law enacted that established greater religious freedom in public school. Even though this was well received by a portion of the population, many LGBTQ+ rights activists have declared this to be providing a legal excuse for discriminating against members of their minority group. In general, there have been many political debates over the topic. However, many citizens of both sides believe that these debates have desensitized politicians to the true lack of humanity in this situation.

### QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN BILLS

1. What religious affiliations may affect the amount of LGBTQ+ discrimination in the workplace?
2. What types of discriminations are the LGBTQ+ community facing?
3. What current rules and regulations are there on discrimination in the workplace?
4. What rules and regulations have other states or municipalities set in place regarding LGBTQ+ discrimination in the workplace?
5. How has the economy of states with comprehensive laws regarding LGBTQ+ workplace discrimination been positively/negatively affected?

### SOURCES FOR RESEARCH

Freedom for All Americans

<https://www.freedomforallamericans.org/category/states/ky/>

American Progress

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/lgbt/news/2011/06/02/9872/gay-and-transgender-people-face-high-rates-of-workplace-discrimination-and-harassment/>

Human Rights Watch

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/02/19/interview-licensing-lgbt-discrimination-us>