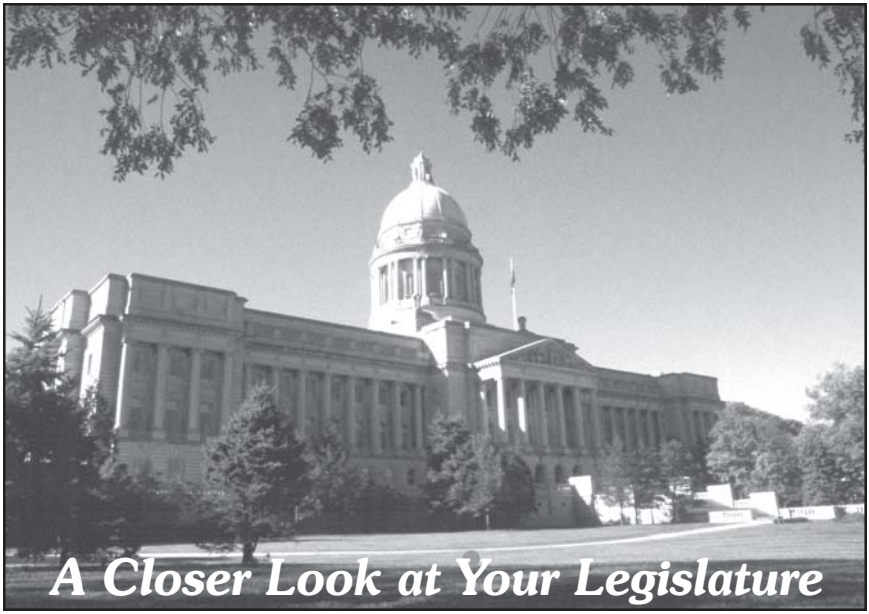

Inside the Kentucky General Assembly

Legislative Research Commission
FRANKFORT, KENTUCKY

Senate

David L. Williams
SENATE PRESIDENT

Richard "Dick" Roeding
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

Dan Kelly
MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Ed Worley
MINORITY FLOOR LEADER

Charlie Borders
MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIR

Johnny Ray Turner
MINORITY CAUCUS CHAIR

Elizabeth Tori
MAJORITY WHIP

Bob Jackson
MINORITY WHIP

House

Jody Richards
HOUSE SPEAKER

Larry Clark
SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

Rocky Adkins
MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

Jeffrey Hoover
MINORITY FLOOR LEADER

Jim Callahan
MAJORITY CAUCUS CHAIR

Bob DeWeese
MINORITY CAUCUS CHAIR

Joe Barrows
MAJORITY WHIP

Ken Upchurch
MINORITY WHIP

Inside the Kentucky General Assembly

Legislative Research Commission

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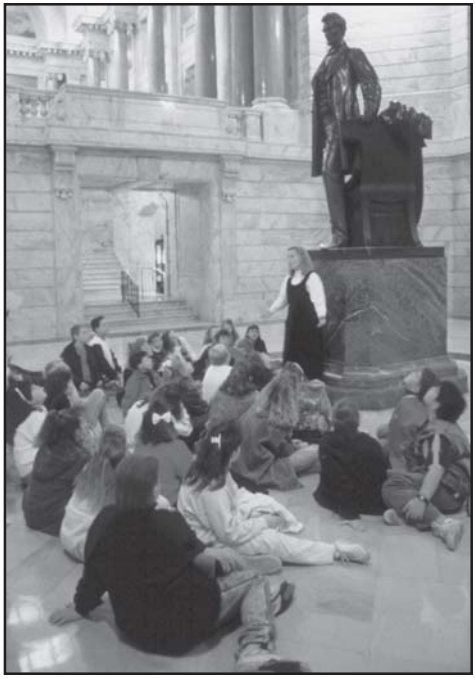

Foreword

Kentucky is governed by three branches of government—the executive, the judicial, and the legislative. The legislature is the branch of government closest to the people and the one into which Kentuckians have the most direct input. Consequently, it is beneficial to both the legislature and our citizens that the work of the General Assembly be understood and the legislative process be utilized to its full potential.

The role of the legislative branch is specifically defined by Kentucky's Constitution. To keep this role in perspective, it is important to know something of the history and constitutional provisions concerning the General Assembly and the organization of its members.

This booklet has been prepared to provide the citizen with insight into the legislative process and the work of the General Assembly.

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Welcome

A Citizen Legislature

The 138 members of the Kentucky General Assembly invite your participation in the legislative process. Like most states, Kentucky has a part-time citizen legislature with members from diverse backgrounds. When the General Assembly is not in session, legislators work in their communities as farmers, lawyers, teachers, merchants, and in a host of other jobs. All of them, however, work year-round as legislators, representing constituents, helping them solve problems, and studying new ideas.

Your interest in the legislature is important to the democratic process. The more you become involved, the better the General Assembly can serve the citizens of the Commonwealth.

Visits During Sessions

You are welcome to visit the state Capitol when the legislature is in session. Remember, however, as you sit in the House and Senate galleries, that what you see on the floors below is only part of the process. Much work is done in committees, which play a vital role both during and between sessions. Committees work long and hard considering many pieces of legislation. Usually, committee meetings are open to the press and public.

The Day's Schedule

Your state senator and representative will want to know when you are coming to Frankfort. If possible, let them know in advance the date and time of your visit. If you arrive without notice, leave a message for them at the office of the House Clerk, Senate Clerk, or the Legislative Offices in the Capitol Annex. The clerks' offices also have gallery passes for those who want to watch the proceedings. Guests in the chambers often are recognized when the House and Senate are in session.

Bulletin boards outside each chamber list the bills to be considered each day. Copies of the bills are available for a nominal charge in the Public Bill Room in the Capitol basement. A schedule of committee meetings also is posted on the bulletin boards. The number of observers at committee meetings is limited only by rules of the state fire marshal.

Rules

A few other rules should be observed when you are visiting the legislature:

- There should be no applause or loud talking in the galleries or in committee rooms.

- Please don't take food or drinks into the galleries or when you are touring the building. There is a snack area in the basement of the Capitol and a cafeteria and a snack shop in the

Capitol Annex. The Annex can be reached through a tunnel from the basement of the Capitol.

- No visitors are permitted on the floor when the House of Representatives and Senate are in session except by special invitation from a legislator.

- Smoking in the galleries is prohibited, except in the designated area in the House gallery.

Information Desks

An information desk is located on the first floor at the north entrance of the Capitol. Guides conduct tours that offer a historical perspective of the building and familiarize visitors with present activity. During sessions, information desks also are located on the third floor of the Capitol.

The Legislature and the Constitution

Kentucky became the 15th state on June 1, 1792. That year the first General Assembly, with 21 members, met in Lexington to form a state government. A committee of lawmakers chose Frankfort as the state capital, and the General Assembly has met there since 1793. The legislature has met in the current House and Senate chambers since 1910.

Kentucky changed rapidly during its early years as a state. The first Kentucky Constitution, adopted in 1792, soon needed to be changed, and a new Constitution was approved in 1799. A third Constitution was adopted in 1850. This, too, was revised in 1890-1891. Kentucky's current Constitution, its fourth, contains a number of provisions that govern the legislative branch. Amendments approved by voters since 1979 have made significant changes in those provisions.

Session Dates

Kentucky's Constitution requires the General Assembly to meet in Frankfort every year on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in January. Sessions in even-numbered years may not last more than 60 legislative days and cannot extend beyond April 15. Sessions in odd-numbered years may not last more than 30 legislative days and cannot extend beyond March 30. A legislative day is a calendar day with the exception of Sundays, legal holidays, and any day on which neither house meets.

Special sessions may be called by the Governor to deal with specific subjects. Although there is no time limit on special sessions, they are usually brief.

Between sessions, House and Senate standing committees meet jointly until the next regular session.

The legislature was changed drastically by delegates to the 1890 Constitutional Convention. Before the current Constitution was adopted, the General Assembly could vote to stay in session for more than 60 days and often did.

The current Constitution prohibits special laws applying only to one city, town, or county and lists 28 areas in which special legislation is prohibited. The last legislature to meet under the 1850 Constitution passed 1,926 acts, only 117 of which affected more than one county.

138 Lawmakers

The Constitution requires the General Assembly to divide the state into 38 Senate districts and 100 House districts as nearly equal in population as possible.

The General Assembly must review the districts every 10 years and redivide them if necessary. The last redistricting occurred in 2002.

Terms and Qualifications

The Constitution establishes terms and qualifications for legislators. A state senator must be at least 30 years old, a citizen of Kentucky, and must have lived in the state at least six years immediately preceding election. He or she must live in the district for at least one year prior to election. Senators are elected for four-year terms, with half the Senate elected every two years.

A state representative must be at least 24 years old, a citizen of Kentucky, and must live in the state for at least two years and in the district for one year prior to election. Representatives are elected for two-year terms, with the entire House elected at the same time. Under a constitutional amendment approved in 1979, legislators are elected in November following the regular session of the General Assembly.

The Constitution also includes provisions concerning quorum, powers of each house, adjournment, compensation, and restrictions and privileges of the members.

Legislative Leadership

Until November 1992, the Lieutenant Governor served as President of the Senate. But a constitutional amendment passed that year now requires that a member of the Senate be elected President of that body by its full membership, just as the Speaker of the House is elected by the House membership. The President Pro Tempore, also elected by the full Senate, presides in the absence of the President or when asked by the President. Each may vote on all issues that come before the chamber.

The Speaker of the House is elected by the full membership of that body. The Speaker Pro Tempore, also elected, presides over the House when the Speaker requests it or is absent. Each may vote on all issues.

Legislative party leaders—floor leaders, caucus chairs and whips—are selected by caucuses during the organizational phase of odd-year sessions. They are responsible for seeing that the interests of their respective parties are well served. Leaders of the Governor's party usually guide the administration's bills through the legislature.

Legislative Constitutional Officers

The Constitution also mandates a number of constitutional officers to carry out clerical and support activities for the General Assembly. Among these are the chief clerks elected by each chamber.

The clerks and their staffs, assisted by the staff of the Legislative Research Commission, are responsible for minutes of the sessions, roll calls, bill calendars, recording committee assignments, certifying the passage of bills and resolutions, equipment inventories, and the official *Journal* of each house.

They must see that amendments are incorporated into bills before they go from one house to the other and that final copies signed by the presiding officer in each chamber contain the exact wording approved by the House and Senate.

Other Legislative Officers

The sergeants-at-arms clear unauthorized persons from the floor of the House and Senate before each session and as otherwise directed. These officers may arrest members of the General Assembly when so ordered. They also clear the galleries if there is a disturbance.

Other officers authorized by the Constitution include doorkeepers, pages, janitors, and cloakroom keepers.

The Legislative Process

The Role of Standing Committees

Standing committees play a vital role in the legislative process. They consider more than 1,000 bills and resolutions each session and decide which should advance to the full House or Senate. In each house, the Committee on Committees, made up of legislative leaders, assigns bills to one of several standing committees. Assignments are determined by the subject of each bill. Rules adopted at the beginning of the organizational session list subjects that fall within each committee's jurisdiction.

The Committee on Committees also selects the chair, vice chair, and members of each standing committee. Legislators usually serve on two or three committees.

The chair of each committee decides in what order bills will be considered. If a particular issue has generated wide and conflicting interests, a

committee may schedule a public hearing on the subject before acting on specific legislation. Even without formal hearings, supporters and opponents of a particular bill might be invited to address a committee.

Committees may send bills to the full House or Senate with favorable or unfavorable reports or, in the Senate, without recommendation. Committees also may propose amendments to bills or decline to return them to the full House or Senate. If a legislator feels a bill has been held in committee for an unreasonable time, he or she can force action by filing a "discharge petition." In the House, 25 members must sign the petition. Approximately half the bills introduced each session never get out of committee. Unless a bill receives a favorable committee report, its chances of passing are slim.

The role of interim committees, which are essential to the continuity of the work of the General Assembly between sessions, is described in a later section on between-session activity of the legislature.

How a Bill Becomes Law

Only a member of the General Assembly can introduce legislation. Legislators, however, often introduce bills suggested by other individuals or organizations. All bills must begin with the words: "Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky . . . ."

'Be it enacted by the General Assembly. . .'

Bills vary in length from a single paragraph to hundreds of pages. The Constitution requires that a bill relate to only one subject, which must be stated in the title. Bills that don't adhere to this rule have been ruled unconstitutional.

Some bills pass with little discussion. Others are subjected to much examination and undergo major changes before becoming law. Amendments may be proposed by a committee or a legislator, but bills can be amended only by a vote of the House or Senate. If changes alter a

bill significantly, a substitute bill may be drafted and given the same number.

All bills are introduced by delivering them to the House or Senate Clerk, after which they are referred by the Committee on Committees to an appropriate standing committee. Several weeks may pass before a bill is reported out of that committee and returned to the floor. If the bill is reported other than favorably, a majority of senators or representatives must vote to give it a first reading.

The Process Step-by-Step

Step-by-step, here is the process a bill must follow to be enacted into the Kentucky statute books:

- *Introduction and Committee Referral*

A bill may be introduced in the House or Senate. Each bill is assigned a number, read by title and sponsor, and referred to a standing committee by the Committee on Committees.

- *Committee Consideration*

Committee meetings are usually open to the public. When there is sufficient interest in a subject, a public hearing may be held. A bill may be reported out of committee with one of the following reports: favorable with amendments; favorable with committee substitute; unfavorable; or, in the Senate, without opinion. A committee can essentially kill a bill by failing to act on it.

- *First Reading*

When a committee reports a bill favorably, the bill has its first reading and is placed in the Calendar for the following day. If a committee reports a bill unfavorably or without opinion, the bill is not likely to go further.

- *Second Reading; To Rules*

The bill is read by title a second time and sent to

the Rules Committee. The Rules Committee may recommit the bill or place it in the Orders of the Day for a specific day.

- *Third Reading and Passage*

"I move that House Bill 100 be taken from the Orders of the Day, read for the third time by title only, and placed upon its passage." This motion, usually by the majority floor leader, is adopted by voice vote, and the floor is open for debate. Following debate and amendments, a final vote on the bill is taken. To pass, a bill must be approved by at least two-fifths of the members of the chamber (40 representatives or 16 senators) and a majority of the members present and voting. If the bill contains an appropriation or an emergency clause, it must be approved by a majority of the members elected to each house (51 representatives and 20 senators). During sessions in odd-numbered years, legislation that appropriates funds or raises revenue requires a three-fifths majority to pass.

- *What Happens Next?*

If a bill is defeated, that is the end of it unless two members who voted against it request its reconsideration and a majority approves. If a bill passes in one house, it is sent to the other chamber, where it follows much the same procedure. Both houses must agree on the final form of each bill. If either house fails to concur in amendments made by the other, the differences must be reconciled by a conference committee of senators and representatives. Compromises agreed to by this conference committee are subject to approval by both houses.

- *Enrollment*

After passage by both houses, a bill is read carefully to make sure the final wording is correct. The bill is signed by the presiding officer of each house and sent to the Governor.

- *Governor's Action*

The Governor may sign a bill, permit it to become law without signing it, or veto it. The veto may be overridden by a majority of the members of both houses. The Governor has 10 days (excluding Sundays) to act on a bill after it has been received.

- *Becoming law*

The Constitution specifies that an act becomes law 90 days after the General Assembly adjourns, unless the act contains a later effective date or an emergency clause.

In the latter case, the act must be approved by a constitutional majority (half of the members plus one) and becomes effective immediately upon its approval by the Governor.

The fastest a bill can pass through both houses of the legislature is five days, the minimum time required for three readings in each house. Most bills take longer to complete the process, however.

Resolutions and Citations

Besides bills, the legislature may express its feelings in citations or in simple or concurrent resolutions.

Legislative citations are presented by the Senate or House to honor, commend, or express condolences to an individual or group. Because citations are honorary, they may not be used for procedural, controversial, or partisan political matters.

Simple resolutions require action by only one house. They are used to handle procedure, organization, or to express the sense of the chamber on a particular matter. Frequently, at the end of a day, the House or Senate will pass a simple resolution to adjourn in honor or memory of an individual or group.

Concurrent resolutions adopted by both houses are used to mandate specific legislative studies and to send messages to other branches of government. They are sent to the Governor, but do not have the force of law. When the legislative session ends, the General Assembly passes a concurrent resolution to adjourn *sine die* (without a day to reconvene).

A third type of resolution—a joint resolution—is used to ratify amendments to the U.S. Constitution, to direct an executive-branch agency to conduct a study, and for other matters of temporary law not meant to be inserted in the statutes. Joint resolutions have the force of law and must pass both houses, be signed by the officers of each chamber, be sent to the Governor, and be filed with the Secretary of State.

Adjourning and Convening

Each chamber decides individually each day it is in session when to adjourn and when to convene for the next working day. Both chambers normally convene in the afternoon Monday through Thursday. On Friday, except near the end of the session, the houses usually meet only in the morning so that legislators can return to their home districts Friday night.

Night sessions are held sometimes for a special address by the Governor or toward the end of the session to conduct business when time threatens to run out before the legislature has finished its work.

Order of Business

The exact order of business varies slightly between the House and Senate—at which point the Orders of the Day are taken up, for example. (Check with the House or Senate Clerk or consult the published rules of each chamber if you need to know exactly when a given order of business will be taken up.)

However, in each chamber a typical day's proceedings include the following:

- *Invocation*

Each day begins with a prayer. Resolutions are adopted inviting area ministers to offer the invocation.

- *Roll Call*

The clerk calls the roll to see if a majority of the house is present as constitutionally required to transact business.

- *Reading and Approval of the Journal*

A motion is usually made that the reading of the *Journal* be dispensed with and approved.

- *Introduction and Reading of New Bills and Resolutions*

The clerk numbers bills as they are received and reads new bills by title and sponsor. Bills are identified by number throughout their consideration.

- *Report of References of Bills to Committees*

The clerk announces where bills have been referred by the Committee on Committees.

- *Report of Committees*

Committee chairs report to the clerk, who reads committee action on each bill. (Rules Committee reports are included among these in the House, while the Senate has a separate order of business for Rules Committee reports.)

- *First Reading of Bills*

A favorable committee report constitutes the first reading of a bill. Bills with first reading are placed in the Calendar for the following day.

- *Second Reading of Bills*

Bills in the Calendar are given their second reading, by title only, and sent to the Rules Committee.

- *Motions, Petitions, and Communications*

A member may present any matter he or she wishes to have considered at this point.

- *Orders of the Day*

The majority leader calls bills from the Orders of the Day for debate, amendment, recommitment, or floor vote in favor or against.

- *Announcements*

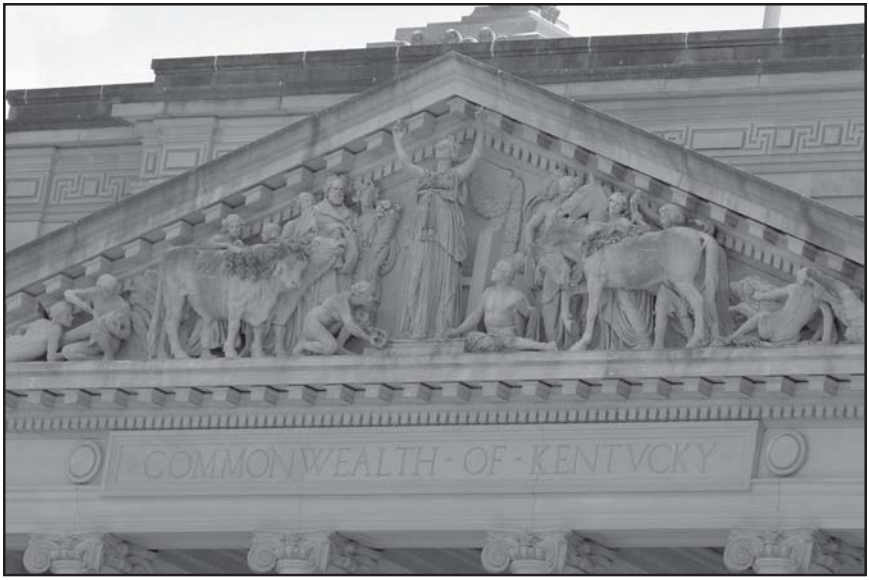
Committee chairs call meetings of their committees and members make any announcements they have.

- *Adjournment*

The presiding officer asks if there is any further business. If not, the chamber adjourns.

Chamber Decorum

The rules of each house provide that members shall not address each other on the floor by name. Senators usually refer to one another as, "The senator from (a particular county or district)." House members refer to a colleague as, "The gentleman or lady from . . . ." Senators address the presiding officer as "Mr. or Madam President"; and House members, "Mr. or Madam Speaker." Members who use objectionable language on the floor may be called to order by the chair.



Working Visitors

Lobbyists, the Media

Many people visit the Capitol to see the legislature at work. Some come merely to observe the proceedings while others have an interest in particular legislation. Lobbyists representing particular groups come to look after the interests of their organizations. They keep track of pending legislation and attempt to persuade legislators to vote one way or another on particular bills.

Many people have an unfavorable image of lobbyists as individuals who place undue pressure on legislators. Most professional lobbyists, however, are hard-working spokespersons for the groups they represent and are important sources of information for lawmakers. Lobbyists must register with the Legislative Ethics Commission. The interests they represent range from business enterprises to the Kentucky Education Association, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, Common Cause, and the League of Kentucky Sportsmen.

When the legislature is in session, reporters sit at desks near the front of each chamber so they can follow the proceedings closely. They also attend committee meetings and report extensively about individual legislators, key bills, and major issues.

A number of radio and television stations in Kentucky also provide coverage of the session's activities, including committee meetings.

Kentucky Educational Television videotapes the sessions for a nightly presentation to viewers across the Commonwealth. Such coverage allows the general public to observe legislative proceedings firsthand.

Between Sessions

Interim Committees

The General Assembly meets in regular session every year. To provide a continuity of study and action between sessions, interim committees are formed from the standing committees of both houses. For instance, the Appropriations and Revenue Committee of the Senate and the Appropriations and Revenue Committee of the House become the Interim Joint Committee on Appropriations and Revenue after the legislative session. This enables a committee to continue studying the problems related to its area and to prepare legislation for introduction at the next session.

Interim committees are actually subcommittees of the Legislative Research Commission and so are subject to the procedural directions and limitations as set forth by the LRC.

The interim committees are an important part of the legislative process. They provide an opportunity for in-depth discussion and study without the rush and pressure that exist during sessions. All interim committees are open to the public and the press so the people have an opportunity to express views on areas the proposed legislation will affect.

Interim committees draft and approve bills for prefiling for the next session. This enables bills to be introduced at the beginning of the session and the standing committees to become active immediately.

Statutory Committees

The interim committee system was implemented in 1968 and has steadily increased its effectiveness. The constitutional amendment adopted in 1979 strengthened the interim committee system by assuring that the members serving on a committee between sessions will also serve on the same panel during the upcoming session.

In addition to the interim joint committees, there are other committees that function as subcommittees of the Legislative Research Commission. The following subcommittees were established to perform specific tasks related to the authority and intent of legislation passed by the General Assembly.

Administrative Regulation Review

The Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee was established in 1972. This subcommittee is now composed of eight members of the General Assembly and meets monthly to review regulations proposed by state administrative bodies. After review by the subcommittee, the Legislative Research Commission refers proposed regulations to an appropriate interim joint committee for further review.

The Legislative Research Commission may note objections to a proposed regulation and return it to the agency that issued it. If objections to a regulation are noted by the Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee or a subsequently assigned interim committee, the "deficient" regulation may still become effective at the end of the review process. However, during the next regular General Assembly session, a bill may be enacted to declare the deficient regulation void.

The *Administrative Register of Kentucky* is a monthly publication of proposed regulations filed in the previous 30 days. *The Kentucky Administrative Regulations Service* is an annual publication of all regulations in effect as of July of each year.

Government Contract Review

The Government Contract Review Committee was established in 1978. This committee is composed of eight members of the General Assembly.

This committee meets monthly to review proposed personal service contracts to determine the need for the service, whether the service can be performed by state personnel, and to examine the cost and duration of the contract.

If there are objections to a proposed contract, the committee returns the contract with its objections to the contracting agency, which must respond within 60 days.

If the objections cannot be resolved, the committee files a copy of the contract and its objections with the clerks of the House and the Senate for whatever action the General Assembly deems appropriate.

Program Review and Investigations

The Program Review and Investigations Committee was established in 1978. Sixteen members of the General Assembly are appointed for two-year terms.

The committee is directed to make performance reviews of the operations of state agencies to ascertain the appropriate expenditure of funds and the effectiveness of the programs.

The operations, practices, and duties of state agencies are studied as they relate to efficiency in the utilization of space, personnel, equipment, and facilities. The committee conducts special studies and issues reports as requested by the General Assembly and pursues investigations as directed.

State agencies are directed by statute to provide the committee with information necessary for the performance of its duties. The Attorney General and Auditor are also directed to assist the committee whenever necessary.

The Program Review and Investigations Committee has the power to subpoena witnesses and documents and to require testimony under oath. The committee reports its findings to the state agency involved and to the General Assembly.

Capital Projects Oversight

The Capital Projects and Bond Oversight Committee was established in 1988 to carry on the functions of the old Capital Construction and Equipment Purchase Oversight Committee and to oversee state bond projects. The committee is composed of eight members of the General Assembly. The committee is authorized to meet monthly, and more often if necessary.

The Finance and Administration Cabinet is directed to present to the committee for its review records of the amount spent and transferred for capital construction projects. The committee is directed to report any alterations or changes in projects approved by the General Assembly.

The committee is charged with maintaining reports of purchases and transfers and to monitor the costs of state capital construction projects.

The committee is also charged with bond oversight. Prior to the establishment of a bond project by any state agency except for the Turnpike Authority, the School Facilities Construction Commission, and the Kentucky Development Finance Authority, the committee reviews the project. If the committee makes recommendations on a bond project, the secretary of the Finance and Administration Cabinet decides whether to cancel, revise, or proceed. The committee also reviews yearly reports from state agencies on the amounts of their bonds and the costs associated with them. Its findings and recommendations are transmitted to the appropriate interim joint committee or to the General Assembly when in session.

Education Assessment and Accountability Review

The Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee is made up of eight members of the General Assembly. It is empowered to review administrative regulations and advise the Kentucky Board of Education concerning the implementation of the state system of assessment and accountability. The subcommittee also advises and monitors the Office of Education and Accountability.

Education Accountability

The Office of Education Accountability (OEA) was established by the 1990 General Assembly's passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act. The OEA is charged with the responsibility of reviewing the state's system of school finance; verifying the accuracy of school district and state performance; and investigating unresolved allegations of wrongdoing at the state, regional, and district level. In addition, staff are to conduct studies and analyze available data on the efficiency of the system of schools to determine whether progress is being made toward attaining the goal of providing students with the seven capacities required by KRS 158.645. The Office of Education Accountability reports periodically to the Education Assessment and Accountability Review Subcommittee (EAARS); and reports annually to the Governor, the Legislative Research Commission, and the State Board for Elementary and Secondary Education, upon approval of the annual report by EAARS. This reporting includes recommendations for improvement.

Medicaid Managed Care Oversight

The Medicaid Managed Care Oversight Advisory Committee is made up of 10 members of the General Assembly. It is directed to meet at least four times annually to monitor the implementation of Medicaid Managed Care within the Commonwealth, including access to services, utilization of services, quality of services, and cost containment.

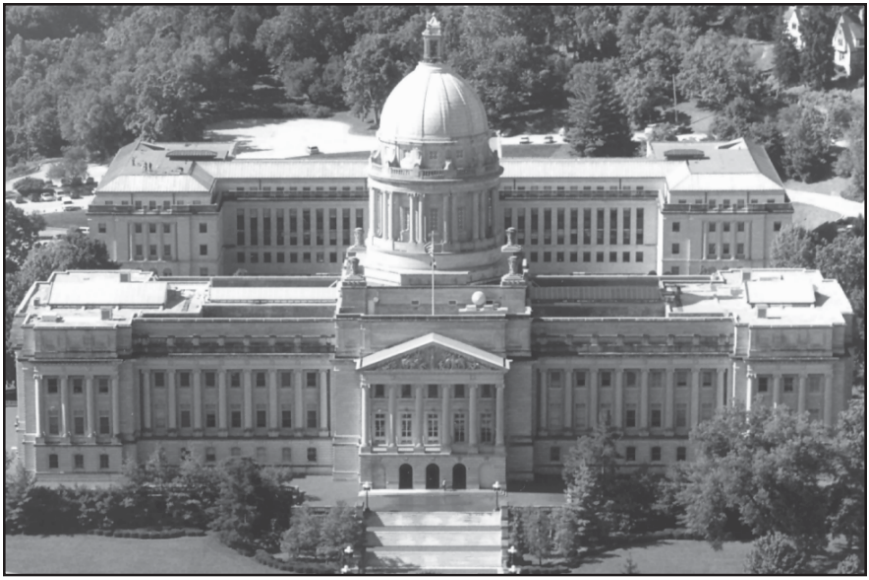
Tobacco Settlement Oversight

The Tobacco Settlement Agreement Fund Oversight Committee is made up of 12 members of the General Assembly. It is required to review each project being submitted to the Agricultural Development Board for funding from the Tobacco Settlement Fund, to provide findings and determinations to the Legislative Research Commission, and to issue an annual report.

Capital Planning Advisory Board

The Capital Planning Advisory Board is charged with the responsibility of developing in each biennium a comprehensive statewide six-year capital improvements plan. The board then develops its statewide capital improvements plan for submission to the heads of the three branches of government. The plan includes recommendations of projects to be undertaken or continued in the six-year planning period, as well as recommendations as to priority and means of funding such capital projects.

The board is composed of 16 members appointed by the three branches of state government. The board is statutorily defined as an entity of the General Assembly.



Legislative Research Commission

The Legislative Research Commission, established in 1948, is a bipartisan fact-finding and service body for the General Assembly. Its members are the leaders of each party in both houses.

The Commission employs a director who presides over a professional staff of researchers, fiscal analysts, librarians, secretaries, attorneys, computer operators, and other trained specialists who provide a multitude of services for the General Assembly.

The LRC has its own print shop for the printing of bills, research reports, and informational bulletins. It also maintains a public information office to dispense information to the media and the public about the activities of the General Assembly and its members.

Professional Support Staff

LRC staff help legislators prepare bills and resolutions, conduct both limited and in-depth research, and work closely with interim and standing committees. The LRC has a statute reviser who incorporates Acts of the General Assembly into existing laws.

Research Reports

Staff research reports on a variety of subjects are published each year and made available to the public upon request, often at no cost.

These reports, usually dealing with issues of current public policy concern, are directed by the Legislative Research Commission or the General Assembly.

Budget Review

The LRC is directed by statute to study and examine the expenditures of state agencies. For this purpose, the Commission has a budget review staff that reviews agency budgets, conducts fiscal studies, and provides data required for effective legislative review of proposals.

During General Assembly sessions, budget review staff prepare fiscal notes on the cost implications of pending legislation and work with the Appropriations and Revenue Committees in reviewing the executive budget.

Expanded Functions

The LRC's functions have expanded in recent years to include the Kentucky Long-Term Policy Research Center. The center is charged with alerting decisionmakers to emerging trends and the long-term implications of policy decisions.

LRC Publications

The LRC offers a number of publications that will help you participate more effectively in the legislative process.

- The *Legislative Record*, published by the LRC, shows the daily status of all bills and resolutions when the General Assembly is in session. Final executive action on each bill also is recorded. Between sessions, the *Interim Legislative Record* is published monthly and provides information about the Commission and interim committees.

- The *Legislative Calendar* is a weekly notice of committee meetings during the interim. It is provided at no charge and can be obtained by e-mail on a continuing basis.

- The *Kentucky General Assembly Directory,* a pictorial booklet with a brief biography of each legislator, is published before each session.

- *Kentucky Acts* contains all bills enacted during a session.

- The *House Journal* and the *Senate Journal* are the official daily records of proceedings in each house during a session. Each *Journal* contains roll call votes on all bills, as well as all motions and referrals.

- *General Assembly Action* contains summaries of all bills and resolutions delivered to the Governor each session. It is published by the LRC after final adjournment.

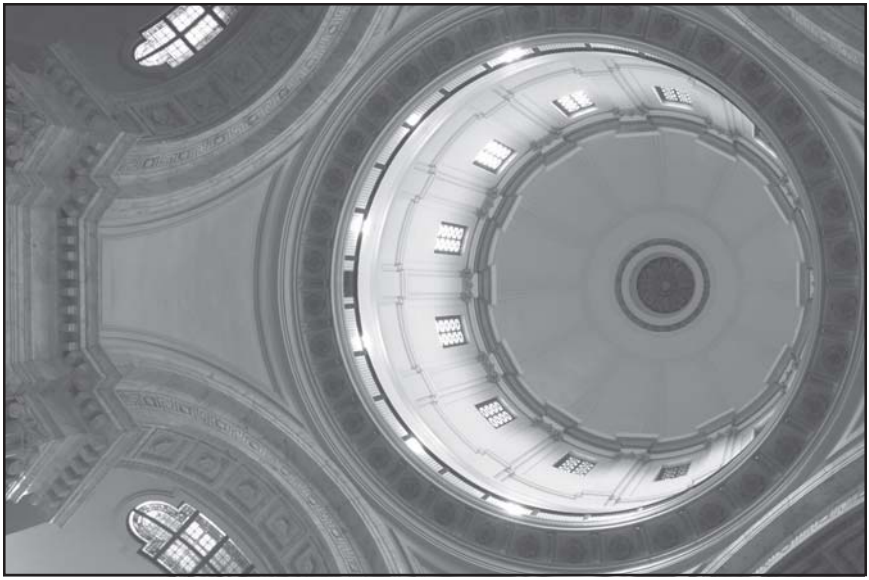
- *Administrative Register of Kentucky*, published monthly by the LRC, is a compilation of regulations proposed by administrative agencies of the Commonwealth and serves as public notice of such proposed regulations.

- *Kentucky Administrative Regulations Service*, published annually by the LRC, contains regulations promulgated by administrative agencies and in effect as of July of each year.

- *Final Reports of the Interim Joint, Special, and Statutory Committees* provides a summary of the proposals discussed and acted upon by each committee during the interim. It is published a few weeks prior to the convening of a regular session of the General Assembly.

- *Issues Confronting the General Assembly* is a collection of reports on the major issues that received attention during the interim. The analyses include pros and cons of the issues and list alternatives to be considered. This publication is available before a session.

The legislature also hosts a Website at <www.lrc.state.ky.us>, which contains information on members, committees, the legislative process, bill status, and publications available.



Staying in Touch

Your senators and representatives want to hear from you.

During General Assembly sessions, toll-free telephone lines are installed for citizens to use to contact legislators and determine the status of bills. The numbers are well-publicized in the media when the legislature is in session.

Writing letters is an effective way to let your legislators know how you feel about issues. Specify the legislation you endorse or oppose and try to discuss only one issue in each letter. Write before or during the time your issue is being considered; and don't hesitate to write to a committee chair, even if the chair is not from your district. Make sure your letter is legible, and include your name and address.

During a session, your legislators will be extremely busy. To make your visits with them most successful, make appointments in advance. State your facts as simply and briefly as possible, and give specific examples to support your position. You will want your legislators to listen to your opinions; it is important for you to listen to theirs as well.

Even if you do not agree, end each visit on a friendly note. Good will and mutual respect are important foundations for the next time you talk with your legislator.

Afterword

Representative government is based on a concept unique in human history: that the people themselves, speaking through elected representatives, can not only influence policy, but govern their own affairs.

That concept bestows great power and authority on individual citizens.

More importantly, it expects—and demands—that those same citizens assume great responsibility for the success or failure of the system we call democracy.

The extent to which democracy works to better the lives of average Kentuckians can be measured directly by how active and involved each of you is in the legislative process. The legislature is truly your branch of government. No other branch is as close to you, and no other branch is as responsive.

Your interest in the work of the General Assembly, and your active participation in the process, is not just a citizen's obligation learned in civics class; it is fundamental to fulfilling a dream more than 200 years old, a dream in which this nation's founders told the world:

The people can govern themselves.

We urge you to help us realize that dream.

This publication of the Legislative Research Commission is designed as an introduction to the Kentucky General Assembly and the legislative process. For further information, contact the LRC Public Information Office, Room 023, State Capitol Annex, Frankfort, KY 40601, phone 502/564-8100, extension 307.