

THE ELLIOTT COUNTY NEWS

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Gov. Beshear vetoes DEI measure that he says is ‘about hate’

By TOM LATEK
Kentucky Today
FRANKFORT, Ky., Mar. 20—For the second day in a row, Gov. Andy Beshear has vetoed a bill passed by the 2025 General Assembly, this time a measure dealing with diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives at Kentucky’s public colleges and universities.

On Thursday, he vetoed House Bill 4, which would prohibit a public postsecondary education institution from providing differential treatment or benefits based on an individual’s religion, race, sex, color, or national origin. This includes such things as admissions, scholarships and housing, among other things.

In his veto message, Beshear said, “Diversity is a strength, and never a weakness. Diversity makes our commonwealth stronger, enriching Kentucky with people from all different backgrounds and upbringing. Diversity programs help us add more voices to the table. This legislation shrinks that table by attempting to control how universities and colleges meet the needs of their students and prepare them for the future. This bill forecloses our universities and colleges from fully embracing students from communities of color, from various faith communities of certain ethnicities, women, and the LGBTQ+ community.”

In a post on Facebook, Beshear said Kentucky used to be more welcoming.

“We were one of the first Southern states to sign a civil rights act. But this bill, House Bill 4, moves us backwards. It makes people feel less welcome, less deserving, less like they are welcomed in the commonwealth.

“This bill isn’t about love; House Bill 4 is about hate. So, I’m going to try a little act of love myself and I’m going to veto it right now. I’ll always believe that diversity is a strength and never a weakness. That we are better with more voices and more seats at our table.”

More than 50 universities are being investigated for alleged racial discrimination as part of President Donald Trump’s campaign to end DEI programs, which his officials say exclude white and Asian American students.

Delayed hatch of E. caterpillars is expected

Tent caterpillars can pose serious danger to pregnant mares

By TOM LATEK,
Reprinted From
Kentucky Today
LEXINGTON, Ky., Mar. 25—The Eastern tent caterpillar (ETC) gained notoriety in Central Kentucky during the early 2000s when its accidental ingestion by pregnant mares was linked to thousands of cases of Mare Reproductive Loss Syndrome (MRLS) but hopefully won’t cause that level of problems in 2025.

From 1999 to 2001, according to the University of Kentucky, MRLS caused an estimated 3,500 foal losses, including abortions, stillbirths and neonatal deaths. Central Kentucky alone lost around 30% of its 2001-02 Thoroughbred foal crop, resulting in an estimated state economic impact of \$336 million across all horse breeds.

Due to a colder winter and slower accumulation of growing-degree days this year, experts at UK’s Martin-Gatton College of Agriculture, Food and Environment (CAFE) anticipate a delayed hatch for ETCs.

“ETCs begin to hatch after enough warm days accumulate,” said Jonathan Larson, assistant extension entomology professor in the Department of Entomology. “We’ve seen a slower approach to that number this winter, which gives horse owners more time to monitor and prepare.”

Eastern tent caterpillars are commonly observed on wild cherry, apple and crabapple trees, although they may also infest hawthorn, maple, peach, pear and plum. These caterpillars construct compact silk “tents” in the forks of branches. The tightly woven nests serve as shelters, helping to protect the growing larvae from predators and harsh environmental conditions.

Over the winter, ETCs remain dormant as egg masses wrapped around pencil-thin twigs, waiting for the warmer days of early spring to hatch. Once they emerge, the larvae feed primarily at dawn, dusk or overnight and can grow to a length of 2 to 2.5 inches. As resources become scarce — or when it is time to pupate — these caterpillars often leave their host trees, wandering along fence lines and into pastures in search of new food sources or protected pupation sites.

In pregnant mares, ETC hair cuticles can lodge in the lining of the digestive tract, creating an entry point for bacteria. The resulting infection may harm both the fetus and placenta, posing a significant threat to equine health and foal development.

“If farm managers notice high numbers of nests, they should relocate pregnant mares from areas near wild cherry trees to reduce the risk of exposure,” Larson said.

For more information, download the UK entomology publication “Checking Eastern Tent Caterpillar Egg Masses” at <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef449>.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By Representative Richard White

Key Pieces of Legislation Become Law

March 23 As the veto recess continues and we move closer to the end of the 2025 Regular Session, the General Assembly remains committed to completing the work we began on January 7. So far, we have passed more than 100 bills, which are now moving through the final stages of the legislative process.

As most of you know, our Governor has already vetoed around 170 bills since taking office. While the number is historic, he is not the first governor to use the veto power, just as we are not the first legislature to use our authority to override those vetoes. While the veto period is not over, I want to highlight some of the bills that he has already signed into law.

• House Bill 1 lowers the individual income tax from 4% to 3.5% beginning on January 1, 2026. This tax cut will leave an estimated \$718 million in the paychecks of hardworking Kentuckians during the first full year of implementation.

• Senate Bill 23: SB 23 establishes procedures for the informational review of an administrative regulation by the Administrative Regulation Review Subcommittee or any other legislative committee, gives the subcommittee the authority to put a filed administrative regulation on the agenda for informational review, and requires the agencies that drafted the regulations to be present and cooperate with informational reviews.

• House Bill 19 prohibits the use of an unmanned aircraft system like a drone to record images of privately owned real property or of the owner, tenant, occupant, invitee, or licensee of the property with the intent to conduct surveillance on or publish unauthorized images taken of the individual or their property. If violated, an individual may take civil action in a court of competent jurisdiction.

• House Bill 131 allows for additional flexibility in firefighters’ work schedules. This measure allows for specific fire personnel to have the ability to work 48/96 schedules (48 hours on, 96 hours off) or 1/3/2/3 schedules (24 hours on, 72 hours off, 48 hours on, 72 hours off), unless otherwise provided in a collective bargaining agreement.

• House Bill 164, known as Braylon’s Law, allows courts to render adoption judgments to families in the event of a child’s death during the adoption process.

• Senate Bill 73 makes sexual extortion a felony, empowers victims by giving them legal remedies to seek justice and recover damages, and prioritizes prevention by requiring schools to educate students and parents about the warning signs and ensuring that resources are visible and accessible.

• Senate Bill 87 allows air boards that operate a commercial airport serving more than one million passengers annually to use federal small purchase procedures, increases penalties for airport rule violations, and directs the Council on Postsecondary Education, in coordination with the Transportation Cabinet, to conduct a study on creating a FAA-recognized air traffic control credential program at a postsecondary education institution.

• House Concurrent Resolution 20 directs the Legislative Research Commission to study access to sexual assault nurse examiners in Kentucky. This measure requires that a report be submitted to the Interim Joint Committee on Health Services and the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary by December 1, 2025.

When the veto recess concludes, we will reconvene for the final two days of the 2025 Regular Session, which will give us the opportunity to override any of the governor’s vetoes with a constitutional majority in both chambers. This power, granted to us by the Kentucky Constitution, reinforces the system of checks and balances and ensures that key legislative priorities are upheld. We will reconvene on March 27 for the final two days of session. The legislature will not convene again until Tuesday, January 6, 2026, unless the governor calls us into special session.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via email at Richard.White@kylegislatre.gov.



University of Kentucky
College of Agriculture,
Food and Environment
Cooperative Extension Service



Extension News

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CEA, 4-H Youth Development Education



Sign Up For Cooking Through The Calendar!

It’s Time to sign up for cooking through the calendar. We will make a recipe a month from our NEP calendar. Participants will learn how to make the recipe and sample the recipe and receive a recipe calendar. Call the Elliott County Extension Office to sign up. 606-738-6400. Spaces are limited.

Save The Dates For Elliott County 4-H Camp!

Elliott County 4-H Camp dates will be July 29, 2025, to August 1, 2025. Information about signing up for 4-H camp will be coming soon.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

The Elliott County Board of Education has adopted a General Fund rate of 51.8 cents. Of this rate, 6.6 cents is subject to recall.

The previous tax rate on 2024 bills was 45.2 cents. The only proposed new tax is 6.6 cents which is restricted to the school building fund. This tax creates the opportunity for a state match and other state funding for building projects.

Jennifer Carter, Elliott County Clerk, 118 Main St, Sandy Hook, KY 41171, Telephone (606) 738-5421, can provide necessary information about the petition required to initiate recall of the tax rate.

Sen. Paul introduces Nutritious SNAP Act

To restore personal responsibility, and state flexibility to Federal Food Assistance Program

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Rand Paul (R-KY) has introduced the Nutritious SNAP Act to confront an uncomfortable truth: while the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) was created to fight hunger, it is now fueling a new public health crisis—obesity and chronic disease—by subsidizing the purchase of junk food with taxpayer dollars.

“SNAP was designed to fight hunger and improve nutrition—not to subsidize soda and junk food,” said Dr. Paul. “It makes no sense that taxpayer dollars are being used to fund an epidemic of obesity and diet-related illness in low-income communities. My bill ensures that this assistance program actually supports health and wellness, not chronic disease.”

SNAP currently provides food-purchasing assistance to more than 42 million individuals. While it successfully addresses food insecurity, studies show that nearly one-quarter of SNAP benefits are spent on junk food—sodas, chips, snack cakes, and desserts—contributing to worse diets and higher obesity rates among SNAP recipients than the general population. Despite these health concerns, previous

efforts by states—like Minnesota, California, and New York—to limit SNAP junk food purchases have been rejected by the USDA.

The Nutritious SNAP Act represents a common-sense step toward improving public health, protecting taxpayer dollars, and respecting the decisions made by states to combat chronic disease.

Background

Senator Paul’s legislation will:

- Prohibit SNAP funds from being used to purchase sodas, snack foods, and dessert items, including potato chips, snack cakes, and brownie mixes.
- Limits beverage purchases to water, cow’s milk, healthy dairy alternatives, and 100% fruit or vegetable juice.
- Empowers states to restrict additional foods they deem unhealthy, restoring local control and removing federal barriers to innovation in public health policy.
- With nearly a quarter of SNAP benefits currently spent on sugar-laden, nutrient-poor products, the bill seeks to realign the program with its original mission: to improve the nutrition of low-income households.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

IF ANY MEMBER OF YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS CURRENTLY ENROLLED IN...

• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

• Federal Public Housing Assistance or Section 8

• Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

• Medicaid

• Supplemental Security Income (SSI)

• Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF)

• National School Lunch Program’s Free Lunch Program

OR ELIGIBILITY BASED ON HOUSEHOLD INCOME.**

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