

Video series now available for state diversion program

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

Frankfort – The Administrative Office of the Courts is offering a video series highlighting the benefits of Senate Bill 90, legislation that is transforming how Kentucky’s justice system supports people with substance use disorder and behavioral health needs.

Passed by the Kentucky General Assembly and signed into law by the governor in 2022, SB 90 created the Behavioral Health Conditional Dismissal Program as an alternative to incarceration for defendants whose substance use disorders

and/or mental health conditions were contributing factors to their criminal acts.

The video series, released Thursday, showcases the legislation’s real-life impact, featuring participant testimonies and insights into how the program diverts defendants into appropriate care, a news release from the Administrative Office of the Courts said. The program supports participants with treatment and services, including assistance with education, employment and housing.

View the video series at kcoj.info/SB90vid.

The program is for certain non-violent, non-sexual misdemeanors and Class D felonies. Eligible defendants can have their charges dismissed after successful completion of the program.

“The Administrative Office of the Courts has been honored to be a part of legislation that impacts justice-involved individuals in such a powerful way,” AOC Director Zach Ramsey said in the release. “Giving access to treatment, barrier relief and educational opportunities while subverting the stigma of a conviction is setting these individuals on a new direction in life.”

The AOC, Kentucky Office of Adult Education and state Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities partner to offer the program.

“I’ve had the pleasure of speaking with participants on how their lives have changed through BHCDP,” said Angela Darcy, who heads AOC’s statewide Department of Pretrial Services. “Participants are excited to share their successes that have been made possible by SB 90, not just limited to the celebration of sobriety but also the joy of reunification with family,

the pride of earning a spot in the workforce and the confidence to continue this positive path. It’s amazing to witness.”

The BHCDP launched in January 2023 and is available in 17 counties with plans to expand. The counties are Clark, Christian, Daviess, Greenup, Henry, Hopkins, Johnson, Kenton, Letcher, Lewis, Madison, McCracken, Oldham, Pulaski, Russell, Warren and Wayne.

More than 760 participants have successfully completed the program. More information is available in the SB 90 Annual Report at kcoj.info/SB90AnnualReport.

Beshear urges Trump to oppose effort to block cannabis rescheduling

BY PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Kentucky Gov. Andy Beshear has asked President Donald Trump to oppose congressional efforts that would block the federal government from reclassifying marijuana to a less restrictive drug category.

In a letter sent this week, Beshear called on the President to reject language recently approved by a U.S. House

appropriations subcommittee that would prevent the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) from moving forward with a proposal to reclassify marijuana under the Controlled Substances Act. The reclassification would move cannabis from Schedule I — which includes drugs with no accepted medical use — to Schedule III, indicating moderate to low potential for dependence.

“Patients suffering should have access to safe cannabis for treatment, and rescheduling would help provide more Americans – and Kentuckians – relief,” Beshear said in a news release issued Friday. “This step would also help make our communities safer and fuel more meaningful research around cannabis that could help more people.”

The DEA proposed the rescheduling rule in spring

2024 following a recommendation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The department recognized marijuana’s medical uses and noted it is already being used for treatment purposes.

However, the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies included language in its Fiscal Year 2026 spending bill that would

prohibit the Department of Justice — which oversees the DEA — from using funds to implement the rescheduling change.

“This is not common-sense law,” Beshear wrote in his letter to Trump. “It stops a process that is already underway to accomplish a policy end that is overwhelmingly supported by the medical and scientific communities as well as the American people – of every

political party. Congress should not take the decision-making process out of the hands of medical and scientific experts when they don’t like the results.”

According to the governor’s release, Beshear said allowing the DEA’s rescheduling effort to proceed is critical for expanding safe access, reducing criminal justice burdens and enabling further medical research on cannabis.

MARRIAGES

The following marriage licenses have been recorded at the Hardin County Clerk’s office.

- Natalie Ann Schory, 22, of Elizabethtown, and Emmanuel Jordan Haynes, 22, of Rineyville.
- Megan Louise Cloyd, 25, and Shawn Michael Strawser,

28, both of Radcliff.

- Regina Elanie Parsons, 42, and Joshua Allen Jones, 38, both of Radcliff.
- Kelly Justine York, 47, and Chad Michael McNally, 46, both of Radcliff.
- Carolyn Dominguez Torres, 47, and Carlos Manuel Vazquez Melendez, 57, both of Eliza-

bethtown.

- Anna Marie Ard, 66, and William Allen Lawless, 69, both of Elizabethtown.
- Cheyanne Melvina Strong, 22, of Fort Knox, and Dylan Rex Mundy, 27, of Jeffersonville, Indiana.
- Elizabeth Ann Jacobs, 39, and Keith Richard Bates, 41,

both of Radcliff.

- Kaelyn Amaya Page, 19, of Radcliff, and Jaden Lee Brown, 19, of Fort Knox.
- Tayler Michelle Miller, 25, and Cameron Dandre Vaughn, 28, both of Elizabethtown.
- Niabi Pearl Boyer, 29, and Cameron Glenn Creason, 29, both of Fort Knox.

- Misty Ann Hazel, 35, and Nathaniel Edwin Webb, 38, both of Elizabethtown.
- Tara Marie McGlone, 25, and Matthew Richard Jenkins, 25, both of Elizabethtown.
- Tranquility Tao Frankowicz, 18, of Campbellsville, and Joshua David Henderson, 18, of Hodgenville.

- Mariet Lynn Dennison, 50, and Adam Leon Ashley, 47, both of Leitchfield.
- Angela Kathleen Lewis, 33, of Radcliff, and Wesley Allen Manakee, 38, of Upton.
- Torie Nichole Vandiver, 32, and Dakota Turgeon Klingensmith, 30. both of Abilene, Texas.

FEDERAL

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older. In June, that was 91,000.

THE ‘VICIOUS CYCLE’ OF HUNGER

Kentucky has millions of acres dedicated to farming and produces billions in agricultural products such as corn and eggs. Still, people are hungry.

The 2025 Map the Meal Gap report, based on data from 2023, shows that about 70% of food insecure Kentuckians fall within the threshold that qualifies them for SNAP benefits; about 30% are above it.

In total, 753,410 Kentuckians are food insecure, according to the report, meaning they’re not sure where their next meal will come from. Overall, nearly 17% of Kentuckians have some shortage of food.

Jordan Ojile, Feeding Kentucky’s advocacy manager, said these folks face “a chronic lack of nutrition that is secure, and this is concerning to us.”

“Food insecurity is a vicious cycle,” he told lawmakers during the July MAHA meeting. “It leads to a decrease in options and quality of your diet, which leads to a decrease in healthy behaviors when it comes to eating, which ...

does lead to chronic disease, which will ultimately lead to increase in health care expenditures, a decrease in employability, which will ultimately decrease your health income, which feeds into the snowball effect of increased food insecurity.”

Kentuckians spend their SNAP benefits at nearly 5,000 convenience stores, farmers markets, grocery stores, supermarkets, pharmacies and super stores, according to the cabinet.

“SNAP is not just there to benefit the people who receive it,” Kunkel told the Lantern. “It’s also a huge influx of federal money that comes into our state.”

It also better positions schools to buy local meat and dairy, supporting farmers and feeding children high quality food.

Steve McClain, spokesman for the Kentucky Retail Federation said it’s “too early to tell” the full impact of SNAP changes on grocery stores in the state.

“The Kentucky Grocers and Convenience Store Association is closely monitoring the potential impact of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on SNAP benefits in the commonwealth,” McClain said in a statement. “We recognize the significant role that SNAP benefits play in food security for Kentucky families, financial stability for local grocers and overall economic stability for

our communities — and will continue collaborating with federal and state officials as we move toward the act’s full implementation.”

LOOKING TO 2026: ‘PROTECT THOSE THAT ARE HUNGRY.’

McDonald, of Feeding Kentucky, said she wants to see Kentucky lawmakers make a commitment to continue SNAP, through legislation and/or the budget in 2026.

“We need to make sure that SNAP will be protected. There needs to be something that is put into place to guarantee that our lawmakers in Kentucky are going to protect those that are hungry,” she said. “There’s going to have to be a level of commitment from our legislators and from the budget to show ... that there will still be a SNAP program, and here’s what it’s going to look like.”

So much is at stake — children losing access to free meals, increased hunger-induced stress, worse education outcomes and more, Kunkel said.

“When your local economy takes a hit, and your local food producers take a hit, we all suffer,” she said. “I do well when my neighbor’s doing well...I don’t think we have been creating policy or state budgets to really acknowledge that.”

DUIS

The following cases of Driving Under the Influence and the resolutions were found in Hardin District Court records. All convicted of DUI are subject to Alcohol Driver Education and Commonwealth Mediation Services. License suspension referred to the Transportation Cabinet unless otherwise indicated. Birth year is in parentheses for identification purposes.

- Luke Allen Brakebill (2004). First offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants. Sentenced to two days in jail with credit for two days served. Fine waived. Must pay service fee and court costs. Total: \$604.
- Landon Joseph Isiah Fennell (2001). Third offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants. Sentenced to 365 days in jail with credit for 110 days served and bal-

ance probated for two years. Fined \$500 plus court costs and service fee. Total: \$1,120.

- Sarah Lunsford (1996). First offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants with aggravating circumstances. Sentenced to 30 days in jail, ordered to serve four days with credit for one day served and balance probated for two years. Fined \$200 plus court costs and service fee. Total: \$814.
- James William Martin (1993). First offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants. Sentenced to 30 days in jail with credit for four days served and balance probated for two years. Fined \$200 plus court costs and service fee. Total: \$820.
- Maynorkis Ocampo Napalose (1989). First offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence

of intoxicants. Sentenced to 30 days in jail with credit for one day served and balance probated for two years. Fined \$200 plus service fee and court costs. Total: \$804.

- William U. Scott (1995). Second offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants. Sentenced to 180 days in jail, ordered to serve seven days with credit for two days served and balance probated for two years. Fined \$350 plus court costs and service fee. Total: \$964.
- Demond Montez Thornton (1976). First offense operating a motor vehicle under the influence of intoxicants. Sentenced to 30 days in jail with credit for four days served and balance probated for two years. Fined \$200 plus court costs and service fee. Total: \$845.

DIVORCES

The following marital dissolutions have been recorded at the Hardin Circuit Clerk’s office.

- Braquel Mya Chester, 31, of Radcliff, and Rukiya Aisha Chester, 39, of Elizabethtown. Married three years.
- Randy Michale Cook, 42, and Necole Lee Bynum, 43, both of Mount Washington. Married three years.

- Trevor Harris, 28, of Elizabethtown, and Stephanie Harris, 29, of Bedford. Married nine years.
- Carla Ann Brown, 29, of Radcliff, and Austin Smith Finney, 29, of Vine Grove. Married two years.
- Davida Michelle Aragon, 35, and Reginald Cody Wayne Robitaille, 33, both of Fort Knox. Married seven years.

- Jeremiah Gruber, 43, of Radcliff, and Jessica Lavallee, 29, of Canada. Married four years.
- Savannah Terry, 27, of Horse Cave, and Matthew Parks, 28, of Sonora. Married nine years.
- Domingo Perez, 56, of Radcliff, and Chelsea Perez, 30, of Louisville. Married six years.

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