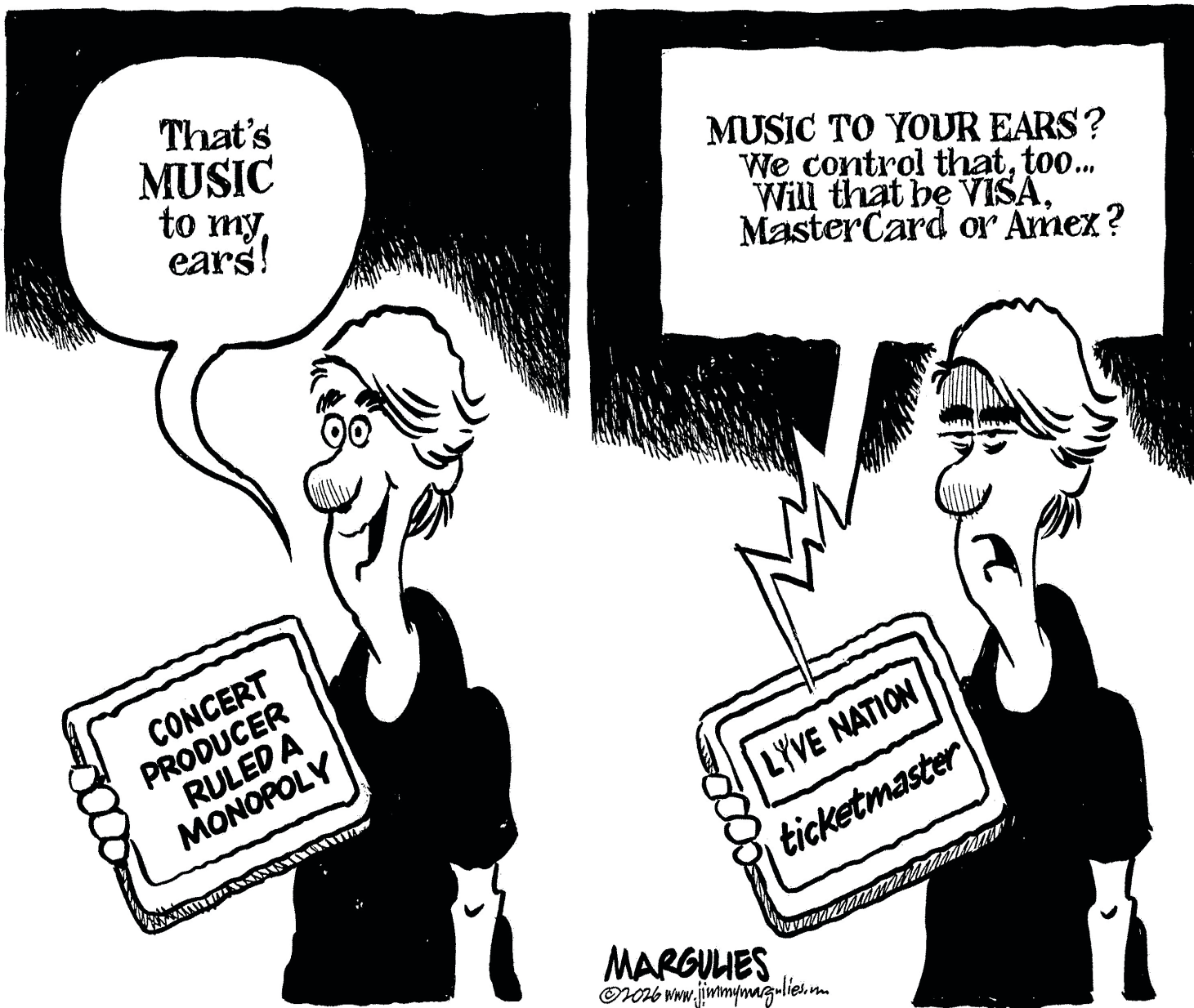


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The Hart County News-Herald

OPINION

APRIL 30, 2026



INDICTED

CONTINUED FROM PAGE A1

Road, Horse Cave, operating a motor vehicle under the influence or intoxicants (fourth offense, aggravating circumstances), operating motor vehicle while license is revoked/suspended for driving under the influence (first offense, aggravated), possession of an open alcoholic beverage container in a motor vehicle, failure to wear a seat belt;

Christopher Stallions, 50, 1019 Willowbank Drive, Ashland City, Tennessee, possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine), promoting contraband (first degree);

Michael Daughtery, 62, 22 L.C. Mansfield Road, Munfordville, possession of a handgun by a convicted felon;

Deviny Delano, 28, 111 Cherokee Drive, Cynthiana, possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine), wanton endangerment (first degree), assault (fourth degree, no visible injury), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess);

Daniel Deavers, 56, 941 J.L. Thomas Road, Bonnieville, possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine, second offense, complicity), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess, complicity), possession of marijuana (complicity);

Joni Hawkins, 48, 2684 Flint Ridge Road, Horse Cave, trafficking in a controlled substance (first degree, two grams or more methamphetamine, complicity), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess, complicity);

Danny Hodges, 67, 1154 Main Street, Munfordville, possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine, complicity), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess, complicity), possession of marijuana (complicity);

Brandon Woodard, 44, 2684 Flint Ridge Road, Horse Cave, trafficking in a controlled substance (first degree, two grams or more methamphetamine, subsequent offender, complicity), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess, complicity), persistent felony offender (first degree);

David Mercer, 47, 850 N. West Street, Munfordville, possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine, third or greater offense), possession of a controlled substance (first degree, hydrocodone, third degree or greater offense), drug paraphernalia (buy/possess);

John Isaacs, 18, 67 Graham Road, Munfordville, assault (second degree);

Brandon Wease, 43, 5086 Saint John Road, Elizabethtown, fleeing or evading police (first degree, motor vehicle), possession of a handgun by a convicted felon, tampering with physical evidence, wanton endangerment (first degree, police officer), criminal mischief (first degree), possession of a controlled substance (first degree, methamphetamine, third or greater offense), operating a motor vehicle under the influence of alcohol/drugs (first offense), reckless driving, operating a motor vehicle with operator's license revoked, suspended, canceled, or denied, drug paraphernalia (buy/possess), possession of marijuana, speeding 10 MPH over limit, failure of non-owner operator to maintain required insurance (second or greater offense), failure to produce insurance card, failure to wear a seat belt,

INDICTED CONTINUED ON PAGE A7



Representative Ryan Bivens LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Voters to decide fate of constitutional amendment

Are you in favor of limiting a Governor's ability to grant pardons or commute sentences by prohibiting him or her from granting pardons or commuting sentences during the time period beginning 60 days prior to the general election at which the Governor is elected, and ending when the Governor is sworn in for that term by amending the Constitution of Kentucky as stated below?

These words will appear on the November General Election ballot for all voters in Kentucky to decide the fate of a proposed amendment to our state's constitution. This proposal was placed on the ballot after lawmakers passed Senate Bill 10 earlier this month.

The proposal did not come out of nowhere. It follows public outcry over the more than 400 pardons and commutations issued by former Governor Matt Bevin in the final days of his term. Still, controversy over pardons is nothing new in Kentucky. In 2003, then-Governor Paul E. Patton pardoned four men facing campaign finance charges tied to the 1995 governor's race, and Governor Steve Beshear later issued more than 200 pardons of his own. In fact, they go back even farther. Kentucky's early constitutions in 1792, 1799, and 1849 all allowed governors to grant pardons but did not require any public explanation. Concerns about abuse led constitutional convention delegates to add language to the current Kentucky constitution that requires governors to put their reasons in writing and make those records available for public inspection.

Let me begin by stressing that placing

any amendment on the ballot is not necessarily an endorsement of it, but rather a reflection of its importance as an issue and the need for voters to weigh in directly. Similarly, this column is intended to inform, not to persuade either for or against its passage. In our republic, constitutional amendments are among the most significant questions citizens are asked to consider, and they deserve careful, thoughtful explanation rooted in context and clarity.

Kentucky is currently operating under its fourth constitution, adopted in 1891. That alone offers important perspective as the world of 1891 looked very different from the one Kentuckians live in today. There are other differences. For example, the U.S. Constitution is relatively short and broad, providing an outline of general principles and leaving many specifics to the legislative and judicial branches. Kentucky's Constitution is much longer and far more detailed. It includes specific rules about things like taxes, education, local offices, and even procedural requirements that the federal document leaves open. That level of detail can provide clarity and guardrails, but it also means that the document can require updates over time to remain relevant and responsive to changing conditions.

It is also important to recognize that amending Kentucky's constitution is not the same as amending the United States Constitution. At the federal level, constitutional changes are rare and require an extraordinarily high threshold. In Kentucky, the process is more accessible. Proposed amendments must pass both chambers of the General Assembly, after which

they are placed on the ballot for voters to decide.

This year, the Kentucky General Assembly approved such a proposal. Through Senate Bill 10, lawmakers voted to place a constitutional amendment before voters that would modify the governor's pardon powers.

Under the current constitution, the governor has broad authority to grant pardons and commute sentences. This authority is a longstanding feature of executive power, designed to serve as part of checks-and-balances, checking the power of the justice system. It preserves the ability to extend mercy in rare cases and offers a safeguard when the legal system does not fully account for all circumstances.

The proposed amendment would place a temporary limitation on that authority during the final portion of a governor's term. Specifically, it would prohibit a governor from issuing pardons during the 60 days leading up to a gubernatorial election and continuing through the inauguration of the next governor.

In November 2026, Kentucky voters will have the final say. Between now and then, there will be opportunities to review the language of the amendment, hear from various perspectives, and consider what the change might mean in practice.

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 Ryan.Bivens@kylegislature.gov and keep track through the Kentucky legislature's website at legislature.ky.gov.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

The Hart County News-Herald welcomes letters to the editor regarding our publications or local issues of importance. Letters should be no more than 300 words; we reserve the right to edit for clarity or length, or to reject letters that are in poor taste or libelous. Writers must include their name and a valid telephone number for verification purposes. Anonymous letters will be rejected. Send your letter by email to print@jpinews.com or marybeth@jpinews.com or mail to or drop off at any Jobe Publishing office.