

# OBITUARIES

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**Deadline for print publication:**

Wednesday publication deadlines Monday, 10 am EST  
Saturday publication deadlines Thursday, 10 am EST

## Alice C. Hopson



Alice C. Hopson passed away at home surrounded by family March 26, 2026. Alice was born August 06, 1939 to the late Carl and Lily Lambert in Sanderson, TX.

Along with her parents she is preceded in death by her loving husband of 57 years Robert Hopson and her three sisters Joanne, Cathy & Andra. Alice is survived by her five children, Carla (Charles), Carl J (Nancy), Mark (Denice), Mary (Robert) & Margaret, thirteen grandchildren, seventeen great grandchildren and 7 great great grandchildren.

Services will be held at The Tazewell Church of Christ April 04, 2026 at 2:00pm.

# Hampton bill clears path for criminal record updates

Media Release

FRANKFORT - Members of the General Assembly voted to approve HB 448. The measure, sponsored by State Representative Tony Hampton, would clarify and modernize the sharing of criminal history records for federally authorized background checks while maintaining strong privacy protections.

HB 448 would allow Kentucky criminal justice agencies to provide criminal history records information to authorized federal agencies conducting basic suitability or fitness assessments for federal or contractor employment. The bill would align state law with existing federal requirements by ensuring agencies can participate in background checks without placing additional monetary burdens on the Commonwealth.

"This bill would bring our agencies clarity and consistency and allow for cooperation," Hampton

said. "Kentucky law enforcement agencies need clear authority to respond to lawful federal background check requests, and HB 448 would provide that framework while maintaining strong safeguards for sensitive information."

Additionally, this measure would also make targeted updates to existing statutes governing juvenile records to ensure appropriate access for authorized background checks while preserving confidentiality and limiting public disclosure.

"HB 448 would ensure that Kentucky remains a reliable partner with federal agencies without compromising the privacy rights of our citizens," Hampton added. "It would be a practical update that reflects how background checks are conducted today and protects taxpayers from unnecessary costs."

The bill has been delivered to the Governor. To learn more about HB 448, visit [legislature.ky.gov](http://legislature.ky.gov).

# First Lady leads new Kentucky human trafficking task force

News Release

FRANKFORT, Ky. - First Lady Brittainy Beshear announced the formation of the Human Trafficking Awareness Coalition. Gov. Andy Beshear signed an executive order establishing the 15-member coalition, with experts in public safety, law enforcement, health care, media, government and more focused on preventing human trafficking and helping survivors. The First Lady will serve as chair.

"Human trafficking tears families apart and leaves survivors not knowing where to turn or who they can trust. As First Lady, I've made the fight against human trafficking a top priority. I want to end it - in every awful form that it takes," said the First Lady. "Through experiences like serving on the National Coalition for the Prevention of Human Sex Trafficking, I've seen firsthand that change is possible - and the more we understand trafficking, the more action we can take to help our neighbors. Through this coalition, we will increase education across Kentucky, support survivors, seek justice and deliver meaningful results."

The Human Trafficking Awareness Coalition will be composed of the following members:

- First Lady Brittainy Beshear;
- Commissioner Phillip Burnett Jr., Kentucky State Police (KSP);
- Amy Hess, executive director, Kentucky Office of Homeland Security;
- Josh Keats, senior director of security, executive protection, Churchill Downs;
- Gerina Whethers, Jefferson County commonwealth's attorney;
- Deanna Lynn, survivor leader and advocate;
- Aundrea Lewis, deputy commissioner, Kentucky Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental, and Intellectual Disabilities;
- Sheriff David James, Jefferson County Sheriff's Office;
- Corenza Townsend, chief administrative officer, Norton Healthcare;
- Kelly Jones, deputy director, Louisville Metro Emergency Services;
- Matt Gibson, president/CEO, Kentucky Derby Festival Inc.;
- Corey Krill, director of government relations, Churchill Downs;
- Jeremy Murrell, deputy commissioner, Office of Counter Exploitation, Office of the Attorney General;
- Olivia D. Olson, special agent in charge, FBI Louisville;
- Bill Lamb, WDRB media.

Ending human trafficking requires more than law enforcement efforts alone, and the Human Trafficking Awareness Coalition is a step forward in saving lives from this horrific act by raising awareness

and empowering Kentuckians with the knowledge to recognize and help stop this crime," said KSP Commissioner Burnett. "If you see something, say something - by working together we will disrupt trafficking operations and hold offenders accountable"

"I want to thank the First Lady for inviting me to be a part of the Human Trafficking Awareness Coalition," said Lynn, survivor leader and advocate. "I think there is a lot we can do in the way of educating people on coercion, fraud, grooming and all the tactics that are used before force comes into the picture. I want to use my voice to impact generations - and to tell our children that we're not just anti-trafficking, we're pro-human dignity."

The First Lady's Human Trafficking Awareness Coalition will convene at the call of the First Lady and will provide an annual report to the Governor with findings and recommendations to guide wider efforts.

The Beshear administration has made it a priority to fight these crimes and support survivors. As Attorney General, Gov. Beshear created the Office of Child Abuse and Human Trafficking Prevention and Prosecution, where a historic level of child predators were arrested during his term. Also as Attorney General, Gov. Beshear created the Survivor's Council, which provided a way for survivors of violent crime to have a voice in state government.

In 2025, Gov. Beshear signed legislation making sexual extortion a felony in Kentucky. The Governor has also awarded funding to provide survivor services, including more than \$145 million through the Victims of Crime Act and more than \$18 million through the Violence Against Women Act.



SUBMITTED ARTWORK

# Body armor donated to MPD K9s Mazi and Týr

Staff Report

Middlesboro Police Department K9s Mazi and Týr have received bullet and stab protective vests thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. Both vests were sponsored by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. and embroidered with the sentiment "This gift of protection provided by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc."

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., established in 2009, is a 501(c)(3) charity whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. This potentially lifesaving body armor for four-legged K9 officers is U.S. made, custom fitted, and National Institute of Justice (NIJ) certified. Since its inception, Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. has provided over 6,348 vests valued at \$6.9 million to K9s in all 50 states, made possible by both private and corporate donations.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Middlesboro K9 Mazi shows off the bullet and stab protective vest recently donated to the MPD by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

Middlesboro K9 Týr shows off the bullet and stab protective vest recently donated to the MPD by Vested Interest in K9s, Inc.

U.S. dogs at least 20 months old and actively employed and certified with law enforcement or related agencies. K9s with expired vests are also eligible to participate. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States.

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc., accepts tax-deductible contributions in any amount, while a single donation of \$1,050 will sponsor one vest. Each

vest has a value of \$1800.00, weighs an average of 4-5 lbs., and comes with a five-year warranty. For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call (508) 824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts donations at [www.vik9s.org](http://www.vik9s.org), or you may mail your contribution to P.O. Box 9, East Taunton, MA 02718.

# Middlesboro News

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