

GOP bill would end free tuition for older Kentuckians

BY JAMIE LUCKE
AND LIAM NIEMEYER
KENTUCKY LANTERN

FRANKFORT — For 50 years the legislature has waived tuition and fees at public universities and colleges for Kentuckians who have passed their 65th birthdays.

That would end if the chair of the House Standing Committee on Postsecondary Education has his way.

Rep. James Tipton, R-Taylorsville, is sponsoring House Bill 497 which would repeal the 1976 law that created the waiver that benefits Donovan Scholars and other students who are 65 or older.

Herman L. Donovan, a champion of lifelong learning, was president of the University of Kentucky from 1941 to 1956 and before that president of what's now Eastern Kentucky University. UK and other institutions have named the tuition benefit in his honor.

The prospect of seniors losing free access to public higher education is not sitting well with some, including Nathan Goldman, chair of the University of Louisville Donovan Scholars, a campus club. The club last week sent out an alert urging people to contact their lawmakers to oppose the bill.

Tipton in an interview last week with the Lantern emphasized that universities and colleges could still waive tuition for older students if they chose after his bill becomes law. But the committee chair questioned the value of supporting higher education for seniors: "Are they going out and getting a job? Are they contributing to the economic success of the state, and is it fair for the taxpayers of Kentucky to be paying that bill?"

'EDUCATION IS A LIFE PROCESS'
In the 1950's, University of Kentucky President, Herman L. Donovan attended a seminar with pioneering leaders in gerontology. He became a strong advocate of higher education for retired persons. "Intellectual life cannot be ignored," he said. "Education is a life process."
In 1964, on the recommendation of then UK President John Oswald, the Board of Trustees approved the Herman L. Donovan Scholarship for Senior Citizens, waiving tuition for adults 65 and older.
In the Fall of 1964, 26



University of Kentucky President Herman L. Donovan raised purebred cattle at Battlefield Stock Farm near Richmond. He also championed lifelong learning. Donovan Scholarships for Kentuckians who are 65 or older are named in his honor.

Donovan Scholars, ranging from 65 to 84 joined traditional UK students on campus for the first time. In 1967, Amanda Hicks became the first Donovan Scholar to receive a degree. In 1975, Alfred D.G. Arthurs became the first to earn a Ph.D. The program gained national attention in 1966 in a TIME magazine article, resulting in inquiries from across the nation and abroad.

In 1976, the Kentucky General Assembly expanded UK's program by mandating that residents of the commonwealth, aged 65 or older, receive a tuition waiver for academic classes at all state-supported institutions of higher learning.

"You know what? I'm 66 right now. I could go to college tuition free, but I don't think it's fair for me to do that to the taxpayers on their dime. If I want to do it, I can pay for it," Tipton said.

Goldman, the U of L student, doubts the waiver poses a hardship on taxpayers or the institutions. "If a lot of people were taking advantage of it, it might be a burden on the schools, but I don't think that's the case," Goldman told the Lantern.

Seniors can take courses for free only if there's room in the class. Universities are not required to add classes to

accommodate them. The Donovan Scholars club at UofL has "maybe 100 members," Goldman said. At the University of Kentucky, 160 Donovan Scholars are enrolled this semester, down from 185 in fall 2025 — out of a total enrollment of more than 38,000. UK and UL last week told the Lantern they are still analyzing the bill's impact.

SURVIVOR WAIVERS WOULD BECOME 'LAST-DOLLAR SCHOLARSHIPS'
Elders are far from the only group the legislature has given tuition waivers through the years. Among the eligible are children and spouses of disabled military veterans and law enforcement officers and firefighters who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty. Tipton's HB 497 requires those groups to tap available state and federal financial aid and converts their waivers to "last-dollar scholarships" that would cover tuition and fees not paid for by other sources. "The student shall complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid to determine the level of need and eligibility for state and federal financial aid programs," the bill says.

Tipton said the universities asked him to make the changes in tuition waivers for survivors and that the bill would save the institutions \$30 million a year. He said no universities asked him to end the waiver for students 65 and older but "they've seen the bill, and nobody has complained to me about it." He said that by the time the bill goes to committee he will have an estimate on possible savings from ending the waiver for people over 65.

Tipton last year successfully sponsored a bill that academics warned would erode tenure protections for professors. Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear vetoed the measure, saying it would "limit Kentucky's ability to hire the best people and threatens academic freedom." The Republican legislature overrode the veto.

'AMAZING OPPORTUNITY FOR EVERYONE'
Carrie Mott, the faculty

advisor to the UofL Donovan Scholars club, said the loss of the waiver would hurt more than just older students who could no longer afford to be students. "We're not talking about a huge number of people at any of our universities who are taking advantage of this. But for the ones who are, it's extremely important, and they have a 100% positive impact on the campus and on younger students. It's really a benefit for all of us."
She said the older students mentor younger students and take an active part in campus culture. "Having senior citizen students in the classroom with 18- to 22-year-olds is an amazing opportunity for everyone. Younger students benefit from that. ... I've got a woman in one of my classes now who's in her 70s, and she sits with kids who are about 20 and shares her life experience and knowledge as it relates to the stuff we're talking about. She's been amazing. I've seen that happen many times in my time at U of L," said Mott, an associate professor in geography and environmental sciences. She predicts that losing the waiver would force many of the older students out of higher education since many are living on fixed incomes and modest retirements. As for Tipton's assertion that people over 65 won't be contributing to the economy, Mott said, "I guess in response to that I'd say they've contributed to the economy their entire adult lives."

Agencies to be honored for animal advocacy

BY BRENT SCHANDING
THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE
Humane World for Animals is expected to present Humane Law Enforcement awards to several local agencies today for their responses in a high-profile animal torture case that's already spurring reform for cruelty cases across Kentucky. Representatives from the animal advocacy group, formerly known as the Humane Society of the U.S., are expected to recognize Radcliff Police Department, Hardin County Animal Care & Control and the Hardin County Commonwealth Attorney's Office at 3:30 p.m. today during the Hardin County Fiscal Court meeting at the county government center in Elizabethtown.

The Humane Law Enforcement awards are presented annually to law enforcement agencies across the U.S. that demonstrate exemplary work in animal cruelty cases. In November, a Hardin County court sentenced a Radcliff woman to six years for her role in the injuries and deaths of multiple dogs. The sentence was the harshest ever given in an animal cruelty case in Kentucky, and the ruling is already helping to set legal precedent for stiffer penalties for convicted animal abusers. "This case reflects the power and cost of thorough animal cruelty investigations and prosecutions," a spokesperson for Hardin County said.

Humane World for Animals helped support the case here by funding necropsies to strengthen the evidentiary record and help ensure accountability. Early reporting in the case highlighted necropsy findings as a key component of the investigation. The case could also reform state laws to shield Kentucky taxpayers from bearing the

high financial costs associated with prosecuting animal torture cases. About \$300,000 was reportedly spent to prosecute the case. "This case underscores the urgent need for cost of care legislation so that animals receive appropriate care while cases move through the courts, and so taxpayers are not left holding the bill," the spokesperson said.

**HORIZON**
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Radcliff, KY 40160
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9am-6pm

**In Towne Center**
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Elizabethtown, KY
Monday-Saturday
9am-6pm

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**LEGAL NOTICE**

MASTER COMMISSIONER SALES
To comply with the orders of the Hardin circuit court, the Commissioner will sell the property described in the following actions on **Wednesday, February 18th, 2026, at the hour of 2:00 p.m.** at the Hardin County Justice Center, 120 East Dixie Ave., Elizabethtown, Kentucky. Said property shall be sold to raise the amounts hereinafter set forth, together with interest and the costs of the action, and upon the following terms and conditions.
At the time of sale, the successful bidder shall either pay cash or check, if paying in full, or make a deposit of 10% with the balance on a credit of thirty (30) days. In the event the successful bidder desires or elects to credit the balance, he or she will be required to produce one of the following:
1. An irrevocable letter of credit (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) from lending institute at the time of the sale. Please note that a loan commitment or bank statement will not be sufficient.
2. Post bond and furnish an acceptable surety thereon. If a purchaser chooses to use a surety for the remaining balance of property purchased, **THE SURETY MUST PROVIDE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TO THE MASTER COMMISSIONER BY 2 PM THE MONDAY PRIOR TO THE SALE AND BE PRESENT AT THE TIME OF THE SALE** (if a married individual intends to act as surety, their spouse must also sign.):
(i) A COPY OF A DEED WHICH IS UNENCUMBERED AND A COPY OF THE STATEMENT OF VALUE FROM THE PROPERTY VALUATION ADMINISTRATOR (PVA OFFICE), TO WHICH THIS BOND WILL ATTACH.
(ii) A COPY OF THE CURRENT ACCOUNT STATEMENT, A SWORN FINANCIAL STATEMENT WHICH SHOWS A NET WORTH OF AT LEAST 2 1/2 TIMES THE SALE PRICE.
3. AN IRREVOABLE LETTER OF CREDIT (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) FROM THE LENDING INSTITUTE TO THE SURETY.
The down payment, in addition to either an irrevocable letter of credit (MUST HAVE THE ORIGINAL, NO COPIES) or acceptable surety (see requirements above), must be produced at the time of the sale. Said bond and/or irrevocable letter of credit shall be for the unpaid purchase price and bear interest at the rate of six percent (6%) per annum from the date of sale until paid. (Unless otherwise court ordered)
(a) The purchaser shall be required to assume and pay all taxes or assessments upon the property for the current tax year and thereafter.
(b) All properties are sold subject to the judgment and order of sale in each case which should be reviewed carefully prior to purchase. The Judgment and Order of Sale can be reviewed at the Hardin Circuit Clerk's office, 120 E. Dixie, Elizabethtown, Ky.
(c) The Master Commissioner does not obtain a title search or investigate for further liens on the properties listed below nor conduct or authorize a survey of the property. ****the purchaser is responsible for title searches and/or any additional liens not named in the judgment and order of sale and for the results of any good and accurate survey of the property.**
(d) The Master Commissioner does not have access to the properties listed below and therefore makes no representation or warranty of any kind as to the conditions of these properties.
(e) Bidding is in increments of \$500.00 up to \$75,000.00 and \$1,000.00 for over \$75,000.00. If Plaintiff provided a one-time opening bid, a first-bid increment of \$100.00 may be made.
(f) If the property sells for less than 2/3 of the Master Commissioner's appraisal amount, there is a 6 month right of redemption period.
(g) If purchasing as a Corporation, LLC, or Trusts please provide the Master Commissioner's Office by the Monday prior to the sale date with the following:
1.) An updated certificate of good standing for the entity for which they are purchasing.
2.) Entity must provide its EIN Number
3.) Resolution- Proof that the person bidding is authorized to bid on behalf of the entity.
4.) Identification: Current Driver's License and SSN

SALE NO. 1
Stock Yards Bank & Trust Company vs. Brandon L. Hall, et al (23-CI-00625)
Amount of Judgment: \$91,805.55 plus interest and costs
628 STEWART STREET, ELIZABETHTOWN, KY
MAP ID# 220-40-03-018
Recorded in Deed Book 1456 Page 1294 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

SALE NO. 2
Kentucky Housing Corporation vs. Jadon Laurel Peacock (25-CI-01836)
Amount of Judgment: \$41,176.02 plus interest and costs
1418 KINGSWOOD WAY, RADCLIFF, KY
MAP ID# 138-40-02-078.01
Recorded in Deed Book 1448 Page 934 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

SALE NO. 3
Freedom Mortgage Corporation vs. Joshua F. Shaffer (23-CI-01638)
Amount of Judgment: \$346,222.82 plus interest and costs
4582 FLINT HILL ROAD, SONORA, KY
MAP ID# 155-00-00-009.02
Recorded in Deed Book 1514 Page 1161 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

SALE NO. 4
Freedom Mortgage Corporation vs. Joseph Bungert, as Administrator of the Estate of Stephanie A. Bungert, et al (25-CI-01624)
Amount of Judgment: \$229,515.25 plus interest and costs
170 BOTTO AVENUE, ELIZABETHTOWN, KY
MAP ID# 231-40-03-029
Recorded in Deed Book 1517 Page 83 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

SALE NO. 5
Select Portfolio Servicing, Inc. vs. Emily J. Whitaker, et al (24-CI-02229)
Amount of Judgment: \$214,143.48 plus interest and costs
603 CAROLYN STREET, RADCLIFF, KY
MAP ID# 161-10-06-015
Recorded in Deed Book 1534 Page 121 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

SALE NO. 6
The Bank of New York Mellon, FKA the Bank of New York Mellon as Trustee for the Certificate holders of the CWABS, Inc., Asset-Backed Certificates, Series 2004-8 vs. Dewayne Pittman, et al (22-CI-00862)
Amount of Judgment: \$144,097.90 plus interest and costs
1250 SUNSET DRIVE, RADCLIFF, KY
MAP ID# 139-30-06-002
Recorded in Deed Book 1132 Page 032 in the Hardin County Clerk's Office

BARRY BIRDWHISTELL
MASTER COMMISSIONER
HARDIN CIRCUIT COURT
270-234-0250
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