

# Court ruling allows enforcement of sex offender law on social media

Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman announced Tuesday that a Kentucky law requiring registered child sex offenders to use their full name on social media can be enforced statewide, following a unanimous ruling from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit.

In 2024, the General Assembly unanimously passed SB 249, sponsored by Sen. Lindsey Tichenor, (R-Smithfield). Under the law, any registered sex offender in Kentucky who has committed a crime against a minor must use their full name if they choose to use social media.

An anonymous registered sex offender in Daviess County sued County Attorney John Burlew to stop enforcement of the law.

Coleman's office stepped in to defend its constitutionality in federal court.

"We're really happy about it," said Burlew about the ruling. "Although it doesn't dismiss the case outright, we believe that it does substantially weaken John Doe's case, because the

Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals vacated the injunction that Judge (Greg) Stivers put in place that would prevent me from prosecuting Mr. Doe.

"When a judge does that, it's saying that he believes that the plaintiff's case has a good likelihood of succeeding at the end, and this federal court of appeals disagreed."

Jack Heyburn, the attorney general's principal deputy solicitor general, presented the Commonwealth's case before the Sixth Circuit, arguing the law complies with the First Amendment and is a reasonable safeguard to protect Kentucky's children from online predators. Unless the plaintiff seeks review by the U.S. Supreme Court, the case now returns to the federal district court.

"We are working relentlessly to protect our kids from predators online," Coleman said. "Policy makers in the General Assembly passed a common-sense law to keep Kentucky kids safe. We successfully defended that law up to the federal court that's one level below the Supreme Court of the

United States. We will continue to fight against online predators who try to use the anonymity of the internet to harm our kids."

Burlew said that it's important laws keep pace with expanding technology.

"I think its a common-sense law, it was a needed law, and we need laws to keep up with technology — specifically in this case the internet, social media — and it filled a loophole," Burlew said. "The law doesn't say that convicted sex offenders can't get online. It doesn't say that they can't say things online that they want to say. It just says you have to have your actual name somewhere on your profile."

Burlew said it's all about protecting minors from potential predators.

"We don't want them unknowingly communicating with sex offenders," Burlew said. "I'm thankful, at least at this time, it appears that law is going to be held constitutional."

The ruling was a double win for Burlew and the attorney general. Not only is the injunction granted by Stivers vacated, but the plaintiff's cross appeal that Stivers should have certified it as a class action was also rejected.

The plaintiff now must decide how he wants to proceed with the case.

"John Doe has a choice to make, in our opinion, whether to proceed in district court — and if so, how are you going to do that since your case has sort of been substantially weakened or compromised — or are you going to try to appeal the Sixth Circuit opinion that came down. The only venue he would have to do that is the United States Supreme Court, and they, to my knowledge, out of all the cases they get asked to review, they deny about 98% of those."

"Your chances of getting granted the opportunity to have your case reviewed by the Supreme Court is not good. It's possible, but not probable."

Burlew said he remained confident throughout the process that the law was constitutional.

"Kentucky's leaders came together in a bipartisan way to protect our children online," Burlew said. "I'm grateful to Attorney General Coleman and his staff, in particular Jack Heyburn, for taking up this fight on my behalf to keep kids safe."

"I'm thankful this important law may now go into full effect."

# Former Madison mayor pleads guilty to attempted child exploitation

BY BOB DEMARREE  
PAXTON MEDIA GROUP

Former Madison Mayor Tim Armstrong entered a plea agreement on Jan. 16 in Jefferson Circuit Court pleading guilty on two counts — attempted child exploitation and official misconduct.

Dearborn Circuit Judge Frank Aaron Negangard is taking the plea agreement under advisement with sentencing scheduled for 10 a.m. on Monday, March 16.

Armstrong, a former Detective Captain with the Madison Police Department, was a School Resource Officer and high school baseball coach with Madison Consolidated Schools at the time of the incidents that led to the charges.

The charges stem from incidents with a 12-year-old victim that occurred between April 26 and May 12 of 2022 in which a sexually explicit communication was made by Armstrong.

On the charge of attempted child exploitation, a Level 5 felony, the plea agreement signed by Armstrong would sentenced him to four years incarceration with time suspended to probation. On the charge of official misconduct, a Level 6 felony, the plea agreement would sentence Armstrong to one year incarceration with all time suspended to probation. The plea agreement provides for both counts to run consecutive for an overall sentence of five years with all time suspended to probation.

By pleading guilty to child

exploitation, Armstrong will be required to register on the sexual offender registry for a period of 10 years.

Ripley County Prosecuting Attorney Rick Hertel took over prosecution of the case late last year after the original prosecutor, Jeff Chalfant of Jackson County, resigned to move away from the area.

Hertel said the victim's father had requested an opportunity to speak about the matter, which Negangard granted to occur at the sentencing hearing in March.

Armstrong originally faced 11 counts — including more serious Child Seduction, Promotion of Child Sexual Trafficking, Vicarious Sexual Gratification and Child Solicitation charges — only to plead guilty to the exploitation and official misconduct charges. Hertel said in his discussions with the victim's father, he would have liked Armstrong to have served prison time but the case came down to the evidence and "what's admissible and what's not admissible."

Armstrong served as Mayor of Madison from Jan. 1, 2008 through Dec. 31, 2011. Before and after that he had a career in law enforcement, having been a Madison police officer prior to his election as Mayor, and later serving as a school resource officer for Madison Consolidated Schools. He had also coached Madison's varsity baseball team, a role that he also previously served at Shawe Memorial, as well as several years coaching the Madison American Legion Post No. 9 baseball team.

# CHARLIE

FROM PAGE A1

and hopefully turn out a crop of experienced, confident, and polished songwriters. Program number two we are calling the Songwriter Meet-Up, and phase three goes by the title New Noise.

"The Songwriter Meet-Ups are not led by an instructor, like the Jam Shops. It's more of an open forum where folks with completed songs can come and share them with other artists to get feedback and support. Sometimes the best guidance is from other folks who are facing the same challenges and discovery process as you are. Dan Mahoney, who is a well-established songwriter and performer, under the name Jimmy Mundane, will be at the sessions to sort of moderate and keep things on track, along with myself.

"We had six musicians at the first Meet-Up, plus four people who just came to listen and offer suggestions. It feels like a very natural progression from the Jam Shops, which were more raw songwriting skills.

"The third spoke of the wheel is the New Noise performance sessions, and

these will be led by Robert Reynolds. These sessions are a sort of graduation, if you will, from the other learning and support programs. Robert will identify three to five players whose songs are well polished and ready to be shared in a more public setting. Sort of a mini concert if you will, a chance for family and friends to hear these new songs in a positive, welcoming atmosphere.

"In theory an aspiring songwriter, young or old, could progress through all three programs, first learning to write a great song at the Jam Shop, refining their songs at the Meet-Ups, and then performing their song in public with the New Noise shows.

"It's pretty exciting, and it's something you won't find in most small towns. We're very lucky to have the music culture we do here in Madison, and the talented people willing to share their time and experience to teach others."

The next Jam Shop 8-week program is scheduled for March 3, and will be run by Dan Mahoney this time. The Songwriter Meet-Ups convene the second Monday of the month at Eggleston Elementary School at 6:30 p.m. (enter building off 3rd Street and go downstairs). And the New Noise songwriter

shows will be at The Drake venue. Look for his distinctive fedora bobbing above the crowd anywhere local live music is happening.

## HOT TIP OF THE WEEK

Who's ready to get all sweaty at a rollickin' January Beach Party? That's what you'll find at Mad Paddle this Saturday when Rusty Bladen brings his unique brand of good-time warm weather music to the stage. Rusty is a veteran performer who knows how to warm things up and help us all forget the winter blues for a few hours. It will be a good one! The other show of note is what is billed as their "Last Show" at Timeless LIVE in the old Masonic Building. This very cool upper floor concert hall has been a bright light on our music scene for the past year, and we will miss them ... but you have one more chance to catch a show up there this Friday, so check it out. And finally, I want to remind everyone that this Saturday is Obscure Neil Young Night at Thomas Family Winery. This has to be about the 20th year for this quirky event, and it will be a memorable night for anyone who loves Neil and the music of the 70s. I know I'll be there!

Charlie Rohlfing is a retired advertising man and partner in The Red Bicycle Hall music

venue. Look for his distinctive fedora bobbing above the crowd anywhere local live music is happening.

## MUSIC EVENTS

**SCHEDULE**  
**Friday, Jan. 30**  
Mad Paddle Brewstillery – L&L Karaoke (8 p.m.)  
Timeless LIVE! – Rockin' Cowboyz (8 p.m.)


TailGators – DJ Scratchy Karaoke (9 p.m.-1 a.m.)  
Vintage Lanes – Jazz (7-9 p.m.)

**Saturday, Jan. 31**  
Mad Paddle Brewstillery – Rusty Bladen Beach Party with Cover Charge (8 p.m.)  
Thomas Family Winery – Obscure Neil Young (8 p.m.)  
TailGators – Band Hi

Rise (9 p.m.-1 a.m.)  
Tiki LIVE! – L&L Karaoke (9 p.m.-1 a.m.)  
The Central – Killin Smalls

**Sunday, Feb. 1**  
Vintage Lanes – Violin Pop Series with Samantha Lamkin (6-8 p.m.)

**Monday, Feb. 2**  
TailGators – Singo Bingo (7-9 p.m.)



# LEGAL NOTICE

ADVERTISEMENT FOR BIDS  
CHEMICAL BIDS 2026  
Carrollton Utilities Commission  
(Owner)

Carrollton Utilities Office  
P.O. Box 269, 900 Clay Street  
Carrollton, Kentucky 41008

Carrollton Utilities will be accepting sealed bids for **2026 Annual Chemical Requirements** for the Water, Wastewater, and Natural Gas Systems. Bids will be accepted until and opened on, 2:00 PM, Wednesday, February 25, 2026. Normal deliveries for these chemicals would be monthly or bi-monthly for each, unless otherwise noted. Please include in the bid any delivery costs, deposits, or additional charges which are applicable. **BIDS MUST BE GIVEN IN UNITS REFERENCED BELOW.**

Chemical	Annual Volumes
HFS Acid 23% (55 gal drums)	1,320 gallons
Bulk Aluminum Sulfate Liquid	810,000 lbs
25% Orthophosphate 75% Polyphosphate (330 gal totes)	1,650 gallons
Bulk Coarse LA Salt	1,000 tons
Nitra-Nox (or equivalent odor control for H2S prevention product)	8,000 gallons
12.5% Bleach (330 gal totes)	10,000 gallons
Scentinal E	1,500 gallons

For information about the above materials and quantities and for inquiries concerning the invitation to bid and submission details, please contact Frank Thieman at (502) 525-0437 or William Davis by phone at (502) 732-1215 or by email at wdavis@cuky.us  
The OWNER reserves the right to waive any informality or to reject any or all proposals. No BIDDER may withdraw his proposal within thirty (30) consecutive calendar days after the actual date of the opening thereof.  
Federal law prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, religion, age, handicap, and sex.  
Carrollton Utilities  
Terry A. Roach, P.E., General Manager



## WELCOME TO OUR Grand Opening! AND RIBBON CUTTING CELEBRATION

with Food & Giveaways at the newly open  
**Owenton Branch**  
**785 Hwy 22 East Owenton, KY**  
**January 30th, 2026 at 12:00PM**  
**502-669-8196**  
We're proud to open our newest branch  
right here in Owenton - bringing hometown  
banking, friendly faces, and financial  
solutions you can trust.

- Free Personal & Business Checking
- Personal & Business Loans
- Savings Accounts
- Digital banking solutions



### United Citizens Bank & Trust Co.

ROOTED IN SERVICE SINCE 1872

[unitedcitizensbank.com](https://www.unitedcitizensbank.com)