

Guest Editorial

2008 session: Some immediate bottom-line positives, but short on long-term progress

An Op-Ed by Dave Anderson, President and CEO, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

The just-completed session of the 2008 General Assembly did not represent Kentucky's finest hour. There is a lot of frustration across the state and a fair amount of finger pointing for chaotic nature of the session, especially in the closing hours.

Although the legislature held the line on a number of projects that would have increased Kentucky's tax burden and growth jobs, it missed important opportunities for progress in a state that is full of ground to cover in education and economic growth.

There were some immediate bottom-line positives for the state's employers - several of those falling into the "didn't pass" category:

- No corporate tax increases or sales taxes on services
- No expansion of litigation against employers
- No legislative mandates that increased workers' compensation costs

On the affirmative side of the ledger, measures winning approval will improve the math and science skills of Kentucky's middle and high school students; restore some funding for the successful Blocks for Prosperity Act that has brought top-flight researchers to our postsecondary institutions; provide the state forward in energy conservation initiatives and help Kentuckians become better health care consumers by making provider cost and quality information available online.

But there were significant disappointments and missed opportunities that threaten the long-term quality of life and prosperity of Kentucky and its citizens - both corporate and individual - by not being implemented.

- In education:**
 - No action to improve student financial aid
 - No bonding authority for universities
 - Punding cuts for K-12 programs and postsecondary institutions
- In health care:**
 - No cigarette tax increase, which would reduce smoking and provide needed revenue for education and other critical programs
 - No tax credits for employer wellness programs
 - No physical education requirement for school children
- In business development:**
 - No broad tax credits for small businesses - the source of most of the state's job creation
- In government:**
 - No public vote on expanded gaming, another potential source of funds for needed programs
 - No action on pension reform

That final failure is particularly unacceptable, given the ongoing, negative impact on the state's economy from cuts to schools, local governments, taxpayers and the state's overall cost of doing business.

How much more evidence do we need that Kentucky is on the brink of a pension crisis? Public safety is at risk as our cities, now dollars for education are being eaten up by benefit costs, and the state faces a \$26.6 billion shortfall in its pension system.

Sturdy we could do better in Kentucky. Bipartisan cooperation - the kind that actually produces results - must be viewed as a virtue for all as an equalizer on one side of the aisle. Failure to address our critical problems must no longer be an option for the state and its elected leadership.

The Carlisle Mercury

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OPINION

Veloz Viewpoints

Greetings from Nevada! I hope you are all getting a great week.

As anyone besides me noticed how many people seem to be having babies right now? I'm not sure if it has always been this way and I just haven't noticed before because I wasn't a mom and maybe I'm more aware now, but it sure seems like everywhere I turn someone is having a baby.

I have three people, fairly close to me, that I know of right now that are having babies. One of the teachers Ben works with, and two of my good friends. All three of them are due soon.

And the worst part is I look at all three of these women with disgust. Two of them being the wife of my boss, and the other being the wife of my boss's brother.

Ok, not really smack them, but I would do it if I could to help her along.

The other one is on a modified diet because of a modified list of things. She has high blood pressure, low ammonia fluid and she's on a modified list of things. She has high blood pressure, low ammonia fluid and she's on a modified list of things.

Her husband works a lot of her husband, Tommy, was not supposed to be up cooking, so therefore they end up eating dinner out a lot. I hate for them to have to do that as her husband, Tommy, was not supposed to be up cooking, so therefore they end up eating dinner out a lot.

I just gave one of her a ride to work, and she was the lady by the bus, but her husband has to leave town on business for three weeks next Monday, so she really wants to have the baby now. I told her I would do it if I could to help her along.

Until next week, make it a great one!

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Talkin' From The Mountains

When a small town Kentucky boy grows up with the rich and the famous.

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Legislative Perspective

By Representative Sammie Overton

FRANKFORT — After three and a half months of lawmaking, the 2008 Regular Session of the Kentucky General Assembly came to a close Tuesday. Dozens of bills became law in the session's final week, including a \$19 million budget for public education, some new funding for education, health care and transportation.

Lawmakers have readily admitted that the two-year budget plan is not perfect, but it will provide over \$400 million in additional funding for education programs than was proposed at the beginning of the session by the governor.

Letters to the Editor

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OPINION

Legislative Perspective

Product also received legislative support this session. Among the new laws passed to benefit this sector of Kentucky's economy are HB 484, which promotes the use of locally-grown produce and other food products by state colleges and universities.

In education, we took steps to increase the number of math and science teachers in public schools, increase the number of students taking advanced math and science courses, and increase eligibility for Kees Scholarships to keep us on track for progress at the secondary and postsecondary levels.

Change to criminal law was made during each annual session, and this session was no exception. Most notably we passed HB 211, which broadens the state's child sex abuse laws while increasing penalties for abusers.

Our Little Doll Turns 4! Happy Birthday! We Love You! Paige Kenney is 4!! Happy 1st Birthday, Paige! April 24th, 2008 We love you!

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Fourth District Report

Progress in Iraq

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4th District Report

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