

Scorecard @ Jan 6
(4/60 days)

	<u>Senate</u>	<u>House</u>
# bills filed	65	262
# resolutions filed	50	53
# bills passed 1 chamber	0	0
# billed passed both chambers	0	0
# bills into law	0	0
# bills vetoed	0	0

LRC Contact Numbers

Bill Status	877/257-5541
Mtg info	800/633-9650
Legislators msg	800/372-7181
TTY msg	800/896-0305
Spanish msg	877/287-3134
LRC web	www.lrc.ky.gov

Key Session Dates

Jan 4	Convenes
Jan 9	Gov's State of Commonwealth Address
Jan 9	Gov's Budget
Feb 17	Last day to have a new bill drafted
Feb 27	Last day to file House bills
Mar 1	Last day to file Senate bills
Mar 24&27	Concurrence days
Mar 28- Apl 7	Veto days (GA not in session)
Apl 11	Adjourn

The General Assembly began its 2006 regular session last Tuesday when it convened at noon at the Capitol Building in Frankfort. Members were sworn in and the filing of bills began. By the end of the day, 46 Senate and 202 House bills had been filed. Both the House and Senate adopted their respective rules of procedure, other housekeeping measures and adjourned quickly. Few committee meetings were held the rest of the week as members got into their session routines.

The House and Senate will again be led by different political parties. In the House, Democrats outnumber Republicans 56-44. In the Senate, Republicans currently have 21 members, Democrats have 15 and there is 1 other. One (1) senate seat is vacant (37th District, Louisville) because the state Supreme Court recently confirmed a lower court decision that Dana Seum Stevenson, the 2004 election winner, failed to meet the minimum residency requirements. Last session, the Senate ignored the court decision and seated Stevenson anyway. She has now resigned her seat and a special election has been scheduled for Feb 14 when state Rep. Perry Clark (D) will face Deborah Peden (R) for the senate seat.

Other elections will also influence the session as all 100 House members and 18 senators face re-election. Movement of major legislation and critical votes generally doesn't take place until the filing deadline is passed. So don't look for much action on major issues until after Jan 31, the last day candidates can file for office.

The mood of the GA was congenial last week – in stark contrast to past sessions. Although it may have been due to the slow pace of last week, it could also be the result of a court decision last summer that places more pressure on the GA to pass a budget on time, something it failed to do in the 2002 and 2004 sessions. In the past, the Governor would operate from a continuation budget until the GA adopted a budget. The state Supreme Court ruled, however, that the Governor could fund only the activities specifically set out in the constitution, leaving much of current state government activities unfunded and “shut down”. Even though a budget surplus of up to \$400 million this fiscal year is projected, heated budget battles are expected later in the session as previously under-funded programs as well as new or expanding programs battle for budget dollars. At the end of the session, however, a budget is expected to be passed on time.

Governor Fletcher will give his State of the Commonwealth address tonight to highlight his accomplishments and visions for the future. He is expected to focus on the financial condition of the administration. Legislators also expect to learn the Governor's legislative goals for the session. The Governor's budget proposals will be made on Jan 17.

Senate Leadership

President – David Williams (R-Burkesville)

President Pro Tem – Katie Kratz Stine (R-Ft. Thomas)

Republicans: Floor Leader - Dan Kelly (R-Springfield), Caucus Chair - Richie Sanders (R-Franklin) & Whip - Dan Seum (R-Fairdale)

Democrats: Floor Leader - Ed Worley (D-Richmond), Caucus Chair - Johnny Ray Turner (D-Drift) & Whip - Joey Pendleton (D-Hopkinsville)

House Leadership

Speaker – Jodie Richards (D-Bowling Green)

Speaker Pro Tem – Larry Clark (D-Louisville)

Democrats: Floor Leader - Rocky Adkins (D-Sandy Hook), Caucus Chair - Bob Damron (D-Nicholasville) & Whip - Joe Barrows (D-Versailles)

Republicans: Floor Leader - Jeff Hoover (R-Jamestown), Caucus Chair - Bob DeWeese (R-Louisville) & Whip - Ken Upchurch (R-Monticello)

Telecom Issues

A major regulatory reform bill that KTA supports is expected to be filed this week in the House. *“The Emerging Technology and Consumer Choice Act of 2006* will provide needed regulatory reform that will encourage companies to continue to invest in new technologies, allow customers to obtain packages of services and ensure basic services remain affordable and dependable. *Look for Member Alerts for additional information when the bill is filed.* Member support is crucial for the passage of this bill.

SB 53 would limit E911 conversion cost recovery to Tier III CMRS providers. Currently, all CMRS carriers are eligible to receive funds from the state

wireless surcharge. The bill would also create a state grant/matching fund pool for PSAPs and fund the state 911 Coordinator office.

HB 9 is another of a long line of bills to restrict the use of mobile phones while driving. Similar bills have been filed in the last several sessions with much support. Hands-free phones would be exempt.

Ins & Outs

Attorney General Grady Stumbo recently said the PSC commissioners should be elected rather than appointed by the governor. Look for legislation to be filed soon, although similar legislation in past sessions failed to get much consideration. Gov. Fletcher has announced his opposition to the proposal.

First Lady Glenna Fletcher recently announced that more than \$1 million in private funds have been raised by the Governor’s Mansion Preservation Foundation. Fund raising had been slow earlier in the year but has recently picked up. Restoration will begin this month. It has been over 20 years since the last major restoration.

Congratulations to Joan Coleman, Vice President-Regulatory & External Affairs for BellSouth and current KTA President, on being elected to the Board of Directors of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce.

Senate Bills & Resolutions

SB 49 GIFT CARD RESTRICTIONS

(Roeding) – Would define and place restrictions of the sale of gift cards. *Exempts prepaid calling cards. [Filed 1/4, now in Senate Banking & Insurance.]*

SB 53 CMRS BOARD

(Buford) – Would clarify that prepaid calling cards are subject to the wireless E911 surcharge. Reallocates surcharge monies to fund the state 911 Office, create a fund for a direct grant or matching funds program and restrict provider cost recovery to Tier III carriers. *[Filed 1/4, now in Senate A/R.]*

SB 59 HOMELAND SECURITY

(Kelly) – Confirms a 2005 Executive Order to establish an Office of Homeland Security in the Governors office. *The CMRS Board is transferred from COT into this new office. [Filed 1/5.]*

House Bills & Resolutions

HB 9 MOBILE PHONE RESTRICTIONS

(Marcotte) – Would prohibit use of mobile phones while driving. Exempts emergency personnel & hand-free phones. *[Filed 1/3; now in House Transportation Cmte.]*

HB 48 FRANCHISE FEES/TAXES

(Rasche) – Would redefine franchise fee/taxes to exclude any in-kind cost or property "required by a franchise agreement to be incurred by a provider for a capital items for public, educational, or governmental access facilities. *[Filed 1/3; now in House Appropriations & Revenue.]*

HB 52 PSC

(Cherry) – Would expand the Executive Branch Ethics Commission (EBEC) definitions to include the PSC and its orders. *[Filed 1/3; now in House State Gov't (SG).]*

HB 74 RURAL ENHANCEMENT & DEVELOPMENT CMTE

(Denham) – Would create the Rural Enhancement & Development Cmte as a new permanent LRC sub-cmte. Part of its duties would be to review rural "infrastructure development, including telecommunications and broadband access". *[Filed 1/3; now in House SG.]*

HB 82 JOINT MUNICIPAL OPERATIONS

(Cherry) – Would allow separate municipal electric systems to jointly own and provide electric services. All related provisions in KRS 278 are maintained. *[Filed 1/3; now in House Tourism Development & Energy (TD&E).]*

HB 175 IDENTITY THEFT

(Lindsey) – Would require businesses and government agencies notify persons if a breach of security of their computerized personal information occurs. *[Filed 1/3; now in House Judiciary.]*

HB 185 SMALL BUSINESS CONTRACTS

(Farmer & Palumbo) – Would require governments to give preferences to small businesses in defined purchases and contracts. *[Filed 1/3; now in SG].*

HR 26 PSC RATE FREEZE

(Nelson) – request PSC not authorize utility rate increases in 2006. *[Filed 1/3; now in House TD&E.]*

HR 28 E-SCRAPE TASK FORCE

(Webb) – Creates legislative task force to assess recycling of e-scrap waste report by Dec 1, 2006. *[Filed 1/3; now in House Natural Resources & Environment.]*

Editors Note. This news bulletin is published weekly via email during sessions of the General Assembly for the benefit and information to KTA members and friends. Special issues and Member Alerts will also be published as needed to notify members of significant action or bills affecting members. Contact the KTA office to be added or deleted from the distribution list, or to receive it in a different medium. Each edition will also be available on the KTA web site at www.ktaoffice.org. Questions and comments should be directed to Forest M. Skaggs at 859/223-9001 or forest@ktaoffice.org.