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Governor Steve Beshear's Communications Office **Gov. Beshear signs landmark corrections reform bill into law**

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Contact Information: Kerri Richardson, Jill Midkiff 502-564-2611

Bill culmination of multi-year effort to keep Kentuckians safe while being "smart on crime"

FRANKFORT, Ky.— Governor Steve Beshear today signed into law a landmark justice reform bill designed to decrease the state's prison population, reduce incarceration costs, reduce crime and increase public safety.

"This overhaul of Kentucky's penal code is the result of a multi-year effort involving members of the executive, legislative and judicial branches," said Gov. Beshear. "Over the last three years, we've made headway with aggressive efforts to bring common sense to Kentucky's penal code, and our prison population has dropped each of the past three years. House Bill 463 helps us be tough on crime, while being smart on crime."

HB 463 is estimated to save the Commonwealth \$422 million over the next decade. The bill is the culmination of years of study and work to solve a complex problem: out-of-control corrections costs.

The bill modernizes Kentucky drug laws by reducing prison time for low-risk, non-violent drug offenders who possess small amounts of illegal drugs. It then reinvests the savings from the reduced prison costs into drug treatment opportunities for offenders who need help. The law also strengthens probation and parole laws by basing key decisions on the risk posed by offenders and improving supervision, and links offenders to appropriate community resources.

The reforms included in HB 463 offer real-world solutions to a burgeoning and costly prison population, a problem Gov. Beshear pledged to tackle early in his administration.

"Of all the problems I inherited, this is one of the most complex," Gov. Beshear said. "In early 2008, I directed Justice & Public Safety Secretary J. Michael Brown to convene the Criminal Justice Council and report back on recommendations for curbing the rising prison population. That report, and the work of subsequent work groups, provided the groundwork for much of these reforms."

"This bill takes major steps to both decrease recidivism while addressing the unique problems Kentucky faces with substance abuse in ways that absolutely enhance public safety," said Justice Secretary J. Michael Brown.

HB 463 is the product of recommendations from an unprecedented bipartisan, inter-branch task force that included legislators, the Chief Justice, officials from the Justice Cabinet, prosecutors and local officials.

The task force was aided by the guidance and expertise of the Pew Center on the States, and supported by \$200,000 from the executive branch budget.

The law addresses key issues that contribute uniquely to Kentucky's large inmate population.

"I'd like to thank Sec. Brown along with Sen. Jensen, Rep. Tilley and all the task force members who diligently worked together to bring this reformative legislation to fruition," stated Gov. Beshear. "I greatly

appreciate their continued efforts to better our corrections system and enhance overall public safety throughout our Commonwealth.”

“House Bill 463 is landmark legislation not only for the positive changes it proposes for our penal code, but also for the manner in which it became law,” said Speaker Greg Stumbo. “Anytime you can bring together as many diverse groups as this bill did, and have them agree, you’re on to something special. Rep. John Tilley and Sen. Tom Jensen did a tremendous job in getting this bill to the finish line.”

“It is the most significant and meaningful piece of legislation that I have had the privilege to work on since being elected to the state legislature,” said Sen. Tom Jensen, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. “I am pleased that the Task Force on the Penal Code and Controlled Substances is going to continue studying these issues. We have gotten off to a great start and we need to continue working to make things better where we can.”

“It is my hope that this significant effort serves an example of what we can achieve if work together,” said Rep. John Tilley, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee. “Now, we owe it to the people of Kentucky to continue working in a non-partisan way.”

“I’m pleased we’re making progress in tackling the problems facing our penal code,” Chief Justice of Kentucky John D. Minton Jr. said. “With all three branches involved in this deliberative process, I’m confident that the outcome will be positive for Kentucky.”