



October 9, 2025

Via Electronic Mail

Kentucky General Assembly
702 Capital Avenue
Annex
Frankfort, Kentucky 40601

Re: Kentucky County Judge-Executives Support Pre-K for All

Dear Senators and Representatives:

As County Judge/Executives from across the Commonwealth, we urge you to support the Pre-K for All initiative. It would expand Kentucky's voluntary publicly-funded preschool program, so that every Kentucky four-year-old has an opportunity at a strong start.

As the leaders of Kentucky's 120 counties, we know expanded preschool would save families money, boost our local economies, and be an investment in Kentucky's long-term competitiveness.

American families are struggling to pay the bills and lack of childcare is a key reason why. Pre-K for All can help ease the financial burden and boost household earnings by nearly \$9,000 dollars each year for at least six years. That's \$54,000 more dollars in the pockets of our families, cycling through our local economies, creating and maintaining jobs, and growing our counties.

We've heard it from parents, teachers, and business owners: **Pre-K works**. But right now, only 14,000 of Kentucky's 54,000 four-year-olds have access to it.

The evidence is overwhelming, and success is undeniable. Pre-K improves statewide kindergarten readiness, boosts high school graduation rates, and raises overall lifetime earnings. It saves parents money, supports working families, and fuels broader workforce participation. In a state where nearly two-thirds of counties lack sufficient childcare, **Pre-K is not just about education—it's an economic development investment that will keep Kentucky moving forward.**

The research speaks for itself:

- **Boosts Kindergarten Readiness:** Over half (53.8%) of Kentucky children are already behind their first day of kindergarten. Pre-K for All would close that gap and make sure every Kentucky kid has a firm footing to start school.
- **Expands the Workforce:** Up to 70,000 Kentuckians are unable to work because they lack childcare. Pre-K for All will let parents reenter the

workforce and take advantage of local job opportunities in our counties across Kentucky.

- **Raises Household Incomes:** A long-term study shows that families with access to Pre-K earn nearly **\$9,000 more per year** - gains that persist for years after their child completes Pre-K.
- **Delivers a 10:1 Return on Investment:** Every dollar invested in Pre-K yields ten dollars in return—from better jobs and health outcomes to reduced criminal justice costs and increased educational attainment.
- **Creates Jobs in Education:** Pre-K for All will generate demand for educators and support staff across the state, creating new careers, and helping attract talent to our counties.
- **Expands Access Across Kentucky:** With 79 of Kentucky's 120 counties having little to no childcare available, this initiative will expand access, create job opportunities, give parents a choice, attract and retain young families, and lay the foundation for academic success.

As County Judge/Executives, we are committed to leading counties where children thrive, families prosper, and business grow.

Our counties and families cannot wait. We urge the General Assembly to make expanding Pre-K access for all Kentucky four-year-olds a top priority in the 2026 Budget Session. Together we can support our working families and build our communities.

Thank you for your leadership and consideration of this urgent matter. We look forward to working with you to build a stronger, more prosperous Commonwealth.

Respectfully,

*The Undersigned County Judge/Executives of the
Commonwealth of Kentucky*

Larry Russell Bryant

Judge/Executive Larry Russell Bryant
Adair County

Orbrey Gritton

Judge/Executive Orbrey Gritton
Anderson County

Todd Cooper

Judge/Executive Todd Cooper
Ballard County

Forrest McKenzie

Judge/Executive Forrest McKenzie
Bath County

Eric Chaney

Judge/Executive Eric Chaney
Boyd County

Trille Bottom

Judge/Executive Trille Bottom
Boyle County

Tina Teegarden

Judge/Executive Tina Teegarden
Bracken County

Jeff Noble

Judge/Executive Jeff Noble
Breathitt County

Maurice Lucas

Judge/Executive Maurice Lucas
Breckinridge County

Steve Pendery

Judge/Executive Steve Pendery
Campbell County

Greg Terry

Judge/Executive Greg Terry
Carlisle County

David Wilhoite

Judge/Executive David Wilhoite
Carroll County

Brandon Burton

Judge/Executive Brandon Burton
Carter County

Tommy Harmon

Judge/Executive Tommy Harmon
Clay County

Ricky Craig

Judge/Executive Ricky Craig
Clinton County

Myron Lewis

Judge/Executive Myron Lewis
Elliott County

Mary Diane Hanna

Judge/Executive Mary Diane Hanna
Fayette County

John Sims Jr.

Judge/Executive John Sims Jr.
Fleming County

Robbie Williams

Judge/Executive Robbie Williams
Floyd County

Michael Mueller

Judge/Executive Michael Mueller
Franklin County

Jim Martin

Judge/Executive Jim Martin
Fulton County

Ryan Morris

Judge/Executive Ryan Morris
Gallatin County

Chuck Dills

Judge/Executive Chuck Dills
Grant County

Jason Marshall

Judge/Executive Jason Marshall
Harrison County

Joe Choate

Judge/Executive Joe Choate
Hart County

Scott Bates

Judge/Executive Scott Bates
Henry County

Kenny Wilson

Judge/Executive Kenny Wilson
Hickman County

Shane Gabbard

Judge/Executive Shane Gabbard
Jackson County

Queenie Averette

Judge/Executive Queenie Averette
Jefferson County

Blake Durrett

Judge/Executive Blake Durrett
LaRue County

David Westerfield

Judge/Executive David Westerfield
Laurel County

Steve Mays

Judge/Executive Steve Mays
Lee County

William Lewis

Judge/Executive William Lewis
Leslie County

Terry Adams

Judge/Executive Terry Adams
Letcher County

George Sparks

Judge/Executive George Sparks
Lewis County

Matt Wireman

Judge/Executive Matt Wireman
Magoffin County

David Daugherty

Judge/Executive David Daugherty
Marion County

Owen McNeill

Judge/Executive Owen McNeill
Mason County

Craig Clymer

Judge/Executive Craig Clymer
McCracken County

Jimmie Greene II

Judge/Executive Jimmie Greene II
McCreary County

Hector Alcala

Judge/Executive Hector Alcala
Menifee County

Larry Wilson

Judge/Executive Larry Wilson
Metcalf County

Mitchell Page

Judge/Executive Mitchell Page
Monroe County

Chris Haddix

Judge/Executive Chris Haddix
Montgomery County

Jim Gazay

Judge/Executive Jim Gazay
Morgan County

Steve Hamilton

Judge/Executive Steve Hamilton
Nicholas County

David Johnston

Judge/Executive David Johnston
Ohio County

David Voegele

Judge/Executive David Voegele
Oldham County

Zeke Little Jr.

Judge/Executive Zeke Little Jr.
Owsley County

Scott Alexander

Judge/Executive Scott Alexander
Perry County

Ray Jones II

Judge/Executive Ray Jones II
Pike County

Edward Barnes

Judge/Executive Edward Barnes
Powell County

Valerie Grigson Miley

Judge/Executive Valerie Grigson Miley
Robertson County

Howell Holbrook Jr.

Judge/Executive Howell Holbrook Jr.
Rockcastle County

Harry Clark

Judge/Executive Harry Clark
Rowan County

Randy Marcum

Judge/Executive Randy Marcum
Russell County

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Dan Ison

Judge/Executive Dan Ison
Shelby County

Barry Smith

Judge/Executive Barry Smith
Taylor County

John Ogburn Jr.

Judge/Executive John Ogburn Jr.
Trimble County

Timothy Graves

Judge/Executive Timothy Graves
Washington County

Raymond Banks

Judge/Executive Raymond Banks
Wolfe County

James Kay

Judge/Executive James Kay
Woodford County

Attachments: Letter from Boyle County Judge/Executive Trille Bottom

Letter from Magoffin County Judge/Executive Matt Wireman

Letter from Carlisle County Judge/Executive Greg Terry

Letter from Barren County Judge/Executive Jamie Bewley Byrd

Letter from Mason County Judge/Executive Owen McNeill

Mason County Fiscal Court

OWEN J. MCNEILL
JUDGE EXECUTIVE

JOHN F. ESTILL
COUNTY ATTORNEY



September 10, 2025

Dear Honorable Members of the Kentucky General Assembly,

I am writing to express the support of the Mason County Fiscal Court for the Commonwealth's vision to implement universal pre-kindergarten programs across the state of Kentucky. Early childhood education plays a critical role shaping the futures of our children and the future of our communities. In Mason County and Northeastern Kentucky, Pre-K for all would provide immeasurable benefits for not only our current generation, but all that follow.

As Judge Executive, I've witnessed firsthand the unprecedented economic growth in our county and the state of Kentucky. We need a workforce that stands ready to accept that challenge with the initial stages involving our youth. Studies have shown there are long-term effects of excluding children from early educational opportunities. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds begin school already behind their peers with universal Pre-K leveling the playing field. Universal pre-kindergarten would help close the gap and ensure that every child who enters kindergarten is ready to succeed. Successful kindergartners lead to successful high school graduates, college graduates, and ultimately, successful citizens who are better equipped to serve in our community.

Universal pre-k would also relieve much of the juggling act many new parents face today given the rising cost of childcare. Parents are struggling to balance work and family responsibilities while living on one income. With universal pre-k, both parents could enter the workforce, increase family incomes, and increase opportunities for all family members.

We urge all partners across the state to attack barriers such as funding, operational and educational space, and staffing that would enable Pre-K and empower our youth from the educational jumpstart they'd receive from this program. Mason County Fiscal Court urges you to consider the impact that universal pre-kindergarten could have on the future of the state of Kentucky. I applaud the efforts of Governor Beshear's leadership in making universal pre-k a reality for every child in Kentucky and look forward to Kentucky's bright future!

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Owen J. McNeill", written over a horizontal line.

Owen J. McNeill
Mason County Judge Executive

OJM/smb

COMMISSIONERS: JOSEPH MCKAY CHRIS O'HEARN PEGGY FRAME

221 Stanley Reed Court Street, Maysville, KY 41056
Phone: (606) 564-6706 Fax: (606) 564-7315



Magoffin County Judge/Executive
Matthew C. Wireman
P.O. Box 430
Salyersville, KY 41465
Phone 606-349-2313 Fax 606-349-2109

To the Team Kentucky Pre-K For All Advisory Committee:

As Judge/Executive of Magoffin County and someone who truly cares about education and local jobs, I want to express my strong support for Governor Andy Beshear's Pre-K for All plan. This initiative is a significant step forward for Kentucky's youngest children and will help our workforce, stabilize school funding, and promote economic growth—especially in rural regions like ours.

In Magoffin County, we know firsthand the challenges families face when early childhood education isn't accessible. Many parents are forced to stay home with their kids because of limited childcare options, which means missing out on work opportunities. According to the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, 79 out of Kentucky's 120 counties—including ours—simply don't have enough child care resources. This lack limits job opportunities and holds families back.

On top of this, schools across Kentucky are struggling financially to provide necessary services for the students who are eligible for them. Tight budgets and rising costs have made it increasingly difficult for districts to meet the needs of every child. Too often, schools are forced to stretch limited resources, leaving some kids without the vital support they need to start their education on the right foot.

Before becoming Judge/Executive, I worked as Chief Financial Officer for several school districts, so I've seen up close the positive impact early childhood programs have on rural communities—and the strain placed on schools trying to offer these services without adequate funding. Free pre-K for all doesn't just prepare kids for school and help parents return to work—it also ensures that every child receives the support they deserve while removing a major financial burden off local school districts. With universal funding, schools won't have to scramble to serve only those who qualify; instead, every child benefits, and districts can focus on high-quality education rather than eligibility rules and budget shortfalls.

This program isn't just another policy; it reflects exactly what we want for Magoffin County—supporting working families, empowering our schools, and building a resilient local economy.

I applaud Governor Beshear for championing Pre-K for All, and I hope everyone in Kentucky, especially those concerned with education and the economy, will support this effort. Investing in our youngest learners helps everyone—students, families, schools, and communities—now and far into the future.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Matthew C. Wireman, written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned above the printed name and title.

Matthew C. Wireman
Magoffin County Judge/Executive



BOYLE COUNTY FISCAL COURT

321 West Main Street, Courthouse Room 111, Danville, KY 40422

Phone (859) 238-1100 Fax (859) 238-1108

email: trille.bottom@boyleky.com

Pre K 4 All Task Force
Advisory Committee

July 29, 2025

Dear Committee Chair and Members,

I am writing this letter of endorsement for the Governor's Plan for Pre K 4 All. This plan gives 4-year-olds the opportunity to attend preschool if their parents choose to send them. In today's world of chaos, kids need more one on one attention to help facilitate early learning skills. I have 2 grown sons; the oldest attended a structured day care center and the youngest attended public pre-school. No two children are alike or learn at the same capacity so while my oldest son performed extremely well just from a daycare setting, my youngest son needed that extra personal attention and direction for early learning. Every child should have the same opportunity to learn in a classroom setting.

I fully endorse the Governor's plan and hope that you will too! Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Trille L. Bottom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Trille L. Bottom
Boyle County Judge Executive



Carlisle County Fiscal Court

Greg Terry, County Judge Executive

985 US 62 • P.O. Box 279 • Bardwell, KY 42023

Phone: (270) 628-5451 • Fax: (270) 628-0190 • Cell: (270) 445-0051

Email: judge@ccfcky.com

July 30, 2025

Pre-K for All Advisory Committee,

As Carlisle County Judge Executive, I am honored to be able to support the preschool for all initiative for the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Early childhood is a critical period for brain development. Studies have shown that children who attend high-quality preschool enter kindergarten better prepared and have stronger language, math and social skills. But, the sad reality is that not every child has access to this head start, often because of cost, location or lack of availability. This initiative has the power to transform lives and strengthen our society as a whole.

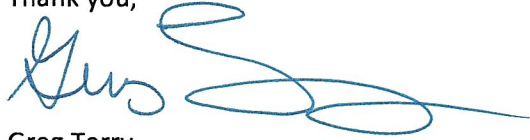
Carlisle County is a small, rural community, with a very small tax base—less than 5,000 in population. Carlisle County falls short on childcare and education before school age. I won't be shy in admitting that we do not have funding to support these children on our own but I also know that in Carlisle County, we have high expectations for high-quality child-care and education. This initiative could and would change that. It would ensure that every child in Kentucky, regardless of income or background, gets a fair chance at success from the very beginning. This isn't just an investment in our children; it is an investment in our future workforce, our economy and our communities.

For Kentucky, this investment is not just beneficial, its essential for competitiveness. Our state currently ranks low in several key economic indicators compared to neighboring states, including a 41st ranking in income. Furthermore, Kentucky lags behind the national average of 62.6% in the labor force participation rate. A recent Kentucky Chamber Report stated that between 40 and 70,000 Kentuckians would rejoin the workforce but would need access to childcare options for their families. With universal preschool, more parents – especially mothers – can enter or re-renter the workforce earlier, contributing to economic productivity. This initiative is a key to economic prosperity and opportunity for our families and economic development for our communities.

Let's consider the immediate economic impact this initiative would have. 4 year old preschool programs have been shown to lead to a 1.2% rise in labor force participation and a 1.5% increase in overall

employment, which results in higher total earnings. Let's get ahead, Kentucky. This isn't just the right thing to do; it's the smart thing to do in moving forward and bettering Kentucky.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Terry', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Greg Terry
Carlisle County Judge Executive



Barren County Judge/Executive

Jamie Bewley Byrd

117 North Public Square - Suite 3A
Glasgow, Kentucky 42141

Telephone 270/651-3338
Fax 270/651-2844

October 1, 2025

Dear Senators and Representatives,

As the Judge/Executive of Barren County, I write to express my full support for the Pre-K for All initiative. Expanding access to high-quality preschool is not only an investment in our children — it is a strategic decision that strengthens our workforce, grows our local economy, and gives every Kentucky child a chance to succeed. Across Barren County, I hear from working parents, educators, and employers about the ongoing struggle to find affordable, reliable childcare. For many families, the lack of access to early learning opportunities is keeping parents out of the workforce entirely. By making Pre-K available to all four-year-olds — including those who currently do not qualify — we can remove one of the largest barriers to employment and put thousands of Kentuckians back to work.

If we are serious about expanding Pre-K access, we must also take a hard look at where our resources are going. The growing cost of state-level administration in Frankfort is drawing critical funds away from local communities — funds that could and should be used to support programs like Pre-K for All. Reducing bureaucratic overhead and streamlining government operations would allow us to redirect more dollars to the front lines: our classrooms, families, and children. In addition, school districts across the Commonwealth are being burdened by unfunded mandates and restrictive policies that limit their ability to serve students effectively. Local educators and administrators know their communities best. They should be given more flexibility — not more paperwork — to implement Pre-K programs that meet local needs. Without changes, local school districts are left to absorb increasing costs without the support they deserve.

While many ongoing capital projects and initiatives are well-intentioned, they often fall short of the long-term economic and educational benefits provided by early childhood education. Redirecting even a portion of these funds toward early learning programs would generate meaningful, statewide impact for every county in Kentucky. This could be achieved by reducing allocations to central administrative functions within the Department of Education and instead directing more funding directly to local school districts, where it can be used more effectively to support early learning initiatives.

I urge you to prioritize this initiative in the upcoming 2026 Budget Session and to pursue policies that cut waste, reduce restrictions, and empower communities to do what's best for their children. Let's make smart, forward-thinking choices that support Kentucky families and strengthen the foundation of our future.

Respectfully,

Jamie Bewley Byrd
Barren County Judge/Executive