

COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

2027 REGULAR SESSION

HOUSE BILL NO. \_\_\_\_

## **THE NORTHERN KENTUCKY SHIELD ACT**

**A Commonwealth Mandate to Shield Families, Restore Public Safety,  
Strengthen Economic Vitality, and Reaffirm Accountable Governance  
Along the I-75/I-71 Corridor**

### **A BILL**

To establish a coordinated Northern Kentucky public safety, infrastructure, education, recovery, first responder, and economic resilience framework for Boone, Kenton, Campbell, and surrounding Counties; to strengthen lawful interdiction of fentanyl trafficking, human trafficking, labor exploitation, and organized criminal activity; to support schools, first responders, recovery services, small businesses, and corridor infrastructure; to prohibit mass surveillance of law-abiding citizens; to provide fiscal controls, audits, reporting, and budgetary limitations; to make an appropriation there for, and to declare an emergency.

Sponsored by:

**SETH WINSLOW YOUNG**

Candidate for Kentucky House of Representatives

District 63 - Boone and Kenton Counties

Villa Hills, Kentucky

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**FORTITUDINE VINCIMUS**

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY**

**2027 Regular Session**

**HOUSE BILL NO. \_\_\_\_**

AN ACT relating to public safety, anti-human trafficking and fentanyl interdiction along the I-75/I-71 corridor, infrastructure and economic connectivity investments, protection of education funding and teacher support, strengthening of law enforcement, first responders, and recovery services, small business relief, homeownership, and family protections; making appropriations therefor from existing opioid settlement funds (consistent with allowable abatement uses under KRS 15.291 et seq.), federal grants, civil asset forfeitures under KRS 529.150, Road Fund surpluses and efficiencies, and budgetary reallocations; supplementing and building upon the provisions of KRS Chapter 529 and the Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force; and declaring an emergency.

Sponsored by:

**SETH WINSLOW YOUNG**

Candidate for Kentucky House of Representatives

District 63 - Boone and Kenton Counties

Villa Hills, Kentucky

**BILL DESCRIPTION**

The Northern Kentucky Shield Act is a comprehensive public safety, infrastructure, education, recovery, first responder, and economic resilience proposal designed to address the urgent challenges facing Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties along the Interstate 75 and Interstate 71 corridor.

The Act establishes a coordinated regional framework to strengthen lawful interdiction of fentanyl trafficking, human trafficking, labor exploitation, organized criminal activity, and related public safety threats. It creates the Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force within the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet as a targeted, intelligence-led, victim-centered, and constitutionally restrained regional effort that supplements existing state and local operations rather than duplicating them.

The Act also invests in the broader conditions that make communities safer and stronger. It provides for corridor infrastructure and connectivity improvements, education stability and teacher support, law enforcement and first responder resources, recovery and treatment services, small business support, homeownership opportunity, and local economic circulation.

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The Act is designed with strict fiscal and constitutional guardrails. It imposes no new taxes or fees. It requires lawful use of restricted funds, including opioid settlement funds only for authorized opioid-abatement purposes and Road Fund monies only for constitutionally permitted transportation purposes. It requires certification by the Office of State Budget Director before disbursement, quarterly reporting to the Legislative Research Commission, independent audits, civil liberties and privacy compliance, performance benchmarks, automatic accountability triggers, and sunset review.

The Northern Kentucky Shield Act is built upon a simple governing principle: Kentucky families must be protected without surrendering their freedoms, and public safety must be restored without creating a surveillance state. It is a shield for families, a support for first responders and educators, a pathway for recovery, and a framework for accountable government along one of the Commonwealth's most important corridors.

### **STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY**

The Northern Kentucky Shield Act is founded upon the enduring truth that the strength of the Commonwealth is measured by the safety of its communities, the stability of its families, the dignity of honest work, and the trust between the people and those who govern.

The government exists to secure the conditions under which free men and women may live without fear, labor with purpose, raise families with confidence, and pass on a stronger Kentucky. When safety is compromised by fentanyl, human trafficking, and labor exploitation along the I-75/I-71 corridor, the obligation to act becomes a duty.

This Act delivers targeted, responsible, optimized action: shielding Northern Kentucky families through intelligence-led interdiction that supplements existing statutes for optimized, noninvasive results, restoring economic connectivity, protecting educational excellence, and supporting recovery, all without new taxes, mass surveillance, or infringement on law-abiding citizens. It puts Kentucky First and America First by restoring the covenant between the people and Almighty God under His Divine providence, constituting a continued effort in prioritizing stewardship amongst our legislators and law enforcement, in the task of actively protecting the peace, order, safety, and welfare of the Commonwealth.

The authority for this Act rests in the inherent police powers of the Commonwealth and in the solemn duty of the General Assembly to protect life, liberty, property, public safety, public order, and the general welfare of the people of Kentucky. Government is not established to watch the innocent, burden the lawful, or expand itself without restraint, but to punish evil, defend the vulnerable, secure justice, and preserve the conditions under which free citizens may flourish.

This Act therefore proceeds from a simple principle: Kentucky can be strong without being reckless, vigilant without becoming invasive, compassionate without becoming weak, and

fiscally responsible without becoming passive. It recognizes that the fentanyl crisis, human trafficking, labor exploitation, public safety failures, economic instability, school strain, infrastructure pressure, and the erosion of public trust are not separate problems, but connected wounds along the same civic body.

Accordingly, the Northern Kentucky Shield Act establishes a lawful, limited, and accountable framework for action along the I-75/I-71 corridor and throughout the affected counties of Northern Kentucky. It seeks to strengthen coordination among law enforcement, first responders, schools, recovery services, local governments, and community partners while preserving constitutional liberties, protecting lawful citizens from mass surveillance, and ensuring that public funds are directed toward measurable results rather than bureaucratic expansion.

The purpose of this Act is not to create a larger government, but a more faithful one; not to replace local judgment, but to equip it; not to surrender Northern Kentucky to disorder, addiction, trafficking, or decline, but to restore confidence that the Commonwealth still possesses the courage to defend its people.

For these reasons, this Act is declared necessary for the immediate preservation of public peace, health, safety, economic stability, and good order in the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

### **A PRAYER FOR THE COMMONWEALTH**

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, King of kings and Lord of lords, Who hast established all authority in heaven and on earth, look down with mercy upon the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Grant unto our leaders wisdom and courage to govern justly according to Thy holy will; strengthen our first responders and law enforcement with Thy divine protection as they stand against the forces of darkness; shield our families and children from every evil and threat along the corridors of our land; and restore hope to the oppressed, the trafficked, and the addicted.

Through the intercessions of Thy Most Pure Mother, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and of all Thy saints who have shone forth in this land, preserve us in peace and righteousness. Guide this work not by human ambition but by Thy truth, that we may ever glorify Thee, together with Thine Eternal Father and the All-Holy, Good, and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Amen.

## FOREWORD

*(by Seth Winslow Young, Candidate for Kentucky House District 63)*

As Candidate for Kentucky House of Representatives District 63, I present the Northern Kentucky Shield Act, developed and prepared from numerous conversations with families, first responders, educators, small business owners, victims as well as survivors throughout Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties, and informed by research-backed coordination with existing statutes under KRS Chapter 529, the Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, and the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force.

In 2026, the people of Northern Kentucky expressed their sentiments towards this issue clearly: overwhelmingly constituents across the board supported continued efforts of interdiction, and the rule of law taking precedence. As such, many believe these efforts to be effective, but not enough.

Therefore, in the interest of the constituents residing in House District 63, as well as in Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties, and throughout our Commonwealth, our efforts should standardize and enshrine for the protection, eradication, and shielding of our Kentucky families from fentanyl and other illicit narcotics, trafficking, and local prostitution rings present along the I-75/I-71 corridor. Additionally, this Act includes initiatives to strengthen infrastructure, incentivize business and economic development and opportunity for both entrepreneurs and small businesses. Furthermore, this Act acknowledges the necessity to protect school excellence, and ensure that working families keep more of what they earn.

This Act delivers measurable, optimized progress through focused, interconnected components, funded entirely from existing, allowable sources with built-in accountability mechanisms. Therefore, no new taxes, or cuts to essential services shall be required, nor shall infringements upon law-abiding citizens be necessary or tolerated in order to achieve this goal. Instead, this Act builds from existing law, strengthens existing efforts, and brings coordination, discipline, and measurable execution, which optimizes existing efforts to produce the best results, and effectiveness to the work already before us.

This Act is designed to restore the proper balance of government action: strong enough to confront real threats, restrained enough to preserve the liberties of the people, and accountable enough to justify the public trust placed in it. Public safety must be pursued with seriousness, but not through mass surveillance or the casual expansion of state power. Traffickers, fentanyl distributors, and those who exploit the vulnerable must be met with firm and lawful force, while the rights of law-abiding Kentuckians remain fully protected.

The issues addressed by this Act are not isolated from one another. Fentanyl, human trafficking, labor exploitation, strained infrastructure, exhausted first responders, classroom pressures, weakened small businesses, and families losing confidence in the future all place weight upon the same Commonwealth. When one part of our public life is neglected, the

burden is carried by families, schools, churches, local businesses, law enforcement, and communities alike.

The Northern Kentucky Shield Act recognizes this reality and responds with a coordinated plan rooted in law, fiscal responsibility, constitutional restraint, and measurable results. It does not seek new taxes. It does not weaken essential services. It does not treat the people as subjects to be monitored, but as citizens to be protected, served, and respected.

This is a real and achievable proposal to restore safety, strengthen public confidence, support those who serve, and preserve the future of the Commonwealth we love. I respectfully submit the Northern Kentucky Shield Act for consideration and ask for your support.

This is a real, achievable plan to restore safety, prosperity, and confidence in the Commonwealth we love. I respectfully submit it for consideration and ask for your support.

Respectfully submitted,

**SETH WINSLOW YOUNG**

*Candidate for Kentucky House of Representatives*

District 63 — Boone and Kenton Counties

Villa Hills, Kentucky

## **A BILL**

To establish a coordinated Northern Kentucky public safety, infrastructure, education, recovery, first responder, and economic resilience framework along the I-75/I-71 corridor and surrounding region; to strengthen lawful interdiction of fentanyl and narcotics trafficking, human trafficking, labor exploitation, and organized criminal activity; to support and protect schools, first responders, recovery services, small businesses, homeownership, and corridor infrastructure; to prohibit mass surveillance and protect constitutional liberties; to provide and audit fiscal controls, reporting, auditing, and budget limitations; to make an appropriation therefore; and to declare an emergency.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

## **PREAMBLE**

**WHEREAS**, the I-75 and I-71 corridor through Northern Kentucky (Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties) has been identified as a primary route for fentanyl distribution, human trafficking, and labor exploitation, with Kentucky ranking in the top 10 states for human trafficking reports per the 2024 Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Data Report, directly endangering families and communities in the Commonwealth; and

**WHEREAS**, the Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force (established 2013) and the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force provide foundational multi-disciplinary, victim-centered efforts under KRS Chapter 529 that this Act supplements and coordinates with, without duplication, thereby advancing intelligence-led, trauma-informed, and accountable responses; and

**WHEREAS**, Northern Kentucky serves as the economic gateway to the Commonwealth, requiring targeted congestion relief, broadband expansion, environmental maintenance, and public-private partnerships along the corridor to drive local growth while supporting interdiction; and

**WHEREAS**, educational excellence and teacher retention in the region must be protected while accelerating tax relief for working families; and

**WHEREAS**, existing opioid settlement funds (Kentucky's share exceeding \$900 million–\$1 billion over 18 years, with substantial unallocated balances remaining after the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission's April 2026 award of nearly \$34 million and cumulative awards exceeding \$100 million) along with federal grants, civil asset forfeitures, Road Fund surpluses/efficiencies, and budgetary reallocations provide dedicated, sufficient resources without new taxes or fees; and

**WHEREAS**, immediate action is required to protect public safety along this critical corridor, consistent with the historic duty of government to secure ordered liberty and the safety of its people;

Now, therefore, Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

### **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE**

This Act shall be known and may be cited as the “Northern Kentucky Shield Act.”

### **SECTION 2. DEFINITIONS**

As used in this Act:

- (1) “Corridor” means the portions of Interstates 75 and 71, including interchanges, rest areas, and immediate access roads, within Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties.
- (2) “Northern Kentucky” means Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties.
- (3) “Opioid settlement funds” means monies received by the Commonwealth pursuant to opioid litigation settlements, administered through the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission under KRS 15.291 et seq.
- (4) “Task Force” means the Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force established in Section 3 of this Act.
- (5) “Statewide Task Force” means the Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force.

### **SECTION 3. NORTHERN KENTUCKY SHIELD TASK FORCE**

The Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force is established for public safety, anti-trafficking, fentanyl interdiction, victim referral, and corridor coordination purposes.

- (1) There is hereby established the Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force within the Justice and Public Safety Cabinet as a regional, multi-disciplinary component that shall coordinate with, supplement, and not duplicate the Statewide Task Force and the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force.
- (2) The Task Force shall focus intelligence-led, targeted, probable-cause-based operations exclusively on the I-75/I-71 corridor using data-driven hot-spot analysis and trauma-informed protocols consistent with the 2024 Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Data Report.
- (3) Composition shall include representatives from local law enforcement (Boone, Kenton, Campbell), Kentucky State Police, prosecutors, victim services providers, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, federal partners (FBI/HSI), Ohio authorities, survivor-informed advocates, and at least one survivor representative.
- (4) Duties include:

- (a) Targeted interdiction of fentanyl, human trafficking (KRS 529.100), and labor trafficking through enhanced patrols, K-9 units, drug-detection technology, digital/financial intelligence, and interstate coordination;
- (b) Development of voluntary training and awareness programs for corridor businesses, hotels, truck stops, and employers (incentivized through compliance assistance grants, not mandates);
- (c) Mandatory referral of identified victims to comprehensive services under the Statewide Task Force framework and KRS 529.140;
- (d) A voluntary E-Verify compliance assistance program for corridor employers, including training and technical support.
- (5) Within ninety (90) days of enactment, the Task Force shall develop and submit a strategic plan to the Legislative Research Commission outlining operations, privacy protocols, and measurable performance benchmarks.
- (6) There is appropriated \$150,000,000 for the 2026-2028 biennium from opioid settlement funds (for fentanyl-related abatement), federal grants (OJP/BJA anti-trafficking), and civil asset forfeiture proceeds (redirected under KRS 529.150) to fund the above, subject to prior certification of availability and allowable use by the Office of State Budget Director and the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission. All forfeited assets seized in corridor operations under KRS 529.150 shall be redirected to the Task Force and victim services under KRS 529.140.
- (7) The Task Force shall submit quarterly performance reports to the Legislative Research Commission, including specific KPIs (victims identified/rescued, interdictions, convictions, overdose reductions in the corridor, and economic impact). Failure to meet annual benchmarks (e.g., fifteen percent (15%) reduction in documented corridor incidents) shall trigger automatic ten percent (10%) reversion of unspent funds to the General Fund.

#### **SECTION 4. NORTHERN KENTUCKY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY**

- (1) There is established the Northern Kentucky Infrastructure and Connectivity Fund.
- (2) There is appropriated \$300,000,000 for the biennium from Road Fund surpluses and efficiencies, federal infrastructure matching funds (supplementing the 2026-2028 Highway Plan and Brent Spence Bridge Corridor projects), to:
  - (a) Accelerate targeted congestion relief, safety improvements, truck parking expansions, and litter abatement on the I-75/I-71 corridor;
  - (b) Expand broadband access in exurban and rural areas of Boone and Kenton Counties;
  - (c) Seed public-private partnerships for riverfront amenities benefiting local small businesses.

(3) No new taxes shall be levied. Funds shall supplement existing transportation plans and support interdiction visibility (e.g., better-lit rest areas).

## **SECTION 5. PROTECTION OF EDUCATION FUNDING AND TEACHER SUPPORT**

(1) The Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) formula shall be held harmless from any revenue reductions resulting from income tax relief or efficiencies under this Act.

(2) There is appropriated \$200,000,000 for the biennium from General Fund efficiencies to:

(a) Provide retention bonuses and professional development for teachers in Boone, Kenton, and surrounding counties;

(b) Expand career and technical education programs aligned with corridor workforce needs;

(c) Address classroom resource needs.

(3) Funding shall supplement, not supplant, existing appropriations.

## **SECTION 6. STRENGTHENING LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND RECOVERY**

(1) There is appropriated \$125,000,000 for the biennium from asset forfeitures, federal justice grants, and efficiencies to expand school resource officers, modernize emergency communications, provide mental health support for first responders, and equip for fentanyl exposure prevention.

(2) There is appropriated \$225,000,000 for the biennium from opioid settlement funds and federal grants to establish the Northern Kentucky Recovery and Renewal Initiative, expanding treatment, recovery housing, prevention, employment-linked reentry, and survivor services (consistent with KRS 15.291 abatement priorities). Repeat trafficking offenders shall be ineligible for diversion programs.

## **SECTION 7. SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF, HOMEOWNERSHIP, AND ECONOMIC CIRCULATION**

(1) Revenues generated or efficiencies achieved under this Act shall support acceleration of personal income tax reductions, expanded tax credits for locally owned small businesses in the corridor, first-time homebuyer assistance, and zoning flexibility for attainable housing.

(2) No local government receiving funds under this Act may impose new regulations materially increasing housing or business costs.

## **SECTION 8. PROTECTION OF FAMILIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES**

(1) No funds appropriated under this Act shall be used for mass surveillance, warrantless data collection, or to infringe upon the free exercise of religion, parental rights, lawful speech,

assembly, or due process protections. All enforcement shall require probable cause and comply with constitutional standards.

(2) Programs shall prioritize community-based, locally governed partnerships. The Task Force shall include annual civil liberties and privacy compliance certification and independent audit filed with the Legislative Research Commission.

## **SECTION 9. FUNDING PRINCIPLES AND LIMITATIONS**

All appropriations shall be funded exclusively through:

- (1) Existing opioid settlement receipts (prioritized for recovery and fentanyl abatement consistent with KRS 15.291);
- (2) Federal grants and matching funds;
- (3) Civil asset forfeitures from trafficking and fentanyl offenses under KRS 529.150;
- (4) Road Fund surpluses and efficiencies; and
- (5) Budgetary efficiencies identified and certified by the Office of State Budget Director prior to any disbursement.

No new taxes or fees shall be imposed. Unexpended balances shall revert to the General Fund for future tax relief or abatement priorities.

## **SECTION 10. LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS ON URGENCY AND EMERGENCY CLAUSE**

Whereas public safety conditions along the I-75/I-71 corridor require immediate action, an emergency is declared to exist, and this Act takes effect upon its passage and approval by the Governor or upon its otherwise becoming law.

## **SECTION 11. SEVERABILITY**

If any provision of this Act is held invalid, the remainder shall remain in effect.

## **SECTION 12. SUNSET AND REVIEW**

This Act shall be subject to full legislative review, independent audit, and potential reauthorization or repeal by December 31, 2028, based on Task Force performance metrics.

## APPENDIX

### APPENDIX A: FISCAL NOTE AND IMPLEMENTATION ANALYSIS (Non-codified Supporting Material)

Total Biennial Appropriation: \$1,000,000,000 (\$500M per year) – fiscally neutral short-term, revenue-positive long-term through economic growth, reduced public safety/health costs, and increased tax base.

Detailed Breakdown:

- ❖ Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force: \$150M
- ❖ Infrastructure & Economic Connectivity: \$300M
- ❖ Education Protection & Teacher Support: \$200M
- ❖ Law Enforcement, First Responders, & Recovery: \$350M (\$125M + \$225M)

Funding Sources (Verified 2026 Data):

- ❖ Opioid settlements: >\$900M–\$1B total share; substantial unallocated balances remain after >\$100M awarded (including April 2026’s nearly \$34M round).
- ❖ Federal grants, civil asset forfeitures (KRS 529.150), Road Fund surpluses/efficiencies, and General Fund reallocations.

Oversight & Accountability: Quarterly KPI reporting to Legislative Research Commission; annual independent audits; performance benchmarks (e.g., measurable reductions in corridor trafficking/incidents/overdoses per 2024 Statewide Data Report); automatic reversion triggers; sunset review by December 2028.

Projected Impact (5-Year Horizon): \$500–800M surplus through safer corridors, retained teachers, business growth, and lower long-term costs.

### LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS ON URGENCY (DATA-BACKED)

Kentucky ranks in the top 10 states for human trafficking, with the I-75/I-71 corridor documented as a major route for fentanyl, drugs, and human smuggling impacting Boone, Kenton, and Campbell Counties (2024 Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Data Report). The Northern Kentucky Bluegrass region consistently reports high case volumes. Existing opioid settlement funds remain substantially unallocated and eligible for these purposes following the April 2026 award of nearly \$34 million (with cumulative awards exceeding \$100 million); Road Fund surpluses provide additional capacity. This Act transforms Vision 27 into a comprehensive, corridor-specific shield that is effective (KPIs/metrics), optimized (coordinates with existing task forces/statutes), noninvasive (targeted/probable-cause only), fair (voluntary incentives, civil liberties audits), and properly funded/executed (certification, reversion, sunset).

## **ENHANCED FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & BUDGET BALANCING MECHANISMS**

- Certification Requirement: The State Budget Director and Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission must certify source availability and allowable use (KRS 15.291) before any disbursement.
- Reversion & Accountability: Unspent funds or unmet benchmarks revert automatically; annual independent audits required.
- No Supplantation: All appropriations supplement existing budgets.
- Long-Term Revenue Positive: Safer corridors and economic multipliers project a surplus within 5 years.

This legislative package: bill text, fiscal note, and supporting materials—is complete, research-verified, and ready for introduction, committee review, and floor consideration in the 2026 Regular Session. It honors the solemn duty of governance while delivering tangible protection and renewal for the people of Northern Kentucky and the Commonwealth.

Prepared and Sponsored by:

**Seth Winslow Young**

Candidate for Kentucky Representative

House District 63- Boone and Kenton Counties

Villa Hills, Kentucky

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