



April 2026

PATH EDUCATION

The 2026 Kentucky Legislative Session has come to a close. One of the most talked about bills, House Bill 4(HB4) Grooming, was signed into law by Gov. Andy Beshear on April 10, 2026 with emergency 4 provision, meaning it will go into effect immediately and not have the traditional 90 day waiting period after the session ends.

HB4's primary sponsor, Rep Marianne Proctor (R) commented on the bill during a March 2026 committee meeting. "We've got an increasing problem across our commonwealth ... one in 10 children are sexually abused, and those are the ones that we know about. Grooming is the intentional, manipulative and deceptive process where a predator developed a relationship with a child to prepare them for future acts of sexual abuse. What this bill seeks to do is to stop that behavior before it progresses to sexual assault."

Under HB4 adults who groom a minor for sex can be criminally charged. Groomers face a Class A misdemeanor charge unless the minor is younger than 12 years old, in which case it is a Class D felony. For perpetrators in trusted positions, grooming a minor is a Class D felony unless the minor is younger than 12, in which case it is a Class C felony. Until now, law enforcement had to wait to charge groomers until they have specifically solicited or assaulted a child.

With passage of this bill, Kentucky becomes one of 18 states which passed laws that legally **define or criminalize** grooming as the process of manipulating a child for sexual abuse, giving local law enforcement the ability to intervene in potential child sexual abuse cases earlier.

Read the full bill [here](#).



It's Derby Time! While the greatest two minutes in sports is quickly approaching, the increased media presence around human trafficking at major sporting events is also intensified.

While the media presence is appreciated by those working in the anti trafficking fields, we need to remember that trafficking occurs year round and in all socio-economic categories.

PATH interim chair, Dr. Theresa Hayden, has spent her academic career teaching in criminal justice and social work departments focused on researching trafficking and generational family violence. With Derby upon us, it's always good to remember that if we see something, we need to say something anytime of the year.

Dr. Hayden's 2014 research of Backpage ads revealed that the most high demand time for trafficking in Louisville was actually during the NCAA tournament regional games. So while a high profile sporting event, it certainly did not bring in the numbers of people visiting Louisville that Derby does. Another good reminder that it is happening right here all the time. It doesn't go away because Derby is over.

If you are interested in reading Dr. Hayden's full research, read it [here](#).

A recap of the 2026 media coverage of trafficking around Derby has survivor stories, general information on what to watch out for and information from First Lady Britany Beshear on her human trafficking coalition.

[Survivor Story WBIR](#)

[Survivor Story WLKY](#)

[Human Trafficking Spectrum News](#)

[Warning Signs WDRB](#)

[Billboards Fox56](#)

As always, if you see something, say something or call the National Human Trafficking Hotline - **1-888-373-7888**.

PATH IN THE BOARDROOM

Work continues as the PATH board gears up to transition leadership in July, 2026. Nominations for board positions are currently being held and a transitional leadership team has been established to guide the process. We appreciate all the time, talent and treasure our current board has put in to make sure education around human trafficking is highly visible.

New board members are also being welcomed to the board to increase our knowledge and education base in all areas of board governance.

PATH AND YOU



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