

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 appropriations from reliable sources, and to set a sunset for review.

Sponsored by:

SETH WINSLOW YOUNG

Candidate for Kentucky House of Representatives

District 63 - Boone and Kenton Counties

Villa Hills, Kentucky

ANNO DOMINI MMXXVII

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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 to provide an effective date.

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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.

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. The 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 appropriations from reliable sources, and to set a sunset for review.

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

PREAMBLE

WHEREAS, official Kentucky child trafficking data reflects 467 reports of alleged human trafficking involving 557 alleged child victims in the 2024 reporting period, with the Northern Bluegrass Service Region reporting one of the highest regional totals 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

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) 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) subject to existing agreements and availability, and at least one survivor representative.
- (d) Duties include:
 - (1) Targeted interdiction of fentanyl, human trafficking (KRS 529.100), and labor trafficking through enhanced patrols, K-9 units, drug-detection technology, digital and financial intelligence, and interstate coordination;

(2) Development of voluntary training and awareness programs for corridor businesses, hotels, truck stops, and employers, incentivized through compliance assistance grants, not mandates;

(3) Mandatory referral of identified victims to comprehensive services under the Statewide Task Force framework and KRS 529.140;

(4) A voluntary E-Verify compliance assistance program for corridor employers, including training and technical support.

(e) Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Act, the Task Force shall develop and submit a strategic plan to the Legislative Research Commission outlining operations, privacy protocols, interagency coordination, civil-liberties safeguards and measurable performance benchmarks.

SECTION 4. COORDINATION WITH EXISTING TASK FORCES AND STRIKE FORCES

The Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force established under Section 3 of this Act shall operate in coordination with, and shall not duplicate, the Kentucky Statewide Human Trafficking Task Force, the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force, and any other applicable state, federal, or local public safety entities.

Within ninety (90) days of the effective date of this Act, the Task Force shall enter into a formal memorandum of understanding (MOU) with both entities, to be filed with the Legislative Research Commission, clarifying distinct roles, information sharing protocols, and avoidance of redundant operations. No funds appropriated or authorized under this Act shall be used to supplant or replace funding that would otherwise flow to the existing Statewide Task Force or the Northern Kentucky Drug Strike Force.

SECTION 5. USE OF CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE PROCEEDS

All forfeiture proceeds expended under this Act shall comply strictly with KRS 529.150 and KRS 500.090. Forfeiture proceeds shall be distributed in accordance with KRS 529.150, including fifty percent (50%) to the human trafficking victims fund, forty-two and one-half percent (42.5%) to the seizing law enforcement agency or agencies for direct law enforcement purposes, and seven and one-half percent (7.5%) to the Office of the Attorney General or the Prosecutors Advisory Council as provided by law. No forfeiture proceeds shall be used for any purpose other than those expressly permitted by law. The Justice and Public Safety Cabinet shall submit an annual report to the Legislative Research Commission detailing the amount, source, distribution, and use of all forfeiture funds expended under this Act

SECTION 6. LIMITATION ON USE OF OPIOID SETTLEMENT FUNDS

None of the funds authorized or appropriated under this Act from opioid settlement receipts shall be used for law enforcement interdiction, criminal prosecution, civil asset forfeiture, or any activity not expressly permitted as an “opioid abatement” use under KRS 15.291 and the national opioid settlement agreements (Exhibit E). Any use of opioid settlement funds shall be certified in writing by the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission as an allowable abatement activity prior to disbursement.

SECTION 7. NORTHERN KENTUCKY INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY

(a) There is established the Northern Kentucky Infrastructure and Connectivity Fund.

(b) There is authorized from existing funds up to \$38,500,000 for the biennium, consisting of up to \$20,000,000 from certified Road Fund surplus dollars (from the FY2024-2025 Road Fund surplus as certified by the Office of State Budget Director) deposited into the State Construction Account, and up to \$18,500,000 in eligible federal highway or transportation matching funds. These funds shall be restricted to constitutionally permitted highway and bridge purposes, including corridor safety, congestion relief, rest area lighting and security, truck parking, interchange safety, traffic flow improvements, maintenance, and other transportation projects connected to the I-75/I-71 corridor.

(c) No new taxes or fees shall be levied. Funds shall supplement existing transportation plans and support interdiction visibility, including better-lit rest areas.

SECTION 8. PROTECTION OF EDUCATION FUNDING AND TEACHER SUPPORT

(a) The Support Education Excellence in Kentucky (SEEK) formula shall be held harmless from any revenue reductions resulting from this Act.

(b) The General Assembly affirms its intent to maintain SEEK base funding at the levels in House Bill 500 (2026-2028 biennium). Any future teacher retention bonuses or other education support shall be subject to separate appropriation.

(c) Funding under this section shall supplement, not supplant, existing appropriations.

(SECTION 9. STRENGTHENING LAW ENFORCEMENT, FIRST RESPONDERS, AND RECOVERY

(a) For law enforcement and first responders, there is authorized up to \$10,000,000 for the biennium from eligible federal justice grants (including Byrne JAG funds, subject to annual federal award amounts) and from forfeiture proceeds lawfully distributed under KRS 529.150, for school resource officers, emergency communications, first responder mental health support, and fentanyl exposure prevention equipment.

(b) For the Northern Kentucky Recovery and Renewal Initiative, there is authorized up to \$50,000,000 for the biennium from allowable opioid settlement funds certified by the

Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission under KRS 15.291, for treatment, recovery housing, prevention, employment-linked reentry, and survivor services. Repeat trafficking offenders shall be ineligible for diversion programs.

(c) All expenditures under this section are subject to the limitations in Sections 5 and 6 of this Act.

SECTION 10. SMALL BUSINESS RELIEF, HOMEOWNERSHIP, AND ECONOMIC CIRCULATION

(a) Revenues generated or efficiencies achieved under this Act shall support accelerated personal income tax reductions (subject to separate legislation), expanded tax credits for locally owned small businesses in the corridor, and first-time homebuyer assistance.

(b) No provision of this Act shall preempt or supersede local government zoning, land use, or business licensing authority.

SECTION 11. PROTECTION OF FAMILIES AND CONSTITUTIONAL LIBERTIES

(a) No funds appropriated or authorized 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 law enforcement operations shall require probable cause and comply with constitutional standards

(b) The Task Force shall include in its annual report a civil liberties and privacy compliance certification, and an independent audit shall be filed with the Legislative Research Commission.

SECTION 12. FUNDING PRINCIPLES AND LIMITATIONS

(a) All authorizations under this Act are contingent upon source availability, lawful use certification, federal grant award requirements, statutory restrictions, and final appropriation authority. No new taxes or fees shall be imposed. Unexpended balances from any source shall revert to the General Fund or to the original restricted fund as provided by law, subject to the performance benchmark reversion in Section 13 of this Act.

b) Because this Act authorizes appropriations during an odd-numbered regular session, enactment shall require the vote threshold prescribed by Section 36 of the Constitution of Kentucky.

SECTION 13. LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT AND PERFORMANCE BENCHMARKS.

(a) The strategic plan required under Section 3(e) of this Act shall be submitted to the Interim Joint Committee on Judiciary for review and non-binding comment within sixty (60) days of its completion. No funds authorized under this Act shall be expended by the Task Force until

the strategic plan has been submitted to the Committee and the Committee has had at least thirty (30) days to review it, unless the Committee waives such review.

(b) The Task Force shall submit quarterly performance reports to the Legislative Research Commission, including specific KPIs: victims identified and rescued, interdictions, convictions, overdose reductions in the corridor, and economic impact. Failure to meet annual benchmarks, including a fifteen percent (15%) reduction in documented corridor incidents as measured from the 2024 baseline, shall trigger an automatic ten percent (10%) reversion of unspent discretionary funds to the General Fund, subject to federal grant rules and restricted fund limitations.

(c) The Task Force shall include in its quarterly reports a certification of compliance with Section 11 of this Act (civil liberties and privacy).

SECTION 14. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this Act or its application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity does not affect other provisions or applications that can be given effect without the invalid provision or application. To this end, the provisions of this Act are severable.

SECTION 15. SUNSET AND REVIEW

This Act shall be subject to full legislative review, independent audit, and potential reauthorization, amendment, or repeal by December 31, 2031. If the Task Force fails to meet its annual performance benchmarks for two consecutive years, the Act shall automatically expire on the following June 30 unless renewed by a joint resolution of the General Assembly.

SECTION 16. EFFECTIVE DATE.

This Act shall take effect ninety (90) days after the adjournment of the session of the General Assembly in which it was passed.

APPENDIX

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

Total Biennial Authorization: Not to exceed \$113,500,000

This proposal is designed to be General Fund-neutral and tax-neutral. It creates no new taxes or fees and relies only upon identified restricted funds, federal grants, lawful forfeiture proceeds, certified Road Fund surplus dollars, and other funding sources legally available for the purposes stated in this Act. No expenditure shall be made unless the responsible agency certifies the availability, lawful use, and proper budgetary classification of the funds.

Funding Breakdown

Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force — Not to exceed \$15,000,000

Funding may be drawn from eligible federal justice assistance grants, including Byrne Justice Assistance Grant funds where available (subject to annual federal award amounts; for Kentucky in FY2026 the total was approximately \$1.4 million), and from eligible state law enforcement grant programs and restricted funds already authorized for law enforcement and first responder equipment, training, technology, and operational support. Any use of existing state grant programs shall supplement, and shall not supplant, funds otherwise available to local law enforcement agencies.

Northern Kentucky Opioid Recovery and Renewal — Not to exceed \$50,000,000

Funding shall come from allowable opioid settlement funds certified by the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission. These funds shall be restricted to opioid-abatement purposes, including treatment, prevention, recovery services, opioid-related emergency response, recovery housing, transportation to treatment, employment-linked recovery support, and services for persons with opioid use disorder or co-occurring substance use or mental health conditions.

Law Enforcement, First Responders, and Victim Support — Not to exceed \$10,000,000

Funding may come from eligible federal justice grants and from forfeiture proceeds lawfully distributed under KRS 529.150. Forfeiture proceeds shall be distributed in accordance with KRS 529.150, including fifty percent (50%) to the human trafficking victims fund, forty-two and one-half percent (42.5%) to the seizing law enforcement agency or agencies for direct law enforcement purposes, and seven and one-half percent (7.5%) to the Office of the Attorney General or the Prosecutors Advisory Council as provided by law. Forfeiture funds shall be used only in accordance with statutory distribution requirements and shall support eligible victim services, direct law enforcement purposes, prosecution-related purposes, and other lawful activities connected to human trafficking, fentanyl interdiction, and organized criminal activity.

Infrastructure, Corridor Safety, and Highway Connectivity — Not to exceed \$38,500,000

Funding shall consist of up to \$20,000,000 from certified Road Fund surplus dollars (from the FY2024-2025 Road Fund surplus as certified by the Office of State Budget Director) deposited into the State Construction Account, and up to \$18,500,000 in eligible federal highway or transportation matching funds. These funds shall be restricted to constitutionally permitted highway and bridge purposes, including corridor safety, congestion relief, rest area lighting and security, truck parking, interchange safety, traffic flow improvements, maintenance, and other transportation projects connected to the I-75/I-71 corridor.

Total Two-Year Authorization — Not to exceed \$113,500,000

All expenditures shall be contingent upon source availability, lawful use certification, federal grant award requirements, statutory restrictions, and final appropriation authority.

Oversight and Accountability Measures

Certification Requirement. No opioid settlement funds shall be expended unless the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission certifies that the expenditure is an allowable opioid-abatement use under KRS 15.291. No Road Fund dollars shall be expended unless the Transportation Cabinet and the Office of State Budget Director certify that the expenditure is constitutionally restricted to highway, bridge, traffic, or motor vehicle law enforcement purposes. No forfeiture proceeds shall be expended except in accordance with KRS 529.150.

Reporting and Audits. The Northern Kentucky Shield Task Force shall submit quarterly performance reports to the Legislative Research Commission. The Act shall require an annual independent audit of all funds used, including federal grants, restricted funds, forfeiture proceeds, opioid-abatement funds, and Road Fund dollars.

Performance Benchmarks. The Task Force shall report measurable benchmarks, including interdiction activity, victim identification and referral, overdose response, fentanyl-related incidents, human trafficking investigations, successful prosecutions, recovery referrals, first responder support, and corridor safety improvements. Failure to meet annual benchmarks shall trigger a ten percent (10%) reversion of unspent discretionary funds, subject to federal grant rules and restricted fund limitations.

No Supplantation. Funds authorized under this Act shall supplement, and shall not supplant, existing appropriations for law enforcement, recovery services, education, transportation, or victim services.

Sunset Provision. This Act shall be subject to full legislative review, independent audit, and potential reauthorization, amendment, or repeal by December 31, 2031.

Legislative Findings on Urgency

Official Kentucky child trafficking data reflects a continued rise in reported trafficking concerns. In the 2024 reporting period, the Cabinet for Health and Family Services received 467 reports of alleged human trafficking involving 557 alleged child victims, with reports involving both sex and labor trafficking. The Northern Bluegrass Service Region reported one of the highest regional totals in the Commonwealth.

The General Assembly further finds that the I-75/I-71 corridor is a critical transportation, commerce, and public safety artery for Northern Kentucky and the Commonwealth. Fentanyl trafficking, human trafficking, labor exploitation, organized criminal activity, overdose events, and corridor safety risks impose direct costs upon families, schools, law enforcement, first responders, recovery providers, employers, and local communities.

This Act responds with a targeted, fiscally restrained, constitutionally limited, and performance-measured framework. It does not create new taxes or fees. It does not authorize mass surveillance. It does not enlarge the government for its own sake. It uses existing lawful tools, restricted funds, federal grants, certified transportation dollars, and statutory accountability to strengthen public safety while preserving the liberties of law-abiding Kentuckians.

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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