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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

By State Representative Ron Crimm

**Government transparency, cost savings the focus of last week in February**

With the deadline for requesting new bill drafts and the eighth week of session behind us, legislative committees and the House of Representatives acted on several bills in the last week of February.

House Bill 36 cleared the House Elections, Constitutional Amendments and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee. This constitutional amendment would amend the oath of office taken by the Commonwealth's elected officials by removing the portion that affirms the individual has not been involved in fighting a duel with deadly weapons. If both chambers pass this bill, which would delete language dating back to 1897, the amendment would be placed before the voters for ratification in this November's general election.

Under the provisions contained in House Bill 143, approved by the House Judiciary Committee, teens who are under the age of 18 would be required to perform community service and pay a \$100 fine the first time they are caught possessing or sending nude images of themselves or others through text messages, a practice commonly known as "sexting." Teens who commit multiple "sexting" offenses would be charged with a misdemeanor crime.

The House Economic Development Committee approved legislation focused on reducing waste in state government. The provisions in House Bill 309 would abolish the Kentucky Wood Products Competitiveness Corporation. This board was investigated by the FBI in 2003, has not met since 2004 and currently has no members.

The House Appropriations and Revenue Committee approved legislation that would impose a tax on advanced deposit wagering by Kentucky residents on thoroughbred racing. House Bill 368 would add a 0.5 percent tax on the wagers that are made via telephone or computer on live racing. Of the revenues created from this tax, one third would be distributed to the Kentucky Horseracing Commission and two thirds would be distributed to the track.

Government transparency would be extended to executive branch personal service contracts under House Bill 387, passed by the House State Government Committee. All cabinets and departments within state government would be required to report the number of all full-time classified, unclassified and contract employees to the Personnel Cabinet. This report would be submitted to the Legislative Research Commission within 15 days after the effective date of this act and on a quarterly basis thereafter.

House Bill 421 received approval from the House Transportation Committee and would allow mini-trucks to operate on highways, other than interstates, that have a speed limit of more than 55 miles per hour. Mini-trucks are generally used as vehicles for farms or construction sites.

In action taken by the full body, owners of bed and breakfast inns would be offered options to boost profits and better accommodate their guests under House Bill 354. Passed 97-0, this legislation would allow the business to expand the number of rooms it could rent, serve multiple meals instead of only breakfast and operate a retail gift shop. Further provisions specify only guests of the inn would be allowed to use the dining services to prohibit the inn from becoming a public restaurant.

A legislative measure that had been source of much controversy was adopted by the House, despite 16 dissenting votes. House Resolution 132 would urge Congress to put a hold on the Environmental Protection Agency's effort to regulate carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions until Congress "adopts a balanced approach to address climate and energy supply issues without crippling the economy." My support for this resolution was not anti-environmental, but

rather spurred by the concern of giving a non-elected body the authority to regulate emissions that were not detailed in the Clean Air Act of 1990.

House Bill 175, approved on a vote of 97-0, would encourage coal companies to plant a variety of pollen-producing plants on mountain reclamation sites after their work is completed. Current gaps in the flower bloom sequence have adversely affected the state's honeybee population, which needs flowering plants to survive.

If you would like to speak with me regarding any of the bills mentioned above or about our work in Frankfort, please contact me at home or through the Legislative Message Line at 1-800-372-7181. A taped message containing information on legislative committee meeting schedules is available by calling 1-800-633-9650. For bill information, please call the Bill Status Line at 1-866-840-2835. If you have internet access, you can e-mail me at [ron.crimm@lrc.ky.gov](mailto:ron.crimm@lrc.ky.gov) or you may keep track through the Kentucky Legislature Home Page at [www.lrc.ky.gov](http://www.lrc.ky.gov).

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