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CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY DAY AT THE CAPITOL DRAWS HUNDREDS TO FRANKFORT Key Legislative Agenda Items for Children Seeing Movement, Support

Jeffersontown, KY – More than 1,000 Kentuckians from across the Commonwealth are registered to attend Children's Advocacy Day at the Capitol in Frankfort today. They will urge legislators to make Kentucky's children a priority when making decisions this session and support priorities on the Blueprint for Kentucky's Children, a common agenda for child advocates across the state.

"The Blueprint was created as a response to legislators who asked child advocates to come together around a concise agenda," says Terry Brooks, executive director of Kentucky Youth Advocates. "In order for Kentucky to improve our current ranking of 41st in the nation for child well-being, we need to focus on proven, evidence-based policies that will make the biggest impact."

Key items on the group's agenda have seen movement during the short session:

- HB 123 – Legislation sponsored by Rep. Kelly Flood would reduce the use of incarceration for youth who commit status offenses like skipping school or running away from home. Last week the bill unanimously passed both the House Judiciary Committee and the House floor.
- HB 89 & SB 32 - Bills were filed in both the House (Rep. Tom Burch and Rep. Addia Wuchner) and Senate (Sen. Denise Harper-Angel) to monitor children's Body Mass Index (BMI) and aggregate the data at the state and local level in order to target and evaluate obesity prevention efforts. HB 89 passed the House Education Committee on Tuesday and could be brought to the rest of the House as early as Thursday.
- HB 225 – The "Dropout Bill" gradually raises the compulsory education age from 16 to 18. Sponsored by Rep. Jeff Greer, an overlooked component of the bill includes much-needed measures to improve the state's alternative education programs. HB 225 passed the House last week and awaits the Senate's consideration.

- HB 182 – Legislation sponsored by Rep. Darryl Owens to place a 36% cap on interest rates that payday lenders can charge was heard in the House Banking & Insurance Committee on Wednesday, however it failed to garner enough votes to reach the House floor.

“There are clear, evidence-based steps that Kentucky can take that will make a big difference for children and families without costing the state extra money like capping the interest rate on payday loans at 36%, monitoring children’s BMI data, and improving alternative programs,” said Brooks. “Other measures like reducing incarceration of youth who commit status offenses actually save the state money because they cost much less than their alternatives, and improve long-term outcomes.”

For more information about Children’s Advocacy Day at the Capitol visit

<http://kyyouth.org/Advocacy/cad.htm>.

For more information about the Blueprint for Kentucky’s Children visit

<http://www.blueprintky.org>.

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***Kentucky Youth Advocates** is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.*