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Subject: For Immediate Release - General Assembly Announces Plans for 2020 Regular Session

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For Immediate Release
Media Release

General Assembly Announces Plans for 2020 Regular Session

Frankfort, Kentucky (March 16, 2020) – Members of House and Senate leadership announced today that the 2020 Regular Session will continue as scheduled, but with a number of safeguards and precautions in place to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. House Speaker David Osborne and Senate President Robert Stivers released the following information detailing specifics:

“We believe that the General Assembly has a responsibility to the people of Kentucky and our membership is committed to fulfilling that obligation. However, we are putting in place a number of safety procedures based on the recommendations of public health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While this is a departure from business as usual, we are taking every step possible to use available technology to ensure transparency and accessibility.”

Beginning Tuesday, March 17, 2020, access to the Capitol Annex and legislative proceedings will be limited. While this policy is similar to the Governor’s closing of the Capitol, there will be some variations as the legislature proceeds with necessary legislative business. Only elected members, staff, and members of the media will be allowed in the facility until further notice. However, Kentuckians will still be able to view legislative business through livestreaming services and broadcasting by Kentucky Education Television (KET). Constituents will be able to communicate with legislators by email, the toll-free message line (1-800-372-7181), and the direct line (502-564-8100). The Legislative Research Commission website, www.legislature.ky.gov, will provide further information.

Changes include:

- The Capitol Annex is closed to everyone but legislators, essential staff, LRC-credentialed media, and specifically-approved individuals (Governor Beshear has already closed the Capitol)
- Increasing streaming for committee meetings and House and Senate Floor proceedings
- Working to increase staffing of toll-free message lines
- Closing of the House and Senate visitor galleries
- Limiting in-person attendance at committee meetings
- Suspending the use of legislative pages, door keepers, and other floor personnel

Further changes are possible as legislators continue to evaluate the situation and prioritize the health and safety of all involved in the legislative process, including the public, legislative staff, and membership. The General Assembly will

remain in contact with the Governor, public health leaders, and others as they work together to slow the spread of COVID-19. According to leadership, the top priority is the health and safety of Kentuckians.

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