

# Advocacy Report – Policy Update

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# Advocacy



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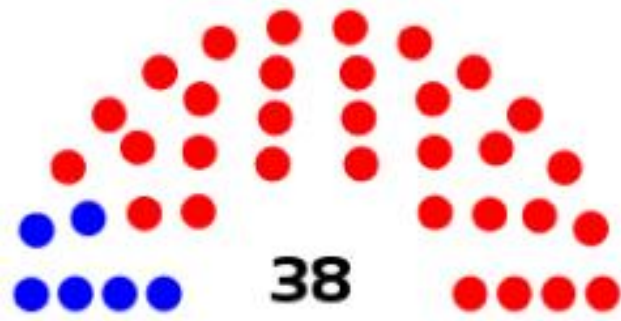


American  
Heart  
Association.



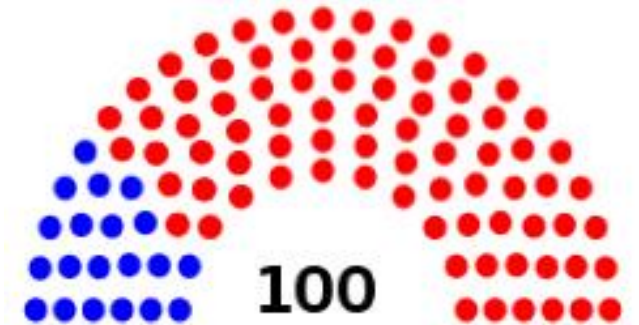
Kentucky Senate	
Affiliation	Members
Republican Party	32
Democratic Party	6
Vacant seat	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>38</b>

Kentucky House of Representatives	
Affiliation	Members
Republican Party	80
Democratic Party	20
Vacant seat	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>



19 Senate seats are up for election in 2026

Party	#	%
Democrat	1,511,242	43.3%
Republican	1,615,451	46.3%
Other	364,312	10.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,491,005</b>	<b>100%</b>



All 100 House seats up for election in 2020



# Kentucky State Priorities 2025





# Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Advocacy

## Smoke Free Legislation

Every person deserves the opportunity to live a healthy life, and that includes having the fundamental human right to breathe air free from smoke. Because there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke, the only proven way to universally protect people is to make sure the spaces we all share, including workplaces, are completely smoke-free without exceptions.

Most working Americans benefit from legally protected smoke-free policies. Unfortunately, laws often exclude some workers – including those employed by casinos, music venues, restaurants and bars – from being able to earn a living in safe and healthy conditions.

Closing these legal loopholes to attain 100% smoke-free workplaces ensures all people – regardless of age, sex, race, ethnicity or income level – can work without jeopardizing their health or their lives due to breathing harmful secondhand smoke.

## Local Ordinance Passed in Ludlow, KY!

AHA worked with our network of advocates, one of whom resides in Ludlow, to reach out to the City Council and let them know how important it was to pass the smoke-free ordinance in the City (Ludlow ordinance 2025-1). Our advocate let the council know that she appreciated the introduction of an ordinance that prioritizes the health and safety as well as everyone's right to breathe clean, smoke-free air, regardless of where they live, work, or play. Our advocate even got a response from one of the council letting her know they were in agreement. We appreciated the connection to the Breathe Easy Coalition/OneNKY Alliance who worked with our team to identify the importance of passing this ordinance.



# Tobacco Retailer Licensing

## The Problem: Why Tobacco Retail Licensing Is Needed

- **Widespread Availability:** Tobacco is sold in grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies, and convenience stores—even in rural areas.
- **Youth Use:** 23.6% of high school students report using tobacco products.
- **Youth Access:** 75% of youth who attempt to purchase tobacco are not refused, despite being underage.
- **Targeted Marketing:** Tobacco companies advertise near schools and events attended by youth; discounted products are common.
- **Health Equity Concern:** Retailers disproportionately market tobacco in Black and minority communities, increasing health risks.

# Tobacco Retailer Licensing

## ✓ **The Solution: Benefits of Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL)**

- Tracks and Limits Sales: Helps communities monitor where tobacco is sold and restrict by location or type.
- Enforces Laws: Licensing fees can fund compliance checks and law enforcement efforts.
- Protects Youth: Holds retailers accountable for refusing sales to under-21 individuals; limits youth exposure.

## 🔧 **AHA Policy Recommendations**

- Eliminate Youth Penalties: Hold retailers—not youth—responsible for illegal sales.
- Fine the Business, Not Employees: Penalize license holders, not low-wage workers.
- Fund Compliance Checks: Use licensing fees to support regular enforcement and training.

# Kentucky kids thank **Senator Higdon**

For his leadership on Senate Bill 100,  
which strengthens the law prohibiting  
the sale of nicotine products to  
underage kids and increases  
protections.

Thank you for putting kids' health above industry profits!



# Cardiovascular Disease & Stroke Funding

- A lot of progress made with budget leaders in both chambers in 2025; however, the budget was not opened for appropriations asks. We plan to utilize the progress made to secure appropriation in 2026 for:
  - KHDSP Program funding
  - CPR in Schools funding
  - CARES funding



# Become an Advocate Today

Text *KY* to 46839



American Heart Association

# HEART

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Initiating to change the future of health.