

**Republican Legislative Leaders Unveil 2014
“Handshake with Kentucky”**

Platform Details Priorities of a Republican Majority House of Representatives

Frankfort – House Republican leaders today released details of “Handshake with Kentucky,” a platform of specific legislation they will make a priority of enacting within the first 30 days if given a majority in the House of Representatives for the 2015 General Assembly.

“Growing up, my father taught me a man’s word was his bond and deals were made with a firm handshake,” said House Republican Leader Jeff Hoover (Jamestown). “When I look someone in the eye and shake their hand, I’ve made a promise and commitment. This ‘Handshake with Kentucky’ is a public promise that we, the House Republican Caucus, and our candidates are making with the people of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. If the people of Kentucky entrust us with the majority, we are committing to immediately begin debate with the intention of passing each of these pieces of legislation.”

“For far too long, the majority leadership of the House of Representatives has made empty promises,” continued Leader Hoover. “Democrats in Frankfort have failed to achieve meaningful results on behalf of families and local businesses, and the current leadership in the House of Representatives has squandered real opportunities while surrounding states prosper. Kentuckians have no confidence in the General Assembly to fix the problem. As Republicans, we will focus on a-pro-growth agenda if given the opportunity to lead.”

“Handshake with Kentucky” goals include:

Create Jobs and Economic Opportunities – Kentucky’s House Republicans understand economic growth and job creation should be the top priorities of the 2015 General Assembly. In order to thrive in the current economic climate, we must ensure government does not stand in the way of our existing businesses, allowing them to prosper and expand, as well as create an environment desirable for new businesses to begin or locate here in Kentucky.

We will pass public-private partnership (P3) legislation which will allow private entities and government agencies to work in tandem for major infrastructure projects and other important services for Kentuckians. This will not only provide for more private sector jobs throughout the Commonwealth, but will support important infrastructure and public services to meet the needs of employers and citizens.

House Republicans will lead the way on Right to Work legislation and join our surrounding in creating real private sector jobs. While we support the right of a worker to join a labor union, we do not believe an employee should be forced to do so as a condition of employment. Rather, each employee will have the freedom to make that decision for oneself. Additionally, by passing Right to Work legislation, Kentucky will put itself in a more advantageous position when competing with other states to attract jobs.

We will adopt a tax reform plan that encourages and does not penalize productivity, rewards people for hard work, and creates jobs. We will reduce the tax burden on Kentuckians, while making our tax structure more attractive to job creators. Focusing on economic growth, rather than punishing taxpayers, will ultimately grow jobs and increase revenue as more Kentuckians are put back to work.

We will pass legislation that will remove regulatory barriers for the communications industry which desires to reinvest in Kentucky by expanding our broadband internet access. By doing this, Kentucky businesses of all sizes will be able to better compete in the global marketplace.

A Republican majority in the House will also enact legislation which will establish a Medical Review Panel process in the Commonwealth. A panel will be comprised of independent healthcare experts who will evaluate lawsuits against healthcare providers. This will help expose frivolous lawsuits. We must ensure the truly injured get their day in court and reduce the cost employees and employers pay for health insurance.

Control Wasteful Spending – Much of the economic challenges we face now are due to the unprecedented spending that took place in Washington, and has surfaced in Frankfort. The House Democrat leadership recently proposed the largest level of debt in Kentucky’s history. We must curb unnecessary spending to ensure that we focus our resources on high priority investments to improve education and workforce preparation to support job growth without leaving our children with crippling debt.

House Republicans believe, like Kentucky families, we must live within our means. To illustrate our dedication to this principle, we are proposing the Responsible Budgeting and Spending Act. This legislation will require state revenue estimates to be based upon a 15 year rolling average rather than unsupported revenue projections. We believe this will help rein in spending and debt, while allowing budgets to focus state resources on high priority areas in a fluid cyclical economy.

End Corruption in the Kentucky House of Representatives – Democrats have held the majority in the House of Representatives since 1921. During that time, an atmosphere that breeds corruption and misconduct has grown out of control. Despite some of the toughest ethics laws in the nation, the culture continues a downward spiral due to the actions of a few Democrat legislators. Recent allegations of legislators offering bribes to state inspectors along with the series of allegations of sexual harassment of government employees by legislators has further eroded the public’s trust in the General Assembly.

Stand Up to Obamacare Mandates –Kentucky simply cannot afford the unprecedented expansion of our Medicaid system mandated through Obamacare and passed by the Washington Democrats. House Republicans are prepared to take action to do what we can to repeal this expansion before it plummets our state into crippling debt. It is important that the voices of frustrated Kentuckians be heard on this issue.

A House Republican majority will introduce a constitutional amendment that would “prohibit any person, employer or healthcare provider from being compelled to participate in any health care system.” This proposed amendment, subject to the ratification by the voters, would be similar to measures introduced or passed by at least 30 other state legislatures across the country.

Take Action on Crucial Issues – For far too long, House Democrats have delayed issues that are becoming more crucial each day. While, in some instances, studies have been commissioned and conducted, they have languished on a shelf due to nothing more than petty political cowardice.

We pledge to file legislation regarding these issues, so that fair, honest and transparent debate can begin and that they can be fully vetted before the 2016 General Assembly.

We will address the growing unfunded liabilities of the Kentucky Teachers’ Retirement System in order to make it solvent and strong for future generations of our educators. We pledge to establish a task force to develop recommendations concerning the benefits, investments and funding of KTRS with the plan of being ready for action in the 2016 General Assembly.

Finally, House Republicans, while cognizant of the financial pressure on our state universities, also recognize the growing burden being placed on students and parents with as tuition rates continue to rise. We pledge to study this issue by examining what has worked in other states and attempt to find innovative ways to ensure more Kentuckians can afford an education which will better prepare them for economic prosperity.

“The 2015 General Assembly is scheduled for 30 days,” said Leader Hoover. “If the voters of Kentucky entrust us with the majority, thus allowing us to set the agenda, we pledge to address each and every one of these issues. It is my belief, and that of my colleagues, that we will accomplish more for the Commonwealth in this short session than has been done in the aggregate of many sessions in the recent past.”