

## Guest Editorial

(Owen/Grant/Scott)

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Commonwealth of Kentucky  
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### Report from Frankfort

**Frankfort** – Improving education and government were our main focuses this week in Session. Reading proficiency is the one skill necessary for students to achieve their academic goals and to be successful in life. Senate Bill 100, which I co-sponsored and passed this week, is an early childhood reading initiative that creates the framework that will enable all students to read at grade level by the end of the primary program.

The “Read to Achieve” Act of 2004 allows schools to choose from several reading-enrichment models, but they must use one that has been demonstrated effective in replicable, research-based trials. The models must also address the diverse learning needs of primary school students who read at low levels. To date, one-third of Kentucky’s elementary schools have used the program. I am committed to the continued improvement of Kentucky’s educational system.

Children’s future must be protected whether it is through education or ensuring their personal safety. This week, I sponsored legislation that would toughen the penalties against sex offenders who target children. Senate Bill 145 would create a new crime of indecent exposure in the first degree for a person who had been found guilty of exposing himself or herself to a child, and would increase the charge to a felony with second and subsequent offenses. Considering recent news stories, this is a timely bill.

Late last year, we were inundated with stories of fraud and abuse in the Transportation Cabinet. Working with Transportation Secretary Clay Bailey, Senate Republicans filed Senate Bill 2 which will substantially improve legislative oversight of the Transportation Cabinet and will put in place performance measurements to help improve efficiency and cost savings within the Cabinet.

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Many more serious issues confront us in the next two months. The state House of Representatives, as constitutionally required, has already begun budget hearings. I anticipate receiving the House's proposal in the next month and then the Senate's own budget work will begin in earnest. I am committed to adequately funding education and making sure our most vulnerable citizens are provided for.

Please call me anytime at 800/372-7181 and let me know what issues are important to you.

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Note: For a high-resolution .jpeg of Senator Thayer, please log onto [www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/epphoto.htm](http://www.lrc.state.ky.us/pubinfo/epphoto.htm).