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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Gov. Beshear Provides Update on COVID-19**

*Governor highlights rare day of no new reported deaths from coronavirus in commonwealth*

*Visit the Governor's [Facebook](#) page to watch today's news conference*

**FRANKFORT, Ky. (June 22, 2020)** – Gov. Andy Beshear on Monday updated Kentuckians on the state's actions to fight the novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19).

The Governor held Monday's news conference in the Old State Capitol.

"The Old State Capitol helps us to make connections between our past and our future. That is important now more than ever," Gov. Beshear said. "We learn from the past to do better in the future. Watch [History.ky.gov](#) for more details about the reopening of the historic state Capitol building."

Gov. Beshear and administration officials also provided updates on new guidance for venues, including for weddings and gatherings of 50 or fewer people; preparations for Tuesday's primary elections, including polling help from plain-clothed Kentucky National Guardsmen; and upgrades being made to help administer unemployment insurance claims.

### **Case Information**

As of 4 p.m. June 22, Gov. Beshear said there were at least 13,839 coronavirus cases in Kentucky, 90 of

which were newly reported Monday. He also noted Sunday's number of new cases was revised up by three, to 120 cases.

Fortunately, Gov. Beshear reported no new deaths Monday.

"For somebody who has read the names, genders and ages of those we have lost, to have no reportable deaths today is special," the Governor said. "We are very grateful and blessed that today there is a reprieve from this deadly virus."

The total number of Kentuckians lost to the virus stands at 526.

At least 3,534 Kentuckians had recovered from the virus. For additional information, including up-to-date lists of positive cases and deaths, as well as breakdowns of coronavirus infections by county, race and ethnicity, [click here](#).

#### **New Guidance for Venues**

Gov. Beshear and Dr. Steven Stack, Kentucky's commissioner of public health, spoke about updated guidance beginning next week for many venues, including [restaurants and bars](#). The new guidance also covers wedding venues and [gatherings of 50 or fewer people](#).

"Next Monday, just about everything in the commonwealth will be open, from bars, wedding venues, public pools and even Kentucky Kingdom," the Governor said. "It has been a long road dealing with this virus. But by following medical guidelines we have gone from a time when our cases were doubling every week, to a point where we are safely beginning to reopen businesses and our economy."

Beginning June 29, people can begin gathering in groups of 50 or fewer people. Adherence to rules on social distancing, mask use and sanitation remains critically important, and people in more vulnerable categories should continue to avoid such gatherings.

"Despite reopening, there are small things we have to do until we get a vaccine or treatment," Dr. Stack said. "Continue to socially distance, wear face masks, wash hands frequently and do temperature screenings at work and places of businesses."

Dr. Stack said using face masks and getting tests are crucial in keeping the virus under wraps.

"This is a dangerous disease. We are seeing in other states dramatic surges in virus cases," he said. "The increase is not just about testing more, it's about hospitals needing to admit more people, and having to treat more people."

### **Tuesday's Primary Elections**

Gov. Beshear offered an update on the plan for plain-clothed Kentucky National Guardsmen to help manage some polling stations across the commonwealth.

In all, 234 soldiers will be helping out in 45 counties. He said the soldiers will not be in uniform and their primary duties include aiding traffic control, social distancing, sanitization and general voter assistance.

Gov. Beshear also spoke about Kentucky's operation of the primary elections in light of some questions about the reduced number of polling sites. The Governor noted that the plan was the result of a compromise with Kentucky Secretary of State Michael Adams and included, for the first time in the commonwealth, absentee voting offered to all voters.

"Though the election is tomorrow, it has actually been going on about a month. Through an agreement with my office and the Secretary of State, we for the first time allowed mail-in voting and 'no-excuse' early voting in Kentucky," Gov. Beshear said. "We are on track to have a record number of votes in Kentucky in this primary election."

The Governor said the end result is that he's expecting the highest voting totals for a primary in the state in many years. As of Monday, he said, 883,054 absentee ballots had been requested, 88,530 people already voted early and 452,305 ballots already had been returned.

"If your absentee ballot is postmarked by tomorrow, June 23, your vote will be counted," Gov. Beshear said. "If you need to vote in person, please make sure to follow county voting guidelines and directions."

### **Unemployment Insurance Update**

Gov. Beshear provided information about the administration's latest moves to address the unprecedented number of unemployment insurance claims brought on by the global pandemic.

"We continue to face difficulties with our unemployment system, due to it being starved of funds and outdated in the past," the Governor said. "That is making our job of processing a record number of claims very hard."

As he explained last week, Gov. Beshear noted that the state's unemployment office budget went from \$41 million in 2010 to \$25 million in 2018; in addition, in 2017, the state cut 22 of 51 local unemployment offices and 95 employees. These financial, geographic and staffing challenges have made it more difficult to provide in-person services throughout the commonwealth, but the Governor said he was determined to find a path forward.

"We are instituting three major changes to improve the unemployment claims processing system. These include: One, reorganizing the unemployment office and moving it to the Labor Cabinet, which means the entire cabinet will be working day in and out to solve these claims. Two, contracting with an outside vendor to train more claim processors and answer more public questions. Three, adding more in-person services, including out in the counties."

Gov. Beshear said Labor Cabinet Secretary Larry Roberts is now in charge of the unemployment system and that the state is working to finalize a contract with an outside consulting firm that has experience working with these claims.

In addition, new in-person help soon will be offered outside of Frankfort.

For more information from the Labor Cabinet at the Kentucky Career Center portal, [click here](#).

#### **Price-gouging Update**

Gov. Beshear has signed an [executive order](#) prohibiting price-gouging, extending a previous order. This order will remain in effect for the duration of the [state of emergency](#).

#### **Census Update**

Gov. Beshear reminded Kentuckians of the critical importance of filling out their U.S. Census forms. Those who have not can fill out the Census at [my2020census.gov](#) or by phone at [844-330-2020](#) (English) or [844-468-2020](#) (Spanish).

#### **More Information**

Read about other key updates, actions and information from Gov. Beshear and his administration at [governor.ky.gov](#), [ky covid19.ky.gov](#) and the Governor's official social media accounts [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

Kentuckians can also access translated COVID-19 information and daily summaries of the Governor's news conference at [tinyurl.com/kygovespanol](https://tinyurl.com/kygovespanol) (Spanish) and [tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations](https://tinyurl.com/kygovtranslations) (more than 20 additional languages).

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