



For Immediate Release

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Bill Filed to Raise Graduation Age

Statement by Terry Brooks, Executive Director of Kentucky Youth Advocates

Today's youth face an economy with daunting challenges and a highly competitive environment to find jobs. The best economic development tool is an educated workforce. Many adolescents who leave school early are entrenched in poverty and unemployment. HB 225 seeks to change the culture of our society and ensure that each child has a fair chance to graduate from high school.

Raising the compulsory attendance age translates into raising the standards and expectations in Kentucky among students, parents, school employees and the business community. Simply raising the mandatory attendance age will not keep students in school. All research points to the need for initiatives from investing more in early education and career-oriented programs to providing preventative measures and intervention strategies as detailed in HB 225. Increasing graduation rates in Kentucky requires a multi-pronged approach and it is certainly much more difficult for school districts to address the problem when state law does not support the effort by allowing students to dropout before reaching graduation age. Increased attention to make students successful and graduate far outweigh the economic and social cost later – welfare, healthcare and the criminal justice system.

This is a call to action, a call to change, and a chance to step up and do our part. The message should be that it is no longer acceptable to drop out of high school.

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Kentucky Youth Advocates is a non-partisan, non-profit, children's advocacy organization. KYA represents a voice for Kentucky's most precious asset – its youth. We believe that Kentucky's youth deserve the opportunities and resources necessary to ensure their productive development and health.