



Photo courtesy of Rayner Minerals

# The Kentucky Agate



The **Kentucky Agate** is characterized by its fineness of grain and brightness of color. Agates have a reputation of being quite hardy, resistant to acids, extremely resistant to weathering. **Sharon Marcum**, Bluegrass Central Branch, serves as editor. Keep her updated with all of your exciting branch news at [marcum3@aol.com](mailto:marcum3@aol.com)

Your AAUW of Kentucky State Newsletter

April 2023

## State President's Message

### Greetings AAUW of Kentucky Members

Spring is here, at least on the calendar, if not necessarily in the weather! The days are more sunny than not, though, and that encourages me. Something that encourages me even more is the **Equal Rights Amendment vote** coming up in the U.S. Senate **TOMORROW**, Thursday April 27. Thirty-eight states have ratified the ERA, although it took much longer than 1982 deadline. The vote tomorrow is to remove the deadline, which would allow the last three state votes to count.

I urge to contact your senators TODAY and tell them to **vote YES on Joint Resolution S.J. Res. 4** - A joint resolution removing the deadline for the ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment. There are several ways to do this:

AAUW Form - <https://www.aauw.org/act/two-minute-activist-era/>

Call Senators' Offices - <https://aauw-ky.aauw.net/activism/congressional-contacts/>

Call US Capitol - 1-202-225-3121 and ask for a senator's office. You can leave the following message or your own:

"Senator \_\_\_\_\_, please vote YES for Senate Joint Resolution 4 to remove the deadline for ratification of the ERA."

Timeline: Wednesday at 6:00 P.M. EST, speeches start on the U.S. Senate floor. Thursday 1:45 P.M or so EST, VOTE!

To learn more about the AAUW stance on the ERA, see <https://www.aauw.org/resources/policy/position-era/>.

Thank you, Christine.



Christine Salmon, President  
AAUW of KY

**AAUW: Tenacious and trailblazing—advocating for women and girls since 1881 and into the future!**

## AAUW of KY

### State Convention

Saturday, June 3, 2023

9:30 am—12:30 pm  
Eastern Time

#### Theme:

**“AAUW Advocacy—How We Can Influence Change”**

The 2023 State Convention will be virtual this year—using Zoom—which many of you experienced during the pandemic.

This means no traveling and lodging expenses and even better, no registration fee!

Our featured speaker will be retired Representative Joni Jenkins who served House district 44 in Louisville for over 25 years. She is the first woman to lead a party's legislative caucus in state history. Much of her legislative career focused on preventing violence against women.

Other convention topics include increasing AAUW's reach through

- ◆ AAUW Policy and Advocacy Resources
- ◆ More College/University Partnerships

I hope to see you at the 2023 state convention—virtually!

## 2023 State Convention

June 3, 2023

Theme: “AAUW Advocacy—How We Can Influence Change”

### Planned Agenda

9:00 – 9:30	Zoom Opens: Meet and Greet Old and New Friends
9:30 – 9:40	Welcome Christine Salmon, President, AAUW of KY Kathy Matheny, President, Louisville Branch
9:40 – 10:00	Greetings from AAUW National
10:00 – 10:30	“The Importance of Being in the Rooms Where It (Legislation) Happens” Joni Jenkins, Senior Advisor to US Congressman Morgan McGarvey
10:30 – 10:40	Break
10:40 – 11:30	Increasing AAUW’s Reach Overview of AAUW Policy and Advocacy Resources Developing more C/U Partnerships
11:30 – 12:15	Annual State Members Meeting State Board Report Election of State Board Officers Student and Branch Highlights
12:15- 12:30	Drawing for Door Prize and Closing Remarks Christine Salmon, President AAUW of KY



## Featured Convention Speaker

**Joni Jenkins**

**“The Importance of Women Being in the Rooms  
Where It (Legislation) Happens”**

Joni Jenkins served as the Minority Leader of Kentucky House of Representative from 2019—2023 being the first woman to hold that position. She served a total of 14 terms from 1995 to 2023 representing the Shively area of Louisville in the Kentucky House of Representatives. In her time in the legislature, she caucused with other female legislators and strove to highlight pending legislation which would adversely affect minorities, women, or other less-represented groups to oppose or modify these bills. Joni currently serves as Senior Advisor to US Congressman Morgan McGarvey.

She holds a BA in Communication from the University of Kentucky.

# Public Policy Report

Many will remember the 2023 KY General Assembly session because of SB150 which focused on health services and school policies related to gender and human sexuality. The bill's veto was overridden by legislators.

## Status of 2023 Bills:

**Autonomous Vehicles:** House Bill 135 would provide a legal framework for the use of fully autonomous vehicles in Kentucky. The measure has been sent to the governor.

**Biomarker Testing:** House Bill 180 requires health benefit plans to cover biomarker testing for patients who have been diagnosed with cancer and other diseases. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Bourbon Barrel Tax:** House Bill 5 would, over a 20-year period, phase out the property taxes on distilled spirits that are warehoused in Kentucky. The taxes are paid to state and local taxing districts, and the bill includes some protections for public schools and local governments that use the revenue. HB 5 has been signed by the governor.

**Charles Young Corridor:** Senate Joint Resolution 58 calls for the area from Camp Nelson in Jessamine County to the Kentucky and Ohio border at Mays Lick, Kentucky, to be designated as the Brigadier General Charles Young Memorial Historical Corridor. The governor signed this resolution.

**Child Abuse:** Senate Bill 229 seeks to ensure that law enforcement, social services and other authorities are properly notified and communicating in cases of child abuse. It also requires agencies under investigation to cooperate with authorities. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Child Murder:** House Bill 249 makes the intentional killing of a child under age 12 an aggravating circumstance. That ensures that a person who is guilty of killing a child would either be subject to life in prison without parole or the death penalty. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Coal Power:** Senate Bill 4 requires utility companies to receive permission from the Kentucky Public Service Commission before retiring a fossil fuel-fired electric generating unit. A unit cannot be retired if the move would compromise the quality of service to customers or negatively impact the electric grid. SB 4 became law without the governor's signature.

**Delta-8 THC:** House Bill 544 directs the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services to establish regulations related to delta-8 THC by Aug. 1. That includes product testing and labeling along with prohibitions on the sale of delta-8 products to people under age 21. The governor signed this bill into law.

**DUI Restitution:** Senate Bill 268 would allow courts to order restitution for children whose parents are killed or permanently disabled by an intoxicated driver. This bill has been delivered to the governor.

**Fentanyl Test Strips:** House Bill 353 would remove fentanyl test strips from state prohibitions on drug paraphernalia unless the strips are used in the manufacture or selling of the drug. This bill was sent the governor.

**Gender and Sexuality:** Senate Bill 150 is a wide-ranging bill focused on health services and school policies related to gender and human sexuality. Among many provisions, the legislation bans puberty blockers, hormones and surgeries for transgender minors. SB 150 also calls for greater parental communication and consent on how schools approach gender and sexuality with students. It prohibits instruction on human sexuality in elementary school and requires written parental consent for teaching the subject in later grades. Other instruction on exploring gender identity or sexual orientation is not allowed at any grade level. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

**Gray Machines:** House Bill 594 clarifies that certain gambling machines, often called "gray machines" or "skill games," are illegal in Kentucky. The devices are called gray machines because they have operated in gray area in the state's gambling laws while growing more prevalent at gas stations and convenience stores over the past two years. Anyone who manages or owns the machines would be subject to a \$25,000 fine per device. The governor has signed HB 594 into law.

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**Hazing:** Senate Bill 9, known as “Lofton’s Law,” would elevate reckless or dangerous acts of hazing to a crime. First-degree hazing would qualify as a Class D felony, while second-degree hazing would be a Class A misdemeanor. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Health Care Workers:** House Bill 200 aims to address a shortage in health care workers by creating the Kentucky Health Care Workforce Investment Fund. It will use both public and private money to increase scholarship opportunities in the field. The governor signed HB 200 into law.

**Incest:** House Bill 78 more narrowly defines Kentucky’s incest laws by prohibiting a person from having sexual intercourse with his or her parent, child, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, brother, sister or ancestor or descendant. This bill was signed into law by the governor.

**Juvenile Detention:** House Bill 3 requires that juveniles charged a violent felony offense be detained up to 48 hours pending a detention hearing with a judge, beginning July 1, 2024. The bill also seeks to improve parent accountability, expand mental health interventions and enhance options for restorative justice. Other provisions will reopen the Jefferson County Youth Detention Center. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Juvenile Justice Reform:** Senate Bill 162 will place all eight of Kentucky’s juvenile detention centers under one office with a lead supervisor who reports directly the commissioner. Among many other changes, the bill seeks to increase staffing and training, enhance mental health interventions, and provide better segregation of violent offenders. SB 162 was signed into law by the governor.

**KEES for Workforce Training:** Senate Bill 54 allows students to use a Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship to attend certain proprietary school programs and workforce training programs that are focused on high-demand work sectors. Students could also use KEES funds at an eligible college of art and design. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Literacy Center:** Senate Bill 156 establishes a statewide reading research center for research on early reading models, instructional resources and evidence-based reading practices. The legislation builds on last year’s Read to Succeed Act, a comprehensive effort to improve early literacy outcomes in Kentucky. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Motor Vehicle Racing:** Senate Bill 96 would set up a framework for local governments to grant permits for motor vehicle racing events as long as conditions are met on insurance, security and emergency services. It would also allow local governments to temporarily close roadways and waive traffic regulations for the events. SB 96 has been sent to the governor.

**Physician Wellness:** Senate Bill 12 will allow physicians to participate in wellness and career fatigue programs without disclosing their participation to employers. Supporters say it will help physicians deal with job-related burnout without fear of retaliation. The bill was signed by the governor.

**Police Wellness:** House Bill 207 would allow law enforcement agencies to provide confidential wellness programs to support employee mental health. Specifically, it would shield records of a wellness program from subpoenas and open records requests. The bill has been sent to the governor.

**Postpartum Depression:** Senate Bill 135 calls on the state Cabinet for Health and Family Services to create a panel focused on perinatal mental health disorders and provide related information and assessment tools online. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Public Employee Payroll Deductions:** Senate Bill 7 will cease most automatic payroll deductions that public employees might use for paying union dues or dues to other organizations. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

**Religious Freedom in Schools:** House Bill 547 codifies religious freedoms for public school teachers, faculty and staff, including the right to engage in religious expression and prayer during breaks and to display religious items in personal spaces. The governor signed this bill into law.

**School Materials:** Senate Bill 5 calls on local school boards to create a process for reviewing and resolving parental objections over sexually explicit materials in public schools. This bill became law without the governor's signature.

**School Staffing:** House Bill 32 allows school districts to hire classified personnel, such as cafeteria workers and bus drivers, without a high school diploma or GED. The school district must provide those employees an opportunity obtain a GED or earn relevant licenses or credentials at no cost. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Sex Offenders:** Senate Bill 80 prohibits registered sex offenders from loitering or operating a mobile business within 1,000 feet of schools, daycares, and public playgrounds or swimming pools. The governor signed this bill into law.

**State Education Commissioner:** Under Senate Bill 107, the state education commissioner will be subject to Senate confirmation before taking office. The bill also sets a four-year term for the position. The governor vetoed this bill, but lawmakers overrode the veto.

**Student Discipline:** Under House Bill 538, school boards are required to adopt policies related to expelling students who pose a threat to the safety and wellbeing of others and disciplining students who have physically assaulted, battered or abused personnel or other students off school property – if the incident is likely to disrupt the educational process. HB 538 also provides more flexibility to place students into alternative learning programs. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Taxes:** House Bill 1 is part of a broad, multi-year effort to gradually reduce and eliminate income taxes while also expanding the overall tax base. It would reduce state income taxes from 4.5% to 4% at the start of 2024 and codify a reduction from 5% to 4.5% that took effect earlier this year. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Teacher Shortages:** House Bill 319 aims to ease teacher shortages by cementing Kentucky's place in the Interstate Teacher Mobility Contract if created. The bill also requires the Kentucky Department of Education to establish a state-wide job posting system. The bill has been sent to the governor.

**TikTok Ban:** Senate Bill 20 bans nearly all employees in the state executive and legislative branches from using the social media app TikTok on government-owned networks and devices. The app – owned by the Chinese company ByteDance – is considered a threat to the state's data security. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Tracking Devices:** Senate Bill 199 would, with some exceptions, outlaw the installation of tracking devices on motor vehicles without the consent of the vehicle owner or lessee. The bill has been delivered to the governor.

**Unemployment Insurance:** House Bill 146 makes technical updates to an overhaul of unemployment insurance that lawmakers passed last year. Among the changes, the measure sets the minimum duration of benefits to 16 weeks, instead of 12, and calls on state unemployment officials to advise claimants on educational and training opportunities. The governor signed this bill into law.

**Vehicular Homicide:** House Bill 262 adds the crime of vehicular homicide to state statutes. A person would be guilty of vehicular homicide, a class B felony, if they cause a death while operating a motor vehicle impaired. The governor signed this bill into law.

Teena Halbig, Public Policy Chair

AAUW of KY

### Stay Up-to-Date on AAUW Community Hub

Visit the comprehensive [Community Hub: Tools & Resources Page](#) to stay up to date on the latest training videos, written guides, and a compilation of answers to the most frequently asked questions (FAQs) since launching the Hub.

# KENTUCKY CONGRESSIONAL CONTACTS

## U.S. SENATE

### Sen. Mitch McConnell

(202) 224-2541 – Washington  
(502) 582-6304 – Louisville  
(859) 224-8286 – Lexington  
(859) 578-0188 – Fort Wright  
(606) 864-2026 – London  
(270) 781-1673 – Bowling Green  
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### Sen. Rand Paul

(202) 224-4343 – Washington  
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## U.S. HOUSE

### Rep. James Comer, 1st District

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### Rep. John Yarmuth, 3rd District

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### Rep. Andy Barr, 6th District

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**of Kentucky**

## FIND US!

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