A RESOLUTION encouraging the Legislative Research Commission to establish the Kentucky Emergency Preparedness Task Force.

WHEREAS, since 2008, the Kentucky Department for Public Health has activated the State Health Operations center 125 times to coordinate public health and medical support for catastrophic and historical events including the 2009-2010 H1N1 influenza outbreaks, the 2012 Ohio Valley tornado, the 2014-2015 Ebola virus disease event, the 2016 Zika virus disease event, the 2017-2019 Hepatitis A outbreak, and the COVID-19 virus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, due to its geology and geographical setting, Kentucky is vulnerable to a wide array of natural and manmade hazards, and from 2000 to 2019, Kentucky received 32 major disaster declarations, 2 fire management assistance declarations, and 2 emergency declarations as well as emergency declarations for the COVID-19 virus outbreak; and

WHEREAS, as the lead agency for emergency support, the Department for Public Health's preparedness program, including all branch and field personnel, is 100 percent federally funded; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky's public health and medical preparedness infrastructure faces new and continuing challenges, including the high drug overdose death rate, emerging disease threats such as COVID-19, increased federal work plan and reporting requirements; and a high population of persons at risk because of diseases, disabilities, and low-income; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus outbreak has created a public health crisis that has had an impact on all aspects of society, including the health care system, the economy, educational institutions, family relationships, social activities, and religious practices; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus outbreak has revealed weaknesses in Kentucky's preparedness for emergencies such as shortages of medical supplies, including medical

equipment, diagnostic testing, and treatment availability; a limited pool of medical volunteers; limited state laboratory capacity; insufficient epidemiological capacity locally and at the state health department; a declining number of public health personnel; and an electronic medical data infrastructure that is not integrated; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus outbreak has resulted in the closing or downsizing of small and large businesses putting thousands of Kentuckians out of work and creating an economic crisis for the state; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 virus outbreak has resulted in limited access to public and private institutions such as schools, state and local government offices, banks, religious institutions, and postal services; and

WHEREAS, the short- and long-term impacts of the COVID-19 virus outbreak on the mental health and well-being of Kentuckians is likely to be severe; and

WHEREAS, the Kentucky General Assembly, state and local government agencies, private businesses, health care providers, educational institutions, religious organizations, and thousands of individual Kentuckians and their families have sacrificed personally and have risen to the challenge of addressing the needs of others during the COVID-19 virus outbreak, more could be done in advance of the next emergency to increase the efficacy of these actions; and

WHEREAS, taking action now to have a preparedness plan in place that strengthens health care-related capabilities and emergency public health strategies can help Kentucky be better prepared for the next public health crisis and better protect the health and welfare of the citizens of Kentucky;

NOW, THEREFORE,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:

➔Section 1. The Legislative Research Commission is encouraged to establish the Kentucky Emergency Preparedness Task Force to assess Kentucky's preparedness for

statewide emergencies and to establish a plan of action for addressing components of preparedness that need improvement to ensure that Kentucky is effectively equipped to deal with emerging health threats and natural disasters.

➔Section 2. The duties of the task force shall include but are not limited to:

(1) Hearing testimony from businesses, hospitals and health care providers, medical supply companies, medical laboratories and diagnostic facilities, and agriculture and farming enterprises to gain insight on the effects and challenges they face in a statewide emergency;

(2) Assessing plans and needs for different types of emergencies;

(3) Evaluating the role and effectiveness of executive orders in emergency situations;

(4) Evaluating and planning for state and local government agencies' responses and coordination;

(5) Considering how to support and use research on effective emergency responses;

(6) Assessing the needs of the statewide infection, disease, and immunity tracking system;

(7) Examining the funding needs of different state, local, and private entities to respond effectively in emergencies; and

(8) Exploring ways to strengthen and support lines of communication and the use of technology during emergencies.

➔Section 3. The Kentucky Emergency Preparedness Task Force shall be composed of the following members with final membership of the task force being subject to the consideration and approval of the Legislative Research Commission:

(1) Two members of the House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, one of whom shall be designated by the Speaker of the House of Representatives as a co-chair of the task force;

(2) One member of the House of Representatives appointed by the Minority Floor Leader of the House of Representatives;

(3) Two members of the Senate appointed by the President of the Senate, one of whom shall be designated by the President of the Senate as a co-chair of the task force;

(4) One member of the Senate appointed by the Minority Floor Leader of the Senate;

(5) The secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services or designee;

(6) The commissioner of the Department for Public Health or designee;

(7) The secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet or designee; and

(8) Any other members deemed appropriate by the Legislative Research Commission including other members of the General Assembly and executive branch officials.

➔Section 4. The task force shall meet monthly during the 2020 Interim of the General Assembly. The task force shall submit any findings and recommendations to the Legislative Research Commission for referral to the appropriate committee or committees by December 1, 2020.

➔Section 5. Provisions of this Resolution to the contrary notwithstanding, Legislative Research Commission shall have the authority to alternatively assign the issues identified herein to an interim joint committee or subcommittee thereof, and to designate a study completion date.