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# Courier Journal

Louisville, Kentucky

MONDAY, MARCH 27, 2023 | COURIERJOURNAL.COM

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## Lame-duck lawmakers sent to Hawaii

**7 outgoing Ky. legislators went to Dec. conference on the taxpayer's dime**

**Joe Sonka**  
Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Kentucky taxpayers footed an \$86,095 bill to send 26 state lawmakers to a legislative conference in Hawaii in December — with more than 30% of those funds going to seven lame-duck

legislators who would be out of office in less than a month.

The Council of State Governments hosted their national conference in Honolulu from Dec. 7-10, which a sponsorship packet said would have more than 1,000 state leaders as guests holding panels on emerging public policy issues and challenges facing states, capped off by a luau-themed reception.

Kentucky legislators are typically reimbursed for travel expenses to various legislative conferences and compensated with a daily salary — so long as their

written requests to attend are approved by either the House speaker or Senate president, depending on what chamber they serve in.

Among the seven lame-duck legislators approved and reimbursed \$26,492 for their travel to Hawaii were three who did not run for reelection in 2022, one who lost his primary in May and three who lost in the general election one month before the conference.

Spokespersons for both Republican House Speaker David Osborne and Senate President Robert Stivers defended

the compensation for all legislators attending the conference, saying it is a continuation of policy to reimburse sitting legislators for approved travel to conferences on their official business.

Much like in years past when lame-duck legislators were reimbursed for travel to conferences, others found the use of taxpayer dollars inappropriate for those who would soon be leaving office.

Andrew McNeill, a policy fellow for the small government think tank

**See CONFERENCE, Page 2A**

## Facing a flood of debt



A MSD crewmember operated a remote-control crane while training on the installation of floodwall enclosures at the MSD central maintenance facility on Cane Run Road on Tuesday morning in February in Louisville. The training exercise replicates portions of MSD's flood-protection system, which includes 26.1 miles of floodwall.

JEFF FAUGHENDER/COURIER JOURNAL

## Sewer district has been on troubling financial trajectory

**Connor Giffin**  
Louisville Courier Journal | USA TODAY NETWORK

An expansive levee system traces Louisville's riverbanks, thousands of miles of sewer lines run beneath its streets and drainage systems and pump stations keep those streets dry.

The Metropolitan Sewer District is responsible for all

of it.

And for years, the utility has been on a troubling financial trajectory.

MSD's debt has grown by 50% over the past decade, currently sitting at \$2.7 billion, records show. It's a sum that's not only disproportionate to other similar

**See DEBT, Page 4A**

## Random judges to review warrants

**Practice adopted after DOJ report on LMPD**

**Andrew Wolfson**  
Louisville Courier Journal  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Ending the practice of Louisville Metro Police officers cherry-picking judges to sign search warrants, Jefferson Circuit Court judges have adopted a practice in which they will be randomly selected to review the requests.

Under the policy, which the judges approved in a vote, law enforcement officers must now take applications for warrants to the Jefferson Court Administrator, which will select the judge.

Chief Judge Mitch Perry informed interim police Chief Jacquelyn Gwinn-Villaroel of the new practice in a March 17 letter, a copy of which was provided to The Courier Journal. The policy had gone into effect a day earlier.

The letter said an on-call judge will still be available to review District Court cases.

The move comes about two weeks after a U.S. Department of Justice investigation into Louisville Metro and LMPD was released that scrutinized the process by which the police

**See WARRANTS, Page 2A**

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