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The Times Journal

OPINION

March 10, 2022

DATE BY THIS FEATURES INDICATED BY LINE

MAKES WITH
LAS VEGAS SUN-JOURNAL

NOW THAT
MASK
MANDATES
ARE BEING
LIFTED...

I'M LOOKING
FORWARD
TO GETTING
BACK TO
NORMAL.

IF I CAN
AFFORD
IT.



By Paula L. Ratliff,
BSC, MS
Criminologist and
Author
Jobe Publishing
Contributor

State & National

Former Louisville Police Detective Brett Hankison found not guilty on charges from Breonna Taylor's death

On March 3, Detective Brett Hankison was found not guilty in the trial involving the death of Breonna Taylor on March 13, 2020.

The jury deliberated for nearly three hours before returning the verdict which is the final action to conclude the criminal charges from the death of Taylor, 26, who was killed when gunfire erupted inside of her apartment as the Louisville Metro Police Department attempted to execute a search warrant.

Hankison, a 20-year veteran in policing, was charged with three counts of wanton endangerment for three bullets that traveled through the walls of Taylor's apartment into an adjoining apartment.

No one was charged in her death.

Taylor was in her apartment with a friend, who upon hearing a commotion at the door, armed himself and began firing when the door was breached.

The investigation confirmed that her friend, Kenneth Walker fired first at the police, although he originally stated that Taylor was shooting the gun.

Kentucky Assistant Attorney General Barbara Whaley admonished the jurors that this was not a trial to address the validity of the search warrant or the procedures by which the police executed the search warrant.

It was about three people who came dangerously close to being shot when Hankison exhibited "extreme indifference to human life" when he fired into Taylor's home.

She focused heavily on the three neighbors that lived in the adjoining unit and the fear they encountered that night.

Defense counsel, Stew Matthews provided a copy of the civil suit the three neighbors who lived together in the apartment have filed against Hankison and others for \$12.1 million for each account.

Throughout the trial, Matthews focused on Hankison's actions and perceptions based on the information that was available to him.

"This veteran officer responded appropriately during a chaotic situation that was a threat to him and others. There's not going to be any dispute about the evidence. The issue is: What was the reasoning behind his firing those shots?"

"He did what he was trained to do: Shoot until the threat was stopped. He was justified. Officers had no idea what they were getting into" said Matthews. He enlisted body camera footage and dispatch tapes to affirm Hankison's actions.

After the not guilty verdict, he stated, "We are thrilled, that the jury realized Detective Hankison was doing his job and that officers will respond when fired upon."

Hankison began his career in law enforcement by earning a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice, then joining the Lexington-Fayette Police Department in Lexington, Kentucky.

He worked with Lexington for approximately three years and then pursued a lateral transfer to

RATLIFF,

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Legislation Funds, Adds Authorizers For Public Charter Schools

By Jim Waters



Five years after Kentucky's General Assembly passed legislation allowing public charter schools, a bill filed by House Majority Whip Rep. Chad McCoy, R-Bardstown, could finally allow some to open in the Bluegrass State.

House Bill 9 builds on the framework created by the late House Majority Leader Rep. John "Bam" Carney, who led the effort to get legislation passed in 2017 that not only allowed charters throughout the Bluegrass State but also insisted on strong oversight of these publicly funded schools of choice which, like their conventional counterparts, are free to all students.

Charters also have freedom from rules and regulations that can hinder educators in traditional public schools.

These innovative public schools have their own boards and often focus on particular areas like STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) programs, career readiness or the arts.

Setting these schools

and their students up for success means empowering charter boards to assemble teams of administrators and teachers who best fit their schools' focus.

In exchange for such flexibility, charters in their agreements with authorizers specify how their schools will be organized and managed, what students will achieve and how that success will be measured.

As with the 2017 legislation, HB 9 rightly requires failing charter schools to be held accountable, including the possibility of being shut down.

However, the bill also rightly expands the length of charter contracts to at least five years.

This matters because charters often enroll children who fall behind in conventional public schools, so they must be given adequate, but reasonably limited, time to help students turn their academic performance around.

Based on what's happening in many of the 44 states and Washington, D.C., which have had robust charter policies for several years, poor children in Kentucky will benefit the most from McCoy's bill.

Pennsylvania's education department, for example, reports that 65% of the Keystone State's 170,000 charter school students are

minority and low-income.

Giving these at-risk students, who disproportionately attend lower-performing conventional public schools, an opportunity to enroll in quality charters will also likely help close longstanding academic achievement gaps.

HB 9 builds out the 2017 legislation in three important ways:

While some federal dollars and other revenue sources are available for charters, their primary source of funding will flow from SEEK dollars – the state revenue stream for each public school student in the commonwealth.

SEEK monies doled out by Frankfort in differing amounts for counties based on a complicated funding formula will follow students to any charter they choose to attend, even if it's not in the district in which they live.

However, local property tax dollars will only follow students who attend charters in their resident districts.

Additional dollars will be provided by the state for charters providing transportation for their students.

The new bill expands authorizers beyond local school boards and the Kentucky Board of Education (KBE) to allow public and accredited non-public four-year universities to choose to authorize charters.

Authorizers also include

the mayors of Louisville and Lexington, nonprofit organizations approved by the KBE and a new statewide commission whose members are nominated by the governor and confirmed by the Kentucky Senate.

Allowing more authorizers lessens the possibility that committed applicants with stellar plans for quality charter schools will get turned down by local school board members with inherent biases against any and all alternatives for parents – no matter how solid those submissions.

Although HB 9 allows for new charter schools anywhere in the state, applications in districts with fewer than 5,000 students must include a Memorandum of Agreement from the local school board to be considered.

The thoughtful and comprehensive approach taken by McCoy and those who've worked with him in a politically challenging environment for school choice is, no doubt, receiving a thumbs up and a "well done" from "The Beyond" by a lawmaker who was passionate about policy that best serves the youngest – and often neediest – among us.

Jim Waters is president and CEO of the Bluegrass Institute for Public Policy Solutions, Kentucky's free-market think tank. Read previous columns at www.bipps.org. He can be reached at jwaters@freedomkentucky.com and @bipps on Twitter.

Dear Editor,

Many of you may have recently learned of the upcoming retirement of Dr. John Kilgallin. While I am happy that he has achieved this milestone event in his life and career, at the same time I acknowledge this transition as one of loss for Russell County's medical community.

Dr. Kilgallin has served his entire career with a laser focus and clear mission to keep Russell County healthy. You may have been a patient in his clinic, seen him for

a sports physical, or in the local ER. Dr. Kilgallin has been instrumental in keeping us all healthy, in helping to heal wounds, or treating a chronic illness. He has been there for our happiest moments, celebrating with us at the news of new baby, or he may have held the hand of a loved one at the end of their life. No one has the unique ability to touch lives in a more impactful way than that of the family practice doctor. And certainly, the degree of Dr. Kilgallin's compassion for his patients cannot be disputed.

Dr. Kilgallin came to serve Russell County by choice. He was not a native of the area and could have easily selected any other county or state in which to practice medicine. He chose to make us healthy, to be our friend, and to stand by us when we needed help, comfort, and guidance. To our good fortune, he chose us, he chose Russell County. By doing so, he chose to make this his home and all of us his family.

Years ago, as a young college student, I came to Dr. Kilgallin for a physical exam as a prerequisite

for entrance into medical school. I recall that he shook my hand as I left, wishing me the best. It's odd how life sometimes brings us full circle. Now, it's my turn to shake his hand, to honor and recognize him as a friend, a mentor, a valued colleague. I wish Dr. Kilgallin all the best and remain grateful for his decision to make Russell County his home and all of us his family. The benefits of that decision will continue to resonate in all of us into the future.

Eric Loy, MD
Family Medical Center, Inc.