

## MAY - JUNE 2012 GRAND JURY REPORT

We, the members of the May-June 2012 Grand Jury, would like to express our gratitude for the opportunity to serve as Grand Jurors in Christian County during this term. We have learned a great deal about the justice system, and we have been made aware of several issues that we would like to address in this report.

First, we would like to thank the law enforcement officers throughout Christian County who take risks and strive every day to ensure the safety of our citizens. Every one that appeared before us was very professional and thorough in the investigation and presentation of their cases. Thanks also to the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney for their assistance in guiding us through our service as jurors.

Next, we were presented with the report from the May 2012 Primary Election. Christian County Clerk Mike Kem explained the election process to us, and he ensured us that there were no inconsistencies or allegations of voter fraud.

We also heard many cases involving the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, and we would like to encourage the legislature to look at overhauling their regulations and standard operating procedures. The Commonwealth of Kentucky needs more social workers, more resources for them, and more oversight into the carrying out of their duties. Many of these cases involved state benefits, such as food stamps, being obtained through fraud or false statements. It seems that most of these cases involved substantial amounts of money, tens of thousands of dollars, paid out by the Commonwealth of Kentucky. After learning about the ways that these individuals fraudulently deceived the Commonwealth, we feel like more effort should be made on the front-end to ensure that benefits are not just handed out to people who are taken at their word when they complete their paperwork. We have learned about resources that state workers could use to check up on the information provided to them by the applicants. However, internal investigations do not currently start until there is some particular suspicion or report made regarding potential abuse of the system.

It seems that the Commonwealth of Kentucky could prevent the loss of millions of dollars each year by doing a little more investigation into the facts provided by an applicant for benefits - on the front-end rather than after the loss of the money. We also feel strongly that anyone who receives benefits from the Commonwealth of Kentucky should be drug tested. If those of us who work for our paycheck every week are required to pass a drug test for our employer, why shouldn't people who receive free money be required to do the same?

We were overwhelmed by the extent and variety of criminal activity that takes place in Christian County, including homicides, drug possession and trafficking, assaults, sexual offenses, thefts and a number of other types of crimes. We are also much more aware of the presence of criminal gang activity within our county, and we believe that more effort needs to be directed at ridding our community of criminal gangs. It was an extremely eye-opening experience, and we are grateful to those members of the justice system who work tirelessly to protect us all.

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