



ANDY BESHEAR
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER

Secretary of State
Frankfort
Kentucky

2026 – 362
June 15, 2026

**RELATING TO PARDONS
FOR THOSE WHO HELPED OTHERS ESCAPE SLAVERY**

On July 4, 1776, the Founders of this Nation met to adopt a Declaration of Independence from Great Britain.

In doing so, the Framers captured the very essence of the American Dream. Kentucky's own Abraham Lincoln would later say America was "conceived in liberty."

But our Great Nation – like ourselves – is imperfect. And, as a People, we have struggled for a quarter of a millennia to perfect this Union.

Like others before it, this country allowed the immoral and unconscionable practice of human slavery. Millions of Black men and women; young and old; fathers, mothers, daughters, and sons lived and died enslaved. And, the forces of power, money, and immorality fought viciously to preserve the wretched and unnatural institution of slavery.

In 1835, the Kentucky General Assembly went so far as to criminalize the very act of helping people escape their bondage to enjoy the same God-given and unalienable liberty and freedoms they were so unjustly denied. That immoral law, called "enticement," provided:

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, That if any person not having lawful, or color of claim thereto, shall be guilty of seducing or enticing any slave to leave his lawful owner or possessor; and to escape to parts without the limits of the state, to any of the other states, or a foreign county; or shall make, or finish, or aid and assist in making or furnishing a forged pass of freedom, or any other forged paper purporting to be a deed of emancipation, or will, or other instrument, liberating, or purporting to liberate, any slave, or shall in any manner aid or assist such slave in making his escape from such owner or possessor, to another state, or foreign country; every person so offending, shall, on conviction, be sentenced to confinement in the jail and penitentiary of this commonwealth, a period not less than two years, nor more than twenty years.

But many brave Kentuckians and Americans were undeterred by slavery or the powerful interests trying to protect it. Despite laws meant to keep others in chains, these people helped the enslaved to escape their bondage and reach out toward freedom. Some of those individuals were conductors on the Underground Railroad.

Elijah Anderson, a free Black man, was one of the most active Underground Railroad conductors in Kentucky. He lived in Madison, Indiana and led "freedom expeditions" into Kentucky. He is credited with helping about 1,000 people to freedom. He was arrested in Louisville attempting to cross the Ohio and died in the Kentucky State Penitentiary – which was located steps from where this Order is being signed today.



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Others, like Julett Miles, a free Black woman, was convicted of this unjust law for attempting to free her own children, who she learned were going to be sold in New Orleans. Julett paid the ultimate sacrifice for trying to save her children, dying during her imprisonment.

Some individuals convicted of this law, like Irish immigrant Thomas Brown, who was arrested for “abducting slaves” in Union County, were severely beaten for their actions during their imprisonment.

And, while their actions were unlawful at that time and place, their actions are timeless and noble.

Less than century after the signing of the Declaration, during the midst of the Civil War, President Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation declaring all enslaved African American people free and entitled to absolute equality of personal and property rights.

President Lincoln later consecrated the hallowed ground of Gettysburg by dedicating the American people to a new task, a “new birth of Freedom,” one without slavery, one where *all* people are equal in the eyes of the law.

The freedom he had declared in the Emancipation Proclamation was finally realized when Major General Gordon Granger announced it in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865 – Juneteenth, a day we recognize as one of thanksgiving and a holiday in the Commonwealth.

During that great struggle, Americans – Black and White – fought side by side to preserve the Union and restore all Americans to their birthright of freedom and equality.

That work continues today. The words of the Great Seal of the Commonwealth are “United we Stand, Divided we Fall.” They provide a reminder that we must choose – each day – whether to adhere to the founding principles of the American Dream – that all men are created equal.

Today, 250 years after the birth of this Nation, we make that choice. We recognize those forgotten souls who bravely sacrificed their own lives, fortunes, and sacred honor to preserve the liberty and freedoms of others.

But recognition alone is not enough. We now lift the weight of unjust conviction and imprisonment.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Andy Beshear, Governor of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, by virtue of the authority vested in me by Sections 77, 145, and 150 of the Kentucky Constitution, do hereby posthumously grant a full, complete, and unconditional pardon for the crime of “enticement” to the individuals herein below:



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1. **Elijah Anderson**, a Black man, convicted in Trimble County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his term of imprisonment from the unknown date of his conviction until his death in 1861.
2. **Dick Baker**, a Black man, convicted in Trigg County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1858 to 1861.
3. **James Blackburn**, a Black man, convicted in Mason County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence from 1850 to 1859.
4. **Thomas Brown**, a White man, convicted in Union County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1855 to 1857.
5. **Richard Buckner**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1858 to 1860.
6. **John Cain**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1850 to 1852.
7. **George Carter**, a Black man, convicted in Scott County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from the unknown date of his conviction until his death in 1853.
8. **James Carter**, a White man, convicted in Graves County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1861 to 1862.
9. **Paul Coleman**, a Black man, convicted in Fayette County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1853 to 1858
10. **Cornelius Cook**, a White man, convicted in Greenup County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1858 to 1860.
11. **George Dayton**, a White man, convicted in Fayette County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1853 to 1858.



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12. **John Dixon**, a Black man, convicted in Fayette County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his term of imprisonment from 1851 to 1852.
13. **William Dixon**, a White man, convicted in Woodford County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1852 to 1859.
14. **John Drummond**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, who served his sentence from the unknown date of his imprisonment until his death in 1850.
15. **Ruben King**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1844 to 1854.
16. **Samuel Gordon**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1862 to 1868.
17. **Joseph Gray**, a Black man, convicted in Mercer County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1845 to 1848.
18. **Samuel Hardy**, a White man, convicted in Scott County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1863 until his escape on Oct. 17, 1863.
19. **William Jeter**, a White man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence from the unknown date of his imprisonment until his death in 1858.
20. **D. Johnson**, a White man, convicted in Marion County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his or her sentence of imprisonment from 1846 to 1851.
21. **Isaac Johnson**, a White man, convicted in Kenton County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his or her sentence of imprisonment from 1851 to 1853.
22. **John A. Kinser**, a White man, convicted in Wayne County, Kentucky, and who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1854 to 1864.
23. **Cleveland Lang**, a White man, convicted in Marion County, Kentucky, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1846 to 1851.



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24. **William Lewis**, a White man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1858 to 1860.
25. **Jesse McDaniel**, a White man, convicted in an unknown jurisdiction of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1837 to 1839.
26. **Neil McDaniel**, a White man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1850 to 1851.
27. **Henson McIntosh**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his or her sentence of imprisonment from 1861 to 1868.
28. **Martin**, a Black man of unknown location, convicted of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, served his or her sentence of imprisonment from 1833 to 1835.
29. **Julett Miles**, a Black woman, convicted in Bracken County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served her sentence of imprisonment from the unknown date of her imprisonment until her death in 1859.
30. **Doctor Perkins**, a Black man, convicted in Bracken County, Kentucky, who served his or her sentence of imprisonment from the unknown date of his or her imprisonment until his or her death in 1854.
31. **German Pin**, a Black man, convicted in Henderson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his or her sentence from the unknown date of his or her imprisonment until his or her death in 1857.
32. **William Pister**, a White man, convicted in Nicholas County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1855 to 1857.
33. **William Ray**, a Black man, convicted in Greenup County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his term of imprisonment from 1844 to 1851.



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34. **John Russell**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1846 to 1856.
35. **Charles Smith**, a Black man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1856 to 1859.
36. **Charles Goodwin**, a White man, convicted in Butler County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1864 to 1866.
37. **John Smith**, a White man, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1859 to 1864.
38. **Georgeanna Stephenson**, a Black woman, convicted in Jefferson County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served her sentence of imprisonment from 1853 to 1855.
39. **R.J. Tyner**, a White man, convicted in Fulton County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1857 to 1859.
40. **George Williams**, a Black man, convicted in Mason County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence from the unknown date of his imprisonment until his death in 1858.
41. **Susan D. Woods**, a White woman, convicted in Hopkins County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served her sentence of imprisonment from the 1859 to 1861.
42. **Oswald Wright**, a Black man, convicted in Meade County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1859 to 1864.
43. **Josiah Ward**, a White man, convicted in Russell County, Kentucky of harboring, aiding, or enticing Black slaves to escape enslavement, who served his sentence of imprisonment from 1853 to 1857.

I hereby return to them all rights and privileges of citizens of the Commonwealth that they possessed or should have possessed at the time of their convictions.



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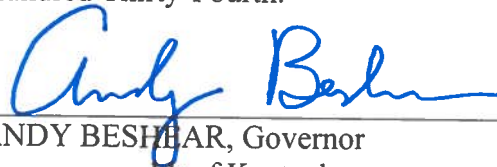
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Done at the Capitol, in the City of Frankfort,
this 15th day of June, in the year of our
Lord Two Thousand and Twenty-Six and in
the year of the Commonwealth the Two
Hundred Thirty-Fourth.


ANDY BESHEAR, Governor
Commonwealth of Kentucky

MICHAEL G. ADAMS
Secretary of State