



# 2013: A Year in Review



I'm a firm believer that you can't know where you're going unless you know where you've been. Looking back on 2013, I'm proud of what we have accomplished and excited about the direction in which we're headed.

As the Commonwealth's chief election official and chief business officer, my office has continued to expand on initiatives that are opening Kentucky's doors to business and maintaining free and fair elections. We also had tremendous success with an ambitious legislative agenda, helping pass six new laws that will keep Kentucky moving forward. And in my capacity as chief advocate for civic engagement, I've focused on making sure Kentuckians of all ages have the tools they need to be active citizens.

I can't wait to build on this strong foundation in 2014 and beyond. Together, we can ensure Kentucky's future is bright!

*Alison Lundergan Grimes, Kentucky Secretary of State*

## Protecting those who protect us

In 2012 I had the privilege to see firsthand in the Middle East our military's commitment to the Commonwealth and our nation. I respect them deeply, and as chief election official I am honored to work on their behalf to ensure that no military or overseas voter ever has to question whether his or her vote counts.

The Military Heroes Voting Initiative, enacted in 2013, is a step forward in preserving Kentucky's 65,000 active military members, their families, and veterans' voting rights. This law will allow military and overseas citizens to register to vote and update their registration online, ensure they have sufficient time to vote in special elections, and extend existing protections to state and local elections and National Guard members. My office received a \$2 million federal grant to implement the electronic ballot delivery system.

I have also been able to support Kentucky's troops and veterans throughout the year at deployment and award ceremonies and job fairs. I'm honored to show my appreciation for our military and the sacrifices they and their families make, and I am proud to continue to work to ensure their rights are protected.



# Safeguarding the ballot box

As Kentucky's chief election official, ensuring that every eligible Kentuckian's voice is heard while maintaining the integrity of our election is paramount. In 2013 I was proud to support important bills that help achieve that goal.

Under one of these new laws, domestic violence victims can have their personal information redacted from publicly available voter records, ensuring that no Kentuckian will be discouraged from voting out of fear for his or her own safety, or the safety of his or her children. Another new law will keep confidential until after an election the identities of absentee voters, protecting their ability to vote without interference.

We are also constantly striving to ensure that all Kentuckians are able to vote independently and privately, regardless of disability. To that end, we have worked throughout the year with our fellow advocates for individuals with disabilities to continue implementing the Help America Vote Act and develop programs and resources to protect the rights of voters with disabilities.



## Cutting the red tape

Since taking office, I have worked hard to modernize and streamline our laws and processes to help businesses interact with government more efficiently, including by expanding the Kentucky Business One Stop Portal. The Portals goal is to provide a single, unified point of entry for businesses to interact with state government. It is already saving significant time – up to 75 percent – for processing

business registrations, and steps we took this year will create even more efficiency.

In 2013 I supported a law that will create a uniform business identification number for use across state agencies, streamlining the way entities interact with government and facilitating data sharing among agencies and the expansion of the Portal. My office also collected occupational license tax forms from across the state and made them available both on our website and the One Stop Portal, making it easier for businesses to satisfy their tax obligations.

## Shaping Kentucky's future together

In 2012 I worked with state and national civic partners to release Kentucky's first-ever *Civic Health Index*. The *Index* uses Census data to examine various aspects of civic participation, such as voter turnout, political involvement, volunteerism, group membership, and community and family relationships.

From November 2012 through May 2013, I hosted a statewide series of 15 roundtable discussions at Kentucky's universities and colleges to create new partnerships and formulate innovative strategies to improve civic engagement in Kentucky. In addition to panels comprised of elected officials and leaders in education, business, and the community, active audiences filled with students and local residents shared their experiences and insights.

The forums and findings have sparked an ongoing discussion about the common good in Kentucky, and we're continuing to work with partners around the Commonwealth to create tools for future success and increase civic engagement moving forward.

