



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY

STATE SENATE

September 29, 2025

Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services
Attn: Board Chair and Members
118 James Court, Suite 50
Lexington, Kentucky 40505

Dear Chair and Members of the Board:

I am writing in strong support of Powell County paramedic Eddie Barnes and his teammate as you review their actions during the May snakebite incident at the Kentucky Reptile Zoo.

I recognize the board has stated that the majority of cases brought forward are either dismissed or resolved with education. This case should clearly fall into that category. The paramedics acted in consultation with an emergency physician, administered antivenom at the patient's request, and saved a life. Punishing such a response serves no public good.

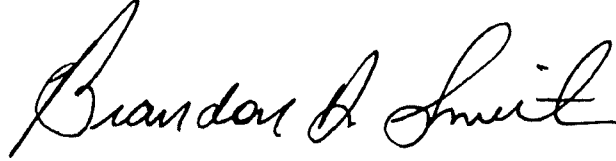
Instead of being celebrated, these professionals find themselves at the center of a story drawing national attention. Kentucky is being portrayed as a place where rules and regulations are valued above human life. The result has been an embarrassing spotlight on the handling of this matter.

I believe this case highlights the need to revisit the regulation that restricts antivenom to wilderness paramedics. Safety requirements are important, but they should include narrow exceptions when lives are at immediate risk, particularly when victims authorize treatment and medical consultation is obtained. A more balanced approach would prevent cases like this from reaching a disciplinary hearing.

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I urge the board to dismiss this case and to take a broader look at how rules are applied in matters of life and death. Kentucky cannot afford to have paramedics hesitate in an emergency because they fear their careers will be destroyed for making the right call.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Brandon D. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Brandon" being the most prominent part.

Brandon Smith
State Senator, 30th District

BS/di

CC: Eddie Slone, executive director, Kentucky Board of Emergency Medical Services
John R. Langefeld, commissioner, Kentucky Department for Public Health
Dr. Steven Stack, secretary, Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services