

Senator Givens' Update: Week 7 of the Regular Session



Senate report
State Sen. David Givens

As we reach the midpoint of the 2026 Legislative Session, I want to provide a straightforward update on where things stand and what you can expect in the weeks ahead. So far, we have remained focused on steady, deliberate progress. Nine of the Senate Majority's 10 priority bills have now passed the Senate, reflecting months of interim preparation and careful review in committee and on the floor.

The Budget Process: Where Things Stand

I have heard from many of you regarding the early budget proposal, House Bill 500, filed in the House of Representatives. I appreciate those who have taken the time to reach out. It is important to be clear about the process. The state budget traditionally begins in the House. The proposal currently being discussed has not yet passed that chamber. It remains subject to committee revisions and floor amendments before it ever reaches the Senate. No final budget decisions have been made.

When the House sends its proposal to the Senate, we will carefully review the measure, examine its long-term impacts, and make revisions where needed. That responsibility is outlined in our Constitution, and it is one the Senate takes seriously.

As we approach budget deliberations, several principles continue to guide our work:

- Maintain a structurally balanced budget, ensuring recurring revenues support recurring expenses.
- Exercise discipline with one-time dollars to avoid creating long-term instability.
- Make transparent, thoughtful decisions that protect both taxpayers and public employees.
- There is significant work ahead before a final budget is enacted, and I will continue to keep you informed as that process unfolds.
- Military Kids Day
- On Thursday, we welcomed military families from across Kentucky for Military Kids Day at the Capitol. These young people serve in their own way: through resilience, adaptability, and quiet sacrifice. It was an honor to recognize them and thank their families for their continued service to our Commonwealth and nation.

Bills Advancing

This Week
This week, the Senate passed Senate Bill (SB) 141, legislation developed through thoughtful collaboration to address Kentucky's legal advertising requirements. For years, questions have surfaced about how to maintain transparency in government while adapting to changes in how citizens access information. SB 141 represents a balanced solution shaped through conversations with stakeholders, local officials, and members of both chambers. Moreover, SB 172 became the first bill enacted during the 2026 Regular Session, as it was signed into law by the governor. The measure addresses sudden spikes in electric bills by allowing fuel cost increases to be spread over time rather than applied in a single surcharge. This approach promotes greater stability and predictability for families, seniors on fixed incomes, and small businesses.

Several other bills also passed the Senate this week:

- SB 9 supports housing development by streamlining regulations and expanding financing tools to help local communities grow and increase access to affordable homes.
- SB 47 expands state death benefits and tuition waivers to include search and rescue personnel who lose their

lives in the line of duty. SB 69 creates the Autism Spectrum Disorder Trust Fund and allows voluntary tax refund contributions to support autism research and services. SJR 74 directs the creation of a statewide fiscal map of substance use disorder programs to improve coordination and accountability. SB 85 allows public pension benefits to be placed in a Special Needs Trust to help families protect long-term care while maintaining eligibility for support programs. SB 104 establishes a safety zone around first responders and strengthens penalties for those who interfere or threaten them, while protecting constitutional rights. SB 152 strengthens school leadership by affirming principals' authority while maintaining input from teachers and parents. SB 159 improves coordination in missing persons cases to help locate individuals more quickly and support families.

As always, it is an honor to serve you in Frankfort. If you have questions or ideas, feel free to contact my office at (502)-564-8100 or email me at David.Givens@kylegislature.gov. You can learn more about bills, committees, and the work of the Kentucky General Assembly by visiting www.legislature.ky.gov.

SB 141 resolves longstanding debate over transparency and cost

The Kentucky Senate has passed Senate Bill (SB) 141, legislation sponsored by Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens, R-Greensburg, to modernize the Commonwealth's legal advertising requirements while protecting both transparency and taxpayer dollars. The measure passed the Senate with a 36-1 vote. Presenting the bill on the Senate floor, Givens described the legislation as the resolution of a longstanding and often recurring issue for lawmakers. "This is one of those rare occasions when a vexing, recurring issue finally resolves itself," Givens said. "For years, we have wrestled with the balance between ensuring the public knows what its government is doing and being mindful of the cost to taxpayers." Kentucky law requires cities and counties to publish legal notices to inform the public of government actions. Historically, those notices have appeared in print newspapers, and while digital publication has become more common, print requirements remain in statute. SB 141 addresses the tension between maintaining broad public access and managing the expense associated with required advertising. The legislation is the result of collaborative work during the interim between the Kentucky Press Association, the Kentucky League of Cities, and the Kentucky Association of Counties. Under SB 141, public agencies will be charged the lowest advertising rate offered to other customers, ensuring taxpayer protections while preserving required publication. The bill also clarifies qualifying newspaper standards, updates procedures and timelines, and reflects the continued transition into expanded online access. Givens emphasized that strong public notice laws are essential to maintaining an informed electorate and transparent government. "An informed public is crucial to sustaining this ongoing experiment in self-government," Givens said. "SB 141 protects that principle while recognizing fiscal responsibility and the evolving way Kentuckians access information." SB 141 now heads to the Kentucky House of Representatives for further consideration.

Representative Bivens' Update: Child care, public safety, education top House Orders



State Representative
Ryan Bivens

In the Kentucky legislature, the term "Orders of the Day" refers to the official agenda of business that either the House or Senate will consider on a given day. It lists the bills, resolutions, and motions scheduled for debate, amendment, or vote on the chamber floor.

Before a bill reaches the Orders, it must follow a structured process. First, it is filed by a legislator and assigned to a standing committee based on subject matter. The committee reviews the bill, holds hearings where testimony from the public, stakeholders, and experts can be presented. Bills must receive at least one hearing before being reported out of committee, though some legislation may

have multiple hearings. Once a committee approves a bill, it is either placed on the Orders of the Day or reassigned to another committee for further consideration. This happens a great deal with bills that would cost the state money or impact multiple agencies or programs. Once it clears the committee process, legislation is placed on the Orders of the Day and ready for full House (or Senate) consideration. However, just because legislation is on the Orders does not mean it will pass the House, simply that it is ready to be considered. The Orders are basically an agenda, ensuring an organized flow of legislative business and providing members and the public notice of what will be considered each day. Here are a handful of the bills that were on the Orders and cleared the House this week: HB 6 expands safe,



LRC photo
Rep. Ryan Bivens, R-Hodgenville, takes a picture of the vote board as his bill related to on-farm animal health, House Bill 111, passes on the House floor Friday.

affordable child care for working parents, removes barriers for children with disabilities, and promotes community-based innovation. It strengthens the Child Care Assistance Program, enhances quality ratings, improves transparency, and permanently establishes the CCAP income exclusion - creating a more accessible, high-quality system that supports families and children statewide. HB 10 would

strengthen accountability, transparency, and continuity of government during gubernatorial transitions in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. HB 139 would strengthen Kentucky's

election system by ensuring only eligible voters are on the rolls, standardizing candidate filing forms, and requiring timely delivery of election materials and faster results reporting. It sets school district boundaries before school board filing deadlines, adjusts common school tax rate elections, requires districts to post election bonds, mandates pre-election testing of tabulating equipment for all elections, updates write-in procedures, allows withdrawals to trigger party nominations, and bars officials from certifying votes for deceased, withdrawn, or disqualified candidates. HB 213 would provide city and county governments and universities the ability to reemploy retired police officers without incurring employer retirement contributions. HB 257 would shift Kentucky's education accountability to a growth-focused model by modifying the state system in four ways: reducing state testing, tracking individual student growth, allowing districts to adopt local quality indicators to boost community engagement, and prioritizing attendance. Kentucky would join 36 states using chronic absenteeism as an accountability measure.

See Bivens, page 10A

House committee passes measure to protect farmer's rights

Members of the House Standing Agriculture Committee passed HB 111, a bill that would allow farmers and their veterinarians to make decisions about on-farm animal care and health practices. This bill, sponsored by Representative Ryan Bivens of Hodgenville, would give the decision-making power to farmers and any other professional in which they seek advice from for the determination and implementation of health care practices on the on-farm animals. "On every farm, farmers and their vets work hand in hand to protect the health of every animal," said Bivens. "HB 111 ensures that decisions about animal care and farm health practices stay where they belong, with farmers." The bill gives farmers and their veterinarians full control over on-farm animal health care and production practices, as long as the veterinarian has legal responsibility for the animals under state law. It protects these everyday animal health decisions from outside interference. "This legislation protects both animal welfare and the integrity of Kentucky agriculture," Bivens added. "It reinforces science-based decision-making while respecting the role of farmers."

Wage increase for RNs and LPNs



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