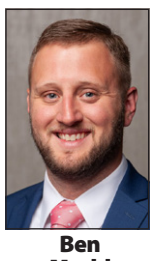
ELECTION 2026: 14TH DISTRICT STATE SENATE

Mudd trying to keep Senate seat in GOP hands

BY THE LARUE COUNTY HERALD-NEWS

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AND INTENTIONS AS KENTUCKY SENATOR?

My goal is to be an effective voice for the people of District 14 and bring a practical, common-sense approach to Frankfort. I want Kentucky to remain a place where families can afford to live, businesses can grow, and children have opportunities to build their futures here.


Ben Mudd

That means continuing to responsibly reduce Kentucky's income tax, controlling government spending, supporting our schools while demanding accountability, protecting family farms and small businesses, and improving access to affordable healthcare.

I also believe government works best when elected officials listen first. District 14 is made up of five unique counties, and each community has different needs. I intend to be accessible, present throughout the district, and willing to work with anyone who shares the goal of making Kentucky stronger.

At the end of my service, I want people to know that I worked hard, kept my word, and never forgot who I represented.

WHAT COMMITTEES WOULD YOU WANT TO SERVE ON? WHY?

I would be interested in serving on the Senate Health Services, Appropriations and Revenue, Agriculture Committees, and the Public Pension Oversight Board.

As a pharmacist, healthcare leader, and small business owner, I have spent my career working at the intersection of healthcare policy, patient care, and business. Health Services would allow me to bring that experience to issues including healthcare affordability, Medicaid, workforce shortages, and access to care.

Appropriations and Revenue is important because policy decisions requires responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars. As Kentucky continues reducing the income tax, we must remain disciplined about spending and prioritize essential services.

Agriculture is important to District 14 and to me. I was raised on my family's farm and understand its importance to our rural communities.

I would welcome serving on the Public Pension Oversight Board to ensure Kentucky meets its pension obligations and protects the retirement security our public employees were promised.

IF ELECTED, WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF LEGISLATION YOU WOULD INTRODUCE? WHY?

One piece of legislation I would work to pass is senior property-tax protection. Similar proposals have been filed in previous sessions, including legislation in 2026 that would have protected homeowners age 65 and older from increases in the assessed value of their permanent residence. That proposal passed the Senate unanimously but did not become law.

I believe this is an issue worth continuing to pursue. Many seniors have lived in their homes for decades and are on fixed incomes. Their ability to pay does not increase simply because property values around them rise.

My goal would be to build on the work that has already been done and help get a responsible proposal across the finish line. We should protect seniors from being taxed out of homes they have worked a lifetime to own while also considering the impact on local governments and schools.

For me, this is about predictability, fairness, and keeping our commitment to older Kentuckians.

IN REGARD TO THE STATE'S BUDGET, WHAT ONE AREA DO YOU FEEL NEEDS TO BE PRIORITY? WHY?

My priority would be ensuring that Kentucky is meeting its obligations while maintaining the fiscal discipline necessary to keep taxes low.

A budget is about priorities. Before creating new programs or expanding government, we should make sure we are funding the responsibilities Kentuckians expect government to perform, including education, public safety, transportation infrastructure, and services for our most vulnerable citizens.

I believe we have to evaluate existing spending and aggressively address fraud, waste, and abuse, particularly in programs like Medicaid. Every dollar lost to an improper payment or unnecessary expense is a dollar that cannot be used to care for someone who truly needs assistance or returned to taxpayers. Programs should be evaluated based on measurable results, duplication should be eliminated, and taxpayers should know they are receiving value for the money spent.

That discipline matters because Kentucky has made significant progress toward reducing the individual income tax. I support continuing to eliminate it, but it must be done responsibly. We should not reduce one tax to create financial instability or replace it with another burden on working families.

A strong budget should fund our priorities, protect essential services, maintain reserves, eliminate waste, and position Kentucky for long-term economic growth.

IF YOU ARE ELECTED, YOU WILL BE FULFILLING A 17-YEAR INCUMBENT SEAT. HOW WILL YOU, AS A FRESHMAN, ENSURE DISTRICT 14 REMAINS A PRIORITY IN FRANKFORT?

Seniority matters in the legislature, and few people understand that better than Senator Jimmy Higdon, who has served our region in the General Assembly for 24 years. I have tremendous respect for the relationships he has built and the work he has done for District 14. I am also proud to have his endorsement and support in this race. If elected, I intend to build on that foundation and continue the strong representation our district has come to expect.

While I would be a freshman senator, I would not be new to Frankfort. Through my professional work, I have spent 6 years working with legislators, state agencies, regulators, and organizations across Kentucky. I understand the legislative process, how state government operates, and, most importantly, the value of relationships and trust.

I would approach the Senate the same way I have approached leadership throughout my career: show up, do the work, know the issues, and keep my word.

I would also make sure District 14 remains visible and connected to Frankfort. That means maintaining regular communication with local officials, educators, farmers, healthcare providers, businesses, and families throughout Marion, Nelson, Washington, LaRue, and Spencer counties. I want people across the district to know their senator is accessible and responsive.

Finally, I would work closely with our House members and regional legislative delegation. Effective representation is built through relationships, preparation, and collaboration.

I cannot replicate 24 years of seniority on day one, but I can bring established relationships, experience in Frankfort, energy, accessibility, and a strong work ethic. With Senator Higdon's support and the relationships I have already built, I believe District 14 can continue to have a strong voice from the moment I take office.

WHERE DO YOU STAND ON DATA CENTERS?

First, I strongly support local control. Nelson County Fiscal Court has already taken action by establishing a moratorium on data centers, and I respect that decision. There has been significant concern and opposition from local residents, and I believe their voices deserve to be heard. Frankfort should not force these developments on communities that don't want them.

THE 14TH DISTRICT IN GENERAL AND NELSON COUNTY SPECIFICALLY HAVE A NUMBER OF KEY TRANSPORTATION PROJECTS BOTH SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM. HOW CAN YOU HELP SEE THROUGH THE WORK DONE BY SENATOR HIGDON THROUGH HIS ACTIONS AS SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE CHAIR?

We owe him a great deal of gratitude for his leadership and the investments he has helped secure for our communities. Road projects take time, often years of planning, funding and construction. Under Senator Higdon's leadership, we've seen significant improvements to our transportation infrastructure throughout the district, and I want to build on that progress.

Additional reporting on this story by Kentucky Standard editor Peter W. Zubaty.

Truitt looking to be 1st Democrat since 1990 to represent 14th District

BY THE LARUE COUNTY HERALD-NEWS

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS AND INTENTIONS AS KENTUCKY SENATOR?

For the past twenty years, whether leading a nonprofit organization, serving on the Marion County Board of Education, or volunteering in my community, I have worked to build consensus among people with different ideas, different needs, and different priorities to find a way forward together.

Carrie Truitt

My proven experience will enable me to achieve goals focused on the issues impacting working families every day: strong public schools, good paying jobs, affordable housing, and accessible healthcare. This begins with listening to farmers, teachers, factory workers, police officers, Veterans, retirees, and more to close the gap between legislation and reality.

Progress comes through active listening, intentional preparation, patient collaboration, and commitment to hard work. Those are the qualities that have defined my candidacy, and those are the qualities you will see in me as your next State Senator.

WHAT COMMITTEES WOULD YOU WANT TO SERVE ON? WHY?

Three committees sit at the top of my list: Education; Transportation; and Economic Development, Tourism, and Labor.

Education is personal. I've spent nearly a decade on the Marion County Board of Education working to serve the students, families, and staff in our district. I want to carry that experience directly into policy.

Transportation matters deeply to our district. Senator Higdon has done tremendous work advocating for the infrastructure needs of rural Kentucky, and I intend to continue and expand upon his efforts.

Economic Development, Tourism, and Labor is where I can work to drive economic opportunity, support working families, and showcase everything this Commonwealth has to offer. This committee sits right at the intersection of where I can do a lot of good.

I see these as more than committees, but real opportunities to make Kentucky a better place to live, work, and raise a family.

IF ELECTED, WHAT IS ONE PIECE OF LEGISLATION YOU WOULD INTRODUCE? WHY?

When elected, I will introduce legislation to standardize how tornado sirens are used across Kentucky because strong schools, affordable homes, accessible healthcare, and good paying jobs all depend on our safety first.

Earlier this year, sirens sounded in Hardin County when there was no tornado warning for the area which created fear and confusion. Kentuckians cross county lines all the time to live, work, and play and the use of this critical signal should mean the same thing no matter where we are. With Tornado Alley expanding and families in Mayfield, London, Somerset, and sadly many more, still working to rebuild, we cannot afford confusion when seconds matter.

This legislation is a priority for me because our safety is not a partisan issue. It also has no impact on the budget because many emergency management departments have already received federal funding to add or replace sirens in communities across the Commonwealth. This is commonsense legislation that tells my colleagues, and my constituents, that I came to Frankfort to make a real difference, and makes it easier to find common ground in the future.

IN REGARD TO THE STATE'S BUDGET, WHAT ONE AREA DO YOU FEEL NEEDS TO BE PRIORITY? WHY?

If I could name one priority in the state budget, it would be public education which isn't a new idea. Historically, nearly half of Kentucky's budget has gone to our schools. However, with the passage of this year's state budget, LaRue County will see a $451,546 decrease in SEEK funding after adjusting for inflation. This decrease means that more of the load will be carried by local tax dollars.

Kentucky ranks 5th nationally in reading growth and 8th in mathematics gains, so our students and teachers are delivering. As a school board member, I have seen what educators can do when they are empowered and supported. I believe in setting high expectations for our students and teachers because they have shown us they are more than capable. But expectations without resources are just hope, and hope isn't a strategy. Without the support to back them up, we can expect to lose these hard-won gains, and it will be our children who pay the price.

Public education will be my top priority in every budget because investing in our schools is investing in every child, every family, every employer, and the future of our communities.

IF YOU ARE ELECTED, YOU WILL BE FULFILLING A 17-YEAR INCUMBENT SEAT. HOW WILL YOU, AS A FRESHMAN, ENSURE DISTRICT 14 REMAINS A PRIORITY IN FRANKFORT?

First, I want to thank Senator Jimmy Higdon for his years of service in the General Assembly. His seventeen-year commitment took dedication and sacrifice. I am grateful for the work he has done on behalf of our communities. Those are big shoes to fill, and I do not take that lightly.

I know there is a learning curve for any freshman legislator, and it is a significant one, but I will not be starting from scratch. I have spent a decade in public service, working through budgets, listening to families, and building consensus among people who see things differently. I understand how to do the work and am committed to doing it right.

I also bring independence to this role. Throughout this campaign, I have stood on my own two feet, and I will do the same in Frankfort. My only obligation will be to the families of the 14th District, and every decision will start with one question: what is best for the people back home?

Finally, I believe being a member of the minority is an opportunity. In a chamber with a Republican supermajority, there is a long line of members waiting for their chance to lead. As a member of the minority, I have a faster path to leadership, impactful committee work, and a seat at the table where decisions are made. I intend to use that opportunity to make sure District 14 is heard.

Senator Higdon recently told one of his unforgettable stories and ended with this: "You don't have to be better than the person across the line from you. You just have to work harder." That is how I will approach Frankfort, and this district will have a senator who outworks everyone else and never forgets where home is.

WHERE DO YOU STAND ON DATA CENTERS?

Data centers coming to Kentucky communities is not a question of if,

SEE TRUITT/PAGE T4

DID YOU KNOW?

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS and newspaper websites are relied on more than any other media for information about public notices and local government.

59% Local newspapers/newspaper websites
32% Local tv/cable
26% Word of mouth/friends/relatives
25% Local radio
24% Government websites
15% City newsletters
11% Public bulletin boards
7% Non-government website
5% Other

We Are Proud To Be
Your Local Newspaper
KPA KENTUCKY PRESS ASSOCIATION
The Kentucky Standard

Source: The Kentucky State Study 2023: Conducted by Coda Ventures, Base: Total adults, multiple results