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The Banner/Republican

# OPINION

JUNE 04, 2025



## East Kentucky Senator Switches Political Parties

Senator Robin Webb has announced her decision to become a Republican



By **JEFF JOBE**  
Jobe Media Group,  
Publisher

The Kentucky State Senate has gained another Republican. Senator Robin Webb will no longer be the Democrat from the community in which I grew up, Greenup.

On Friday, May 30, she announced she would be changing her party affiliation. She is leaving the six Democrats now serving with her and joining the thirty-one-member Republican caucus, giving the 38-member body a 32-Republican-to-6-Democrat breakdown.

Webb has served in this position

since 2009 and held a position in the Kentucky House of Representatives before the Senate when she was first elected in 1998.

The Eastern Kentucky politician announced her plans to switch parties in a release from the Republican Party of Kentucky. All remaining Democrats in the Senate serve the areas of Lexington and Louisville. This is a bold move for the communities she serves: Boyd, Carter, Greenup, and Lewis counties.

“While it’s cliché, it’s true: I didn’t leave the party—the party left me,” Webb said in a news release. “The Kentucky Democratic Party has increasingly alienated lifelong rural Democrats like myself by failing to support the issues that matter most to rural Kentuckians.”



▲ PHOTO | LRC  
**Kentucky Senator Robin Webb has announced her political affiliation change from Democrat to Republican on Friday, May 30, 2025.**

The senator also said her former party “continues its lurch to the left and its hyperfocus on policies that hurt the workforce and economic development in my region.”

Webb ultimately says the Democrat **WEBB**, Continued on page nine

## Meredith Appointed to Kentucky Air Mobility and Aviation Task Force

Will Shape the Future of Aviation and the Economy in Kentucky



**FRANKFORT, Ky.** (May 30, 2025) — Sen. Stephen Meredith, R-Leitchfield, has been appointed to serve on Kentucky’s Air Mobility and Aviation Economic

Development Task Force for the 2025 Interim. The bipartisan legislative group is charged with studying innovations in aviation and aerospace and crafting policy recommendations to help Kentucky capitalize on the growing economic potential of this high-tech sector.

The task force’s creation follows recognition of Kentucky’s central role in the national air cargo network. Kentucky is home to 58 public-use airports and two of the busiest cargo hubs in North America. According to a recent Kentucky Transportation Center study, the commonwealth’s aviation sector supports more than 116,000 jobs and contributes \$23.7 billion in total economic output.

“Steve’s appointment to the Air Mobility and Aviation Economic

Development Task Force comes at a critical time for Kentucky’s growing aviation sector,” said Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester. “With his leadership, the task force can harness Kentucky’s strategic position in the national air cargo network and advance policies that strengthen jobs and economic growth across the commonwealth.”

“I’m honored to be part of this task force at a time when air mobility technologies are transforming how we think about transportation and economic development,” said Meredith. “This is a forward-looking effort that can bring new jobs, infrastructure, and opportunities to rural communities like mine.”

States nationwide are examining how new aviation technologies, such as unmanned systems and electric vertical takeoff and landing aircraft, can expand mobility, enhance logistics, and create jobs. In Kentucky, the task force will explore how public and private investment in this space can support statewide growth.

The task force will focus on areas such

as supporting innovation in advanced air mobility and aviation technology, studying trends in aerospace-related economic development, identifying opportunities for growth at regional and commercial airports, and recommending state-level policies to position Kentucky for future success.

Meredith, who has a background in healthcare leadership and rural economic development, will offer the task force valuable insight as it examines how aviation investments can serve smaller communities and create new care pathways.

“This is about making sure rural Kentucky doesn’t get left behind as the aviation industry evolves,” Meredith said. “Whether improving airport infrastructure or encouraging aerospace training programs, I’ll work to ensure our region’s voice is heard in shaping Kentucky’s strategy.”

The task force will meet monthly through the 2025 Interim and gather testimony from transportation officials, airport leaders, and industry experts to inform future legislative recommendations.

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the meeting to order at 5:00 pm. After the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation, the key speaker was introduced.

Speaking at the meeting was Johnny Webb, a native of Edmonson County. Webb started Southern School Supply in 1972, and it continued growing into a multi-state operation moving into 7 states which includes the retail store “The Parent Teacher Store”. Webb is the former Vice Chairman and current board member of the Kentucky Trans Park. In 1992 he became the Mayor of Bowling Green and served one term. In 1993 he founded the non-profit Operation PRIDE (Paint, Repair, Improve, Develop and Enjoy) to help improve the appearance of Bowling Green. Most recently he has been championing the Beautifi-65 Project which includes the new gateway into Bowling Green from Morgantown. Webb has privately raised close to 8 million dollars to help revamp those areas around the exits in Bowling Green to make it more attractive to visitors, hoping for more cities in Kentucky to start doing the same.

Mr. Webb has been asked what some of the advantages of Operation PRIDE are. The first advantage would be a huge economic development tool. Second is what it can do for tourism since there are 25 million vehicles driving on Interstate 65. Thirdly, it instills pride in most all residents of Bowling Green with a beautiful community. There are 5 interchanges on 65 and 3 interchanges on I65.

Every penny of the close to 8 million dollars collected for Operation PRIDE has come from individuals and small businesses. This does take close to \$900,000 a year to maintain the areas that have been revamped, which come from the city, county and CDB (Commissions District Bureau).

If you are interested in more information on Operation PRIDE you can find them on their webpage, operation-pride.org.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

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