

Reed

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At that time, the General Assembly created the Broadband Deployment Fund to harness state resources and engage both public and private sector companies to reach rural areas that do not have the population necessary to attract some companies. By allocating \$250 million towards this fund, we are not only declaring broadband access a top priority for this legislative session but also a top priority for the future prosperity of rural areas of our Commonwealth.

Many experts believe that one of the lasting implications of the pandemic will be an increase in people working remotely. Technology has certainly made that easier, which makes broad-

band expansion even more important. However, remote working also provides everyone an opportunity to work from anywhere – making the great quality of life in our rural communities attractive to those who would otherwise have to work in urban areas. That makes data centers, the facilities that centralize an organizations data storage and processing functions, critically important to locating daily operations in communities. HB 372 allows Kentucky an opportunity for investment, economic advancement, and industry diversification. Data centers generate new income and business taxes, create additional property taxes, which increases local tax revenue. In states where companies like Google and Facebook have built data cen-

ters, the massive facilities and employees contribute significantly to local tax revenue. This bill provides a state sales tax exemption on data center equipment and construction materials to companies that invest at least \$150 million in Kentucky within five years and create a minimum of twenty permanent, competitive jobs. Over the last seven years, no data center has located in a state without this tax benefits.

We are approaching the one-year anniversary of Kentucky's first diagnosed case of COVID-19 and have an opportunity to reflect on the past twelve months and how the people of this commonwealth have weathered this experience. Many Kentuckians are still struggling to get their unemployment benefits, much

less talk to someone on the phone. HB 367 would increase access to unemployment insurance benefits across the Commonwealth and would mandate public employment offices be open and operational in specified locations across the state anytime the unemployment rate in a local workforce area increases to above five percent.

As someone who calls rural Kentucky home, I know firsthand how critical it is to have access to quality medical care so we can improve health outcomes. Of the 100 hospitals in Kentucky, 28 are rural hospitals that are in danger of closing. I proudly serve as the primary cosponsor of HB 556, which would allocate \$20 million to the rural hospital operations and facilities revolving loan that was created

during the 2020 legislative session to help rural hospitals. This measure would not only aid our rural hospitals, but it would help our rural communities recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We are on the brink of a very real, very harmful health care crisis in rural communities throughout our state.

Hospitals are some of the biggest job producers in our communities, and we must do everything we can to ensure their continued success. Another measure aimed at helping citizens obtain easier access to medical care is HB 48. This bill would ensure that citizens have access to pharmacists and improve health outcomes that would allow pharmacists to receive reimbursement for additional services and pro-

cedures they provide. Pharmacists collaborate with healthcare professionals, such as physicians and nurse practitioners to provide patient care that goes well beyond filling prescriptions. Because pharmacists are often the healthcare provider seen most by Kentuckians, I cosponsored HB 48 and worked to see it pass the House.

If you are needing assistance or have any questions, I can be reached during the week from 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. (EST) through the toll-free message line at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via e-mail at Brandon.Reed@lrc.ky.gov. You can keep track of committee meetings and potential legislation through the Kentucky Legislature Home Page at legislature.ky.gov.

Givens

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Other notable bills passing in the Senate include:

Senate Bill 122 would prohibit a state contract from being awarded to a business if it was already awarded the same or similar contract and if a contract was awarded through an executive agency lobbyist who was convicted of a crime related to contracts. It also prohibits a person associated with an agency from participating in a contract procurement for one year after termination.

Senate Bill 128 provides any student enrolled in a Kentucky public school in grades K-12 during the 2020-21 school year the opportunity to request to participate in a temporary program during the 2021-22 school year to retake or supplement the courses or grades the student has already taken. The ultimate decision of providing this opportunity will be left to local school districts, which must decide to accept all student's requests or none at all.

The past year has been tough on so many, but Kentucky students have significantly been negatively impacted. A recent report from the Lexington Herald-Leader shows failing grades have skyrocketed. The good news is that most school districts have returned to some form of in-person learning, but the school year is almost over now. For the most part, all of the 2020-21 school year has remained virtual, and while districts, teachers, and parents or other guardians have done their best, distance learning has been inadequate for many of our kids. Some children may not have the support they need at home. Our rural communities with broadband issues have proven to be a challenge for families. Quite simply, our students have missed their teachers, friends, and vital emotional and social experiences they deserve. SB 128 will provide local school districts with the ability to do right by students and families determining it is in their best interest to take advantage of a supplemental year of education. It will ensure participating seniors' preparedness for what-

ever their next chapter in life is, and all students the peace of mind knowing the pandemic will not cause them to be left behind.

Senate Bill 146 establishes a requirement of a national and state criminal background check, via fingerprint analysis by the state police and the FBI, for every prospective and current employee of the Labor Cabinet or its agencies.

Senate Bill 172 requires persons who damage underground utility facilities, such as pipelines and telecommunications lines during demolition or excavation, to cease activity and notify the operator of the underground facility.

Senate Bill 181, is a companion bill to House Bill (HB) 4, a bill that made final passage this week. HB 4 is a constitutional amendment bill, so it does not require the governor's signature. Instead, it will go before you, the voters, on the next general election ballot. If supported by a majority of voters, HB 4 would provide the General Assembly with the ability to call itself back into session. As sponsor of SB 181, I was pleased to carry HB 4 in the Senate

SB 181 would establish the Senate President's and House Speaker's power to reconvene the

General Assembly for up to twelve additional legislative days via joint proclamation. Additionally, it would allow for any bills filed in the regular session to remain active for legislative consideration until December 31 of that same year. As sponsor of SB 181, I was pleased to carry HB 4 in the Senate.

Senate Bill 212, also known as the "Kara Beth Adair Wilson Act," requires the various Kentucky retirement systems to develop an electronic method to which future changes to beneficiary designations for all members and new member forms, including beneficiary designation forms, must be submitted.

Senate Bill 228 would reform how a U.S. Senator of Kentucky is replaced should a vacancy occur. The bill would establish that the departing senator's state party

would nominate three people from which the governor would select. That individual would serve out the remainder of the term. Additionally, it sets stipulations about how long a replacement can serve before voters get to elect someone to take over that seat and establishes provisions about how such elections should be held.

Bills headed to the governor's desk for consideration include:

House Bill 7 establishes a Recovery Ready Community council and program for cities and counties that want to demonstrate their addiction recovery commitment. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 83,000 people died in the twelve months ending in July 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic has only heightened addiction. The state has worked hard over the years to combat the scourge of drug addiction. Although the challenge is difficult, we must continue efforts to address the abuse of opioids and other narcotics. HB 7 is one more step in saving lives.

House Bill 8 allows quasi-governmental organizations, such as local health departments and mental health centers, to pay back unfunded liabilities owed to the Kentucky Retirement Systems for Employees using a liability based system instead of a percent of payroll.

By changing to a liability based contribution method, HB 8 provides assurance for accurate payment assumptions, allowing these agencies to adequately plan each fiscal year therefore reducing the risk of having to cut back on staff and services. HB 8 also establishes an intent that the general assembly will pay the increased cost associated with this bill for the first year.

House Bill 50 provides that health insurance plans offered in Kentucky comply with a federal law designed to ensure the equal treatment of mental health conditions and substance use disorders by strengthening Kentucky's implementation of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act of 2008. That means health plans' co-payments, deductibles, and limits on visits to health care providers are not more restrictive or less generous for mental health benefits than for medical and surgical benefits. An average of six people die of drug overdoses and suicides every day in Kentucky. It is vital that our state does not limit access or coverage to mental health care.

House Bill 208 addresses the issue of getting our students back into schools amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Under this bill, local school districts MUST offer, at least, a hybrid schedule where all students are able to attend in-person classes

a minimum of two days a week by March 29, 2021. Districts would still be able to offer virtual or remote learning for students whose parents/guardians provide written requests due to COVID-19 concerns. As a society, we have figured out a way to safely open restaurants, shopping malls, and movie theaters. It is time we finally do the same for Kentucky's youth by prioritizing a pathway to normalcy for our schools.

You can learn more about these bills and others by visiting www.legislature.ky.gov. Thank you for staying engaged in the legislative process. It is an honor to serve you in Frankfort.

If you have any questions or comments about these issues or any other public policy issue, please call me toll-free at 1-800-372-7181 or email me David.Givens@LRC.ky.gov.

ACCEPTING SEALED PROPOSALS

The Green County Board of Education will be accepting sealed proposals for replacement of the district's phone system. Bid specifications can be found at Green County Board of Education Central Office at 402 E. Hodgenville Avenue, Greensburg, KY 42743 and proposals must be submitted by March 31, 2021 at 1:00pm central. All bids will be publicly opened at 1:30pm central on March 31, 2021 in the Green County Board of Education Conference Room.

Greasy Creek Baptist Church Bid Notice

Greasy Creek Baptist Church is now accepting bids for the following two positions: Mowing/Landscape Maintenance and Church Facility Custodian. To inquire call Stuart Tucker 270-403-5934, Chad Dixon at 270-932-1801, Larry Clark 270-299-5167 or Bill Clark 270-932-4481 for questions or bid applications. Sealed bids will need to be received by April 11th. Upon awarding bid and signing contract, proof of liability insurance will need to be submitted. Contracts are rebid annually. Trustees reserve the right to refuse and or reject any and all bids at their discretion.

Public Notice

Los Ayala Inc., d/b/a Los Agaves hereby declares its intention to apply for a Limited Restaurant License, Special Sunday Retail Drink License no later than March 1, 2021. The licensed premises is located at 120 N. Public Sq., Greensburg, Ky., 42743. The owners are Miguel Ayala, President, 8675 Columbia Hwy., Greensburg, Ky., 42743 and Juan Ayala, Vice President, 8525 Columbia Hwy., Greensburg, Ky., 42743. Any person, association, corporation or body politic may protest the granting of the licenses by writing the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 500 Mero St., 2NE33, Frankfort, Ky., 40601, within 30 days of the date of legal publication

PUBLIC NOTICE

BUDGET HEARING REGARDING PROPOSED USE OF COUNTY ROAD AID AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE (LGEA) FUNDS.

A public hearing will be held by the Green County Fiscal Court on the front steps of the courthouse on May 25, 2021 at 9:00 A.M. for the purpose of obtaining citizens comments regarding the possible uses of the County Road Aid (CRA) and Local Government Economic Assistance (LGEA) Funds. All interested persons in Green County are invited to the hearing to submit verbal or written comments on possible uses of the CRA and LGEA Funds. Any person(s) who cannot submit written comments or attend the public hearing but wishes to submit comments, should call the Office of the County Judge/Executive at (270) 932-4024 by 4:00 P.M. May 24, 2021.

LEGAL NOTICE

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet

In accordance with KRS 176.051, Kentucky's noxious weed law, the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet will control noxious weeds on state-owned right of way at the request of the adjoining property owner. The noxious weeds named in this law are Johnson grass, Giant foxtail, Canada thistle, Nodding thistle, Common teasel, Multiflora rose, Amur honeysuckle, Poison hemlock, Mares tail, Japanese knotweed, and Kudzu.

Persons who own property adjacent to state right of way and who are involved in eradication efforts on their property can submit a written application to the highway district office in their area. Contact information can be found at transportation.ky.gov/DistrictPages

Basketball Contest Rules

To enter the contest, contestants may use either this page or an identical page obtained at no charge at the Record-Herald office, 102 West Court Street, Greensburg. You do not have to purchase a paper or anything else to be eligible to win. Only one entry per person. Contestants must circle their winning teams on the page. Should contestants get the same number of games correct, the tie will be broken by the tie-breaker. All entries must be MAILED to the Greensburg Record-Herald, P.O. Box 130, Greensburg, KY 42743. All entries must have an automated postmark no later than FRIDAY, 5 p.m., of this week. To be eligible for the Grand Prize and bonus, an entry must be received by Saturday morning. **Mark all envelopes BASKETBALL CONTEST.** NO ENTRIES WILL BE ACCEPTED IN PERSON at any participating stores or at the Record-Herald. The grand prize will be awarded when a contestant picks the winners of 26 different games. For each week that no one wins, the amount will increase by \$25.

Crossword Puzzle Answers

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