

Senator Givens' update: Week five of the Regular Session marks progress



Senate report
State Sen. David Givens

The fifth week of the 2026 Regular Session marked steady progress in the Kentucky Senate as we passed the one-third point of this 60-day session. Much of our work this week reflected a clear focus on education, accountability, and long-term planning, priorities that will shape Kentucky's future well beyond this session.

Education is one of the Senate's primary areas of focus this session. In fact, six of the Senate's top ten priority bills address education policy, with an emphasis on governance, transparency, leadership, and responsible steward-

ship of public resources. This week, the Senate passed Senate Bill (SB) 1, legislation I sponsored to modernize governance in Kentucky's largest and most complex school districts. As districts grow in size and complexity, it is critical that roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. SB 1 clarifies the authority of local boards of education and superintendents, strengthening accountability while preserving local control. The bill now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

The Senate also passed SB 3, another priority education measure focused on improving transparency in local school district budgeting. Together, these bills work in tandem to reinforce sound governance and ensure the public has greater confidence in how educa-

tion decisions are made. Education priorities also advanced in committee this week. SB 4, which establishes a structured, statewide leadership development program for new school principals, and SB 2, which addresses fairness and balance in educator compensation, both moved forward. These measures reflect a continued commitment to supporting educators while ensuring clear standards and responsible oversight.

The Senate's work this week also included action on several measures addressing broader statewide needs.

SB 9, another designated priority bill, was filed to support housing growth across Kentucky. The bill would provide new tools for local governments and developers to partner on infrastructure and redevelopment, to low-

er housing costs and accelerate construction. While not yet passed, it reflects ongoing work to address housing needs statewide.

SB 5 passed the Senate, making it easier for schools to purchase fresh Kentucky grown food by streamlining procurement requirements that have slowed farm-to-school programs. The bill supports student health, strengthens local agriculture, and aligns with broader efforts to improve long term health outcomes.

Other bills approved by the Senate this week include:

SB 48, which updates Kentucky's re-entry supervision laws to strengthen accountability and improve transparency as eligible nonviolent offenders transition back into the community.

SB 73, which expands Kentucky's home-based processor law to allow small producers to make and sell tallow-based cosmetic products, such as soaps and balms. The bill supports local entrepreneurship while maintaining existing health and safety standards.

SB 102, which allows experienced retired Kentucky State Police officers to return to service within a defined timeframe, helping retain expertise and support public safety.

SB 132, which gives local governments clearer authority to regulate massage therapy businesses and increases penalties for operating without a license. The measure is aimed at improving public safety and enforcement at the local level.

Budget update

The House of Representatives has not yet finalized or delivered its budget proposal to the Senate. While a placeholder bill has been filed, it must still complete the full House process before the Senate can formally take it up. In the meantime, we have begun reviewing documents and preparing comparisons to guide the work ahead. There is still significant work to be done, and I will continue to keep you informed as the process moves forward.

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.

Representative Bivens' legislative update Healthcare, protecting children, agriculture, and transportation issues take center stage in House



State Representative Ryan Bivens

With just 38 days remaining in the 2026 Regular Session, lawmakers have officially crossed the one-third mark. The pace has only accelerated as committees continue to meet, bills move through the legislative process, and work on the state budget remains front and center. These final weeks are critical, as decisions made now will shape Kentucky's priorities for years to come.

The Capitol Annex has also been packed as Kentuckians from across the Commonwealth traveled to Frankfort to share their perspectives, advocate for issues important to their communities, and take part in the legislative process. From farmers and veterans to students, educators, and small business owners, these voices play a big role in our work and remind lawmakers who we serve. As the session moves into its next phase, working with stakeholders like them will remain key as we work to deliver responsible solutions for Kentucky's future.

In the meantime, here are several of the bills that cleared the House this week and are now in the Senate for consideration: HB 4 would define and criminalize behavior commonly referred to as grooming. Under provisions of HB 4, grooming refers to the manipulative and deceptive process by which a predator builds a relationship with a vulnerable person, such as a child, to gain trust and access for abuse or exploitation.

opt out of state water fluoridation programs.

HB 143 would require a fiduciary bond ordered by a court to be signed by the fiduciary in the presence of a notary public rather than before the clerk of the court.

HB 164 would modernize how state law defines hearing aids and increase the amount covered by both public and private health insurance plans from \$1,400 to \$2,500. The measure also includes standards for services offered within a network required by an insurer or plan administrator.

HB 169 would remove BMI, commonly known as body mass index, from treatment standards used by health insurance plans marketed in Kentucky, ensuring that care decisions are based on clinical need rather than an arbitrary numerical threshold. Instead, the bill outlines factors such as eating behaviors and the need for support interventions that should be used to determine the medical

necessity of treatment.

HB 188 would expand the scope of third-degree assault to include healthcare workers in jails, penitentiaries, and local or state correctional or detention facilities.

HB 189 would prohibit a person from sitting, kneeling, reclining, standing, or remaining physically stationary in any portion of a state-maintained right-of-way not designated for pedestrian use, with a few exceptions. Violators would be fined between \$20 and \$100 for each offense, as outlined in Kentucky law.

HB 194 would establish a formal definition for cigar bars to ensure these establishments are recognized for their unique contributions to Kentucky's hospitality and retail sectors. Under the measure, a cigar bar must generate at least 25% of its annual gross income from the sale of cigars, pipe tobacco, and related accessories.

HB 212 would expand access to routine animal health care by

authorizing Kentucky-licensed veterinary technicians to administer rabies vaccinations to dogs, cats, and ferrets, under the direct supervision of a veterinarian who is on the premises.

HB 258 would modernize transportation rules for dairy farmers by allowing vehicles weighing up to 90,000 pounds and transporting fluid milk from a farm to the first market to operate on any state highway, with a 10% weight tolerance.

HB 314 would strengthen accountability of Kentucky-Wired, the taxpayer-funded program that allows internet service providers to connect to critical infrastructure and expand broadband access across Kentucky's counties, especially in rural and underserved communities. The bill transfers administrative control

of KentuckyWired to the Commonwealth Office of Technology, the agency that already provides technology support for all of state government.

HB 387 would add a licensed equine veterinarian and a licensed livestock veterinarian—both of whom prescribe and dispense scheduled drugs—to the Controlled Substances Prescribing Council, ensuring the veterinary profession has a meaningful voice in discussions and decisions that directly affect their work.

HB 393 would address the critical need for early detection and diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease and related dementias. Specifically, the proposal would require the Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders (ADRD) Advisory Council to develop, implement, and dis-

seminate a health care provider toolkit on early detection and diagnosis.

HB 398 would clarify existing law to ensure the costs of decommissioning coal-fired plants can be recovered throughout the life of the plant, rather than at the end of the facility's life after misinterpretation by the Public Service Commission.

HB 419 would strengthen firefighter representation on the Kentucky Fire Commission and expand access to lifesaving cancer screenings.

As always, I can be reached anytime through the toll-free message line in Frankfort at 1-800-372-7181. You can also contact me via email at Ryan.Bivens@kylegislature.gov and keep track through the Kentucky legislature's website at legislature.ky.gov.

Eat, Drink Gather!

Come on in to enjoy delicious bbq in a relaxing space with friends and family!

128 East Main Street
Campbellsville, KY
270-789-0011
Tue-Sat 11:00-9:00

BROTHERS
@BROTHERS42718 f BROTHERSKENTUCKY

ASK US ABOUT CATERING YOUR EVENT

Wage increase for RNs and LPNs

RN's - Earn up to \$40/hour
LPN's - Earn up to \$33/hour

Attendance Bonus Quarterly Raises Free Telehealth All Access Smartphone Daily & Weekly Pay

Changing the world, one heart at a time.

Green River Trails
Formerly Green Hill Rehabilitation and Care

213 Industrial Drive - Greensburg, KY 42743
Phone (270) 932-4241

Green River Trails does not discriminate in the delivery of services or in employment on the basis of age, disability, race, color, national origin, religion or sex. EOE/M/F/D Medicare, Medicaid and private insurance accepted.

HB 103 would clarify that local governments may vote to

Deadline for news and advertising is 2 p.m. central time Friday. However, earlier is always better.