

Senator Danny Carroll Legislative Update

Week three of the 2025 Legislative Session

It's official. House Bill 1 has been signed into law, marking another step forward in delivering tax relief to hardworking Kentuckians. This measure authorizes the next half-percentage reduction in the state's individual income tax, bringing it down from 4 percent to 3.5 percent. As a result, an estimated \$718 million will remain in the hands of Kentucky families, allowing them to save, invest, and spend as they see fit. This reduction will officially take effect on Jan. 1, 2026, and continue our commitment to a responsible tax policy that benefits individuals and the state's economy.

With this priority completing the legislative process, several other priorities continued during week three of the 2025 Legislative Session ahead of bill filing deadlines next week. The last day to file legislation in the Senate is Tuesday, February 18. The state House of Representatives deadline is Wednesday, February 19.

I introduced another nuclear energy-related measure in week three, Senate Bill (SB) 179. This bill establishes a grant program within the Kentucky Nuclear **Energy Development** Authority (KNEDA) for advancing and locating nuclear energy-related projects within the commonwealth. \$10 million in funds already appropriated to the University of Kentucky for its operations would be set aside for these grants. KNEDA would be responsible for promoting the grants and accepting grant applications. A subcommittee of advisory board members would administer the grants. Nuclear energy grant funding is essential to allow Kentucky to compete with other states in this rapidly growing energy sector.

SB 111, which I noted last week, was approved in committee in week three and now qualifies for consideration by the full Senate. I was joined in committee by Cabinet for Health and Family Services Secretary Eric Friedlander and Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) Commissioner Randy White to present the bill.

SB 111 introduces

key reforms to DJJ to improve the juvenile detention system's safety, efficiency, and care. Two central components of the bill are constructing an acute mental health detention center and at least two female-only detention centersone located in Central Kentucky and another in Western Kentucky. If population trends indicate a need, a third center may be built in Eastern or Northern Kentucky. The decision to build new female facilities rather than renovate existing ones stems from the challenges associated with separating male and female offenders, as well as violent and non-violent individuals, under the state's current regional model. Officials determined that retrofitting existing centers would exceed the costs of building new, standalone female facilities.

The bill allocates \$45 million for each new female detention center and an additional \$5 million to design a high-acuity mental health center. The new mental health center will provide intensive care for youth with significant mental health challenges, aligning with a similar initiative in South Carolina. Legislators stressed the importance of these investments to improve the quality of care for juvenile offenders while enhancing public safety.

bill provides clarity regarding the handling of violent, mentally ill juveniles in medical settings. It authorizes law enforcement to take custody of individuals who engage in violent or disruptive behavior in hospitals, establishing clear protocols for transferring them to appropriate treatment or detention facilities. These facilities would include those offering the highest levels of

Additionally, the

mental health care when necessary.

While some concerns were raised about the bill's costs, I emphasized the need for these reforms to address longstanding issues within the juvenile justice system. I'm happy to say the bill passed out of committee with bipartisan support, with lawmakers acknowledging that while the investments are substantial, they are crucial to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of juveniles and the broader community.

I also passed SB 103 out of committee this week with unanimous support. This bill creates more transparency in the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR) by requiring the agency to promulgate administrative regulations and report their activities and a complete operating and financial statement to the Governor, Legislative Research Commission for referral to the Families and Children Committee, which I chair, on an annual basis.

Some measures won Senate approval during week three and are now moving to the House for

consideration.

SB 14 prevents
pharmaceutical
manufacturers from
denying 340B drug
pricing to Kentucky
hospitals and
pharmacies if they
offer it in other states,
ensuring fair access to
discounted medications
for safety-net providers
and empowering the
attorney general to
investigate violations.

SB 26 prohibits discrimination based solely on disability in adoption, foster care, or parental rights decisions. It requires individualized assessments, mandates documentation for transparency, and aligns with the ADA to protect children and support families.

SB 59 removes regulatory barriers for faith-based organizations to build affordable housing on their existing properties. It designates these projects as permitted uses in residential and commercial zones

while maintaining local oversight. The institution must have owned eligible properties before Jan. 1, 2025.

SB 61 updates pool regulations for improved safety while clarifying that pools on single-family home properties remain exempt from public pool rules, even if rented to guests.

SB 64 expands protections for critical infrastructure by increasing penalties for copper theft, which has caused 911 outages and power failures. The bill includes cable, telephone, and broadband systems and takes effect immediately upon

passage.
SB 73 strengthens laws against sexual extortion by introducing clear penalties, civil remedies, and educational initiatives. The bill focuses on protecting minors, empowering victims, and equipping schools with tools to prevent and respond to these crimes.

SB 76 modernizes escrow retainage rules by raising the contract threshold from \$500,000 to \$2 million. It ensures timely payments, requires funds to be held in escrow, and prohibits contract waivers to protect contractors and subcontractors.

SB 85 expands the authority of the Auditor's Office and Commonwealth Ombudsman to improve oversight of state agencies. It clarifies roles, enhances confidentiality protections, requires state agencies to provide software access, and ensures timely reporting of suspected child abuse while maintaining confidentiality. An emergency clause allows the bill to take immediate effect upon

passage.
Don't forget to
follow legislative
coverage at legislature.
ky.gov and find live
and archived meeting
footage at KET.org/
legislature and the
KY LRC Committee
Meeting YouTube
Channel. Don't hesitate
to reach out to my
office at 502-564-8100
or Danny.Carroll@lrc.
ky.gov.

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Sen. Danny Carroll, R-Paducah, represents the 2nd Senate District, including Ballard, Carlisle, Livingston, Marshall, and McCracken Counties. He serves as chair of the Senate Families and Children Committee. Sen. Carroll is also a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, the Senate Health Services Committee, and the Senate Education Committee. Additionally, he is a Legislative Oversight and Investigations **Statutory Committee** member and serves as an ex officio (nonvoting) Juvenile Justice **Oversight Council** member.

Funeral Notice
Obituaries furnished to Kentucky Publishing

Charles Ray Thompson

Charles
Ray
Thomason,
born March
5, 1931, in
Carlisle
County,
Kentucky,
passed away
peacefully

peacefully
on February 19, 2025, in
Bardwell, Kentucky. He
dedicated many years
of service to the State
Highway Department
and was deeply involved
in his community,
always extending a
helping hand to those in
need.

Charles was an active member and deacon of Oak Grove Baptist Church and served his title well. He was an avid outdoorsman, finding solace in the quiet moments while fishing or in the thrill of the hunt. His love for his cows was matched only by his passion for the University of Kentucky basketball and the St. Louis Cardinals baseball team. His enthusiasm for his favorite teams was infectious, bringing joy and spirited discussions to all who knew him.

Most importantly, Charles was the cornerstone of his family, treating them with a kindness and generosity that was unmatched. He was a role model in love and patience, living a life that touched and lifted those fortunate to have known him. Charles's legacy of kindness and dedication will be cherished by all.

Charles is survived by his loving wife of 72 years, Dorothy Sue Denton Thomason of Arlington, Kentucky; a daughter, Bridget (Jerry) Shelton of Mayfield, Kentucky; a son, Barry (Cindy) Thomason of Arlington; three grandchildren, Jason (Michelle) Thomason

of Paducah, Kentucky, Crystal (Austin) Furlong of Nashville, Tennessee, and Summer (Craig) Ellegood of Murray, Kentucky; and three great-grandchildren, Nash Ellegood, Presley Furlong, and Nora Ellegood.

He was preceded in death by a son, Steven Ray Thomason; three sisters, Helen Doublin, Naomi Terry, and Lou Eva Lovellette; a brother, Glen Thomason; and his parents, Charlie and Hettie Tucker Thomason.

A funeral service will be held at 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at Milner & Orr Funeral Home of Arlington with Bro. Aaron McAlpin officiating. Burial will follow at Roselawn Cemetery in Bardwell, Kentucky.

Visitation will be held from 11:00 AM until the service hour of 1:00 PM on Saturday, February 22, 2025, at Milner & Orr Funeral Home of Arlington.

Expressions of Sympathy may be made in the form of contributions to Gideon's International Carlisle-West Graves Camp, PO Box 608 Cunningham, KY 42035.

You may leave a message of sympathy and light a candle of remembrance at www. milnerandorr.com.

OCTC announces Trade Wars 2025: Regional Skills Competition

OWENSBORO — Owensboro Community & Technical College (OCTC) will host TRADE WARS 2025, a comprehensive skills competition showcasing student talent across multiple technical and professional disciplines. The free event will occur on April 25, 2025, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at OCTC's Main Campus, located at 4800 New Hartford Road.

The competition features seventeen competitions spanning three major sectors: Manufacturing & Transportation. Healthcare, and Professional Skills. Students can demonstrate their expertise in fields ranging from Air Conditioning Technology and Welding to Nursing and Criminal Justice. Performance categories include Visual Art, Public Speaking and Dramatic Interpretation, while technical competitions showcase Industrial Maintenance, Manufacturing and Machining, and **Electrical Technology** skills.

"TRADE WARS 2025 represents a unique opportunity for high school students to demonstrate their professional skills in a competitive environment, it is based on an event that started in Maysville in 2019. They were always so excited about it, last year we made a road trip to check it out" said Bernie Hale, OCTC's director of marketing and communications. "Once we experienced the event we wanted to replicate it for our region. This event rewards excellence and helps students gain valuable experience



Sydney Warren

that appeals to future employers."

OCTC's Vice President of Advancement, Sydney Warren added, "The event in Maysville is 100% covered by donations through sponsorships. We are hoping that our regional partners will take this opportunity to show their support of both our transfer and career options."

Winning schools will receive commemorative banners, while individual champions will earn career-focused prizes designed to support their professional development. Students may participate in multiple categories, allowing them to showcase their versatility across different disciplines.

Registration is now open at www.owensboro. kctcs.edu/tradewars. Due to space limitations in certain categories, early registration is encouraged. Schools interested in participating should contact OCTC. TradeWars@kctcs. edu for comprehensive information packets, including registration materials and required waivers.

For more information, please contact: OCTC.
TradeWars@kctcs.edu to sponsor the event please contact sydney.warren@kctcs.edu

