

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE: SEN. AARON REED

WEEK SEVEN OF THE 2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

With over 30 legislative days complete of the required 60, the Senate has remained focused on steady, deliberate progress. At this stage of the session, nine of the Senate Majority's 10 top-priority bills have been filed and passed the Senate.

First, I'm happy to inform you that the first bill of this session to become law and be signed by the governor and become law is Senate Bill (SB) 172. It provides an additional tool to the Kentucky Public Service Commission (PSC) to address energy affordability challenges. Under the bill, upon request from your utility company, the PSC could prevent sudden spikes in utility bills from fuel surcharges by allowing the costs to be spread out over time. I'm happy to see this bipartisan measure become law as it should provide relief for you in the very near future.

I have heard from many of you regarding the early budget bill filed in the state House of Representatives and the budget process more broadly. I understand these discussions affect real families, and I appreciate those who have taken the time to share their concerns.

It is important to clarify where we currently stand. The state budget originates in the House of Representatives and has not yet passed that chamber. When the House delivers a proposed budget to the Senate, we will carefully review it, evaluate any changes and make revisions where necessary. That is the Senate's constitutional responsibility, and we take it seriously.

Questions surrounding health insurance costs, benefit stability and long-term affordability deserve

thoughtful review. Those issues require discipline, transparency and careful analysis. In fulfilling the Senate's role in the budget process, our guiding principles remain clear:

- Maintain a structurally balanced budget, ensuring recurring revenues support recurring expenses.
- Exercise discipline with one-time dollars and avoid short-term budgeting approaches that create long-term instability.
- Make thoughtful, transparent decisions that protect both taxpayers and public employees.
- There is considerable work ahead before a final budget is enacted, and I will continue keeping you informed as the process moves forward.

On Thursday, the Senate welcomed military families from across the commonwealth for our annual Military Kids Day at the Capitol. This special event honors the children and grandchildren of those who serve or have served in the United States Armed Forces. I paused to consider my own kids who endured long deployments, frequent moves, new schools and time away from me as I answered the call to protect our freedoms. Their sacrifices are real and deeply felt. These young Kentuckians explored a Capitol campus they may one day return as I have as public servants themselves. It was an honor to recognize their resilience for the shared sacrifice that strengthens both our state and our nation.

I sponsored and the Senate successfully passed SB 152, which provides greater clarity and strengthens accountability in school leadership by converting school-based decision-making councils into advisory councils and clarifying that

principals retain final decision-making authority at the school level. The bill establishes a clearer chain of command of principal, superintendent and school board so responsibility for school performance rests with designated leaders rather than shared councils. Advisory councils will continue to provide input and recommendations, including a consulting role regarding principal candidates. SB 152 aims to reinforce leadership accountability while maintaining structured input from teachers and parents.

Another bill I have co-sponsored has been assigned to the Education Committee. SB 124 would allow Kentucky school districts to offer teachers and other school employees the option to receive an additional check for a portion of their unused sick leave, providing flexibility for staff and financial planning tools for districts. Educators could choose whether to participate. Those who prefer to save sick leave for emergencies or retirement would retain that option. Others might elect to receive a payout. I look forward to advocating and voting for full Senate passage.

Several other bills passed out of the Senate this week.

SB 9 streamlines regulations and creates new financing tools to support housing construction and redevelopment across Kentucky. The bill aims to increase housing supply, strengthen local economies and help more Kentuckians find homes they can afford.

SB 39 gives private landowners greater flexibility to manage lakes and ponds on their own property by allowing them to stock and fish without certain state limits on size, creel or methods. It also allows

landowners to extend those privileges to others through written or electronic permission, while maintaining safeguards to prevent misuse and protect public waters. The measure clarifies stocking rules, including for largemouth bass, and clearly defines what qualifies as a private lake or pond.

SB 47 expands state death benefits and tuition waivers to include search and rescue personnel who lose their lives while performing official emergency operations.

SB 69 establishes an autism spectrum disorder trust fund and allows taxpayers to voluntarily contribute a portion of their state income tax refund to support autism research, services, and workforce development.

SB 70 strengthens oversight of Kentucky's public pension systems by updating the structure of the Public Pension Oversight Board and expanding legislative and fiscal accountability.

SB 80 proposes a constitutional amendment to restore voting rights to individuals convicted of certain nonviolent felonies after they have completed their full sentence.

Senate Joint Resolution 74 directs the development of a statewide fiscal map of substance use disorder programs and funding to improve transparency, coordination, and accountability.

SB 85 allows retirement benefits from Kentucky's public pension systems to be directed into a special needs trust for a disabled beneficiary.

SB 104, known as the HALO Act, establishes a 25-foot safety zone around first responders while they are performing official duties and creates penalties for individuals who intentionally interfere, threaten or

harass emergency personnel. I am a proud co-sponsor of this bill that backs the blue.

SB 127 clarifies how the cost of unused annual leave included in a retiring teacher's pension benefit is funded to ensure clearer financial responsibility between the state and school employers.

SB 141 modernizes Kentucky's public notice laws by clarifying publication requirements, updating timelines, expanding digital access, and helping control taxpayer costs.

SB 152 strengthens school leadership and accountability by clarifying that principals have final decision-making authority while maintaining structured input from teachers and parents through advisory councils.

SB 154 strengthens Kentucky's voter ID law by updating the list of documents that may be used to verify identity when casting a ballot. I am a co-sponsor of this bill that cleans up our voter rolls and better ensures voter integrity.

SB 159 strengthens Kentucky's response to missing persons cases by requiring timely reporting and improved coordination between state and federal databases. I also co-sponsored this bill.

Each of these bills now advances to the House for further consideration.

Serving the people of Anderson, Henry, Shelby and Jefferson counties in District 7 is one of my greatest honors, second only to my service as a Navy SEAL. If you have questions about legislation or would like to share your thoughts on an issue, please reach out to my office at 502-564-8100 or by email at aaron.reed@kylegislature.gov.

Supreme Court bars suits against Postal Service, even on undelivered mail

BY MARK SHERMAN
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — A divided Supreme Court on Tuesday ruled that Americans can't sue the U.S. Postal Service, even when employees deliberately refuse to deliver mail.

By a 5-4 vote, the justices ruled against a Texas landlady, Lebene Konan, who alleges her mail was intentionally withheld for two years. Konan, who is Black, claims racial prejudice played a role in postal employees' actions.

Justice Clarence Thomas, writing for a majority of five conservative justices, said the federal law that generally shields the Postal Service from lawsuits over missing, lost and undelivered mail includes "the intentional nondelivery of mail."

In dissent, Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that while the protection against lawsuits is broad, it does not extend to situations when the decision not to deliver mail "was driven by malicious reasons." Justice Neil Gorsuch joined his three liberal colleagues in dissent.

President Donald Trump's Republican administration had warned that a ruling for Konan would have led to a flood



Julia Demaree Nikhinson/AP Photo

The Supreme Court is seen on Jan. 13 in Washington.

of similar lawsuits against the cash-strapped Postal Service.

Konan, who's also a real estate agent and an insurance agent, claims two employees at a post office in Euless, Texas, part of the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex, deliberately didn't deliver mail belonging to her and her tenants because, she alleges, they didn't like that she is Black and owns multiple properties.

According to court documents, the dispute began when Konan discovered the mailbox key for one of her rental properties had been changed without her knowledge, preventing her from collecting and distributing tenants' mail from the box. When she

contacted the local post office, she was told she wouldn't receive a new key or regular delivery until she proved she owned the property. She did so, the documents say, but the mail problems continued, despite the USPS inspector general instructing the mail to be delivered.

Konan alleges the employees marked some of the mail as undeliverable or return to sender. Konan and her tenants failed to receive important mail such as bills, medications and car titles, according to the lawsuit. Konan also claims she lost rental income because some tenants moved out due to the situation.

US consumer confidence improves modestly in February after cratering the first month of 2026

BY MATT OTT
AP BUSINESS WRITER

WASHINGTON — The American consumer's confidence in the U.S. economy improved slightly in February after cratering a month earlier.

The Conference Board said Tuesday that its consumer confidence index rose to 91.2 in February from an upwardly revised 89 last month.

A measure of Americans' short-term expectations for their income, business conditions and the job market rose four points to 72, remaining well below 80, the marker that can signal a recession ahead. It's the 13th consecutive month that reading has come in under 80.

The measure of consumers' assessments of their current economic situation fell by 1.8 points to 120.

Respondents' references to prices and inflation were little changed but remain elevated. Mentions of trade and politics increased, while references to labor market conditions eased as perceptions of the job market improved modestly this month.

The country's labor market has been stuck in a "low hire, low fire" state, economists



Nam Y. Huh/AP Photo

A shopper checks out at a cash register in a grocery store in Schaumburg, Ill. on Feb. 9.

say, as businesses stand pat due to uncertainty over Trump's tariffs and the lingering effects of elevated interest rates.

Earlier this month, the government reported that employers added a surprisingly strong 130,000

nonfarm jobs in January. Still, the economy gained just 584,000 jobs in 2025, about one-fourth of the more than 2 million added in 2024.

The softening job market comes even as the U.S. economy keeps growing, often beyond projections.

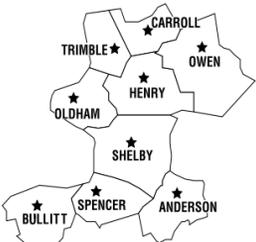
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Real Estate: Mostly brick ranch home on 1.5 acres in prime location. The home boasts 3 large bedrooms, 3 full baths, a finished walkout basement, 2 car garage, large family room, living room, dining room, kitchen, and deck overlooking the acreage.



Separate Building Lot: 1.5-acre lot, mostly wooded, secluded for privacy. This lot is in a prime location just minutes from I-71 and downtown LaGrange.

Public Inspection: Sunday, March 8th. 2-4pm

TERMS: A 10% Buyer's Premium will be added to the final bid to determine the final sales price. The winning bidder shall put down 10% of the total sales price (bid price plus the Buyer's Premium) as a deposit with the balance due in 30 days or before after the auction date. The real estate is sold as is. The property shall transfer with a special warranty deed.

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LEGAL NOTICE

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
Social Services:

Title III-C1 and III-C2 Congregate and Home Delivered Meals - Meal Delivery

KIPDA DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES
11520 Commonwealth Drive
Louisville, KY 40299

The Kentuckiana Regional Planning and Development Agency (KIPDA), Division of Social Services, 11520 Commonwealth Drive, Louisville, KY 40299, serving the Kentucky counties of Bullitt, Henry, Jefferson, Oldham, Shelby, Spencer, and Trimble, is inviting organizations to submit proposals for the services listed above. Funding is made available through the Older Americans Act and/or the KY General Assembly.

The Request for Proposals will be issued after 4:00 p.m. (Eastern Time) February 23, 2026.

A copy of this RFP can be accessed through KIPDA's website at www.kipda.org/about/rfps-rfq after it is released. Please also review Procurement Information for Potential Division of Social Services Providers which includes the link to KIPDA's Procurement Portal.

All applicants must be registered users of KIPDA's Procurement portal in Euna Solutions. The registration can be completed at <https://kipda.bonfirehub.com> by clicking the "Log In/Register" button at the top right of the page. There is no cost for registration.

All communication regarding these proposals, including accessing application documents and submitting questions, will go through this portal.

Proposals must be submitted to <https://kipda.bonfirehub.com/> no later than 12:00 noon (Eastern Time) March 16, 2026. Proposals received after that time and date will not be considered for review. Awards will be based on the lowest and best evaluated bids and in