

Ky. Senate Dem. leader prepares run for local office

BY MCKENNA HORSLEY
KENTUCKY LANTERN

A Kentucky Senate Democratic leader is preparing to run for local office in Jefferson County.

A campaign website and social media account for Sen. David Yates, the Democratic Whip from Louisville, were updated Friday to reflect his plans to run for Jefferson County clerk next year. His website now has a campaign kick-off scheduled for Monday, June 9, with appearances by Louisville area Democrats, including U.S. Rep. Morgan McGarvey and former U.S. Rep. John Yarmuth.

Yates' updated website comes on the heels of another Democratic senator leaving the caucus. Sen. Robin Webb, of Grayson, changed her party affiliation Friday to join the Republican Party.

Bobbie Holsclaw, the Jefferson County clerk since 1998,



ISABELLA SEPHABAN | KENTUCKY LANTERN

Sen. David Yates, D-Louisville, is pictured.

is an elected Republican in Louisville, a Kentucky city where voters tend to favor Democrats. She faced some criticism after the November election following an issue with e-poll books that delayed lines early in the day. Democrats sued to keep the polls open longer in the day, but a

Jefferson Circuit judge denied their emergency request.

In a phone interview, Yates told the Kentucky Lantern that he prepared to only serve two terms in the state Senate as he strongly believes in term limits. He filed a bill to impose term limits on state lawmakers earlier this year,

but the bill did not get a committee hearing.

"I'm part of the superminority in the state Senate, and I love to be able to have a voice for Jefferson County and argue about what's best for the Commonwealth of Kentucky, but I think this is an opportunity for me as the Jefferson County Clerk to have a real and immediate impact on the citizens that we serve," Yates said.

An attorney, Yates was elected to the Senate in 2020. He won reelection in November for the 37th Senate District, taking more than 60% of the vote in the general election.

Yates cited his grandparents' history in public service as one of the reasons why he wants to return to local office. He previously served on the Louisville Metro Council between 2010 and 2020, including one year as president of the council.

"I love the opportunity to make my community better, and I see this as an opportunity for me to use my talents and abilities in a way that I think can really transform the Jefferson County Clerk's Office and to be a model for the whole country," Yates said.

Yates isn't the first Democrat to announce a candidacy against Holsclaw. Rosalind "Roz" Welch, a long time election worker, entered the race Thursday.

Democrats hold six seats in the Kentucky Senate. Republicans have 32.

As for the future of the caucus, Yates said Democratic senators will continue to advocate for their priorities in the upcoming session, such as funding early education and public schools, as well as public safety and public health resources. The General Assembly will review the two-year state budget in 2026.

Kentucky ACLU drops challenge to abortion law

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky has voluntarily dropped a challenge to the state's abortion restrictions.

The Friday dismissal comes about six months after the chapter filed a lawsuit on behalf of a Louisville woman who, at the time, was pregnant and seeking an

abortion.

The woman, identified by the pseudonym Mary Poe, later traveled out of state for an abortion, which is illegal in Kentucky in most circumstances.

Amber Duke, the executive director of the ACLU of Kentucky, said in a statement that "decisions about health care are and should remain private, and we will not be providing

additional details about the dismissal.

"People have the right to control their own bodies without government interference, and we will never stop fighting to restore abortion access in Kentucky," Duke said. "We are strategizing our next steps in this fight. In the meantime, our work to address the commonwealth's maternal mortality rates and lack of widespread paid leave coverage will continue as long as Kentucky remains a forced-birth state."

Attorney General Russell Coleman celebrated the suit dropping, saying "Kentuckians can be proud that our pro-life values won the day today."

Poe's lawsuit was the fourth challenging Kentucky abortion

laws since the United States Supreme Court in 2022 overturned the landmark Roe v. Wade ruling that had protected the right to abortion for almost 50 years. The ruling triggered Kentucky's ban into effect.

The first challenge, filed by abortion providers, advanced in Jeffer-

son Circuit Court but was rejected on appeal.

In December, a woman filed a lawsuit similar to Poe's challenge, stating she was pregnant and did not wish to be. Within days of filing her lawsuit, though, the pregnancy lost viability and she ended her challenge of the law.

In two cases, Kentucky courts, including the state Supreme Court, have rejected challenges to the ban on grounds that the plaintiffs lacked standing to bring the action; the U.S. Supreme Court has likewise avoided ruling on the merits of abortion bans.



KIRA MEADOR | ACLU

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kentucky has voluntarily dropped a challenge to the state's abortion restrictions.

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*Kentucky State Study 2023; conducted by Coda Ventures

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The Boyd County School District reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to award multiple bids.

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