

KY Politics Insider: Massie on war resolution, primary opponent’s ad stock footage

BY AUSTIN HORN
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Kentucky Politics Insider provides an analytical view of Kentucky politics and the conversations that drive decisions. Email me at ahorn@herald-leader.com or ping me on any one of the various social media sites with tips or comments

Thomas Massie is not done filing resolutions.

Weeks after getting his resolution passed to re-lease the investigative files related to late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, the Northern Kentucky Congressman is leading the charge alongside Democrats to get a resolution limiting President Donald Trump’s ability to engage militarily with Venezuela.

In recent weeks, American military forces have ramped up operations in and around Venezuela. Government forces recently seized an oil tanker off the Venezuelan coast and Trump has OK’d covert CIA operations in the country.

That’s alarmed Massie, generally a non-interventionist when it comes to foreign affairs, as well as Democrats. He cosponsored the resolution alongside Reps. Jim McGovern, D-MA, and Joaquin Castro, D-TX.

It reads: “Congress hereby directs the President to remove the use of United States Armed Forces from hostilities within or against Venezuela, unless explicitly authorized by a declaration of war or specific statutory authorization for use of military force.”

Massie said he thinks there’s a good chance of it passing the House, where the GOP holds a slim majority.

“The anti-war Democrats become anti-war again when there’s a Republican in the White House,” Massie told the Herald-Leader in a recent interview in his Washington office. “It would take three or four (Republicans) to get it over the finish line. There may be



Congressman Thomas Massie (R - KY) answers questions during the Towing Industry and Mason County Forum held at Parc Cafe in Maysville, Ky, on Sept. 24, 2025.

more than that, or there may not be, I don’t know.”

It’s not the first time Massie has led the charge on a resolution to limit Trump’s war powers. In 2020, he supported one limiting the administration’s engagement in Iran, which was ultimately vetoed by Trump.

He recalled Trump calling him about it in January 2020, imitating Trump’s voice.

“He said, ‘I’m more anti-war than you are. I’m more libertarian than you,’” Massie recalled. “I said, Well, this is just the way I vote, regardless of who the president is. The power to declare war rests in Congress. Then, he’s like, ‘Well, I can keep us out of war if they think I’m going to strike them.’”

MASSIE ON NATO BILL, NEW LOOK, POLITICAL FUTURE

Massie also defended his recently filed bill to pull America out of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, a decades-old military alliance and collective security group the country has led for decades and includes 30 European countries as well as Canada.

How is this not seen as kowtowing to Russia, which has long opposed NATO’s eastward expansion? He says it’s simple: Money spent helping European countries is better spent on America’s issues like debt or self-defense.

Massie argued that Russia “is not the big empire that it was,” and the formation of the European Union renders the organization moot.

The congressman also offered some insight into why, after years with a consistent clean-shaven, nerdy profile, he shifted to his more recent bearded look, sans glasses.

He called it his “misfortune makeover,” blending together grief over his late wife’s passing, new habits and a serious medical issue.

“Nobody knows this, but it’s part of my medical history that I’ll disclose now: I had a torn retina before my wife passed away,” Massie said, explaining that he underwent significant surgery on his right eye, out of which he could not see. “The result of this misfortune and all of this eye care is that I ended up with 20/20 in what I call it my bionic eye. So, it turns out I don’t need glasses anymore.”

The other factor was the passing of his grandmother and his wife, Rhonda, within three days of each other. Both insisted he remained clean-shaven.

“I let myself go over Christmas, I came back in January, and I didn’t have time to shave. I did a TV interview and my mom said I looked like a hobo, internet haters said I looked like I was a homeless man on a bender — but a lot of women said it

looked good in the comments,” Massie said.

Massie added that he lost 15 pounds grieving Rhonda. Then, he lost another 15 pounds because, for the first time in years, he had to go out and cook for himself, and he took up running.

Later, Massie’s then-girlfriend, Carolyn Moffa, whom he married in the fall, suggested a wardrobe update. All those factors have helped him as he’s risen to become the loudest Trump critic in Washington, he said.

“I do think being more presentable helped me lead the Epstein effort. People are less inclined to follow a frumpy nerd and charge the hill than to follow somebody who looks like he knows how to dress himself, at least,” Massie said.

One more topic Massie covered in the interview: his political future.

1st Congressional District Rep. James Comer, a former gubernatorial candidate who fell just short of the GOP nomination in 2015, is widely expected to run for governor. But Massie, whose profile has grown in recent months, is not closing the door on a run of his own.

“I am focused on getting to May 19, and not just eking out a win, but winning in a big way. When I pull that off, with the headwind of a Trump counter-endorsement, I’ll have the antibodies, so to speak, and I think that that will insulate me in other races somewhat, but we’ll see,” Massie said.

When asked if he’d be a good gubernatorial candidate, he responded bluntly. “I’d be a good governor,” he said, laughing. “We’ll wait and see. I am focused on May 19.”

MASSIE’S FIRST SHOT AT GALLREIN

Although the national GOP is growing more skeptical of American aid to Ukraine in its ongoing war with invading forces from Russia, Massie has always been a critic.

So it was natural for him to call out the use of what appears to be a Ukrainian model couple in his new primary competitor’s first ad.

The couple, along with two children, appears as the thumbnail image and is briefly featured in a 2-minute ad for Ed Gallrein, a Shelby County native backed by President Donald Trump in his run against the longtime Northern Kentucky congressman.

It took some sleuthing on the part of Massie’s staff, who provided links to the Ukrainian modeling agency and source footage, described as capturing a “good-looking caucasian family.” The staff matched photos of the couple featured in the ad with photos from the agency showing them walking in a European plaza. Massie’s staff used reverse image searching to show that the plaza was located in Lviv, a Western city that’s the country’s fifth largest.

“I don’t think he’s ready for prime time. I think this just shows it. That’s, like, a rookie mistake, and it also shows my team’s on the ball, that we caught it,” Massie said.

Lance Trover, spokesperson for Gallrein’s campaign, described Massie’s accusations as “fake news from ... a career politician.”

“What is not fake news is Massie’s record as a constant roadblock to President Trump’s policies and the conservative agenda our district overwhelmingly voted for and supports: cutting taxes and regulations to support businesses and unleash our economy, securing the border, restoring law and order, and rebuilding our Nation’s military,” Trover said.

Negotiations between Ukraine and Russia, brokered by the United States, are ongoing and have yet to come to a conclusion.

Skepticism toward aid to Ukraine has been growing among Republicans in since the conflict began in 2022, according to the Pew Research Center. It became a campaign issue in the 2024 presidential election, with Vice President JD Vance long expressing reservations for the aid.

Massie and Sen. Rand Paul, generally non-interventionists, have continually bashed U.S. mil-

itary aid to Ukraine. Kentucky’s other senator, Mitch McConnell, has made support a focal point of his final years in Washington. McConnell is not running for reelection in 2026.

NATIONAL REVIEW TAKES ON THE KENTUCKY SENATE GOP FIELD

The only thing that will really matter for GOP candidates seeking to replace Sen. Mitch McConnell next May is the will of Kentucky Republican voters.

But it’s worth getting a snapshot of the view from Washington, where narratives are formed and decisions about strategy, funding and more are hatched.

A recent story in the National Review, the nation’s leading traditional conservative outlet, provided just that.

The article claims the race “captures the GOP’s internal debate on immigration,” with Lexington tech entrepreneur Nate Morris taking a hard-line stance advocating to block all immigration until every single undocumented immigrant is deported.

That isn’t exactly what Trump has proposed, and GOP opponents Rep. Andy Barr and former attorney general Daniel Cameron have more closely mirrored whatever the Trump administration’s posture has been. But it’s earned Morris some important fans, the National Review’s Matthew X. Wilson wrote.

“Since his entrance into the race, Morris has attracted media attention and generated a large online following among young MAGA-aligned activists through his call for a moratorium on all migration,” Wilson wrote.

Wilson also offered a strong assessment of Barr’s endorsements from powerful Washington Republicans as well as Cameron’s criticisms of both Barr and Morris. On the whole, though, the story framed the race as Morris the MAGA-aligned outsider versus two establishment Republicans.

“Granted anonymity to provide insight into Trump World’s thinking on the primary, a long-time Trump political adviser told NR that ‘no race in the country is a more clear proxy war between the MAGA base and the establishment than this one,’” Wilson wrote.

London City Council advances budget mayor says will cut 51 city jobs

BY CHRISTOPHER LEACH
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The London City Council on Tuesday advanced a budget over the mayor’s objections it would cut dozens of jobs.

All five council members at a special meeting Tuesday voted to approve second readings of each ordinance on the agenda, including two controversial measures on the proposed amended budget and the city employee pay scale. Council member Anthony Ortega was not present and did not cast a vote on the second readings.

A final vote to enact the ordinances was not taken.

The first ordinance during the meeting was about the proposed budget, which Mayor Randall Weddle said would result in 51 jobs in the city being cut. Fallout of the proposed budget include “firing everybody at the fire department,” eliminating the IT department, laying off 15 people in the public works department and 13 police officers, he said.

Weddle said the city would lose 101 years of service if the budget passes, and it’s likely more people will quit.

“I hope you realize the

significant damage that this is causing,” Weddle said. “Especially since we sent you a budget that works and impacts no jobs.”

The council has not disputed that the amended budget would result in job cuts, but Council member Judd Weaver said the amendments were necessary because the city budget needs adjusting after Weddle made several illegal hires during his term, beginning in January 2023.

Weaver and Kelly Greene claimed Weddle has hired more than 70 people without the council’s approval since his term began.

Weddle disputed the council’s claim, saying he’s hired only 15 full-time employees, and that he has the power to hire and fire city employees.

“I’m doing this because I’m trying to save the ones that had been here, that had worked all these years and not to be replaced by people that (Weddle) wants to replace them with,” Weaver said.

Weaver also expressed frustration in what he said was a lack of transparency in city hall. He said he’s had to submit multiple open records requests to get answers about city employee hirings, which

has made it difficult to draft a proposed budget.

“That’s not working with us,” Weaver said. “Working with us would be to give us that information in a timely manner. Certain people not on the council can get it in less than a day, and that’s what’s really incredible to me.”

In response to Weaver’s allegations, Acting City Clerk Ashley Taylor said she has given the council “everything that I can give.” She further said she wouldn’t risk her career to hide information from the council.

“It’s awfully suspicious, not just to me, but to everyone sitting here, and our attorneys as well,” Weaver responded.

After the second reading of the proposed budget ordinance was passed, the remaining five proposed ordinances were read and advanced without any further argument from Weddle.

There are no future special council meetings on the city calendar.

Tuesday’s dust-up was the latest installment in a monthslong fight between Weddle and the council.

Council members previously tried to have second readings of the proposed ordinances, but Weddle didn’t call the meeting to

order over concerns it would violate the Open Meetings Act. The council, without Ortega, convened the special meeting anyway without the mayor, a meeting that Weddle debated was illegal.

The council is also trying to remove Weddle from office. On Sept. 5, the council unanimously impeached the mayor after determining he committed misconduct or willful neglect.

Weddle appealed the impeachment ruling Sept. 11 in Laurel County Circuit Court. A little more than two weeks later, a special judge presiding over the case, David Williams, reinstated Weddle as mayor.

The council appealed the order, but Weddle has remained in office in the meantime. The Kentucky Court of Appeals denied a request from the council to pause Williams’ reinstatement order, and the case is awaiting ruling from the Kentucky Supreme Court.

Obituaries

Betty Morrison June 4, 1932 - December 17, 2025



Lexington, Kentucky - Betty Joan Taylor Morrison, 93, passed away on December 17, 2025. She was born June 4, 1932, in Bracken County, Kentucky.

A graduate of Bracken County High School, Betty earned both her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Kentucky. She spent her working life educating and caring for children, serving as Director of the Central Baptist Church Child Care Center from 1968 to 2004 and later as Minister of Early Childhood Education for Central Baptist Church. She was also the founding director of the Crestwood Christian Church Child Care Center, leading it from its inception in 1985

until 2000. As a parent, Betty was a great listener who understood the values of learning and self-discovery more than direction and rules. She was a patient, kind, faithful friend and counselor to many. She believed in long-term results over short-term gains and had the patience and determination to let the future unfold. She was an avid gardener, especially passionate about daylilies, and an artist at heart, making beautiful rugs that reflected her creativity and care.

She is survived by her daughter, Margaret; her son, David (Tracy); her grandchildren, Brooke and Scott; and several beloved nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by her four brothers, Norman (Evelyn), Robert (Carolyn), David (Shirley), and Nick.

Visitation will be held Sun. Dec. 21, 2025, at Milward - Southland, 391 Southland Dr., Lexington, KY 40503, from 4 to 6 pm, with a graveside service at Sharon Church Cemetery, 3401 Asbury Road, Augusta, Kentucky on Wed. Jan. 7, 2026, at 12:30 pm. www.milward-funeral.com

Obituaries

OBITUARY INDEX

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Contact our obituary staff at 859-231-3215 or hlobits@herald-leader.com

NAME, AGE	CITY	DEATH	ARRANGEMENTS
Morrison, Betty, 93	Lexington	Dec 17	Milward Funeral Directors

Bold listings indicate expanded obituaries