

OPINION

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"I disapprove of what you say, but I defend to the death your right to say it." - Voltaire

COLUMN

Settle down

It may just be my perception, but it seems like, at least anecdotally, the first few weeks of President Donald Trump's run as the 47th president of the United States has been one of the most action-filled of any president in my lifetime if not beyond. Among all the actions taken, some are minor, while some, like the actions being taken to secure the borders and deport illegal immigrants, have been vast and sweeping. Part of the problem so many things are happening at once is it's hard to get a handle on what exactly is happening. All of these actions are being taken via executive orders, which are

ultimately reversible. That reversibility played a part in one of the more confusing episodes of a presidency in its infancy. One of the president's executive orders which came down froze all federal aid funding to states and organizations. It sparked a lot of fear and uncertainty, as individuals and others scrambled to figure out what the executive order meant. The problem was no one really got their hands on what exactly was affected before the order was rescinded on Wednesday. Or was it? I keep seeing information that indicates the order still cur-



Fillin' In
 Russ Cassady
 Regional Editor

rently stands but is being held up by courts and other actions. There's little doubt that many voters who voted for Donald Trump did so because they believed his statements that indicated he would be cutting back on government spending. If that was accurate, this would seem to be a part of it, but a fairly heavy-handed way of doing it. The reality, however, is that we are sitting here days after the order was given (if it still stands) and we really don't know what

it's going to do if it goes through. This has been one of my greatest fears in getting ready for the current administration to take office. President Trump is such a lightning rod for controversy (remember, he's Hitler, according to some) that everything he does is hyper-analyzed. As word of this order began filtering down, I heard that it impacted FAFSA, school lunches and a multitude of other things. But I'm not sure, at this point, whether it actually does. Every action taken by every government agency and official deserves scrutiny. However, if everyone knee-jerks when the Trump administration takes an action and assumes that the worst is coming true every time, then when the administration really does something bad, we'll hardly be able to recognize it. We've got four more years

and a lot of orders, executive and otherwise, that need proper and realistic analysis, so we're really going to have to slow down our expectations of immediately having the answers, and instead seek accuracy. If we try to process what's going on at the speed the administration is acting, we'll miss what matters. And if the national media which clearly doesn't understand its current status in the United States doesn't make accuracy paramount over speed of reporting, then it will no longer have a voice that matters. We're in a new world right now, and it, in reality, calls for an approach more based on the past, when the newspapers had time to process information before disseminating it. To fail to respond appropriately will be to fail to respond at all.

GUEST COLUMN

How a bill becomes a law

By **BOBBY MCCOOL**
 STATE REPRESENTATIVE
 97TH DISTRICT

How does a bill become law? This is a seemingly simple question that requires a rather detailed, lengthy response. Creating laws is not an easy or simple process, which is no accident. As a matter of fact, this is the way the Founding Fathers intended it. Our Founding Fathers wanted to ensure that bills

face much scrutiny and deliberation before becoming law. Hence, they established the framework for a robust, stringent process that a bill must undergo to become law, safeguarding against the passage of impulsive or ill-conceived legislation. Throughout the 2025 Regular Session, you will observe the process outlined below as pieces of legislation filed by members of the General Assembly move forward. Step 1: Introduction

and Committee Referral: A bill may be introduced in either the House or Senate. Each bill is assigned a number, read by title and sponsor, and referred by the Committee on Committees, a group of legislative leaders tasked with assigning a bill to a committee, to the appropriate standing committee. Step 2: Committee Consideration: The committee assigned a bill by the Committee on Committees will either choose to act or fail to act on it, resulting in the bill's death. If the committee chooses to act, a public hearing is held, which is also broadcast live on KET.org and the legislature's YouTube page, @KYLRCCCommitteeMeetings. The bill is presented, debated, and open to questions from committee members. A bill may be reported out of committee with one of the following reports: favorable, favorable with amendments, favorable with committee substitutes, unfavorable, or without opinion.

Step 3: First Reading: When a committee reports a bill favorably, the bill is given its first reading on either the House or Senate floor and is placed in the calendar for the following day for its second reading. Step 4: Second Reading and then to Rules: The bill is read for a second time and sent to the Rules Committee, a group of legislative leaders and other members who prepare the Orders of the Day. The Rules Committee then decides to either recommit the bill, sending it back to committee, or to place it in the Orders of the Day, a list of bills and resolutions ready to be debated and/or adopted within each chamber that day. Step 5: Third Reading and Passage: Typically, the Majority Floor Leader, the spokesperson for the majority party on the floor, makes the motion to read the bill for a third time. Earlier this month, HB 1, a measure that would lower the individual income tax from 4 percent to 3.5 per-

cent, was read for the third time on the House floor. The motion went as follows: "I move that House Bill 1 be taken from the Orders of the Day, read for the third time by title and sponsor only, and placed upon its passage." The motion is adopted by voice vote, and the floor is open for debate. After debate on the bill and any amendments, a final vote is taken. To pass, the bill must be approved by at least two-fifths of members in each chamber, equivalent to 40 representatives or 16 senators, with a majority of members present and voting, unless the bill contains an appropriation of funds or an emergency clause. In that case, the bill must be approved by a majority of members in each chamber, equivalent to 51 representatives and 20 senators. Next Steps: If a bill is defeated, it will likely not have another vote unless two members who voted against it request its reconsideration, and the majori-

ty approves. If a bill passes in one chamber, it will move to the other chamber for consideration, where it goes through the same first five steps again. In the end, both the House and Senate must agree on the final form of the bill. If either chamber fails to concur on amendments, the differences may be reconciled by a conference committee of both representatives and senators. Changes agreed to by the conference committee are subject to approval by both chambers. Step 6: Enrollment: Once a bill is passed by both the House and Senate, it is carefully read to ensure the final wording is correct. The bill is then signed by the presiding officer of each chamber, the Speaker of the House and the President of the Senate, and sent to the Governor. Step 7: Governor's Action: Once received, the governor has 10 days, excluding Sundays, to act on

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