



# 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 sub-committee 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 centers—one 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.

Additionally, the 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

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 well-being 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 retainerage 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](http://legislature.ky.gov) and find live and archived meeting footage at [KET.org/legislature](http://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](mailto: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 (non-voting) 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 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.



(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 Dublin, 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](http://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](http://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](mailto:TradeWars@kctcs.edu) for comprehensive information packets, including registration materials and required waivers.

For more information, please contact: OCTC. [TradeWars@kctcs.edu](mailto:TradeWars@kctcs.edu) to sponsor the event please contact [sydney.warren@kctcs.edu](mailto:sydney.warren@kctcs.edu)



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