David Givens' Bill Clears Committee 10-0

Measure modernizes Kentucky legal notice rules

PHOTO | DUSTIN ISAACS

Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens explains Senate Bill 141 to members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee during a Feb. 11 meeting.

BY **SETH DUKES**
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FRANKFORT — Legislation aimed at modernizing how legal notices are published in Kentucky is advancing with strong early support after clearing a Senate committee unanimously.

Senate Bill 141 passed 10-0 out of the Senate State and Local Government Committee on Feb. 11 and is expected to continue moving smoothly through the General Assembly. The measure seeks to update and standardize requirements governing how state and local governments publish legal notices, including tax notices and public hearing announcements.

The proposal is the result of collaboration among the Kentucky Press Association, the Kentucky League of Cities and the Kentucky Association of Counties.

Jay Nolan, government affairs co-chair of the press association, told lawmakers the process involved compromise among stakeholders.

"There's nothing in this bill that I love 100%, and I don't think that's true for any of us," Nolan said. "But all of us feel like it modernizes the Kentucky public notice infrastructure."

Jeff Jobe, the behind-the-scenes co-chair of the press association, said the agreement reflects roughly a year of work and began with conversations at the local level.

"This is an agreement that has been an entire year of working toward," Jobe said. "We began by listening to the county judge-executives and mayors in the region our newspapers serve. I made notes of their needs, and we then met with their organizations' leadership, JD Chaney and Jim Henderson. The press association knew we were going to have to evolve if we were going to keep Kentucky legal notices in our weekly newspapers."

Jobe said the negotiations addressed concerns raised throughout the process.

"As Nolan said in the Feb. 11 meeting, there were some thorny issues, and I'm pleased that we addressed every issue brought before our combined meetings," he said.

He also credited the bill's sponsor for initiating the effort.

"He asked me to try to establish a consensus with the organizations we have had to fight for 20 years on this issue, something I would never have attempted if he didn't ask me to try," Jobe said.

Sponsor Senate President Pro Tempore David Givens said lawmakers have long balanced two priorities: ensuring public transparency and controlling taxpayer costs.

"We have a need for transparency so that all the voters can understand how their tax money is being spent," Givens said. "But we also have a need to minimize the amount of tax money we spend doing that."

The legislation clarifies current law by defining a published statement of ownership, updating standards for which newspapers qualify to publish required legal notices, and requiring that public agencies be charged fair and reasonable rates.

It also incorporates language allowing online publication of legal notices.

Nolan said the bill would provide continuous statewide digital access to public notices at no cost to the state through the press association's system.

Committee Chair Michael Nemes said he expects the measure to receive favorable consideration when it reaches the Senate floor.

The full text of the draft bill can be read at apps.legislature.ky.gov/recorddocuments/bill/26RS/sb141/orig_bill.pdf.

Legislative Action Needed

Allen County Beekeepers Association, Inc., requests citizen support of Kentucky General Assembly House Bill 57. The bill was introduced January 14, 2026 by sponsors D. Fisher, K. Banta, R. Bevins, S. Heavrin and referred to Appropriations and Revenue committee for consideration.

The bill, if passed, would amend KRS 139.480, relating to the sales and use taxes, to exempt bees used in a commercial enterprise for the production of honey or wax for sale or for the pollination of crops, and certain items used in that pursuit; effective August 1, 2026.

Concerned citizens can contact legislators and voice their support in moving this house bill out of committee and onto the 2026 General Assembly floor for vote of passage. Local legislators are Senator Max Wise (max.Wise@kylegislature.gov), 702 Capital Ave., Annex Room 242 Frankfort, Ky. 40601 and Representative Shawn McPherson (shawn.McPherson@kylegislature.gov), 702 Capital Ave., Annex Room 405D Frankfort, Ky. 40601.

OP-ED

Protecting Kentucky's Community Banks Starts with Fixing Washington's Stablecoin Gap

Today, 148 community banks operate across the Commonwealth, serving farmers, small-business owners, and families. I've spent my career in community banking. We know our customers, and we put their interests first. The success of these banks is no coincidence. It stems from a simple model: deposits flow in, and loans are issued out to support local growth.

However, this model is now at risk due to a loophole in federal law. The GENIUS Act, signed into law by President Trump, aimed to encourage innovation while setting safeguards for the growing crypto industry.

Most importantly, it prohibited stablecoin issuers from paying interest to holders. Stablecoins were created as a modern payment tool, not to replace deposits in community banks or money market funds.

Unfortunately, almost immediately after the law was passed, companies began finding ways around it. While stablecoin issuers are barred from paying interest, affiliates and exchanges started offering "rewards" and yield programs to stablecoin holders. These programs are essentially the same as the interest payments Congress aimed to ban.

In other words, what Congress clearly prohibited directly is now being done indirectly.

If this loophole remains open, the consequences could be profound. The Treasury Department has warned that up to $6.6 trillion in deposits nationwide could shift into stablecoins if unregulated interest-like programs continue to grow. That is not a theoretical concern — that is a direct threat to the deposits that make community lending possible.

Research from the Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City shows that every $1 shift from banks to stablecoins reduces bank lending by about 50 cents.

For Kentucky, where community banks fund everything from agricultural loans to small-town startups, such a reduction would be devastating.

And the damage would not be felt equally. It would hit underserved and rural communities the hardest. Kentucky's community banks are often the only financial institutions serving these areas. If their deposits decline, interest rates will rise, loan availability will decrease, and families and small businesses will suffer the most.

Stablecoin issuers, unlike banks, do not have Community Reinvestment Act obligations. They are not required to lend locally. Deposits that leave Kentucky communities for unregulated digital platforms are unlikely to ever return.

Congress must close this loophole before real damage is done.

That involves clarifying that interest-like "rewards" offered through affiliates or exchanges break the intent of federal law.

Lawmakers must also ensure that any entity performing bank-like functions is subject to similar oversight and that it protects the deposits on which community banks depend.

Innovation is encouraged — but regulatory arbitrage is not.

Kentucky's community banks have supported our state for generations, not because they follow trends, but because they invest in people. They deserve a level playing field.

Congress must close the stablecoin loophole — before real harm impacts the people and places that keep Kentucky strong.

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State Rep. Michael Meredith (R-Oakland) serves as chair of the Kentucky House Banking & Insurance Committee - and is a longtime loan officer with a local community bank in South Central Kentucky.

Governor's Scholars Program Highlights Opportunities for Local Students

Kentucky's Governor's Scholars Program (GSP) recently presented before the House Standing Committee on Primary and Secondary Education, highlighting the program's continued impact on high-achieving students across the Commonwealth—including those from our local schools.

Rep. Scott Lewis, who chairs the committee, said the program has been a cornerstone of academic excellence since it began in 1983.

"The Governor's Scholar Program has been a cornerstone of Kentucky academic excellence since its inception in 1983," Lewis said. "The General Assembly recognizes its role in shaping the future of thousands of our students and remains committed to ensuring its opportunity will be accessible for future classes."

Each summer, more than 1,000 rising high school seniors are selected to participate in the free, five-week residential program. Students from public, private and home school settings are eligible to apply during their junior year.

The state provides approximately $2 million annually to support the program. According to program data, nearly 75 percent of students who completed the summer 2023 session enrolled at a Kentucky college or university by fall 2024.

Completion of the program also opens doors to scholarship opportunities at colleges and universities across the state, helping families reduce the cost of higher education while encouraging Kentucky's top students to remain in the Commonwealth.

Enrollment for the 2026 session closed in January. Students who are currently juniors and interested in applying for future sessions should contact their school guidance counselor for application details and deadlines.

Local educators encourage qualified students to consider applying, noting the program not only strengthens academic skills but also builds leadership, confidence and lasting connections with peers from across Kentucky.

DID YOU KNOW?

Instances of driving under the influence of a substance seem to increase during the holiday season.

Drunk and drug-impaired driving is illegal in all 50 states and across Canada. Unfortunately, instances of driving under the influence of a substance seem to increase during the holiday season. According to recent data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 29.8 percent of all fatal car accidents between 2018 and 2022 (the most recent for data) involved a drunk driver. Fatal crashes involving drunk driving are about 27 percent more common during holiday periods than other times of the year. Nighttime driving during the month of December tends to be particularly dangerous. Almost half of drivers involved in fatal crashes between the hours of midnight and 2:59 a.m. were intoxicated, according to data from December 2023.

Thirty percent of drivers involved in fatal traffic crashes between the hours of 6 p.m. and 5:59 a.m. were intoxicated. The NHTSA reminds people that impaired driving is deadly. Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over and If You Feel Different, You Drive Different - Drive High Get a DUI are NHTSA campaigns instituted during the holiday season that are followed up with increased enforcement by police. Holiday celebrants should always plan for a sober ride home from parties or holiday dinners if they plan to drink or consume other substances that can cause impairment.