Trump delays Medicaid rules, but not for Kentucky

BY SARAH LADD
KENTUCKY LANTERN



Sarah Ladd/Kentucky Lantern

Hundreds of Kentuckians with disabilities and their loved ones and advocates came to Frankfort and pleaded with elected officials to find a way to protect the services they receive through Medicaid waivers, on July 17.

The Trump administration on Friday offered states extra time to implement work requirements for Medicaid, but the Beshear administration says Kentucky cannot take advantage of the optional delay.

Beth Fisher, a spokesperson for the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, said that the state has to align with timeline requirements in Kentucky's House Bill 2, which says the state has to implement the new work requirements in the One Big Beautiful Bill Act on Jan. 1.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services wrote in a statement that an "optional hold harmless period" will give state governments more time to update their systems and improve the processes they have in place.

"States have made real progress, and they've been clear with us about what it takes to get this right for beneficiaries—at scale and for the long term," Director of the Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services Dan Brillman wrote in the statement.

Under the rules, people covered by Medicaid between the ages of 19-64 will have to spend 80 hours a month either working, participating in community services or attending an educational program. Some people have exemptions, including those with physical, intellectual or developmental disabilities.

"Gov. Beshear has repeatedly pushed back against these harmful Medicaid cuts, which will put 35 Kentucky rural hospitals at risk of closing and strip 250,000 Kentuckians of their health insurance," Fisher said in a statement.

Medicaid is the federal-state program that pays for 1 in 3 Kentuckians' health care.

"Team Kentucky believes healthcare is a basic human right and values the critical role of Medicaid in providing coverage for 1.4 million Kentuckians," Fisher said.

GOP

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including Tucker, in all of the top statewide offices. Democrats also took over the Texas House, which has been controlled by Republicans since 2003.

Republicans still hold the majority in the Texas Senate and are considering rule changes to undercut the power of incoming presiding officer Vikki Goodwin, a Democratic legislator who defeated incumbent Republican Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick for the state's number two post, which includes leadership of the legislature's upper chamber.

In the aftermath of what she called a "nationwide Republican defeat," Texas Republican Party Chair D'rinda Randall announced the formation of an invitation-only Texas Mandate Committee composed of statewide leaders charged with "examining what occurred and developing a strategy to win Texas back."

"This is not about placing blame," she said in a statement. "It is about planning to win."

Kendall Scudder, chair of the Texas Democratic Party as well as the Democratic National Committee's Rural Council, told Stateline that his party's Texas triumph resulted in part from a concentrated campaign that included a heavy focus on rural Texas.

"What I think happened was folks in rural Texas gave Democrats an opportunity to state our case, and we hadn't had that in while," said Scudder, who grew up in Sulphur Springs in largely rural East Texas.

"I think we started making inroads, and part of that could be because Republicans weren't worth showing up and voting for. But I think another piece is that Democrats were talking about things that were important to rural Texas."

Top issues that resonated strongly in rural Texas, he said, included the spread of data centers, "mass surveillance" by mounted Flock cameras that read license plates, and inadequate funding for state schools. As result, he said, 21 largely rural counties that voted red in previous elections "went blue this time."

"I think we moved the needle in a good way, and I think if Democrats deliver for those communities, we can start to unlock more and more gains," he said.

Outgoing Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller, a Republican who lost his primary race for re-election, echoed Tucker and Scudder's assertions that rural voters are up in arms over data centers, artificial intelligence, Flock cameras, and soaring fuel prices. Tucker says he will push for a moratorium on data centers after he takes office in January.

"We've never had any real property tax relief," Miller said in a phone interview "Diesel's the highest it's ever been. Fertilizer's the highest it's ever been. I don't think the Democrats took anything away from the Republicans," Miller said, "we basically gave it to them."

Miller put much of the blame for rural dissension on Abbott's policies. Abbott endorsed Miller's Republican primary opponent, Nate Sheets, who in turn was beaten by Tucker in the general election.

A $1 billion publicly funded private school voucher program that Abbott pushed through the Texas Legislature in 2025 also stirred dissent in parts of rural Texas, amid fears that it will siphon money from public schools.

"There was a lot of hard feelings about the voucher program out there," said Snapper Carr of Austin, a managing partner and general counsel of Focused Advocacy, a lobbying firm that represents cities and communities throughout the state. The Republican downturn, he said, was particularly evident in what he said are typically "bright red areas of West Texas," where residents "talk about the price of diesel like we all talk about the weather."

"The Republicans still carried them," he said, "but their margins were much less than what they've been in the past…There was a large number of past Republicans that didn't show up this time."

'TOTALLY SURPRISED'

In Briggs, an unincorporated Central Texas community with around 100 residents, Ray Bizzell, 83, offered his thoughts on the election outcome as he left Sunday's services at the Briggs Baptist Church. Bizzell, who runs a floor covering business about 20 miles away in Georgetown, Texas, said he voted "Republican, straight ticket" and "was totally surprised" by Democrats' strong showing in the state.

"I really thought we might hold it," he said. "I just think my beliefs align better with the Republican Party."

In Williamson County, which stretches from the high-growth Austin suburbs to patches of rural Texas further east, the unexpected Democratic surge propelled first-time candidate Chris Jimenez, 42, into a state legislative victory over a Republican incumbent backed the governor.

In this year's U.S. Senate race, Williamson County swung nearly 19 points toward the Democrats compared with the Senate race in 2024, according to The Associated Press.

Jimenez, who lives on a pecan farm with his wife and 16-year-old daughter near the town of Elgin, is headed to the statehouse after defeating Republican state Rep. Caroline Harris Davila for the House seat once held by Talarico. Jimenez's opponent was endorsed by Abbott.

Jimenez grew up on a ranch near Sanderson and served in the Marine Corps. He said his thoughts of running for office intensified after he was "pulled over and profiled by a police officer," he told Stateline. "I was very concerned on multiple levels. I figured, 'Hey, if this is happening to me, a Marine Corps veteran just trying to make my life here on the farm, it's got to be happening to multiple people.'"

"Did I expect to win? I felt our message resonated with people, regardless of their political affiliation," he said. "It was never about being red or blue. It was about survival in Texas and it's gotten hard for a lot of folks."

Jimenez has joined other incoming lawmakers in pre-filing bills before the January start of the legislature. His measure call for repealing "the private school voucher scheme," eliminating a sales tax exemption for data centers and expanding Medicaid benefits in Texas.

Republican data analyst Derek Ryan said Republicans needed to win by "a very large margin" in rural counties to counter strong turnout in predominately Democratic urban areas. The GOP only had 32-point advantage in those counties in this year's mid-term elections, he said, compared to 55 points in 2022 and 46 points in 2018.

Ryan estimated that about 625,000 Republicans sat out the election, according to the Texas Rural Report.

"We knew there was going to be a slight shift towards the Democrats in rural Texas," Ryan told Stateline. "I didn't think it was going to be this significant, but it comes down to the economy and gas prices.

"When you live in rural Texas, it's a long drive anywhere you go. So when it's costing you more to fill up your tank, you know you're going to vote with that in mind."

Suzanne Bellsnyder, who owns and runs a newspaper in the small town of Spearman near the Oklahoma state line, said she has analyzed all 184 Texas counties with a population under 50,000 and found signs of Republican slippage in areas that have typically served as Republican bulwarks.

"Republicans have always depended on the rural counties to kind of be their firewall, their insurance policy," she said. But this time, she added, "they just weren't there."

HOUSING

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session is an opportunity to take action."

The report shows that home building in Kentucky plummeted 46 percent in the decade following the Great Recession of 2007-2009, resulting in a housing supply shortfall. Government regulations, bureaucratic delays, and infrastructure have since made home building more difficult and expensive.

As a result, in certain areas of the state, median home sale prices are now 4 times median household incomes, up from 2-3 times median incomes 30 years ago.

Proposed reforms include:

- Modernizing parking requirements so that the free market determines how many parking spots are needed for new homes instead of the government
- Making sure that rules for builders are consistent and predictable.
- Reducing costly delays by allowing builders to partner with qualified private parties for mandated inspections.
- Encouraging public-private partnerships between builders and governments to help reduce the financial impacts of infrastructure on homebuyers.
- Ensuring that governments fully consider the impacts of regulations on housing and the economy when they create new rules for home building .
- Making it more practical for builders to develop infill housing and convert existing structures – like office buildings – into new housing.

Let Kentucky Build can be read in full at kychamber.com/housing. Also available are an executive summary, a housing reforms brief, and a slide deck featuring the report's key data points.

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LEGAL NOTICE

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WEBSTER COUNTY, KENTUCKY
SUMMARY AND NOTICE OF ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION

The Board of Education of Webster County, Kentucky (the "Board of Education") at a regular meeting on November 9, 2026, passed and adopted a Resolution entitled:

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WEBSTER COUNTY, KENTUCKY ("BOARD"), AUTHORIZING AND APPROVING THE ISSUANCE OF GENERAL OBLIGATION BONDS, SERIES 2026 IN THE PRINCIPAL AMOUNT OF $1,275,000 (SUBJECT TO AN INCREASE OR DECREASE OF UP TO $130,000) (THE "BONDS") PURSUANT TO KRS §§ 66.011 THROUGH 66.191, 157.611 THROUGH 157.640 AND 160.160, THE PROCEEDS OF WHICH ARE TO BE USED FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL PROJECTS; AUTHORIZING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CERTAIN FUNDS TO PROVIDE FOR THE COLLECTION, TO THE EXTENT REQUIRED, OF THE PROCEEDS OF A DIRECT ANNUAL TAX ON ALL TAXABLE PROPERTY WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT, IN ADDITION TO ALL OTHER TAXES; AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF THE BONDS AND THE DISBURSEMENT OF THE PROCEEDS THEREOF; AUTHORIZING THE INVESTMENT OF FUNDS PURSUANT TO KRS § 66.480; PROVIDING FOR DELEGATION BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF AUTHORITY TO THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD TO DETERMINE CERTAIN MATTERS RELATING TO THE BONDS; AND AUTHORIZING SUCH OTHER DOCUMENTS, AGREEMENTS AND CERTIFICATES NECESSARY OR REQUIRED FOR THE ISSUANCE OF THE BONDS.

The Resolution authorizes the issuance of $1,275,000 of the Board of Education's General Obligation Bonds, Series 2026 ("Bonds") (subject to permitted adjustment) to be issued for the purpose of financing HVAC replacement at Webster County High School (the "Project").

To assure the payment of the Bonds, it is necessary that the Board of Education authorize the levy of a tax ("Bond Tax") sufficient to pay debt service on the Bonds; provided, however, it is now anticipated that other available taxes and revenues of the Board of Education, including amounts to be received from the Kentucky School Facilities Construction Commission, will be sufficient to meet the debt service requirements of the Bonds without the collection of the Bond Tax.

Section 5(C) of the Bond Resolution, which levies the Bond Tax reads as follows:

That pursuant to Section 157 of the Constitution of Kentucky and KRS § 66.111, there is hereby authorized to be levied, and the Board hereby does so levy, without limitation as to rate or amount, each year that the Bonds remain outstanding, a Tax in an amount sufficient to provide for the full payment of the principal and interest requirements on said Bonds; provided, however, that said Tax shall be collected only to the extent that other receipts from existing Board taxes or other sources, including amounts to be received from the Kentucky School Facilities Construction Commission, are not sufficient to provide for the full payment of the debt service payments on the Bonds each year.

That by the adoption of the Resolution the Board of Education covenants with Owners of the Bonds that it shall, if necessary, collect each year a Bond Tax in a sufficient amount and appropriate in its annual budget, together with other monies available to it, an amount of funds sufficient to pay the "debt charges" on the Bonds as defined in Section 66.011 (4) of the Kentucky Revised Statues.

The Bonds are to be sold at a publicly advertised competitive sale. The Bonds will mature over a term not to exceed 20 years from the date of issuance. The Resolution establishes a Sinking Fund to provide for the payment of the principal and interest requirements of the Bonds as same become due.

A copy of the Resolution is available in the office of the Secretary of the Board of Education.

This summary has been prepared by David B. Malone of Steptoe & Johnson PLLC, Louisville, Kentucky, Bond Counsel to the Board of Education.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OF WEBSTER COUNTY, KENTUCKY
By: /s/ Michael Gooch
Secretary