

KENTUCKY POLITICS INSIDER

A trip to Mar-a-Lago and Comer, Beshear comment on Minnesota

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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.

Sen. Rand Paul was not the only Kentucky politician to make significant comments after the killing of Alex Pretti by federal agents in Minnesota.

Rep. James Comer's appearance on Fox News Sunday came at a pivotal moment for Republican messaging on the incident, which has been widely criticized on the left and some on the political right.

In the wake of Pretti's killing, some members of President Donald Trump's administration labeled him a "domestic terrorist" without any evidence and shifted blame onto Pretti for being shot.

"If I were President

Trump, I would almost think about, OK, if the mayor and the governor are going to put our ICE officials in harm's way and there's a chance of losing more, you know, innocent lives or whatever, then maybe go to another city and let the people of Minneapolis decide, 'Do we want to continue to have all of these illegals,'" Comer said.

Trump liked it. "Highly Respected Congressman Jamie Comer was GREAT in his interview this morning with Maria Bartiromo. He said it all concerning Minnesota, Deranged Jack Smith, and many other topics of interest," Trump wrote in a social media post. "Jamie is doing a fantastic job!"

Comer's comment was used as an example of the ways people in GOP circles tiptoe around outright criticizing the Trump administration, but still get their point across, in a recent POLITICO story. North Carolina Sen. Thom Tillis, for instance, blamed advisers around Trump — not Trump himself — for the hardliner defenses of the agents.

BESHEAR'S COMMENTS ON MINNESOTA

Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear was very firm in his criticisms of how the federal government was handling the situation in Minnesota in an interview with CNN Monday — unsurprisingly more so than

Comer.

Beshear homed in on Department of Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem's statement that Pretti was a "domestic terrorist."

"It is grossly irresponsible, it's incredibly concerning, and listen: if you believe in our rights as Americans, you ought to be speaking up, and you ought to be upset at what's going on," Beshear said.

The governor proposed a complete withdrawal of agents from Minnesota and a "full-on retraining."

"The first thing we have to do is demand that they pull these officers out of all of our cities and that they fully retrain every single one of them. They are operating with aggressive tactics that are not appropriate for law enforcement.

They are not following our constitution and giving people their rights," Beshear said.

A key backdrop to these comments is Beshear's open consideration of a run for president in 2028.

Another POLITICO story published this month made the governor's presidential aspirations even more clear.

"If people want to underestimate me, I'm used to it, and it drives me," Beshear told the outlet when asked about a common Democratic "knock" on him that he doesn't have the charisma to get the nomination.

MR. DOTSON GOES TO FLORIDA

It's commonplace for federal candidates to make the rounds in Washington, meeting with elected officials and representatives of the White House's political team

But one Central Kentucky congressional candidate headed south instead of east this week.

Rep. Ryan Dotson, R-Winchester, was in Mar-a-Lago, the sprawling South Florida club owned by Trump, Tuesday. Dotson had political meetings scheduled there, according

to someone familiar with his plans. Dotson is one of a few prominent Republicans running to replace Rep.

Andy Barr in the Lexington-based 6th Congressional District, including former state Sen. Ralph Alvarado and Nicholasville businessman Greg Plucinski.

It's unlikely Dotson's visit intersected with Trump himself. The president's public schedule shows that he has not been to Mar-a-Lago since Jan. 19. Still, plenty of people in the president's orbit hang around the club throughout the year.

Dotson was not present for Tuesday's session of the General Assembly.

MCGARVEY IMPEACHMENT PUSH

Kentucky's lone Democrat in Congress has been harshly critical of the Department of Homeland Security throughout the Minnesota immigration crackdown.

In mid-January, McGarvey backed articles of impeachment against Noem, citing obstruction of Congress, violation of public trust and self-dealing.

"ICE is committing atrocities in communities across the country every single day," McGarvey said. "In a long list of failures to protect public safe-

ty and her lies, self-dealing, and corruption; ICE murdered Renee Good, and Secretary Noem defended it.

"It's well past time to impeach her and cut DHS off from the taxpayer dollars they are using to fund a terror campaign against our own neighbors," McGarvey wrote in a press release.

The 3rd Congressional District representative's enmity toward the agency only grew with time.

In a recent post to X, McGarvey made clear he would not vote to fund Immigration and Customs Enforcement, which is seen as a sticking point that could possibly lead to another government shutdown.

"ICE is executing Americans and terrorizing our communities. And Trump is asking for a blank check to continue funding this campaign of terror. I voted NO, and every member of the Senate should too. Not another dollar for ICE," McGarvey wrote.

McGarvey doesn't feel that way about all Republicans, though. The congressman made a notable appearance alongside Senate President Robert Stivers, R-Manchester, on the first episode of a podcast hosted by University of Louisville President Gerry Bradley.

McGarvey and Stivers were colleagues for several years when the congressman served in the state Senate.



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Jordan Wade, left, and Kelvin Gabbard made their way through the flooded waters of closed Main Street after high flood waters after severe overnight rain hit Beattyville, Feb. 14, 2025 in Lexington, Ky. The pair were delivering groceries to friends stranded due to the closed road. The photo won first place for breaking news photography from the Kentucky Press Association.

Lexington Herald-Leader takes home 27 press awards for breaking news, more

BY STAFF REPORT

The Lexington Herald-Leader won 27 awards Jan. 23 at the Kentucky Press Association's annual Winter Convention, including first-place wins for

breaking news, photography and extended coverage.

Among the topics lauded by judges were coverage of the Fayette County Public Schools budget crisis, a botched search warrant that left a London

man dead, and live and ongoing coverage of deadly tornadoes in Southeastern Kentucky last spring.

The Herald-Leader took home a second-place win in its division for General Excellence, the highest prize.

"I'm proud to be part of a newsroom that works hard each day to improve the lives of those in Central and Eastern Kentucky," managing editor Alex Valentine said. "It's great to see them honored for the excellent work they do."

The judging period for entries ran from Oct. 1, 2024, to Sept. 30, 2025.

A full list of the Herald-Leader's KPA award winners is below:

Best editorial writer, certificate of merit: Linda Blackford

Best breaking news coverage, first and second place: Herald-Leader staff

Best columnist, second place: Linda Blackford

Best sports columnist, first place: Mark Story

Best sports story, third place: Ben Roberts

Best sports feature story, second and third place: Ben Roberts

Best enterprise or analytical story, first place: Bill Estep

Best investigative story or series, second and third place: John Cheves, Monica Kast and Kendall Stanton

Best on-going/extend-

ed coverage story, first, second and third place: Bill Estep, Christopher Leach, Taylor Six, Valarie Honeycutt Spears, Linda Blackford, Beth Musgrave and John Cheves

Best business/agribusiness story, second place: John Cheves

Best use of social media, third place: Herald-Leader staff

Best video, second and third place: Ryan Hermens, Andrew Henderson and Orizo Hajigurban

Best website, second place: Herald-Leader staff

Best breaking news picture, first place: Brian Simms

Best sports picture essay, first and third place: Herald-Leader staff

Best editorial page,

second place: Linda Blackford

Best front page, first place: Michael Yparrea

Best headline writer, first and second place: Tessa Duvall, John Cheves and Austin Horn

General Excellence, second place: Lexington Herald-Leader



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Bardstown, KY Seeks Proposals to Reimagine a 1914 Landmark on Court Square



Nelson County Fiscal Court, Kentucky invites qualified parties to submit proposals for the purchase and adaptive redevelopment of the Old Historic Post Office, located in Bardstown's National Historic District and the Bourbon Capital of the World.

Download Details at:
nelsoncountyky.gov/old-historic-post-office-rfp/