

Legislative update from Sen. Scott Madon

As we reach the halfway point of the 2026 Legislative Session, I want to take a moment to provide a clear update on where things stand and what Kentuckians can expect in the weeks ahead.

With more than 30 of the 60 legislative days complete, the Senate has remained focused on steady, deliberate progress. At this stage, nine of the Senate Majority's 10 top-priority bills have been filed and passed the Senate. That work reflects months of preparation during the interim and careful consideration in committee and on the floor.

I have also heard from many of you about the early budget proposal filed in the House of Representatives. I understand these discussions affect real families, and I appreciate those who have taken the time to reach out and share their concerns.

It is important to clarify where we are in the process. The state budget traditionally begins in the House. The current House proposal has not yet passed that chamber and remains subject to revisions and amendments before it ever reaches the Senate. To be clear, no final budget decisions have been made.

When the House sends its proposal to the Senate, we will carefully review it, evaluate any changes, and make adjustments where necessary. That is the Senate's constitutional responsibility, and we take that role seriously. Questions surrounding health insurance costs, benefit stability, and long-term affordability deserve thoughtful and disciplined review. As we move forward, our guiding principles remain the same: maintaining a structurally

balanced budget, exercising discipline with one-time dollars, and making transparent decisions that protect both taxpayers and public employees.

There is still considerable work ahead, and I will continue to keep you informed as the process unfolds.

In other news, the General Assembly's first bill of the 2026 Regular Session, Senate Bill (SB) 172, was signed into law. The measure helps address sudden spikes in electric bills caused by sharp increases in fuel costs. This is something many families know all too well, especially during extreme weather. SB 172 allows the Public Service Commission, upon request from a utility, to spread fuel cost recovery over several months instead of imposing a large, one-time surcharge. The goal is to provide more stability and predictability for hardworking families, seniors on fixed incomes, and small businesses across our region.

This week also brought one of my favorite traditions to the Capitol. On Thursday, we welcomed military families from across the commonwealth for Military Kids Day. While we often recognize the men and women who serve, it is just as important to honor their children, who make sacrifices in their own way.

Here are several bills that passed the Senate this week:

- SB 9 supports housing development by streamlining regulations and expanding financing tools for local communities. The goal is to increase housing supply, strengthen local economies, and help more Kentuckians access affordable homes.

- SB 47 expands state death benefits and tuition waivers to include search and



State Senator Scott Madon

rescue personnel who lose their lives in the line of duty, ensuring their families receive the same support as other emergency responders.

- SB 69 creates the Autism Spectrum Disorder Trust Fund and allows voluntary state tax refund contributions to support autism research, services, and workforce development across Kentucky.

- SJR 74 directs the creation of a statewide fiscal map of substance use disorder programs and funding to improve transparency, coordination, and accountability in prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts.

- SB 85 allows public pension benefits to be placed

in a Special Needs Trust for disabled beneficiaries, helping families protect long-term care while preserving eligibility for essential support programs.

- SB 104 establishes a 25-foot safety zone around first responders and creates penalties for those who intentionally interfere or threaten them, while protecting constitutional rights to observe and record.

- SB 141 modernizes public notice laws by updating requirements, expanding digital access, and helping control costs while maintaining transparency for taxpayers.

- SB 159 improves Kentucky's response to missing persons cases by requiring

timely reporting and stronger coordination across state and federal databases.

Each of these measures now advances to the House for further consideration.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve you, and I look forward to keeping you updated as the work of the 2026 Regular Session continues.

If you have questions, concerns, or suggestions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at 502-564-8100 or email me at Scott.

Madon@kylegislature.gov. You can learn more about legislation, committees, and the work of the General Assembly at www.legislature.ky.gov.

Pastor's Pen: Turn off the noise

It is extremely hard to focus or listen when there is so much noise around you. Our mind is constantly engaged with everything going on around us and we seem to get lost in concentrating or zoning in on the one thing we need to listen to. The same thing happens when we are driving. If we do not focus on the road we are more apt to be involved in some type of accident. It is hard to focus when we are distracted.

In Habakkuk chapter 2, the scripture tells us in verses 1 and 2, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am reproved. And the Lord answered me,

and said, write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it." This is Habakkuk escaping the noise to hear what God is saying. He understands that he must get away from everything else that is going on in order to plainly hear the voice of God.

With so many voices, opinions, attacks, that are going on in this world today, we need to make sure that we escape to the place where we can hear the voice of God in our lives. We may have to take a moment, clear our schedules, and retreat to a secluded place so that we may zero in on what God is speaking to us. Whatever it takes, you must have your time alone with God.



PASTOR STEVEN TEMPLE

from the world, noise from the enemy, or from work. We must have that time alone and when we do we must expect to clearly discern the whisper of the Lord. We must lean in to hear what God is saying to us and to us alone. What direction is He giving to our lives? What answer are we seeking from

You cannot constantly live in noise, noise of opinions, noise of social media, noise of fear, noise

God? We will not hear if our ears are full of the sounds from elsewhere.

Now, when you do decide to get to that place where you are alone with God you need to look and listen. What do I mean? Well, Habakkuk said, "I will watch to see what he will say." Notice something unusual? Habakkuk said, "I will watch to see what he will say." He didn't just listen—he watched. Why? Because sometimes God speaks through impressions, through pictures, through scripture, through conviction, and even through our present circumstances. Spiritual listening requires spiritual attention.

We must lean in to hear the voice of God and when the

noise that surrounds us drowns that out we may never be inclined to hear His voice. We must take every opportunity that we can, even create those opportunities on a daily basis, to make sure that we hear what God is saying to us. Not to the world or the masses, but what is God speaking to you personally for your life? Don't allow the noise to take away from the time alone with God that you so desperately need. Turn off the noise and hear what thus sayeth the Lord

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The lie that keeps us from Jesus

What is keeping you from having a relationship with God? Is it shame?

I've been there.

The enemy loves to use our sin against us. He whispers that because we have sinned, we are inadequate... unworthy... too far gone. But that is not the truth. Jesus loves us regardless of what we have done or failed to do. He doesn't push us away in our weakness — He invites us closer. He wants us to come to Him so He

can help us overcome the strongholds the enemy has built in our minds.

The enemy wants us to picture Jesus looking down on us with disapproval.

But the truth? His arms are stretched open. He longs to hold you. To restore you. To bless you.

Or is it hurt? I've been there too, sweet friends.

I have been hurt deeply. The kind of hurt that knocks you down and leaves your heart



CANDIDA SULLIVAN

The enemy uses that pain to try to separate us from God. He wants us to blame Him. To harden our hearts. To pull away.

aching long after the moment has passed. And if I'm honest, some of it still aches in the deepest places.

But I've learned something.

Instead of allowing pain to distance me from the Lord, I let it drive me closer to Him. I have spent countless hours pouring out my heart before Him, asking for help, asking for healing, asking for strength.

When my heartache feels overwhelming, I remember what Jesus endured for me. He was rejected, mocked, beaten, yet He did not quit. He proved His love on the cross. He endured suffering so I would

never have to walk through mine alone.

Hardships can make us bitter, or they can humble us.

So I ask God to forgive me. To help me forgive what feels unforgivable. To teach me how to pick up my cross daily and follow Him. In seasons of pain, I draw closer instead of retreating.

I never want my sin, my suffering, or someone else's actions to stand between me and a beautiful relationship with my Lord.