

# ETHICS REPORTER

January 2026



Kentucky Legislative Ethics Commission  
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## **Financial Disclosure Forms for General Assembly Members, Candidates, and Major Management Personnel Due by Monday, February 16, 2026**

Members of the General Assembly, legislative candidates, and major management personnel within the legislative branch are required to file their annual financial disclosure statements by **Monday, February 16, 2026**. The statements are for the 2025 calendar year.

Also, by **Monday, February 16, 2026** all lobbyists and employers are required to file Updated Registration Statements for the period of January 1 through January 31, 2026. The easiest and quickest way for lobbyists and employers to file is to visit the Commission's website at: <https://apps.klec.ky.gov/lec/onlinefiling.aspx>

## **Certificates of Registration Going Out**

We estimate somewhere around 4,500 forms came in for re-registration. On top of re-registration, the 9/1/2025 to 12/31/2025 expense reports were due. So roughly 9,000 forms were processed since December 1, 2025 in our office. We have been VERY busy! With only 2 employees working on these forms, we have been moving as fast as we can. We are now able to start sending out the Certificates of Registration. Just a note, you may not see all of your employers listed on one certificate (we try keeping them together), but you will get a certificate stating who you are working for at some point. To make sure you are registered correctly, look at the lobbyist list located at:

<https://klec.ky.gov/Reports/Reports/AgentsByEmp.pdf>

## **Legislative Ethics Commission Appointments**

**New Commission Appointment:** In December 2025, Derrick Ramsey was appointed to the Commission by the President of the Senate, Senator Robert Stivers. Mr. Ramsey attended the University of Kentucky, was a professional football player in the National Football League (NFL), and later became a small business owner. He then served as Deputy Secretary of Commerce for the Commonwealth of Kentucky from 2003-2007, and also served as the Secretary of the Labor Cabinet from 2015-2018, and as Secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet from 2018-2019. In addition, he was appointed to the Board of Trustees of the University of Kentucky from 2017-2023. In 2024, he served as special assistant to the KCTCS President Ryan Quarles. Mr. Ramsey is a graduate of the University of Kentucky and has a Master's Degree in Sports Administration from Eastern Kentucky University. He and his wife reside in Lexington.

Former legislators, Tanya Pullin and Marie Rader, both resigned from the Commission in the past few months. Ms. Pullin was a former State Representative and was appointed to the Commission by the President of the Senate, Senator Robert Stivers in May, 2020. Mrs. Rader was a former State Representative and was appointed to the Commission by the President of the Senate, Senator Robert Stivers in January, 2023. They were both excellent Commission members and they will be greatly missed.

## **Newly-Registered and Terminated Lobbying Employers**

The following businesses and organizations recently registered to lobby in Kentucky:

<b>Aircraft Owners and Pilots Assn.</b>	<b>KY Laborers District Council</b>
<b>Alexion Pharmaceuticals, Inc.</b>	<b>KY Pork Producers Assn.</b>
<b>American Promise</b>	<b>KY River Resources, LLC</b>
<b>Animal Policy Group</b>	<b>KY Social Work Advisory Just. &amp; Leadership</b>
<b>APB Consulting Solutions</b>	<b>KY Soybean Association</b>
<b>Archer Daniels Midland Company</b>	<b>KRC Machine Tools Solutions</b>
<b>CareQuest Institute for Oral Health</b>	<b>Lexington Professional Fire Fighters</b>
<b>Charitable Gaming Association</b>	<b>Mesabi Metallics Company LLC</b>
<b>City of Monticello</b>	<b>Metropolitan Housing Coalition</b>
<b>CoinFlip</b>	<b>Modern Ag Alliance, Inc.</b>
<b>Community Ventures Corporation</b>	<b>Muhammad Ali Center</b>
<b>Dolly Parton's Imagination Library</b>	<b>Next Stage Development Corp.</b>
<b>EchoStar Corporation &amp; its Affiliates</b>	<b>OneQuest Health</b>
<b>EXXON Mobil Corporation</b>	<b>Rockcastle Reg. Hospital &amp; Resp. Care Cent.</b>
<b>Federation of State Massage Therapy Bds.</b>	<b>Rocket Limited Partnership</b>
<b>Girl Scouts of Wilderness Road Council, Inc.</b>	<b>Rocket Mortgage</b>
<b>Graves Gilbert Clinic</b>	<b>Save the Children Action Network</b>
<b>Guaranteed Asset Protection Alliance</b>	<b>Save the Choctaw Academy Project</b>
<b>Hometown Health System</b>	<b>Spalding University</b>
<b>Johnson Controls, Inc.</b>	<b>Table Sense</b>
<b>Kelley's Landing</b>	<b>TikTok US Data Security Joint Venture</b>
<b>Kentuckians for Freedom LLC</b>	<b>Tidal Basin Group</b>
<b>KY Assn. of Fire Chiefs</b>	<b>Walmart Inc.</b>
<b>KY Aviation Assn.</b>	<b>Water Foundation</b>
<b>KY Humanities Council</b>	

As noted in emails to all employers and the December, 2025 Legislative Ethics Reporter, the Code of Legislative Ethics requires **ALL** employers to re-register every two years. Employers who fail to re-register as of December 31<sup>st</sup> of an odd-numbered year are automatically terminated.

January 1, 2026 was the beginning of a new two-year registration cycle, so every person, business, and organization interested in lobbying was required to register with the Commission for the period covering January 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027. Lobbying spending reports are due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month from January to May, then again in September.

The following business recently terminated their status in Kentucky:

<b>Advanced Medical Technology Assn.</b>	<b>Amneal Pharmaceuticals</b>
<b>Aeroflow Health</b>	<b>Barneyard (The)</b>
<b>Agile Networks, LLC</b>	<b>BE NKY Growth Partnership</b>
<b>American Engineers</b>	<b>Benevis Dental Practice Management</b>
<b>American Kennel Club</b>	<b>Big Rivers Electric Corporation</b>
<b>Americans United for Sep. of Church</b>	<b>Blue Line Solutions</b>

California Nurses Assn/NNOC  
 Carewise Health Holdings  
 Carfax  
 Children & Nature Network  
 Children's Law Center, Inc.  
 Christian Science Committee on Pub. For KY  
 Communications Workers of America  
 Cornerstone Diagnostics  
 Curaleaf  
 Darwin Global, LLC  
 DC Elevator  
 Dish Network LLC  
 DisposeRX, Inc.  
 EIP III Credit Co. LLC  
 Ephraim McDowell Health  
 Ethan Health  
 Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund  
 Excellence in Education in Action  
 Family Medical Centers Community Found.  
 Fayette County Public Schools  
 Flock Safety  
 G20  
 General Matter  
 Georgetown-Scott Co. Chamber of Comm.  
 GlaxoSmithKline  
 Harlan Co. Fiscal Court  
 Home School Legal Defense Assn.  
 HopSkipDrive, Inc.  
 Howling at the Moon, LLC  
 Human Coalition  
 IGT and Its Affiliates  
 Institute for Justice  
 Iron Mountain  
 Isaiah House, Inc.  
 Jackson Crossing LLC  
 Jeffersontown FOP Lodge #26  
 KY Assn. for Environmental Education  
 KY Assn. for Gifted Education  
 KY Assn. of Professional Educators  
 KY Building Materials Assn.  
 KY Cares 2018  
 KY Constable Assn., Inc.  
 KY Entrepreneurship Education Network

KY Fresh Harvest  
 KY Lithium LLC  
 KY Malt Beverage Council, Inc.  
 KY Oil & Gas Association  
 KY Paint Council  
 KY Quarter Horse Racing Assn.  
 KY Rural Health Assn., Inc.  
 KY Solar Industries Assn. LLC  
 KY Staffing Association  
 Lake Cumberland MH/MR Board, Inc.  
 Land Betterment Corp.  
 Lexington Children's Theatre  
 Lexington Medical Society  
 Libertas Institute  
 Magellan Health, Inc.  
 MC Global Holdings LLC  
 National Assn. of Vision Care Plans  
 National Nurses United  
 National Rifle Assn. of America  
 New Venture Fund  
 One East Kentucky  
 Pathology & Cytology Laboratories, Inc.  
 Professional Certification Coalition  
 ProGen Industries  
 Reclaim Recovery LLC  
 Red River Gorge Climbers' Coalition  
 Safety & Advocacy for Empowerment  
 Savvas Learning Company  
 Shirley's Way, Inc.  
 Shyne Labs  
 Simple Solutions Behavioral Health  
 Sportsmens Alliance  
 Students For Life Action  
 Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America  
 Tata America International Corp.  
 TechNet  
 Textile Rental Services Assn.  
 TikTok, Inc.  
 Trevor Project, Inc. (The)  
 USA Drone Port  
 Vision RNG  
 Voter Reference Foundation  
 Western Hospitality Partners

If you are on the list above but shouldn't be, please let us know by contacting the Commission office at  
[Lori.Smith@kylegislature.gov](mailto:Lori.Smith@kylegislature.gov).

## **Ethics & Lobbying News from around the U.S.**

### **Hawaii Attorney General to Investigate \$35K Bribery Case After All**

By: Christina Jedra – [\*\*CIVILBEAT.org\*\*](https://civilbeat.org) - January 20, 2026

A state lawmaker took \$35,000 from a federal bribery subject in 2022. Hawaii prosecutors are now in charge of the case.

The Hawaii attorney general reversed course on Tuesday, announcing she will take up the case of a Hawaii lawmaker who was recorded accepting \$35,000 in a paper bag from the subject of a bribery investigation in 2022.

A press release indicates federal authorities informed state officials on Friday that they would share evidence of the transaction, which was recorded by former state Rep. Ty Cullen after he was arrested for bribery in 2021 and became an FBI asset.

To help in the investigation and lower his eventual sentence, Cullen accepted \$3,000 from an unnamed bribery subject and two days later recorded that person handing \$35,000 to one of his legislative colleagues. The identity of the lawmaker described in a court filing as “influential” has remained hidden from the public and it is unclear whether that person is still in elected office today.

Public scrutiny has grown since Civil Beat revealed the monetary handoff’s existence last year. Questions have been raised about whether it was a bribe, an unreported gift or a campaign contribution — which would be a state crime — or legal campaign cash bundling, typically arranged to curry favor with politicians.

As the public calls for transparency and accountability mounted, the issue became a hot political issue and the subject of rampant speculation. The clock is ticking on the statute of limitations to file state charges, if any are warranted.

The federal government has described the matter as part of an ongoing investigation, and state officials — the AG and both houses of the Legislature — had repeatedly said they would not launch their own probe so as not to interfere with the federal case.

A citizen petition effort, led by government accountability advocate and attorney Alexander Silvert, put pressure on the Legislature to expose the recipient of the \$35,000. And a handful of current lawmakers called for a legislative probe.

Tuesday’s announcement means the ball is now in the state’s court.

Gov. Josh Green and Attorney General Anne Lopez determined together that a state investigation into the matter is in the public interest, according to Tuesday’s press release from the AG’s office.

“Governor Green has consistently emphasized the importance of individuals coming forward voluntarily when concerns arise, expressing his hope that matters can be resolved in a way that maintains public trust in government,” the AG’s office said.

“In recent weeks, Hawaii state legislative leadership, while deferring to the Attorney General’s previous recommendations to hold on investigating this matter, have also strongly urged that the matter be formally reviewed to ensure accountability and transparency. The January 16 decision by federal authorities to share evidence provided a clear path for the Attorney General to proceed without jeopardizing the ongoing federal investigation.”

Leading the investigation is the attorney general’s special investigation and prosecution division, which was created in 2022 in the wake of the bribery scandal.

“To preserve the integrity of the investigation,” the press release said, the governor and attorney general will not comment further.

The announcement was welcome news to those who had called for a state probe into the person who some are calling the “\$35,000 bandit” but also prompted new calls for transparency.

The name of the lawmaker who took the money needs to be revealed as soon as possible, Rep. Della Au Belatti said at a press conference in front of the federal court building on Tuesday afternoon.

“This is not an investigation that needs to be bottled up,” Belatti said. “Is it a current legislator? Is it someone who’s sitting in the executive branch?”

At the press conference, Silvert called on the governor to order the AG to reveal the identity of the mystery lawmaker to the Legislature. Silvert, a retired federal public defender, noted the conduct may not prove to be illegal but the Legislature should be able to “address within their own house what to do with this person.”

Belatti, a Democrat who is running for Congress, and Kanani Souza, a Republican, have been pushing the attorney general to investigate the case since last year. In a July 2025 letter the lawmakers shared with the media on Tuesday they urged the AG to look into the case, determine what happened, and make the facts public.

Understanding the circumstances is crucial, they wrote, to determine if laws were broken, and if they weren’t, to understand what laws need to be written to “curtail practices which are eroding the public’s trust in government.”

If the \$35,000 was dispersed among multiple lawmakers, those elected officials may want to return the funds, Belatti said on Tuesday, “so they can make it right.”

As recently as two weeks ago, the AG had said she would not investigate the case. She said she’d spoken directly with acting U.S. Attorney Ken Sorenson, and he “affirmed that a parallel investigation by state authorities would interfere with their federal investigation.”

“The United States Attorney is a highly respected prosecutor who has served in Hawaii for years, and there was no ambiguity in our conversation that a parallel state investigation would disrupt his ongoing investigation,” Lopez said in a statement on Jan. 7. “To the extent that the Department of the Attorney General can assist in the future, I welcome that wholeheartedly, but I appreciate and respect the U.S. Attorney’s Office’s current position.”

Since that statement, the heat has only turned up.

Starting on Jan. 6, Civil Beat surveyed every living current and former lawmaker who was in office in 2022 to ask if they were the recipient of the funds. Almost all said no, with the exception of a few who didn't respond, and two who have passed away. Silvert's petition gained traction, with more than 1,000 signatories as of Tuesday. And lawmakers, including Belatti and Jarrett Keohokalole, who is also running for Congress – have made it a point to speak out in support of transparency.

Keohokalole is putting forth legislation to extend the statute of limitations for bribery charges to nine years, from six years — which would run out in 2028. Belatti noted on Tuesday that if the lawmaker in question is still in office, they need to be isolated so they cannot vote on the statute of limitations in their own case.

Even as the AG's office investigates, a group of House members still wants the Legislature to take action. In a letter to House Speaker Nadine Nakamura on Tuesday, Reps. Belatti, Souza, Terez Amato, Elle Cochran and Kim Coco Iwamoto asked for details about how Silvert's petition will be handled.

"We need to get to the bottom of this," Souza said at the press conference.

That same group sent a letter to Sorenson last week asking for the answer to a key question: Is the legislator who accepted the \$35,000 in a paper bag a current sitting legislator? Yes or no.

Sorenson, Belatti said, did not answer the question.

## **Former Oklahoma mental health department official settles with Ethics Commission**

By: Emma Murphy – OKLAHOMA VOICE, YAHOO! NEWS - January 15, 2026

OKLAHOMA CITY — The former deputy director of Oklahoma's mental health department settled with the Ethics Commission Thursday and will pay the state \$2,500 for violating lobbyist registration and reporting law.

Heath Hayes, 41, communicated with state officials "for the purpose of influencing governmental action" without being registered as a lobbyist, according to a statement from Lee Anne Bruce Boone, executive director of the Ethics Commission.

She would not disclose who Hayes was lobbying on behalf of.

Scott Adams, Hayes' legal counsel, did not immediately return a request for comment.

Bruce Boone signed the settlement Thursday following its approval by the Ethics Commission at its meeting. Hayes and Adams signed the settlement Tuesday.

The Ethics Commission found Hayes had not violated Oklahoma conflict of interest rules, but had violated the lobbyist registration rules, according to the settlement.

“Ethics Rule 5 exists to ensure transparency in the lobbying process and fairness for those who comply with the law,” Bruce Boone said in a statement. “When individuals engage in lobbying activity without registering, it places those who follow the rules at a disadvantage and undermines public confidence in government.”

Hayes must make his payment in the next 30 days and provide proof of payment to the Ethics Commission, according to the settlement.

Hayes also faces ongoing criminal charges, separate from Thursday’s ethics settlement, after Oklahoma City police alleged he embezzled \$17,500 from Healthy Minds Healthy Lives while serving as a board member of the nonprofit foundation, which was affiliated with the State Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services.

Hayes is charged in Oklahoma County with one felony count of embezzlement in excess of \$1,000, according to court records. The offense is punishable by up to up to 10 years in prison, a fine of up to \$10,000 and restitution.