

# Ky. lawmaker announces switch to GOP in latest setback for Dems

By Bruce Schreiner  
Associated Press

A longtime state lawmaker announced Friday that she is switching parties, joining Republican supermajorities in the latest setback for Democrats trying to rebuild support across rural Kentucky.

State Sen. Robin Webb, who represents a four-county swath of northeastern Kentucky, revealed she will join the ranks of GOP lawmakers who control the flow of legislation in the state. Webb was one of the last rural Democrats in Kentucky's legislature, and her defection leaves her ex-party more tethered to urban and suburban districts in a state with large stretches of rural territory controlled by the GOP.

Webb said in a news release that she felt increasingly disconnected from the Democratic Party as it continued to "lurch to the left."

"It has become untenable and counterproductive to the best interests of my constituents for me to remain a Democrat," Webb said. "I will continue to be a fearless advocate for rural Kentucky and for the residents of eastern Kentucky who have been so good to me and my family."

Kentucky Democratic Party Chair Colmon Elridge said in a release that Webb chose to align with a political party attempting to fund tax breaks for the wealthy "off the backs of vulnerable" people.

It was a barbed reference to the multitrillion-dollar tax breaks pack-

age passed recently by U.S. House Republicans. To make up for some of the lost tax revenue, Republicans focused on changes to Medicaid and the food stamps program. The non-partisan Congressional Budget Office estimates 8.6 million fewer people would have health care coverage and 3 million less people a month would have SNAP food stamps benefits with the proposed changes.

"If those are her priorities, then we agree: she isn't a Democrat," Elridge said.

Webb stressed that her core values have not changed.

"The only difference today is the letter next to my name," she said.

Webb has compiled a personal and professional resume deeply ingrained in Kentucky culture. She's a hunter, a horse enthusiast and a former coal miner who changed career paths to become an attorney.

Webb first joined the Kentucky House in 1999, when Democrats controlled the chamber. She spent a decade as a state representative before joining the GOP-led Senate in 2009. Republicans seized total control of the legislature in the 2016 election, when they rode Donald Trump's coattails to win the Kentucky House. Republicans padded their legislative numbers in subsequent elections, giving them their



Webb

overwhelming majorities.

Republicans attained that dominance by winning in rural districts previously held by Democrats, but Webb's district had remained a blue dot on the map until Friday.

Her party switch leaves Democrats mostly devoid of a rural presence in the legislature. One exception is Democratic state Rep. Ashley Tackett Laferty, who represents an Appalachian district.

The state's two-term governor, Democrat Andy Beshear, won a number of rural counties and shrank GOP margins in others in his 2023 reelection. His popularity was built on the state's robust economic growth during his tenure and his handling of disasters, from tornadoes and floods to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kentucky Democrats are trying to spark a rural comeback with a grassroots strategy, evidenced by the state party's ongoing "listening tour" with stops in culturally conservative towns across the state.

State Republican Party Chairman Robert Benvenuti said Webb's party switch reflects a broader political trend. In 2022, the GOP overtook the Democratic Party in statewide voter registration.

"Like countless other Kentuckians, she has recognized that the policies and objectives of today's Democratic Party are simply not what they once were, and do not align with the vast majority of Kentuckians," he said.

## COMMUNITY CALENDAR

### TODAY

**5 p.m.:** Fiscal court meets at 321 W. Main St.

### THURSDAY

**Noon:** DAR (Daughters of the American Revolution) will be having a monthly meeting in Frankfort.

### FRIDAY

**8 a.m.:** American Red Cross Blood Drive until 12:30 p.m. at Hiram Community Hall, 308 Ann St.

**7:30 p.m.:** Shelby County Community Theatre's Upstairs at 801 Teen production of "PUFFS, or Seven increasingly Eventful Years at a Certain School of Magic and Magic" will be at the theatre located at 801 Main St. in Shelbyville. Additional performances will be 7:30 p.m. are June 7, 13 and 14, and at 2:30 p.m. June 8 and 15. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$18 for seniors (62 and older), and \$15 for students. To order tickets or for more information, visit [ShelbyTheatre.org](https://shelbytheatre.org).

### SATURDAY

**10 a.m.:** Kentucky History Day will take place until 5 p.m. at the Old Capitol. Get ready to celebrate Kentucky's 233rd birthday. The day will be packed with vibrant festivities that showcase the best of what makes our state extraordinary. Dive into the rich tapestry of Kentucky's culture through a variety of activities that highlight our tourism, arts, heritage and history. Experience the heart and soul of Kentucky with captivating living history demonstrations, engaging performances and interactive exhibits that will transport you through time. This is more than just a celebration — it's a sensory exploration of our identity. The event is free and open to the public.

### SUNDAY

**4 p.m.:** Barn Raisin': Conservation, Culture, and Cuisine will bring together arts and nature enthusiasts for a night of community celebrating Josephine Sculpture Park (JSP). The event will last until 8 p.m. at JSP, 3355 Lawrenceburg Road. Tickets cost \$140 and can be purchased at <https://www.josephinesculpturepark.org>.

## FPB: Public hearing also included establishing four new residential Nextband internet packages and add-on services

Continued from page A1

The plant board's monthly customer charge of \$12.79 will remain unchanged.

"If I could just point out that ... we're not raising our fees, it's because the programming that we buy, like it's always been," explained FPB Board Chair John Cubine.

As a result, Classic Tier cable subscribers would pay \$71.25 per month — a 5% jump from \$67.85 this past year. That would make the total monthly rate, including the cable network pass-through fees, retransmission surcharge and FPB customer charge, \$116.67.

Retention Tier customers would pay \$98 cents more in cable network pass-through fees at \$15.18 each month. Combined with the \$32.63 retransmission surcharge and FPB customer charge, Retention Tier subscribers' monthly rate

would be \$60.60.

Customers of Bulk Cable I, which is provided to hotels and dormitories, would pay nearly \$1 more per outlet each month at \$18.20. Subscribers of Bulk Cable II, which is a service provided to office buildings with more than eight outlets, would jump from \$29.95 per month to \$31.62.

The public hearing also included establishing four new residential Nextband internet packages and add-on services.

With a speed of 300M, Nextband Essential would cost \$55 per month and includes Wifi. Nextband Family would be priced at \$70 per month at a speed of 500M and includes Wifi.

The Nextband Home Hero has a speed of 1,000M offers whole-home Wifi and would cost \$90 each month. Nextband

Trail Blazer would be priced at \$145 per month with a speed of 5,000M. It also includes whole-home Wifi.

These four new Nextband internet packages would only be available to new and upgrading subscribers. Existing customers will be able to maintain their existing packages.

Add-on services include Bark Parental Controls at \$12 per month and outdoor Wifi at \$20 each month per device.

The plant board is also establishing a Nextband Stream Lite package, which would include a lineup of channels delivered over the broadband without the expense of sports and local broadcast channels.

The channel lineup, which may fluctuate over time, would include Cable 10; FPB Local Weather; A&E; Lifetime; Life-

time Movie Network; History Channel; Hallmark Channel; Hallmark Family; Hallmark Movies & Mysteries; FYI; World Fishing Network; Outdoor Channel; MAV TV; Game Show Network; Great American Family; Sony Movies; AXS TV; TBN; Leased Access Channel 20; FPB Marketplace; HDNet Movies; INSP; C-SPAN; C-SPAN 2; C-SPAN 3; and Next Level Sports.

Nextband Stream Lite would only be available as an internet service and is not a traditional cable package. The cost would be \$20 monthly.

"Remember, if any of the public who might be watching, do want to comment, you go to our website [www.FPB.cc](http://www.FPB.cc) prior to our next meeting on Tuesday, June 17 and we will accept written comments and you can also phone in as well," added FPB Board Vice Chair John Snyder.

## RESOURCES: Flood-affected residents eligible for a reimbursement on water usage

Continued from page A1

The Disaster Recovery Center, located at 827 Louisville Road, is open for in-person FEMA assistance in addition to assistance from community agencies.

Flood-affected residents are eligible for a reimbursement on water usage for flood cleanup. To start the process, call the Sewer Department at 502-875-2448.

Those in need of electrical inspections should call the Franklin County Planning and Zoning for an electrical inspector at 502-875-8701.

Questions regarding building permits and inspections should be directed to the City Planning Department at 502-352-2094.

Residents in need of food, shelter, supplies or other assistance should contact the CARES Coalition at [frankfort-floodrelief@gmail.com](mailto:frankfort-floodrelief@gmail.com) The CARES Coalition is also connecting volunteers with those who are in need of cleanup help.

The Frankfort/Franklin County Flood Relief Fund, a collaborative effort between the City of Frankfort, Franklin County Fiscal Court and the Franklin County Community Fund is continuing to raise money for those affected by the recent flood.

To make a donation, visit <https://tinyurl.com/franklin-countyflood>.

## FRANKFORT INDEPENDENT ANNUAL HALL OF FAME INDUCTION WILL BE THURSDAY

The annual Frankfort Independent Schools Education Foundation Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be Thursday in the Frankfort High School auditorium.

This year's inductees are Ollie and Ruth Leathers, Raymond Glenn, C. Julian Oberwarth, Jackie Beach and Laura Hagg.

The ceremony begins at 5:30 p.m., and the public is invited.

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