

WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

SENATE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE
REGULAR SESSION, 2026
FIFTEENTH DAY

Charleston, West Virginia, Wednesday, January 28, 2026

The Senate met at 11:10 a.m.

(Senator Smith, Mr. President, in the Chair.)

Prayer was offered by the Reverend Robert Fulton, Madison United Methodist Church, Madison, West Virginia.

The Senate was then led in recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance by the Honorable Ryan W. Weld, a senator from the first district.

Pending the reading of the Journal of Tuesday, January 27, 2026,

At the request of Senator Chapman, unanimous consent being granted, the Journal was approved and the further reading thereof dispensed with.

The Senate proceeded to the second order of business and the introduction of guests.

The Senate then proceeded to the third order of business.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4002—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §4-16-1, §4-16-2, and §4-16-3, relating to establishing the West Virginia Collaboratory; establishing powers and duties; directing funding; establishing an advisory group; specifying composition and duties of the advisory group; authorizing reimbursement of members; exempting meetings of the advisory group from open meetings laws; exempting documents compiled by the advisory group from public records requests; and requiring annual reports.

Referred to the Committee on Education.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4005—A Bill to amend and reenact §18-2-7G and §21-6-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; to clarify the categories of employment which are prohibited or authorized for persons in West Virginia who are under the age of 18 and to clarify youth apprenticeships prohibited or authorized in such categories of employment and to be known as "The Workforce Development Act of 2026".

Referred to the Committee on Government Organization.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4022—A Bill to amend and reenact §49-2-102 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to child protective services worker; the allocating of child protective service workers; the stationing of child protective workers; and requiring a report.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4196—A Bill to amend and reenact §16B-13-3 and §16B-13-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to offering long-acting reversible contraception to patients; and establishing parameters of how to offer long-acting reversible contraception.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4354—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §49-13-1, §49-13-2, §49-13-3, and §49-13-4, relating to necessity allowance; setting forth the purpose of the article, defining terms; setting forth the requirements to obtain funding from the Bureau of Social Services for approved necessities; and setting forth the amount and form of payment.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

A message from the Clerk of the House of Delegates announced the passage by that body and requested the concurrence of the Senate in the passage of

Eng. Com. Sub. for House Bill 4433—A Bill to amend and reenact §61-14-1, §61-14-2, §61-14-3, §61-14-4, §61-14-5, §61-14-6, §61-14-7, and §61-14-8 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend the code by adding a new section, designated §61-14-10, relating to human trafficking; creating crimes relating to human smuggling of an adult and human smuggling of a minor; creating criminal penalties; amending definitions; creating definitions; authorizing asset forfeiture in certain circumstances; amending provisions relating to restitution; providing for circumstances where an offender may not be eligible for parole; and creating an exemption for medical, mental health, and legal services being provided for an illegal alien.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

The Senate proceeded to the fourth order of business.

Senator Willis, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on the Judiciary has had under consideration

Senate Bill 61, Prohibiting acceptance of illegal ballots cast in any election.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 61 (originating in the Committee on the Judiciary)—A Bill to amend and reenact §3-1-41 and §3-9-19 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to prohibiting the acceptance and counting of illegal ballots; prohibiting counting of ballot cast in incorrect precinct and providing exception; prohibiting counting of provisional ballots on election day; removing county commission discretion to disregard technical errors, omissions, or oversights in certain circumstances; and providing criminal penalties for failing to reject ballots or counting ballots in certain circumstances.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas E. Willis II,
Chair.

Senator Grady, from the Committee on Education, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Education has had under consideration

Senate Bill 102, Establishing Summer Feeding for All Program.

And reports the same back with the recommendation that it do pass; but under the original double committee reference first be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted,

Amy N. Grady,
Chair.

The bill, under the original double committee reference, was then referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Morris, from the Committee on Government Organization, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Government Organization has had under consideration

Senate Bill 167, Relating to meetings for local levying bodies.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 167 (originating in the Committee on Government Organization)—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-8-6e and §11-8-9 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to meetings of local levying bodies; clarifying when those bodies may conduct late meetings and file late reports; and revising procedure for calculation of reduced levy rates.

And,

Senate Bill 506, Permitting certain use of county-owned wireless tower.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 506 (originating in the Committee on Government Organization)—A Bill to amend and reenact §7-1-3k of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to permitting county commissions to lease, rent, or permit the use of county-owned wireless towers or any portions thereof to any entity or entities meeting certain criteria, with equipment and systems meeting minimum requirements, and for purposes not prohibited; prohibiting county commissions from levying charges for use of county-owned wireless towers or any portions thereof by public safety operations, the West Virginia Division of Highways, or any other state agencies provided the same requirements are met as for other applicants; mandating county commissions conduct due diligence before permitting use of county-owned wireless towers; and providing that county commissions that conduct due diligence may not be held liable for injuries or damages for entities failing to meet minimum requirements.

With the recommendation that the two committee substitutes do pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert L. Morris, Jr.,
Chair.

Senator Roberts, from the Committee on the Workforce, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on the Workforce has had under consideration

Senate Bill 233, Clarifying qualifications to be licensed to administer polygraphs.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 233 (originating in the Committee on the Workforce)—A Bill to amend and reenact §21-5-5c of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to deception examiners; and clarifying the qualifications required to be licensed as a Class I or Class II psychophysiological detection of deception examiner.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Rollan A. Roberts,
Chair.

Senator Willis, from the Committee on the Judiciary, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on the Judiciary has had under consideration

Senate Bills 374 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, and 385, Division of Economic Development rule relating to tourism development districts.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 374 (originating in the Committee on the Judiciary)—A Bill to amend and reenact §64-10-1 *et seq.* of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to authorizing certain agencies of the Department of Commerce to promulgate legislative rules; authorizing the rules as filed and as modified by the Legislative Rule-Making Review Committee and as amended by the Legislature; authorizing the Division of Economic Development to promulgate a legislative rule relating to tourism development districts; authorizing the Division of Forestry to promulgate a legislative rule relating to rules for the certification of managed timberland; authorizing the Division of Labor to promulgate a legislative rule relating to child labor; authorizing the Office of Miners' Health, Safety, and Training to promulgate a legislative rule relating to the submission and approval of a comprehensive Mine Safety Program for coal mining operations in the State of West Virginia; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to small arms hunting; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to wildlife rehabilitation; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to special boating; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to defining terms used in hunting and trapping; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to prohibitions when hunting and trapping; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to deer hunting; authorizing the Division of Natural Resources to promulgate a legislative rule relating to special migratory game bird hunting; and authorizing the Division of Rehabilitation Services to promulgate a legislative rule relating to the Ron Yost Personal Assistance Services Act Board.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas E. Willis II,
Chair.

Senator Roberts, from the Committee on the Workforce, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on the Workforce has had under consideration

Senate Bill 396, Creating WV Job training and Placement Act.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 396 (originating in the Committee on the Workforce)—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §11-13NN-1, §11-13NN-2, §11-13NN-3, and §11-13NN-4, relating to the West Virginia Job Training

and Placement Act; creating a short title and legislative purpose; defining terms; providing for certification of certain retailers as qualified organizations; authorizing sales tax revenue retention by qualified organizations; setting limitations on tax revenue retention; providing for use of tax revenue retention by qualified organizations to provide job training and placement services; requiring reporting; providing for revocation of qualified organization certification; providing for renewal of qualified organization certification; and providing for rulemaking.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass; but under the original double committee reference first be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted,

Rollan A. Roberts,
Chair.

The bill (Com. Sub. for S. B. 396), under the original double committee reference, was then referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Roberts, from the Committee on the Workforce, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on the Workforce has had under consideration

Senate Bill 402, Workforce Readiness and Opportunity Act.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 402 (originating in the Committee on the Workforce)—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-13W-1 and §30-1B-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend the code by adding eight new sections, designated §11-21-12o, §11-24-6d, §18B-3D-8, §21-18-1, §21-18-2, §21-18-3, §21-18-4, and §21-18-5, relating to expanding opportunities and participation in the state's workforce through the Workforce Readiness and Opportunity Act; creating the West Virginia Micro-Credential Program under the authority of the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission; expanding the availability for the tax credit for apprenticeship training programs; providing additional modification from personal and corporate net income tax for contributions and recipients to voluntary portable benefits plans; allowing hiring parties to contribute to the portable benefits for independent contractors without creating an employer-employee relationship; removing the requirement that military-trained applicants must pass a proficiency examination before receiving a professional licensure; and clarifying who qualifies for a license as a military-trained applicant.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass; but under the original double committee reference first be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted,

Rollan A. Roberts,
Chair.

The bill (Com. Sub. for S. B. 402), under the original double committee reference, was then referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Barrett, from the Committee on Finance, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Finance has had under consideration

Senate Bill 403, Relating to expanding definition of "tourism attraction".

And,

Senate Bill 427, Relating to loan form.

And reports the same back with the recommendation that they each do pass.

Respectfully submitted,

Jason Barrett,
Chair.

Senator Helton, from the Committee on Health and Human Resources, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Health and Human Resources has had under consideration

Senate Bill 543, Requiring Bureau for Social Services to file legislative rule.

And reports the same back with the recommendation that it do pass; but under the original double committee reference first be referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Helton,
Chair.

The bill, under the original double committee reference, was then referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

Senator Helton, from the Committee on Health and Human Resources, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Health and Human Resources has had under consideration

Senate Bill 546, Relating to clothing and necessity allowance.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 546 (originating in the Committee on Health and Human Resources)—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §49-13-101, §49-13-102, §49-13-103, and §49-13-104, relating to clothing and necessity allowance; setting forth the purpose of the article; defining terms; setting forth the requirements to obtain funding from the Bureau for Social Services for approved necessities, an adequate wardrobe, and any supplementary clothing assistance; and setting forth the amount, form, and time frame of payment.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute do pass; but under the original double committee reference first be referred to the Committee on Finance.

Respectfully submitted,

Brian Helton,
Chair.

The bill (Com. Sub. for S. B. 546), under the original double committee reference, was then referred to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Maynard, from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, submitted the following report, which was received:

Your Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure has had under consideration

Senate Concurrent Resolution 1, Requesting DOH name certain transportation infrastructure.

And reports back a committee substitute for same with the following title:

Com. Sub. for Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 (originating in the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure)—Requesting the Division of Highways to name certain bridges and roads.

With the recommendation that the committee substitute be adopted.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark R. Maynard,
Chair.

At the request of Senator M. Maynard, unanimous consent being granted, the resolution (Com. Sub. for S. C. R. 1) contained in the preceding report from the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure was taken up for immediate consideration.

The question being on the adoption of the resolution, the same was put and prevailed.

Ordered, That the Clerk communicate to the House of Delegates the action of the Senate and request concurrence therein.

The Senate proceeded to the sixth order of business.

On motions for leave, severally made, the following bills were introduced, read by their titles, and referred to the appropriate committees:

By Senators Willis, Helton, and M. Maynard:

Senate Bill 635—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §20-20-1, §20-20-2, §20-20-3, §20-20-4, §20-20-5, §20-20-6, §20-20-7, §20-20-8, §20-20-9, and §20-20-10, relating to creating the Mountain Bike Responsibility Act; stating a legislative purpose; defining terms; providing for the duties and liabilities of trail system

operators, mountain bicyclists, and passengers on aerial passenger tramways; providing for competition responsibilities; and providing a release for minor participants.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Senator Woodrum:

Senate Bill 636—A Bill to amend and reenact §31-18E-4 and §31-21-5 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to allowing intergovernmental agreements with the Land Stewardship Corporation.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Senator Takubo:

Senate Bill 637—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §11-13NN-1, §11-13NN-2, §11-13NN-3, §11-13NN-4, §11-13NN-5, §11-13NN-6, §11-13NN-7, §11-13NN-8, and §11-13NN-9, relating to establishing a tax credit for certain physicians who locate in this state to practice; setting forth findings; defining terms; setting forth eligibility for tax credit; creating the tax credit; establishing maximum allowable amount of tax credit; setting forth procedure to claim tax credit; authorizing the Tax Commissioner to promulgate rules; and setting effective date.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senator Takubo:

Senate Bill 638—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §16-5EE-1, §16-5EE-2, §16-5EE-3, §16-5EE-4, §16-5EE-5, §16-5EE-6, §16-5EE-7, §16-5EE-8, and §16-5EE-9, relating to recruitment of forensic pathologists; setting forth purpose; defining terms; setting forth eligibility criteria; setting forth required loan repayment documents and procedure; designating the Department of Health to administer the program; setting forth award requirements and procedure; creating a fund; requiring rulemaking; and setting forth minimum salary.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senator Takubo:

Senate Bill 639—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-17-2 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend the code by adding two new sections, designated §16-4C-27 and §16-4C-28, relating to tobacco products; defining terms; levying a user fee on cigarettes; providing the user fee be directed to support Emergency Medical Services; and creating a special revenue fund to receive funds from the created user fee.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senators Azinger, Charnock, Helton, and Z. Maynard:

Senate Bill 640—A Bill to amend and reenact §3-8-5a and §3-8-11 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended; and to amend the code by adding a new section, designated §3-8-6a, relating to prohibiting the release of addresses and names of employers of persons who make contributions to political elections; and providing a misdemeanor criminal penalty.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Senators Rose, Helton, Rucker, and Tarr:

Senate Bill 641—A Bill to amend and reenact §22-30-3, §22-30-5, and §22-30-6 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating generally to aboveground storage tanks; modifying an exception to the definition of an aboveground storage tank to except out devices having a capacity of 210 barrels or less, containing brine water or other fluids produced in connection with hydrocarbon transmission and storage, as well as production activities, that are not located in a zone of critical concern; providing an exemption to devices having a capacity of 210 barrels or less and not located in a zone of critical concern, which is located at a lawfully permitted coal mining site; providing that the secretary may not, as part of the regulatory program, require any regulated tanks to be lifted, moved, or otherwise physically altered in connection with a visual leak detection program in the absence of a confirmed release; providing that tanks used for hydrocarbon production, transportation, or storage activities and tanks used for roadway snow and ice pretreatment, as identified under certain sections of code that are located in a zone of critical concern, are exempt from inspection and certification by a third party, but must be self-inspected, self-certified, and reported to Department of Environmental Protection by its owner or operator at least once per year; and providing that tanks used for hydrocarbon production, transportation, and storage activities and tanks used for roadway snow and ice pretreatment, as identified under certain sections of code that are located in a zone of critical concern are required to have secondary containment inspections performed and documented by the owner or operator at least once per month.

Referred to the Committee on Energy, Industry, and Mining.

By Senator Woodrum:

Senate Bill 642—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-1C-3 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to property valuation; clarifying requirements before an assessor can be nominated; and providing preference when certain requirements are met.

Referred to the Committee on Government Organization; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senators Charnock, Chapman, Takubo, Tarr, and Weld:

Senate Bill 643—A Bill to repeal §3-12-1, §3-12-2, §3-12-3, §3-12-4, §3-12-5, §3-12-6, §3-12-7, §3-12-8, §3-12-9, §3-12-10, §3-12-11, §3-12-12, §3-12-13, §3-12-14, §3-12-15, and §3-12-16 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to discontinuing the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals Public Campaign Financing Program.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Senator Rucker:

Senate Bill 644—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §18-31A-1, §18-31A-2, §18-31A-3, §18-31A-4, §18-31A-5, and §18-31A-6, relating to requiring the State Treasurer to participate in the federal tax credit scholarship program; and identifying qualified scholarship organizations and schools.

Referred to the Select Committee on School Choice.

By Senator Deeds:

Senate Bill 645—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding five new sections, designated §33-15-24, §33-16-20, §33-24-46, §33-25-23, and §33-25A-37, relating to surprise billing of out-of-network ambulance services; clarifying what is considered full

payment to an ambulance service, what the rate of payment is, and the most an ambulance service can be paid; prohibiting the billing of an insured for additional costs except for fees the insurer required the insured to pay; providing procedure for payment; providing exceptions when the insurer does not have to pay within 30 days; and requiring written notices for denied claims.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources.

By Senator Deeds:

Senate Bill 646—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-21-97 and §11-24-44 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to modifying certain requirements for eligibility for West Virginia's employer-provided or sponsored child care tax credit program; maximizing the utility and accessibility of West Virginia's child care tax credit for employers; clarifying that employer-sponsored child care includes licensed third-party providers receiving financial contributions from one or more employers, regardless of location or employee usage ratios; eliminating the requirement that centers primarily serve the children of a sponsoring employer's workforce; and lengthening the carry-forward period for unused tax credits.

Referred to the Committee on Economic Development; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senator Takubo:

Senate Bill 647—A Bill to amend and reenact §30-3-14, §30-3-15, and §31B-13-1301 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to authorizing physician assistants own a business; denying a license or other authorization for physician assistants for referrals where the physician assistant has a proprietary interest; authorizing medical corporations that have physician assistant shareholders; conforming the definition of "physician assistant" to the American Academy of Physician Associates' term for the profession; and designating the profession of physician assistant as a "professional service" for the purposes of the Uniform Limited Liability Company Act.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources.

By Senators Morris, Charnock, Hamilton, Helton, Queen, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Woodrum, and Z. Maynard:

Senate Bill 648—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new article, designated §15A-14-1, §15A-14-2, §15A-14-3, §15A-14-4, §15A-14-5, §15A-14-6, and §15A-14-7, relating to strategic and critical resources; providing a short title; providing legislative findings and purpose; providing definitions; allowing for state preemption of local regulations; clarifying the applicability of federal law; establishing foreign ownership limitations and restricted commerce entities; and authorizing rulemaking.

Referred to the Committee on the Judiciary.

By Senator Grady:

Senate Bill 649—A Bill to amend and reenact §9-5-20 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to Medicaid coverage for blood pressure monitoring devices to be offered to certain persons who have been diagnosed with hypertension; requiring benefits be provided; and requiring reimbursement for related costs.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senator Queen:

Senate Bill 650—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-27-38 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to designating a psychiatric hospital that treats exclusively civil and forensic patients committed to it from the state or from state hospitals a state-designated hospital for purposes of the statute.

Referred to the Committee on Health and Human Resources; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senator Smith (Mr. President):

Senate Bill 651—A Bill to amend and reenact §11A-2-14, §11A-3-2, §11A-3-39, §11A-3-44, §11A-3-45, §11A-3-46, §11A-3-48, §11A-3-55, §11A-3-65, and §11A-3-66 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to the sale of certain properties subject to delinquent tax liens; modifying the dates designated for certain actions required in the said sale process; requiring the sheriff's office to deliver certified notices of impending sale by personal service to certain owners of record, residents, or occupants prior to selling delinquent property; allowing the State Auditor to engage a private auctioneer for selling certain tax-delinquent properties; requiring highest bidder to pay 10 percent buyer's fee to private auctioneer under certain circumstances; requiring highest bidder to pay \$50 of total bid amount to State Auditor and remainder of bid amount to county sheriff; modifying the process for providing notice to redeem to certain delinquent taxpayers; and modifying the distribution of surplus proceeds obtained from certain tax delinquent property sales.

Referred to the Committee on Government Organization.

By Senator Garcia:

Senate Bill 652—A Bill to amend and reenact §11-6N-4 and §11B-2-33 of the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, relating to taxation; modifying the formula for distribution of ad valorem property tax revenues collected from high-impact data centers to provide 80 percent of such revenues to counties in which high-impact data centers are located; and clarifying method of funding the Personal Income Tax Reduction Fund.

Referred to the Committee on Economic Development; and then to the Committee on Finance.

By Senators Chapman, Rose, and Willis:

Senate Bill 653—A Bill to amend the Code of West Virginia, 1931, as amended, by adding a new section, designated §5A-4-7, relating to placing a statue of U.S. Army Specialist Sarah Beckstrom in a corner of the rotunda of the Capitol.

Referred to the Committee on Government Organization; and then to the Committee on Finance.

Senator Smith (Mr. President) offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution 19—Designating January 28, 2026, as West Virginia Tourism and History Day at the Legislature.

At the request of Senator Martin, unanimous consent being granted, the resolution was taken up for immediate consideration, reference to a committee dispensed with, and adopted.

Senator Barrett offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution 20—Recognizing and honoring victims of Agent Orange exposure during the Vietnam War.

Which, under the rules, lies over one day.

Senator Takubo offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution 21—Designating January 29, 2026, as Jan Lilly-Stewart Disability Advocacy Day at the Capitol.

Which, under the rules, lies over one day.

Senators Rose and Chapman offered the following resolution:

Senate Resolution 22—Honoring the life and legacy of Charlie Kirk and designating October 14 as "Charlie Kirk Day" in West Virginia.

Which, under the rules, lies over one day.

The Senate proceeded to the seventh order of business.

Senate Resolution 14, Recognizing James and Lucille Pennington on receiving the 2025 West Virginia Logger of the Year award.

On unfinished business, coming up in regular order, was reported by the Clerk.

At the request of Senator Martin, unanimous consent being granted, the resolution was laid over one day.

Senate Resolution 15, Recognizing 154th anniversary of Glenville State University.

On unfinished business, coming up in regular order, was reported by the Clerk and referred to the Committee on Education.

The Senate proceeded to the eighth order of business.

Eng. Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 55, Establishing criminal offense for obstructing or hindering home incarceration supervisor or social services worker.

On third reading, coming up in regular order, was read a third time and put upon its passage.

Pending discussion,

The question being "Shall Engrossed Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 55 pass?"

On the passage of the bill, the yeas were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Grady, Hamilton, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Oliverio, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Weld, Willis, Woelfel, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—32.

The nays were: Garcia—1.

Absent: None.

So, a majority of all the members present and voting having voted in the affirmative, the President declared the bill (Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 55) passed with its title.

Ordered, That the Clerk communicate to the House of Delegates the action of the Senate and request concurrence therein.

Eng. Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 281, Authorizing Department of Homeland Security to promulgate legislative rules.

On third reading, coming up in regular order, was read a third time and put upon its passage.

On the passage of the bill, the yeas were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Garcia, Grady, Hamilton, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Oliverio, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Weld, Willis, Woelfel, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—33.

The nays were: None.

Absent: None.

So, a majority of all the members present and voting having voted in the affirmative, the President declared the bill (Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 281) passed with its title.

Senator Martin moved that the bill take effect from passage.

On this question, the yeas were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Garcia, Grady, Hamilton, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Oliverio, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Weld, Willis, Woelfel, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—33.

The nays were: None.

Absent: None.

So, two thirds of all the members elected to the Senate having voted in the affirmative, the President declared the bill (Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 281) takes effect from passage.

Ordered, That the Clerk communicate to the House of Delegates the action of the Senate and request concurrence therein.

At the request of Senator M. Maynard, and by unanimous consent, the Senate returned to the second order of business and the introduction of guests.

The Senate again proceeded to the eighth order of business, the next bill coming up in numerical sequence being

Eng. Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 309, Authorizing DOT to promulgate legislative rules.

On third reading, coming up in regular order, was read a third time and put upon its passage.

On the passage of the bill, the yeas were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Garcia, Grady, Hamilton, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Oliverio, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Weld, Willis, Woelfel, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—33.

The nays were: None.

Absent: None.

So, a majority of all the members present and voting having voted in the affirmative, the President declared the bill (Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 309) passed with its title.

Senator Martin moved that the bill take effect from passage.

On this question, the yeas were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Garcia, Grady, Hamilton, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Oliverio, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Rucker, Takubo, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Weld, Willis, Woelfel, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—33.

The nays were: None.

Absent: None.

So, two thirds of all the members elected to the Senate having voted in the affirmative, the President declared the bill (Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 309) takes effect from passage.

Ordered, That the Clerk communicate to the House of Delegates the action of the Senate and request concurrence therein.

The Senate proceeded to the ninth order of business.

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 4, Relating to crimes against public justice.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 84, Prohibiting law enforcement from placing surveillance cameras on private property.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Senate Bill 388, Requiring public elementary or secondary school make Aitken Bible available to certain classrooms.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time.

On motion of Senator Woelfel, the following amendments to the bill were reported by the Clerk and considered simultaneously:

On page 1, section 1, by striking out the article heading and substituting therefor a new article heading, to read as follows:

ARTICLE 9I. DISTRIBUTION OF BIBLES.:

On page 1, section 1, by striking out the section caption and substituting therefor a new section caption, to read as follows:

§18-9I-1. Distribution of Bibles in public schools.:

On page 1, section 1, line 1, after the word "make" by inserting the word "both";

And,

On page 1, section 1, line 2, after the word "Bible" by inserting the words "and the Catholic American Bible".

Following extended discussion,

The question being on the adoption of Senator Woelfel's amendments to the bill, and on this question, Senator Woelfel demanded the yeas and nays.

The roll being taken, the yeas were: Garcia, Hamilton, Oliverio, Rucker, Takubo, Weld, Willis, and Woelfel—8.

The nays were: Azinger, Barrett, Bartlett, Chapman, Charnock, Clements, Deeds, Fuller, Grady, Hart, Helton, Jeffries, Martin, M. Maynard, Z. Maynard, Morris, Phillips, Queen, Roberts, Rose, Tarr, Taylor, Thorne, Woodrum, and Smith (Mr. President)—25.

Absent: None.

So, a majority of those present and voting not having voted in the affirmative, the President declared Senator Woelfel's amendments to the bill rejected.

The bill (S. B. 388) was then ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 390, Altering conditions for flood resiliency disbursements.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Com. Sub. for Senate Bill 400, Updating personal income tax definitions and provision of law relating to gaming and gambling losses.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Senate Bill 443, Granting municipal fire marshals authority to assist in lawful execution of law-enforcement officer's official duties.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

Senate Bill 445, Adding Potomac State College as eligible institution for participation in Learn and Earn Program.

On second reading, coming up in regular order, was read a second time and ordered to engrossment and third reading.

The Senate proceeded to the tenth order of business.

Senate Bill 208, Exempting certain military records from public release.

On first reading, coming up in regular order, was read a first time and ordered to second reading.

The Senate proceeded to the twelfth order of business.

Remarks were made by Senators Rucker, Garcia, Phillips, Fuller, and Azinger.

At the request of Senator Rucker, unanimous consent being granted, the Senate then stood in observance of a moment of silence in recognition of the passing of the Honorable John Overington, a former member of the West Virginia House of Delegates.

At the request of Senator Woelfel, and by unanimous consent, the remarks by Senators Garcia and Phillips were ordered printed in the Appendix to the Journal.

At the request of Senator Roberts, unanimous consent being granted, the remarks by Senators Fuller and Azinger were ordered printed in the Appendix to the Journal.

At the request of Senator Queen, and by unanimous consent, the remarks by Senator Rucker were ordered printed in the Appendix to the Journal.

The Senate proceeded to the thirteenth order of business.

Under the provisions of Rule 15 of the Rules of the Senate, the following senator was removed as a co-sponsor of the following bill on January 27, 2026:

Senate Bill 61: Senator Hart.

Under the provisions of Rule 15 of the Rules of the Senate, the following senators were added as co-sponsors to the following bills and resolutions on January 27, 2026:

Senate Bill 1: Senator Taylor;

Senate Bill 52: Senator Willis;

Senate Bill 53: Senator Willis;

Senate Bill 73: Senator Willis;

Senate Bill 76: Senator Bartlett;

Senate Bill 102: Senator Deeds;

- Senate Bill 144:** Senator Queen;
- Senate Bill 163:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 167:** Senator Hamilton;
- Senate Bill 170:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 233:** Senator Deeds;
- Senate Bill 396:** Senator Hamilton;
- Senate Bill 413:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 431:** Senator Bartlett;
- Senate Bill 432:** Senator Morris;
- Senate Bill 435:** Senators Hamilton and Morris;
- Senate Bill 437:** Senator Hamilton;
- Senate Bill 447:** Senator Queen;
- Senate Bill 487:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 490:** Senator Bartlett;
- Senate Bill 498:** Senator Bartlett;
- Senate Bill 500:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 506:** Senator Rucker;
- Senate Bill 531:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 532:** Senator Morris;
- Senate Bill 538:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 539:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 543:** Senators Garcia, Taylor, and Rucker;
- Senate Bill 545:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 546:** Senators Takubo, Taylor, Bartlett, and Garcia;
- Senate Bill 548:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 549:** Senator Queen;

- Senate Bill 556:** Senator Phillips;
- Senate Bill 561:** Senator Bartlett;
- Senate Bill 592:** Senator Queen;
- Senate Bill 599:** Senator Willis;
- Senate Bill 601:** Senator Woelfel;
- Senate Bill 602:** Senator Taylor;
- Senate Bill 605:** Senators Rose and Willis;
- Senate Bill 606:** Senator Rose;
- Senate Bill 608:** Senator Rose;
- Senate Bill 609:** Senator Rose;
- Senate Bill 610:** Senator Rose;
- Senate Bill 612:** Senator Taylor;
- Senate Bill 615:** Senator Taylor;
- Senate Bill 616:** Senator Woelfel;
- Senate Bill 619:** Senators Phillips, Oliverio, and Woelfel;
- Senate Bill 620:** Senators Oliverio and Woelfel;
- Senate Bill 621:** Senator Woelfel;
- Senate Bill 622:** Senator Rose;
- Senate Bill 624:** Senator Phillips;
- Senate Bill 631:** Senator Oliverio;
- Senate Bill 632:** Senator Deeds;
- Senate Bill 633:** Senators Deeds and Woelfel;
- Senate Joint Resolution 8:** Senator Queen;
- Senate Concurrent Resolution 1:** Senator Taylor;
- Senate Resolution 15:** Senators Hamilton, Phillips, and Rose;
- Senate Resolution 16:** Senators Hamilton and Morris;

Senate Resolution 17: Senator Hamilton;

And,

Senate Resolution 18: Senator Hamilton.

Pending announcement of meetings of standing and select committees of the Senate,

On motion of Senator Martin, at 12:16 p.m., the Senate adjourned until tomorrow, Thursday, January 29, 2026, at 11 a.m.

SENATE CALENDAR

**Thursday, January 29, 2026
11:00 AM**

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- S. R. 14 - Recognizing James and Lucille Pennington on receiving the 2025 West Virginia Logger of the Year award
- S. R. 20 - Recognizing and honoring victims of Agent Orange exposure during Vietnam War
- S. R. 21 - Designating January 29, 2026, as Jan Lilly-Stewart Disability Advocacy Day at Capitol
- S. R. 22 - Designating October 14 as "Charlie Kirk Day" in WV

THIRD READING

- Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 4 - Relating to crimes against public justice
- Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 84 - Prohibiting law enforcement from placing surveillance cameras on private property
- Eng. S. B. 388 - Requiring public elementary or secondary school make Aitken Bible available to certain classrooms
- Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 390 - Altering conditions for flood resiliency disbursements (original similar to HB4018)
- Eng. Com. Sub. for S. B. 400 - Updating personal income tax definitions and provision of law relating to gaming and gambling losses (original similar to HB4024)
- Eng. S. B. 443 - Granting municipal fire marshals authority to assist in lawful execution of law-enforcement officer's official duties
- Eng. S. B. 445 - Adding Potomac State College as eligible institution for participation in Learn and Earn Program (original similar to HB4533)

SECOND READING

- S. B. 208 - Exempting certain military records from public release

FIRST READING

- Com. Sub. for S. B. 61 - Prohibiting acceptance of illegal ballots cast in any election
- Com. Sub. for S. B. 167 - Relating to meetings for local levying bodies
- Com. Sub. for S. B. 233 - Clarifying qualifications to be licensed to administer polygraphs
- Com. Sub. for S. B. 374 - Authorizing Department of Commerce to promulgate legislative rules
- S. B. 403 - Relating to expanding definition of "tourism attraction" (original similar to HB4015)

S. B. 427 - Relating to loan form

Com. Sub. for S. B. 506 - Permitting certain use of county-owned wireless tower (original similar to HB4624)

ANNOUNCED SENATE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Regular Session 2026

Thursday, January 29, 2026

9:30 a.m.	Education	(Room 451M)
9:30 a.m.	Government Organization	(Room 208W)