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House Narrowly Passes 'One Big Beautiful Bill' amid Deep Cuts; Bill heads to Senate, Fleischmann releases Statement



In a razor-thin 215–214 vote, the U.S. House of Representatives has passed H.R. 1, the “One Big Beautiful Bill Act,” a sweeping Republican spending and tax proposal that now faces a tough path through the Senate. The bill delivers on several key promises from former President Donald Trump’s “America First” agenda, including major tax cuts, reductions in social safety net programs, and new incentives for American energy production.

Among its most controversial provisions is a proposed **\$880 billion cut to Medicaid over the next decade**, which analysts say could result in over **10 million people losing coverage** by 2034. The bill also imposes work requirements on certain Medicaid recipients, penalizes states for covering undocumented immigrants, and eliminates state funding mechanisms long used to support the program. These changes are expected to hit rural hospitals, long-term care facilities, and low-income families the hardest.

Additional provisions include a **permanent extension of the 2017 Trump tax cuts**, an expansion of the **Child Tax Credit**, and the elimination of federal income tax on **overtime pay and tips**. While supporters argue these measures will boost economic growth, the bill is not revenue-neutral. It is projected to **increase the federal deficit by \$4 to \$6 trillion** over the next decade.

The measure has created deep divisions not only between parties but within the Republican caucus itself. Rep. Lloyd Smucker (PA) warned, “*The reconciliation bill must not add to the deficit*,” and Rep. Chip Roy (TX) declared, “*This bill falls profoundly short. I am a ‘no’ on this bill unless serious reforms are made.*”

Story Continued on Page 7

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Athens, Tennessee

Athens to Host ISSA Smokey Mountain Classic Senior Softball Tournament

The Athens Parks and Recreation Department is gearing up to welcome athletes and spectators from across the country as it hosts the International Senior Softball Association's (ISSA) **Smokey Mountain Classic** at Athens Regional Park.

The tournament will run from **May 30 to June 5, 2025**, featuring **47 teams from 17 states and Ontario, Canada**. Over the course of seven days, players will compete in a total of **139 games** spread across all five fields at the park.

"This is going to be a great opportunity for visitors from outside of Athens to enjoy our city and have a great time at Athens Regional Park," the department said in a statement. "We are grateful and thankful for their visit to our city!"

The Smokey Mountain Classic is expected to bring a wave of tourism and community engagement, offering locals and visitors alike a chance to enjoy high-level senior softball in a festive and welcoming environment.

Source: Frank Clark, City of Athens

Valor Guild to Host Juneteenth Celebration in Athens on June 21



The [Valor Guild](#) invites the community to join in celebrating [Juneteenth](#) on **Saturday, June 21** at the **Market Park Pavilion** at 106 South Jackson St. in downtown Athens. The event will take place from 1:00 to 7:00 p.m. and is free to attend. This event will take place directly after the conclusion of the Juneteenth Celebration at Cook Park in

Athens from 10am - 1pm.

Juneteenth commemorates the end of slavery in the United States and celebrates African American freedom, heritage, and achievements. Themed "Seeds of Change Start with the Heart," the celebration aims to honor the past, uplift the present, and empower the future.

The event will feature an array of live entertainment, including music by local DJs, poetry readings, and a Juneteenth history message. Attendees can enjoy food, dancing contests, outdoor games, bounce houses, and explore a variety of vendor booths. Organizers encourage all ages to attend and participate in this cultural celebration filled with music, learning, and community connection. For more information, follow Valor Guild on social media.

Source: Stanley Blair



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Friday, May 23, 2025

Page 3

Athens, Tennessee

Church News and Events

- **First Baptist Church Etowah** is seeking a part-time **Music Worship Leader**. To access more information, email: FBCof-ficemail@gmail.com, Call: (423)263-2214, or Visit the Web-page at www.fbcetowah.org
- **East Athens Baptist Church** will have VBS June 8th through 10th from 5:30-7:30 PM. The location will be at Cook Park (414 Cook Drive.) Ages include Pre-K through 5th grade. Free supper included.
- There will be a benefit singing for Debbie Weddington on Saturday June 7 at 12 noon. She has been diagnosed with cancer. This will help with travels and treatments. *At The Gathering* in Ten Mile Tn. Address is 29501 SR-58, Ten Mile. Singers are Recognized Southern Gospel, Meadow Fork Singers, and Good News Singers.
- **Niota UMC** will be hosting a free week-long summer camp on July 14-18 in partnership with Camp in the Community at their church in Niota. The summer camp is open to all children ages 5 -14 The camp will run from 8:30-4:30pm (Friday ends at 2pm) and includes breakfast and lunch. Space is limited, make sure to sign up soon to secure your spot. To register, visit: <https://www.campinthecommunity.org/host/niota>
- **Planted In Christ Outreach Fellowship** (317 Maple Street, Athens) holds Outreach Deliverance Classes every Thursday at 7:00 pm.
- **Celebrate Recovery** meets every **Tuesday** at 6:00 pm at Woodward Ave. Church of God (507 Woodward Ave., Athens). They also meet every **Thursday** at 6:00 pm at Watts Bar Community Church (1517 TN-68, Decatur)
- **New Life Church** hosts weekly Prayer Meetings every Wednesday night beginning at 7:00 pm. The church is located at 204 Fisher St. in Athens. All are welcome.
- **SRBC Kids presents: Kingdom Seekers** on Sunday Nights at 5:30pm at **Solid Rock Baptist Church** (4975 Hwy. 11, Calhoun) This event combines, God, music, games and fun into a very special all ages affair.
- Athens Lutheran Church (710 Forrest Ave, Athens) invites children ages 6-12 to their Vacation Bible School from June 23 - 27 from 9 a.m. to 12:30p.m. Lunch will be provided. Register online at AthensLutheranChurch.org

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Athens, Tennessee

Seven Earn EPA Certification in CSCC HVAC Bootcamp



Seven students recently completed an HVAC Bootcamp offered by Cleveland State Community College Workforce Development at the PIE Center in Cleveland. Funded by Southeast Tennessee Development and City Fields, all participants earned their EPA Section 608 universal certification.

(L-R) HVAC Instructor Jason Taylor, Ethan Yarber, Jason Shields, Kalijha Brewster, Riley Myers, Austin Stevison and Stavon Thomas. Not pictured Ricky Drew.

Source: Andrea Byerly, CSCC

Local Groups to Honor Veterans with Memorial Day Grave Marking Ceremonies



In observance of National Memorial Day and the upcoming 250th anniversary of the United States, the Hiwassee Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) will host a Veterans' grave marking and flag placement ceremony on Saturday, May 24,

The event will begin at 10:00 a.m. at the Riceville Community Cemetery, located on County Road 79 above the Riceville Post Office. A short patriotic and remembrance ceremony will take place at the flagpole before flags are placed on the graves of veterans. A second ceremony and flag placement will follow at South Liberty Community Cemetery on County Road 679.

Joining SAR members will be representatives from the Alexander Keith Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, the Patriots of Liberty Chapter of the Children of the American Revolution, as well as family members of the veterans being honored. The public is invited and encouraged to attend this meaningful event to honor and remember those who served. SAR event signs will be posted in the area for guidance.

Source: Jason Wright, Hiwassee Chapter TNSSAR



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Athens, Tennessee

TCAT Athens Hosts *SkillsUSA* National Signing Day for Incoming Students



The Tennessee College of Applied Technology (TCAT) Athens recently welcomed 51 students from area high schools for its annual *SkillsUSA* National Signing Day event. Each student signed a "Letter of Intent" to enroll in a variety of technical programs at TCAT Athens for the 2025–26 academic year.

As part of the celebration, each participating student received a \$100 scholarship and the opportunity to apply for an additional \$500 scholarship. Students from McMinn County, McMinn Central, Meigs County, Bradley Central, Polk County, Tellico Plains, Sweetwater, and Walker Valley high schools were in attendance, marking their commitment to career and technical education.

Source: Shirley Phillips, TCAT



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Obituaries

AACA Announces Summer Art Camps for All Ages

Phyllis Jane Daugherty-Firestone, 80 of Cleveland, passed away on Tuesday, May 20. She was the pianist for Chestuee Baptist Church for many years, and led many children's programs over the years. Phyllis worked at Life Care Centers of America Headquarters for over 20 years, and she and her best friend, Gregory Beavers, established Firestone-Beavers Bookkeeping. Phyllis will be laid to rest in a private graveside service at Chestuee Baptist Church Cemetery. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah is in charge of arrangements.

James C. Williams, 88 of Etowah, passed away Thursday, May 22. Family and friends will assemble at the funeral home at 1:30 p.m., Sunday, May 25th and go in procession to McMinn Memory Gardens for a 2:00 p.m. graveside service. No formal visitation will be held. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah in charge of arrangements.

David Bagwell, 83 of Etowah, passed away Thursday, May 22. A memorial service will be held at a later date. Bordwine Funeral Home of Etowah in charge of arrangements.

The Athens Area Council for the Arts is offering a variety of summer camps at The Arts Center for students who have completed grades K-12:

- **Kids Arts Camp** (Grades K-6): June 2-6 or June 9-13. Daily classes in art, music, drama, and dance. Ends with a "Swinging 60s" performance.
- **Jr. Musical Theatre Camp** (Grades 1-6): June 16-27. Students rehearse and perform *Seussical KIDS*.
- **Theatre Camp** (Ages 11-17): July 7-18. Intensive training in acting, stage movement, and music. Ends with a performance of *All Summer in a Day*.
- **Visual Arts Mini Camp:**
- Grades K-5: July 21-25 (AM/PM sessions by age group)
- Grades 6-12: July 28-August 1 (AM/PM sessions by age group) Features hands-on workshops in various media, ending in a student art exhibit.

Most camps offer scholarships through the Marian Biddle Trew Fund. Space is limited—early registration is encouraged.

Learn more or register: athensartscouncil.org or call 423-745-8781.

Source: Lauren Brown, Executive Director, AACA

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Athens, Tennessee

House Narrowly Passes 'One Big Beautiful Bill' amid Deep Cuts; Bill heads to Senate, Fleischmann releases Statement (Continued)

Despite internal GOP tensions and Democratic opposition, the bill passed the House Budget Committee by a 17–16 vote on May 18, before clearing the full House early on May 22. It now awaits further review and debate in the Senate, where changes are expected and passage is far from guaranteed.

Speaker Mike Johnson has expressed hope for final passage by Memorial Day, though Senate leaders say the process could extend into the fall. A major deadline looms: October 1, the start of the federal fiscal year, which could trigger a government shutdown if no budget is approved.

At the center of the bill's energy and infrastructure priorities is **Tennessee Congressman Chuck Fleischmann**, who chairs the House Energy and Water Appropriations Subcommittee. Fleischmann strongly supported the bill, calling it a historic achievement.



"Today, I proudly voted YES on House Republicans' One Big Beautiful Bill Act that delivers President Trump's America First Agenda," said Fleischmann. "This historic bill permanently slashes taxes for hardworking East Tennesseans, invests in border security, puts our country back on a path toward fiscal sanity, strengthens the benefits Americans have paid for, builds up American military might to restore peace through strength, and unleashes American-made energy dominance."

He added, "As Chairman of Energy and Water Appropriations, I am particularly pleased with the continued support for advanced nuclear reactors... which underscores President Trump's continuing commitment to work with me to create America's New Nuclear Future."

Sources: [Congressman Chuck Fleischmann](#), [The Tennessean](#)

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