



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
August 3, 2026

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Senator William H. Frist, MD Announced as Keynote Speaker for 11th Annual Tennessee State Fair FFA Ham Breakfast

Former U.S. Senate Majority Leader will join Tennessee FFA members and an agricultural educator for a keynote conversation about agriculture, education and Tennessee's future.

LEBANON, TN – Senator William H. Frist, MD will serve as the keynote speaker for the 11th Annual Tennessee State Fair FFA Ham Breakfast presented by Farm Credit Mid-America on Monday, August 17, 2026, at the Farm Bureau Expo Center in Lebanon.

Senator Frist will join Tennessee FFA State President Emma Hummer of Erwin FFA, State Sentinel Baylea Walton of Covington FFA and agricultural educator Steve Stephens of Hendersonville FFA for a keynote conversation about the importance of agriculture and agricultural education. The discussion will explore the responsibility of today's leaders, the role of service and stewardship, and the investments needed in agriculture, education and leadership to build a strong future for Tennessee.

“Senator Frist’s career reflects the values we work to instill in every FFA member: service, leadership and a commitment to improving the lives of others,” said Chelsea Carpenter, Executive Director of the Tennessee FFA Foundation. “His experience in public service, education, conservation and agriculture will bring an important perspective to this conversation about preparing young people to lead Tennessee’s future.”

Senator Frist is a heart and lung transplant surgeon and former United States Senate Majority Leader. As founder of the Vanderbilt Multi-Organ Transplant Center, now the nation’s busiest transplant center by volume, he performed more than 150 heart and lung transplants and authored more than 100 peer-reviewed medical articles.

He represented Tennessee in the U.S. Senate from 1995 to 2007 and was elected Majority Leader in 2003. His leadership contributed to the passage of the Medicare Modernization Act and the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, known as PEPFAR, which has provided lifesaving HIV treatment to millions of people around the world.

Senator Frist is the founder and chair of the Tennessee State Collaborative on Reforming Education, or SCORE, which works to improve student achievement and prepare Tennessee students for success after high school. He also serves as Chair of the Global Board of The Nature Conservancy and is the founder and chair of NashvilleHealth and Hope Through Healing Hands.

Since leaving public office, Senator Frist and his wife, Tracy, have focused on sustainable agriculture and land stewardship in Tennessee and Virginia, including efforts to restore biodiversity in Appalachian grasslands. Together, they founded the Senator Bill and Tracy Frist Initiative for Planetary and Human Health at The Nature Conservancy. They live at Old Town, their historic farm in Franklin, Tennessee.

The Tennessee State Fair FFA Ham Breakfast brings together more than 1,200 FFA members, agricultural educators, government officials, business leaders and supporters of Tennessee agriculture. A highlight of the annual event is the auction of the Tennessee State Fair's two Grand Champion Hams, with proceeds supporting programs and opportunities for Tennessee FFA members across the state.

The breakfast will be held from 8:00 to 9:30 a.m. on Monday, August 17. Doors will open at 7:15 a.m. Registration is available at bit.ly/hambreakfast.

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Box 5034, TTU, Cookeville, TN 38505



(Photo Caption: Senator William H. Frist, MD will serve as the keynote speaker for the 11th Annual Tennessee State Fair FFA Ham Breakfast presented by Farm Credit Mid-America on August 17, 2026, in Lebanon, Tennessee.)