

Opinion

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ADVOCATING FOR INCREASED PROTECTION OF OUR CHILDREN'S LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Dear Editor,
I am writing as a deeply concerned parent and citizen of Oldham County regarding the alarming lack of protective setbacks between our schools and heavy industrial developments — particularly the potential hyperscale data centers that could be advanced near our current or future educational campuses. Our community expects and deserves stronger safeguards to ensure that the health, safety and learning conditions of our children are never compromised for industrial interests.

It is both a matter of established best practices and simple common sense that a minimum setback of 1,000 feet and ample landscape and buffer zone from the high security fence should exist between any school and heavy industrial activity. Such a standard is not excessive — it is responsible. Diesel fuel storage, around-the-clock massive generator operation and testing, massive electrical substations, sustained operational noise and vibration, sustained construction noise and heightened traffic volumes create an environment wholly incompatible with education. These are not theoretical concerns; they have well-documented, measurable impacts on student concentration, respiratory health and emotional well-being. Proposed data center zoning regulations are currently being considered before the Planning and Zoning Commission on Oct. 28. Currently, a data center would be required to maintain a 1000-foot minimum setback from residentially zoned land. Unfortunately, schools have not been given this similar protection and would allow a 15-foot minimum setback for any buildings, ancillary and accessory usages of a data center to our schools property line in some zoning districts.

Equally concerning are recent reports that an informational document distributed following a School Board meeting downplayed these risks and omitted critical context. The public deserves to know: who authored this document, who reviewed its contents, and whether any developers, lobbyists, or outside consultants influenced the information shared. Transparency is not optional when decisions of this magnitude affect children's daily environment.

The community also requests immediate clarification on whether any district-owned property has been, or is being, considered for sale or lease to data center developers, and whether such discussions occurred with proper public notice and board oversight. The public trust demands a full accounting of these matters.

Finally, the comparison that has reportedly been made between hyperscale data centers and rural schools is both inaccurate and insulting. To equate industrial operations involving megawatt-scale generators, diesel storage tanks and 24/7 equipment noise with a school campus is an affront to every parent, teacher, and child in this district. Such a position reveals a dangerous detachment from the lived reality of our schools and an unacceptable disregard for student welfare.

I urge the school board to correct the record, reaffirm its duty to protect the learning environment and take formal action to support minimum setbacks that reflect the highest standards of student safety. Our children's right to a healthy, peaceful, and focused learning space must not be subordinated to corporate convenience or political influence.

The people of Oldham County are watching closely — and we expect leadership that honors both the letter and the spirit of your oath to serve this community.

Most sincerely,
Nathan Oberg, of La Grange; President, We Are Oldham County

GUARDING DEMOCRACY FROM THEOCRACY

Dear Editor,
My thanks to the Oldham Era for

its fair and balanced reporting on the LifeWise subject. It's truly a major issue that has far reaching effects on how we as a county and society want to continue our 250-year-old belief in the U.S. Constitution and its amendments, especially the First Amendment in this regard.

Obviously, the LifeWise supporters do not want our experiment in civil representative democracy to continue. Strategically, they want a Christian theocracy. Vaguely democratic, as long as their interpretation of what Jesus says rules. While the Oldham County Board of Education does. Therefore, their universal denial of the attempt to tactically get the religious foot in the door of public, secular education. For that I deeply thank them!

Although I do wish the board had said something about the real issue directly. Ignoring the often ugly reality, with examples, of what these so called "religious" folk are doing is frightening and dangerous. As is demonstrated by the reported spiritual and physical threats, made against them clearly proves. Or as a 77-year war over a so called piece of Jewish dirt; nailing a Jewish guy who wants to quit to a cross; eight or more Christian Crusades; and Islamic jihad against heretics and infidels have demonstrated for over two Millennia.

Joe Kopacz of Prospect

THANK YOU, OLDHAM COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Dear Editor,
I am writing to give a public thank you to the Oldham County school board. I've attended most of their meetings since August. I might need to get a life in 2025, but I've been impressed in their decision making process, whether I have agreed with the decision or not. For example:

1. Cell phone policy: They had a policy that teachers and staff were worried about implementing. They listened to the teachers and staff and adjusted the policy based on teacher, parent and student input.

2. LifeWise Academy: They heard hours of public comment and read hundreds of emails. In my opinion, they took each seriously and came to a decision. I'm biased because I agree with their decision on LifeWise, but I was more impressed with their process and listening to the community more than their decision.

3. School construction projects: They are supporting and overseeing massive expansions at multiple campuses while supporting the day-to-day work of the schools.

4. They make decisions and have discussions in public: As a leader, I could not imagine leadership discussions being broadcast and making decisions before an audience in meetings. They know that every word is recorded and dissected. I know this is what they signed up for, but it is still a difficult leadership reality.

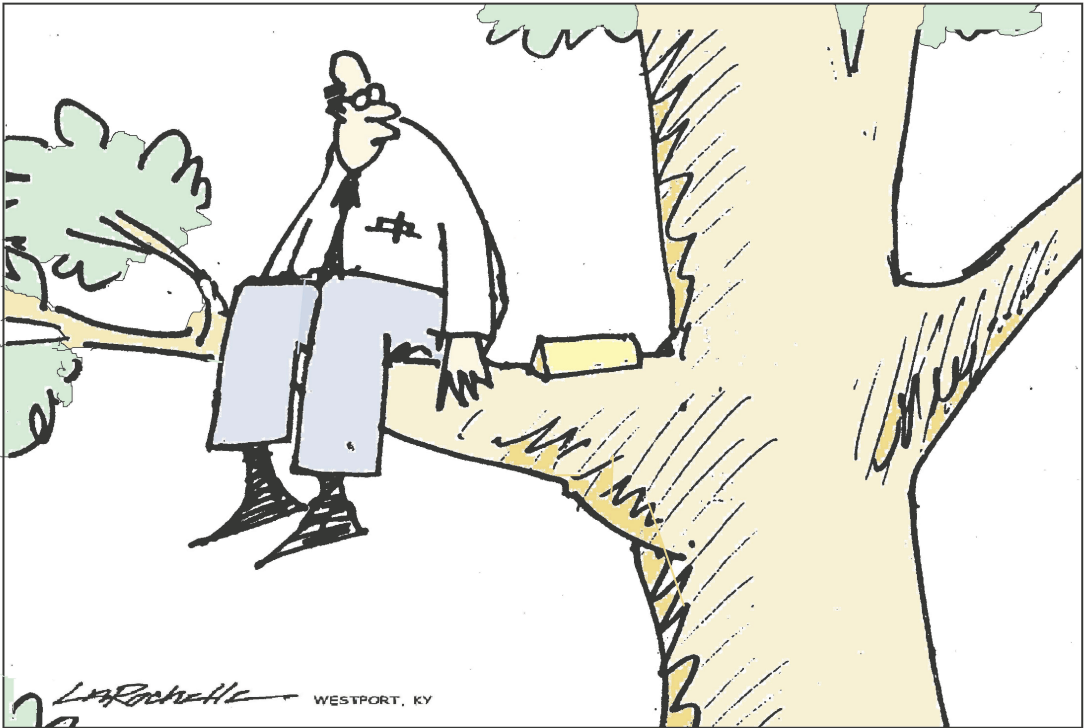
5. Conversations in public: I've seen our school board representatives in public spaces living their life take 10, 20, 30 or even 45 minutes to have conversations with concerned community members on a wide variety of topics.

6. Social media presence: They have been praised and criticized on social media and in most cases have taken the high road in their response.

Sometimes I agree with their decisions. Other times I don't, but as a Christian leader I remind myself to pray for the board, admin leaders, teachers, staff and students every day. When I communicate, I need to speak with conviction and clarity as well as humility knowing that I don't see the full picture of the info that leaders receive. Most importantly, I need to start each communication with "thank you." I can't imagine the stress, anxiety and responsibility they feel.

Thank you to the board, admin leaders, teachers and staff that pour into the lives of our kids every day. I hope you have a great fall break!

In Christ,
Rev. Derek Robinette of Crestwood United Methodist Church



KENTUCKY DIVISION OF FORESTRY • BRANCH MANAGER

Maurice LaRoche

Until they come home: Remembering everyone deployed

National Day of the Deployed is this Sunday, Oct. 26, 2025. If you didn't know this day existed, you're not alone. The celebratory day has only been an official day of recognition for 13 years.

The day was initially started in North Dakota by Shelle Michaels Aberle in 2006 for her deployed cousin, Major David Hosna, on his birthday. Then, in 2011 North Dakota Governor, John Hoeven, issued a state proclamation, before sponsoring the resolution that passed unanimously the following year making the National Day of the Deployed an annual observation on Oct. 26. While it is appropriate that we have a national day to recognize deployed service members, one day a year is not enough to support them in their service for our continued freedom.

Since the early 2000s, when United States service members were being deployed heavily to the Middle East in Afghanistan and Iraq as a result of the Terrorist Attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, wearing red on Fridays has been a small way to show big

support. Red represents courage, sacrifice and valor; all qualities associated with those that answer the call to serve our country. RED became the acronym for Remember Everyone Deployed.

Over the last two decades I hope you have seen a shirt that has the American Flag and some version of the wording, "Red Fridays", "Remember Everyone Deployed" or as my current Friday shirt reads, "Until they all come home." While we may not be in a current conflict to the magnitude of the mid 2000s, there are still service members deployed around the world, some from right here in Oldham County. Small gestures, like wearing a red tie, socks, button-up, polo or other item on Fridays sends a big message of uniformity, support and gratitude from home and means more to the service members than we know.

Soldiers, airmen, Marines and sailors don't serve alone, their families serve right along with them. Wearing red on Friday doesn't mean something only to the service members, it matters to their families too.



JOELLE KERFOOT BOAZ

Joelle Kerfoot Boaz is the proud wife of a deployed Oldham County soldier.

10 years too long: Keeping families apart

When the lawyer asked Jesus, "Who's my neighbor?" in Luke



LOGAN ARMSTRONG ASHLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH PASTORAL ASSISTANT

10:25, Jesus answered with a story about a Jewish man in need. If Jesus had been asked the same question in 21st century America, he could have told a story about a young girl whose parents were abusive, a widow who lost her husband or a poor man struggling to pay rent. They are all in need, and Christians all agree that we are to love these neighbors. When we sit with a widow, adopt an orphan or help a poor man find employment, we become closely acquainted with our neighbor's need, and we can love them. But we cannot love those whom we do not know. Love requires proximity. It



Faustin, left, and Logan Armstrong are pictured as Faustin translates a sermon into Kinyarwanda.

always has. We must walk on the other side of the road where we find Jesus, the good Samaritan tending to his foreign neighbor's needs.

The sojourner, the stranger, the immigrant, the refugee and the permanent resident are all our neighbors. Unfortunately, legal immigrants are often

unfairly co-opted into the discussions about deporting undocumented immigrants or building a wall. They are sadly included in many critiques of immigrants' threat to public safety and concerns over taking Americans' jobs and perverting Western culture. This rhetoric has undermined our neighbors' confidence in their long-term stability in this country and has resulted in the public policies and processes that do not align with the kingdom of Christ.

Since 1980, the U.S. government has resettled tens of thousands of refugees every year. But these legal residents do not get citizenship automatically. They must wait five years as they show themselves to be good residents of the U.S. before they are eligible for naturalization. Once they are sworn in, they have all the rights and privileges of any U.S. native-born citizen, except for running for U.S. president. The U.S. resettlement process is

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LETTERS TO EDITOR

Letters to the editor should include your name, address and phone number where you can be reached for verification. Letters should be limited to 500 words. The Era reserves the right to edit all letters for clarity, style and taste. The Era restricts publication of multiple letters on the same topic from the same author to two letters and one per every 30 days. The Era also reserves the right to hold all letters considered libelous or in poor taste. Letters do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Era staff.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

ADVERTISING:

Ad deadlines are noon Monday unless there is a holiday or a countywide issue. Kentuckiana ads are due by 4 p.m. one week prior to publication.

SUBMITTED ITEMS:

Any submitted obituaries, news, photos, editorials and community page items must be at the Era office by noon Monday for that week's publication.

CORRECTIONS:

The Era will publish a correction of any error that it is made aware of. The newspaper will also make clarification of facts that may be misconstrued. The newspaper strives for accuracy, fairness and clarity in its coverage of Oldham County.