

# Opinions & Letters to the Editor

## The Publisher's Notebook

Charles A. Myrick  
Publisher / General Manager



## Your right to know is under attack

When newspapers come under attack, you are also under attack.

You may not even realize that.

Let me explain what I mean. As the commentary on this page says, I am often the only person attending local government meetings.

These are the same meetings where elected officials determine tax rates, discuss possible new taxes, and decide what you do in your daily life.

Newspapers, like The Mountain Advocate, are your only source for local information. The area has one television station, WYMT, which recently laid off many employees in a downsizing move.

They can't be at your local meetings to cover these things.

But we are and always have been.

What I am about to say has nothing to do with anyone local or any local elected officials.

The Kentucky Legislature is proposing two bills, House Bill 368 and Senate Bill 218, allowing local governments to post public notices on their websites.

In many cases, local governments across this state do not even have websites, and you probably didn't realize your local government maintained one.

The Kentucky Press Association has been providing these public notices online for years at [kypublicnotice.com](http://kypublicnotice.com) at no cost to taxpayers!

Let's play out some possible scenario(s) here. I am only using this as an example.

If these bills pass, you may not know if the board of education wants to raise your property taxes.

You would not know if the fiscal court discussed raising the occupational tax.

You would also not know if the city council wanted to impose an occupational tax of their own.

These are just three of many examples I could use. Some may say they get their news from Facebook. Facebook doesn't attend these local meetings. Facebook doesn't have the best interests of your community at heart. Facebook has no accountability. Facebook has nothing to lose.

The best interests of the community comes from local reporting, and the requirement that these legal advertisements be placed in print before action can be taken.

You probably haven't even realized or considered these, but they're very accurate scenarios that could quickly happen in communities across this state.

We need your support to continue protecting your best interests. Please get in touch with your local legislators and ask them to vote no on both these bills.



## EDITORIAL

# Proposed bills attack Government Transparency

Newspapers are the heartbeat of every community in Kentucky. We exist to inform, to raise awareness, to build community, to be the voice of those who can't always speak for themselves, to cover local government and hold local officials accountable, to help local businesses grow, to enact change, to celebrate achievements and to archive our community's history.

HB368 and SB 218 bills seek to remove legal notices from newspapers and place them on government websites. These bills were introduced by legislators who want to allow governments to inform the public via websites on what they're doing or proposing.

Websites that are run by the government themselves. What could go wrong with that?

The newspaper is often the only person at local government meetings when discussing tax increases. Without newspapers reporting on these events, a tax increase could pass, and citizens would not be aware of it until it was enacted.

We are your community watchdogs. We are watching when nobody else is.

Openness will strengthen our democracy and promote efficiency and effectiveness in Government. The government should also be transparent. Transparency promotes accountability and provides citizens with information about what their government is doing.

When a legal ad is placed in a newspaper, it is placed in the local newspaper, dated, and cannot be changed after the fact.

Can you imagine what might happen if these bills were passed?

CHARLES MYRICK .....PUBLISHER/EDITOR  
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