Viewpoints

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Beware of false knowledge; it is more dangerous than ignorance. — George Bernard Shaw

LETTER TO EDITOR

Read Across America Week 2025

Sunday, March 2 through Saturday, March 8 marks the 23rd annual "Read Across America Week" sponsored by the National Education Association. Across the United States, thousands of schools, libraries, community centers, civic groups, and numerous other organizations will participate by promoting the power of reading. Focusing on motivating children to read and master basic reading skills, the NEA's "Read Across America" works to unite children and books, and demonstrate the many benefits of reading. In addition, this year's celebration also marks the 121st birthday of author Dr. Seuss on March 2.

In commemoration of the event, Mayor Bonnie Henderson and the Clarkson City Commission have signed a proclamation declaring the week of Sunday, March 2 through Saturday, March 8, 2025 as "Read Across America Week" in the City of Clarkson. The Commission urges all parents, teachers, and other adults within our community to set aside time on those dates to read to your child and allow them to read aloud to you. The Clarkson

City Commission challenges the teachers of Clarkson Elementary, and of all schools in Grayson County, to teach children the foundations of reading and assist them in mastering basic reading skills. All adults are encouraged to provide a safe reading environment for the children within their care, and explain that reading is an essential building block to a proper education.

Reading is the first step in creating a bright and successful future for the children of our community and nation. It is the key that will open many doors throughout a child's academic career. So read to your child, and let them read to you. Demonstrate to them that reading leads to knowledge and understanding. And above all remember that children learn best by example. Teach them the true value of reading by checking out a book at the local library and sitting down beside your child and reading together. And remember that proper reading skills can be taught all throughout the year, and not just on March 2-8. For more information, visit http://www.nea.org/ grants/886.htm.

Submitted

Passage of HB 368 will harm communities and newspapers

• one local business that has been there longer than any other, most more than a century — while some are even closing in on

two centuries. In many of these counties, that business is the local newspaper.

I manage two of those local newspapers. The Oldham Era which is looking forward to celebrating our 150th anniversary next year. The Henry County Local has been publishing 168 proud years and counting. I also assist regionally with 13 other area newspapers with similar tenures.

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 that 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.

Our founding fathers felt so strongly about the importance of newspapers and the role we play in communities that we are the only

• very county in Kentucky has profession explicitly named in the Constitution of the United States of America.

> There are three ways in which newspapers have effectively carried out some of our most important roles - covering local government, keeping officials accountable, keeping citizens informed and helping transparency exist: public notices, open meetings and open records. Without these three in

place, knowing how your tax dollars are being spent, what bids are available and being rewarded, what decisions your elected officials are making for you, when meetings are being held and what new ordinances are being considered would not be as easily accessible.

There is currently a bill, HB 368, that seeks to remove legal notices from newspapers and place them on government websites. Websites that are run by the government themselves. What could go possibly go wrong with that?

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

managed by the Kentucky Press Association where all legal notices in Kentucky can be found easily kypublicnotices.com.

HB 368 seeks to have entities including county and city governments place public notices on their own websites. Yet many have only one employee, if any, and can't even keep their current websites updated. I found one city website in my area that hadn't been updated with meetings or ordinances since 2020. Two others had very little information, none of the council members listed were current and the monthly meeting time was wrong.

Officials have said they would create their own statewide website for all notices. I would argue they are going to spend a lot more money creating a website we already have created and maintained successfully. Right now, paid legal notices are a very small part of county and city budgets only 0.16%.

So why change? Is this what is really best for the community?

In counties of 80,000 or more a bill was passed in Kentucky to change the rules of public notices due to the

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Week four of the 2025 Regular Session

Editor's Note: This legislative update was submitted on Friday, Feb. 21.

s we begin another A week in the 2025 Legislative Session, our hearts are with the many Kentuckians impacted by the severe storms and historic flooding that swept across the commonwealth this past weekend. Several communities, particularly in eastern and south-central Kentucky, experienced widespread devastation, with homes and businesses submerged, roads washed out, and thousands left without power. At one point, there were over 300 road closures. Tragically, reports confirm that lives have been lost in the flooding, and we mourn alongside the families affected. The Governor declared a state of emergency, and the President approved it to ensure federal resources are available to assist in recovery efforts. First responders, the National Guard, and local emergency management teams continue working tirelessly to conduct water rescues and aid those in need. Reports indicated there were hundreds of water rescues, which resulted in many lives being saved. Their dedication, and that of local neighbors, in the face of such horrors is commendable, and we are grateful for their service. In the days and weeks ahead, we must focus on supporting the impacted communities and ensuring they receive the necessary resources. The General Assembly will work closely with state and federal officials to assist in relief efforts, and we urge all Kentuckians to remain vigilant as conditions continue to evolve. Week four of the 2025 Legislative Session marked the bill filing deadlines for the House and Senate. A bill I am sponsoring, Senate Bill (SB) 13, passed the Senate this week, marking an important step toward streamlining Kentucky's Medicaid system. This legislation aims to reduce administrative burdens on healthcare providers by capping the number of managed care organizations (MCOs) in the state's Medicaid program at three. By simplifying operations, SB 13 will improve efficiency and accessibility, particularly in rural areas where providers face challenges navigating multiple MCOs. Now that the bill has cleared the Senate, I am working diligently to ensure it moves forward in the House. I am engaging with my



JANE ASHLEY

PACE

STEPHEN MEREDITH

and advocates to underscore the importance of this reform. Addressing inefficiencies in our

Medicaid system is critical, and I remain committed to seeing SB 13 across the finish line to provide much-needed relief to Kentucky's healthcare providers and patients.

In the upper chamber, the Senate Majority Caucus successfully limited the number of bills each member introduced. For comparison, during the previous 30-day legislative session in 2023, the Senate proposed 282 bills; in 2021, there were 285. Below is a list of other bills the Senate approved this week. Senate Bill (SB) 2 ensures no taxpayer dollars are used for transgender surgeries or hormone therapy for inmates while still protecting access to medically necessary care for conditions like thyroid or hormonal disorders. The bill draws a clear line between essential health care and elective procedures, which prevents state agencies from pushing unauthorized policies behind closed doors. **SB 15** exempts minor league baseball players from Kentucky's wage-and-hour laws to align with their federal collective bargaining agreement, which provides salary increases, year-round pay, health insurance, and housing. This ensures Kentucky's minor league teams remain operational. SB 18 expands insurance options for vehicle dealers by allowing required bonds or coverage from a broader range of insurers, including certain non-admitted insurers. It also updates insurance statutes to streamline compliance. **SB 24** strengthens protections against insurance fraud by closing loopholes and expanding the definition of fraudulent statements in property and casualty claims. It includes repair cost misrepresentation, towing, storage, and associated expenses. SB 28 establishes an agricultural economic development program within the Department of Agriculture to boost agribusiness, create jobs, and support rural communities. It creates a funding board to oversee financial support for agriculture projects statewide. SB 67 proposes a constitutional amendment to freeze property tax assessments for Kentucky homeowners aged 65+ to protect them from tax increases due to rising property values. Requires voter approval in 2026. SB 69 modernizes animal health regulations by creating new licenses colleagues, healthcare stakeholders, for animal chiropractors and equine

dental providers. It establishes an advisory committee, updates rabies vaccination record laws, and clarifies that only veterinarians can prescribe equine dental medications.

SB 77 expands eligibility for appointments to the Education Professional Standards Board by allowing the governor to appoint either a chief academic officer or the head of an educator preparation program from independent not-for-profit colleges.

SB 79 updates state personnel policies to improve efficiency and accountability. It clarifies job classifications, requires remote state employees to return to in-person work with limited telework allowances, and reclassifies wardens as non-merit employees to improve juvenile facility leadership. SB 84 ensures Kentucky courts interpret laws independently rather than deferring to state agencies. It mandates de novo judicial review, aligning with a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling to prevent excessive agency authority. SB 103: Increases transparency in the Kentucky Office of Vocational Rehabilitation by prioritizing in-state service providers, requiring annual reports to the governor, and preventing arbitrary service fees. SB 104 expands investment options for Kentucky's Deferred Compensation program by authorizing self-directed brokerage accounts, strengthening fiduciary protections, and ensuring compliance with federal regulations. SB 111 strengthens Kentucky's juvenile justice system by prioritizing mental health treatment for high-risk youth, improving facility safety, and creating a structured continuum of care for mentally ill juveniles. **SCR 43** expresses the General Assembly's support for the Crisis Recovery Support Network, which helps schools and colleges recover from crises like natural disasters and school shootings, particularly in rural areas. It's a privilege to serve you in Frankfort. If you have questions or ideas, feel free to contact my office at (502) 564-8100 or email me at Stephen.Meredith@kylegislature. gov.



LETTERS POLICY

Grayson County News encourages and welcomes letters to the editor. Letters should be about issues of general interest and no longer than 400 words. They should not be libelous or in bad taste. We will not publish poetry or anonymous letters. Letters thanking sponsors or endorsing candidates will be considered, but publication can only be assured through advertising. Letters that exceed 400 words can be considered as a guest column. We reserve the right to edit for grammar and spelling, but meaning will not be altered. Letters must be signed, include a street address, hometown, and telephone number. The street address and telephone number will not be published. No more than one letter should be submitted every two weeks. Individuals who submit letters to the editor may be asked to provide proof of identity. Letters can be hand delivered to our office at 20 Public Square, Leitchfield, KY 42754; emailed to mlasley@ gcnewsgazette.com; or faxed to 270-259-5537.

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Sen. Stephen Meredith, R-Leitchfield, represents the 5th Senate District, encompassing Breckinridge, Butler, Grayson, Ohio, and Meade Counties. Meredith serves as chair of the Senate Health Services Committee and co-chair of the Government Contract Review Committee. He is also a member of the Senate Committees on Education; Families and Children; and Veterans, Military Affairs, and Public Protection.