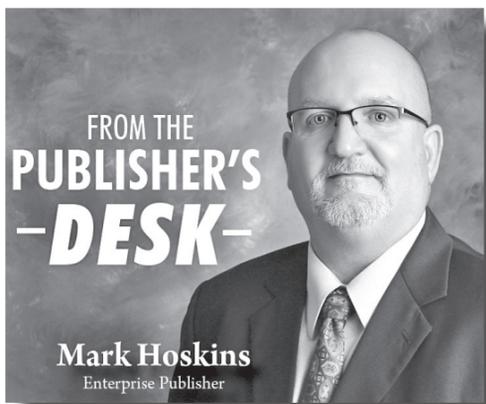


“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

--First Amendment to the United States Constitution



Your right to know is under attack



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?

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 Manchester Enterprise, 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 their 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

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.

That 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.

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Hello friends!

As I'm writing this, I know that so many people are struggling with the aftermath of the most recent flood.

Nearly three years ago in June, we had almost this exact thing happen to our community and parts of Eastern KY.

At that point, EKY's population was expected to drop drastically.

No, with this, you can expect it to drop even more. People have had enough.

Some people are tired of living in a flood zone. They will move to higher ground.

Some people don't want to spend so

much money and effort to build back or remodel again.

This has become an enormous problem. The more people we lose, the more it hurts our economy and local businesses.

It's all so tragic and sad. I wish there were something we could all do, but we can't control Mother Nature.

We can be supportive, lend a helping hand, and throw up many prayers.

Our people are some of the most challenging people in the world, and they will regroup once again.

Much Love Manchester!



TIM PARKS

-Wild Tourism



Serving Manchester/Clay County Since 1890

"The people shall not be deprived or abridged of their right to speak, to write, or to publish their sentiments, and the freedom of the press, as one of the great bulwarks of liberty, shall be inviolable."

• Who We Are:

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The Manchester Enterprise is published weekly in Manchester, Ky. by *The Manchester Enterprise Inc.*, 21 Banker's Alley, Manchester, Ky. 40962.

Postmaster:

Send address changes to us at P.O. Box 449, Manchester, Ky. 40962. Periodicals postage paid at Manchester, Ky. and at additional mailing offices. Subscriptions: In-Clay \$36 per year. Out of Clay \$42 per year. Checks, Visa, Mastercard, money orders and Paypal accepted.

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