

MONTGOMERY COUNTY Chronicle

March 16, 2015

To: Rep. Mark Hutton, chairman, Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

From: Andy Taylor, editor of the Montgomery County Chronicle

Re: HB 2237

Dear committee members:

No element in my newspaper carries more weight and greater importance than the public notice section. My newspaper, the Montgomery County Chronicle, is recognized as the county's most affordable newspaper for the publication of public notices, which is why it's not unusual to see at least one dozen public notices in each weekly issue.

Those public notices aren't shoved underneath obscure ads or stories. They are promoted proudly on page A1 and usually constitute a half page or full page per week, giving it more credence as something important to read. We also provide stories to our readers explaining the public notices and how they impact our towns.

Here's my concern with House Bill 2237: should local governments be relied upon to post those legal notices on their official websites, I fear that the people at city hall or the local school board office will not carry that same passion for informing the public as a community newspaper instinctively does.

I just browsed the websites of several municipal governments and school districts in my readership area. Only one of those local governments made an attempt at providing full disclosure of their public notices. All other local governments and school districts did not carry any public notices on those websites (in fact, most of the websites had more than four-year-old information still posted as "What's New?"). If the use of local government websites is believed to be the best way to inform the public, why then are we not seeing more legal notices on those websites?

The answer is obvious: the newspaper, by tradition and culture, is the necessary venue to keep the public aware of local government decisions. And, it's imperative that this remain.

Kansans who care about the flow information from their local government should feel the same as I do: House Bill 2237 should be defeated.

Thank you for your consideration.



Andy Taylor, editor

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