

BULLY PULPIT

Taxation

There is one state in 50 that thinks a candidate for public office should have their taxes paid in order to serve – and that state is Missouri.

A quick search of AI brought the Missouri statute up, 115.306, and explained what happens if a candidate owes taxes, qualifications and disqualifications for office under that debt.

Kansas has no such law; why would it be a good thing? As voters, we hold those being elected to a higher platform. They are people that should be ready to handle the coffers of a county, city, library or other public entity and have a clear understanding of paying bills, budgets and more.

Tax payers expect a certain amount of understanding in elected officials who wield a pen to cut and add money to budgets. Office holders and candidates alike should be able to show taxpayers that they are responsible in their own households before they want to handle sums of money that don't belong to them.

As stated, Missouri has a law on the books that forces candidates to be good stewards of their own money before asking to be stewards of the public's money. Missouri's law from revisor.mo.gov states, "Title IX SUFFRAGE AND ELECTIONS, Chapter 115, 115.306 - Disqualification as candidate for elective public office, when — filing of affidavit, contents — tax delinquency, effect of. — 2. (1) Any person who files as a candidate for election to a public office shall be disqualified from participation in the election for which the candidate has filed if such person is delinquent in the payment of any state income taxes, personal property taxes, municipal taxes, real property taxes on the place of residence, as stated on the declaration of candidacy, or if the person is a past or present corporate officer of any fee office that owes any taxes to the state.

"...The department shall notify the candidate of the outstanding tax owed and give the candidate thirty days to remit any such outstanding taxes owed which are not the subject of dispute between the department and the candidate. If the candidate fails to remit such amounts in full within thirty days, the candidate shall be disqualified from participating in the current election and barred from refiling for an entire election cycle even if the individual pays all of the outstanding taxes that were the subject of the complaint."

Illinois took a slightly different approach as their tax payment law became lawfare for those hoping to disqualify an opponent.

ISBA.org reported, "The Illinois Supreme Court limited the reach of the candidate-qualifications statute to make it harder to remove candidates from the ballot for "indebtedness to the municipality."

"In a 2008 opinion that opened a small floodgate of ballot-access litigation, the Illinois Supreme Court ruled that a statute prohibiting certain debtors from holding an elective municipal office could be used to remove a potential candidate's name from the ballot prior to election day.

"The Illinois Municipal Code section at issue in both cases was an office-holding eligibility law stating, among other things, that "A person is not eligible for an elective municipal office if that person is in arrears in the payment of a tax or other indebtedness due to the municipality..." 65 ILCS 5/3.1-10-5(b)."

The Illinois Supreme Court essentially eliminated the ability for people to removing elected-officials from office for traffic tickets, etc. – eliminating those they don't agree with from office by using the law for minor infractions.

Laws, as seen in the case of President Donald Trump, should not be used as lawfare; they should be there to foster good candidates that have a clear understanding of budgets, whether that be personal or business.

Voters should be made aware of a candidate's tax status before the election; if voters choose to elect a person with property taxes or other taxes owed, that candidate should be able to offer a reason why it's not paid, especially in instances where taxes have been owed for long periods of time, and prove they'd be a good fit for an elected position.

Kansas legislators need to take a look at this issue – especially as budgets get tighter and tax money is placed further under the public's microscope.

Jackie Taylor
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Phillies' Karen



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Taking Farlinville voting location questioned

Letter to the Editor:

We all know what road is paved with good intentions, and that seems to be the case with the closing of the Farlinville polling location. At first glance, the numbers may look like closing Paris Township's polling site is a cost-saving move, but a closer look shows otherwise.

Clerk Danielle Souza said, "I'm not taking away the right to vote; I'm being financially minded. Even in a small city/school general election we're saving \$800." But the county's own website advertises "Poll Workers Needed" starting at \$195 for a full day. That equals roughly \$15 an hour, not \$7.67 as previously stated. In fact, the decision has increased costs by more than \$2,500. That is not saving—it's spending.

Souza has also claimed there are problems finding poll workers, but Linn County has a dedicated group of election workers, with new ones stepping in every cycle. The real issue is not worker shortages but poor planning and lack of research.

The truth is, poll worker pay—like all county pay rates—is set by Resolution 2025-01 and can only be changed by a new resolution signed by the commission. An appointed

clerk shouldn't promise raises or close polling places without full consideration of the costs and consequences.

Good intentions are not enough. Financial responsibility must be balanced with protecting citizens' access to the ballot box. This decision was made with a "quick glance" at numbers instead of the careful research and planning our county deserves.

Cheri Nutt
Mound City

The Everest of Theft

Civil forfeiture laws allow officers of the law to commit theft. Sometimes they have to return the money they stole. But they don't get punished.

Under civil forfeiture, authorities can grab cash or other possessions without proving criminal wrongdoing and without making an arrest. Since 2000, though, a federal law has made the federal government liable for reasonable attorney fees when a victim "substantially prevails" in court.

This law enabled Brian Moore, a rap artist, to eventually obtain compensation for thousands in legal costs after he sued to recover the \$8,500 taken from him by federal drug agents.

One day in 2021, Moore took this cash, which he had inherited from his grandfather, to the airport. He hoped to fund production of a music video in Los Angeles, his destination. He was thwarted.

Even after a judge ruled that Moore could get his money back, he had to keep fighting, now with the help of Institute for Justice, to be compensated for legal fees. Eventually, he won that battle too.

But he won *only* after wasting a lot of time and suffering a lot of anxiety because officers of the law, with no evidence of wrongdoing, treated a

person carrying cash as guilty of something just for carrying cash.

It was like Mount Everest. The officers took Moore's stuff because it was there.

And they knew what they were doing. Such conduct should be punishable. If it were, it wouldn't happen so often.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.

The party of losers is not funny

MAKING SENSE
BY MICHAEL REAGAN

Maybe we do need a Civil War 2.0 – with guns.

Our politics has become so partisan and so nasty, using guns to settle our national political differences may soon end up being the only solution.

It's bad enough no one agrees with what the other side is saying anymore.

But now when one side says something spectacularly horrible or "subtly" wishes harm on their opponent – and I'm thinking specifically about the prancing governor of Minnesota – no one on their side has the common decency to criticize them for it.

Tim Walz made a goofy loser of himself last fall as Kamala Harris VP pick.

And on Labor Day he showed why he's still the reigning buffoon of the Democratic Party.

Speaking in front of a partisan and apparently masochistic crowd in Duluth, Walz made a creepy joke based on the viral social media rumor that Trump had died because he had not been seen in public for four days.

Making weird faces, smiling, Walz said such a day would come.

"The last few days, you woke up thinking there might be news," he said, with a nod-nod, wink-wink look on his contorted face.

"Just saying, just saying – there will be news, sometime. Just so you know, there will be news."

Everyone knew what
SEE PARTY, A6

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Linn County News encourages letters to the editor. They may be mailed, emailed, faxed or hand-delivered. To be published, the letter must:

- Be hand signed.
- Include writer's name, city and phone number as letters will be verified for authenticity.
- Be 500 words or less.
- Be received by 5 p.m. Monday to appear in that week's edition.
- We reserve the right to print or not print reader's contributions. No malicious, slanderous or threatening letters will be allowed.
- Letters with political content will not be accepted the week preceding an election as it does not allow time for a response.

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- Any corrections or clarifications that need to be published in the Linn County News are published on the Opinion page after such corrections or clarifications are deemed necessary by the publisher.

Linn County News

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