



Title: Public notices all about transparency

Author:

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The **Kentucky** State Legislature is at it again.

Several Representatives, led by Rep. Jennifer Decker (R) of Shelby County, have sponsored House Bill 1 that would all but eliminate public records from appearing in newspapers and administered by a Government or third-party on a web site as opposed to publishing them in print media.



Keith Taylor

The bill's sponsors cite money as a reason for the proposed legislation, but monies spent on placing public newspapers are merely a drop in the bucket compared to what government agencies spend on other projects of their particular interest.

The Legislative Research Commission did a survey of public notices adopted in 2016, which revealed it costs less than one percent of the a public agencies total expenses.

"Of counties providing

data through the questionnaire, the median county spent 0.23 percent of its general fund expenditures on state-mandated public notices, or \$23 of every \$10,000 spent in FY 2015. The amount for a typical county varied from \$12 to \$34 per \$10,000," the report revealed. "Of the other counties reporting their advertising expenditures to the department, the median county spent 0.34 percent of its general fund on advertising of all types in FY 2015, or \$34 of every \$10,000 spent. The amount for a typical county varied from \$18 to \$62 per \$10,000. Total advertising costs for 108 counties are reported in Table 3.1 along with the percentage of each county's general government expenditures that this represents. The other counties did not report

advertising costs."

Furthermore, cities, throughout the state much like Berea and Richmond, also revealed that, "Analysis of questionnaire responses suggested that in FY 2014, the median city used approximately 0.16 percent

of its general government spending for state-mandated public notices, which is \$16 for every \$10,000 of general government spending. The typical city spent from \$6 to \$34 per \$10,000. State-mandated advertising costs for 119 **Kentucky** cities that responded to the questionnaire are reported in Table 3.2 along with the percentage of each city's general government expenditures that those costs represent."

The real issue in question is the lack of transparency this would create when putting public notices on a web site and in cyberspace. At any given time, those notices can "disappear" without public knowledge and the possibility for preference given business when it comes to bids and contracts are more prone to occur under the proposed legislation.

The **Kentucky Press Association** already publishes public notices online at no additional cost from its member newspapers at <http://www.kypublicnotice.com/>

While state representatives preach transparency and the importance of the public's right to know changes in ordinances made by local gov-



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erning bodies that effect you. For example, on Jan. 1, fans had to pay taxes on parking fees at Rupp Arena, meaning an extra 10 to 15 thousand dollars were generated by the extra \$1.20 attached to the \$20 parking rate at Rupp Arena.

The public deserves the right to know. They are the taxpaying citizens and the state legislature shouldn't be trying to eliminate pertinent information one place, while adding taxes and fees here and there to add more money to the coffers.