Open states' courts

It is time to begin opening child abuse and neglect proceedings within the Commonwealth of Kentucky to the public eye. Kentucky’s Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel found, for the third consecutive year, that SB 40 excludes all child sexual abuse cases and prohibits the use of recording equipment in juvenile court proceedings. To promote “transparency, accountability and systems improvement,” it is time to begin opening child abuse and neglect cases after much study, discussion and review of best practice recommendations. The panel identified that complete transparency within the court system will promote greater public understanding of the impact of child abuse, improve confidence in our court and child welfare system, and promote greater accountability for those agencies responsible for the well-being of our children. It is worth noting that SB 40 includes all child sexual abuse cases and prohibits the use of recording equipment in juvenile court proceedings.

In a February 15th post, Brent Schanding wrote: “It is time to begin opening child abuse and neglect cases to show greater accountability for the well-being of our children. It is important to note SB 40 excludes all child sexual abuse cases and prohibits the use of recording equipment in juvenile court proceedings.” He recommended that legislative action to show greater accountability for the well-being of our children.

The panel has identified missed opportunities for improvement among nearly all agencies – the Department for Community Based Services, the Family and Child Protective Services, medical and mental health providers, law enforcement, the court system and the advocate for the child. Increased transparency within the court system will promote greater public understanding of the impact of child abuse, improve confidence in our court and child welfare system, and promote greater accountability for those agencies responsible for the well-being of our children. It is worth noting that SB 40 includes all child sexual abuse cases and prohibits the use of recording equipment in juvenile court proceedings.

I encourage the General Assembly to enact SB 40. It is time to begin opening child abuse and neglect cases to show greater accountability for the well-being of our children. It is worthy of note that SB 40 excludes all child sexual abuse cases and prohibits the use of recording equipment in juvenile court proceedings.

SB 40 should help equalize funding for city schools

Our state senator and former Gov. Johnny Caroll, has filed Senate Bill 148 (SB 148), which is important to the capital city of Kentucky and, I believe, to all of Kentucky’s leaders. SB 148 helps the Frankfort Independent School District toward its responsibility to drive the revitalization of the Old City of Frankfort.

A vibrant, scenic capital city presents Kentucky as a place of prosperity, rich history and unequalled beauty. The Old City of Frankfort is anchored by both state capital buildings and includes two governor’s mansions, historic churches, an historic cemetery and homes of Kentucky’s earliest leaders. These Frankfort landmarks and the source of pride to all of us in this school district. But these landmarks pose an enormous financial challenge to leaders of the Frankfort Independent School District. All of these properties are exempt from property taxes, the single most important means by which a school district raises its operational funds. Only 25 percent of property taxes can be levied on property outside the school district boundaries in Kentucky.

The other 75 percent of all Old City property is owned by government, churches, educational institutions or non-profits. Each year, the Frankfort Independent School District loses $31,314 in revenue each year compared to the state SEEK appropriation. For the Frankfort school district alone, this loss is $70,000 per year. The Old City of Frankfort is located within the district’s ability to serve its students.

I believe the Old City of Frankfort is the magnet for attracting money to a city, especially a capital city. The Old City of Frankfort will play its vital role for the capital city.

Unfortunately, as in previous presidential campaigns, we are seeing some of the same from the candidates, both Republican and Democrat, who have not been elected to public office. The candidates, Hillary Clinton and U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., have taken a few jabs at each other, but would have both run relatively positive campaigns. That may change, though, as that contest has become more than just names expected.

The same cannot be said about the current Republicans, with the exception of Ben Carson, who hasn’t lowered himself to attack another candidate but instead has talked about what the people really care about, which are issues such as the economy and national security.

Candidates who play these attack games are committing a diavolical sin in the eyes of the voters.

In the presidential race, candidates are vying to be the leader of the party as a whole. In the Senate, they all play different roles in a professional manner, whether during debates, interviews with the press or on the campaign trail.

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The issues our country is facing are significant and require all candidates to have different roles in the eyes of the voters.

While the debates and day-to-day campaigning have featured the usual rhetoric and polemics, recent comments have also seen many too much name calling and personal attacks.

It is about time to see the voters answer these questions: What would you do about the things that really matter? What will you do to make our country a better place than when you took office?

Pakistan, our nuclear-armed neighbor, is one of the world’s most significant countries. It is important that we keep our nuclear-armed neighbor, Pakistan, in mind as we continue to see the world.

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