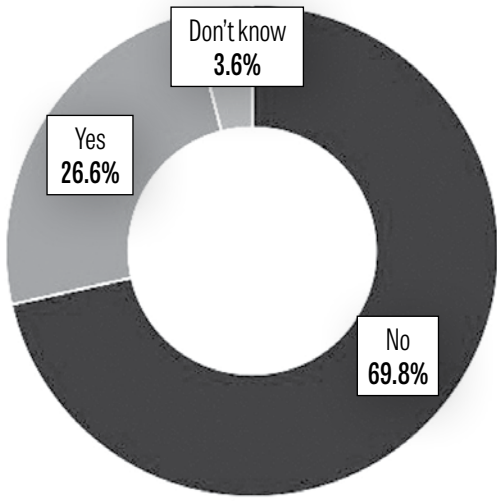


ONLINE POLL:

Do you believe 15-year-olds should be able to obtain their driver's permit?



This poll reflects the opinions of 334 respondents. Visit www.state-journal.com to take part in today's poll.

EDITORIAL

Best of the worst invasive plants to be featured in SJ

If you know what to look for, they aren't hard to find — especially since many of them — such as Bradford pear trees and bush honeysuckle, which are currently blooming white and bright green, respectively — are blossoming right now. Hoping to raise local awareness about the negative effects non-native invasive plant species have on the community, Remove Invasives Partnership (RIP) and the Joint Task Force on Invasives are teaming up for a photo contest to identify the best of the worst.

To demonstrate the extent of the spread of invasive plant species in the Frankfort and Franklin County area, the task force and RIP are encouraging the public to submit photographs of the pest plants. The deadline for submissions is 5 p.m. on Friday, April 18. The State Journal will publish the top five winning photos in an upcoming edition. The top three winners will be awarded \$25 gift certificates to Wilson Nurseries.

- Here are the rules for the contest:
- ▶ Up to 10 photo submissions per person.
 - ▶ All submissions must be identified by location.
 - ▶ All entries will be in the public domain.
 - ▶ All images of invasive plants are accepted and include, but are not limited to, bush honeysuckle, Bradford pear, winter creeper, English ivy and more.
 - ▶ Images with Frankfort landmarks will receive a higher ranking.

Send photo submissions of invasive plant species to Anna Claire Rogers, Kentucky State University forestry/invasive specialist, at anna.rogers@kysu.edu. In addition, the winning photo contest entries will be displayed at the Bradford Pear Bounty Day table during the Earth Day festivities slated for the Orlando Brown House from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday, April 19. Additionally, those who cut down a Bradford pear tree on their property and bring a photograph of it to the event will receive a free native tree replacement. For more information about RIP or its initiatives, contact Chris Schimmoeller at c.schimmoeller@gmail.com or 502-514-2960.

We are grateful for Remove Invasives Partnership and the Joint Task Force on Invasives for bringing local attention to non-native invasive plant species that kill trees and native vegetation that provide food for birds, butterflies, bees and other beneficial insects and urge community members to submit their best of the worst photos for the contest.

10 Commandments 'reminds us of historic roots of the law'

House Joint Resolution 15 (HJR 15), which allows for the display of a 10 Commandments monument on the State Capitol grounds, became law without the governor's signature and essentially reminds us of the historic roots of the law.

Detractors argue that such a religious display is contrary to the American doctrine of the disestablishment of religion. Groups like the ACLU of Kentucky say that such a display is "unconstitutional." However, such detractors would do well to look at the U.S. Supreme Court building, which features in the center of its east side a marble statue of Moses holding forth none other than the 10 Commandments. Such a feature, alongside such lawgivers as Confucius and Solon, represents the essential role the 10 Commandments and the natural law tradition at large plays in our nation's laws and mores.

Supporters say that the display of the 10 Commandments outside of the Kentucky Capitol serves as a reminder to citizens and legislators alike that we are not left in the dark concerning these issues of morality. America was built on a broadly Judeo-Christian tradition, acknowledging the great Lawgiver as the basis for our rights and laws. The Kentucky Constitution already acknowledges this centrality of God to the Commonwealth. The Preamble gives thanks to "Almighty God for the civil, political and religious liberties we enjoy" and seeks to invoke the "continuance of these blessings."

The monument in question was originally donated to the Commonwealth of Kentucky in 1971 by the Fraternal Order of

Eagles and was displayed on the new Capitol grounds until the 1980s, when it was relocated to Western Kentucky for storage during a construction project. The monument returned to the



Jacob Ogan
Guest columnist

Capitol grounds in the year 2000. However, just two years later, the monument was removed once again, this time due to legal concerns. In 2005, the Supreme Court of the United States ruled in *Van Orden v. Perry* that the Ten Commandments were appropriate for display within a historical context outside of the Texas Capitol building. The majority opinion argued that such monuments are not contrary to the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment. Rather, the Court cited the "strong role played by religion and religious traditions throughout our Nation's history" to justify the display.

Justice Rehnquist, joined by Justices Scalia, Thomas and Breyer likewise cited the Court's ruling in *School Dist. of Abington Township v. Schempp*, which argues that "religion has been closely identified with our history and government ...". The opinion goes on to speak of the Founding Fathers' devotion to God and the inalienable rights that are "rooted in Him" and "clearly evidenced in their (Founding Fathers') writings, from the Mayflower Compact to the Constitution itself ...".

The Court acknowledged the undeniable role that the Judeo-Christian tradition has played in our nation's history. Support-

ers of HJR 15 argue that the 10 Commandments being displayed outside of Kentucky's Capitol is simply another testament to our nation's religious heritage, which, if forgotten, threatens the very survival of the American Experiment. No civilization can survive without being rooted in a transcendent order. As founding President, George Washington stated, "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports."

In a time when the Commonwealth is experiencing alarming levels of child abuse, incarceration, and drug use, we need to be reminded of our moral foundation. When such moral codes are forgotten, society devolves into chaos, as the statistics bear out.

While teaching the spiritual importance of the 10 Commandments should take place within the realm of the church, application by citizens in their daily lives benefits the state.

Restoring the 10 Commandments monument to the Capitol grounds is a good reminder of the historical significance of religion and morality in the history of the Commonwealth and the nation at large.

Jacob Ogan is the executive assistant at the Commonwealth Policy Center and is pursuing degrees at Boyce College and the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Alongside his work at CPC, he serves in the President's Office at Southern Seminary and has previously interned with members of both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate. He can be emailed at jacob@commonwealthpolicy.org.

LETTERS

'SUCH IS THE NATURE OF ECONOMIC GROWTH'

Dear editor,

I went to a zoning board meeting with my family and a bunch of our neighbors to oppose the petition to operate an Airbnb (directly across the street from our home) on our quiet dead end street.

It was a sham meeting because the petition to change zoning from residential to commercial rental had already been approved by the fiscal court weeks before without our knowledge.

Never have I been more insulted and disillusioned about (this aspect) local government. We had no power to influence the outcome except to force Airbnb owners to address parking and noise issues that may arise.

We sat there for over two hours listening to Airbnb after Airbnb being "approved." Remember, the court had already approved these petitions prior to the meeting.

When it was our turn, which was last on the list, we received the longest amount of time as we had the most people in opposition and had written five separate letters to the head of the board. Several neighbors spoke in opposition as well.

When the chairman was reminded that the board had the power to deny a petition, the chairman's reply was that these petitions had already been court approved and the board's purpose was to ensure Airbnb operators complied with restric-

tions, i.e. parking and noise.

Then to add further insult, he said, "such is the nature of economic growth" and spread his arms out wide.

It was then that I could take no more and walked out.

*Alex Aranilla
Frankfort*

IN LINCOLN'S WORDS

Dear editor,

Oh that we knew more of our wonderful history and our founders.

"You cannot help the poor by destroying the rich. You cannot strengthen the weak by weakening the strong.

You cannot bring about prosperity by discouraging thrift.

You cannot lift the wage earner up by pulling the wage payer down.

You cannot further the brotherhood of man by inciting class hatred.

You cannot build character and courage by taking away people's initiative and independence.

You cannot help the people permanently by doing for them what they could and should do for themselves."

— Abraham Lincoln

*Phyllis Vincent
Frankfort*

SUBMIT LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The State Journal encourages readers to submit letters to the editor. To submit a letter, email letters@state-journal.com.

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