

COMMUNITY FORUM

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kids, guns and ice cream are a recipe for disaster

A gun shop plans to open soon on Bardstown Road in the Highlands — near the Homemade Pie & Ice Cream Kitchen.

Earth to Louisville residents: we don't want or need a store selling lethal weapons near a store serving children and their parents.

Please, Louisville officials: Don't let this happen. Kids, guns and ice cream don't mix.

— Owen Hardy, 40205

I am so ashamed

The world was stunned when Russia began their takeover of Ukraine. Now, Trump is doing the same with Greenland. As an American, I am so ashamed.

— Marty Johnson, 40059

ICE mask ban is wishful thinking

Councilor Ruhe needs education on the Supremacy Clause & intergovernmental immunity. Her op-ed is fairy tale wishful thinking at best, or woeful blatant ignorance at worst.

- City passes a “no face coverings in public” ordinance.
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Home Security, or U.S. Marshals wear masks during an operation.
- The ordinance cannot lawfully be enforced against them.
- Any attempt to do so would likely be unconstitutional and quickly shut down in court.

— Vince Pinnick, 40241

I am worried about Newcomer Academy students

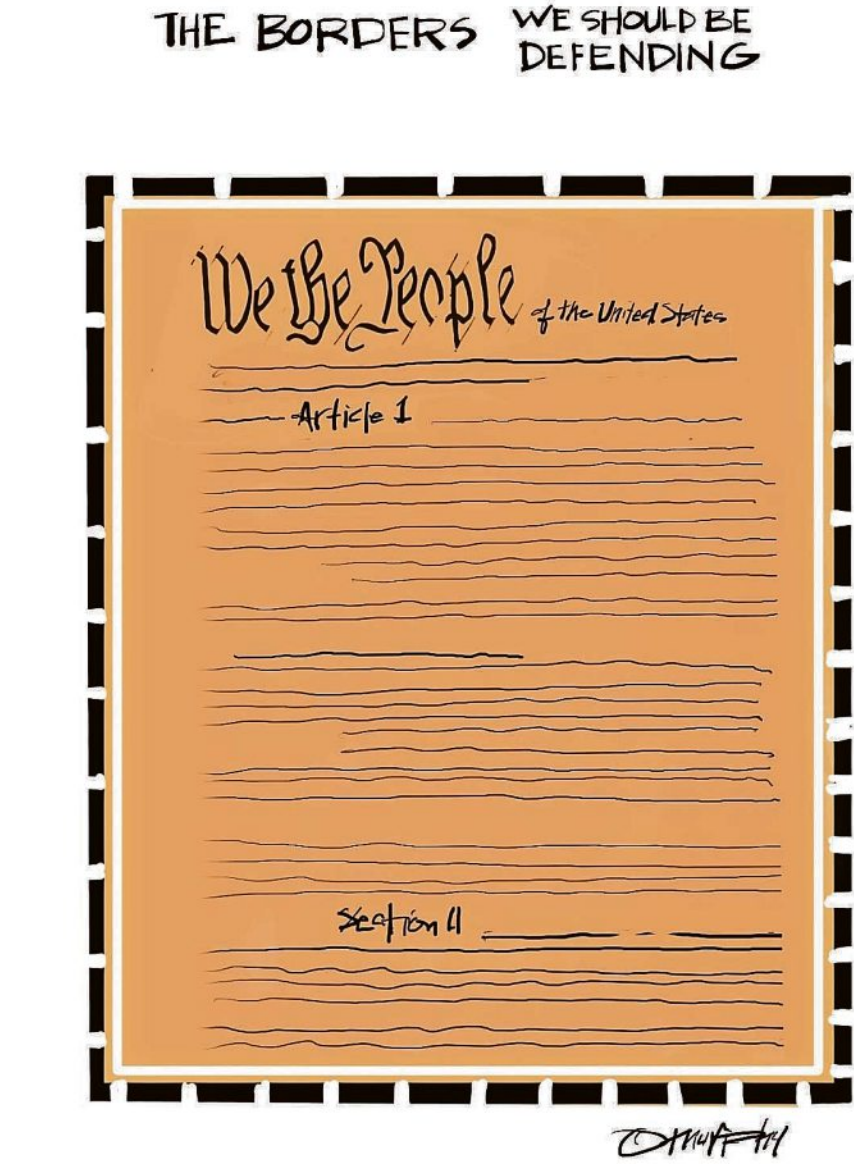
I was very happy to hear that we have a school dedicated to helping incoming immigrants. I think that the fact that they are extending their services, now that the amount of new immigrants coming in has decreased, is excellent. However, it worries me that publishing the newspaper story may actually invite attention from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). I hope that the school has taken steps to help prevent this from happening. We need to do all we can to protect the children.

— Martha Hoskins, 40241

Thanks to Councilwoman Purvis

I want to say thank you to Councilwoman Purvis for looking out for our community and all the hard work that she has done for us. I also send a thank you, with love and a smile, to her staff.

— Victor Baber, 40216



"Borders" MARC MURPHY

KY legislators are wasting time and money with nonsense

As surely as night follows day, the holiday season in Kentucky is followed by the silly season, better known as the meeting of the state legislature. Instead of dealing with serious issues, legislators are again treating Kentuckians to a buffet of legal nonsense. Prime examples are two companion pieces of ignorant and blatantly unconstitutional nonsense, proposed by Reps. Shane Baker and John Hodgson, that would restrict most public offices to native-born citizens. By their logic, Melania Trump, were she a Kentuckian, could not sit on a local school board, but I doubt that has occurred to either of them. What a waste of time and tax dollars!

— Larry Johnson, 40205

Rep. Kulkarni wants Beshear to call the National Guard for what?

State Rep. Kulkarni wants something

done to prevent ICE from operating in Kentucky. She wants the governor to call out the National Guard to protect Kentucky people.

What does she want the Guard to do? Take to the streets in force to take on a lawful law enforcement agency?

— Robert Murphy, 40387

Brute force against civilians is not the answer

I'm old enough to remember Kent State, another instance of armed government representatives put in a situation that led to deaths of unarmed civilians. Very few people now justify the use of deadly force in that historical event. You may argue the situation now is different, but I'm confident that years down the road people will all agree that it was avoidable and unnecessary. Why can't we learn from history? Brute force perpetrated on the civilian population is not the right way to resolve differences. It won't work here, and I believe it will

Letters to the Editor

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Guidelines

Letters must be 200 words or less and may be edited for space constraints and clarity. We give preference to discussions of local issues and letters submitted by local writers. If you are citing a source, please provide a link to it. Letter writers will be limited for publication to once every 30 days.

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eventually also fail in Iran.

— Edward Lloyd, 40205

My students are terrified of ICE

I'm a mother, and I'm a school counselor. Constantly, my students, of all races and colors and complexities, ask me about ICE. They're asking me if they will be next, they're asking me if their parents will be home, they're asking me what to do if — no, when ICE comes for them or their friends at school. They're afraid to come to after-school activities, they're terrified of their pictures being posted on the school website. They're afraid to raise their hand or ask for help. They are walking in fear, a fear that lives on top of the everyday anxiety of just being a teenager. And we, in education, hold their fears and give them all the love and support we can, knowing that there is little else we can provide, while those in office, who have power and resources, continue to beat down our young people day after day after day.

This is our America — bullies to children and terrorists to their families.

— Cordia Pickerill, 40215

KY's property tax system fails in accountability and transparency



Your Turn
Levi Anderson and Caleb O. Brown
Guest columnists

Homeowners across the commonwealth are waking up to shocking tax bills.

In Louisville, property assessments jumped at least 30% in reassessed neighborhoods. Daviess County has seen six consecutive years of assessment increases exceeding 5%. In Shelby County, where activists fought a property tax hike, school authorities handed themselves millions in new property tax revenue while simultaneously touting no change in tax rates. The enabler in all of these cases is a structural flaw in Kentucky's property tax system that allows silent tax increases to happen virtually automatically.

In short, when home values rise, property taxes can soar even when rates stay flat or fall slightly.

Gov. Andy Beshear correctly highlights lower property tax rates of 10.6 cents per \$100 of assessed value, touting that fact obscures some basic problematic math.

A homeowner whose property value increased from \$150,000 to \$180,000 will pay more in taxes even if the rate drops from 11 cents to 10.6 cents. The math is simple: 10.6% of \$180,000 is

It's time for the Kentucky General Assembly to bring truth to Kentucky's taxation.

more than 11% of \$150,000.

Kentucky should consider other property tax models

Utah solved this problem 40 years ago with Truth in Taxation legislation. Before 1985, Utahns faced punishing property taxes and demanded relief. Rather than imposing rigid caps that would cripple local governments or merely shifting burdens, they created a system that combines transparency with accountability.

Here's how it works: Each year, taxing authorities calculate the rate needed to generate the same revenue as the previous year based on new property values, known as "certified rate." This prevents the automatic revenue windfall that occurs when assessments climb.

If local officials determine they need more revenue for schools, roads or public safety, they can still raise taxes — but only after ample public notice and buy-in. This process doesn't handcuff local government; it simply requires transparency and accountability to their constituents.

Once among the highest-taxed states

for property, Utah is now among the lowest in the nation. Kansas and Nebraska have followed Utah's lead in recent years, adopting their own Truth in Taxation laws to combat rising property tax burdens. Kentuckians should join them.

Kentucky's property tax legislation falls behind

Kentucky's current system fails the transparency and accountability tests. State law allows local governments to increase revenue up to 4% without voter involvement. There's no requirement for individualized taxpayer notices and no dedicated hearing focused on property tax increases specifically. The 4% automatic increase allowance — which compounds year after year — enables substantial tax hikes over time without meaningful public input. Five years of a 4% increase is a nearly 22% hike for taxpayers.

Truth in Taxation represents a transparent alternative that respects both taxpayers and local government autonomy. It acknowledges that local needs change and communities sometimes require additional revenue, but it ensures those decisions happen in the light of day with full public participation.

Property tax relief matters to constituents. Lawmakers have taken up bills addressing senior exemptions and assessment freezes for elderly homeowners. But these piecemeal approaches only treat the symptoms. What Kentucky needs is comprehensive structur-

al reform that prevents silent tax hikes.

Kentucky needs property tax reform

The political moment is now. Property taxes consistently rank as Americans' most hated tax. After years of surging home prices driven by weak home construction, homeowners across Kentucky are feeling the squeeze. State legislators are clearly willing to tackle tax reform through income tax reductions implemented in recent years. Applying that same reform-minded approach to property taxes makes both political and policy sense.

The legislation should eliminate the automatic 4% increase allowance that currently exists. While some gradual growth allowance might be reasonable to account for population increases or inflation, the current 4% threshold is too generous and defeats the purpose of requiring transparency.

The choice is clear: Kentucky can continue down the path of silent tax increases, temporary relief measures and growing taxpayer frustration, or it can adopt Truth in Taxation and create a transparent, accountable property tax system that works for everyone. Decades of success in Utah suggests which path leads to better outcomes.

It's time for the Kentucky General Assembly to bring truth to Kentucky's taxation.

Levi Anderson is a taxpayer advocate in Shelby County, KY.
Caleb O. Brown is the CEO of the Bluegrass Institute.