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Shield and Sword

Petition committee disputes allegations of fraud, forgery

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITORIAL

The petition committee attempting to recall the LaRue County Board of Education's 2025 property tax levy were recently accused of fraud, forgery and violating state law — accusations that the committee say are not only unverifiable but also fail as a matter of law.

Filed with the LaRue County Circuit Clerk on March 14, the

document is a motion to dismiss the board's counterclaim against the petition committee, which was filed on Feb. 25 and accused the committee of misconduct during and after signature collection; a full analysis of the board's filing was published in the March 11, 2026, edition of The LaRue County Herald News. It is essential to note that the information contained within both documents reflects the respective entity's perspective on the matter and has not been proven as fact in court.

As reasoning for its motion to dismiss the counterclaim with prejudice, the petition committee asserts that Kentucky law establishes the exclusive framework governing

tax recall petitions; it does not, however, create any civil cause of action by a taxing authority against the members of a petition committee for how they exercised their statutory rights.

"Every count of the Board's Counterclaim rests on the same foundational premise: that the Board has a legally cognizable right to sue the Petition Committee in a civil proceeding for conduct related to the circulation and submission of a recall petition under KRS 132.017," the document states. "That premise is legally unsupported, and its failure is fatal to the entire Counterclaim."

The KRS mentioned above is a procedural statute that creates a

mechanism for qualified voters to challenge a tax levy, including conditions on who may form a petition committee, how a petition must be circulated and assembled, what the county clerk must review and how an aggrieved committee may seek judicial review of an insufficiency determination. The committee argues that the statute is written entirely for the benefit of the voting public, with no provisions to benefit the taxing authority the statute empowers voters to challenge.

"It cannot use the statute as both a shield against the petition and a sword against the petitioners," the committee states. "A party may not invoke the narrowness of a statute when it benefits from that narrowness

while seeking to expand the statute's reach when it wishes to go on offense."

The committee contends that the accusations that it failed to comply with mandatory statute requirements, including non-conforming pages, unauthorized circulation, defective affidavit and photocopied pages, are a defense rather than a counterclaim. And, because no provision of the KRS creates a cause of action by the board against the petition committee for alleged statutory noncompliance, the committee argues the accusation must be dismissed.

On the accusations of fraud,

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Celebrating 65 years of honoring our nation's heroes

ALLISON SHEPHERD
PUBLISHER

Nationwide Uniform located in Hodgenville celebrated their 65 year anniversary on March 25. With a current workforce having a combined 2,500 years of experience, the employees of the factory celebrated with a catered lunch.

In its history, the factory has produced 50 million pair of trousers. Another interesting fact is production has used a million miles of sewing thread.

At 2025 dollars the factory has contributed almost 1/2 billion dollars to the local economy (2025 total labor + OH \$7.5mil x 65 years = \$487mil)

Nationwide Uniform, a Fechheimer Company honors our nation's heroes by crafting the finest uniforms with care and dedication. With global manufacturing partners in Central and South America, Europe, and Asia, Fechheimer partners with them to complement three plants in Cincinnati, Ohio; Hodgenville, Kentucky; and Grantsville, Maryland in the United States to service the needs of their military, postal, fire/ems, public safety and civilian customers.

When V.P. of Manufacturing Mark Maloney addressed the employees prior to the luncheon, he spoke of the recent loss of military members specifically the two from our area that had lost their lives serving our country.

He challenged the team members of Nationwide Uniform



Rita Philpott, 71, returned to work at Nationwide Uniform this past year after working 35 years, then pursuing other employment only to return to her place beside her friend Shirley Cobb, 67, who has worked for Nationwide Uniform for 49 years. The two ladies celebrated together the success of the factory together during the 65 year anniversary celebration.

Allison Shepherd

to recognize the importance of every stitch and work that goes into producing their uniforms, because their work with follow those service members into

eternity. For more information about employment at Nationwide, call 270-358-4173.

Judge Simms asked to reconsider motions to dismiss

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

LaRue County Circuit Court Judge Charles Simms III has been formally asked to reconsider his decision to deny motions to dismiss the case attempting to recall the LaRue County Board of Education's recent property tax levy; the petition committee, however, says the request is nothing more than a repetition of arguments already heard and rejected.

Originally filed in November 2025, the litigation challenges LaRue County Clerk Rhonda Metcalf's decision that the petition attempting to recall the school board's 2025 property tax levy did not meet statutory standards, causing it to be declared insufficient. Per Metcalf's determination, two pages of the petition contained different headings and verbiage than all the other papers submitted. Because state law requires all papers of a petition to be substantially uniform in style, Metcalf said she could not by statute certify the petition.

Adrienne Southworth, attorney for the petition committee, argues that the difference in headings is a "technical problem" that

should not cause the petition as a whole to be rejected, while Tom Claycomb, attorney for the board, contends that the law requires uniformity without exception.

Claycomb and Metcalf's attorney's filed motions to dismiss the case late last year. Judge Simms ruled against the motions in February, citing a 2016 Jefferson County Appellate case that states voter tax recall statutes are to be liberally construed. He also said that, although it is undisputed that 2 of the 88 pages are not substantially uniform, he believes it would be inappropriate to reject the other 86 uniform pages.

The matter returned to court on Monday, March 16. At that time, Claycomb advised that he had submitted a motion asking Judge Simms to alter, amend or vacate his order denying the motions to dismiss. As reasoning, Claycomb argued that the court overstepped its authority by considering materials that were not relevant in the scope of the motion to dismiss; misapplied the substantial compliance doctrine; and effectively severing the two

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DUI, trafficking charges top March indictments

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

A Hodgenville man accused of driving under the influence with a minor in his vehicle has received a nine-count indictment.

According to the original arrest citation, Hodgenville Police Officer S. Grant observed a tan Jeep at Circle K at approximately 11:15 p.m. on Feb. 3. Upon running the vehicle's license plate in the state's system, no information could be found.

"I observed the vehicle leave [Circle K] and make a left-hand turn moving N on N. Lincoln Blvd.," the citation states. "I pulled out to make a stop on the above



Ryan Meredith

vehicle and before I could activate my emergency equipment, the vehicle made a U-turn into Smiley's Liquor Store and proceeded to head South on N. Lincoln Blvd."

After making a U-turn himself, Grant notes that the vehicle had "accelerated at a high rate of speed" before turning left onto Shawnee Drive and subsequently pulling into the Papa John's parking lot. The driver, identified as

RYAN MEREDITH, 38, was reportedly exiting the vehicle when the officer arrived at the scene. Upon contact,

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MEET THE CANDIDATES

Informing voters with candidate questionnaires

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

In an effort to educate the public on the upcoming election, *The LaRue County Herald News* has begun publishing a series of candidate questionnaires.

This week, you'll find the Republican candidates running for LaRue County Jailor on page A4 and the Republican candidates running for LaRue County Sheriff on page A5. All individuals were given the same questions and deadlines and are listed alphabetically by their last name.

The next set of questionnaires will publish in our April 1 edition with the two Republican candidates for Magistrate District 3 and the two Republican candidates for PVA. April 8 will include the seven Republican candidates and two Democratic candidates for State Senate District 14 and the series will conclude on April 15 with the two Republican candidates for State Representative District 24.

Republican candidates running for LaRue County Judge

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School Board requests federal funding to upgrade safety systems

BY VICTORIA COX
EDITOR

The LaRue County Board of Education is hoping federal funding will allow it to implement approximately \$1.2 million worth of safety enhancements across the district.

Meeting in regular session on Monday, March 16, the proposal was presented by LaRue County Schools Superintendent Adryanne Warren. The funding request was submitted to U.S. Congressman Brett Guthrie's office for consideration in the Fiscal Year 2027 Community Project Funding program, which allows members of Congress to request funding for specific

projects in their districts through designated federal accounts.

The request was officially submitted by the City of Hodgenville, on behalf of the school district. Per the application, the Safe Schools Initiative aims to "enhance safety across all LaRue County facilities through comprehensive upgrades to surveillance and access control systems." This includes the installation of high-resolution cameras and modernization of electronic access controls at exterior and critical interior doors.

"The district's current systems are experiencing

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