

I am not sure anyone truly knows what you are going to deal with when you run for local office and win. I certainly did not expect to deal with some of the issues we already have as a Fiscal Court in the first 15 months of my term. I have heard Congressman Comer, who has been elected as a State Rep., Agriculture Commissioner, and now Congressman, say that if you can get re-elected as a Magistrate/Commissioner that you are a truly good at what you do. And that is because we are live and work locally all year. If you want to talk to me or see me, you can find me easily. I thought the first time he said it that he was just saying that to be nice. But because I have heard him say it now on many occasions and have had the experience of 15 months in the position, I truly believe that he means it along with all of the other experienced politicians I have heard say the same. You know where I work, you have my personal cell number, you probably know where I live. I am in Marshall County 95% of the time.

I only made a few promises during my campaign, because I knew better than to commit to specifics not knowing what would come up. I promised to work hard during and after the campaign. I promised to give each decision the proper amount of time it deserved to make my decision. And I promised to try my best to always have my children and your children and grandchildren at the forefront of my mind when making those decisions. I want them to live in an even better Marshall County than what many of us who have lived here all our lives grew up in. My wife will tell you that I take on a large amount of stress spending as much time as I can making sure I keep each one of these promises. One thing I now know is that I cannot control exactly why you think I made a decision. I have found that those that don't agree with my decision automatically believe I didn't give time to both sides of the issue. Those who agree with my decision, believe I gave it the proper analysis it deserved (until I make a decision they disagree with).

What I have probably found most frustrating is trying to answer for decisions I did not make. I often find myself answering "I cannot truly know why someone else made the decision they made. I can only make the decisions that are in front of me and answer to those". As it relates to the flagpole and flag that was recently erected, this is one of them. I did not have a vote on that decision. Should it have been a decision made through Fiscal Court action? I am certainly willing to have the discussion with anyone, but regardless about what we decide going forward, I do think this issue is something we should discuss now as a Fiscal Court. I have taken several calls, emails, and texts from both sides of the issue and I appreciate you taking the time to reach out.

Because I was not involved in the initial decision, I could have just continued to say what I have to some who reached out to me. Which is that I did not vote on it, but to reach out to all four of us on the Fiscal Court and give us your thoughts and hope that something is done to address both sides concerns. Then my wife and I had a discussion about it in the last few days and it reminded me of my last promise, which is to my children and yours to make the best possible decision on their behalf. In my humble opinion, this is not about removing the history of the Civil War. I am certainly not a proponent of taking down a historical monument that has been on site for years, but that is not the same as this issue. This issue is about erecting a new flag and flagpole.

It is not up to me or you to tell someone the flag doesn't represent racism. There are many people that do feel that way, and there are others who argue it is only about history. It is not up to me to decide what is racism as a County Commissioner. That is an individual thought to a certain extent. But those who oppose it are not all "liberal activists" who just want our children not to hear both sides of the history of the Civil War. Some are Conservative Republicans and most are people who voted for all four of the current Fiscal Court members. This is not the same as taking down the statue of Jefferson Davis in the State Capitol Rotunda that has been there since 1936 in my opinion.

I sent an email this morning simply asking Judge Neal to consider having this issue on our next Fiscal Court agenda so that we can decide as an entire Fiscal Court what is the best way to address the concerns of all of our constituents.

Sincerely,

Monti R. Collins

3rd District Commissioner

monti.collins@marshallcountyky.gov