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PRESS RELEASE

Woodlawn Springs Vote Illustrates Need For System Change In Nelson County Government Nelson County Citizens For County Commission Form Of Government Begins Petition Drive

With the recent vote on Woodlawn Springs and the magistrates completely ignoring the calls to delay their vote in the wake of an ethics complaint filed against a Nelson County Planning and Zoning Commission member, a group of Nelson County citizens led by Don Thrasher is starting a petition drive to change Nelson County form of government from a 5 magistrate system to a 3 County Commissioner system.

The county commission form of government is an “at-large” system that eliminates the fiefdom, territorial district based system Nelson County currently has. This is a rare instance where less representatives would actually provide greater representation for the citizens of Nelson County. In the fight over a road naming issue Don Thrasher discovered an unwritten good old boy obstacle to getting anything accomplished by the Nelson County magistrates. Two magistrates admitted off the record that the unwritten code works like this, if a resident of district 4 can't get his or her magistrate to back something the other magistrates will not address it. In other words even if the other magistrates may agree on something a citizen proposes if the person proposing it does not live in their district they will only vote or support something brought by that district's magistrate.

This is ingrained in the magistrates from day one and perpetuated because no magistrate wants to rock the boat in fear of whatever proposals they bring up will meet with opposition. The unwritten rule has been illustrated time and time again in the voting practices of the Fiscal Court. Review of past votes reveals that the only opposing votes by magistrates are for budget items that are not district specific.

Recently Pike County Kentucky had the same problem and in 2016 Kentucky State Senator Ray Jones II, the Democrat Senate Minority Leader was successful in demonstrating how a county commission system would serve the citizens of Pike county better and won the ballot vote on the issue.

In order to get the county commission system implemented a petition signed by 1200 registered voters of Nelson County would then cause the question to be put on the ballot of the next election. Thrasher and his group will begin seeking signatures for the petition on March 10th, 2018. Anyone wishing to sign the petition, help gather signatures or join Nelson County Citizens For County Commissioners is asked to call 502.510.4953.

The system is not going to change until the system changes. This fundamental change in how county government is structured will give the citizens of Nelson County 3 representatives to represent them, not just 1.

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