

NEWTON COUNTY
1132 Usher Street
Room 313
Covington, GA 30014
Phone (770) 784-2070



WALTON COUNTY
303 S. Hammond Drive
Suite 334
Monroe, GA 30655
Phone (770) 267-1355

RANDY MCGINLEY
DISTRICT ATTORNEY
ALCOVY JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Statement of Randy McGinley, District Attorney, Alcovy Judicial Circuit:

Every day we are confronted with the sad reality that trust in elected and public officials is at an all-time low. Simply turning of the TV or scrolling through social media provides signs of this distrust and examples of why it exists.

This week the Newton County Board of Commissioners, in a 3-2 vote, approved a resolution asking local state legislators to propose a bill that would split the Alcovy Judicial Circuit. No one with the knowledge of the Circuit's court system was consulted before the vote. No one called me, the District Attorney, who has worked in this circuit for about a decade and has more knowledge than anyone about the criminal caseload, the budget of the DA's office, and how to keep our courts running fairly, effectively, and efficiently. To my knowledge, no judges were consulted. To my knowledge, no one from the Department of Community Supervision, which handles probation supervision and is a Circuit-wide office, was consulted.

This resolution was added to the agenda during the afternoon of the meeting date, mere hours before the scheduled meeting. It appears that such last minute additions to the agenda are allowed when the matter is urgent or time sensitive. However, not a single reason why this matter was urgent was discussed. Instead, a copy of the proposed bill was already attached to the proposal which clearly indicates that this proposal was already in the works well before the day of the meeting. The late addition to the agenda precluded anyone with knowledge of the court system, the DA's office, and the potential financial impact to appear at the meeting ready to discuss the matter.

I personally found out about the resolution just hours before the meeting time. I was unable, with such extremely short notice to have someone pick up and care for my 4 and 1 year-old daughters.

The County Commission has the power and right to vote on whatever resolutions they choose. But it is disappointing that a vote on a complicated, important subject would be held with so little information on the subject. The last minute addition of this resolution and the vote were based on one thing, and one thing only: partisan politics.

Splitting the circuit would not be without a cost to the people of the Counties. The DA's budget from each county split numerous costs. For example, the cost of expensive and necessary software is shared by both counties. The State creating a new DA costs taxpayers everywhere.

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Judges' caseloads would grow. This means that it would take longer for cases to be resolved. This means that individuals awaiting trial while in jail would have to wait longer for their day in court. If the speed of cases coming to court was truly a reason, then propose the addition of a State Court.

Additionally, it is impossible to calculate the cost of losing the knowledge of the cases in the office. If the circuit was split, it would be naïve to think that there would not be people losing their jobs, people that work day in and day out to help our communities. With them would go priceless knowledge of open cases. A new DA would have no knowledge about these open cases that would include murders, rapes, child molestations, armed robberies, etc.. I do not know how to put a number on the cost to victims of serious crimes.

To be clear, I was elected to be the District Attorney of the Alcovy Judicial Circuit. Not just Newton County, not just Walton County, but the entire Circuit. I have worked in both offices for years and both Counties will always have a special place in my heart. I hope all elected officials believe what I believe: that I serve the people of my Circuit. They do not serve me. I do not serve only those that voted for me. I serve everyone in the Circuit.

Over the last 12+ months, I consistently provided my cell phone in public forums, on public social media posts, and in public meetings. There is not an elected official that is easier to get in touch with than me. Yet, not a single call was made to me, the person with the most knowledge of the criminal court system and the most knowledge of the District Attorney's budget. Anyone that has questions about our court system or the DA's office can call me at any time. As so many are aware, my cellphone number is 404-247-1092.

I will continue to work harder than anyone for the people of the Alcovy Circuit, BOTH Newton AND Walton Counties. The Alcovy District Attorney's Office will continue to serve the people of this Circuit with distinction, with compassion, and with unmatched dedication.

Randy McGinley
District Attorney
Alcovy Judicial Circuit