CITY OF DICKSON

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DON L. WEISS JR., O.D.
MAYOR

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To Whom It May Concern:

In 2010, the 106th Tennessee General Assembly passed and Gov. Bredesen signed Public Chapter 1008 that gave municipalities in Tennessee the choice of moving their local elections to correspond with an August or November general election without having to go through the process of changing their charters. TCA 6-31-102 also gave those municipalities once chance to return to the election cycle defined by their charters by ordinance.

In Dickson County, the towns of Charlotte, White Bluff, Burns, Vanleer and Slayden changed their municipal elections to hold them in conjunction with the countywide ballots. The City of Dickson was one of 74 Tennessee municipalities that chose to keep the election cycle established in its charter.

During the recently completed 110th General Assembly, a placeholder bill identified as HB 2265 and SB 2146 was amended late in the session to force those 74 municipalities to change their election dates.

Nobody, including our own legislative delegation, contacted myself or any other official with the City of Dickson to consult or even alert the city to this pending legislation. It appears the Tennessee Municipal League and other organizations representing the interests of municipalities also had no warning and only caught wind of the potential legislation long after the deadline for filing bills.

I sent letters to Dickson's legislative delegation expressing opposition to the change and the Dickson City Council passed a resolution opposing the proposed legislation on March 5, 2018. Copies of Resolution 2018-8 were sent to Dickson's legislators and members of the Senate State and Local Government Committee the day before the bill was scheduled for debate.

In the letter and resolution, a copy of which is included, the City of Dickson expressed its opposition because:

- It would eliminate local autonomy and pre-empt local decision-making. In 2010, the legislature gave municipalities the option to change the election cycles and left that decision to the local councils, commissions and boards who are elected to and best equipped make those decisions for their constituents;
- It has already created voting problems. Since the other municipalities in Dickson County changed their dates, there have been numerous instances of voters begin given the wrong ballots and in several of these instances the mistake was not caught until the ballot was cast, meaning it could not be corrected;
- It could lead to confusion unique to our city. The City of Dickson is located in Dickson County, which leads to constituent confusion over the different jurisdictions and functions of city and county government. This is a constant educational process with government services and I can only imagine that it will be worse if the City of Dickson and Dickson County are on the same election cycle.

I ask you to allow the people elected by the citizens of the City of Dickson to make this decision for their constituents. Let local leaders make local decisions. Please reject any effort to revive these bills when the 111th Tennessee General Assembly convenes in January 2019.

Sincerely,

Don L. Weiss Jr., O.D.
Mayor