

Revised. I am proposing to add one new sentence, which is in bold.

The almost daily onslaught of public challenges to the board of commissioners by the district attorney is something that's unprecedented in my 35 years at this Courthouse, first as a reporter whose primary beat was county government, then for the past 18 years as a commissioner.

In my time as commissioner, I have reviewed and acted on hundreds, and possibly thousands of position requests from all county departments, including those managed by elected officials. As the district attorney has conceded, we have the power to set the overall budget and establish individual department budget but argues that we do not have the power we have exercised for years—to review requests for new or significantly revised positions.

As was mentioned a few minutes ago, we consult with the Human Resources, our attorneys, and our insurance carrier to make sure a position does not raise potential legal liability issues for the county. We also make sure that the position does not duplicate services already offered by other county departments. These are necessary and proper reasons for the board to exercise this role.

In one of her daily social media posts, the District Attorney says she will not be silenced. I find that an ironic statement given her ongoing social media onslaught and two front page articles in the Newport News-Times are proof that no one can silence an elected official, and no one has attempted to do so. **Similarly, I will not be silenced by daily attacks, innuendos and rumors, or by threats of criminal prosecution.**

I mentioned earlier that I've never seen a situation like this in Lincoln County government before, but I have seen it happen in other counties. Usually, no matter who launches the first volley, everyone suffers, including the people we have sworn to serve. Even though I'm concerned about that, I will continue to defend the integrity of this board and the appropriateness of our actions.