

Letter to the Editor: Local Control Works — Let's Keep It That Way

The recent report from Governor Reynolds's Iowa Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) shows a poor example of streamlining government, combining county offices like the Treasurer and Recorder. While it may sound efficient on paper, those of us who work closest to Iowans know this plan would do just the opposite. History shows that consolidating elected offices rarely saves money.

Local government already *is* the most efficient level of government. It's where you can walk into an office, talk to a real person who lives in your community, and typically leave with what you need in hand, whether that's a vehicle title, a marriage certificate, or a recorded deed. What takes mere minutes at a county office could take weeks or even months when routed through a state agency.

While the report talks of redundancy between the County Treasurer's and Recorder's offices, there is none. Each serves distinct, specialized functions that support one another but do not overlap. The Treasurer manages county finances, property taxes, and vehicle registration, while the Recorder safeguards your most personal and permanent records like births, marriages, deaths, and property titles.

Over the past decade, Iowa's county recorders and treasurers have led the way in modernizing government. From online property tax websites to the Recorder ran Iowa Land Records sight, we have implemented online systems that streamline local government. Local leaders want to innovate and want to become better, and we do that by working within our associations to be stronger together.

County offices are reliable, accountable, and accessible because they're run by elected officials who answer directly to the people they serve. When a mistake is made or a new idea emerges, the response is immediate. That's the beauty of local control, it's government with a face, not a waiting line. It's government that costs you, the taxpayer, a few dollars a year to have quality, accountable, and transparent service.

Having a full slate of local elected officials and keeping them accountable every step of the way is the best guarantee of a government that is fiscally responsible, transparent, innovative, and responsive to its people.

Local control works. Let's keep it that way.

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