

May 14, 2025

Appomattox County Board of Supervisors  
153-A Morton Lane  
P.O. Box 863  
Appomattox, VA 24522

RE: Selective Disabling of Comments on Official County Facebook Page

Dear Members of the Board:

I am writing to formally express concern regarding the Appomattox County Board of Supervisors' practice of selectively disabling comments on specific posts on the County's official Facebook page. Such selective censorship raises significant First Amendment concerns, as outlined by clear and binding legal precedent within the jurisdiction of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals.

In the landmark case *Davison v. Randall*, 912 F.3d 666 (4th Cir. 2019), the Fourth Circuit explicitly held that social media platforms operated by government entities or officials for the purpose of official communication constitute designated public forums. As such, any viewpoint-based restrictions—including selectively disabling public commentary—violate First Amendment protections.

Given this clear guidance, the County's current practice of enabling comments selectively, while simultaneously disabling them on other posts, represents viewpoint discrimination. This practice undermines transparent governance and restricts constituents' lawful right to engage in open discourse concerning governmental activities.

Moreover, the U.S. Supreme Court's recent decision in *Lindke v. Freed* (2024) reinforces the obligation of government entities to operate official social media pages under the stringent standards of the First Amendment, explicitly prohibiting the selective suppression of public commentary based on content or viewpoint.

Accordingly, I request the following:

1. Immediate cessation of the practice of selectively disabling comments on the official Appomattox County Facebook page.
2. Retroactive reinstatement of public comment capabilities on all previously posted content where comments have been disabled.
3. Establishment and publication of clear, content-neutral guidelines governing public interaction on the County's social media platforms, in accordance with constitutional standards.

Transparency and accountability in public discourse are foundational principles of our democratic system. I am confident that Appomattox County shares these values and will take prompt corrective action.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. I look forward to your timely response.

Respectfully,



**Nathan Simpson**  
Publisher  
The Appomattox Times