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For Immediate Release

01/04/2019

Re: Misleading and uninformed

Ford County, Kansas – The Ford County Board of County Commissioners would like to address the citizens of Ford County regarding the latest direct quotes from the ACLU in news/press articles dated 01/02/2019 and 01/03/2019.

As with the previous press releases and information provided by the ACLU, the latest information is intellectually dishonest, intentionally misleading and uninformed.

It is a fact that the County has paid \$70,000+ for legal fees in defense of the ACLU's legal action against Ford County Clerk Debbie Cox.

- 1) It is intellectually dishonest to present the thought that County Clerk Debbie Cox is choosing to pay legal fees only using tax funds as if there are other funds to choose from.
- 2) It is misleading and uninformed to present the statement that County Clerk Debbie Cox chose to pay legal fees over voter operations.
- 3) It is misleading to present information as if the County filed the lawsuit and is choosing to expend taxpayer dollars.
- 4) In spite of the ACLU's lawsuit having questionable legal merit, the ACLU continues to pursue it and, as a result, places Ford County in the position of continuing to expend taxpayer dollars to defend the claims of the ACLU.
- 5) It is misleading and uninformed that the ACLU has taken the position that the county clerk does not have the statutory responsibility for elections on behalf of the citizens as opposed to private special interest groups such as itself.
- 6) It is misleading and intellectually dishonest for the ACLU to present their claims to the citizens of Ford County as if they do not have basis in political motivation as opposed to legal merit.

The ACLU has strategically chosen legal action over other alternatives in place to hold elected officials accountable. Accountability is clearly not the primary purpose of the ACLU. For example, a representative from the ACLU has never attended a public meeting of the Board of County Commissioners to voice concerns about how elections are conducted in Ford County. The ACLU has not made any attempts to understand local county government organizational charts or budgeting processes. The ACLU has instead chosen to grandstand by commencing and now continuing costly litigation and those costs are directly paid by tax funds.

Throughout this process, the County has continued to stay dedicated and focused on service to the citizens of Ford County and we continue to thank all of you for your continued support.

On behalf of the Ford County Board of County Commissioners,

J.D. Gilbert, B.S., M.B.A.
County Administrator and Public Information Officer

The Mission of Ford County Government is to build on our heritage, prepare for the future and provide quality services to our citizens.