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## Election Day confrontation

LOCAL NEWS 1

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Stokes County emphatically chose political outsider Donald Trump for president giving him 75.85% of the local votes on Nov. 8.

But Steven Hewett, an outspoken atheist and community activist, has no interest in boarding the Trump train. On Election Day, he proudly gripped his "Veterans against Trump" sign as people made their way into the American Legion building in King to cast a vote.

Mid-morning a Chevrolet truck driven by Ronald Shouse of Pfafftown charged at Hewett on two separate occasions, the second time hitting his knees. Shouse was charged with one count of assault with a deadly weapon and one count of careless and reckless driving.

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The following day, King Police Department served Hewett with a criminal summons charging him with one count of disorderly conduct for his reported actions and behavior at the election polls, prior to the incident involving Shouse. Hewett's court date is set for Nov. 30.

King American Legion Commander Don Holland said Hewett's sign and actions didn't reflect the views of the legion.

"He has every right in the world to display what he wants, but in front of an American Legion building with a sign like "Veterans against Trump" doesn't belong there."

Hewett believes the summons, issued by a legion member and not the police department, is an attempt to discredit what actually happened at the polling station.

"The police department didn't file any charges against me because I did absolutely nothing wrong."

Hewett said it wasn't his intention to stir up controversy on Election Day, he was merely politicking for his candidate, exercising his right under the constitution.

"I was at a polling station with my sign "Veterans against Trump" with a Hilary Clinton sign above it. I don't give up that right just because I may not fit into the mold of these other people. I live in an area where people don't like Democrats."

People have accused Hewett of "baiting" members of the legion, in part because he came to the polling station wearing a body camera.

"The reason why I wear a body camera is that previous years when I've been at the polling station people have said I've said things when I have not," he explained. "I'm a well-known activist in the community for standing up for religious freedom and that's everybody's religious freedom, not just one segment of society. I've been accused of many things by people in this community."

Some people also questioned how the media picked up the story so quickly.

"The media was contacted by the democratic chairperson for Stokes County. He contacted the media, who in turn contacted me. In fact, I wasn't too concerned about getting it onto TV, that wasn't something I was looking to do."

Hewett said he couldn't discuss the incident in detail because of the pending case set to be heard in court on Nov. 30, but the truth would come out soon.

"People are really vicious right now saying 'He got charged and he's a trouble maker'. The video will vindicate me 100 percent."

Ironically, Hewett is a card-carrying member of the American Legion and said although he doesn't support them 100 percent, he supports a number of their causes.

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