

Speaking up is not agitation

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In a social media post, the Lake Township supervisor referred to residents who attend and speak at meetings as agitators. That's a serious charge, and it deserves a closer look.

An agitator is usually someone paid to stir things up – an outsider with no real stake in the community. That's not who's filling the seats at township meetings. The people showing up to meetings aren't strangers. They're neighbors. They own homes here. They raise kids here. They pay taxes here. They drive on the same roads, deal with the same zoning decisions and live with the results of township policies long after the gavel comes down and the room clears out. They're not clocking in. They're clocking out – leaving work early, missing dinner, juggling other obligations just to be there. That's not agitation. That's civic responsibility.

When the supervisor labels concerned citizens as agitators, it shifts the focus away from the questions being asked and onto the people asking them. Instead of addressing issues, it dismisses them. We've seen this play out on the national level, disagree with those in charge and you get labeled instead of listened to. Township meetings exist so residents can speak freely, even when it's uncomfortable. They're not meant to be quiet or convenient. Debate and disagreement come with the job.

Lake Township doesn't have a problem with agitators. It has a problem with leadership (lack of). It has residents who care enough to show up, speak up and hold their local government accountable. And that's not a threat to this community – it's one of its strengths.

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