



CITY OF TOPEKA

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To: Senate Committee on Senate Federal and State Affairs
From: City of Topeka, submitted by Amanda Stanley, City Attorney
Date: February 12, 2024
Re: SB 373 Written Opposition Testimony

Thank you Chairman Thompson for allowing the City of Topeka to submit written opposition testimony to SB 373 which would ban the use of public funds for lobbying.

The City of Topeka actively monitors legislation and testifies on bills that help our local citizens and help save taxpayers money. Our lobbyist makes us aware of bills that would not be good for the City or its citizens. Just this week, we testified in opposition to a piece of legislation that would likely cause our city to need five new full-time employees. We testified in favor of a bill that would help in domestic violence prosecutions. Last year, we introduced a bill on common consumption, something our citizens are very excited about. We also introduced a bill eliminating the five-day mandatory jail time for driving on a suspended license because it was fundamentally unfair and had a disproportionate impact on our low income citizens. All of this would not have been possible without our lobbyist being there to guide the legislation.

Lobbying allows legislators to understand how proposed legislation will impact all citizens and that should not only come from special interest lobbyists, but also, from the local government leaders that can help legislators understand direct and indirect consequences of proposed bills before they become law. To do that, we need someone that understands the legislative process and monitors the day to day. Cities are dealing with numerous issues. There are times I am in meetings from the second I get up until well after 5 pm. Then there are the hundreds of emails. It is simply not possible to monitor the numerous moving parts without a professional lobbyist.

Thank you for your consideration. We would ask that the committee not pass this bill to the full Senate.