

February 12, 2024

To: Kansas Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs  
From: Americans for Tax Reform  
Re: **Support SB 373**

Dear Senator,

On behalf of Americans for Tax Reform and our supporters across Kansas, **I urge you to support SB 373, which will prevent local government entities from spending public funds to influence state legislative outcomes.** This much needed reform will serve as a shield for taxpayers who would rather not be forced to pay for the big-government priorities of government agencies and municipalities.

**Far too often, the biggest proponents of higher taxes are those whose salaries are funded by those very same taxes.** Indeed, the practice of taxpayer-funded lobbying only exacerbates government waste, as higher government spending is nearly always in the interest of a public entity and its paid representatives. Taxpayer-funded lobbyists also tend to support more governmental regulation that accrues more power to their own municipality, school district or agency. **Too often, taxpaying families and businesses are left footing the bill for not only the increased spending and regulations, but the lobbying responsible for its success.**

Taxpayer-funded lobbying by cities, counties, and school districts is rampant. **Local government entities have become the largest spender of lobbying dollars in several states, spending more money on contract lobbyists than many unions, corporations, and industry associations.** A 2020 audit [revealed](#) that 63 Kansas lobbyists received well over \$1 million in tax dollars to lobby on behalf of state agencies, local governments or associations tied to government activities. On top of that, \$5 million in state and local funds went to Kansan associations that lobby the state or federal government. Meanwhile, California local governments spent [\\$24.3 million](#) on contract lobbyists through the first six months of 2017, an average of \$135,000 of taxpayer money per calendar day. These figures constitute an unacceptable misappropriation of tax dollars.

**Although taxpayer-funded lobbying is wildly unpopular among the general population, most taxpayers are unaware that their city or county government is spending thousands of dollars every year on contract lobbyists.** Details of lobbying contracts are not well-publicized and are not transparent. Many cities do not disclose the dollar amounts of lobbying contracts, and many states do not require detailed public disclosure. Data on taxpayer-funded lobbying is not widely available for most states, making the actual scope of the issue difficult to communicate to the public.

**There is no reason why the government should spend taxpayer money to lobby itself when local governments and other entities already have advocates in the form of elected officials.** As Thomas Jefferson put it, “To compel a man to furnish funds for the propagation of ideas he disbelieves and abhors is sinful and tyrannical.” **For these reasons, ATR strongly urges you to support SB 373 and put an end to lobbying at the taxpayers’ expense.**

Sincerely,



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