



January 28, 2026

Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 314 Senate Federal & State Affairs Committee

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

The Northeast Johnson County Cities of Mission, Merriam, Prairie Village, Roeland Park, and Westwood Hills oppose SB 314. We appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on SB 314, which prohibits the use of local assets in support or opposition of state constitutional questions or state or local ballot initiatives. In short, SB 314 infringes on local decision-making on questions of importance for municipalities and their citizens and unnecessarily attempts to restrain the content of information made available to the public.

Current law restricts engagement regarding the "...nomination, election or defeat of a clearly identified candidate to state or local office." The new language is much broader, targeting any effort "*to promote or oppose the adoption or repeal of any provisions of the Constitution*" or any state or local ballot question.

We believe SB 314 would result in ambiguity and increase the likelihood for misinterpretation. As it relates to local questions, the elected officials of that unit of government by necessity are responsible for explaining, detailing, and presenting a proposed ballot question. Is a levy for a new courthouse not described by its benefits, efficiencies, and contribution to the operation of local government? Similarly, is the renewal of a sales tax dedicated to street and road improvements not described through the process of identifying and quantifying specific needs? Could these descriptions be rebutted by potential critics who argue the language is promoting an issue?

We support our elected leadership and administration's capacity to truthfully and accurately explain ballot questions. We trust our communities' capacity to thoughtfully consider and respond to ballot questions based on identified needs for new water treatment facilities, parks, streets, or other resources critical to the provision of quality local government services. An accurate and detailed description of a project and its benefits is not partisan.

We oppose the imposition of the limitations in SB 314 as unnecessary and subjective. In the absence of a deep and obvious legacy of municipalities' misuse of the process, we do not believe the need for change exists, and thus respectfully request the Committee oppose this bill.

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