



*Associations Advance Kansas*

To: House Elections Committee

Date: March 14, 2012

Subject: **SB 102:** Neutral on Current Language Increasing Certain Fees Charged by the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission

Chairman Schwab, and members of the House Elections Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Vicki Whitaker, and I am the executive director of the Kansas Society of Association Executives (KSAE). Previously, KSAE was opposed to Senate Bill 102, however, the society has changed its position to neutral based on the amendments that were added by the Senate Committee of the Whole. These amendments to the bill made the increases in fees for candidates, political committees and lobbyists more equitable.

KSAE is a professional society with the primary mission of promoting professional excellence in association management. In doing so, an important role of KSAE is to provide information and resources to state legislators on behalf of the trade associations, professional societies, corporate entities and charitable organizations/causes represented by KSAE-member professionals.

As a starting point, KSAE would like to emphasize its strong and unqualified support for the primary mission of the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission of enforcing the state's statutes and regulations and protecting and promoting the public trust in state and local governmental entities in the state of Kansas. Faced with continually declining appropriations from the state general fund over the last few years, KSAE certainly recognizes and appreciates the fiscal strain this has placed on the Commission in executing its responsibilities.

KSAE's neutrality is based on the candidate, political committee and lobbyist fees proposed in the current version of the bill. KSAE would like to point out that the proposed lobbyist fees are still high when compared to surrounding states fees.

- Kansas (Proposed Fee under **SB 102**): \$400 annual fee
- Kansas (Current Fee): \$300 annual fee
- Nebraska (Current Fee): \$200 annual fee
- Oklahoma (Current Fee): \$100 annual fee
- Colorado (Current Fee): \$40 annual fee
- Missouri (Current Fee): \$10 annual fee

Any increase in lobbyist fees has the potential of "pricing out" some citizen lobbyists. KSAE appreciates the fact that the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee heard our concerns and modified the fees to be charged. The current proposed fee schedule should provide the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission with adequate revenue and mitigate any negative and harmful impact on those associations, constituencies and organizations registered with the Commission.

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**Kansas Society of Association Executives**

PO Box 4790 \* Topeka KS 66604 \* 785.234.0155 \* Fax: 785.234.2522 \* email: [ksae@sbcglobal.net](mailto:ksae@sbcglobal.net) \* website: [www.ksaenet.org](http://www.ksaenet.org)

KSAE also appreciates the following commonsense modifications to the statutes and regulations that were amended into the bill. These include:

1. Changing the lobbyist employment and expenditures reporting date from the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month. This change will enable more time for lobbyists, during the session, to compile their reports.
2. Dropping the requirement to file a report at the end of the year if the lobbyist previously filed an affidavit of intent to expend an aggregate amount of less \$100 in each reporting period and has not exceeded that amount.
3. Allowing individual lobbyists to report the aggregate amount or value of expenditures made to a single special event while the primary sponsor or sponsors of the event shall itemize such expenditures.

In closing, KSAE appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on this bill on behalf of its membership. In tight economic times, the Society realizes that fee increases are necessary in order for the Kansas Governmental Ethics Commission to carry out its mission.