

CITY OF SHAWNEE

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SENATE ETHICS AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE HEARING ON SB 368

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 368 on behalf of the City of Shawnee

By Katie Killen, Assistant City Manager
February 4, 2016

Honorable Chair and members of the Senate Ethics and Elections Committee:

Current state law already prohibits a City from promoting or opposing ballot questions. Extending this prohibition to providing educational information to the public is a disservice to residents and promotes an uninformed electorate. The City of Shawnee has several concerns regarding SB 368 as follows:

- In the age of increasing demands for more open government, it is the duty of cities to provide information to residents. This is especially crucial when it is information that led their elected officials to put ballot measures to a vote.
- The bill has broad reaching language when it uses phrases such as “or cause to be distributed” and “other documents.” Simply publishing a staff report that led to the decision could be construed as a violation of this bill or for that matter fulfilling an open records request.
- Finally, the City of Shawnee Governing Body has adopted a statement supporting local control. This bill takes away local governments’ decision to provide the public valuable information regarding a ballot issue.

For these reasons, the City of Shawnee is opposed to SB 368. Thank you for your time and consideration.

