WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Senate Bill 373

**On behalf of the
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas**

**Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
February 12, 2024**

Good morning Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee:

My name is David Johnston, County Administrator for the Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, Kansas (UG), and I am presenting this written testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 373, which prohibits the use of public dollars for lobbying activities. If this bill is enacted, local governments, such as the UG, will be significantly disadvantaged by not being able to communicate our local needs to the Kansas Legislature, state agencies, and the federal counterparts.

Every legislative session there are dozens of bills that are considered by the Legislature that impact local government. Our experience at the UG has been that legislators want to hear from us as to how these measures would affect the services that we deliver to our citizens. We view ourselves as a partner with the State of Kansas and the federal government. We can best serve our citizens by working together and listening to the concerns that exist at every level of government.

The State of Kansas employs a lobbyist in Washington D.C. because there are many decisions being made by the federal government that impact our great state. Local governments need to be able to employ lobbyists and engage in lobbying activity for the

very same reason. We want to bring value to the legislative process and believe that we have done so for many years. Please allow us to continue our partnership with you so we can best serve the people of Kansas and Wyandotte County. For these reasons, I ask that you not act favorably on this bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to present the UG's perspective on this important issue.