



Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee  
February 12, 2024  
SB 373

Kansas Association of Counties  
Opponent Testimony

Chairman Thompson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for allowing the Kansas Association of Counties to offer testimony in opposition to SB 373, which would prohibit the use of public funds for lobbying purposes.

Counties are stewards of public money. The Kansas Association of Counties (KAC) and its member counties take that responsibility very seriously. Because counties carry out a multitude of state functions, including Public Health ([KSA 65-201](#)), Emergency Management ([KSA 48-929](#)), Solid Waste Planning ([KSA 65-3405](#)), Law Enforcement ([KSA 19-801a](#)), Jails ([KSA 19-1901](#)), Roads and Bridges ([KSA 68-501 et seq.](#)), Noxious Weed Eradication ([KSA 2-1315](#)), Election administration ([KSA 25-124](#)), Real Property Tax Collection ([KSA 19-515](#)), Personal Property Tax Collection ([KSA 19-515](#)), Property registration and recordkeeping ([KSA 19-1204](#)), Criminal Prosecution ([KSA 19-703](#) and [KSA 22a-104](#)), Coroner Services ([KSA 22a-226](#)), District Courts ([KSA 20-301](#)), Mental Health Services ([KSA 65-211 et seq.](#)), Flood Control ([KSA 19-3301 et seq.](#)), and Property Valuation ([KSA 19-425](#)), it is important that counties and county officials have a voice in how policy surrounding these issues is shaped.

Any inefficiencies created by policy that does not consider the real-world implications of that policy costs taxpayers money. That is poor stewardship of such a precious resource. It should be noted that Kansas law already requires that any lobbyist that receives public funds disclose that in their lobbyist reports, which are available online. As a result, KAC is transparent about its use of these funds, as well as how the Association testifies on legislation.

SB 373 harms transparency. Counties and county officials have important information regarding the impact of bills before the Kansas legislature. To prevent this information from being presented deprives not only the legislature of that information, but also deprives the people of Kansas of that same information. Transparency is intended to make sure that the electorate is informed. Preventing local officials from providing that information to legislators unless specifically requested would leave the public uninformed about those issues, as well as leaving the legislative record incomplete.

Further, this would prevent local government officials from advocating for their local area on things like local consult at KDOT and other legislative or executive activities unless specifically requested because the definition of lobbying includes “promoting or opposing in any manner action or nonaction” of the legislature, executive or judicial branch ([KSA 46-225](#)). This broad ban could hurt local communities, particularly those that are far from Topeka, where citizens are not as well positioned to advocate for more state highway funds and other additional resources for the community. This could hurt communities,

particularly smaller communities, where local government officials are often the organizing force behind these movements.

SB 373 may, on its face, appear to save taxpayer funds, but it would ultimately hurt local communities, legislative information, and government efficiency. We ask the committee not to advance this legislation. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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