



City of Galena



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The Oldest Mining Town in Southeast Kansas
1877

RE: SB 316 Chairman and Committee members,

As clerk for the city of Galena, I value the policy and structure of strong local government. True to the beliefs of great Presidents such as Abraham Lincoln and Ronald Reagan, The People are best served by an individual or collective group of individuals acting in the best interest of their community in order to maintain a flexible, quick reacting environment for their community to prosper. This must be done in an organized, civil manner, which is why we have city and county governments to react to both opportunities as well as challenges that are unique to our specific communities. SB 316 would remove the ability to react quickly to opportunities we have to grow and/or maintain competitive atmosphere for economic development and necessary services for our citizens.

As you are aware, Kansas is struggling to compete in recruiting new residents and businesses due to benefits other states have to offer such as having infrastructure in place to handle growth for their economies.

Kansas communities by and large, have infrastructure systems in place that are well over 50 years old, and in many instances, 100 years old. Add to this challenge the fact that most fee funded services cities and counties have been able to provide such as water, sewer, electric generation and trash service by past generations have been privatized (and rightfully so), we must rely on mostly general fund dollars generated by ad valorem tax revenue in order to maintain and grow our communities. This effort is made even more difficult as unfunded mandates continue to be levied upon us as elected government officials from federal and state levels abdicate their responsibilities under the pretention of allowing "Local Control", while at the same time tying our hands from the tools granted us by those very governing bodies, that allow us to address these mandates.

Local Governments have the same, as Thomas Jefferson called them, self-correcting powers called elections, as does every other level of government in our great country. Our governing bodies are based on sound principles and policies set forth by our founders, who believed in strong local powers. Local elected officials and community leaders have the best interest of their communities at heart, they are closer to the issues and to the people of those communities, and they are held responsible by living directly with the results of the decisions they make.

SB 316 is bad policy. It is nothing more than big government putting further controls and costs on locals by removing exemptions to restrictions (just put into Statutes last year!) and accelerating the time frame that was also part of law recently enacted.

In closing, Chairman and Committee members, I feel that if you truly believe in local control and strong local government, you will not advance this proposal and instead delete the 2015 supplement to the Kansas Statutes that created these restrictions on local government.

Sincerely,

Flora R Charles
City Clerk