KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Testimony of the Kansas Association of Counties
To the Senate Committee on Ethics and Elections
Neutral on Senate Bill 42 (Lobbying Reporting)

February 5, 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

Senate Bill 42 adds new reporting requirements to disclose public funds paid for the services of a lobbyist. The bill also adds definitions for “public funds,” “government entity,” and “lobbying.” Reports from this bill would be open records. Similar legislation arose last year in this committee—Senate Bill 343—a bill that eventually died in the House. The original bill prompted strong opposition from the Kansas Association of Counties and our members. We did, however, work closely with Chairman Holmes to craft a bill that improves transparency without creating undue burden on local government. This year’s bill, SB 42, offers the same policy changes as last year’s substitute (Substitute for SB 343). SB 42 does impose new requirements for municipal record keeping, which is why KAC offers neutral testimony on the bill.

KAC is ever mindful of the need for open and accessible government, as it is a foundational component of effective government. SB 42 pursues the goal of transparency in a balanced manner, which is why KAC is not objecting to the new requirements for locals. KAC is available to provide additional information regarding this bill and its impact on counties. Thank you for your consideration of KAC’s testimony on SB 42.

Respectfully,

Nathan Eberline, Legal Counsel