



TESTIMONY

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS

SB 373

By: Manuel F. Ortiz, City Mayor, City of Garden City, KS
On behalf of the City of Garden City
February 12, 2024

Opposition

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on behalf of the City of Garden City in opposition to SB 373, which seeks to prohibit the use of public funds for lobbying.

One of the primary reasons for our opposition to SB 373 stems from the geographical constraints that our municipality faces. As a city situated in southwest Kansas, we encounter significant time and distance challenges when it comes to actively participating in legislative matters in Topeka. The journey to the state capital is lengthy and requires considerable time and resources, making it difficult for us to effectively engage in the legislative process.

It is crucial to recognize that municipalities across the state, especially those located in remote areas like ours, rely on lobbying efforts to advocate for the needs and interests of our residents. Lobbying serves as a vital tool for ensuring that our voices are heard, and our concerns are addressed by state lawmakers. By restricting the use of public funds for lobbying, SB 373 would severely impede our ability to effectively represent the best interests of our community before the state legislature.

Furthermore, it is essential to understand that lobbying is not synonymous with wasteful spending. Rather, it is a strategic investment that enables municipalities to navigate the complexities of the legislative process and advance policies that promote the well-being and prosperity of our constituents. With increasingly more legislative business being conducted with short-notice hearings and conference committee negotiations, the ability for the City of Garden City to contract for representation services during the session is far less expensive than hiring a full-time staff member and providing them room and board in Topeka for five months.

In conclusion, I urge you to reconsider Senate Bill 373 and recognize the critical role that lobbying plays in facilitating meaningful dialogue between local governments and state policymakers. By preserving our ability to engage in lobbying activities, you will ensure that municipalities like Garden City can continue to actively participate in shaping the

Manuel F. Ortiz
Mayor

Roy Cessna
Commissioner

Bryce Landgraf
Commissioner

Tom Nguyen
Commissioner

Troy R. Unruh
Commissioner

Matthew C. Allen
City Manager

City Administrative
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future of our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Manuel F. Ortiz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

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Mayor

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