

To: Senate Transparency and Ethics Committee

From: John Goodyear, General Counsel

Date: March 15, 2023

RE: Neutral Testimony on SB 301

I want to thank Chairwoman Bowers and the members of the Committee for affording the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on SB 301.

SB 301 would expand upon current state law regarding statements of substantial interest filed by local government officials. The bill will make the filing of such statements an annual obligation of individuals holding elected offices at the local level. Current law only requires annual updates if something changed in the year prior. The framework SB 301 would modify was passed in the early 1990's and has gone largely unchanged since then. The current statutes have worked. By requiring disclosure of personal and business interests of government officials and requiring recusal when voting on contractual matters, we have avoided actual and apparent improprieties. It is the League's belief that this law works and is not in need of immediate change.

That being said, the proposed change already reflects what the League recommends as best practice for our member cities. Sometimes it can be difficult to remember the continuing obligation created by this act, so it has been our recommendation and the practice of some cities to file these forms annually. While the bill technically does create a new obligation on cities, it is probably worth it if it can help one individual holding public office to avoid unintentionally running afoul of the Act.

We are grateful to the Committee for allowing the League to submit testimony on this bill. We ask that SB 301 remain in its current form if it is advanced favorably by the Committee.