

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF
JIM RICE, SEWARD COUNTY COMMISSIONER
TO THE SENATE ETHICS, ELECTIONS AND
LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
RE: SENATE BILL NO. 109
FEBRUARY 11, 2013**

Dear Chairman Pyle and Members of the Committee;

My name is Jim Rice and I serve on the Seward County Board of County Commissioners. I apologize that I am unable to be before you today in person. I wanted you to have my written comments opposing this measure as you consider Senate Bill No. 109.

In regard to Senate Bill No. 109, prohibiting public money being used for payment of dues to an association engaged in lobbying, the bill may at first seem a great idea, however after carefully considering the consequences to many counties and cities particularly in the western part of the State, I have second thoughts and oppose the bill.

Two reasons for my opposition are:

1. Seward County cannot send a commissioner or other county representative to Topeka on each and every issue on a moments notice throughout the legislative session. As you all know very well, for those that live in our area it is at least a multi-day trip for a hearing that lasts an hour. If we have a professional representative in Topeka, we can rely on them to attend a hearing, report back to us and make personal contacts as necessary in usually less time than driving to Topeka.
2. A professional representative in Topeka saves Senators and Representatives valuable time and effort by providing information from one united voice on issues that impact several county commissions within a legislative district.

I have heard several times, "why do we need a lobbyist, when we have elected representatives to work for us". You and I both know there isn't the time and sometimes the expertise to sift through each and every piece of legislation introduced and changed throughout the session to be able to determine the impact to the residents of my county and the constituents of your legislative district.

Yet it is very important we as a county or city be represented, and you be informed on the possible impacts or proposed legislation. Our professional representatives in Topeka provide us guidance and insight on a daily basis, something that we can't get on our own, 350 miles away.