



What is a community advocate?

- Community advocates **represent the taxpayer** and advocate on behalf of communities at the direction of municipal leadership.
- Community advocates are **experts**. They help mayors, city council members, and other municipal representatives navigate the complex legislative process.

Why do cities benefit from community advocates?

- Community advocates provide the necessary support to ensure **local interests are supported at the Capitol**. Over 7,500 bills are filed each session. Community advocates help locally elected officials review and process each one.

Why not leave it to leadership?

- Not all mayors or locally elected officials have the ability to read every single bill that impacts communities. They need consultants to help. Community advocates are tools in their toolbox to **help them advocate effectively**.
- While mayors and other elected officials have relationships with lawmakers. It's important to have **boots on the ground** when things are moving fast during session.



By banning community advocates, you participate in community censorship.

- Restricting community advocates from meeting with legislators means **communities can not be adequately represented** at the Capitol.
- This is restriction of speech for communities and those who are democratically elected to represent them. Banning this type of advocacy is a **silencing of the voices of legislators' constituents**.

Threatening the spirit of public service

- Texans are encouraged to run for office to further the interest of their community. Elected officials are volunteers for the public good. Removing tools for their advocacy efforts is **undemocratic and against the public good**.

Cost ineffective and inefficient

- Censorship raises cost for communities. Communities, just like businesses, engage professional experts because they bring a specific skill set to the table and create a more streamlined system.



"One size fits all" does not work for Texas

- Because of the unique characteristics of each city, county, and all other political subdivisions, community advocates are needed to appropriately **represent constituents and their needs.**
- **Our patchwork of cities through Texas is what makes our state great.** What works in East Texas doesn't necessarily work in El Paso - and we embrace that fact.
- The diversity of our **state preserves the rich heritage** that most lawmakers are proud of.

Leave decisions at the local level

- Local officials were elected to represent communities' unique interest. State interference of local decision-making **undermines the whole idea of local elections and representation.**

Examples:

- Plastic bag bans
- Short term rental regulations
- Environmental ordinances
- Water ordinances
- Oil and gas ordinances
- Crisis ordinances

RESOLUTION

Resolution in Opposition to SB234/HB749 Efforts to Silence County or Municipal Officials

WHEREAS, S.B. 234/H.B. 749 filed in the 87th Texas Legislature would prohibit county or municipal funds from being used to join and support nonprofit city associations that provide collective communication to state legislators; and

WHEREAS, most Texas cities do not engage private lobbyists and only provide a minimal portion of membership dues to nonprofit city associations for legislative communication; and

WHEREAS, “taxpayer funded” lobbying by local governments accounts for less than 10% of total lobbying activity, while corporate and special interest lobbying interests make up 90% of total lobbying activity; and

WHEREAS, the State of Texas, the Texas Legislature, and state agencies actively employ large numbers of taxpayer funded lobbyists to analyze and monitor the thousands of bills filed each legislative session and to advocate for its interests in Washington, yet these bills would deny local communities this same ability while continuing public support of state agency lobbying; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting Texas cities from retaining experienced representation before federal and state legislative bodies and agencies would place our communities at a disadvantage in efforts to obtain and retain federal and state projects and military bases; and

WHEREAS, city officials require the ability to express our positions and information through associations, form a unified voice on the issues important to our communities, and share the association costs among all cities; and

WHEREAS, it is a false claim that taxpayer funded lobbying works against the interest of taxpayers. Indeed, a priority of city government and its “lobbying” effort is focused on ending the state and federal practice of passing unfunded mandates, which impose billions of dollars in increased taxes upon local property taxpayers annually; and

WHEREAS, smaller cities especially need to be able to combine their resources through their associations to monitor the thousands of bills filed each legislative session and effectively present their unique issues to the state and federal government; and

WHEREAS, the prohibition in S.B. 234/H.B. 749 would violate the basic principle of open and robust discussion and turn the halls of the Texas capitol into a one-sided conversation dominated by special interests.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that city of Mineola hereby expresses their opposition to S.B. 234/H.B. 749 and its attempt to silence the combined voices of the city officials and local communities of this State.

Passed, Approved and Adopted this 1st day of March, 2021

Kevin White, Mayor

Attest:

Cindy Karch, City Secretary