

JW

OPPOSITION TO SB 234/HB 749 EFFORTS TO SILENCE COUNTY OFFICIALS

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

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

WHEREAS, "tax payer 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 interest in Washington, yet these bills would deny local communities this same ability while continuing public support of state agency lobbying; and

WHEREAS, prohibiting Texas counties 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

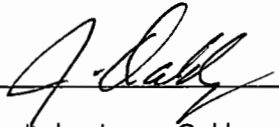
WHEREAS, county officials require the ability to express our positions and information through associations, form a unified voice on the issues important to our communities, and share the associated costs among all counties; and

WHEREAS, it is a false claim that taxpayer funded lobbying works against the interest of taxpayers. Indeed, a priority of county 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 counties 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

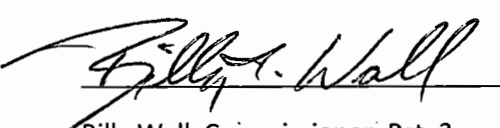
WHEREAS, the prohibition in S.B. 234/H.B. 749 would violate the basic principle of open and robust discussion and turn the halls of the Texas Capitol into a one-sided conversation dominated by special interests.

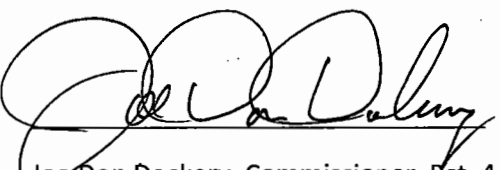
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the undersigned officials of Burnet County, Texas, do hereby express their opposition to S.B. 234/H.B. 749 and its attempt to silence the combined voices of the county officials and local communities of this State.


Judge James Oakley


Jim Luther, Commissioner, Pct. 1


Damon Beierle, Commissioner, Pct. 2


Billy Wall, Commissioner, Pct. 3


Joe Don Dockery, Commissioner, Pct. 4

Attest:


Janet Parker, County Clerk