

RESOLUTION NO. R-030821-3

Resolution relating to the Opposition of Texas State Legislature (2021, 87th Regular Session) Bills to-wit: Senate Bill (SB 234) and House Bill (HB 749), by the City Council of the City of Port Lavaca on behalf of its residents.

WHEREAS, SB 234 and HB 749 filed in the 87th Texas Legislature (2021) would prohibit local government funds from being used to join and support nonprofit associations that provide collective communication to state legislators; and

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

WHEREAS, "taxpayer-funded" lobbying by local governments account for less than 10 percent of total lobbying activity, while corporate and special interest lobbying interests make up 90 percent 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 local governments 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, local government 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 cities and other local governments; and

WHEREAS, it is a false claim that taxpayer-funded lobbying works against the interest of taxpayers. Indeed, a priority of local 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 local governments 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 SB 234 and HB 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 the City of Port Lavaca do hereby express their opposition to SB 234 and HB 749 and its attempt to silence the combined voices of local government officials and local communities of this state.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 8TH DAY OF MARCH, 2021.

Jack Whitlow, Mayor

ATTEST:

Mandy Grant, City Secretary