

## **Opposition to SB234/HB749 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 lobbyists and only provide a minimal portion of membership dues to nonprofit county 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 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

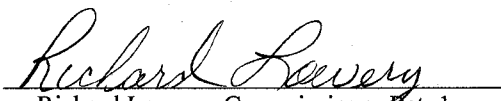
**WHEREAS**, smaller counties especially need to be able to combine their resources through their associations to monitor the thousands of bills filed each legislative session and effectively present their unique issues to the state and federal government; and

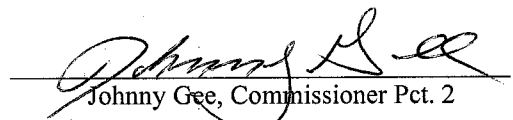
**WHEREAS**, the prohibition in S.B. 234/H.B.749 would violate the basic principle of open and robust discussion and turn the halls of the Texas capitol into a one-sided conversation dominated by special interests.

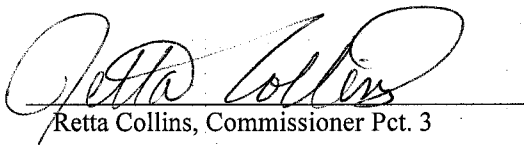
**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the undersigned officials of Clay County do hereby express their opposition to S.B. 234/H.B. 749 and its attempt to silence the combined voices of the county officials and local communities of this state.

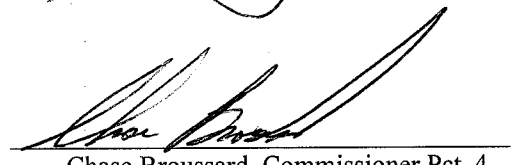
PASSED AND APPROVED this the 8th day of March 2021.

  
Mike Campbell, County Judge

  
Richard Lowery, Commissioner Pct. 1

  
Johnny Gee, Commissioner Pct. 2

  
Retta Collins, Commissioner Pct. 3

  
Chase Broussard, Commissioner Pct. 4

ATTEST:   
Sasha Kelton, County Clerk

