

Friday, January 24, 2025

Chairman Warrey and House Industry, Business, and Labor Committee Members,

Transparency in government is a cornerstone of our Century Code – as evidenced by our strong open record laws; and I applaud the desire to prevent public funds from being used for direct political gain. This bill, however, is far too broad in its scope to be supported and would be detrimental to many of our beloved associations and organizations.

As written, state agencies would no longer be able to fiscally support trade associations and organizations that have made a political statement about a bill – either in support or opposition – in the last 10 years regardless of intent or focus. These associations often play a vital role in our professions - providing workforce training, networking and collaboration opportunities, and building a sense of community. They are broadly seen as positive influences across the state and have broad public support.

In the case of the Library Association (the one I am most familiar with), school librarians receive continuing education credit by attending the annual conference - providing a vital service to our profession. If this bill were to pass, libraries would no longer be able to financially support sending staff and state agencies such as the State Library or the University System would be barred from sponsoring this local conference. Without that financial support, the conference would likely no longer be financially sustainable, leaving the state's school librarians with one less option in an already limited list of options to continue learning and best supporting our schools.

Furthermore, I question the '10 year lookback' clause as being unconstitutional; as trying to pass a law ex post facto. Article 1, Section 18 of the State Constitution states “No bill of attainder, ex post facto law, or law impairing the obligations of contracts shall ever be passed.”

While I am no lawyer by any means – one could potentially see a free speech issue with the State effectively suppressing an association's voice by

assessing a penalty for ex post facto behaviors. This may or may not be the case, but I would anticipate lawsuits and legal friction if this bill were to pass as-is.

Larger organizations with far more members such as Chambers of Commerce, Farm Bureau, Farmer's Union, the League of Cities, and so many others would be in a similar situation as the library association where many attendees of their meetings and supporters are public sector workers and come from political subdivisions such as ag extension offices, city and state government, and public schools. I suspect finding their local associations having to limit their activity and potentially cease operations after decades of organization and good will in the communities they serve would not be a winning political stance.

I strongly urge you to reconsider this bill and voice your opposition to 1141.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Concerned citizen and taxpayer.

Jason Bedsaul