



TEXAS MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

Empowering Texas cities to serve their citizens

President **Allison Heyward**, Councilmember, Schertz
Executive Director **Bennett Sandlin**

February 27, 2025

The Honorable Bryan Hughes
Chairman, State Affairs Committee
Texas State Senate
PO Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711-2068

Dear Chairman Hughes:

I am writing on behalf of the Texas Municipal League (TML) to express our opposition to **Senate Bill 19** by **Senator Middleton**. As filed, S.B. 19 would expressly prohibit a political subdivision from spending public funds to hire a professional advocate. It also would prohibit a political subdivision from joining a nonprofit state association or organization that contracts with a professional advocate. In our view, this will prevent local officials from being able to effectively advocate for our residents on important issues that impact their daily lives.

The City of Schertz is one of TML's 1,175 Texas member cities. TML provides services which individual cities have neither time, money, nor strength to do alone. It provides training for city officials and employees on the many different topics we deal with on a daily basis. It provides legal assistance to city officials on matters of municipal law. It facilitates low-cost access to a wide array of subject matter experts and information. In short – TML gives us the tools to help us better serve those who call our cities home.

In addition to these valuable services, TML's legislative staff and attorneys review the thousands of bills filed each session (over 5,100 so far this session), provide us with legal analysis of thousands of bills that have a potential impact on cities, and keep us informed on the status of these bills as they work their way through the legislative process.

City officials depend upon professional advocates who are experts in municipal law, just like we depend upon engineers and contractors who are experts in designing and building water systems and roads. We don't have the time, the knowledge, or the training to do it ourselves. TML's legislative and legal staff do this for us by collecting feedback from city officials and staff across the state and presenting it to legislators and state officials in an effective manner. This type of communication requires TML's legislative and legal staff to register as lobbyists. S.B. 19 would prevent TML from being able to provide legislators with local input on critical issues facing our state.

Nearly 85 percent of the League's membership has a population under 10,000 people. Our small cities and towns, individually, cannot afford to hire the legal and legislative expertise needed to analyze, track, and provide input on thousands of bills during a legislative session. TML's staff is

critical for them to make their voice heard at the Capitol. S.B. 19 will hurt all cities, but it will hurt these small towns the most.

The Texas Legislature will tackle several monumental issues this session—water, public safety, affordable housing, closing the digital divide, and critical infrastructure needs. These are not uniquely state-level issues. They're also local issues. Local leaders have a valuable perspective on these vital topics that needs to be heard. S.B. 19 would harm our ability to meaningfully participate in the statewide discussions that keenly affect local governments and the communities we represent.

Please vote against S.B. 19.

I hope this information is helpful to you. Please contact me with questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allison Heyward". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Allison" and last name "Heyward" clearly distinguishable.

Allison Heyward
President, Texas Municipal League
Councilmember, City of Schertz