

By: Middleton

H.B. No. 77

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT
2 relating to the use by a political subdivision of public funds for
3 lobbying activities.

4 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

5 SECTION 1. Chapter 556, Government Code, is amended by
6 adding Section 556.0056 to read as follows:

7 Sec. 556.0056. RESTRICTION ON USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS BY
8 POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS FOR LOBBYING ACTIVITIES. (a) A political
9 subdivision may not spend public funds:

10 (1) to hire an individual required to register as a
11 lobbyist under Chapter 305 for the purpose of lobbying a member of
12 the legislature; or

13 (2) to pay a nonprofit state association or
14 organization that:

15 (A) primarily represents political subdivisions;
16 and

17 (B) hires or contracts with an individual
18 required to register as a lobbyist under Chapter 305.

19 (b) If a political subdivision engages in an activity
20 prohibited by Subsection (a), a taxpayer or resident of the
21 political subdivision that engages in the prohibited activity is
22 entitled to appropriate injunctive relief to prevent any further
23 activity prohibited by Subsection (a) or any further payments of
24 public funds related to the prohibited activity.

1 (c) A taxpayer or resident who prevails in an action under
2 Subsection (b) is entitled to recover from the political
3 subdivision the taxpayer's or resident's reasonable attorney's fees
4 and costs incurred in bringing the action.

5 SECTION 2. Section 81.026, Local Government Code, is
6 amended to read as follows:

7 Sec. 81.026. COMMISSIONERS COURT MEMBERSHIP ON
8 ASSOCIATIONS AND NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS. A county judge or county
9 commissioner may serve on the governing body of or any committee
10 serving an association of counties, including a nonprofit state
11 association or organization, except that the county judge or county
12 commissioner may not spend public funds to serve on the governing
13 body or committee or to otherwise join or become a member of the
14 association of counties in violation of Section 556.0056,
15 Government Code ~~[created or operating pursuant to the provisions of~~
16 ~~Section 89.002]~~. A county judge or county commissioner may serve as
17 a member of any board of trustees or board of directors or other
18 governing body of any trust or other entity created pursuant to
19 interlocal contract for the purpose of forming or administering any
20 governmental pool, self-insurance pool, insurance pool, or any
21 other fund or joint endeavor created for the benefit of member
22 counties and political subdivisions. In addition, a county judge
23 or county commissioner may serve as a member of the board of
24 directors of any nonprofit corporation that is created and exists
25 solely for the purpose of providing administrative or other
26 services to such trust or other entity. A county judge or county
27 commissioner, acting as a member of any such board or committee, may

1 perform any act necessary or appropriate for the rendition of such
2 service, including the casting of votes and deliberations
3 concerning and execution of contracts or claims with or against any
4 county. A county judge or commissioner may participate in
5 deliberations concerning and cast any vote on any matter before the
6 commissioners court affecting the execution of any contract with or
7 the payment of claims, premiums, dues, or contributions to any such
8 trust, association, nonprofit corporation, or entity or any related
9 matter.

10 SECTION 3. Section 89.002, Local Government Code, is
11 repealed.

12 SECTION 4. Section 556.0056, Government Code, as added by
13 this Act, applies only to an expenditure or payment of public funds
14 by a political subdivision that is made on or after the effective
15 date of this Act, including an expenditure or payment of public
16 funds by a political subdivision that is made under a contract
17 entered into before, on, or after the effective date of this Act. A
18 contract term providing for an expenditure or payment prohibited by
19 Section 556.0056, Government Code, as added by this Act, is void on
20 the effective date of this Act.

21 SECTION 5. This Act takes effect on the 91st day after the
22 last day of the legislative session.