



Legislation Text

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Approve Letter of Opposition to House Resolution (HR) 29 (Gomez): Pledges Affecting Future Legislation

The League of California Cities sent out an Action Alert requesting letters of opposition to HR 29 (Gomez). Information provided in the League e-mail is as follows:

Background

Last week Assembly House Resolution 29 (Gomez) was introduced and states that the Assembly opposes “outsourcing of public services and assets.” The resolution is aimed at restricting local ability to contract out for services. The resolution includes a clause that local cities should familiarize themselves with, “The Taxpayer Empowerment Agenda,” which is also linked to a group called “In the Public Interest”. The sheer number of websites and affiliated organizations linked to this resolution raises a number of red flags.

This resolution does not have the force of law, but legislators that are asked to vote on this are committing themselves to a pledge to vote on such future bills. Not only is this resolution harmful in its content but this resolution is designed to frame future votes before legislators know the details of actual legislation and local impacts.

Quick Facts for HR 29 (Gomez):

Recently introduced HR 29, which contains resolved clauses stating legislative opposition to “outsourcing public services and assets,” is aimed at restricting local ability to contract out for services, threatening the very mission of local governments to provide vital local services in an efficient and economical way. Taxpayers rely on their local officials to wisely invest their hard-earned money. Contracting with other local agencies to utilize public employees for a variety of services, and contracting for specific services or expertise is a long-standing option that local governments have used effectively for many years.

HR 29 attempts to lock legislators into votes without the real details to make an informed decision. While HR 29 does not have the force of law, it asks legislators to pledge to oppose outsourcing of public services and assets then later refers to legislation that the “Assembly intends to introduce and advocate for.” Such efforts to frame future votes before legislators know the details of actual legislation and local impacts undermine the democratic process and representative government, because legislators lose the opportunity to make an informed decision about the specific impacts of legislation.

Retaining flexibility in how to deliver quality services to residents is pertinent to quality of life in California. Local governments have a long history of addressing service delivery challenges with creativity, self-reliance and innovation. In the late 1800’s, California cities banded together to share strategies over road rollers and the electric light. Since then, unique local challenges and limited budgets continue to fuel innovative efforts to obtain expertise and provide high quality services. Many services are provided by city employees, while others such as refuse collection, construction, and specialized services are provided on a contract basis. Law enforcement services may also be provided via contract with the sheriff and fire and park services by a special district.

HR 29 is unfavorable for California's business climate. At a time when many businesses are leaving the state and devastating local communities, efforts to close off opportunities for innovation and cost-effective service delivery options will only discourage a healthy business climate. This is not to mention that in the end, less competition from innovative companies and providers will ultimately mean a decrease in the quality of services provided to residents.