

## Financial Disclosure of Special-Interest Lobbying

WHEREAS, it has become self-evident that in a democratic society, checks and balances to disclose sources of undisclosed financial influence seeking to influence public process are necessary for that society to exist as a functioning and thriving democracy;

WHEREAS, left unchecked, undisclosed sources of influence in a public decision-making process such as exists within the ideals of our democratic society can, through design or negligence, create results not intended or set forth to promote the interests of a democratic process and society but instead to promote a significantly narrower field of interests;

WHEREAS, when such narrower interests are allowed to perpetuate unchecked, ultimately, the results are a society not enhanced by design through an open process that seeks to promote individual expression and enhance collective achievement but instead eroded through inaction and a lack of appropriate stewardship by undisclosed interests which, in seeking to influence public process through misdirection, end up disseminating misinformation and harming our society in the name of limited, self-interested gains;

WHEREAS, a fair and appropriate balance between the viewpoint that the freedoms of speech and expression as reflected by the expenditure of financial resources to advocate for particular positions or perspectives ought be protected and the viewpoint that such freedoms are also not appropriately unlimited is to require, especially when such freedoms are exerted in an effort to influence public governmental process, that the sources of such financial influences be disclosed to the public;

WHEREAS, a stronger, safer and more effective democracy means that the body politic has available within its sources of knowledge, and for the purposes of its consideration, the identity of the people, groups or entities setting forth financial resources for the purpose of influencing the democratic decision-making process;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the United States Conference of Mayors supports efforts to promote and encourage the disclosure of financial sources for the expenditure of funds which are meant to influence public discourse and process in our communities and society, at all levels of government, from the public governance structures of our localities to our counties, to our states and to the federal government, such that the electorate has the benefit of this prerequisite to the fully formed conversation needed to allow for the fair and accurate consideration of viewpoints in our democracy.