Assembly Bill 315
Local Government: Lobbying Associations: Public Funds
Assemblymember Cristina Garcia (D – 58)

PROPOSAL

Assembly Bill (AB) 315 limits the moneys paid to or otherwise received by an association from a local agency or district member of the association, and would prohibit an association of local agencies or districts from expending those moneys for any purpose other than to present information regarding legislation that the legislative body or the district deems to be beneficial or detrimental to the local agency or district. Specifically,

(1) An association shall not expend the moneys for any purpose other than those activities described above;
(2) The association shall publicly disclose any expenditure of the moneys described, including a description of the activity funded;
(3) As association of local agencies subject to this shall not incur any travel-related expenses except as may be necessary for the association to hold an annual conference or other gathering.

BACKGROUND

After numerous reports of inappropriate behavior during a raucous event sponsored by the California Contract Cities Association were brought to light, AB 315 was introduced to bring government transparency to California. The California Contract Cities Association, and other agencies and special districts, receive thousands of dollars every year in dues. These dues are mostly used for training of their memberships and lobbying at the state and local level. However, the California Contact Cities Association does not currently have a registered lobbyist in Sacramento to lobby on behalf of their causes.

PROBLEM

Taxpayers expect their money to be used responsibly and for there to be transparency, both at the state level and in their local governments. This transparency should extend to these local government lobbying organizations. These groups are extensions of governments and therefore the taxpayers themselves – who expect governmental activities to result in educational enrichment, not spring break. Thus, AB 315 was introduced as a way to provide transparency and accountability of taxpayer dollars. Specifically, AB 315 would limit how associations, which are funded by moneys from local governments or special districts, can expend funds. This legislation also limits the associations of local agencies or districts from using funds paid from local agencies for purposes that are not for lobbying the Legislature or Congress or strictly educational activities. This legislation would also require the associations to disclose funds expended for educational activities and lobbying activities. Through AB 315, the disclosure of funds will be posted in a transparent manner that the public can easily access.

STATUS

Two-year bill, to be heard in January 2020.

CONTACT

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