



# Ohio Municipal League

*Our Cities and Villages ★ Bringing Ohio to Life*

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May 13, 2016

Dear Governor Kasich,

The Ohio Municipal League is writing today to urge you to exercise your veto power with regards to House Bill 180, which would forbid local governments from imposing geographic-based hiring preferences in the performance of local construction projects.

House Bill 180 is the epitome of special interest legislation.

Geographic-based employment rules are an entirely local government issue. Their effect is almost entirely localized to the community these decisions are made in. Rarely, if ever, do the hiring policies on a local construction project effect the entire state of Ohio. Local councils are made up of people who live in these communities and these individuals are the ones who either benefit or suffer directly from the decision they made.

A law that forbids geographic hiring requirements is a law that strips the right of local leaders to put their own communities first. It allows special interests to enter a community and —under the protection of Ohio law—engage in practices that subordinate that community's interest to their own interests.

Ohio's cities are one of the state's primary drivers of economic growth. Local leaders and businesses build our economy one project at a time. Ohio's cities and villages have thousands of people actively working every day with businesses worldwide. No state agency can replace what these local officials and businesses do. The state legislature should not be allowed to interject itself into these local issues and choose special interests over local communities.

Not only are local leaders best postured to make these decisions, but our cities are entirely competent to make these decisions (even if certain interest groups and state policy-makers do not like their decision). There is no evidence that geographic-based hiring preferences increase project costs, but even if they did, that is a local decision. Some localities may be willing to accept higher construction cost, given their cost/benefit analysis—again, that is their decision to make and they have to live with the consequences. Further, the state has a long-established reputation of being untimely and unresponsive to unique local issues (which was the premise for JobsOhio, which has helped reverse that problem).

One example, in the context of geographic-based hiring requirements, is the extensive public hearings and testimony held by the City of Cleveland before enacting geographic hiring policies. This city concluded that they had the necessary talent pool. The city concluded that their construction projects would only be enhanced by these policies. And the city concluded that the people of the city would benefit. Members of the General Assembly are never going to conduct such research for every local community.

Further, it is not legally appropriate for the General Assembly to substitute its judgment for that of local communities when wholly local issues are at stake. The Ohio Constitution recognizes this in Article 18. Ohio is a home-rule state because of the General Assembly's historic failings in micro-managing local policy.

This was a highly politically charged bill in the General Assembly process. As you know, this issue has been highly partisan, as the votes on this bill were nearly entirely party-line.

We respectfully ask for your veto on House Bill 180.

Sincerely,

Kent M. Scarrett

Executive Director

Ohio Municipal League

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