RESOLUTION No. 2-2016
Opposition to Public Act 269

WHEREAS, Governor Snyder signed into law, with immediate effect, Public Act 269 (Senate Bill 571) despite widespread calls for a veto of this bill, including from members of his own party; and
WHEREAS, both the Michigan Senate and the Michigan House of Representatives passed Senate Bill 571 late into the night of December 16, 2015, just prior to recessing for the year; and
WHEREAS, one of the last minute amendments made to Senate Bill 571, without the knowledge of the Michigan Municipal League or other local government organization, and approved without any public testimony or awareness, was the new language inserted into Section 57, subsection (3); and
WHEREAS, this new law prohibits a public body, or a person acting for a public body, from using public funds or resources for the purpose of communicating any information to the electorate regarding a local ballot question that is to appear on the ballot, within 60 days of an election, and
WHEREAS, this law places an immediate gag order on entities with ballot questions on the March 8 ballot and every election thereafter; and
WHEREAS, municipal elected and appointed officials have a civic and legal duty to the residents of their communities to fully inform them regarding the issues placed before them, upon which they may exercise their constitutional right to vote; and
WHEREAS, existing laws, including the former language in Section 57, and decades of guidance from the Michigan Secretary of State, already prohibit the use of public funds to advocate for or against ballot issues; and
WHEREAS, existing laws already provided for an allowance for elected and appointed officials to express their views without fear of violating the act; and
WHEREAS, because the new law bans only communication on local ballot issues, it creates inconsistent treatment of statewide ballot questions versus local initiatives; and
WHEREAS, there are substantial questions regarding the constitutionality and legality of the new law, including a possible ban on freedom of speech;
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Ishpeming calls for an immediate repeal of the new language in Section 57, subsection (3) of PA 269 of 2016; and
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution be forwarded to the city’s state representatives in the Michigan House of Representatives and the Michigan Senate.

Clerk’s Certification:

I do hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution No. #2-2016 was offered by Councilperson Claudia Demarest and supported by Councilperson Justin Koski and same was duly passed at a regular meeting of the City Council, held on January 13, 2016, and that the vote was as follows:

Yeas: five
Nays: none
Absent: none

Mark Slown, City Clerk