

Local Government Lobbying

The city of Red Wing is spending approximately \$50,000 annually for lobbying through its memberships in the League of Minnesota Cities, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, and the Coalition of Utility Cities. Prior to 2001, Red Wing was spending less than \$10,000 annually. A five-fold increase in ten years. (Source: Minnesota State Auditor)

In addition to the annual memberships, the city of Red Wing paid Flaherty & Hood \$62,500 in 2011, and \$70,000 in 2010 for lobbying services.

Local Lobbying Expenditures for 2010:

City of Red Wing:	\$118,891
Red Wing Port Authority:	\$3,000
Goodhue County:	\$24,710
ISD# 256 Red Wing	\$2,362
Total Lobbying	\$148,963

- Minnesota local governments spent a total of \$8,247,933 on lobbying activities in 2010. In 1999, local governments spent \$4,101,192 on lobbying activities.
- Seventy-seven local governments reported that they directly employed staff or hired contract lobbyists in 2010. These local governments spent a total of \$3,936,266 on staff and contract lobbyists. In 1999, fifty-four local governments spent \$2,639,355.
- In addition to the \$4.4 million paid directly to staff and contract lobbyists, local governments paid dues of \$10,540,078 in 2010 to local government associations that also represented their interests before the legislature. These associations spent \$4,311,727 on lobbyists and lobbying in 2010. In 1999, these associations spent \$1,461,857 on lobbying, a threefold increase.

“Taxpayer-funded lobbying—government bodies lobbying other government bodies—distorts the democratic process by supplanting the voice of citizens with that of the state. Instead of interacting with citizen lobbyists, legislators contend with powerful voices from other regiments of government, each clamoring to promote its own interests, which are regularly and demonstrably at odds with citizens’ interests. Lobbying with taxpayer dollars inevitably promotes government growth.”

“Government bodies lobbying other government bodies, presumably for additional money or a change in public policy, has become a popular endeavor. In doing so, government uses taxpayer dollars to pay for advocacy. Therefore, taxpayers are compelled to contribute to pro-government viewpoints and partisan positions with which they often disagree.”

Your Tax Dollars at Work: The Implications of Taxpayer-funded Lobbying.
Goldwater Institute No. 217, January 23, 2007.

Local governments are prohibited from donating directly to political candidates, yet local governments pay dues to associations whose lobbyists make campaign contributions to “friendly” candidates. Expenditures by local government must have a “public purpose.” A local government purpose is not a public purpose.

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