

TO: Members of the Senate Local Government Committee
FROM: Lisa Schaefer, Government Relations Manager
DATE: 10/21/2013
RE: **Support Senate Bill 733**

On behalf of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania (CCAP), representing all 67 counties in the commonwealth, I write to express our support of Senate Bill 733 and ask committee members to vote in favor of reporting the legislation at the Senate Local Government Committee meeting on Tuesday, October 22.

Senate Bill 733 would allow government units, including counties, to publish required legal notices on their official government website instead of a newspaper of general circulation. This bill is part of CCAP's mandate relief agenda through which our members are asking the General Assembly to review and re-visit mandates and statutory provisions that are outdated or unnecessary.

A mandate that local governments advertise legal notices in general circulation newspapers fails to recognize changes in technology and the way in which individuals receive their news today. Counties should have the option to advertise in the way they feel is most responsive to their community's preferences and needs. In fact, counties already are increasingly advertising in special venues, electronic and otherwise – trade publications, electronic billboards, pre-qualified bidding lists – because they are seeking broadest possible response and those formats are better means of access to vendors and contractors than are the legal notices section of the traditional print newspaper. Further, nothing in Senate Bill 733 prohibits a local government from continuing to publish its legal advertisements in a newspaper of general circulation if it feels it is in the best interests of its constituents to do so. Governmental units will have the ability to make a local decision that is the best fit for reaching the public.

Finally, the option to publish legal advertisements online is consistent with what is already allowed under the state procurement code. Under Title 62, Section 512, the method of public notice for invitation for bids may include electronic publication which is accessible to the general public. This was included in the original law when it was enacted in 1998.

In these difficult budgetary times, all levels of government are looking for ways to use limited resources to provide the maximum level of services possible. However, outdated statutory provisions like the requirement to publish legal advertisements in newspapers of general circulation in many counties create additional costs and diverts taxpayer dollars from their most effective use. If existing statutes were updated to reflect today's realities, the result for those counties for which electronic advertising is a better fit for constituents would be an overall savings to counties and taxpayers.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact us if you have questions or need additional information.