



Bob Stephens
Mayor, City of Springfield
MML Board Of Directors

Advocacy is a critical function of the Missouri Municipal League. While I enjoy attending the conferences, keeping up with the latest news, networking with colleagues and serving on the MML Board of Directors, I depend on MML to let me know when it's most critical to contact my legislators regarding a pending piece of legislation.

Threats continue each year to Missouri local government operations. In 2015 alone, MML fought against attacks on our municipal court system, collective bargaining challenges and

SUPPORTING MML ADVOCACY

numerous attempts to chip away at local authority in your city. With the deep pockets of special interest groups, MML is constantly challenged to have the voice of local government heard in Jefferson City.

In response, an advocacy fund was established in 2007 to assist with the high cost of legal analysis, attorney fees, amicus briefs and expert advice. It is an essential tool for MML to be an effective force in the Missouri State Capitol, the courts and in Washington. You can learn more about the creation of the fund on the MML website.

MML is often called upon to use the advocacy fund to serve as a strong united voice on behalf of Missouri municipalities. In 2014 alone, the fund was accessed more than 20 times totaling more than \$160,000, as MML was actively involved in cases regarding red light cameras, the sheriff's retirement fund, wireless telecommunication, vehicle sales tax and many more.

The City of Springfield is proud to assist in keeping the MML Advocacy Fund strong. We believe that when municipalities work together to support a strong local government message, we better the lives of citizens in Springfield and across the state.

A recent settlement regarding a class action suit brought against CenturyLink

suggests that the municipalities involved contribute five percent of the settlement funds they received to MML, to help replenish the advocacy fund used for all cities. The City of Springfield finds great value in the advocacy work MML completes each year, and has taken the opportunity to contribute additional funds, amounting to 13 percent, or \$20,000, of our settlement amount. This funding will help guard against future local government attacks.

The City of Springfield encourages and challenges you to review your own budgets to see how you can support this fund, whether through the recent settlement or via another source.

Local government opponents have deep pockets and many lobbyists to back up their message to Missouri legislators. Their interests, whether personal, corporate or political are attempts to remove or diminish your local decision making and put your citizens at risk of losing their local voice.

Please consider how you can support the MML Advocacy Fund, and make sure your local voice is heard in Jefferson City. □

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