

To the Esteemed Members of the Florida Legislature:

We, the undersigned residents of the Town of Yankeetown petition the Legislature to address the unintended and far-reaching consequences of SB 774 on small municipalities like ours.

While we support transparency and accountability, the current implementation of SB 774 places an undue and potentially damaging burden on our community, threatening our local government itself and silencing the voices of our small town and others across the state.

Unlike the state, counties and cities with larger populations and vast resources, Yankeetown relies entirely on dedicated, unpaid volunteers. These individuals, often juggling full-time careers and families, sacrifice their time and energy to serve without compensation. They are driven solely by a desire to serve their community, not for personal gain. Full financial disclosure can be damaging for successful people who simply want to **volunteer**. It exposes their personal business interests and private lives to unnecessary scrutiny, potentially leading to harassment or even jeopardizing their businesses.

For those reasons, SB774 is unnecessary in a small town and constitutes an undue burden. In Yankeetown, the consequences are already dire and escalating:

- o Two council members have resigned in protest of the onerous burdens imposed by SB 774. If we lose one more we will not have a quorum.

We have an election in April. And so far, no one new has indicated a willingness to run. Ours is not an isolated incident. Small municipalities across Florida are facing similar challenges. The pool of candidates willing to serve for little or no compensation has dwindled markedly or totally disappeared.

The Florida Sunshine Law, mandates transparency in government, does not apply to the Legislature itself. This creates a double standard, placing an unfair and potentially damaging burden on unpaid volunteers at the local level while protecting state legislators from similar scrutiny.

We petition the Legislature to consider the following:

- Streamline disclosure forms, such as Form 1, that maintain transparency while reducing the complexity and intrusiveness of the process, especially for unpaid volunteers.
- Establish clear guidelines to protect the privacy and safety of elected officials and their families from unnecessary exposure.
- **Consider exemptions or modifications to SB 774 for small municipalities with limited resources, unique challenges, and a heavy reliance on volunteerism. possibly implementing exemptions for municipalities who rely on volunteer service.**

Let us not allow SB 774 to stifle the ability of small communities to continue to exist and function. We urge you to reconsider this one-size-fits-all approach and develop solutions that recognize the unique realities of small towns, the dedication of volunteer-driven service, and the potential damage full financial disclosure can inflict on those simply wanting to give back to their community.

Please sign this petition and show your support for small communities, local voices, true transparency in government, and protecting those who want to volunteer without undue risk!

Please share this petition with your Florida friends and family!

Together, we can make a difference!