



Ready-Set-Go Opportunity States: Talking Points

- **Basics of Preemption:** State legislatures are increasingly blocking local governments from passing local laws that benefit local communities.
 - State legislatures used to use preemption as a way of synching up state and local laws. Now state legislatures are abusing preemption and interfering in local lawmaking to keep city and town councils, and county commissions from passing policies that would help middle class and working families.
 - Those policies include minimum wage increases, paid sick leave and other economic, health and safety policies that protect and improve the lives of people.
 - States are increasingly passing “punitive” preemption laws, allowing local mayors, commissioners, and councilmembers to be personally fined, sued by special interests, removed from office by the governor, and even jailed for up to a year — just for just for doing their job – representing their constituents.
- **Trust & Local Control:** People trust local government the most, because they know the government closest to the people governs best and is best able to represent their unique views, values and needs.
 - Follow up: National polling shows local government is the most trusted by a wide margin, compared to state lawmakers and Congress.
 - Follow up: What works for people in a big city might not work best for people in a small town — that’s why local government exists.
 - Follow up: Your local mayor and councilmembers don’t just pass ordinances, they represent your community’s values — you hold them accountable at the grocery store, at church, and at the ballot box.
- **Special Interests:** State lawmakers block local governments from passing common-sense local laws, because corporate special interests and lobbyists convince them to.
 - Follow up: Why? Because special interests want to protect their profits at your expense — and they know it’s easier to influence a few state lawmakers than thousands of mayors and city councils.
 - Follow up: That’s not opinion — 70 percent of voters believe that special interests drive preemption to protect their profits, and they’re right. They just keep putting profits over people.

- **Economy & Regulation:** Every community works differently — that’s why local communities should be able to determine their own economic policies, without state interference.
 - Follow up: Policies are values — if a community wants to pay workers more, make sure they have paid sick leave, help them recover lost wages, and protect them from discrimination, they should be able to.
 - Follow up: This isn’t about stopping a so-called patchwork of local regulations. Companies work with different local, state, and federal business regulations, tax rates, and standards all the time. This is about communities creating local economies that work for the people who live there, and that help local businesses and workers thrive.
 - Follow up: Seattle isn’t Salt Lake City, and Baltimore isn’t Baton Rouge. Every community is different. And two-thirds of voters agree that it hurts local democracy when state lawmakers block local workplace ordinances that help working people.
 - Follow up: The job of state government is to enact state-wide policies — that local governments can build on and tailor to the particular needs and values of their communities and constituents.
- **Local Democracy:** Every time state legislators stop your local community from passing local laws, it undermines democracy and tells you that your needs, your voice, and your vote don’t matter.
 - Follow up: Some say state interference is needed to escape the “oppression” of local control. But don’t we know best what our community needs? Don’t our mayor and city council understand our local values and views better than lawmakers hundreds of miles away?
 - Follow up: If in our community we want better wages, clean air and water, protection from gun violence and discrimination, and a say in the matter — don’t we deserve that right?
- **Gridlock:** Look, Congress and state government just aren’t working. It’s hard to get anything done at the state and federal level, with political infighting and special interest influence. At least locally, we can be heard, demand change, and keep our leaders accountable. Right now, local governments are the main level of government where policies are being passed and implemented.
- **Threat/Real Terms:** This threat is real. This isn’t hypothetical. These state laws blocking local democracy and authority mean lower wages and longer hours, they mean going to work sick, they mean worse air and water quality, they mean fewer jobs for local residents, and they mean more gun violence in our city that we can’t stop. All to protect corporate profits.
- **Why Here/This State:** Changes to your state government after this fall’s elections mean an opportunity to protect local democracy and advance reforms to strengthen home rule.
 - Follow up: Whether or not that happens, we’re doing the groundwork around the potential for change, investing in grassroots organizing, coalition building, legal research, digital targeting, and recruiting and training elected officials and candidates.