

# Strong Cities Strong Texas



City Hall Essentials ' Municipal Fundamentals Seminar  
Centex COG / Belton, TX / December 6, 2019



## To Rein in Cities, Texas Tries to Ban Their Lobbying

When states overrule cities: report finds preemption is spreading

## The Demise of Local Control

Survey finds that Texans are likely to let the state take charge.

## In the Lone Star State, Cities Feel the Heat

Some Texas lawmakers say the state's 'overreach' meddles with their local purview.

## What Do States Have Against Cities, Anyway?

Legislatures regularly interfere with local affairs. The reasons, according to research, will surprise you.

## What Can Texas Cities Do When State Legislators Admit to Hating Them?

## Local Texas leaders have a target on our backs in the Legislature

House Speaker Bonnen confirmed our fears. This must change.



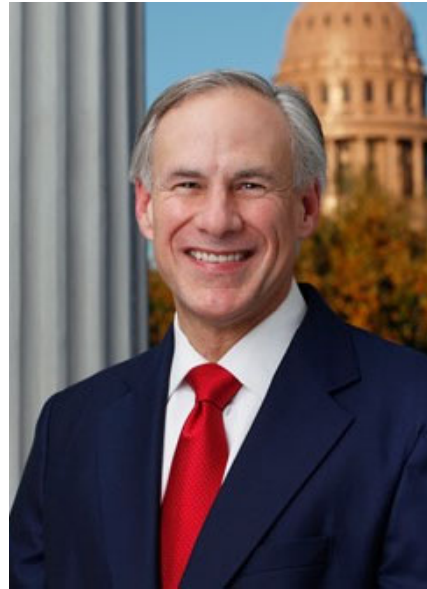
Texas' history is not that of a strong, centralized state government.

The success story of Texas is that of ruggedly independent, unique communities that vary based on geography, industry, culture.

Texas is thriving because Texas cities are thriving.

“I want legislation that ...  
prevent[s] cities from  
micromanaging what  
property owners do with  
trees on their private land.”

– Governor Abbott



“Not only would this ordinance harm  
the ability of Texans to find and keep  
jobs, it is a blatant attempt to silence  
the millions of other voters  
throughout our State who disagree  
with the agenda of urban elites, even  
after the courts have made it clear  
they cannot do so.”

- Attorney General Paxton  
(regarding paid sick leave)



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick:

“People are happy with their governments at the state level.

They’re not with their cities...

Our cities are still controlled by Democrats.”



“any mayor, county judge that was dumb ass enough to come meet with me, I told them with great clarity, my goal is for this to be the worst session in the history of the legislature for cities and counties.”

—Speaker Bonnen





State Rep. Dustin Burrows:  
“I hope the next session’s  
even worse.... We hate  
cities and counties.”

Nationwide states are using preemption laws  
to limit the power of cities and counties to:

- set standards that protect the health and safety of their communities;
- enact policies that increase economic and social equity
- control their own funds, personnel and other resources

## State preemption is also being used to:

- overturn ballot initiatives;
- punish local government and local officials; and
- perpetuate racial and economic inequality.

## As of September 2019:

- 25 states now preempt local minimum wage laws
- 23 states ban local paid sick days laws
- 42 states ban local regulation of ride sharing networks
- 44 states limit local authority to regulate guns or ammunition
- 20 states block or ban municipal broadband networks
- 23 states have banned local control over 5G technology
- 15 states ban local plastic bag bans
- 31 states bar local rent control
- At least 11 states preempt local sanctuary policies
- At least ten states preempt local regulation of e-cigarettes
- At least 9 states preempt local fair, predictable scheduling laws
- Five states have preempted local fair hiring, “Ban the Box” laws
- Four states now ban soda taxes

In Texas, the state government is using Preemption to dismantle municipal authority:

- To generate revenue (e.g., tax caps)
- To grow (e.g., annexation)
- To regulate (e.g., building materials)

## ALEC

- American Legislative Exchange Council
- [www.alec.org](http://www.alec.org)



<https://www.supportdemocracy.org/>

## Local Solutions Support Center

A national hub that coordinates and creates efforts to counter the abuse of preemption and strengthen local democracy.

Our goals are to raise awareness of state preemption and its consequences, reduce the use of this threat to local autonomy, and strengthen the power of local governments to advance policies that promote equity, inclusion, public health, and civic participation.

[www.supportdemocracy.org](http://www.supportdemocracy.org)



[www.nlc.org/resource/new-city-guide-on-preemption](http://www.nlc.org/resource/new-city-guide-on-preemption)

## Best Practices:

- Take responsibility for your relationship with your legislative delegation.
- Don't rely on others to do your job.
- Work to end Legislative bias.
- Communicate with your Sen/Rep during interim.
- Strive for mutual respect and cooperation
- Find a common purpose and build on it.
- Build regional and professional coalitions.

## Best Practices (2):

- Join with non-muni stakeholders of civic / business / special interest groups. Get citizens involved directly.
- Have a Legislative Agenda approved by the City Council.
- *Call / Write / Show Up!* Take action during the Session.
- Keep your citizens informed about (-) pending legislation.
- Explain to your citizens the ill effects of Preemption.
- Work jointly with neighboring cities and your county(ies).
- Hold your legislative delegation accountable.

*Texans deserve cooperation between State & Local leaders!*

**Awareness ★ Involvement ★ Accountability**



**#StrongCitiesStrongTexas**