

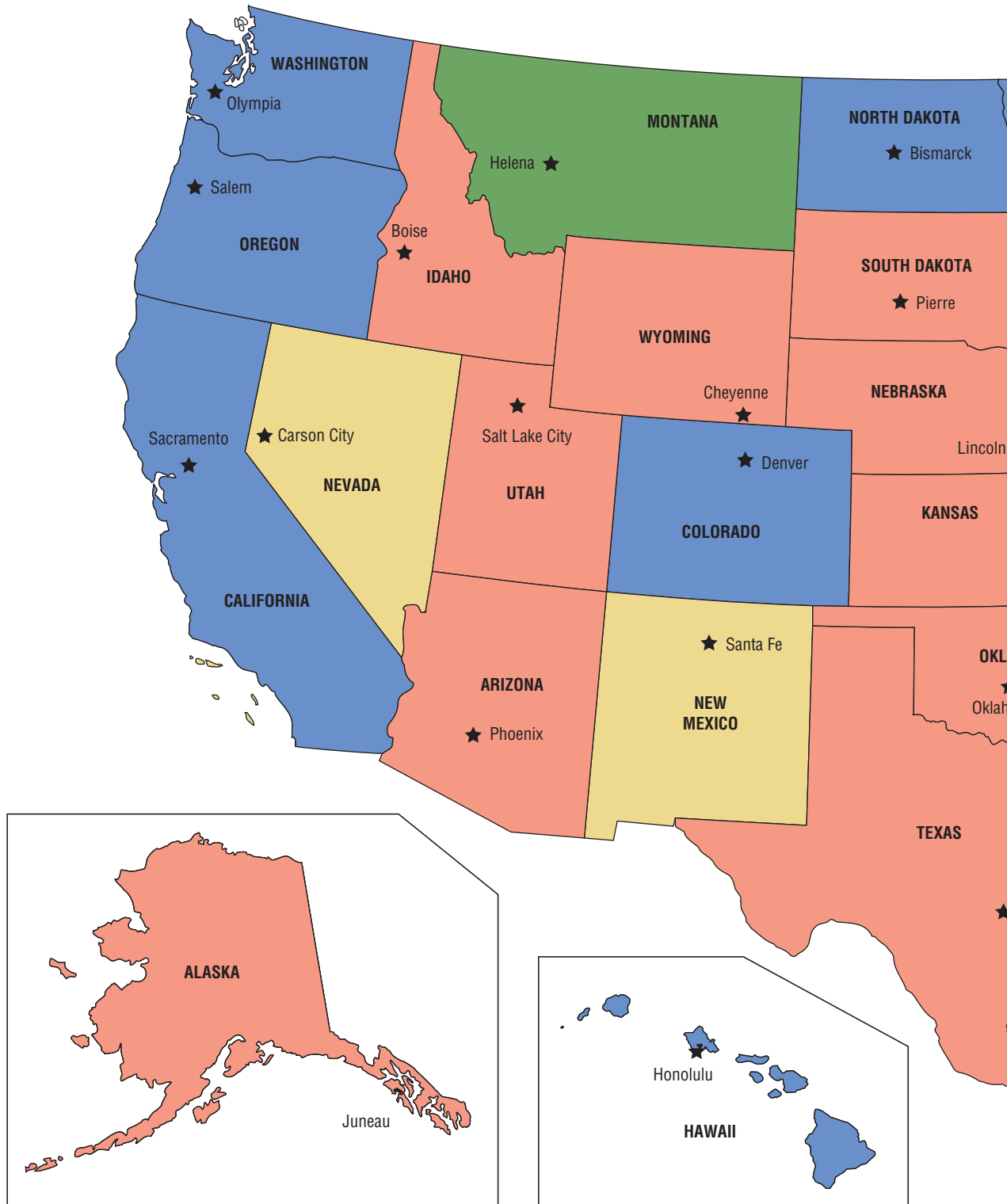
Tenth Edition

State and Local Government

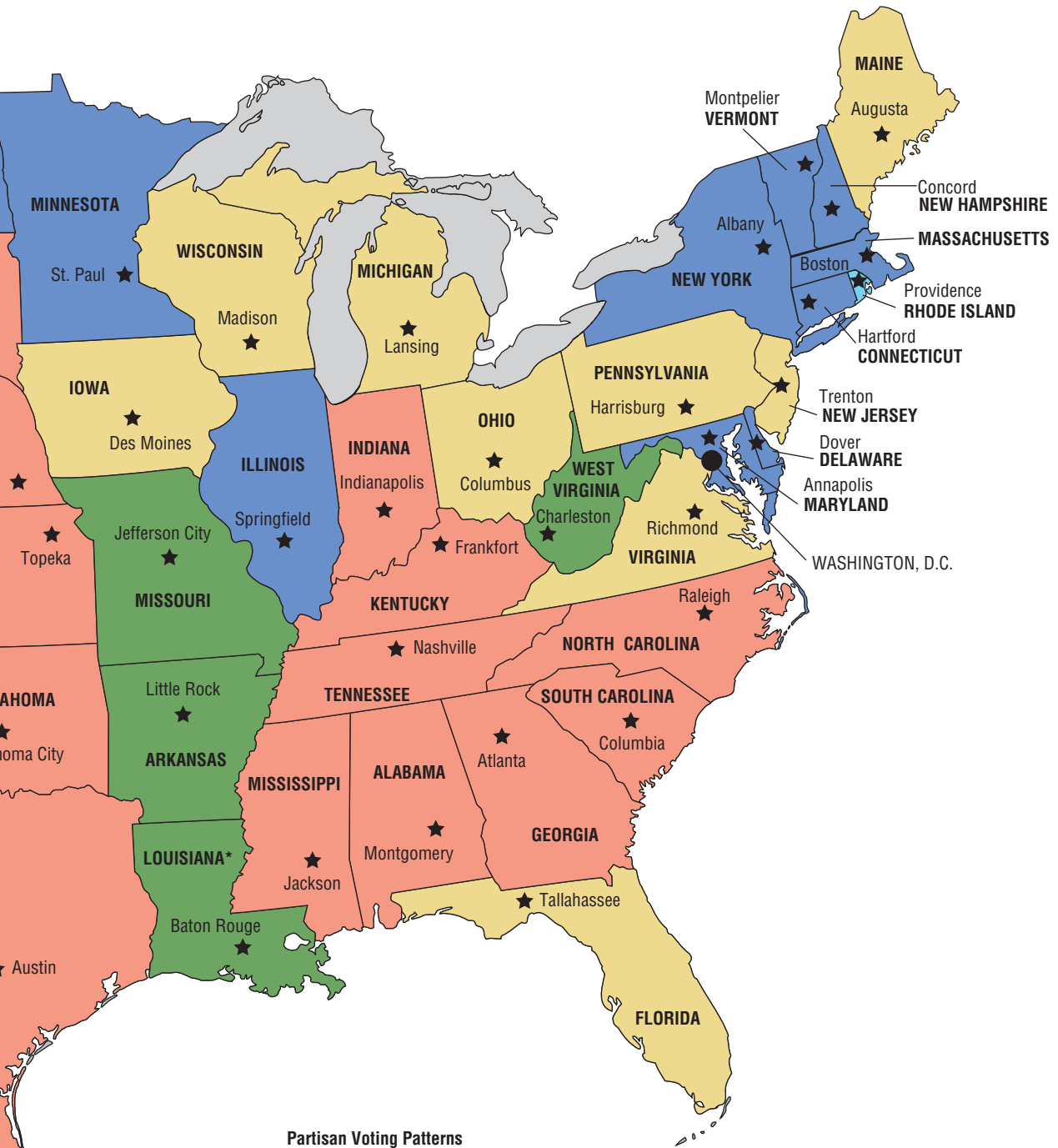
Ann O'M.
Bowman

Richard C.
Kearney





*Data subject to change.



Tenth Edition

State and Local Government

Ann O'M. Bowman
Texas A&M University

Richard C. Kearney
North Carolina State University



Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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**State and Local Government,
Tenth Edition,**
Ann O'M. Bowman, Richard C. Kearney

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Product Team Manager: Carolyn Merrill
Content Developer:
Jessica Wang-Strykowski
Editorial Assistant: Michelle Forbes
Marketing Manager: Valerie Hartman
Manufacturing Planner: Fola Orekoya
IP Analyst: Alexandra Ricciardi
IP Project Manager: Farah Fard
Production Service:
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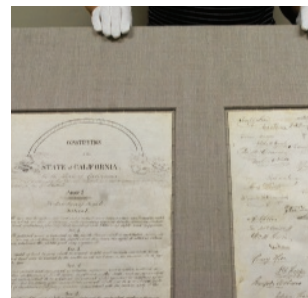
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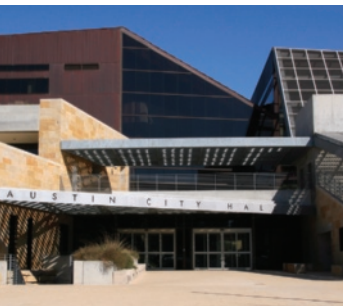
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Preface

If someone had told us in 1990 that the first edition of *State and Local Government* would become what is now widely recognized as “the market leader” and followed eventually by a tenth edition, we would have been doubtful. That first edition broke the mold of traditional state and local government texts by offering a positive, thematic approach to introducing government at the grass roots. We were gratified and delighted when the book quickly built up adoptions in research universities, four-year colleges, and community colleges across the United States. There are quite a few rival texts today, but we like to think that the competition makes ours better. We heartily thank our colleagues in the State Politics and Policy section and the Urban Politics section of the American Political Science Association for their ideas and comments on various editions of this book. And we thank as well researchers, too numerous to mention individually, for their insightful analyses that are published in scholarly journals and inform our latest edition.

The tenth edition of this book was written as important public policy changes were underway in state legislatures throughout the country. The Great Recession was in the rear view mirror, but it had left behind residues of budget problems and policy issues that continue to call for attention. Painful as the Great Recession was, it did present opportunities to use the crisis to make improvements in the way the business of government is done.

Despite the drumbeat of criticism of government and public officials in the mass media and by anti-government talk-show hosts, we like politics and public service, particularly at the state and local levels. We believe that government can be—and often is—a force for good in society. We do acknowledge some of the concerns voiced by critics of government. Yes, there continue to be inefficiencies; and sure, there are some politicians who, once elected, seem to forget the interests of the people back home, not to mention what their parents taught them. But by and large, state and local governments work well. On a daily basis, they tackle some of the toughest issues imaginable, designing and implementing creative and successful solutions to problems ranging from crime and corrections to education and the environment. And they do so with a remarkable diversity of approaches.

In the tenth edition of our text, we again seek to capture the immediacy and vitality of state and local governments as they address the challenges facing the American people. A major goal is to foster continuing student interest and involvement in state and local politics, policy, and public service. Many of the students who read this text will work in state and local government. Some will run successfully for public office. All will deal with state and local governments throughout their lives. We want our readers to know that state and local governments are places where one person can still “do good,” make a difference, and serve a cause. For students who go on to graduate study in

political science, public administration, public policy, or related fields, states and localities are fertile fields for research. And for students taking this course because they “have to” and who purport to dislike politics and government, we invite them to keep an open mind as they explore the fascinating world of politics at the grass roots.

THE THEME OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

This book revolves around a central theme: the growing capacity and responsiveness of state and local government. Our theme was tested during the Great Recession, but not found to be wanting. Despite their many challenges, state and local governments continue to be proactive, expanding their capacity to address effectively the myriad problems confronting their citizens. From Alabama to Wyoming, they are responsive to their rapidly changing environment and to the demands of the citizens.

Our confidence in these governments does not blind us, however, to the varying capabilities of the fifty states and some 90,000 units of local government. Some are better equipped to operate effectively than others. Many state and local governments benefit from talented leadership, a problem-solving focus, and an engaged citizenry. Others do not fare so well, and their performance disappoints. Rank partisanship divides many states as they become increasingly “Red” or “Blue.” Still, as a group, states and localities are the driving forces—the prime movers—in the U.S. federal system. Even those jurisdictions perennially clustered at the lower end of various ratings scales have made quantum leaps in their capability and responsiveness.

FEATURES OF THE TEXT

The themes of *State and Local Government* are supplemented by boxed features that provide compelling examples of nonnational governments in action. The boxes labeled “Controversies in States and Localities” highlight issues that may cause a jurisdiction to venture out on a limb, trying something new. The It’s Your Turn boxes, which are new to this edition, present students with two sides to an issue and ask them to consider their own position.

The **Controversies in States and Localities** features are intended to generate debate and discussion among students. For example, state government responses to the Ebola crisis are featured in Chapter 2, participatory budgeting in Vallejo, California, is explored in Chapter 4, and the effort to get more third parties on state ballots is covered in Chapter 5. Utah’s innovative website that engaged citizens in redrawing legislative districts is the focus in Chapter 6, governors with primarily private sector experience are examined in Chapter 7, and the proposal to split California into six states is the subject of Chapter 12’s Controversies box. Chapter 16 looks at the issue of prison privatization, and mandatory drug testing for welfare applicants is considered in Chapter 17. Each of the Controversies in States and Localities now concludes with a series of critical thinking questions.

The **It’s Your Turn** boxes engage students more directly, by asking them to take a side in a controversial issue. These issues include whether Washington

D.C., should become the 51st state, whether state legislatures should be more professionalized, and whether a state should bail out its financially-stressed local governments. Other It's Your Turn boxes ask students to consider the arguments for and against state governments providing tax incentives to the film industry for filming in their state, cities enacting plastic bag bans, states enforcing strict voter ID laws, and states legalizing marijuana.

Sincere effort has been invested in making this book accessible to the student. Each chapter opens with a series of **Learning Objectives** and closes with a **Chapter Recap** to help structure student learning. The Learning Objectives are now also called out within each chapter, to help students make the connection between each learning objective and chapter content. We have included updated photographs to provide visual images that bring the world of state and local government to life for the reader. Maps, tables, and figures offer an engaging format to assist in the identification of patterns and trends in the data. Many of these graphics are new to or updated for the tenth edition. As noted, boxes throughout the chapters showcase the innovative, the unusual, and the insightful in state and local politics. Lists of states appear in each chapter and facilitate comparisons across the states. **Key Terms** are bold-faced, defined in the margins, and listed at the end of each chapter. References to websites in the end-of-chapter list of **Internet Resources** encourage student curiosity, engagement, and individual research.

THE CONTENT OF THE TENTH EDITION

As in the first nine editions, this book provides thorough and completely updated coverage of state and local institutions, processes, and policies. The chapters blend the findings from the latest political science and public policy research with issues and events from the real world. It is intended to be a core text.

In Chapter 1, we introduce the functions of nonnational governments and explore the theme of capacity and responsiveness. The growing diversity in the United States and the contemporary controversy dubbed “culture wars” are featured in the chapter. Federalism’s central importance is highlighted in Chapter 2, which traces the twists and turns of the federal system, from the scribbles of the Framers to the Supreme Court’s latest pronouncements on the Tenth and Eleventh amendments. The fundamental legal underpinnings of state governments—their constitutions—are discussed in Chapter 3. Chapter 4 explores citizen participation and elections (including the 2014 elections), focusing on the increased access of citizens and the expectations they have for government. Chapter 5, “Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Campaigns,” gets at subnational politics—the fascinating real world of candidates, lobbyists, organizations, and money.

Coverage of the three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—is updated and reflects the institutional changes each branch has undergone recently. The intent of Chapter 6 is to show how legislatures actually work. In addition, responses of state legislatures to the institutional challenge posed by term limits are explored. Governors are featured in Chapter 7, including those who have misbehaved in various ways, and the issue of gubernatorial power is emphasized. Chapter 8, “Public Administration: Budgeting

and Service Delivery,” offers updated coverage of privatization as a strategy for improving government and the delivery of public services, as well as new material on e-government and budget transparency. In Chapter 9, the policy-making role of judges, judicial federalism, judicial accountability, and judicial selection mechanisms are emphasized.

Local governments are not treated as afterthoughts in this book. Two chapters focus solely on localities: Chapter 10 is devoted to the multiple types and structures of local government and Chapter 11 to leadership and governance, including new leadership approaches of mayors and city councils. Subsequent chapters consider localities within the context of the states: Chapter 12 focuses on the political and practical issues linking the two levels—and the resultant tensions between them—and Chapter 13 emphasizes the growing interdependence of state and local financial systems. Chapter 12 specifically tackles the issue of land use and urban sprawl, including New Urbanism approaches. Chapter 13 offers a comprehensive synthesis of the principles and political economy of taxation and spending and an overview of the strategies used by state and local governments to cope with the aforementioned economic crash.

Five policy chapters illustrate the diverse postures of state and local governments in responding to change and citizen demands. The roles of states and localities are different in each policy area. Chapter 14 examines economic development initiatives in the context of interstate and interregional competition for jobs and business. Chapter 15 focuses on the ever-important topic of public education; it includes examples of many of the most recent education reform efforts, including school choice plans, No Child Left Behind, homeschooling, and charter schools. Criminal justice policy is the subject of Chapter 16. Crime statistics have been updated, as have some of the newest initiatives for community policing, law enforcement technology, and criminal data applications. Social welfare and health care policy are featured in Chapter 17. Welfare traps are identified, state programs aimed at plugging the gaping holes in the national health system are examined, and the effects of the Affordable Care Act (“Obama-care”) are explained. Finally, Chapter 18 covers a wide range of environmental topics such as sustainability, waste management, and hydraulic fracturing. Of special interest are some of the success stories in “greening” states and localities.

RESOURCES FOR INSTRUCTORS

Instructor Companion Web Site for *State and Local Government*, 10e

ISBN: 9781305643642

This Instructor Companion Website is an all-in-one multimedia online resource for class preparation, presentation, and testing. Accessible through Cengage.com/login with your faculty account, you will find available for download: book-specific Microsoft® PowerPoint® presentations; a Test Bank compatible with multiple learning management systems; and an Instructor Manual.

The Test Bank, offered in Blackboard, Moodle, Desire2Learn, Canvas, and Angel formats, contains Learning Objective-specific multiple-choice, true/

false, and essay questions for each chapter. Import the test bank into your learning management system to edit and manage questions and to create tests.

The Instructor's Manual contains chapter-specific learning objectives, an outline, key terms with definitions, and a chapter summary. Additionally, the Instructor's Manual features a critical thinking question, a lecture launching suggestion, and an in-class activity for each learning objective.

The Microsoft PowerPoint presentations are ready-to-use, visual outlines of each chapter. These presentations are easily customized for your lectures. Access the Instructor Companion Website at www.cengage.com/login.

IAC Cognero for *State and Local Government, 10e*

ISBN: 9781305642829

Cengage Learning Testing Powered by Cognero® is a flexible online system that allows you to author, edit, and manage test bank content from multiple Cengage Learning solutions, create multiple test versions in an instant and deliver tests from your LMS, your classroom, or wherever you want. The test bank for *State and Local Government, 10e* contains Learning Objective-specific multiple-choice, true/false, and essay questions for each chapter.

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We have incorporated their suggestions into this edition whenever possible.

We also extend our appreciation to our partners at Cengage. Jesse Rodriguez provided indispensable research assistance at Texas A&M University. Finally, Carson, Blease, Kathy, Joel, and Laura contributed in many special ways to the final product, as usual.

A. O'M. B.

R. C. K.

About the Authors



SOURCE: Photo courtesy of Ann O'M. Bowman

Ann O'M. Bowman (Ph.D., University of Florida) is professor and holder of the Hazel Davis and Robert Kennedy Endowed Chair in the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. She teaches courses in state and local politics and policy, intergovernmental relations, environmental policy and management, and public policy process. Her research interests revolve around questions of institutional change, policy adoption and implementation, and intergovernmental dynamics. She has published numerous books and articles on these topics over the years.



SOURCE: Photo courtesy of Richard C. Kearney

Richard C. Kearney (Ph.D., University of Oklahoma) is retired as professor of political science and public administration at North Carolina State University. His career also included lengthy teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities at East Carolina University, the University of Connecticut, and the University of South Carolina. His research interests include comparative state politics and policy, labor relations, and human resource management policy. He has published prolifically on these and related topics.



1 State and Local Governments: New Directions

Montana Governor Steve Bullock delivers his 2015 State of the State address. AP Images/Thom Bridge, Independent Record

With appropriate oratorical flourishes, the governor of Montana, Steve Bullock, delivered his 2015 State of the State message to the people of the Treasure State. Although parts of the speech were specific to Montana—references to the Main Street Montana Project, for example—many of the themes resonated beyond the state’s borders. Fiscal health, job creation, and educational improvement were topics in countless gubernatorial addresses throughout the country. Governor Bullock’s tone was upbeat and determined: “My fellow Montanans, our state is strong. But I see us getting stronger. I see a Montana that remains fiscally responsible, with a balanced budget and some money socked away for a rainy day. I see a Montana where leaders of this State focus less on winning and losing, less on partisanship and political games, and more on the people we serve and the generation that will follow us.”¹

Spirited exhortations such as these were echoed in one state capitol after another in 2015. In Montana and elsewhere, state and local governments are indeed tackling difficult problems and seeking innovative solutions to contemporary issues.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 1.1** To understand the importance of state and local governments in contemporary America.
- 1.2** To identify ways in which states and localities have increased their capacity.
- 1.3** To appreciate the challenges that states and localities confront on a daily basis.
- 1.4** To recognize how changing public attitudes influence government behavior.
- 1.5** To understand the changing demographic landscape in the United States.

LO 1.1

To understand the importance of state and local governments in contemporary America.

Studying State and Local Governments in the Twenty-First Century

The study of state and local governments has typically received short shrift in the survey of U.S. politics.² Scholars and journalists tend to focus on glamorous imperial presidents, a rancorous and gridlocked Congress, and an independent and powerful Supreme Court. National and international issues capture the lion's share of media attention. Yet, state and local politics are fascinating precisely because they are up close and personal. True, a governor seldom gets involved in an international peace conference, and state legislatures rarely debate the global narcotics trade. But the actors and institutions of states and localities are directly involved in our day-to-day lives. Education, job growth, health care, and crime are among the many concerns of state and local governments. And these issues affect all of us. Table 1.1 provides a sample of new state laws taking effect in 2015, laws that touch our daily lives.

TABLE 1.1 A Sample of New State Laws Taking Effect in 2015

STATE	DESCRIPTION OF THE LAW
Alaska	Legalizes the recreational use of marijuana for individuals over the age of 21.
Arizona	Allows terminally ill patients to try medications, treatments, and medical devices that have not yet been fully approved by the FDA.
California	Prohibits the dissemination of nude photos or videos of another individual without his or her consent.
Connecticut	Provides \$250 payment to parents who invest in a college savings account for their children.
Florida	Makes the children of undocumented immigrants eligible for in-state tuition rates.
Georgia	Authorizes licensed firearm carriers to carry in checkpoint-free government buildings, and allows churches, bars, and restaurants to set their own firearm policies.
Hawaii	Bans talking on a cell phone, texting, or playing video games while driving a vehicle.
Idaho	Enables individuals with a concealed carry permit to carry guns on college campuses.
Illinois	Bars firms with more than 15 employees from asking job applicants about their criminal history until they have either interviewed the candidate or extended a conditional job offer.
Indiana	Permits cyclists (on bicycles or motorcycles) to cross through red lights if they have waited for at least two minutes.
New York	Outlaws the disposal of electronics, such as laptops and TVs, in curbside trash; they must now be recycled.
Pennsylvania	Increases the gasoline tax by 9.5 cents per gallon and the diesel tax by 13.2 cents per gallon.

SOURCES: Kelly Beaucar, "New 2015 Laws Tackle Wages and Weed, Pet Tattoos and Tiger Selfies," *Fox News* <http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2014/12/31/new-laws-for-2015-ban-tiger-selfies-hike-minimum-wages/> (December 31, 2014); Reid Wilson, "Thousands of New Laws Take Effect Today, Part One," *Washington Post* <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/govbeat/wp/2014/07/01/thousands-of-new-state-laws-take-effect-today-part-one/> (July 1, 2014); and Greg Toppo, "New Year Brings Hundreds of New Laws," *USA Today* <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2015/01/01/new-laws-january-first/21055077/> (accessed January 1, 2015).

FROM SEWERS TO SCIENCE: THE FUNCTIONS OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

State and local governments are busy. They exist, in large measure, to make policy for and provide services to the public. This is no easy task. Nonnational governments must perform efficiently, effectively, and fairly; and they must do so with limited financial resources. An efficient government is one that maximizes the output (services) from a given input (resources). A government operates effectively if it accomplishes what it sets out to do. Another expectation is that government function fairly—that its services be delivered in an equitable manner. It is no wonder, then, that state and local governments constantly experiment with new programs and new systems for producing services, all the while seeking efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness. For instance, the massive restructuring of Wyoming’s state government several years ago was intended, according to the governor, to produce “a better method of delivering services from the state government to the citizens.”³ The quest for better functioning government never ends. A 2011 report found that, over a three-year period, nearly half of the states had eliminated or consolidated numerous state departments, agencies, boards, and commissions in an effort to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of government.⁴

To promote the exchange of innovative approaches developed by state governments, the Council of State Governments (CSG), a national nonpartisan nonprofit organization, created a website called “Capitol Ideas.” The intent is to showcase the different ways states address the myriad contemporary problems they face.⁵ For example, in 2015, issues garnering attention at the Capitol Ideas site included water resources, infrastructure investment, workforce development, cybersecurity, and international trade, among others. Although many of the innovations deal with public policies, some of the new ideas featured on the website are internal to government operations and are intended to make government function more effectively. These include the utilization of social media, the adoption of **evidence-based practices**, the analysis of data with geographic information system technology, and the use of logic models to achieve desired program results. The unifying characteristic among these innovations is governmental willingness to try something new. And good ideas travel; that is, they are often adopted by other states or localities. For example, after the city of Houston debuted a new web tool, “My Tax Dollars at Work,” other cities followed suit. Using this tool, homeowners can quickly find out how much of their local property taxes go to various city departments such as public safety, trash and recycling pick up, parks and recreation services, land development, and city administration.

OUR APPROACH

The argument of this book is that states and localities have the capacity to play central roles in the U.S. federal system. **Capacity** refers to a government’s ability to respond effectively to change, make decisions efficiently and responsibly, and manage conflict.⁶ Thus, capacity is tied to governmental capability and performance. In short, states and communities with more capacity work better than those with less capacity.

evidence-based practices

Making decisions based on the best research findings available.

capacity

The ability of government to respond effectively to change, make decisions efficiently and responsibly, and manage conflict.

But what factors make one government more capable than another? Governmental institutions such as the bureaucracy matter. The fiscal resources of a **jurisdiction** and the quality of its leadership make a difference. Much of the research on capacity has focused on the administrative dimension of government performance, evaluating items such as financial management, information technology, human resources, and strategic planning. In a 2008 study of state government performance, the highest overall scores went to Utah, Virginia, and Washington (each state received an A–) and Delaware, Georgia, Michigan, Missouri, and Texas (with grades of B+).⁷ Earlier evaluations of forty large counties showed that Fairfax, Virginia, and Maricopa, Arizona, had the best performance grades. Among thirty-five cities examined, Austin, Texas, and Phoenix, Arizona, were the leaders. Other factors being equal, we would expect high-scoring states, counties, and cities to produce “better” government than low-scoring jurisdictions.

A survey in Iowa showed another side to governance. When asked about the characteristics of good government, Iowans put trustworthiness, ethics, financial responsibility, and accountability at the top of the list.⁸ Residents of the Hawkeye State are not unusual; all of us want our institutions and leaders to govern honestly and wisely. As political scientist David Hedge reminds us, better government is found in jurisdictions that are responsible and democratic.⁹ But states and localities face significant challenges as they govern. Complex, often contradictory forces test the most capable of governments. As we have seen recently, trends in the national economy play out at the subnational level. Problems in one jurisdiction can spill over into nearby communities. State and local governments need all the capacity they can muster and maybe even a little bit of luck to meet those challenges. Sometimes states and localities fall short. For instance, in 2011, a budget imbroglio between the Democratic governor and the Republican legislature in Minnesota led to the partial shutdown of state government for nearly three weeks. Obviously, this was not one of the shining moments in the annals of state government. That the public often displays a little skepticism about governmental performance is not surprising.

Federalism, with its overlapping spheres of authority, provides the context for state and local action. (This topic is explored in depth in Chapter 2.) Intervention by the national government in the affairs of a state or local government is defensible, even desirable in some cases. For example, the environmental problems of the 1960s and 1970s exceeded state and local governments’ ability to handle them (see Chapter 18), so corrective action by the national government was generally welcomed. However, some federal actions are greeted less enthusiastically. For instance, No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the education law promoted by President George W. Bush and enacted by the U.S. Congress in 2002, was considered too intrusive by many state leaders and school districts. Since its passage, state legislators throughout the country have debated resolutions challenging the authority of this federal act, and school districts have lamented the provisions related to student achievement and school accountability. In reaction, the U.S. Department of Education has granted a growing number of waivers to states so they can create their own programs to comply with the law.¹⁰

jurisdiction

The territorial range of government authority; “jurisdiction” is sometimes used as a synonym for “city” or “town.”

federalism

A system of government in which powers are divided between a central (national) government and regional (state) governments.

Our approach takes into account intergovernmental relations (i.e., the relationships among the three levels of government)—particularly, the possibilities for cooperation and conflict. Jurisdictions (national, state, or local) possess policy-making authority over specific, but sometimes overlapping, territory. They confront innumerable situations in which boundaries blur and they must work together to accomplish an objective. However, cooperation in some cases is countered by conflict in other instances. Each level of government tends to see problems from its own perspective and design solutions accordingly. In sum, both cooperation and conflict define the U.S. federal system.

The Capacity of States and Localities

To appreciate where state and local governments are today, it is important to understand where they were just fifty years ago. With notable exceptions, states and their local governments in the 1950s and 1960s were havens of traditionalism and inactivity. Many states were characterized by unrepresentative legislatures, glad-handing governors, and a hodgepodge court system. Public policy tended to reflect the interests of the elite; delivery of services was frequently inefficient and ineffective. According to former North Carolina governor Terry Sanford, the states “had lost their confidence, and people their faith in the states.”¹¹ No wonder that, by comparison, the federal government appeared to be the answer, regardless of the question. In fact, political scientist Luther Gulick proclaimed, “It is a matter of brutal record. The American State is finished. I do not predict that the states will go, but affirm that they have gone.”¹²

Those days are as outmoded as a 1950s-era black-and-white television. States and their local governments have proved themselves capable of designing and implementing “an explosion of innovations and initiatives.”¹³ As a result, even many national leaders have embraced the roles of states and localities as laboratories for policy experimentation. A *New York Times* story with the headline “As Congress Stalls, States Pursue Cloning Debate” is indicative of states pushing the policy envelope.¹⁴

The blossoming of state governments in the 1980s—their transformation from weak links in the federal chain to viable and progressive political units—resulted from several actions and circumstances, as discussed in the next section.¹⁵ In turn, the resurgence of state governments has generated a host of positive outcomes. During the 1990s, states and localities honed their capacity and became **proactive** rather than reactive. They faced hard choices and creatively crafted new directions. A word of caution is necessary, however. The challenges of governance can be great, and not all states enjoy the same level of capacity. Furthermore, fiscal stresses such as those endured by state governments as the second decade of the twenty-first century sorely tested the ability of even the most capable states to function effectively.

HOW STATES AND LOCALITIES INCREASED THEIR CAPACITY

Several factors contributed to the resurgence of the states. U.S. Supreme Court decisions in the 1960s on legislative apportionment made for more equitable representation; the extension of two-party competition in the 1970s to states

LO 1.2

To identify ways in which states and localities have increased their capacity.

proactive

An anticipatory condition, as opposed to a reactive one.

formerly dominated by one party gave voters more choices. At the same time, states and localities expanded their lobbying presence in the nation's capital, exerting influence on the design and funding of intergovernmental programs.

Most important, state governments quietly and methodically reformed themselves by modernizing their constitutions and restructuring their institutions. Since the 1970s, more than three-quarters of the states have ratified new constitutions or substantially amended existing ones. Formerly thought of as the “drag anchors of state programs” and as “protectors of special interests,”¹⁶ these documents have been streamlined and made more workable. Even in states without wide-ranging constitutional reform, tinkering with constitutions is almost endless thanks to the amendment process. Nearly every state general election finds constitutional issues on the ballot. (State constitutions are discussed in Chapter 3.)

States have also undertaken various internal adjustments intended to improve the operations of state governments.¹⁷ Modernized constitutions and statutory changes have strengthened the powers of governors by increasing appointment and removal powers and by allowing longer terms, consecutive succession, larger staffs, enhanced budget authority, and the power to reorganize the executive branch. Throughout the country, state agencies are staffed by skilled administrators, and the bureaucracy itself is more and more demographically representative of the public. Annual rather than biennial sessions, more efficient rules and procedures, additional staff, and higher salaries have helped make reapportioned state legislatures more professional, capable, and effective. State judicial systems have also been the targets of reform; examples include the establishment of unified court systems, the hiring of court administrators, and the creation of additional layers of courts. (State institutions—legislatures, governors, state agencies, and courts—are addressed in Chapters 6–9.)

INCREASED CAPACITY AND IMPROVED PERFORMANCE

The enhanced capacity enjoyed by state and local governments has generated a range of mostly positive results. The five factors discussed below reinforce the performance of states and localities.

Improved Revenue Systems Economic downturns and limits on taxing and spending have caused states to implement new revenue-raising strategies to maintain acceptable service levels. Some states also granted local governments more flexibility in their revenue systems. South Carolina, for example, now allows counties the option of providing property-tax relief to residents in exchange for increasing the local sales tax.

As a rule, state governments prefer to increase user charges, gasoline taxes, and so-called sin taxes on alcohol and tobacco, and only reluctantly do they raise sales and income taxes. Over time, revenue structures have been redesigned to make them more diversified and more equitable. State **rainy day funds**, legalized gambling through state-run lotteries and pari-mutuels, and extension of the sales tax to services are examples of diversification strategies. Exemptions of food and medicine from consumer sales taxes and the enactment of property-tax breaks for poor and elderly people characterize efforts at

rainy day funds

Money set aside when a state's finances are healthy for use when state revenues decline. Formally called “budget stabilization funds.”

tax equity. These revamped revenue structures helped states respond to the budget crises they confronted during the Great Recession of 2008–2011.

States continue to tinker with their revenue-raising schemes. One successful foray into creative revenue-raising has been the specialty license plate. Maryland, for example, has generated millions of dollars over the years with its “Treasure the Chesapeake” plate. Monies generated by the plates are earmarked for special programs—in this case, water quality monitoring and erosion control in the Chesapeake Bay. Nearly all states now offer specialty plates. In New York, for instance, owners can equip their cars, for an extra fee, with license plates honoring their favorite professional sports team or NASCAR driver. A brand new approach to generating cash for states comes from the world of retail stores: the marketing of official gift cards. For example, both Kentucky and Ohio sell gift cards that can be used at state park locations for various park services and merchandise.

Another effort of enterprising localities is to sell merchandise. Los Angeles County has marketed coroner toe tags as key chains; Tucson hosts online auctions of surplus property. New York City, which loses thousands of street signs (Wall Street is especially popular) to souvenir-stealing tourists, now sells replicas. But the revenue generated by those actions is dwarfed by Chicago, which has sold (actually, leased for 99 years) four city-owned parking garages to an investment bank for \$563 million. As these examples show, states and localities are willing to experiment when it comes to revenue enhancement.

Expanding the Scope of State Operations State governments have taken on new roles and added new functions. In some instances, states are filling in the gap left by the national government’s de-emphasis of an activity; in other cases, states are venturing into uncharted terrain. It was states that designed the first family leave legislation to give workers time off to care for newborn babies and ailing relatives, the first “Three Strikes” laws that mandated long prison sentences for habitual offenders, and the first Amber Alert systems to broadcast information about abducted children. The federal government eventually followed suit with a national family leave act, a federal Three Strikes law, and a national Amber Alert system. In addition, states have taken the initiative in ongoing intergovernmental programs by creatively using programmatic authority and resources. Prior to federal welfare reform in the mid-1990s, several states had established workfare programs and imposed time limits on the receipt of welfare benefits, provisions that were at the center of the subsequent federal legislation.

States persist in expanding their scope of operations, whether it is California’s venture into stem-cell research or Florida’s strides into bioterror readiness. Hawaii has begun development of an extensive network of plug-in spots where electric cars can be recharged; New Mexico is a partner in a new commercial spaceport facility that it hopes will become the center for space tourism. In 2012, Colorado and Washington became the first states to legalize marijuana for recreational, as opposed to medicinal, use. In short, states are embracing their role as policy innovators and experimenters in the U.S. federal system.

Local governments are also pushing the policy envelope. For instance, in 2012, San Francisco took a bold step when it launched its K2C program to provide college savings accounts to every kindergarten student in the city

school district; Cuyahoga County, Ohio followed suit the next year. In an effort to offer more transit options to the public, Tulsa, Oklahoma, became the first city in the United States to establish an automated bike-share system, with two dozen bikes at three solar-powered stations; New York City took a slightly different approach by creating a public-private partnership for its Citi Bike system. Some cities have begun to address the problem of food deserts—the absence of grocery stores and fresh food in low-income neighborhoods—by incentivizing investment by food retailers and supporting urban agriculture. These examples make an important point: Local governments are not sitting idly by as problems emerge; instead they actively seek solutions.

Faster Diffusion of Innovations Among states, there have always been leaders and followers; the same is true for local governments. Now that states and localities have expanded their scope and are doing more policy making, they are looking more frequently to their neighbors and to similar places for advice, information, and models.¹⁸ As a result, successful solutions spread from one jurisdiction to another. For example, Florida was the first state to create a way for consumers to stop telephone solicitations. By 1999, five more states had passed laws letting residents put their names on a “do-not-call” list for telemarketers. Seven additional states adopted similar legislation over the



It's Your Turn

Should Governments have Innovation Offices?

Businesses and corporations are often seen as engines of innovation, but to some folks, state and local governments seem slow-moving and reactive entities. In an effort to change that perception and to make government more

proactive, city governments from Austin to Pittsburgh are creating innovation offices. These offices are tasked with discovering new and more efficient ways for government to do its job.

PROS	CONS
Having an innovation office could help cities become leaders in discovering new ideas and approaches rather than followers of others' innovations.	Creating a new office in city government means that money will need to be spent on that office. That money has to come from somewhere, whether it is from new revenue or diverted spending.
Internally-focused innovation offices can lead to cost savings and efficiency improvements in government.	There are no guarantees of cost savings. Generating cost savings depends on the capabilities of the people employed in the innovation office and their leadership . . . and maybe even some good luck.
Externally-focused innovation offices can lead to new government services or better ways to provide existing services. These offices may also identify new partnership opportunities.	

next two years before Congress enacted a national statute.¹⁹ Another fast-moving innovation was a 2004 New York law that required cigarettes sold in the state to be self-extinguishing. Concerned over fire safety, California did the same and by 2009, forty other states had adopted the law.²⁰

Local-level innovations spread rapidly, too. Education and environmental protection offer many examples of this phenomenon. When Miami-Dade County, Florida, hired a private company to run a public elementary school, other school districts hoping to improve quality and cut costs quickly did the same. Initial experiments with privatization spawned other innovations such as charter schools. The issue of climate change was addressed at the local level in 2005, when the mayor of Seattle became the first local official to commit his city to a plan to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. Within five years, more than 1,050 mayors of other U.S. cities had joined the climate change bandwagon.²¹ It is worth noting, of course, that the diffusion of new ideas depends in large part on their fit and effectiveness.

Obviously, state and local governments learn from one another. Communication links, including social media such as Facebook and Twitter, have become extensive. A state might turn to nearby states when searching for policy solutions. Regional consultation and emulation are logical: Similar problems often beset jurisdictions in the same region, a program used in a neighboring state may be politically more acceptable than one from a distant state, and organizational affiliations bring state and local administrators together with their colleagues from nearby areas. However, research has shown that states also borrow ideas from peer states, that is, states that are like them in important ways such as ideological leaning or economic base.²² In the search for solutions, states and localities are increasingly inclusive.



Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images

A group of governors holds a press conference in Washington, D.C. after meeting with President Obama.