



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

City Basics & Cal Cities Overview

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Overview

- City Basics
- Key Challenges
- What is Cal Cities?
- Cal Cities
 - Advocacy
 - Education
- 2025 Advocacy Priorities

City Basics - two types of cities

- **Charter Cities (125 cities)**
- Authorized in the Constitution. Special powers to govern “municipal affairs.”



- **General Law Cities (358 cities)**
- Formed under the general laws of the state with local voter approval.



City basics

- 483 cities. Approximately 83% of state population, 31.5 million
- Formed by people to provide more self-government
- Level of government closest to the people

City basics

- Important issues to city residents:
 - Community traditions and sense of place
 - Local history
 - Retaining “local quality of life”
 - Ensuring new growth and development are compatible with community plans
- Cities provide municipal services: police, fire, water, sewer, parks, library, etc
- Common ground between all cities: passionate support for fundamental principle of local democracy and local decision making

Key challenges

- Budget and Fiscal:
 - Prop 13, Prop 218 and Prop 26. Very restrictive. Most financing options involve local voter approval by either 2/3rds or majority vote.
 - Easier to raise taxes on raw land (Mello-Roos)
 - Hard to do infill

Key challenges

- State's constant state tinkering with local revenue:
 - Triple-flip
 - VLF-property tax swap
 - Using truck weight fees to pay for transportation bonds
 - Shifting over \$8 billion per year in ERAF from (cities, counties and special districts) \$400 million growth per year
 - Tried to take local sales taxes
 - Tried to take local highways users taxes
 - Eliminated redevelopment agencies
 - Exempt products from local sales tax

Key challenges

- Disaster preparedness/fire hazard severity zone mapping
- Ongoing funding to address homelessness
- Accountability and transparency for state homelessness funding
- Override local land use planning
- Prop 36 Implementation
- New sales tax exemptions

What is Cal Cities?

- Established in 1898 (operating for 127 years)
- Organization largely governed by local elected officials
- *Mission: Restore and protect local control for cities through education and advocacy in order to enhance the quality of life for all Californians*

Cal Cities Key Functions: Advocacy

- **Legislative**

- 8 full-time lobbyists
- 16 Regional Public Affairs Managers that mobilize city officials and coalition partners

- **Legal**

- Represents city interests in both federal and state court - file approximately 50 friend of the court briefs per year

- **Ballot Issues**

- Draft our own
- In 2024: Support Prop 4 (climate bond), Prop 5 (voting threshold), Prop 36 (retail theft)

Local protection measures

Prop. 6

Protect
Transportation Funds



Prop. 22

Protect
Transportation and
Local Funds



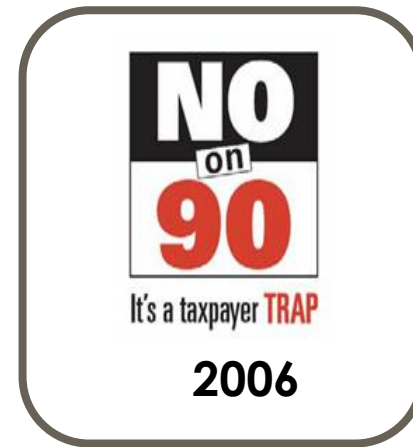
Prop. 98/99

Protect City Rent
Control and
Land Use



Prop. 90

Protect City Land Use
Authority



Prop. 1A

Protect Local
Revenues from State
Raids



Lobbyists

- Damon Conklin
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Transportation, Communications, and Public Works
 - dconklin@calcities.org
- Melissa Sparks-Kranz
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Environmental Quality
 - msparkskranz@calcities.org



Lobbyists

- Caroline Grinder
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Community Services
 - cgrinder@calcities.org
- Johnnie Pina
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Governance, Transparency, and Labor Relations
 - jpina@calcities.org



Lobbyists

- Ben Triffo
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Revenue and Taxation
 - btriffo@calcities.org
- Jolena Voorhis
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Public Safety
 - jvoorhis@calcities.org
- Brady Guertin
 - Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist Housing, Community and Economic Development
 - bguertin@calcities.org



Cal Cities Key Functions: Education

- Cities constantly innovating and learning from each other
- Cal Cities hosts many conferences, webinars, and roundtables, to address the educational needs of local elected officials, city department heads, their staff at all phases of their professional careers
- Other information sources:
 - Western City Magazine
 - CA Cities Advocate (weekly newsletter)
 - Institute for Local Government
 - Californiacityfinance.com

2025 Cal Cities Advocacy Priorities



1. Protect local revenues and expand economic development tools



2. Strengthen climate change resiliency and disaster preparedness



3. Strengthen and modernize critical infrastructure



4. Secure investments to prevent and reduce homelessness and increase the supply of affordable housing

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