

## 8 Reasons to Pay Attention to State Politics

1. **State laws directly affect our daily lives.** From firearm regulations to DUI, from tax code to community property, the vast majority of laws that affect our daily lives are not federal, but state laws. The feds may get more media attention, but our state lawmakers have the money and influence to decide our state's priorities — and they are directly responsible for serving us.
2. **Our state leads the way when the feds don't.** Education reform is stalled in Washington — but state governments hold the reins on school funding, along with public health, transportation, and water policy. Want teachers paid better? Prefer your roads with fewer potholes? Hoping Arizona's faucets don't suddenly run dry? Those are all state-level issues.
3. **State lawmakers are more accessible.** Each of Arizona's federal senators represents the entire state, about 7 million people. Your state senator, by contrast, represents 200,000 people. If you've ever struggled in vain to get the attention of a federal lawmaker, you'll immediately see the value here: a phone call or an in-person meeting with a state lawmaker is actually within the average person's reach.
4. **Local politics shape national change.** Many now-landmark federal policies, like women's suffrage, minimum wage, environmental protection and marriage equality, all started at the local level. By communicating regularly with our state lawmakers — and then holding them accountable — we can help create innovative policies that directly affect us.
5. **It's easier to stop bad policies locally.** When special interests tried to use Arizona as a testing ground for the nation's largest school voucher experiment, citizens rose up to stop SB1431. Contrast this with SB1070, the nation's harshest anti-immigrant law. After the bill passed in Arizona, its [nativist author](#) took his policy ideas to the [federal level](#), demanding immigrants' cell phone contacts and social media passwords, attempting to form a national registry of Muslims, and banning refugees and asylum-seekers outright.
6. **States act as incubators for national policies.** Many other states draw their legislative districts to purposely give one party an unfair advantage. But, thanks to Arizona's (voter-created) Independent Redistricting Commission, our district lines are [among the least skewed in the nation](#), providing representation that closely mirrors voters' intent. Arizona's system has become a model, with five new states [approving the creation](#) of similar commissions this year, and two others with plans in the works.
7. **When national politics are the problem, states can be a solution.** Our federal government is polarized into gridlock, but the partisan balance of our 2019 state Legislature is closer than it's been in decades. That creates a climate where compromise and common-ground solutions can take root. State officials can influence, challenge or protest national policy by passing laws at home — the ideas that don't succeed in Washington just might work when tested out on a smaller level.
8. **Arizona's Constitution protects us.** We the People have safeguards: the right to [overturn bad laws](#) through public vote, the right to [recall lawmakers](#) who aren't serving us, and the right to [make our own laws](#) via initiative. Each of these measures allows regular folk to make sure the laws that affect us most also represent us well. And these are

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not just options: each of these safeguards has happened in the past 10 years. Further progress will take all of us working together. Who knows what the next 10 years have in store?