

# The Claremont Institute

For the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy

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## About Local Liberty

Local Liberty is the blog of the **Center for Local Government** at the Claremont Institute.

The Claremont Institute's **Center for Local Government** aims to restore republican government at the local level. This means articulating and applying the fundamental principles of the American Founding: the rule of law, property rights, and morality. Americans should become once again, as James Madison urged, "free and gallant citizens;" "the mutual guardians of their mutual happiness."

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# Local Liberty

The Blog of the Center for Local Government

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## When Government Becomes an Interest Group (Faction)

Anti-tax activist **Jon Coupal** points to three ways in which an abuse of government--allowing the bureaucracy to take sides in a campaign--makes government even more a part of the problem citizens must deal with. First:

[P]ublic bodies are permitted to "educate" voters. This distinction between "advocacy" and "informational" activity is one that exists only in theory.

Under the guise of the latter, cities, counties and special districts will mail out glossy fliers on a proposed tax increase and, without ever saying "vote yes," either communicate all the good things that will happen if the tax measure passes or all the horrible things that will transpire if it fails. The implicit message is clear: "Listen, you greedy taxpayers, we need this tax/bond/assessment/fee because it is for the children/public safety/clean water, etc."

Of course campaign finance legislation does not apply to the government.

Second: professional groups like the League of California Cities campaign for or against initiatives. And their funding comes from the dues of city officials. That's tax-payer funded lobbying.

Finally, government must approve the wording of initiative ballots, and can actually take activists to court for misleading statements: "Too frequently, government will overreach and attempt to have the court strike statements that are factually true but that, because of their truthfulness, are damaging to the goal of raising taxes."

James Madison argued that a national government would tame factions (unjust groups) by forcing them to moderate in order to form a legitimate majority. Contemporary government, shaped by Progressive and liberal notions of governance, has itself become a

- New Urbanism
- Progressivism
- Property Rights
- Public Unions/Pensions
- Reapportionment
- Redevelopment
- Regulation
- Religious Freedom
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- Rule of Law
- Sacramento Shenanigans
- Schools
- State Legislature
- Stem-Cells/Proposition 71
- Taxation
- Transportation

faction, and Coupal provides evidence for how this proceeds. At the State level, the initiative plays a key role in dealing with this pathology of elected officials. See Steve Frates' review arguing that direct democracy curbs government spending in the **latest issue** of *Local Liberty* newsletter.

Bureaucracy | Ken Masugi | September 13, 2005 | 05:35 PM

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**American Legislative Exchange  
Council (ALEC)**

**California:**

**The California Local  
Government Finance Almanac**

**California Institute for Federal  
Policy Research**

**The Rose Institute of State  
and Local Government**

**The Center for Government  
Analysis**

**California Taxpayer's  
Association**

**Public Policy Institute of  
California**

**Pacific Legal Foundation**

**Pacific Research Institute**

**Center for the Study of  
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**Reason Foundation**

**Television:**

**The California Channel**

**Orange County:**

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**Environment:**

**Property & Environment  
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**Immigration:**

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