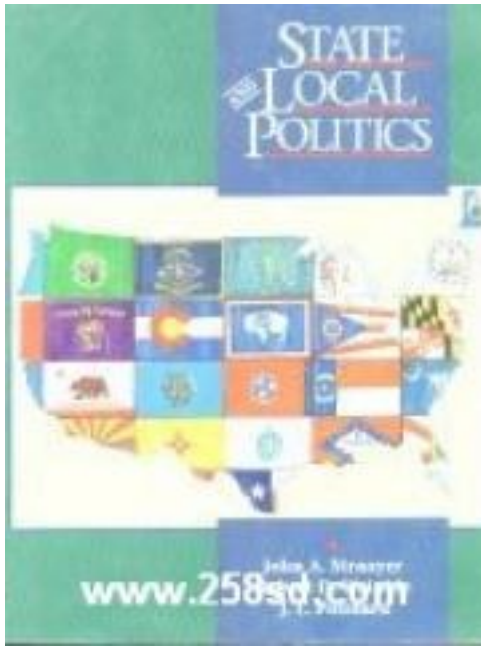


State and Local Politics



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This book is about the institutions and political forces that shape policy making and policy outcomes in state and local communities. To those of us who are students of American politics, states and their local government subdivisions are fascinating political laboratories that allow comparisons among different political systems. States vary in the powers given governors, how their legislatures are structured, how judges are selected and reviewed, and how they operate in a host of policy areas, including how they impose taxes. The party system is much weaker in some regions of the country than in others. State legislatures in some of the smaller or rural states meet for just a few months a year, whereas in other states they meet all year. The importance of interest groups and the media varies from state to state and from city to city. Generalizations are sometimes difficult, yet we try in this book to summarize what

political scientists know about state and local politics and government.

State and local government and politics remain important not only to the residents of a particular state but to all Americans. A tax-cutting ballot initiative or legislative term limitation can spawn scores of similar votes in other states. And as we learned from the welfare reform legislation of recent years, states can be catalysts for change on the national level and then central to its implementation.

Those who want better government in their communities and states will not achieve it by sitting around and waiting for it. If government by the people, of the people, and for the people is to be more than just rhetoric, citizens must understand state and local politics and be willing to form political alliances, respect and protect the rights of those with whom they differ, and be willing to serve as citizen leaders, citizen politicians. We hope this book will motivate you to appreciate that every person can make a difference, and that all of us should work toward that end.

This book consists of the last nine chapters plus the chapter on federalism from the eighteenth edition of *Government by the People, National, State, and Local Version 2000*. We have had the benefit of useful criticisms and suggestions from Professors Thad Beyle, University of North Carolina; Randall Bland, Southwest Texas State University; John Green, Akron University; and Karl Kurtz of the National Conference of State Legislatures. We also wish to express our sincere thanks to our production editor at Prentice Hall, Serena Hoffman, and to the political science editor, Beth Gillett Mejia.

作者介绍:

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