Client’s name

Professor’s title

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Houston's 'Bathroom Ordinance'

In theory the ideal democracy would be a direct one-person, one-vote affair, where each voter represents their own interests. This is exemplified by the Athens of Antiquity. Citizens were obligated to be conversant in the issues of the day and able to vote their own interests. As populations have grown, and knowledge deeper and more complex, government became ever less efficient and eventually unworkable. Hence, the rise of republican or representative government. This form employs citizens to vote for their ‘representative’ to best represent said citizen’s interests in a more complex social and political environment. The end result is said to express democratic ideals though no longer a direct democracy, which remains the ideal. Today, the smaller the constituency, or number of citizens, the more responsive their elected representative can be to citizens interests. In Los Angeles, for example, City Council districts include over 200,000 constituents, and are sub-divided into Neighborhood Councils to further devolve the political apparatus closer to the citizens. The basic premise remains the same, the intent always to enable citizens representatives to be more responsive to their constituents. So, the role of city councils is very crucial in representing the interests of their community.

The city councils should in the same lieu, reflect the racial/ethnic composition of their communities. It is essential to promote an element of equity for people belonging to each ethnicity to ensure that diversity of populations is accounted for while making policies for the betterment of the communities at large. It is also crucial so that interests of a single ethnic population in majority don’t overpower the interests of others in minority.

A basic principal of American government is that all governmental powers belong to the people and are given to the government by consent within the framework of the Constitution. That means that after all the big players like federal and state levels take care of things like military and international relations and public universities, the minor issues are handled at the lower county and city levels. It also means the specific details vary from one state to the next since there’s different powers left over for the lower levels. In general, counties provide services for all cities within that county. Examples are roads connecting the cities (County Highway X, etc.), some larger parks, public health services and county sheriff. It often includes a county jail so that every little city doesn’t need to staff a jail of its own. In many cases, the county’s main job is to execute the programs created and funded by the state (e.g. welfare, district attorney) which often leads them to be called “an agent of the state.” Cities and villages handle what’s left. Local police, fire, snow plowing, parks, water, sewer, library, and especially zoning and land use planning. They also collect local property taxes, acting as the tax collector for county, school district and technical college (a state agency) property taxes.

Lastly, I believe the counties and cities' law-making powers be limited instead of being broadened. Such a fact is owing to the ideologies in the current article where every state representative was fighting to promote his own cause. Such facts while promoting an opportunity to strive for betterment of citizens also create disharmony and chaos. So, it is imperative that broad situations like terrorism etc. are dealt by the higher authorities and the cities' law-making powers should focus on the problems of their communities. If such small problems are not focused by the and only big issues are highlighted, the small issues like traffic or animal control issues would remain suppressed. The state should also have the power to preempt local ordinances to ensure the local law-making powers are giving justice to each community they represent.

References

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