

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

Restore the Partnership with States and Localities

National Commission would create an open forum for decision makers to promote
accountability, efficiency, transparency

Dear Colleague

Please join us in cosponsoring bipartisan legislation to revive the National Commission on Intergovernmental Relations to create a forum for open dialogue among federal, state and local decision makers on policy matters that affect us all.

From our experiences serving in local and state governments, we know firsthand how actions taken here in Congress affect decisions made by our governors, state legislators, county supervisors, city council members and school board members back home. Many of us in the House, in fact, have experience serving in local and state government and can attest to the need for quality communication and coordination for the levels of government to operate efficiently. It is our local and state governments that implement policies and standards for education, air quality, public safety, transportation, health care and so much more. That is why we have introduced the Restore the Partnership Act of 2009 (H.R. 3332) to revive the National Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

The 86th Congress created an Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations in 1959 to foster a stronger relationship among local, state and federal governments. The Commission's membership included public- and private-sector Presidential appointees, members of the Senate, members of the House of Representatives, Governors, state legislators, county supervisors/commissioners, city council members and tribal officials. The Commission provided a valuable forum for leaders from every level of government to share their views, model best practices and highlight the impacts of legislative and policy decisions across all levels of government. Unfortunately, the 104th Congress terminated funding for the Commission in 1995.

Since then, the need for coordination and transparency among the levels of government has not waned. In fact, it has only increased. Already the 111th Congress has enacted several pieces of legislation affecting our state and local counterparts: Reauthorization of the Children's Health Insurance Program, the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Authorization, the National Water Research and Development Initiative Act, the Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act and much more.

Of course, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has had a significant impact on our state and local partners and perhaps best highlights the need to bring decision-makers together to share their experiences, to educate the public and one another about intergovernmental relationships and responsibilities, to look for efficiencies and to foster greater communication and coordination.

Our long-term success on this and many other legislative initiatives is dependent on our ability to work effectively with our local and state partners. When you step back and assess the relationship between federal, state and local governments, you will see we really are in this together. That is why we believe it is essential to restore this partnership by reviving the National Commission on Intergovernmental Relations.

For more information about the Restore the Partnership Act (H.R. 3332) or to cosponsor, please contact Dominic Bonaiuto in the office Congressman Connolly at dominic.bonaiuto@mail.house.gov or 202-225-1492.

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