



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2017

NACo WORKS TO PRESERVE LOCAL DECISION MAKING
AND PROTECT COUNTIES FROM UNFUNDED MANDATES
AND PREEMPTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY.

**Stronger Counties.
Stronger America.**



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

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PROTECT MUNICIPAL BONDS

NACo supports preserving the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds that provide critical funding for public facilities, infrastructure and development. Provisions like the tax exemption for municipal bond interest have been part of the federal tax code for over 100 years, helping to efficiently and safely finance trillions of dollars in public works projects. NACo also supports the federal deductibility of local property and income taxes.

PROTECT THE FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL PARTNERSHIP FOR MEDICAID

NACo supports maintaining the federal-state-local structure for financing and delivering Medicaid services. Counties continue to be concerned about measures that would limit the ability of states to direct supplemental payments to county providers, curtail the ability of counties to contribute local funds to match federal dollars or otherwise shift federal and state Medicaid costs to counties, including cuts, caps or block grants. We support efforts to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Medicaid policies and operations.

PROMOTE COUNTY SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES

NACo will work to ensure that any transportation and infrastructure measures reflect county priorities, including allocating more funding for locally owned infrastructure, increasing local decision making authority and prioritizing investments that advance economic development, mobility and safety. NACo will also continue to urge Congress to resolve the long-term solvency of the Highway Trust Fund.

WORK FOR A MORE EFFECTIVE DEFINITION OF 'WATERS OF THE U.S.'

NACo believes that local streets, gutters and human-made ditches should be excluded from the definition of "Waters of the U.S." (WOTUS) under the federal Clean Water Act. NACo calls on Congress to require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to withdraw the new WOTUS rule and rewrite it in consultation and collaboration with state and local governments.

THE MAJORITY OF TAX-EXEMPT BONDS FINANCE THE BUILDING OF SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, ROADS AND OTHER PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

75% OF OUR NATION'S PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS ARE COMPLETED USING BOND FINANCING, WITH MORE THAN \$3 TRILLION INVESTED FROM 2003 - 2012

COUNTIES INVEST \$83 BILLION ANNUALLY ON COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HOSPITAL SERVICES

COUNTIES OWN AND SUPPORT 961 HOSPITALS, 883 NURSING HOMES AND 750 BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES AND SERVE 1,944 LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

COUNTIES OWN 46% OF ALL PUBLIC ROAD MILES

COUNTIES OWN 38% OF THE NATIONAL BRIDGE INVENTORY

COUNTIES ARE INVOLVED IN A THIRD OF THE NATION'S PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION SYSTEMS AND AIRPORTS

MORE THAN 70% OF COUNTIES INVEST IN STORM SEWER SYSTEMS, SEWAGE DISPOSAL, SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND WATER UTILITIES

COUNTIES INVEST \$23.9 BILLION IN SANITARY, STORM SEWER SYSTEMS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL/TREATMENT AND WATER SUPPLY SYSTEMS

SUPPORT COUNTY AUTHORITY TO COLLECT EXISTING SALES TAX

NACo supports legislation to permit the collection of existing sales and use taxes from remote sellers. The issue of collecting remote sales taxes has escalated in recent years due to the Internet's growth as a retail marketplace. As a result, state and local governments have lost billions in uncollected sales taxes, and Main Street businesses find themselves at a significant competitive disadvantage to online merchants. This disadvantage is amplified because online merchants and their customers use local infrastructure and services without contributing to their provision.

\$26.1 BILLION OF EXISTING SALES TAX REVENUE IS CURRENTLY UNCOLLECTED — THIS WOULD PROVIDE FUNDING FOR ESSENTIAL LOCAL SERVICES, INCLUDING INFRASTRUCTURE, PUBLIC SAFETY, EDUCATION, PUBLIC HEALTH AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SUPPORT POLICIES TO PROMOTE BEHAVIORAL HEALTH AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

NACo supports measures that enhance the ability of counties to prevent and treat mental illness and substance abuse disorders. NACo also supports programs and legislation that help counties divert individuals struggling with mental illness from the criminal justice system and into appropriate treatment, while protecting overall public safety.

APPROXIMATELY 8.5 MILLION ADULTS HAVE BOTH A MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE DISORDER

11.6 MILLION INDIVIDUALS CYCLE IN AND OUT OF MORE THAN 3,000 LOCAL JAILS EACH YEAR

64% OF JAIL INMATES HAVE A MENTAL ILLNESS

SUPPORT THE PAYMENTS IN LIEU OF TAXES (PILT) AND SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS (SRS) PROGRAMS

NACo supports restoring full mandatory funding for the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) program, which compensates counties for tax-exempt federal land within their boundaries. NACo also supports extending the Secure Rural Schools (SRS) program as a transitional funding mechanism until the federal government fully implements a sustainable long-term forest management program with adequate revenue sharing for forest counties and schools.

62.8% OF COUNTIES HAVE FEDERAL LAND WITHIN THEIR BOUNDARIES

PILT AND SRS SUPPORT CRITICAL SERVICES IN COUNTIES, INCLUDING EMERGENCY SERVICES, SEARCH AND RESCUE, FIRE PROTECTION, FOREST MAINTENANCE, EDUCATION AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE

SUPPORT PROGRAMS THAT ASSIST COUNTIES TO PREVENT AND REDUCE POVERTY

NACo supports federal investments and strategies that focus on serving those most in need and address the root causes of poverty. Because counties are responsible for maintaining the local social safety net and are mandated to provide indigent care, NACo supports fully funding programs that assist those most in need and maintaining the maximum amount of efficiency and flexibility possible at the local level. Key federal programs that assist counties in tackling poverty include the Social Services Block Grant, the Community Services Block Grant and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families programs.

COUNTIES INVEST OVER \$58 BILLION IN HUMAN SERVICES EACH YEAR

OVER 58% OF COUNTIES HAVE POVERTY RATES ABOVE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE

IN SOME STATES, COUNTIES ADMINISTER FEDERAL ANTI-POVERTY PROGRAMS, INCLUDING THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) WELFARE PROGRAM, SOCIAL SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (SSBG) AND THE SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (SNAP)

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ABOUT NACo

The National Association of Counties (NACo) unites America's 3,069 county governments. Founded in 1935, NACo brings county officials together to advocate with a collective voice on national policy, exchange ideas and build new leadership skills, pursue transformational county solutions, enrich the public's understanding of county government, and exercise exemplary leadership in public service.

Each year, NACo's Board of Directors adopts the association's federal policy priorities, which help shape NACo's advocacy efforts on behalf of America's counties.



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