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Welcome to the June edition of the NAFSL newsletter!

Just a quick reminder:

- The NAFSL will have a booth at the [American Legislative Exchange Council \(ALEC\) Annual Conference](#) this July 27 through 29 in Atlanta, GA. Please let us know so if you are going to be there so we can coordinate and make sure we connect while at the conference.
- Also, we have been invited to attend the [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\) Annual Legislative Summit](#) this August 1 through 3 in Denver, CO. Let us know if you are planning on being there.

A few thoughts on today's (6/24/2022) breaking news:

Within minutes after the story broke about the US Supreme Court decision on the abortion issue, the prewritten editorials by all the major news outlets were released. Most of the rhetoric was directed towards politicizing the ruling with allusion to public opinion surveys, pejorative jargon aimed at certain justices, and the supposed fulfilment of political strategies.

However, the Court's opinion was clearly one of principle as Justice Samuel Alito wrote, "The Constitution does not prohibit the citizens of each State from regulating or prohibiting abortion. Roe and Casey arrogated that authority. We now overrule those decisions and return that authority to the people and their elected representatives."

From an historical perspective, the US Supreme Court has had some consistency in this area of legal philosophy. As the Founders vision of balanced federalism and state sovereignty is being somewhat restored, our mission to engage our state representatives on issues of principled governance becomes increasingly important.

For this month, we have decided to bring attention to the distinction between principle and policy and explain why state legislators should be mindful of it. Not only is focusing on issues of principle as equally important as enacting policy, but discussing the differences between principle and policy is also essential as worthy policy cannot exist without principles that guide it.

A principle is defined as a "fundamental truth" that "serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior" ([PEDIAA](#)). In other words, principles are the concepts, ideas, values, or beliefs that the creators of any system wish for such system to embody. In the United States, as evidenced by our founding charter, the principles imbedded within our government are those of representative governance, balanced federalism, and state sovereignty.

Conversely, policy is best understood to mean a "course of actions adopted or proposed by an organization or individual" ([PEDIAA](#)). Hence, all policy implicitly or explicitly invokes the principles that motivate such policy. For example, a state government's policy of suing the national government whenever it feels the latter has encroached on state powers is one that is motivated by the principle of state sovereignty.

Ideally then, policymakers should propose policy that inherently echoes the principles that its system of governance was constructed upon. Thankfully, our founders, wary of sinister policy proposals that would attempt to undercut the principles instilled into our government at its founding, provided a justice system that, in part, acts to invalidate such policy as a matter of principle.

However, such system cannot be activated lest energetic citizens and public officials, aware of the principles that our nation was founded upon, denounce illegitimate and backwards policy proposals. Be it on behalf or against national, state, or local governments, citizens and legislators ought to be prepared to take a stand in order to defend the principles that our government was intended to abide by.

Therefore, at the NAFSL, we encourage policymakers, current and past, to reconnect with our government's foundational principles of balanced federalism, representative governance, and state sovereignty. In so doing, legislators will be capable to act as a bulwark against policy that undermines such principles whilst enacting policy that is in harmony and supportive of them.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "James Kallinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

James Kallinger, President
National Association of Former State Legislators