

# STATES INSIGHTS REVIEW

ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT IN  
STATE GOVERNMENT



# BALLAST RESEARCH'S 2019 STATES INSIGHTS REVIEW

## OUR GOAL

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Ballast Research provides direct feedback from senior policymakers to government relations professionals, helping advocates make better use of policymakers' time and provide the resources most useful to those in government.

## OVERVIEW OF FINDINGS

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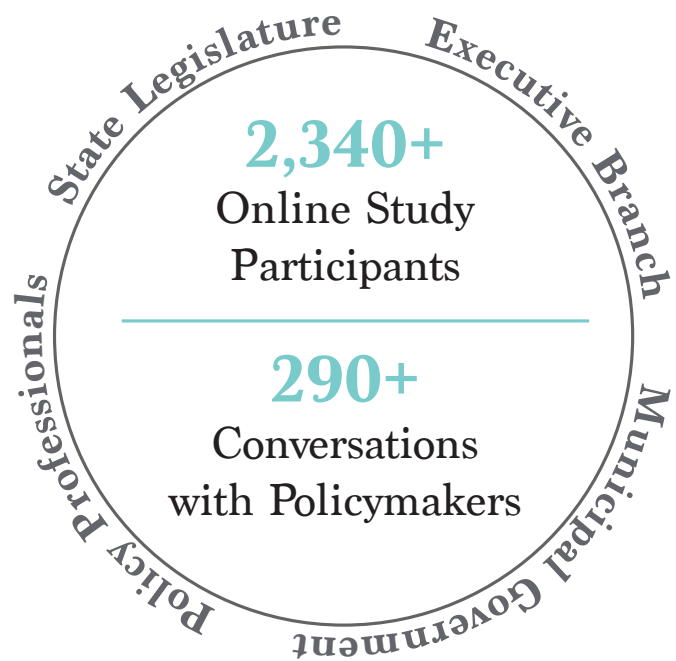
This report summarizes our 2019 findings on general advocacy best practices and how the private sector engages in states like California, Florida, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, North Carolina, Indiana, and Kentucky.

## OUR PROMISE

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### Confidentiality

All participation in our research is confidential and not for attribution.



## RESPONDENTS ON WHY THEY PARTICIPATE IN BALLAST'S RESEARCH

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*"I think insight is so important, and I'm glad that I could lend something to what you're doing. **If we can help entities understand how to communicate better, perhaps we can fix a lot of the challenges we face.** But if we continue down this path of not communicating or listening to one another, it's just going to hurt all parties involved."*

-Policy Expert, Private Sector

*"I'm always trying to increase the communication quality between the regulated community and the regulators. I think when we do a better job of that, we'll see better outcomes and better public policy being set. I only see this as a positive, so I'm happy to help."*

-Senior Staff, Federal Executive Branch

# PRINCIPLES OF GREAT ADVOCACY ACROSS STATES

State and local policymakers want **community-oriented advocacy** grounded in informed constituent voices and active community engagement.

## POLICYMAKERS WANT...

### 1 TO HEAR FROM CONSTITUENTS

Policymakers want to hear informed constituent voices in addition to facts and figures. The quality of these voices takes precedent over their quantity. Organizations that demonstrate a clear connection between their message and the needs of constituents are more helpful and persuasive to policymakers.

#### We Recommend Advocates...



##### Build Trusted Coalitions of Informed Voices

Policymakers prefer to work with individuals who understand policy issues and know about the community.



##### Engage Policymakers in Small Working Groups

A small group of informed constituents conversing and collaborating with legislators is more effective than a large group.



*“Data is very helpful, but what is even more helpful is having a coalition of voices that are trusted in the community. Oklahoma is often about relationships and proximity. The more you can get trusted folks recommending something together, the more likely it is to catch on.”*

-Municipal Director,  
Oklahoma Municipal  
Government

### 2 TO SEE ACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Policymakers prioritize supporting their respective communities and thus place higher value on relationships with organizations that show consistent engagement with their constituents.

#### We Recommend Advocates...



##### Engage With the Local Community

Engage with the local community through projects and solutions that go beyond the typical scope of business models.



##### Listen to Policymakers' Perspectives

Use the unique perspectives policymakers bring to community engagement work and emphasize their impact on local communities.



*“Having that face-to-face time and taking the time to actually be there in the community translates well into good relationships with those local advocates.”*

-Council Member, Florida  
Municipal Government, D

# PILLARS OF STRONG COMMUNICATIONS ACROSS STATES

The best advocates strategically manage relationships to maintain a strong connection with policymakers and their staff. They also connect their messages with policymakers' interests and concerns.



## PROACTIVE RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- ✓ Spend time in communities with local leaders and constituents
- ✓ Be honest and transparent to increase policymakers' willingness to engage with you

*"It took us years before we developed those relationships, but once you do, the dynamic changes. Without that interaction—that communication—things take so long to ever get done because you're not communicating on a regular basis."*

-Mayor, Florida Municipal Government, R

*"Advocates should try to be proactive about keeping a strong relationship even when nothing is going on."*

-Representative, Ohio State Legislature, D

*"I appreciate people who are focused, precise, and provide information in a coherent way. Start by telling me the facts and what you want. We need people to be more honest about what their goals are."*

-Representative, Indiana State Legislature, D

*"Good lobbyists will not only give you what you need to know, but will arm you for whatever the frequently asked questions are or whatever the perceived drawbacks are."*

-Former Representative, Florida State Legislature, R



## CLEAR OBJECTIVES AND WELL-PREPARED ADVOCATES

- ✓ Advocate from your position
- ✓ Outline the opposition's arguments
- ✓ Assuage concerns about perceived drawbacks to legislation

## BEST PRACTICES FOR COMMUNICATION WE RECOMMENDED TO ADVOCATES

INCLUDE RESEARCH AND DATA

BE DIRECT

JUSTIFY YOUR CASE

TELL A STORY

SHOW THE EFFECTS ON CONSTITUENTS

BE CONCISE

BE PROACTIVE

BE RESPECTFUL

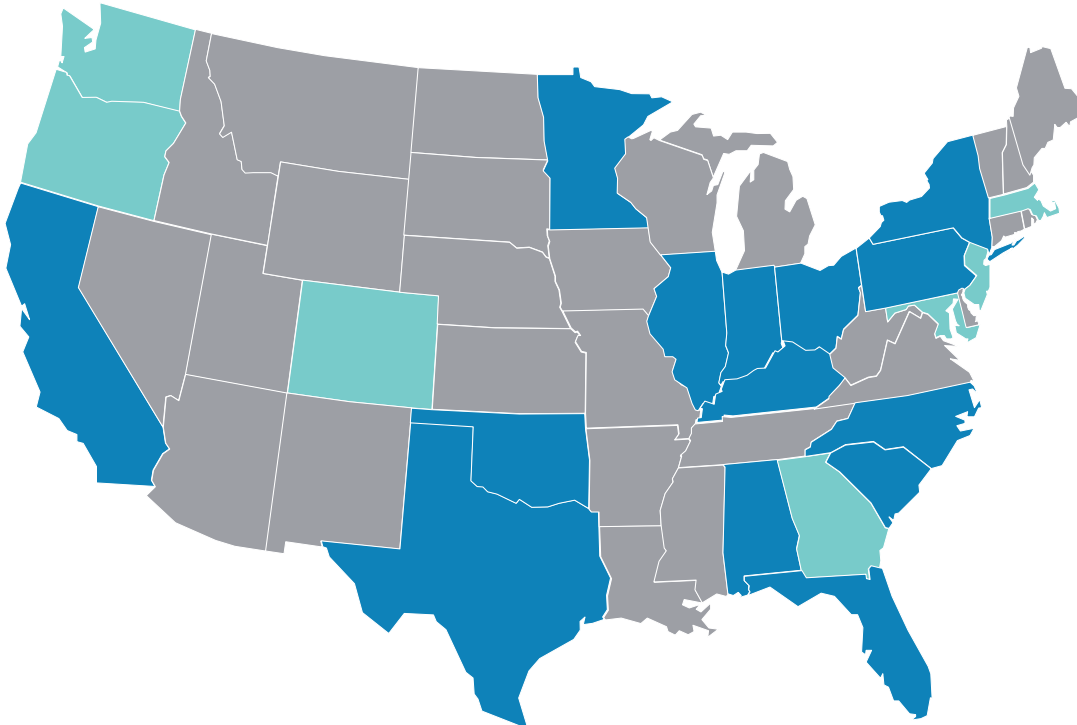
PRESENT BOTH SIDES OF ISSUES



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## OUR PRESENCE



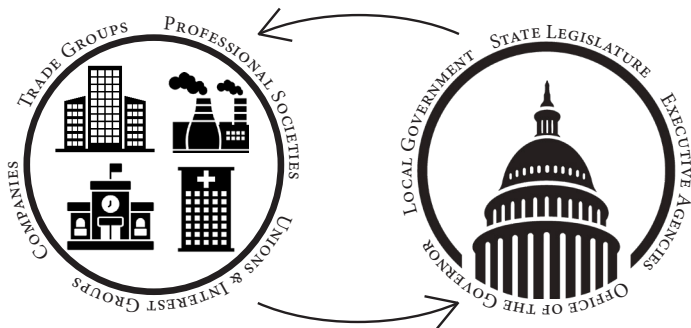
### OUR PRESENCE

Ohio	New York
Texas	California
Illinois	Oklahoma
Florida	Minnesota
Indiana	Pennsylvania
Alabama	South Carolina
Kentucky	North Carolina

### PROSPECT STATES

Oregon	New Jersey
Georgia	Washington
Colorado	Massachusetts
Maryland	

## ABOUT BALLAST RESEARCH



Our clients are Fortune 500 companies, trade associations, and nonprofits looking to forge more productive partnerships with those in government. Each of our clients understands the value of policymakers' time and works with us to optimize every interaction. The result is more productive, mutually beneficial, and efficient engagement.

## PARTICIPATE IN OUR RESEARCH

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OUR PROMISE: ALL PARTICIPATION IN OUR RESEARCH IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION.

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