



“HOW POLITICS REALLY WORK: AN INSIDER’S VIEW” TOPICAL ISSUES FOR STATE AND LOCAL POLITICS

This document can be found on our website:
www.rit.edu/cla/statesmanship/events.php

1. **Federalism:** The American political system includes three levels of government (Federal, State and Local). Do you know your Federal, state and local government representatives?
 - a. Federal: U.S. Senate and House of Representatives
 - b. NY State: Senate and Assembly
 - c. Local: County, City, Town/Village officials
2. **Redistricting** (the process of drawing electoral district boundaries) and **gerrymandering** (a practice intended to establish a political advantage for a particular party or group): How do these processes impact our political system?
3. **Ethics in Government:** How to monitor and regulate conflicts of interest; what works and doesn't work in addressing ethics in government and politics?
4. **Campaign Financing Laws**
 - a. What laws currently govern political fundraising and campaign financing at the State and local level?
 - b. How would public financing of political campaigns impact our political system?
5. **The Role of Lobbying in our Political System**
 - a. How does lobbying impact legislative decision making?
6. **Getting out the vote:** How can we encourage more people to vote in presidential as well as “off-year” elections. Why are local/state elections important? Every vote “counts” so why do people not vote?
7. **Should judges be appointed or elected?** If appointed, what should be the criteria/process for appointing judges?
8. **What are the advantages of incumbency?**



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9. How do bills get to the floor for a vote in the State Legislature?

- a. What is the role of the Leadership of the respective houses in the functioning of their organizations?
- b. What role do committee chairs play in this process?
- c. What role do individual members of the legislature/congress have in introducing and passing legislation?

10. What is the role of the Governor vis-à-vis the State Legislature in policy making, and how do the two branches interact? How is it similar or different at the local level (County/City/Town/Village)?