



The Power of the States
Fall 2022
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Welcome to this 5-session exploration of *The People and Practices Behind the Programs and Policies that Impact People's Lives*. We will meet from 11:00am-12:50pm on the following days. There will also be additional opportunities to spend time with me as well as with the guests I am bringing in to join us.

Session Dates: October 3, October 17, October 31, November 14, November 28

Study Group Summary:

Access to abortion, school curricula and allowable books, redistricting, marriage equality, voting rights, equity, access for trans-gender individuals to sports in school, religious freedom, marijuana legalization – these are just a few of the hot topics that are being decided and/or debated in the States

Especially as exemplified over the past year by high profile state legislation, Supreme Court decisions and/or pending Supreme Court cases, the role and growing power of the States is loud and clear and is being recognized and leveraged more than ever to impact people's daily lives. But those decisions and pieces of legislation didn't just magically appear and weren't "overnight successes".

As a Brown alumna and leader in the public, private and non-profit sectors and as the former head of large government agencies at both the state and federal level (a more detailed relevant bio is at the bottom), I look forward to guiding you through this seminar and to the robust and dynamic conversations it will inspire! You will get to meet incredible leaders from across the nation working on some of these areas as well as elected officials sharing their accomplishments from the magnificent to the mundane.

The arc across these sessions will start with an introduction to state government and how the states work. It will then feature several case studies and personal examples of state efforts which we will then unpack, reverse engineer and pattern match. Finally, we'll look at the difference between impact at the State vs. the Federal government and will synthesize the full sweep of what we've heard and considered over the five sessions.

Through this seminar, I believe you will see meet a wide array of people in different roles who've made an impact and observe that States are where the action is and that you can play a key role in that action!

The objective of the study group is that you learn these 2 sets of 4Ps:

- 1) First – you will meet the **people** and hear about the **practices** behind the **policies** and **programs** at the state level that impact your lives and the lives of those around you.
- 2) Most importantly, you will gain an understanding of the **power** you have in making a difference, especially as you hear from different leaders working at the state level about some of their key success factors: the **partnerships** they have built, the **patience** they've embraced and the **persistence** they've asserted.

Session details:

Session 1, Oct 3: Introductions and Check-in:

- In this first session, we will get to know each other and how State Government works – especially with so many variations across the country.
- Featured guest*: NCSL (National Council of State Legislators)

Session 2, Oct 17: Digging into the people and the practices:

- A panel of State Legislators from across the country (both in person and via zoom) will share what inspired them to serve and will highlight issues on which they've worked - from the magnificent to the mundane.
- Case Study #1: Marriage Equality: While it was enshrined at the Supreme Court in June, 2015 and may soon be codified into Federal law, the Freedom to Marry gathered its momentum on a journey to and through the states. Hear from the people who have been and are still powering and leading that arduous journey.
- Featured guests*:
 - State Legislators: Speaker Laurie Jinkins (WA), House Leader Joanna McClinton (PA), Senator Cory McCray (MD), Delegate Danica Roem (VA)
 - Case Study #1: Bill Smith, Evan Wolfson

Session 3, Oct 31: Nerding out on certain state government concepts and workshopping what's been shared thus far:

- The inner workings of legislative progress as well as the plumbing of how the actual work happens will animate this conversation. Topics to be explored include direct democracy, technical corrections, rulemaking, procurement/contracting, auditing/OIG and change management – the unsung nuts and bolts of how government works.
- Now, at the mid-point of the Seminar, you will process and workshop what you've heard thus far. You will share and explore state policy or program examples that you've identified and dig into how they came to fruition.

Session 4, Nov 14: Pattern-matching and exploring similarities and difference among the respective campaigns:

- Case Study #2: Paid Family and Medical Leave: More than a dozen states now have codified statewide programs, but despite efforts spanning multiple federal administrations, it is still not a federal program. Hear from Washington state leaders (legislators and community activists)

about their journey and successful bipartisan solutions as well as from a national leader who acted as a force multiplier to get other states on board.

- Case Study #3: Gun Violence Prevention: Learn about how national leaders deploy a variety of efforts tailored by state as a strategy to ladder up to larger momentum around gun violence prevention.
- Featured guests*:
 - Case Study #2: Pronita Gupta, Senator Karen Keiser (WA), Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Marilyn Watkins
 - Case Study #3: John Feinblatt, Matt McTighe

Session 5, Nov 28: Wrap-up and a look at the ability to get things done at the state vs. the federal level:

- A lawyer who has been at the nexus of state vs. federal jurisdiction will enumerate his experiences pressing for fair access to voting in state courts and how that intersects with federal law
- Additional guests will talk about leading at both the state and federal level, how the experiences differ and what the impact feels like at both levels
- Finally, just like there was a check-in, there will be a wrap up and check-out. Students will synthesize the key learnings from the respective sessions and discuss what each person's takeaways and actions will be from what they heard.
- Featured guests*:
 - Marc Elias
 - Senator, former Governor, and Brown Alumna Maggie Hassan

Housekeeping:

- Recommended podcasts, videos and readings will be shared in advance of the respective sessions. Consuming this content will not be essential for effective participation in the study group but will certainly enhance the conversation quality.
- Biographical detail on the guests will be forthcoming prior to the respective sessions

Course Leadership:

Ambassador Suzan LeVine currently serves as a board director and community organizer. Her non-linear career and path to the workforce development world features experiences and expertise from the public, private, and non-profit sectors with a North Star of impact and was jump started by her Brown University dual Sc.B. and A.B. degrees in Engineering and English.

She most recently served as Acting Assistant Secretary for the Employment and Training Administration at the United States Department of Labor with a portfolio including unemployment insurance, apprenticeship, Job Corps, workforce development, foreign labor certification and more. She led the 1,000-person organization through the administration transition, managed an \$11 billion budget, grew the organization by over 10% in 6 months, oversaw the issuance of more than \$8 billion in workforce system grants, helped secure \$2 billion in American Rescue Plan funding for the Unemployment Insurance System and revived the Advisory Committee on Apprenticeship.

This follows public sector positions as the United States Ambassador to Switzerland and Liechtenstein and the Commissioner for the Washington state Employment Security Department. During her time as Ambassador, highlights included increasing foreign direct investment by \$3 billion and growing the Swiss model of apprenticeship in the United States. To catalyze this growth, she secured the agreement of 30 Swiss companies to build their apprenticeship programs in the United States.

Among her many accomplishments as Commissioner, she ran the 2,500-person agency, overseeing the on-time and on-budget launch of the nation's first built-from-scratch Paid Family and Medical Leave program, delivering half a billion dollars to over 100,000 people in its first year. In the face of the pandemic, her agency hired 1,000 people in six months and provided over a million people with over \$14 billion in unemployment benefits in only ten months.

Her private and non-profit sector roles included Windows 95 product manager and Director of Communications for Education at Microsoft and Vice President for Sales and Marketing in Luxury Travel at Expedia, Inc. Twice during her career, she was a stay-at-home mom of two kids, during which time she co-founded two non-profit organizations. Suzi serves on the non-profit boards of CareerWise USA, RIPL (Research Improving People's Lives) and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation and, in the for-profit realm, she sits on the board of Publicis Groupe and the US advisory board for OpenClassrooms.com.

Most importantly, she enjoys spending time with her family, epic-walking and paddleboarding.

* Featured guests are subject to change and will be a blend of in-person and video conference.