

# Montana League of Cities and Towns

## Executive Director's Report—2003 Final Report

<http://www.mlct.org/director4.htm>

### Management and Local Control

The Republican and Democratic Parties allege their support for the idea of local control, which is also an element of the conservative doctrine of smaller and less centralized government. There is a lot of talk about “the governments that are closest to the people”, but bills that do nothing more than preempt the management authority and regulatory powers of local government routinely trump this theory.

The 2003 Legislature considered numerous bills that in one way or another would have preempted the authority of cities and counties and moved Montana even further away from the principles of local control established by the 1972 Constitution.

**House Bills 258 and 758** were introduced for one purpose – to preempt the Helena Smoking Ordinance that was approved by 62% of the voters at the primary election last June. This ordinance has been the subject of political conflicts and court cases for nearly a year, and now it has been repealed by the Legislature. This bill subjected an issue that was handled differently by cities across the state to state control and opened up the possibility that the Legislature at some time will pass a law banning smoking in bars and casinos all across Montana.