



Talking to Civic Organizations Speech

Replace “CITY” throughout if you are a town or village.

As the **TITLE** of **NAME OF CITY**, I am proud to represent us.

While I’m here as a representative of **NAME OF CITY**, the question is, how do people like me know the best policies and practices for our unique community? The answer is: By staying connected to our residents and the civic organizations they join.

I cannot overstate how important it is for me to create relationships and stay engaged with you, learning what is important to you, the best and brightest in our communities. Allow me to use my role as **TITLE** to bring us together.

You are the ones who represent, serve and lead our community. We need to know what is important to you, and as elected leaders, we will make those priorities important to us. We want to strengthen our relationships with our residents and civic organizations. As elected officials, our door is always open.

We can accomplish great things by working together to achieve shared goals.

Not everyone is on our team, however. Right now, at **this** very moment, there is a power play taking place behind the scenes at the state Capitol.

A movement that **threatens** our **constitutional right to govern ourselves**, a movement to quiet our voices here in **CITY NAME**, to tell **us** that **they** are better equipped to make decisions for **our** community ...

It’s called **Home Rule**.

Yes, **our** right of Home Rule, to govern ourselves, to solve local problems with local solutions, is under attack. You may already be feeling the effects...

Many of you have called **CITY** hall asking for our help because [include a concern that you cannot fully address because of a preemption. It might be regulating smoking in public parks; controlling where medical marijuana dispensaries are located; determining where cell towers (5G small cells) are installed and what they look like; vacation rentals taking over your neighborhood; more regulations on firearms, especially with the recent tragic events in our state; the regulation of plastic bags, etc.]



We decide how our **local** tax dollars are used ...More police officers... Better transportation... More programs to serve our youth and senior citizens. Shouldn't we, as residents, also decide the policies we want to govern those programs?

We must work together to ensure that the state stops chiseling away at Home Rule. What makes our cities and civic organizations strong is our ability to adopt ordinances and enact programs in response to our needs both effectively and efficiently. We do not need permission from the state. We already have it!

We've had this right for 50 years. 50 years of local decision-making. 50 years of Florida's cities crafting our own laws specifically tailored to our own unique needs. One size doesn't fit all. Miami isn't Mount Dora. **YOU CAN SUB THE LAST SENTENCE WITH THE NAME OF YOUR CITY AND THE NAME OF A CITY OF A VERY DIFFERENT SIZE BUT WHICH HAS A NAME THAT BEGINS WITH THE SAME LETTER AS YOUR CITY.**

Home Rule is a cherished concept, supported by an overwhelming majority of Florida citizens. It is the foundation for local governments as we create fair, effective and responsive policies for our communities. However, in the last few years, the state has increasingly sought to take away this right from us.

We have an ally in this fight.

Since 1922, the Florida League of Cities has been the united voice for Florida's municipal governments. The League is dedicated to serving the needs of Florida's cities, from advocacy to education to providing fiscal solutions to cities of all sizes. The cornerstone of this organization is to protect and promote local self-government – our right to Home Rule.

I will fight to protect Home Rule, and so will the League, but we can't do it alone. We need you on our team.

To pledge your support to protect local self-government.

To take a stand and tell state lawmakers "get out of our backyard." ...

Share this message with your friends and family. Post it on social media. Talk about it at your kid's sporting events and on Sunday mornings...

We work local, we serve local, we **live** local... so **we** should decide local.

[A specific call to action should be added here. We recommend starting with a call to sign-up at www.WeLiveLocalFL.com to learn more about Home Rule and access exclusive advocacy materials designed for residents. Other action steps will be determined by when the speech is given. If months away from session, it could be asking the audience to sign a general petition against legislators taking away local authority. If near or during session, it might be to oppose a bill that preempts local control and providing the audience with information about the bill and the names/contact information of their representative and senator.]

I welcome and encourage suggestions, questions and feedback from you, my neighbors.

I look forward to a successful year working with you. Thank you for being here!

