

FAITH MATTERS

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RE-ENGAGE IN LOCAL POLITICS

BY DAVID L. BAHNSEN





Most damage is done at the local level of politics. I confess to this being a case of the pot calling the kettle black, having been a federal politics junkie for my entire adult life and most of my childhood, as well. I wish I could say that by engaging in local politics you will become less cynical and frustrated, but I must warn you – it's highly likely to get worse. ... Nevertheless, the need is overwhelming in our cities, counties, and states.

We need greater competence and greater integrity. The dilemma we face is this: the most competent and honest in society have found the world of local politics repugnant (for good reason, most of the time). In their absence, ne'er-do-wells or worse eagerly fill the vacuum. But who fills the halls of Congress eventually? Former state senate and state assembly members. Who gets elected to these state positions?

Former members of county boards and city councils. Local politics is generally a training ground for state and federal politics. Thus, our apathy for local politics leaves us with terrible consequences now for our cities and terrible future consequences for everywhere else.

Truth be told, plenty of fantastic people enter local civic leadership for no other reason than to serve their communities. By no means do I want to paint with a broad brush, but we have a systemic problem. There are not enough high-quality candidates in the local domain and not enough citizens engaged on the topics and issues that matter most. For example, city councils and county boards have done more damage to property rights than any liberal Supreme Court could have done in a lifetime. City councils and county boards control zoning laws,



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FOREWORD BY DAVID FRENCH

CRISIS OF RESPONSIBILITY

*Our Cultural
Addiction to Blame
and How You
Can Cure It*

DAVID L. BAHNSEN



which have proven to be extraordinary tools for central planning and statism.

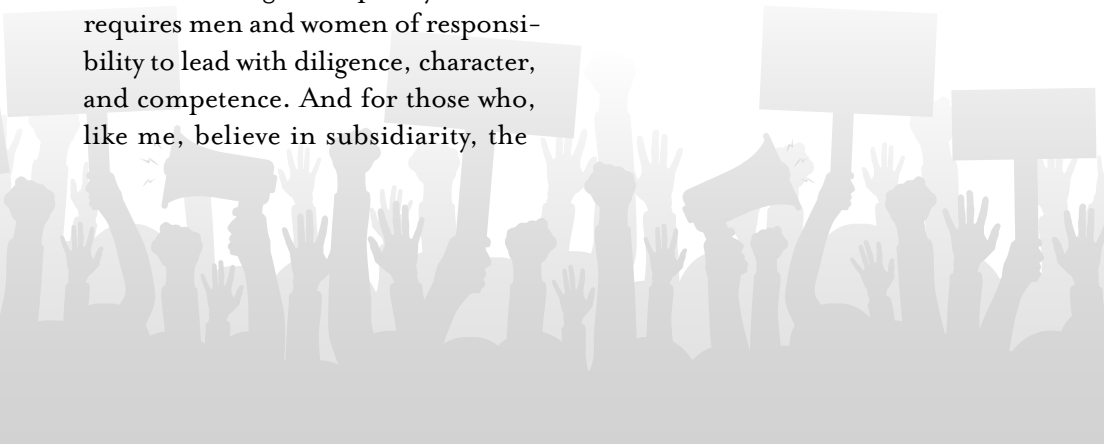
The business-friendliness of a community is often either established or destroyed at the local level, because the general process by which business gets done is determined by the tax, regulatory, and enforcement framework. When I say cronyism festers at the local level, it's because local officials are most guilty of making special handouts of public dollars (or selectively waiving tax liabilities, the reciprocal expression of the exact same thing).

So much of the American quality of life is a by-product of the local community leadership. Protecting and enhancing that quality of life requires men and women of responsibility to lead with diligence, character, and competence. And for those who, like me, believe in subsidiarity, the

best defense against a far removed federal government intruding into a local community... is not to give them a reason to do so. Strong local governance always and forever limits the need for a stronger, more oppressive federal government.

Excerpt taken from *The Crisis of Responsibility: Our Cultural Addiction to Blame and How You Can Cure It*, by David L. Bahnsen (Post Hill Press, 2018), pp.139-141. Posthillpress.com.

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David L. Bahnsen is the founder, Managing Partner, and Chief Investment Officer of The Bahnsen Group, a bi-coastal private wealth management firm, managing over \$2.25 billion in client assets. Named as a top financial advisor in America by Barron's, Forbes, and the Financial Times, he is a frequent guest on CNBC, Bloomberg, Fox Business and a regular contributor to National Review and World. He has written his *Viewpoint* blog for over a decade.

David serves on the Board of Directors for the National Review Institute, King's College in New York City, and is a founding Trustee for Pacifica Christian High School of Orange County. He is the Senior Fellow of Economics for the Center for Cultural Leadership, and a long-time faculty member for both the Acton Institute and the Blackstone Fellowship of the Alliance Defending Freedom. David is passionate about the integration of faith and economics, and has lectured and written for years about a theology of wealth and the marketplace. He is the author of the book, *Crisis of Responsibility: Our Cultural Addiction to Blame and How You Can Cure It* (Post Hill Press).

His ultimate passions are his wife of 18+ years, Joleen, their children, sons Mitchell and Graham, and daughter Sadie, and the life they've created together on both coasts.



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