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Is the Tax Fight Over the SALT Deduction a Sign of Waning State and Local Influence on Capitol Hill?

“Do we have the clout we once had?” said the executive director of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. “That’s a very difficult question.”

WASHINGTON — The sweeping tax bill Republicans in Congress sent to President Trump this week marks a year-end defeat for groups that fought unsuccessfully on behalf of governors, mayors, cities and counties to fully preserve a federal deduction for state and local taxes.

There are straightforward explanations for why tax-writers chose to cap the deduction for the state and local property, income and sales taxes households pay at \$10,000 in the final legislation. One is that doing so provided a huge sum to help offset rate reductions and other changes GOP members of Congress wanted to make to the tax code.

“We were just a number on a spreadsheet,” said Matthew Chase, the executive director of the National Association of Counties.

But the battle over the SALT deduction, and other aspects of the tax bill, also offers a look at how dynamics have changed during recent years when it comes to state and local government groups lobbying for their priorities on Capitol Hill.

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