Original Work Set-Up and Completion Summary

**Date/s:** I worked on my Original Work throughout the second half of November and the first few weeks of December, up until the due date on December 14th.

**Time/s:** I worked studied the topic of my project in some capacity for a total of 14.5 hours over the course of the weeks I worked on the assignment. This includes drafting the project, all of the research that went into it, speaking with my mentors about it, and writing the final synthesis paper.

**Materials:** I completed this original work project entirely through online research and primary information from my mentors. In other words, my computer, a notebook for taking some notes, and various online Texas legislation and news websites were the exclusive “materials” I used.

**Objective/Purpose**: For my Original Work, I wanted to gain a deeper understanding of the concept and arguments in local control and research specific cases where local control is a big deal between the city and state governments in Texas. Additionally, I wanted to bring some part of my work back to Frisco to see how officials within an actual municipality feel about local control in relation to the different instances of the conflict I researched. In other words, I wanted to complete extensive research on this topic of local vs. state jurisdiction while being able to relate it back to Frisco specifically.

**Description of Process:** This year’s Original Work was really driven by my research. In comparison to last year I completed a lot more research trying to learn about different cases where local control was cited as a major explanation to the state’s overruling of a city law, especially because every article I read seemed to have a fluid connection to some other article relating to local control in another topic. Because of this, my process was driven almost entirely by research. I spent hours drafting my proposal, began researching, developed a rough outline for my final synthesis paper to analyze some of the trends in local control I had witnessed through my research, and then writing the paper itself. Within these general phases, I also worked with my mentors to clarify aspects of local control I didn’t completely comprehend and to gain a better understanding of how leaders of Frisco specifically feel about local control. I chose to address certain local control cases and certain broad local control questions within my final paper as well to guide my explanation of everything I learned.

**Utilization of Higher-Level Thinking Skills:** Going into the project I didn’t think I would utilize higher-level thinking skills as much as I could of, but now looking back, I think the research paper I wrote was an incredible way for me to reflect and build on the research I did. By asking more nuanced questions within the paper like “Is local control a partisan issue?” I was able to go beyond the technical black and white facts of local control situations and use my own knowledge to infer and analyze based on what I know. This synthesis provided me with a deeper connection to the subject matter while also giving my paper more readability than a very cut-and-dry research paper. This is even why it feels unfair to call it simply a research paper, because while it was built from a foundation of research, I really synthesized and considered local control patterns in my paper.

**Results:** I honestly am very proud of the work that I did. Going into the project I wasn’t sure how much substance there would be within the field of local control, but I can confidently say now that it was absolutely fascinating to read about the conflicts between state and city governments and then take that information to actual city officials who could help further my understanding of the situation. I learned that some situations (like texting and driving and ride hailing policies) seem to work better when left up to the state to decide regulations, while some (like property taxing) is best left to city governments to handle. As far as my paper, because of how I utilized synthesis so much (as mentioned above), I think my essay was a little more biased, but at the same time I don’t think I was ever going for complete neutrality (because all the facts I built off of are still available online). Instead, I really tried to view this subject from my own eyes and reflect accordingly, which in reflection, I’m quite happy with how it turned out.

**Conclusions/Interpretations:** Overall, I’m still so interested in this concept of local control. One thing my mentors comment on frequently is that good legislation is determined by how it works in the hands of a different party. In other words, historically political parties in control switch back and forth and I hope to continue learning about how the state rules on city laws with potentially changing Texas politics affecting the local control situation in the future. I’m really surprised at this idea that there are conservative cities (like Frisco) that oppose state control in local situations, even with Republicans controlling the state. In a broader national context, it really points to an underlying shift in the Republican party and similar to how party control could change in Texas over the next few years, it will be fascinating to watch how differences within the Republican party could lead to more fractioning at a city and state level.

**Application/Meaning:** For one aspect of my project, I hope that I’ve made some of these local control cases more accessible and understandable to the public. I sought out to write something readable as opposed to a really dense and objective look of local control. I hope some the meaning that comes out of this Original Work will be spreading the understanding of local control to anyone who hears about the work I completed. Another big application I’m looking forward to is personal further research on the subject. I would love, from here, to speak to more state officials and maybe go in even more depth with particular legislation and examining the actual bills themselves to delve into the intricacies of local control instead of just learning about and being able to recognize the broader instances, too.