Power Scorecard Methodology

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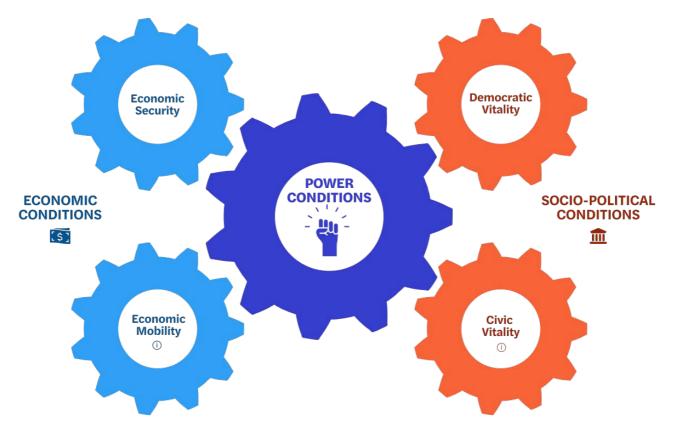
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Power Scorecard Methodology

Background

The Power Scorecard compiles and analyzes a total of 60 indicators organized into two major sections: economic conditions and socio-political conditions, which include 30 metrics each. The framework is further organized into four pillars: economic security, economic mobility, civic vitality and democratic vitality.



The 60 metrics included in the framework are not an exhaustive list of all factors pertinent to economic or socio-political power. Rather, they have been chosen for their ability to convey a holistic snapshot of the composite condition of economic and socio-political power. By design, the framework does not assess states' degree of alignment to specific policy levers or practices that may seek to influence these conditions power: the tool offers a description, not a prescription.

All data points used within this framework meet five requirements for inclusion:

- Pertain to the state level or to a level that can be easily aggregated to state level (e.g. county)
- Available for all 50 states
- Publicly available (i.e. not purchased or custom-collected)
- Numerical in nature either quantitative in its original format or converted into a numerical range
- Regularly updated to maximize chances of a consistent data set that can be tracked over time

Organizing Framework

₿ ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Individual's and communities' financial well-being and the factors that impact it

ECONOMIC SECURITY

Ability to meet current daily needs.

Immediate Security

Ability to live freely and safely while expressing one's identities, opinions and beliefs.

Ability to		Measured by
1/ COVER EVERYDAY COSTS	→	Percentage households stating ability to meet weekly expenses
2/ OBTAIN A DIGNIFIED INCOME	→	Percentage households above the ALICE Threshold
3/ ACCESS BANKING SERVICES	→	Percentage households with a bank account (not unbanked)
4/ AVOID DEBT CRISES	→	Percentage people with a credit bureau record showing no debt in collections
5/ MEET BASIC CHILD NEEDS	→	Percentage children living above the child poverty line

Future Resilience

Ability to sustain economic shocks and financial emergencies.

<i>Ability to</i> 6/ SUSTAIN A VIABLE FINANCIAL BALANCE	→	Measured by Percentage people with a credit score above 600
7/ MAINTAIN STABLE HOUSING	→	Percentage households spending no more than 30% of income on rent
8/ EXERCISE BASIC WORKER RIGHTS	→	Percentage workers represented by a union
9/ ADDRESS HEALTH NEEDS	\rightarrow	Percentage households not avoiding healthcare due to cost reasons
10/ CHOOSE IF/WHEN TO HAVE CHILDREN	→	Percentage women of reproductive age not living in contraceptive deserts

Enabling Context

Systems that support Economic Security.

In the context of		Measured by
11/ EFFECTIVE PUBLIC WELFARE DISBURSEMENT	→	Percentage gap between current benefit program funding and participation vs max. impact
12/ WORKER WELLBEING	\rightarrow	Worker Protection Policies index and Collective Bargaining Laws index
13/ ABUNDANT AFFORDABLE HOUSING	→	Affordable available housing units per 100 households with extremely low income
14/ AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE	→	Percentage household median income consumed by childcare costs
15/ FAIR TAXATION	→	Tax inequality index

ECONOMIC MOBILITY

The ability to improve economic situation over time.

Intra-Generational Mobility

Ability to increase income and wealth over the course of one's life.

Ability to		Measured by	
16/ EARN A HIGH INCOME	→	Percentage households earning a thriving wage ar	nd able to save
17/ OWN APPRECIATING ASSETS	→	Percentage households owning their home	
18/ OWN A BUSINESS	→	Small business ownership per 100,000 people	
19/ ESTABLISH COMPOUNDING INVESTMENTS	→	Percentage people with retirement accounts	
20/ AVOID EXCESSIVE STUDENT DEBT	→	Percentage borrowers with student loan debt	

Inter-Generational Mobility

Factors that support children having better economic situations in adulthood than their parents

Ability to		Measured by	
21/ DEVELOP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD	\rightarrow	Percentage children 3-5 years old enrolled in school	
22/ ACCESS A BASELINE FOR EDUCATIONAL SUCCESS	→	Average 4th grade reading level (out of 238)	
23/ GAIN CREDENTIALS BEFORE OBLIGATIONS	→	Number of births per 1,000 teenage females	
24/ COMPLETE SECONDARY EDUCATION	→	Percentage children completing high school	
25/ PURSUE POST- SECONDARY EDUCATION	\rightarrow	Percentage completion of post-secondary education	I

Enabling Context

Systems that support Economic Mobility.

In the context of		Measured by	
26/ MOBILITY-ENABLING SPENDING	→	State spending per capita on public goods for econo	omic mobility
27/ PROPULSIVE NEIGHBORHOODS	→	Percentage people living in high mobility census tra	cts
28/ POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION FINANCING OPTIONS	→	Percentage of financial aid that is need-based	
29/ CONDUCIVE HOUSEHOLD STRUCTURES	→	Percentage households with multiple earners	
30/ HIGH SOCIAL CAPITAL	→	State Economic Connectedness score	

SOCIO-POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Factors that influence the political power, civic engagement, and well-being of individuals and communities.

CIVIC VITALITY

The ability to meet daily needs and sustain a comfortable standard of living.

Basic Liberties

Ability to live freely and safely while expressing one's identities, opinions and beliefs.

Ability to		Measured by	
31/ LIVE SAFELY	→	Rate of reported violent crime per 100,000 people	
32/ AFFIRM PERSONAL IDENTITY	\rightarrow	Rate of reported hate crimes per 100,000 people	
33/ MOVE FREELY	→	Rate of incarceration per 100,000 people	
34/ AVOID INTRUSIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT	\rightarrow	Police violence index	
35/ EXPRESS OPINIONS AND BELIEFS	→	Inclusiveness index	

Community Cohesion

Ability to shape and stay connected to local community.

Ability to		Measured by	
36/ START ON A PATH TO OPPORTUNITY	\rightarrow	Rate of youth disconnection	
37/ STAY INFORMED ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS	\rightarrow	Percentage counties with more than one local news	source or outlet
38/ PARTICIPATE IN CIVIC DELIBERATIONS	→	Percentage participated in a public meeting or enga official	ged with a public
39/ RECEIVE CARE AND EXPERTISE	→	Percentage members of community organizations o volunteering	r spent time
40/ GROUND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT IN LOCAL NEEDS	→	Community-Based Development Organizations per	100,000 people

Enabling Context

Social and political environment that supports free, safe and interconnected communities.

In the context of		Measured by
41/ TOLERANCE OF PUBLIC EXPRESSION	→	Presence of anti-protest laws
42/ SHARED ECONOMIC REALITY	→	Gini index
43/ NEIGHBORHOOD DIVERSITY	→	Percentage living in racially diverse census tracts
44/ UNCONCENTRATED POVERTY	→	Share of residents experiencing poverty NOT living in persistently high poverty census tracts
45/ FUNDING TO SUSTAIN CIVIC LIFE	\rightarrow	Civic and democratic grant spending per capital

DEMOCRATIC VITALITY

The ability to engage in our political process to determine who they are represented by and how they are governed.

Representative Elections

Experience and participate in inclusive electoral processes.

Ability to		Measured by	
46/ CAST A VOTE	\rightarrow	Percentage voting age population eligible to vote	
47/ CHOOSE AMONG MULTI CANDIDATE S	→	Percentage of uncontested elections (federal, stat	e and local)8
48/ MEANINGFULLY IMPACT RESULTS	→	Redistricting Report Card ranking	
49/ TRUST ELECTEES REFLECT MAJORITY: FEDERAL	→	Voter turnout rate: Presidential elections and mid-	term elections
50/ TRUST ELECTEES REFLECT MAJORITY: STATE	\rightarrow	Voter turnout rate: State (gubernatorial) elections	

Responsive Governance

Experience governance responsive to the needs of its constituents.

Ability to		Measured by
51/ CONTRIBUTE DIVERSE RACIAL EXP.	\rightarrow	Ratio of % POC state legislators to % POC population
52/ CONTRIBUTE DIVERSE GENDER EXP.	→	Percentage women state legislators
53/ CONTRIBUTE DIVERSE CLASS EXP.	→	Ratio of legislator compensation to median income
54/ HOLD GOVERNMENT TO ACCOUNT WITH DATA	→	Presence of state open data laws
55/ ENGAGE IN DEMOCRATIC CONSULTATIONS	\rightarrow	Presence of direct democracy initiatives (0-3)

Enabling Context

Systems that facilitate political participation and compel government accountability.

In the context of		Measured by	
56/ FAIR AND PROTECTED ELECTORAL PROCESSES	\rightarrow	Democracy Subversion Protections index (1-5)	
57/ EASY AND ACCESSIBLE VOTING	\rightarrow	Voter suppression and expansion law index (0-9)	
58/ FINANCIALLY TRANSPARENT LOBBYING	→	Lobby transparency index (0-20)	
59/ AVAILABLE PUBLIC FINANCING PROGRAMS	→	Presence of small donor financing programs	
60/ CAPS ON CORPORATE INFLUENCE	\rightarrow	State limits on corporate contributions to candidate	S

Scoring Methodology

Each of the 60 metrics are scored out of 2 points, thereby yielding a maximum overall score of 120 for each state. The 60 metrics are organized under four pillars of equal weight, each comprising 15 metrics.



At the individual metric level, the approach taken was to:

Calculate the standard deviation across the 50 states data points for a given metric

E.g., percentage of people with a credit score above 600 – the data range for the 50 states for this metric is 64% to 86%; the calculated standard deviation across the 50 data points is 0.059 or 5.9%

Define a maximization point for the metric

E.g., percentage of people with a credit score above 600 – though the actual data point range is 64% to 86%, the maximization/ideal point is 100% people have a credit score above 600.

Calculate a score (x) for all data points for the metric, by calculating how many standard deviations from the maximization point each state's data point is

E.g., in Minnesota, 86% of people have a credit score above 600 – Minnesota's x score is 2.4, i.e., Minnesota (86%) is 2.4 standard deviations (2.4*5.9% = 14%) away from the maximization point (100%). Similarly, in Alaska, 75% of people have a credit score above 600 – Alaska's x score is 4.27 i.e., Alaska is 4.27 standard deviations (4.27*5.9 = 25%) away from the maximization point (100%) Interpretation of the score at this point: higher score implies worse performance.

Normalize the scores for the 50 data points of the metric by converting them into a range from 0-2

Since state performance relative to the the maximization point varies a great deal across metrics, so do the resulting x score ranges – e.g., the x score range for people with a credit score above 600 is 2.4 to 6.14; comparatively, the x score range for another metric – (children 3-5 years old enrolled in school) is 3.76 to 9.01. Therefore, it is essential to normalize

the scores on the same scale to ensure that all metrics are evaluated equally.

We chose to normalize the x scores to a 0-2 range. The normalization method applied is each data point divided by the maximum data point for the metric. E.g., for people with a credit score above 600 – Minnesota's normalized score is 0.79 (2*2.4/6.1) and Alaska's normalized score is 1.39 (2*4.27/6.1). Interpretation of score at this point – higher score still implies worse performance (further away from maximization point).

Flip the scores for ease of understanding – higher score implies better performance

E.g., Minnesota's normalized score of 0.79 will be reported as Minnesota's final score of 1.21 out of 2 on the metric; and Alaska's normalized score of 1.39 will be reported as Alaska's final score of 0.61 out of 2 on the metric. Final interpretation of score – higher score implies better performance.

This approach is replicated across all 60 metrics, producing scores out of 2 points for each metric.

To calculate states individual and relative performance for specific components

The scoring methodology above is designed to give equal weight to the 60 metrics and enable both absolute and relative scoring to be calculated at each level of the framework: sub-category level (e.g., Immediate Security); core component level (e.g., Economic Security); broad dimension level (e.g., Economic Conditions); and finally, an overall framework level (i.e., Aggregate Conditions).

Absolute Scoring

HOW DOES EACH STATE INDIVIDUALLY PERFORM?

Sum the final scores for all the metrics of the desired level to get the total score

• E.g., sum the scores of the 5 metrics in Immediate Security to get a score out of 10 for the state's overall performance on Immediate Security; sum the scores of the 15 metrics in Economic Security to get a score out of 30 for that state's overall performance on Economic Security.

Relative Scoring

HOW DOES A STATE PERFORM RELATIVE TO THE OTHER STATES?

Rank the summed scores for any level for the 50 states

• E.g., for economic security, rank the 50 states based on their total score out of 30 to understand relative performance.

Thematic Case Studies Methodology

The thematic case studies provide a closer look at the impact on specific segments of the population and are evaluated on smaller subsets of metrics from the overarching framework. It worth noting that first case study (impact on populations of color) is evaluated on a subset of metrics due to lack of available racially disaggregated data – i.e., not by design, whereas the second case study (impact on children and families) is evaluated on an intentionally shortlisted set of metrics from the framework that most directly affect children and families.

Impact On Populations of Color

This analysis looks at racially disaggregated data (where available/applicable) to provide insights into how conditions vary for different populations.

Data Scope and Limitations

DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS

Data was collected for the following groups: white non-Hispanic, Black or African American non-Hispanic, Hispanic/ Latino, and Asian non-Hispanic. Some race/ethnic groups were not included, such as American Indian or Alaska Native, Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian, multiple races due to data gaps and inconsistent availability.

METRICS

Of the 60 metrics, the total number of metrics each demographic group is evaluated on is 12 for White and Black, 9 for Hispanic/Latino and 8 for Asian.

STATES

Due to inconsistent data availability, not all states could be scored and analyzed for every selected metric. The total number of states that were ranked for white people is 45, Black is 41, Hispanic/Latino is 43, and Asian is 39. States with partially incomplete or unavailable disaggregated data for one or more race/ethnic groups and/or metrics include CO, HI, IN, MT, NH, NM, OK, VT, OH, SC, NC, MO, GA, WY.

METRICS INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS

1	Cover everyday costs	Percentage households stating ability to meet weekly expenses
2	Maintain stable housing	Percentage households spending no more than 30% income on rent
3	Affordable childcare	Childcare cost burden as percentage of household median income
4	Earn a high income	Percentage households earning a thriving wage and able to save
5	Own appreciating assets	Percentage households owning their home Hispanic/Latino data unavailable
6	Gain credentials before obligations	Number of births per 1,000 teenage females Asian data unavailable
7	Complete secondary education	Percentage children completing high school Asian data unavailable
8	Pursue post-secondary education	Percentage completion of post-secondary education
9	Propulsive neighborhoods	Percentage people living in high mobility census tracts
10	Conducive household structures	Percentage households with multiple earners (2 or more)
11	Move freely	Rate of incarceration per 100,000 people Hispanic/Latino and Asian data unavailable
12	Avoid intrusive law enforcement	Police violence index Hispanic/Latino and Asian data unavailable

Impact On Children And Families

This analysis zooms into the subset of metrics from the overarching framework that affect children and families directly – either currently or in their future prospects. The selected metrics provide a snapshot of conditions that disproportionately impact economic security for children and families and conditions that enable children in building better economic outcomes for themselves in adulthood than their parents.

METRICS INCLUDED IN ANALYSIS

1	Meet basic child needs	Percentage of children living above the poverty line
2	Choose if/when to have children	Percentage women of reproductive age not living in contraceptive deserts
3	Affordable childcare	Percentage household median income consumed by childcare costs
4	Develop in early childhood	Percentage children 3-5 years old enrolled in school
5	Establish a baseline for education success	Average 4th grade reading level
6	Gain credentials before obligations	Number of births per 1,000 teenage females
7	Complete secondary education	Percentage children completing high school
8	Pursue post-secondary education	Percentage completion of post-secondary education
9	Propulsive neighborhoods	Percentage people living in high mobility census tracts
10	Post-secondary education financing options	Percentage of financial aid that is need-based
11	Conducive household structures	Percentage household with multiple earners
12	Start adulthood on an opportunity path	Rate of youth disconnection

60 Metrics Titles And References

Source and year for all metrics & Definition/Explanations

1) US Census Household Pulse Survey, 2023.

Note: The Household Pulse Survey data from Phases 3.6-3.10 were used to cover a full 12 month period running from October 2022-October 2023. Survey data was not collected for November and December 2023, and Phase 4.0 data collection ran from January-April 2024. For future Household Pulse Survey data collection, utilize a full 12-month period for data consistency.

2) Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed — households that earn more than the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford the basics where they live. Derived from the Household Survival Budget, the ALICE Threshold is rounded to the nearest American Community Survey income category and adjusted for household size and composition. United for Alice, 2022

3) Prosperity Now Scorecard, 2021

4) Urban Institute Data Catalogue - Debt in America, 2023

5) The Annie E. Casey Foundation - Kids Count Data Center, 2023

6) Urban Institute Data Catalogue - Credit Health, 2021

7) U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates: Selected Housing Characteristics, 2023

8) US Bureau of Labor Statistics - Union Representation, 2022-2023

9) Health Equity Tracker, 2022

10) Contraceptive deserts are defined as counties where the number of health centers offering the full range of methods is not enough to meet the needs of the county's number of women eligible for publicly funded contraception, defined as at least one health center for every 1,000 women in need of publicly funded contraception. Power to Decide - Contraceptive Deserts, 2022

11) Urban Institute – Safety Net Full Participation Impact on Poverty Analysis, 2022

12) This index accumulates a wide range of worker protection policies including paid sick and family leave, safety standards, worker rights protection, collective bargaining laws and more. Oxfam – Best and Worst States to Work in America, updated July 2024

13) National Low Income Housing Coalition – Affordable Housing, 202

14) Department of Labor - National Database of Childcare Prices, 2023.

Note: The cost of childcare is an average cost by age of children and care setting and are reflective of cost per child. In families with more than one child requiring childcare, the household cost burden will be higher.

15) Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy - Who Pays 7th Edition, 2024

16) Thriving wage is defined using a 50/30/20 rule, whereby a household has 50% of their income to meet essential needs, 30% for other wants, and 20% to save and invest.(A) U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) 1-Year Estimates: Income in the Past 12 Months, 2023. (B) MIT – Living Wage Calculator

17) US Census Bureau – Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, 2020

18) Small Business Administration Office of Advocacy – State Profiles, 2022

19) US Census Bureau – Wealth and Asset Ownership, 2021

20) Prosperity Now Scorecard – Education, 2022.

Note: This measure includes consumers taking out loans for their own education, but also people taking out loans or co-sign loans for family members.

21) U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS), 2022

22) National Center for Education Statistics - National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2022

23) National Center for Health Statistics - Teen Birth Rate, 2022

24) National Center for Education Statistics – High School Adjusted Cohort Graduation Rates, 2021-2022

25) U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS) – Education Attainment, 2023

26) U.S. Census Bureau – Annual Surveys of State and Local Government Finances, 2021.

Note: The categories of expenditure in this calculation are education, social services (public welfare, healthcare) and housing.

27) High mobility census tract is defined as one where the mean percentile rank in the national distribution of household income of children whose parents were in the 25th percentile of the national distribution is greater than or equal to 50th percentile. US Census Bureau – Opportunity Atlas Data: Household Income and Incarceration for Children From Low-

29) U.S. Census Bureau - American Community- Number of Earners in Family, 2022

30) Economic Connectedness is measured as the share of high (above median) income friends among people with low (below median) income. Opportunity Insights – Social Capital Atlas – Economic Connectedness, 2022

31) Statistica - Reported Violent Crime Rate in the United States, 2022

32) Federal Bureau of Investigation – Hate Crimes by Jurisdiction, 2019

33) Prison Policy Initiative - State Prison Incarceration Rate, 2021

34) The Police Violence index produces relative scores showing how agencies compare to each other across four areas of policing: police violence, police accountability, police funding, and an evaluation of each agency's approach to law enforcement (for example, the extent to which an agency focuses on arresting people for low-level offenses or addressing serious crimes). Scores range from 0-100; higher scores indicate better performance i.e., spend less on policing, use less force, are more likely to hold officers accountable and make fewer arrests for low-level offenses. Police Scorecard – Mapping Police Violence, 2021

35) The Inclusiveness Index holistically examines the degree of inclusivity experienced by marginalized groups (specifically gender; LGBTQ populations; people with disabilities; and racial, ethnic, and religious subgroups) across seven domains: out-group violence, political representation, income inequality, anti-discrimination laws, rates of incarceration, immigration or asylum policies and climate change. Berkeley Othering & Belonging Institute – Inclusiveness Index, 2024

36) ProsperityNow Scorecard - Education, 2021

37) Northwestern Local News Initiative - Local News Landscape, 2024

38) US Census Bureau - Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement Survey, 2021

39) US Census Bureau - Volunteering and Civic Life Supplement Survey, 2021

40) Urban Data Catalogue - Community-Based Development Organization Sector, 2022

41) O= no initiatives; 1= pending, defeated or expired initiatives; 2= enacted initiatives. International Center for Not-For-Profit Law – US Protest Law Tracker, updated May 2024

42) The Gini index is a measurement income inequality. Higher values indicate more income inequality with 0 indicating perfect equality and 1 indicating perfect inequality. U.S. Census Bureau – American Community Survey (ACS), 202

43) Measured using the Census Bureau's Diversity Index - the percentage chance that two people chosen at random will be from different race and ethnicity groups. U.S. Census Bureau – Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, 2020

44) US Census Bureau – SAIPE State and County Estimates, 2022; US Census Bureau – Persistent Poverty in Counties and Census Tracts, 2022

45) Candid – Grant Spending by State, 2022-2023. Note: 7The Candid Foundation Directory data is accessible with a subscription or license only, or for free through in-person data centers over the country.

46) US Elections Project – General Election Turnout and Eligibility, 2022

47) Ballotpedia - Uncontested Races by State, 2022.

Note: A race was considered uncontested if the number of candidates who filed for election was less than or equal to the number of seats on the ballot. The analysis below includes Ballotpedia's compiled data on the 10,820 seats that were on the ballot on November 8, 2022.

48) The Redistricting Report Card grades each state's newly drawn out maps (congressional, state, and house) on competitiveness, geographical features and partisan fairness. Grades were converted into numbers for this analysis (A= 5; B= 4; C= 3; D=2; F=1). Gerrymandering Project – Redistricting Report Card, 2021

49) US Census Bureau Data Tables – Voting and Registration, November 2020; US Census Bureau Data Tables – Voting and Registration, November 2022

50) The Book of the States - Voting Statistics of Gubernatorial Elections, 2018

51) National Conference of State Legislators - State Legislatures are a Glance, 2023

52) National Conference of State Legislators - Women in State Legislatures, 2023

53) National Conference of State Legislators - Legislator Compensation, 2024

54) Score interpretation: 1= state has open data laws; O= state does not have open data laws. National Conference of State Legislators – State Open Data Laws and Policies, 2022

55) This metric evaluates the presence of a) direct citizen initiatives; b) indirect citizen initiatives; and c) popular referendum – awarding 1 point for each. National Conference of State Legislators – Initiative and Referendum Processes, 2024

56) The Democracy Subversion Protections Index forms one of three components of the Democracy Report Card – specifically looking at how well each state protects against racial and partisan gerrymandering. Grades have been converted to a numerical scale for this analysis (A= 5; B= 4; C= 3; D=2; F=1). End Citizens United – State Democracy Report Card: Democracy Subversion Protection, 2022

57) This index is a compilation of voter suppression and expansion laws by state including voter registration, early voting, weekend voting, application requirements, penal disenfranchisement laws and more.Voting Rights Lab – Voting Rights by State, 2024

58) States are scored out of 20 evaluating whether lobbyist compensation is disclosed as well as the quality, timeliness of disclosure and access to disclosed information. Open Secrets – State Lobbying Disclosure Scorecard, 2022

59) Score interpretation: O= no small donor financing programs in a state; O.5= local small donor financing program in a state; 1= statewide small donor financing program in a state. Brennan Center for Justice – Guide to Public Financing Programs Nationwide, updated June 2024

60) Total contributions limits are calculated per candidate per election cycle. Total dollar amount is either reported as a total aggregate limit (i.e., across all candidates in a given election cycle) or is the sum of contribution limits for statewide candidates (governor) and legislative candidates (state senate and state house representative) where limits are reported per candidate type. National Conference of State Legislators – State Limits on Contributions to Candidates, updated May 2023