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## **Georgia Legislation Would Imperil Building Safety, Local Autonomy**

*Build with Strength Joins with Community Leaders in Urging State Senators to Oppose HB 876*

**Sandy Springs, GA** – The Georgia State Senate is now considering legislation – [House Bill 876](#) – that would prevent cities and towns throughout the Peach State from enacting local measures to strengthen their building codes in part, because of fire and safety concerns. The bill, which recently passed the Georgia House of Representatives and cleared the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Consumer Affairs, would cede authority away from local lawmakers toward Atlanta, limiting the critical decision-making power of those who understand the needs of their neighbors.

The bill is being derided by local and state leaders and Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed Concrete Association consisting of community organizations, fire safety professionals, engineers, architects, and industry experts, for its threat to building and life safety, and local autonomy.

“I’m hopeful my colleagues will recognize the means do not justify the ends when it comes to this bill, especially when the lives and well-being of our constituents and first responders are at risk,” said State Senator John Albers (R-56). “This issue has constitutional issues, violates local control and ultimately puts lives at risk. To that end, I urge my fellow senators to oppose this legislation.”

Earlier this month, State Senator Albers, along with Sandy Springs’ Mayor Rusty Paul and Fire Chief Keith Sanders, P.E. Steve Skalko of Macon, and representatives from Build with Strength, [addressed the press](#) in Sandy Springs in opposition to the legislation. Sandy Springs, along with Dunwoody, Tucker, and other communities through Georgia, have taken steps to strengthen their building codes by limiting the use of combustible materials in certain building elements with the aim of providing increased quality, sustainability, durability and longevity.

[Dunwoody updated their code](#) in December 2014, and [Sandy Springs followed suit](#) in August 2016.

“This bill would negatively impact not only Dunwoody, but every community throughout our state,” said Terry Nall, a Dunwoody City Council Member (At Large). “In 2014, we made a conscious effort to prioritize life safety and a higher standard of quality for our community. Local control is a basic tenet of Dunwoody being the government that is closest to its citizens, and as such, I call on the State Senate to respect and protect our choice.”

The desire to strengthen local building codes isn't limited to Dunwoody and Sandy Springs. According to [polling conducted in September 2016](#), Georgia voters are highly supportive of Sandy Springs' ordinance (96% support), and were in favor of their own city passing similar regulations by overwhelming margins (94% support). The poll of 400 registered voters living in Georgia was commissioned by Build with Strength.

"In large, multi-storied buildings, combustible wood-frame (while under construction) structures leave our community inherently vulnerable, placing the men and women whose jobs and lives depend on successfully combatting fire at unneeded risk," added Sandy Springs Fire Chief Keith Sanders. "Our state lawmakers have an important job to do when it comes to balancing the needs of everyone, but as they consider this bill, I ask that they place life safety as the priority."

Learn more at [www.buildwithstrength.com](http://www.buildwithstrength.com).

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