



For Immediate Release

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Contact: Kevin Lawlor

klawlor@buildwithstrength.com

202-253-6402

Build with Strength Expresses Disappointment with Georgia Legislative Action To Limit Local Authority To Implement Stronger Building Codes

The Georgia Senate Should Reject Proposal and Ensure Local Leaders Can Keep Their Communities Safe

Silver Spring, MD – Earlier today, the Georgia General Assembly passed House Bill 876, statewide legislation that would prevent Georgia cities and towns from enacting local measures to strengthen their building codes for fire and safety reasons. The Georgia State Senate will now consider the measure.

The decision to do so flies in the face of the efforts of Sandy Springs and Tucker, Georgia, which after a string of fires in buildings constructed with combustible materials nationwide, sought to protect their communities from experiencing similar horrors.

[In August 2016](#), the Sandy Springs (GA) City Council passed an ordinance to amend the city's building codes to include new requirements that prohibit combustible materials from being used in certain building elements with the aim of providing increased building quality, sustainability, durability, and longevity. Likewise, Tucker, Georgia, has taken proactive steps to preemptively ban the use of combustible materials, such as wood, in certain types of construction.

Throughout the country, wood-frame, multi-family residential structures have been the site of intense fires, fueled by the combustible materials in the buildings in question – most notably in [Princeton, NJ](#); [East Boston, MA](#); [Lakewood, NJ](#); [Weymouth, MA](#); [Haverhill, MA](#); [Waltham, MA](#); [Charlotte, NC](#); [Warner Robins, GA](#); [Midvale, UT](#); [Oakland, CA](#); [Dorchester, MA](#); [Lawrence, MA](#); [East Hollywood, CA](#); [Lowell, MA](#); [Waterbury, CT](#); [Emeryville, CA](#); [St. Petersburg, FL](#); [Arlington, VA](#); [College Park, MD](#); [Overland Park, KS](#); [Raleigh, NC](#); and [Maplewood, NJ](#). There have been [dozens over the last few years](#).

“We should not be taking the risk of constructing our larger buildings from combustible material,” said Stephen Skalko, a Georgia-based consulting engineer on life safety, fire safety and construction aspects of buildings in an [oped for The Macon Telegraph](#). “With the future in mind, we owe it to our children, and to their children, to provide them with durable, sustainable and reasonably safe structures.”

Additionally, [polling conducted in September 2016](#) found Georgia voters were supportive of the Sandy Springs construction regulations (96% support), and supported their own city passing similar regulations by overwhelming margins (94% support). The poll of 400 registered voters living in Georgia, commissioned by Build with Strength, a coalition of the National Ready Mixed

Concrete Association consisting of fire service professionals, engineers, architects, industry experts and community organizations committed to strengthening the nation's building codes, was conducted online from September 22nd – 26th and representative of voters in the state in terms of gender, party affiliation, race and age.

“If the state is unwilling to go to bat for residents concerned about the combustibility of their buildings, that’s one thing,” said Kevin Lawlor, spokesperson for Build with Strength. “But to proactively prevent local governments from taking steps to strengthen their communities is completely preposterous. The Georgia Senate should reject this proposal and empower local leaders to make the best decisions for their communities in order to keep their constituents free from harm.”

Additional Information:

- Polling Report: [Georgia Voter Poll](#)
- Infographic: [Calling for a Concrete Change](#)

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