Law student assignment

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“Hot Topics in Public Health Law and Policy”

**The purpose of this assignment** is to do background research and an outline for an experienced public interest attorney teaching a new online class— “Hot Topics in Public Health Law and Policy” – to non-attorney retirees at the City University of New York. The attorney is teaching the class *pro bono* and the students will not receive grades or credits for the course. The attorney seeks to engage the students in topical areas, while introducing them to issues regarding regulation, jurisdiction and litigation. Each class will be an hour comprised of a power point, graphic/visual materials, and class discussion. Readings will be assigned to support the class. The goal is for the class to be fun and lively!

*Topic--Opportunities and Challenges for Cities’ Regulation of Health and Safety*

Cities face unique challenges and opportunities around the health and safety of their residents and have increasingly become the frontline regulators and innovators in this arena. Regulating health and safety may have both positive and economic impacts on cities. Some of the questions the class will discuss follow (in no order)

* What are the issues cities have sought to address?
* What are some examples of health and safety regulations?
  + Calorie Posting
  + Sugary Drinks
  + Nail Salons
  + Food Vending/Trucks
  + Salt
  + Food deserts
  + Other
* Why do cities need to regulate health and safety? What are the gaps cities need to fill?
* Why are they uniquely poised to regulate health and safety? What impediments do they face?
* How have cities used zoning, taxation, and other tools to help regulate health and safety?
* How does health equity play into municipal regulation and goals?
* What are the legal challenges cities face when they regulate health and safety? For example
  + First Amendment
  + Preemption
* What are the successes and failures of these efforts?
* How does political will play a role?
* How can cities craft regulations for success?

**Assignment**. Your assignment is to research the above questions, as well as any others that you identify arising from your research. Provide a short discussion of each of the above efforts at city regulation (or any others you find interesting) and discuss the background of the effort and the outcome. You can focus on one or two cities for each, comparing the outcomes and efforts. For one of the topics, provide a longer summary to make an interesting story.

Your research should consist of reviewing law reviews, materials from advocacy groups and issue-oriented organizations, and when possible, local city council testimony and rulemaking. Good starting points are

* Public Health Law Center
* U.S. PIRG
* National League of Cities
* ChangeLab Solutions
* FRAC (Food Research Action Center)
* Harvard Kennedy School

You should write up the research in plain language since ultimately, the product is going to be a power point for nonlawyers. Include citations to your work. Outline format is fine for this project.

Identify three to five pieces for background reading for the class.

Feel like taking a stab at graphics or a power point? Go ahead!

Please feel free to reach out to me by phone or email to discuss this project. I am interested in feedback on the topic and what makes this interesting to you?