

Self-Storage Politics: Steps Forward, Steps Back

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So far in 2011 the self-storage industry has seen legislative improvements across several states including Colorado, Maine, Nevada, Tennessee and Texas. Other states, such as Florida and Illinois, will have to wait a bit longer for their desired self-storage law. The national and state associations are working very hard to create positive changes for facility operators including easier and more cost-effective lien-sale procedures and remedies for challenges such as vehicle storage and value limitation.

Unfortunately, the law for self-storage operators in California took a step backward last week, as the Governor succumbed to pressure from the newspaper-publishing industry and signed a revision undoing [last year's legislative progress](#). (Read "[California Self-Storage Lien Law Regresses to Suit Newspaper Publishers](#)" for the full scoop.) The newspaper publishers, nervous over lost advertising revenue in recent years, pushed for this reversal in Assembly Bill 655, insisting that storage operators advertise lien sales in a newspaper for their "judicial district" as opposed to county. Opponents say this makes lien-sale advertising far less competitive and effective, and forces operators to spend more on advertising if they want to ensure commercially reasonable sales.

California is not the only state to face opposition from the newspaper industry. Others face similar resistance. Self-storage attorney [Jeffrey Greenberger](#) recently wrote [an article on the issue](#) for **Inside Self-Storage**. While Jeff wonders if we, as an industry, shouldn't come to some polite understanding with the newspaper publishers, as they seem to wield great power in the legislature and have now thwarted at least three self-storage bills, the reality of the situation is clear: We've woken a sleeping giant.

Let's not forget the issue of self-storage sales tax is also still on the table in several states and will likely rear its ugly head in more in the years ahead. Senate Bill 658 was [introduced in the North Carolina legislature](#) in April. The bill has not progressed, but it represents a financial goal coveted in several municipalities.

The point is legislative progress is not always linear. We should be neither discouraged nor complacent, but persistent. If you're an operator in California, Illinois, Florida or another state where self-storage laws have met challenges in the past year, please share your insights on the blog. Do you feel confident that the associations' goals will be met in the year ahead, or do you foresee other obstacles? To all of you: Are you involved in the industry politics of your state? Are you supporting the efforts of your state association? We'd love to hear about your participation.