Welcome to Our American States. This is the fifth episode of a special six-part miniseries from the National Conference of State Legislatures called Building Democracy: The Story of Legislatures. A movement grew to create state legislatures that were more responsive, representative, transparent and independent within the United States in the mid-1960s. Prior to this, many states operated as 'sometimes governments', but this was inefficient. This episode details how legislative reform was conducted throughout the United States.

Key Takeaways:
- From the Revolutionary War to after the Civil War, a distrust of executive power led to a time of legislative supremacy. [3:45]
- The 1960s were one of the most tumultuous and divisive decades in American history. And state legislatures were not immune. [4:55]
- the 1960s were an era of social change and revolution. In short: legislators began working more, with more staff and more pay. [8:55]
- Is it too much? Is it too little? Let’s talk about the legislative salary during the early 70s. [11:40]
- Who is Charles McCarthy and why was he critical in creating legislative services? [13:00]
- The House Research and Fiscal Analysis Departments and the Legislative Reference Library is created in Minnesota. [15:00]
- By 1979, NCSL’s data shows there were just under 27,000 legislative staffers, and that number peaked in 1996 at almost 36,000. [17:10]
- Women begin to lobby for women’s rights issues in 1974. [19:45]
- Women had to overcome cultural perceptions and stereotypes about their sex. [22:25]
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965 paves the way for African Americans into many state legislatures. [25:05]
- The first known formal convening of women lawmakers began in Connecticut with the OWLs [26:00]
- After the Watergate scandal, state governments began to create stronger ethics infrastructure. [30:20]

Guest List:
- **Senfronia Thompson** - Former Dean of Women Legislators in Texas
- **Fred Risser** - Served 58 years in the Wisconsin State Senate.
- **E. Dotson Wilson** - Chief Clerk of the California Assembly
- **Bill Pound** - Former executive director of the NCSL
Resources:
The Supreme Court and the Undoing of the Second Reconstruction
Kathryn Morrison
Ford Foundation
The Wisconsin Legislature
Charles McCarthy
Passage of Proposition 140
Alan Rosenthal
Roe vs. Wade
Equal Rights Amendment
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Barbara Jordan