



2024

State Legislative Trends Report

Congress Stands Still,
State Legislatures Increase Speed



2024 State Legislative Trends Report

While Congress has slowed its activity in the run-up to the November election, state legislatures have been busy in 2024. So far, lawmakers have introduced 76,756 bills (147,660 if you include carryovers) and 14,088 were enacted, with sessions still active in 10 states (not counting any special sessions).

State sessions in even-numbered years tend to be a little slower, which remained true in 2024. Many state officials are facing elections, with 78% of the country's legislative seats — 5,793 in total — up for grabs, as well as 11 governorships. But that doesn't mean there hasn't been a flurry of activity so far this year.

Methodology

The data in this report covers legislative activity and dialogue from January 1 to June 30, 2024. The data was collected and analyzed using Quorum State, the premier legislative tracking and stakeholder engagement platform for public affairs teams.

The number of bills mentioned in the report excludes simple and concurrent resolutions. Where referenced, X (formerly Twitter) dialogue includes posts from both official legislative accounts and campaign accounts.

76,756
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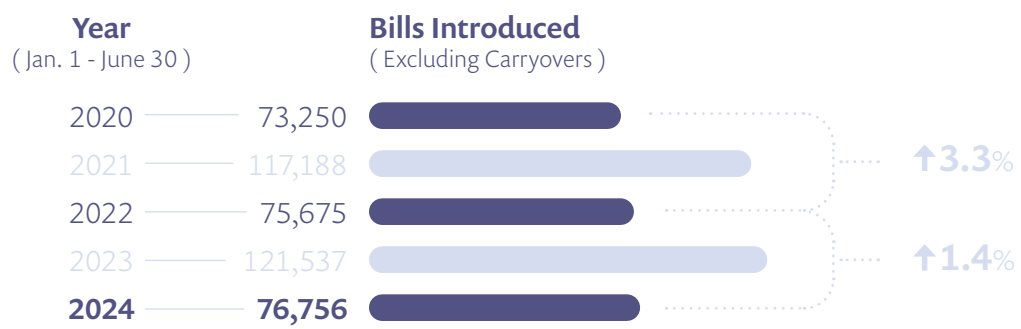
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State Bills Continue Steady Increase



The second year of a legislative session always sees fewer bills than the first, so it is more informative to compare 2024 to other second years: namely, 2022 and 2020. Between 2020 and 2022, there was a 3.3% increase in bills introduced. Following that trend, there was a 1.4% increase between 2022 and 2024.

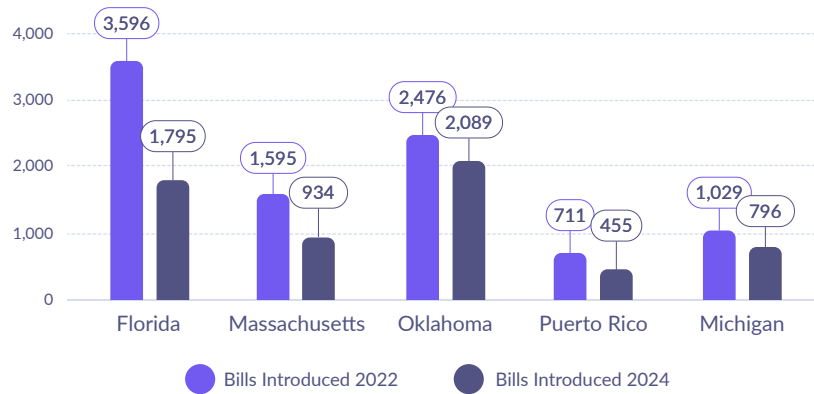
While 1.4% may not seem like a significant increase, for the people on the ground, the already challenging workload is growing noticeably larger. On average, states introduced 1,599 bills each so far this year. This is tough on lawmakers, many of whom are short-staffed. It's tough on public affairs shops, too. When you consider that many public affairs professionals work across multiple states and regions, the numbers balloon quickly. This is especially true when compared to legislation at the federal level. For example, from January 1 to June 30, 2024, Congress introduced 3,189 bills and enacted just four of them.

While things are stagnant in Congress, states can't afford to slow down. Let's look into which states saw the most action, who's talking on social media, and what issues are top-of-mind across the country.

Florida, New Jersey, and South Carolina See Major Swings Compared With 2022

Nationwide, the number of bills introduced cycle to cycle is fairly consistent, but a few states saw major swings. When it comes to a reduction in bills, Florida’s change was the most significant, with 50.8% fewer bills introduced in 2024 compared to 2022 (1,795 to 3,596). That’s a change of 1,801 fewer net bills — the greatest of any state. This falls in line with a similar decline from 2021 to 2023, when the Florida legislature introduced 40% fewer bills.

Largest Net Decrease in Bills Introduced

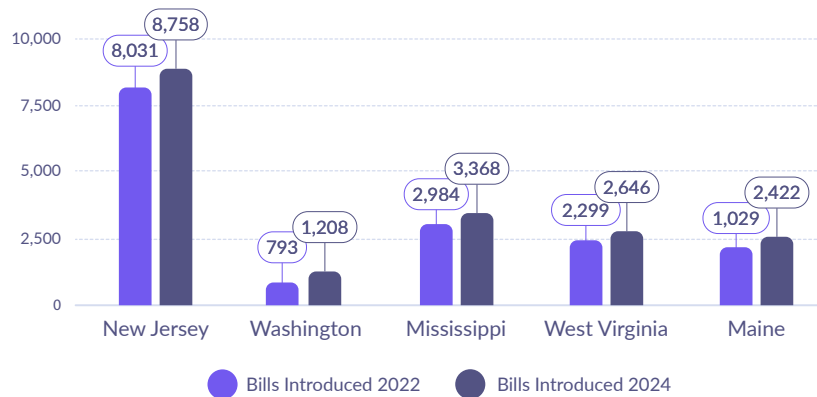


Special sessions could be a major contributing factor. The Florida legislature is scheduled to meet for only 60 days every calendar year. But in 2022, Governor Ron DeSantis called for three special sessions to discuss issues including property insurance and congressional redistricting.

By contrast, in 2023 and 2024, Florida did not hold any special sessions. The change could stem from DeSantis’s presidential prospects. In 2021 and 2022, the governor had clear dreams of the White House. But as those dreams faded, so too have special sessions in Florida.

Meanwhile, New Jersey saw the largest increase in bills introduced, going from 8,031 bills introduced in 2022 to 8,758 in 2024 — a 727 bill increase. South Carolina, on the other hand, saw the biggest percentage increase in legislative activity, with nearly 63% more bills introduced in 2024 compared to 2022 (693 versus 424).

Largest Net Increase in Bills Introduced

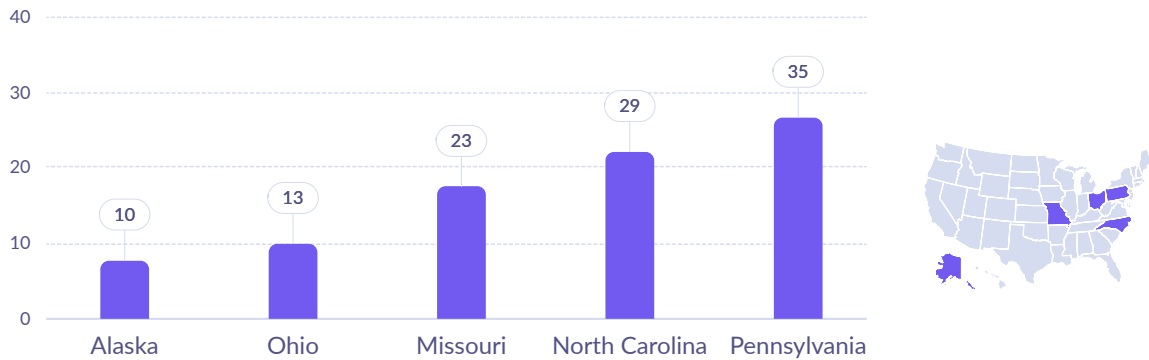


Ohio and Alaska Pass the Fewest Bills

Ohio has passed just 13 bills in the first half of 2024. But unlike some states that only meet for short periods, Ohio meets year-round, so there is still time for lawmakers to introduce and pass additional legislation.

Alaska, on the other hand, adjourned in May with just 10 bills enacted — the fewest of any state. While this number might seem low, it is not too far out of line for a state that routinely passes fewer than 40 bills in a session.

Bills Enacted in 2024 (Including Carryovers)

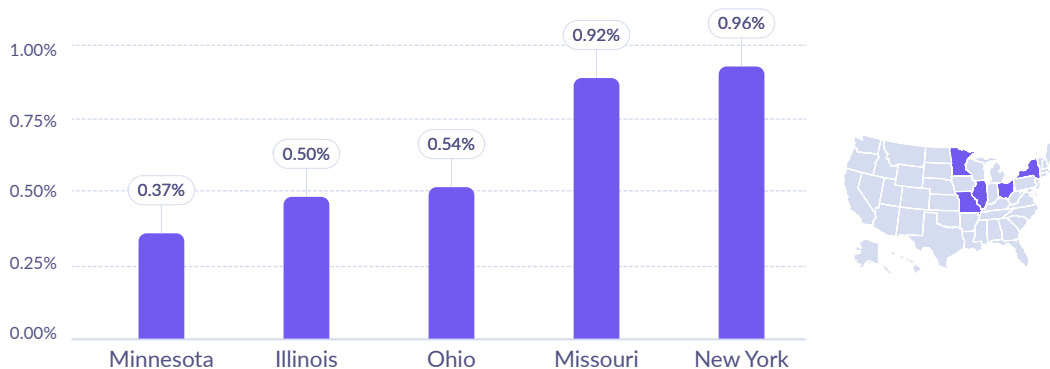


5 States Have Enacted Less Than 1% of Bills

Minnesota passed just 0.37% of bills in 2024 — that’s only 41 bills out of 10,947 that were introduced or carried over into the 2024 legislative session. On the closing days of the session, the Democratic–Farmer–Labor Party (DFL) pushed through a 1,400-page omnibus package without debate, much to the chagrin of Republican lawmakers.

The arrest of Sen. Nicole Mitchell earlier this year also likely contributed to the low number of bills enacted. The DFL held a one-seat majority in the Senate and Mitchell’s arrest put that control in question. Ultimately, Mitchell continued to serve and joined other members of the party to get their agenda passed.

Percent of Bills Enacted (Including Carryovers)

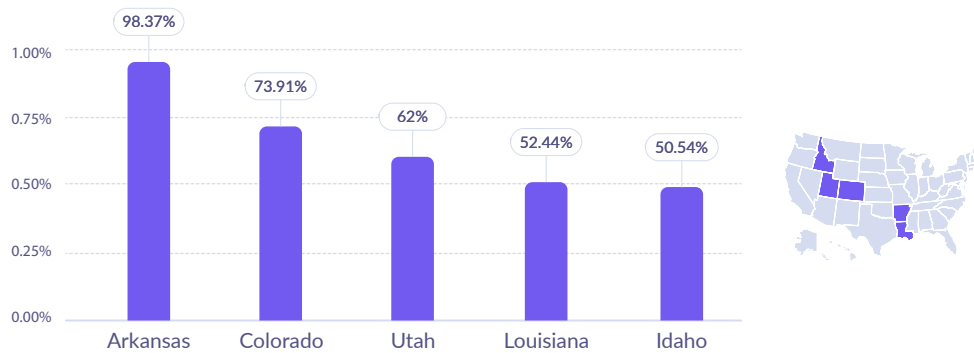


When parties resort to omnibus packages, how should public affairs teams adapt? One approach is to shift from legislative tracking to dialogue tracking. In other words, instead of looking at the text of bills, follow the conversations of legislators on social media, in press releases, or in the news. These channels can give public affairs teams insights into what will be included in upcoming or frequently-changing legislation.

Arkansas Enacts 98% of Bills

Arkansas’ Republican trifecta (the GOP holds both chambers and the governorship) enacted almost every bill introduced during their regular session — they passed 181 out of 184 bills. One of the three bills that didn’t pass was reintroduced and passed during a special session called by Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders.

Percent of Bills Enacted (Including Carryovers)



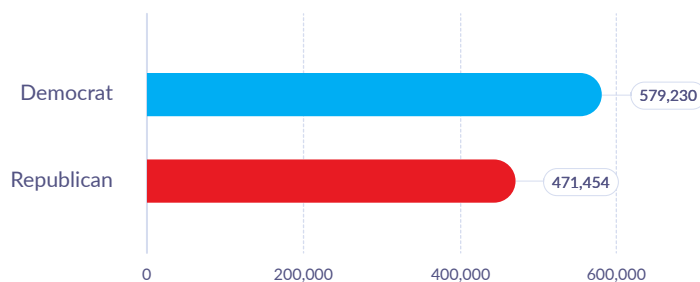
When faced with short sessions, like those in Arkansas, public affairs teams need to get much of their work done before the session begins. This becomes even more important in states where the majority of bills that get introduced are already destined for the governor’s desk. If your issue isn’t top of mind at the start of the sessions, you’re probably too late. Get ahead by following pre-filed legislation and tracking lawmaker dialogue before sessions start, so you know what issues may need more promotion.



Democrats Out-Post Republicans on Social – Despite Being Outnumbered

State Democratic lawmakers out-posted Republicans on X and Facebook 579,230 to 471,454, despite there being 736 more Republicans.

Social Media Posts by Party



The majority of posts come from X (388,863 from Democrats and 281,106 from Republicans). Democrats and Republicans posted nearly identical numbers on Facebook (188,319 and 188,345, respectively).

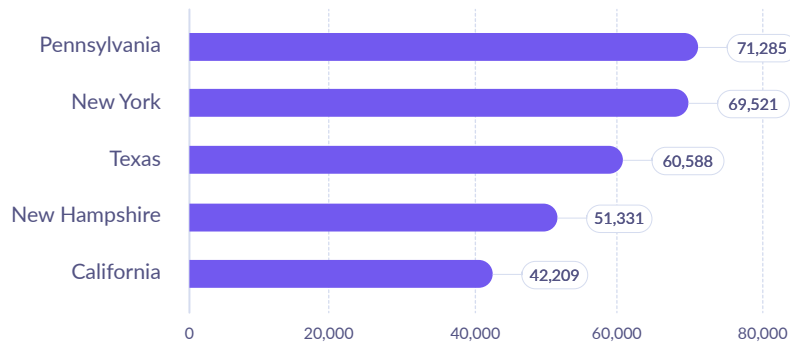
Members not affiliated with a major party contributed 26,126 social posts in the first half of 2024.

State Democrats retweeted the accounts @BidenHQ, @JoeBiden, and @POTUS the most. Meanwhile, Republicans retweeted accounts @elonmusk, @libsoftiktok, and @charliekirk11. The appearance of controversial accounts like @libsoftiktok and provocateurs like Charlie Kirk appears to signal that Republicans favor the amplification of media personalities while Democrats prefer to amplify officials in Washington.

The Most Vocal States and Lawmakers

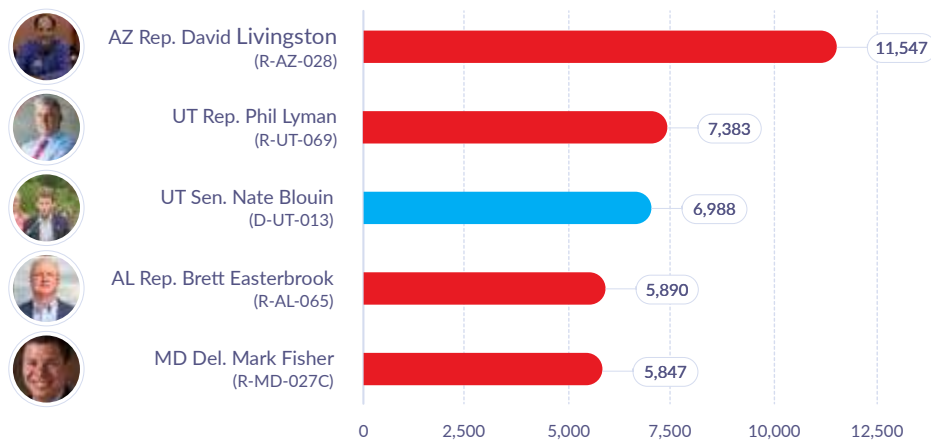
After coming in third place behind New York and New Hampshire last year, lawmakers from Pennsylvania took the top spot in terms of the total number of social media posts.

Social Media Posts from Lawmakers by State



But when we look at social media posts per official, Arizona comes in first place with 448 posts per lawmaker. Rep. David Livingston (R-AZ-028), who is also the most vocal social media poster overall, accounts for 11,485 of the state’s 39,970 posts from lawmakers—nearly 29%. What is Livingston posting about? His favorite topics include Israel, Biden, and Trump.

Most Vocal State Lawmakers on Social Media





Key State Issues in 2024

While Congress has slowed its pace during this election year, state legislatures continued to move bills to address a stunning variety of issues, from inflation and religious freedoms to gun rights and mental health. In some states, the focus remains on issues that have dominated the agenda in recent years, such as abortion rights. In other states, new issues have arisen, such as how to regulate artificial intelligence. In many cases, state lawmakers are taking up issues that have thus far gone untouched by Congress. Here are some of the highlights.

AI Bills Introduced in 45 States

As artificial intelligence (AI) becomes widely available to consumers, lawmakers in 45 states have introduced bills to address how AI is used in various applications, from education to government work.

The technology, which raises tough questions about accuracy, privacy, security, bias, copyright, and other matters, is also being studied widely by state governments given the absence of comprehensive legislation from Congress.

Overall, lawmakers across the states introduced 446 AI bills and enacted 69 of them. New York and California led the way in the first half of 2024 with 38 and 36 introduced bills that mentioned AI, respectively. One of New York's proposed bills establishes the government position of Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer. Other proposed bills attempt to restrict the use of certain models within state agencies and state-owned entities.

Arkansas was the only state that didn't introduce a bill mentioning artificial intelligence. The other four states without AI bills (Montana, Nevada, North Dakota, and Texas) do not meet in even-numbered years.

AI is not only available directly to consumers, but it is also increasingly used in a large variety of software solutions, with applications varying from research and data collection to business and government systems. Given AI's wide range of applications and uses, regulation is likely to continue at the state level for many years to come.

More Than 1,000 Inflation-Related Bills Were Introduced

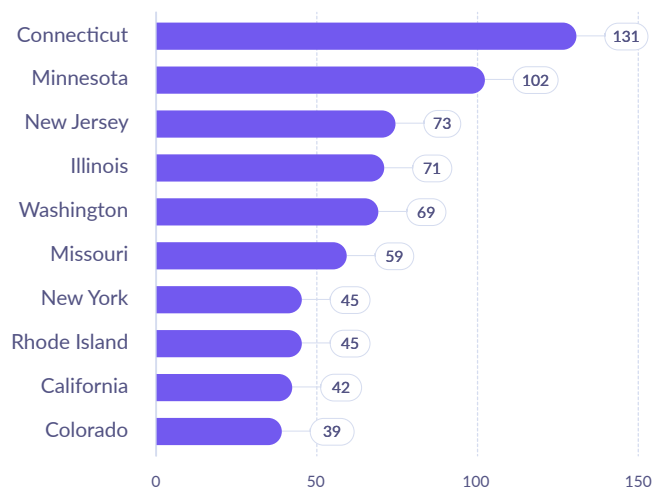
With the topic of price increases dominating the national conversation — and November's presidential election — state lawmakers moved quickly to do their part, introducing 1,070 inflation-related bills and enacting 145 in the first half of 2024.

All the action is not surprising. Inflation is an issue that impacts almost every American, raising the price of food, gasoline, consumer goods, insurance, services — even property taxes, as cities try to cover their own ballooning costs.

While inflation is usually discussed in the context of federal action, such as changes in interest rates by the U.S. Federal Reserve or legislation by Congress, state lawmakers have also been busy, passing initiatives from tax refunds to rent control.

While recent economic indicators show inflation may be slowing, it is likely to remain a primary issue in state elections and a key topic in state governments across the country.

Inflation-Related Bills Introduced by State



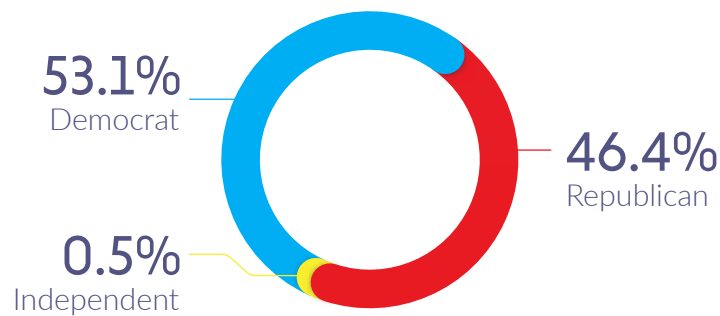
Gun Debate Continues in 2024

The attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump in July, in which a shooter opened fire with an assault weapon at a campaign rally in Pennsylvania, renewed talk about gun laws in America. But that conversation has never really stopped in state legislatures, where firearms have been a consistent topic of debate in recent years and in the past six months.

Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in 2022 — the first substantial federal gun legislation in almost 30 years — and national headlines often fuel the firearms debate. But much gun regulation remains largely a province of the states. The result is a patchwork of laws that vary by location, with some states making firearms easier to obtain and carry, and others making it more difficult.

In the first half of 2024, 1,943 bills addressing guns or firearms were introduced, and 250 were enacted in legislatures across the country. That’s down from 2,774 introduced and 418 passed during the same period last year. Roughly 53% of gun-related bills were introduced by Democrats, covering issues ranging from firearms on school property (Michigan) to purchasing age restrictions (Hawaii). Meanwhile, Republicans introduced 46% of bills, which included measures that protected firearm sellers (Georgia) to making it easier to process concealed carry license applications (Kansas).

Gun-Related Bills Introduced by Party



While more federal legislation is unlikely this year, the gun debate is likely to continue at the federal level as multiple investigations into Trump’s shooting unfold. The issue will likely remain active in many state legislatures, too, often driven by local news and events. For example, there were 35 separate school shootings in the first half of 2024, including 26 at K-12 schools and nine on college campuses. Those incidents killed 17 people and injured 39, according to an [analysis by CNN](#). As communities across the country continue to reckon with these incidents, gun laws are likely to stay on the docket for state legislatures.

More Than 850 Mental Health Bills Passed

With the prevalence of mass shootings in America, the conversations over gun control and mental health often go hand-in-hand. But state lawmakers introduced and passed more legislation regarding mental health than guns in 2024 — and mental health issues span across more areas of life than gun violence.

Roughly 21 percent of American adults — more than 50 million people — live with some form of mental illness, according to a [2023 report](#) by Mental Health America, a nonprofit that promotes mental health. Roughly 55% of those people receive no treatment.

While the federal government does a great deal to address mental health issues, states also play a substantial role by regulating, funding, and operating their own health systems. As such, it stands to reason that state lawmakers are invested in this issue.

Lawmakers introduced a whopping 5,280 mental health bills in the states in the first half of 2024, with Democrats introducing about 57 percent of that legislation. Out of all the bills, 859 were enacted. Among the bills passed, 154 mentioned “mental health” and “social media” while only 61 mentioned “mental health” and “guns.”

The start of 2024 continues a clear trend showing an increased awareness and concern for mental health related issues at the state level. During the same period in 2022, lawmakers introduced 4,618 bills. In 2020, that number was 4,457.

Lawmakers in Many States Tackle Religion in Education

Lawmakers in Louisiana made national headlines in June when they voted to require a posting of the Ten Commandments in every single classroom statewide, from colleges to elementary schools.

The law, versions of which lawmakers in [other states](#) have attempted to enact over the years, quickly drew challenges from activists on constitutional grounds. The outcome of those challenges is still pending.

But Louisiana was hardly the only state to address the issue of religion in educational settings. Perhaps emboldened by the conservative majority on the U.S. Supreme Court, which often ultimately decides these matters, lawmakers introduced legislation regarding religion in schools in states across the country.

In Florida and other states, bills were passed to allow chaplains to provide services such as counseling in schools. Lawmakers stated the policies were an attempt to address the high prevalence of mental health issues among young people and the shortage of school counselors.

Meanwhile, officials in Oklahoma approved the nation’s first Catholic charter school. Republican lawmakers in Ohio introduced a bill that would require school districts to excuse students who miss school to attend religious instruction — but so far, the bill is still in committee.

Overall, policymakers introduced 655 bills related to religion in education, with 45 percent brought by Republicans. Of that 45 percent, 65 were enacted — slightly more than the 62 enacted bills brought forth by Democrats. What sort of religion in education bills

Copilot Analyze AI Summary of Louisiana H.B. 71

“ The recently enacted legislation mandates the display of certain historical documents, including the Ten Commandments, in public elementary, secondary, and postsecondary school classrooms across Louisiana. ”

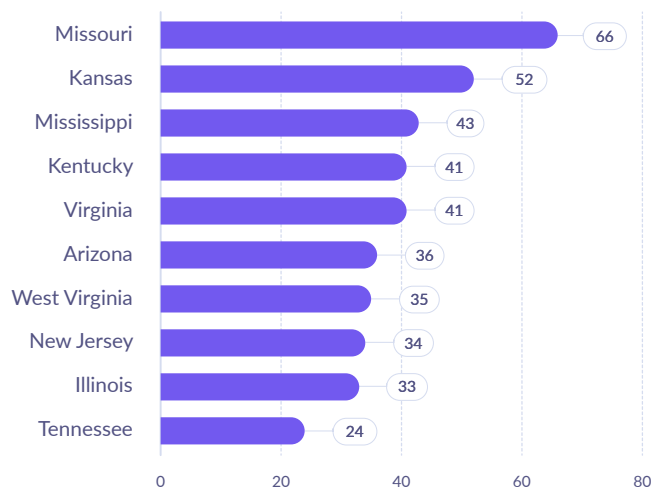
were Democrats passing? Many aim to protect students from discrimination, like California’s S.B. 1287, which was recently passed by the CA State Senate.

States Continue Debate on Abortion Rights

Two years after the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to abortion, effectively turning reproductive rights over to the states, lawmakers continued to make abortion policy a focus in 2024.

Led by lawmakers in Missouri, Kansas, and Mississippi, 714 abortion-related bills were introduced across the U.S. in the first half of the year. Republicans and Democrats contributed legislation in almost equal measures. The total number of bills signed into law was 84.

Abortion-Related Bills Introduced by State



The Supreme Court’s decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women’s Health Organization*, which eliminated the federal abortion protections that stood for over 50 years, has left states scrambling to clarify their own laws. The matter goes beyond a simple yes or no, delving into complex issues such as patient health outcomes, consent, parental involvement, public funding, insurance coverage, provider qualifications, medical methodology, and many other policy areas. The result is a nationwide patchwork of bans, restrictions, and protections that vary by state and can be complicated to understand.

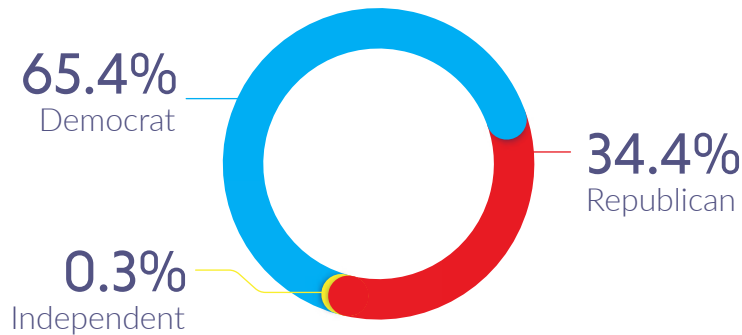
Abortion rights will be a major issue in 2024’s state elections, in which 78% of legislative seats are up for election. That’s 5,793 legislative seats across 44 states, according to the [National Council of State Legislatures](#). The outcomes of these elections will no doubt have a major impact on abortion policy in 2025 and beyond.

Lawmakers Increase Focus on Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

Electric vehicles are becoming more common, in part due to state and federal efforts to reduce emissions. In recent years, state lawmakers have approved rebates and tax credits to encourage EV sales, poured money into charging infrastructure, and created new fees to replace the gas tax revenues that could decline in coming years if EV sales accelerate.

In 2024, state lawmakers continued to introduce EV legislation. In the first half of the year, policymakers introduced 729 bills related to electric vehicles, up from 594 during the same period in 2022. (In New Jersey alone, lawmakers introduced 132 bills mentioning EVs.) Across the country, the legislation was primarily driven by Democrats, who accounted for 65 percent of the bills introduced. In total, 134 EV-related bills were enacted into law.

Electric Vehicle Bills Introduced by Party



Nationwide, much of the focus on electric vehicles has shifted to charging infrastructure, which is necessary to make EVs a viable choice for more drivers. As the federal government is investing billions of dollars to create chargers along major corridors, states are taking up the charge as well (pun intended).

State legislatures considered bills this year to regulate charger reliability, build chargers in rural areas, facilitate at-home charging, set pricing structures, and generally facilitate EV infrastructure. But there is still a lot of work to be done if EV infrastructure is to maintain pace with demand. Needless to say, we can expect more legislation ahead.

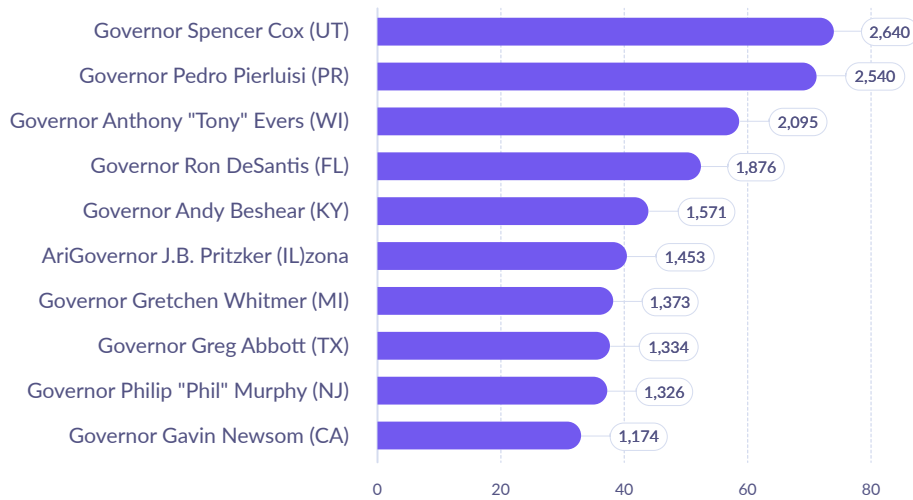
Most Active Governor on Social Media: Utah’s Spencer Cox

Wisconsin’s Tony Evers was dethroned by Utah Governor Spencer Cox as the most active poster on Facebook and X during the first half of 2024.

Cox’s most retweeted account was Jonathan Haidt (@JonHaidt), a social psychologist and author who warns of the dangers of social media use for children. The governor signed two bills in 2023 that required parental

consent to create a social media account. Earlier this year, those bills were altered after lawsuits from social media companies.

Most Active Governors on Social Media



Governors Andy Beshear (KY), J.B. Pritzker (IL), Gretchen Whitmer (MI), and Gavin Newsom (CA) — all of whom have been floated as potential Democratic presidential and vice presidential candidates — also made the list of top 10 posters.

How Quorum Can Help

Whether you're engaging state legislatures through lobbying or advocacy, Quorum has tools to help you get information and execute strategy — all in one place.



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