



# The Legislative Role: State Efforts to Strengthen Rural Medical Education

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RTT Collaborative Annual Meeting  
April 7, 2023

The National Conference of State Legislatures

Health Workforce Policy in the States

The Role of the State Legislature in Rural  
Medical Education

Engaging with State Legislators and Legislative  
Staff

# Agenda



# Strengthening the legislative institution





- A. Less than 3,000
- B. 3,001 – 5,000
- C. 5,001 – 7,000
- D. More than 7,000

Approximately, how many state legislators are there in the U.S.?



Answer: D. 7,386

1,723 are brand new in 2023



# How NCSL Strengthens Legislatures



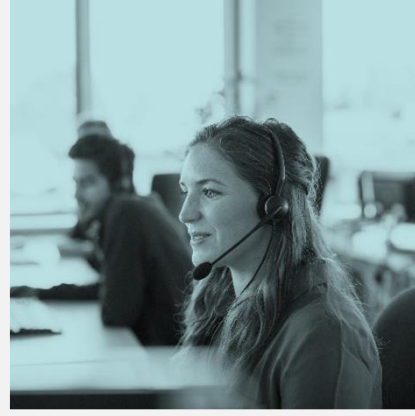
## Policy Research

NCSL provides trusted, nonpartisan policy research and analysis



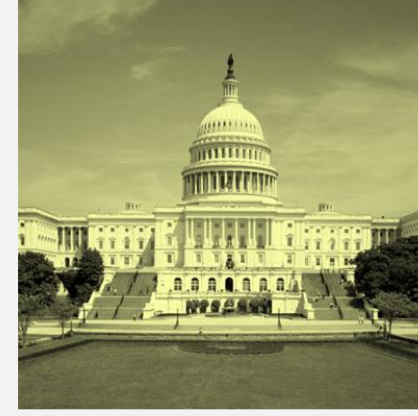
## Connections

NCSL links legislators and staff with each other and with experts



## Training

NCSL delivers training tailored specifically for legislators and staff



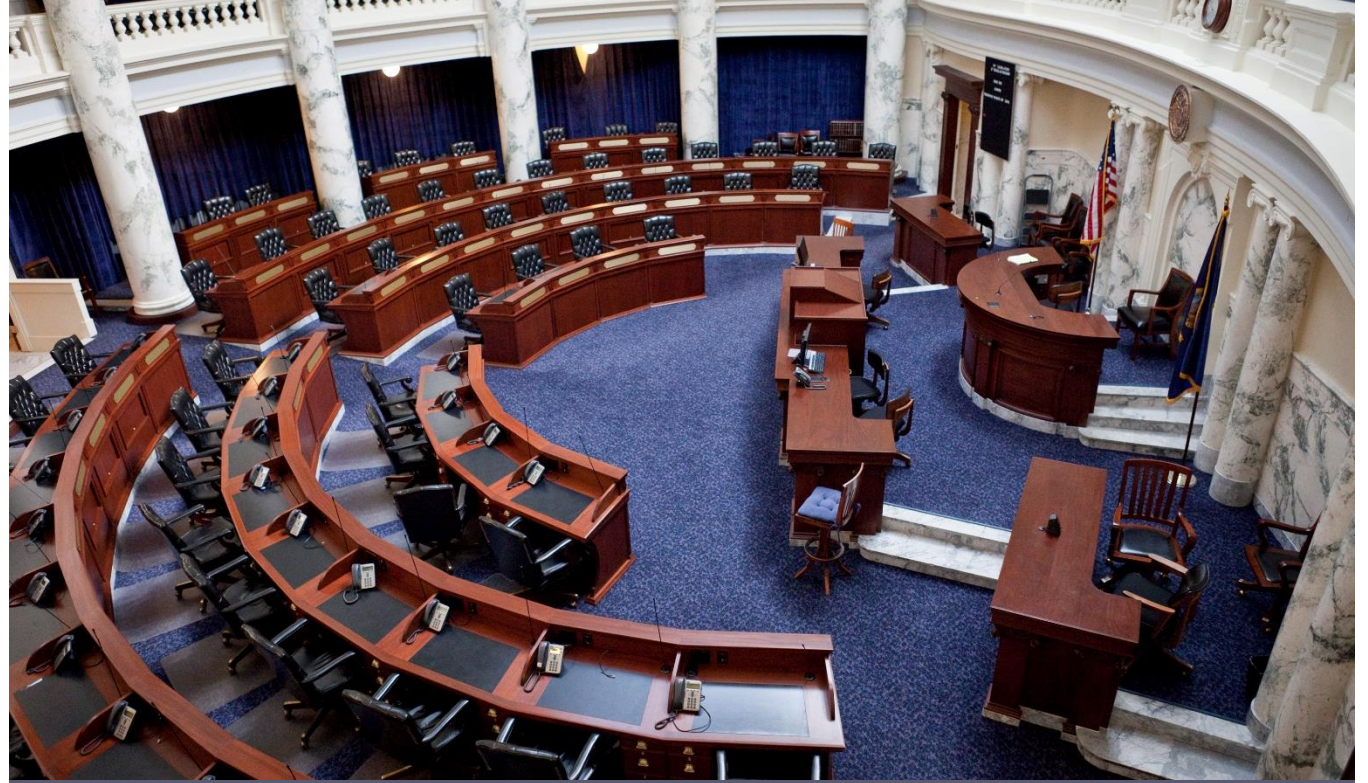
## State Voice in D.C.

NCSL represents and advocates on behalf of states on Capitol Hill



## Meetings

NCSL meetings facilitate information exchange and policy discussions



- A. 50,000
- B. 75,000
- C. 100,000
- D. 150,000

On average, how many bills are introduced each session across the United States?



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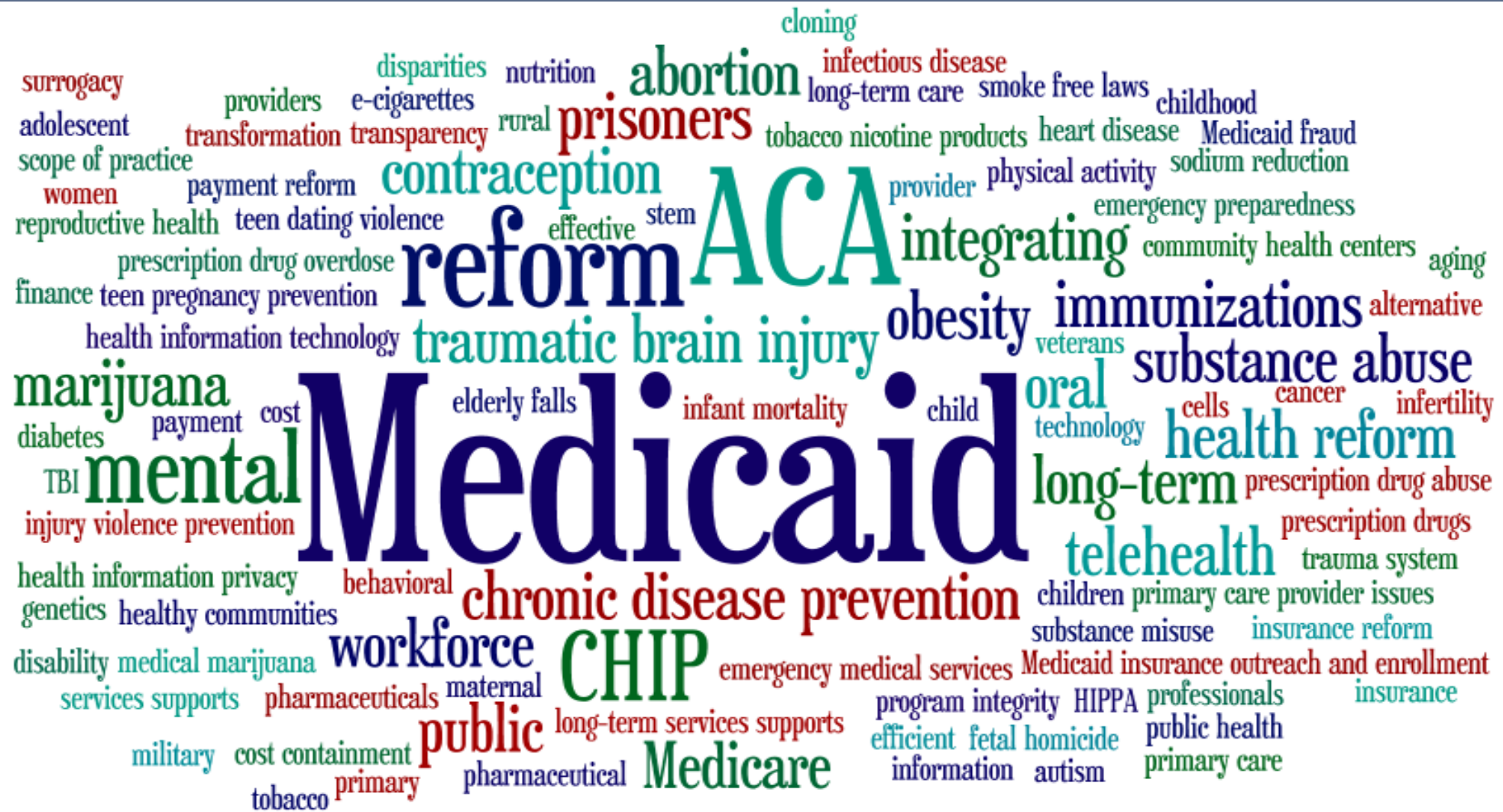
- A. 50,000
- B. 75,000
- C. 100,000
- D. 150,000



About 30,000 bills are enacted each session.



# Health Issues by the Dozens



# Hottest Policy Topics for 2023? It's All About the Workforce





# Health Workforce: Professions

## Primary care:

- [Scope of Practice Policy Website and Database](#)
- *Coming soon!*  
[Understanding Medicaid's Role in Graduate Medical Education](#)  
(Webinar, May 12)

## Nursing:

- [Addressing Nursing Shortages: Options for States](#)  
(Policy Brief)
- *Coming soon!*  
Addressing the Nursing Shortage  
(Our American States Podcast)

## Direct care:

- [Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce](#)  
(Policy Brief)
- [Supporting the Direct Care Workforce: Recruitment and Retention Strategies](#)  
(Policy Brief)

## Behavioral health:

- [State Strategies to Recruit and Retain the Behavioral Health Workforce](#)  
(Report)
- [Behavioral Health Policy Series](#)
- [Peer Support Specialists: Connections to Mental Health Care](#)  
(Policy Brief)

## Maternal health:

- [Maternal and Child Health Database](#)
- *Coming soon!*  
Certified Nurse Midwife Scope of Practice  
(Webpage)

# Health Workforce: Strategies



## Training and Certification

- Education requirements
- Continuing education



## Licensure

- Professionalization
- Interstate compacts



## Scope of Practice

- Practice authority
- Prescriptive authority



## Telehealth

- Broadband access
- Reimbursement



## Recruitment & Retention

- Loan repayment and forgiveness
- Tax incentives
- Career pathways





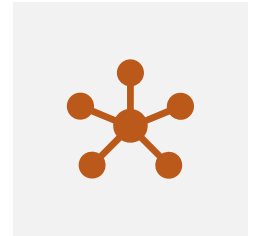
# The Role of Legislatures in Rural Medical Education



Understanding the  
health workforce



Increasing  
professionals in  
rural practice



Bolstering existing  
medical education  
programs

## National Trends:

- Population growth expected to grow by 25 million.
- Increased life expectancy = increased need for health care workers for older adults.
- In the coming years, 25% of physicians will be 60+ years old.
- During the pandemic, 20% of people left health care workforce positions.



## Understanding the Health Workforce



# Understanding the Workforce

## Data Collection

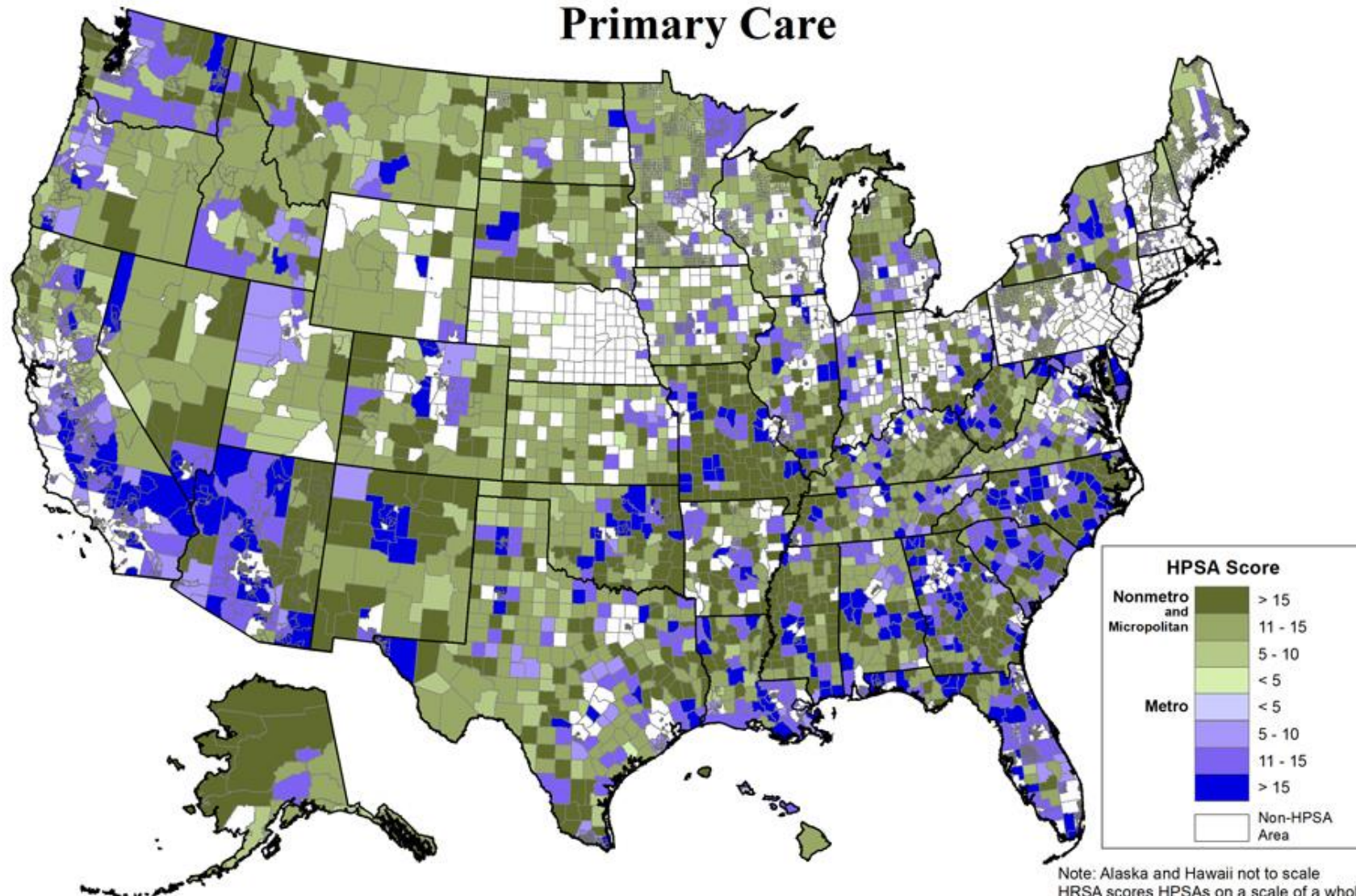
- Coordination across licensing boards, state agencies and employers.
- Identify local health care needs and workforce supply.
- Utah HB 176 (2022) established the Utah Health Workforce Advisory Council and Utah Health Workforce Information Center.
  - Legislation outlined data collection metrics, including workforce shortages, labor market indicators, education requirements, licensure and re-licensure.

## Statewide Rural Health Plans

- Legislative recommendations on how to ensure access to health care in rural communities.
- The Texas State Health Plan: 2023-2028 includes recommendations to bolster the behavioral health workforce, including:
  - Increased funding and stipends for students in mental health professions.
  - Expansion of the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals.

## Increasing Supply of Rural Health Providers

### Health Professional Shortage Areas Primary Care



Note: Alaska and Hawaii not to scale  
HPSA scores are on a scale of a whole number (0-25 for primary care), with higher scores indicating greater need

Source(s): data.HRSA.gov, U.S.  
Department of Health and Human  
Services, November 2022



# Increasing the Supply of Rural Health Providers

## Career Pathways

- Engaging students in kindergarten through college in education and training on health care careers.
- Colorado developed career pathways for counseling, therapy, social work, psychology, psychiatry and psychiatric nursing professions.
  - Includes “stackable” career and technical education programs in high schools and degree programs at community colleges.
- Nebraska established career pathways to recruit and educate students in health care fields who are committed to practicing in rural areas upon graduation.



# Increasing the Supply of Rural Health Providers



## Rural Training Requirements

- Students with personal, educational and training experience in rural communities are more likely to pursue practice in rural settings.
- New Jersey appropriated \$4 million for 10 four-year psychiatry residencies focused on the treatment of lower income individuals, including those with serious mental illness and co-occurring mental health and substance misuse conditions.
- Wisconsin required the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health to establish and support physician residency programs in hospitals located in rural areas or including a rural rotation.

## National Trends:

- Medical school enrollment continues to grow, but the number of residency spots is not keeping pace.
- 44% of medical schools reported concerns about incoming students' ability to find residency positions after graduation.
- OB/Gyn, pediatrics and family medicine are the most difficult areas to find clinical training for.



## Supporting Existing Providers



# Bolstering Existing Medical Education Programs

## Faculty and Preceptor Initiatives

- Several states (including Georgia, Hawaii and Virginia) offer preceptor tax credits for any provider offering clinical oversight for residency rotations.
- Maryland provides a \$1,000 preceptor tax income credit for preceptors who supervise rotations at practice sites located within health workforce shortage areas.
- New Mexico: Established a \$5,000 Rural Health Professional Tax Credit for physicians, dentists, clinical psychologists, podiatrists and optometrists.





## **Loan Forgiveness and Repayment**

- Loan forgiveness and repayment programs cover education-related expenses for health care professions students and practitioners.
- Kansas established a medical residency bridging program, providing loan repayment for primary care and mental health care residents.
- Minnesota established a Rural Physician Loan Forgiveness Program for family practice, obstetrics, gynecology, pediatrics, internal medicine and psychiatry physicians.

How many times have you directly communicated with a legislator (or staff) through your work?

- 0 – and probably won't.
- 0 – but I would like to change that.
- 1-2 times.
- 3-5 times.
- 6+ times...too many to count.

What experience is there in the room?



# If you've seen one legislature, you've seen one legislature.

1

How many members are there?

New Hampshire:

- 400 representatives, 24 senators

Nebraska:

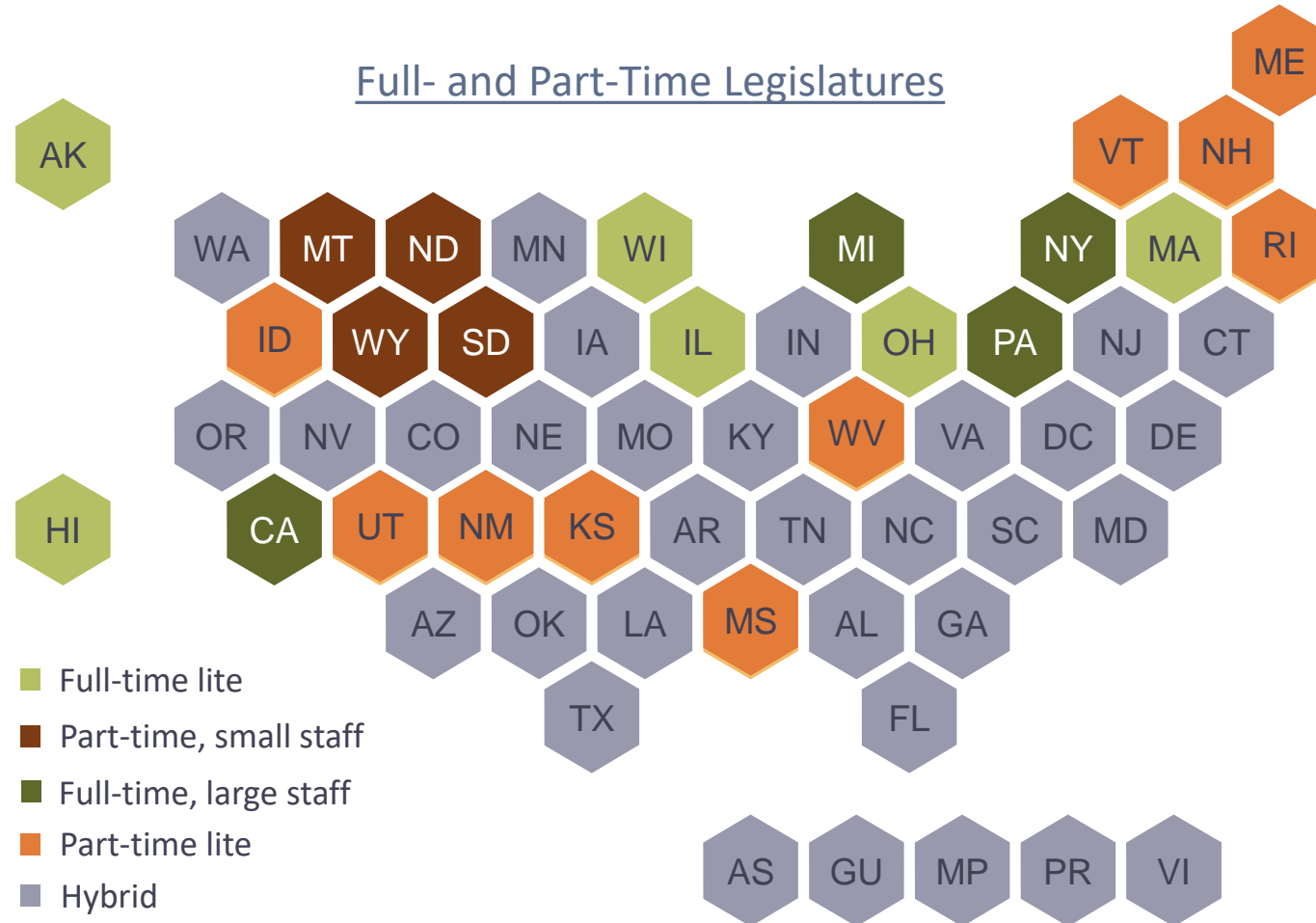
- Unicameral, 49 legislators

2

What is the capacity of the legislature?

- Full-time or part-time?
- Large staff or small staff?

## Full- and Part-Time Legislatures



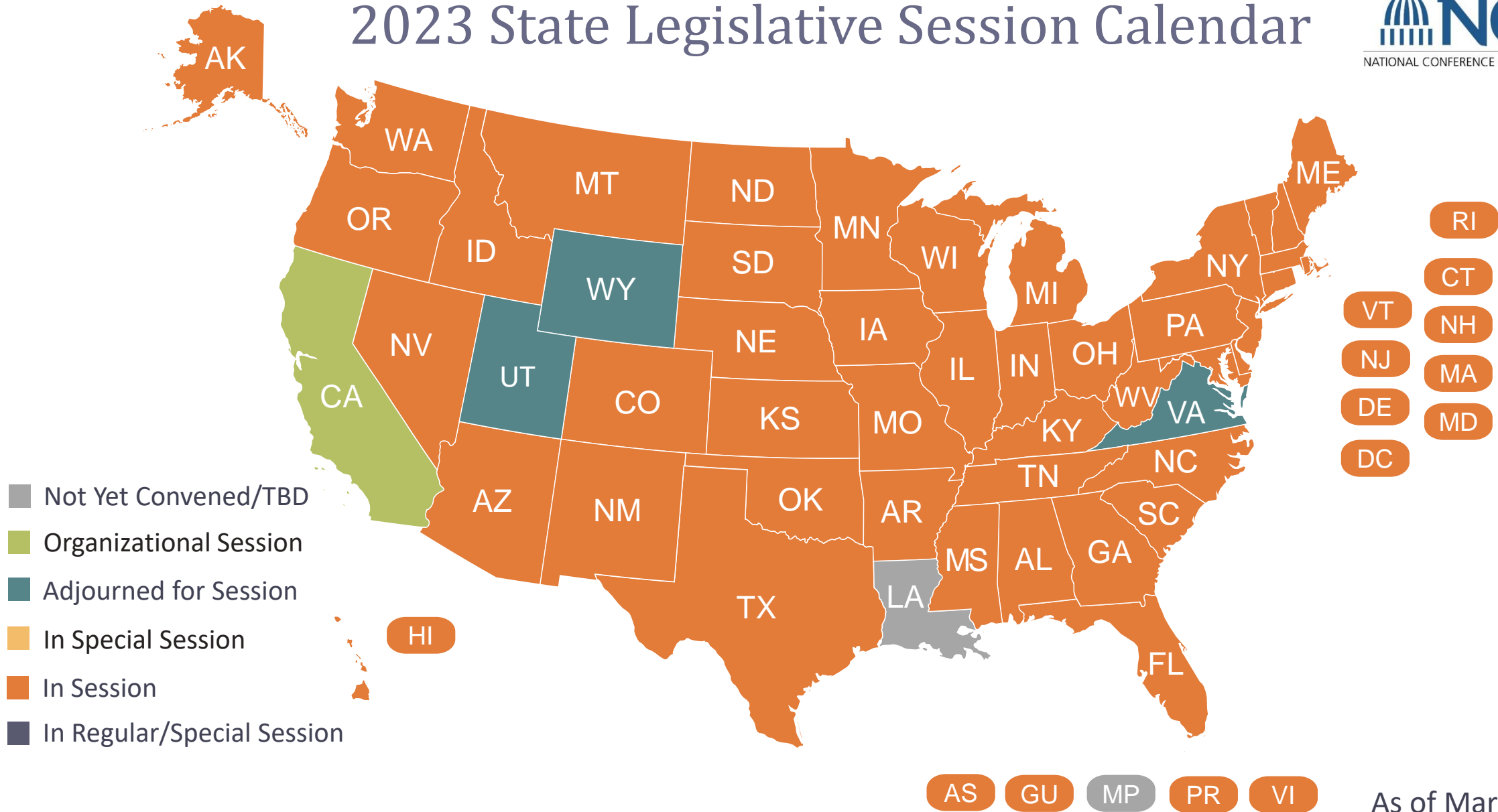
- How does a bill become a law?
- Does your state allow for ballot measures?



# The Legislative Process

What You Need to Know

# 2023 State Legislative Session Calendar



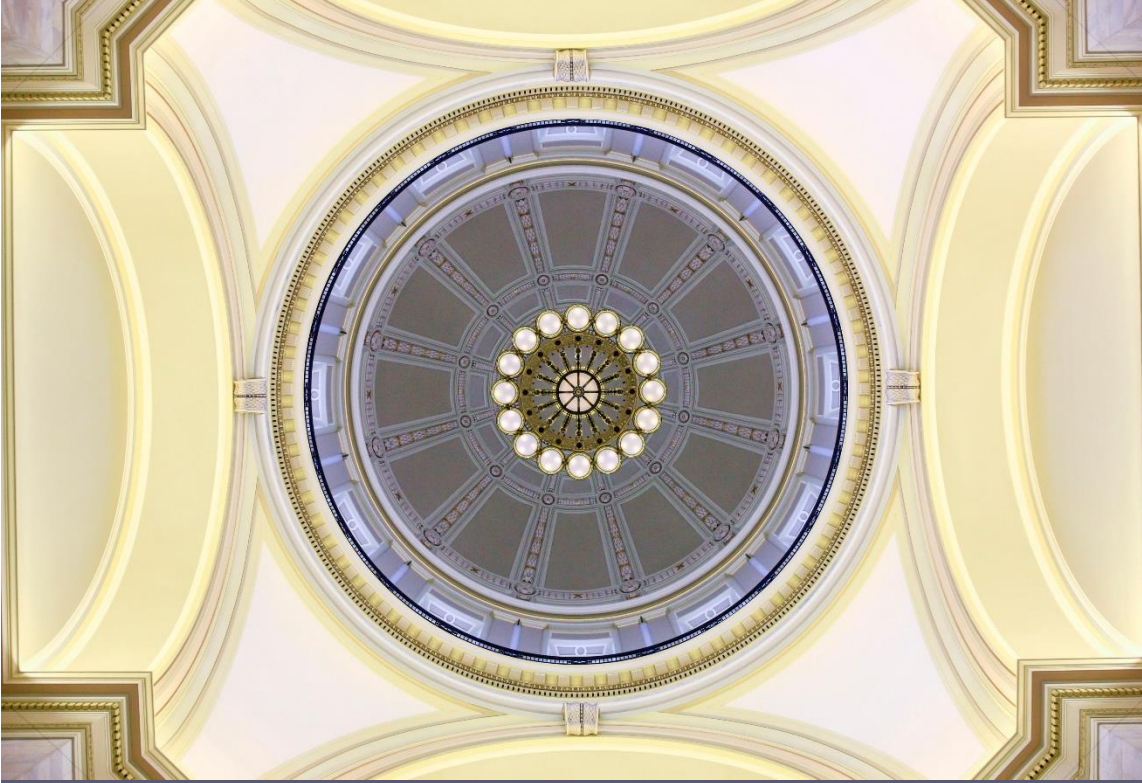
As of March 15, 2023





What state has the smallest senate in terms of numbers?

- A. Alaska
- B. Georgia
- C. Connecticut
- D. North Dakota



What state has the smallest senate in terms of numbers?

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- Who are your state representatives and/or senators?
- Who are the legislative leaders in your state?
- What is the process for public input during committee hearings?
- Look at your state legislature's website!



## Getting to Know YOUR State Legislature

What You Need to Know



# Three Strategies for Effective Communication

## Contact key legislators

- Identify committees of jurisdiction and committee chairs
- Identify yourself as a resource
- Utilize legislative staff

## Raise awareness for your issue

- Education is fundamental
- Interaction with legislators
- Let policymakers know what information you have available

## Frame your message

- How does the issue affect a legislator's constituents?
- What is the return on investment?
- Is this policy successful in other states?

# Stay Connected

- Learn about NCSL training
- Subscribe to policy newsletters
- Read State Legislatures magazine
- Bookmark the NCSL Blog
- Listen to “Our American States” podcast
- Watch recorded policy webinars and training sessions
- Attend a meeting or training
- Follow @NCSLorg on social media





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Scope of Practice Policy Website and Database

State Strategies to Recruit and Retain the Behavioral Health Workforce

Strengthening the Direct Care Workforce

Addressing Nursing Shortages: Options for States

Coming soon!

- Webinar: Graduate Medical Education (May 12, 2023)
- Report: Career Pathways in Health Care (By May 31, 2023)