

FOCUS

2025 REVIEW PREVIEW

State legislatures across the country continue to reflect today's rapidly evolving technological and socio-political environment, addressing a broad spectrum of issues ranging from technology and privacy to taxation, environmental concerns and human rights in healthcare.

In the realm of technology and privacy, we delve into the evolving impacts of artificial intelligence, including in education, and the critical issues surrounding accountability. The field of taxation is adjusting to the challenges of the digital economy, including the taxation of digital goods. Significant environmental shifts are seen in the regulation of per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) and the ongoing emphasis on sustainability. The housing industry is grappling with the implications of rent algorithms and housing supply constraints. Discussions in human rights are increasingly focused on reproductive freedom, including access to in vitro fertilization (IVF) and the ability to travel for an abortion, as the healthcare sector undergoes transformation driven by today's divisive social climate and potential federal policy shifts.

By examining these key areas from 2024, we can gain insights into their significance in the state legislative landscape and what they may herald for 2025. State legislation is expected to be reactionary and affirming of the anticipated federal landscape of potential policy reversals and contentious cultural and social policies.

From cell phone bans to “forever chemicals,” our analysts have looked back in order to look forward at the legislative issues we now face...

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05 HEALTH

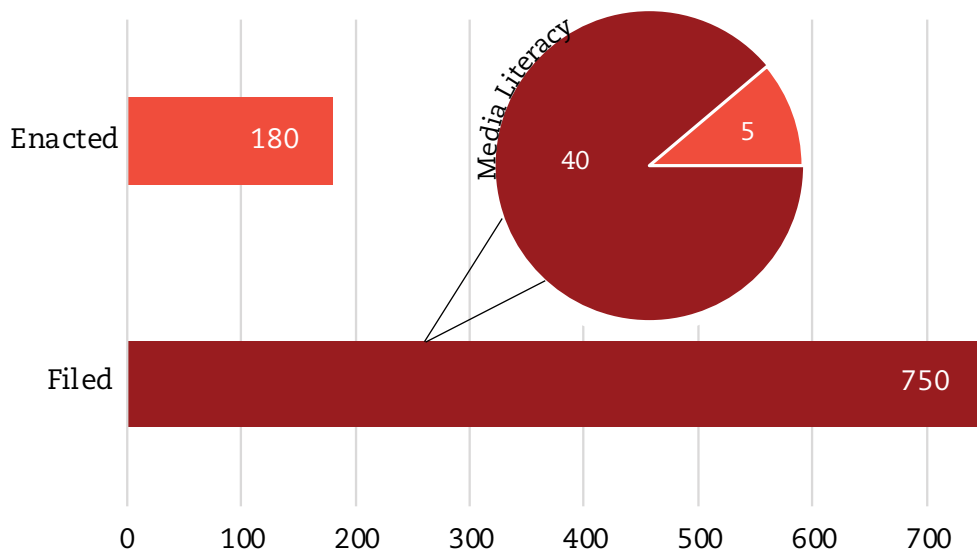
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SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY:

In 2024, the boom of artificial intelligence (AI) legislation in state legislatures nationwide significantly impacted the education sphere, spurring increased focus on STEM curriculum development, career and technical education programs and new restrictions on students' use of electronic devices.



Curriculum & Standards: STEM

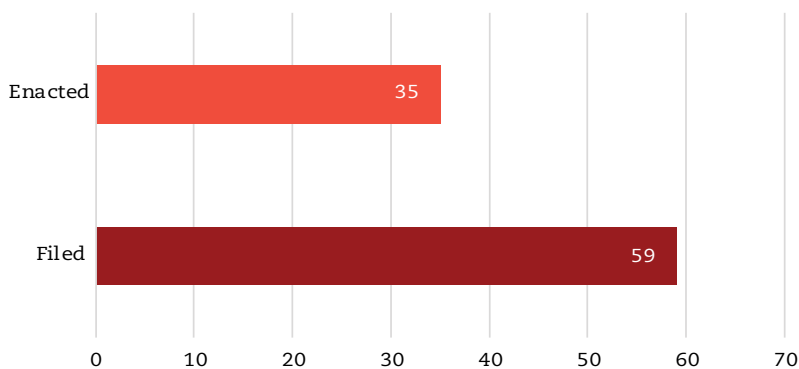
This session, legislation to expand K-12 STEM curriculum focused on computer science, enhanced math and science education, cybersecurity training and media literacy, including internet and social media use. With increasing censorship concerns, there's a growing push for curricula addressing media and internet literacy to enhance student safety. Nearly half of the states introduced similar bills, with successful enactments in California ([AB 873/Chapter 815](#) and [AB 2876/Chapter 927](#)), Connecticut ([SB 154/Act No. 24-93](#)), Georgia ([SB 351/Act 463](#)) and West Virginia ([SB 466/Chapter 104](#)). This trend is expected to grow in the next session.



EMERGING CURRICULUM: New Jersey [AB 4936](#) and companion bill [SB 3876](#) would require K-12 schools to provide instruction on artificial intelligence. AB 4936 is currently pending action in the Assembly Science, Innovation and Technology Committee and SB 3876 is pending in the Senate Education Committee; these bills carry over to the 2025 session.

Career & Technical Education: STEM

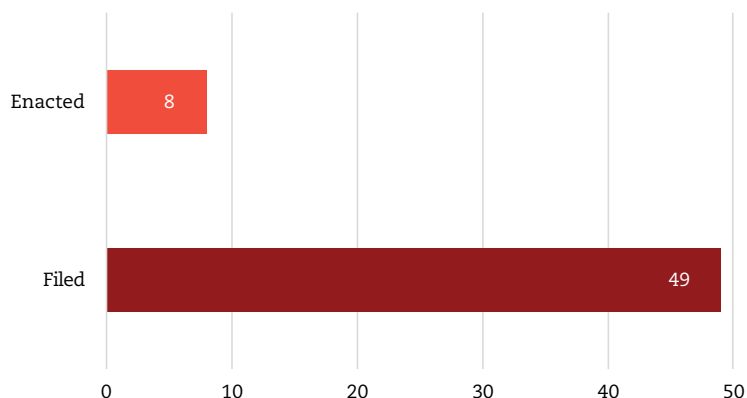
In addition to increased STEM standards in K-12 curricula, many states have established career and technical education (CTE) programs in STEM fields so that students may pursue careers in AI and computer science. Among the almost 60 pieces of legislation filed this past session is Louisiana [HB 264/Act 211](#), which adds computer science credits as a course requirement for obtaining a career major in higher education. States are not limiting CTE programs related to science and technology to just postsecondary students, as evidenced by Oklahoma [SB 930](#), which created an aerospace and aviation career program to partner with primary and secondary schools. CTE programs in STEM fields are becoming increasingly inclusive of AI education and training. According to a [report](#) from the Center for Security and Emerging Technology, "at least 19 high schools across, California, Florida, Georgia and Maryland have either already implemented or





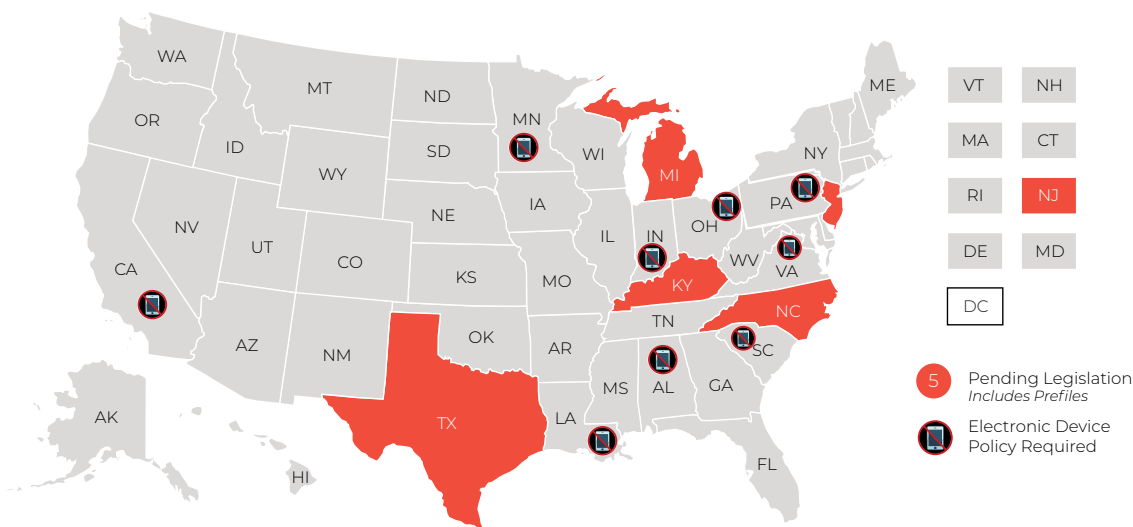
are preparing to implement an AI-specific CTE program” that would allow students to “explore future career fields, earn college credits or obtain industry-recognized certifications.”

Student Health & Safety: Electronic Device Restrictions



With the increased prevalence of technology, in both curricula and career education, one major concern of educators is the effective use of technology in the classroom. A [survey](#) of educators from the National Education Association finds educators believing that cellphones are very or somewhat disruptive during instructional time in schools where students are allowed to use cellphones (73-79 percent), whereas educators working in schools where cellphones cannot be accessed during instructional time find cellphones much less disruptive during instructional time (28

percent). In response, many states have introduced legislation that would require schools to adopt cellphone policies for students. **California, Louisiana, Ohio and Pennsylvania** have all passed legislation this session regulating cellphone use in schools, to varying degrees. For example, **Pennsylvania SB 700/Act 55** ties a grant for school districts to the adoption of a cellphone policy that would require students to lock their phones in lockable bags during the school day, while **California AB 3216/Chapter 500** requires school districts to adopt policies limiting or outright prohibiting the use of smartphones in the classroom.



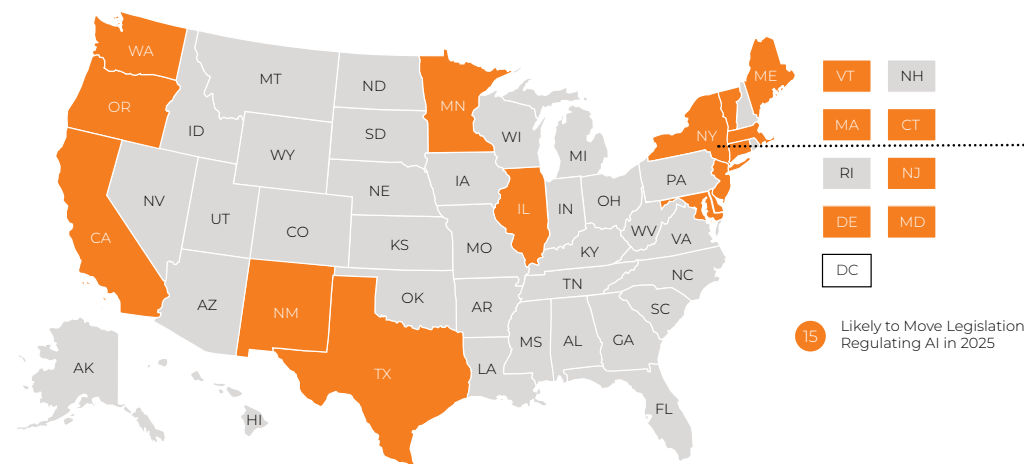
To date, 49 bills were introduced regarding cellphones in schools across 23 states during this session. This effort by legislators and educators has been met with some pushback from families, as school safety concerns lead parents and guardians to seek the immediate access to their students that cellphones provide, according to [Chalkbeat](#).



ELECTRONIC DEVICES: Legislation on student cellphone use has currently been prefiled in three states, including **Texas HB 1446**, which would create a study to investigate the effects of such policies as they relate to student academic outcomes.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

States with democratic trifectas, whether newly established or maintained, are likely to prioritize governing artificial intelligence (AI), especially as federal oversight of big tech undergoes significant shifts. At the federal level, the Trump administration has announced plans to overhaul leadership at key regulatory agencies, including the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and Federal Trade Commission (FTC). This includes the removal of FTC Chair Lina Khan, signaling a rollback of the commission’s aggressive antitrust efforts targeting “big tech”.

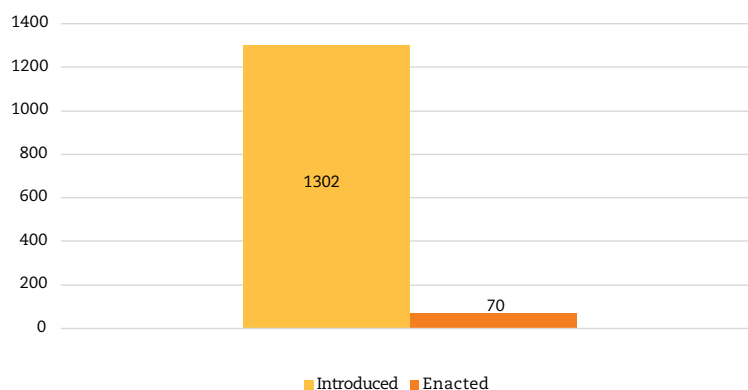


Intel has shared that an AI “safety” bill, similar to California SB 1047, which was passed by the legislature and ultimately vetoed by Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, will be introduced in New York in 2025, along with a suite of other AI regulatory bills.

Additionally, the administration has indicated its intention to revoke President Joe Biden’s October 2023 [Executive Order on AI](#), further shaping the national landscape of AI governance.

The removal of certain federal regulations is expected to prompt states to respond with AI governance bills similar to Colorado’s AI governance law, [SB 205](#). Efforts are anticipated to regulate both high-risk and generative AI. The enactment of SB 205 indicates that Connecticut will likely renew its push for a similar bill in 2025 due to the fact that Colorado’s law was based on the state’s own failed measure, [SB 2](#). Privacy issues are likely to become increasingly intertwined with AI as lawmakers address these complex topics. The use of data provenance in training large language models will remain a focal point for privacy concerns, while deepfakes continue to challenge the boundary between AI innovation and privacy violations.

AI Legislation
2024 - Present



After a long battle to pass and eventually fail to override the veto of data privacy bill [HB 121](#) in 2024, Vermont is likely to see the reintroduction of a major data privacy bill and an AI regulation bill in 2025, like that of Colorado SB 205 or Connecticut SB 2. Much like Vermont’s data privacy bill, Connecticut’s AI bill failed to see enactment at the 11th hour.

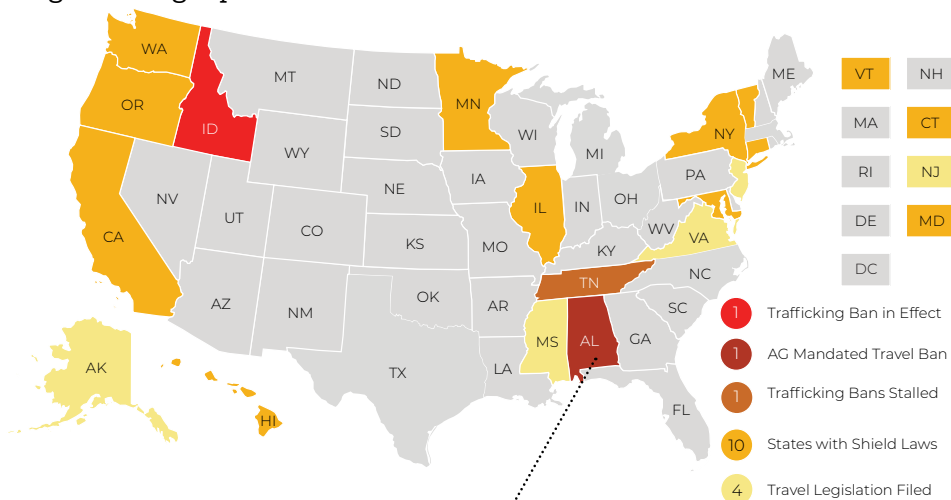
REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH: *Travel for Care*


Several states have enacted or considered “abortion trafficking” laws to restrict minors from traveling out of state for abortion services without parental consent, aiming to penalize individuals assisting in such cases. In a key decision, the Ninth Circuit Court recently ruled that [Idaho can enforce](#) its abortion trafficking law, [HB 242/Chapter 310](#), which carries a felony penalty, reversing a prior First Amendment block. Meanwhile, in 2024, states like [Alabama](#), [Mississippi](#) and [Oklahoma](#) explored similar legislation, and Amarillo, [Texas](#) voters [rejected](#) a proposal to ban using local roads for out-of-state abortions. These measures raise significant legal and ethical concerns about the right to travel and access healthcare, potentially affecting both minors and adults seeking or aiding reproductive services.

Advocates for abortion rights have filed lawsuits in Alabama and Tennessee, challenging the laws as vague and alleging they infringe on constitutional rights, including free speech and interstate travel.

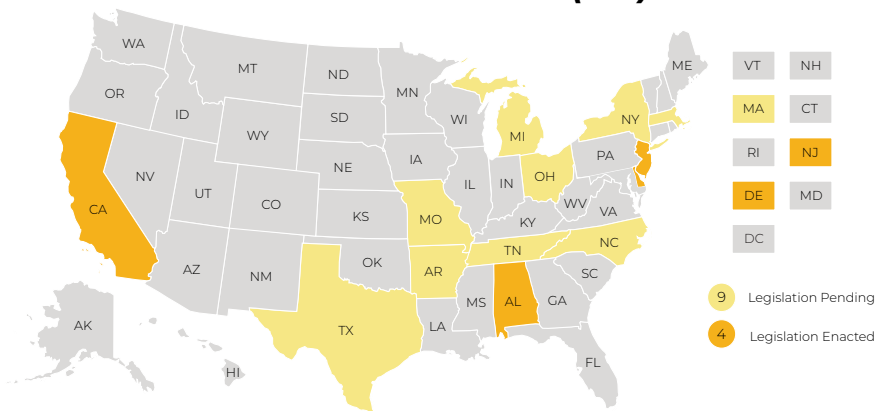
? WHAT IS AN ABORTION SHIELD LAW?

An abortion shield law is a legal measure that safeguards healthcare providers, parents of minors and patients from legal actions initiated by states with restrictive abortion laws, particularly concerning travel-related warrants.



 Alabama is facing a lawsuit due to Republican Attorney General Steve Marshall's threats to prosecute people who help women travel out of state to get abortions.

In Vitro Fertilization (IVF)



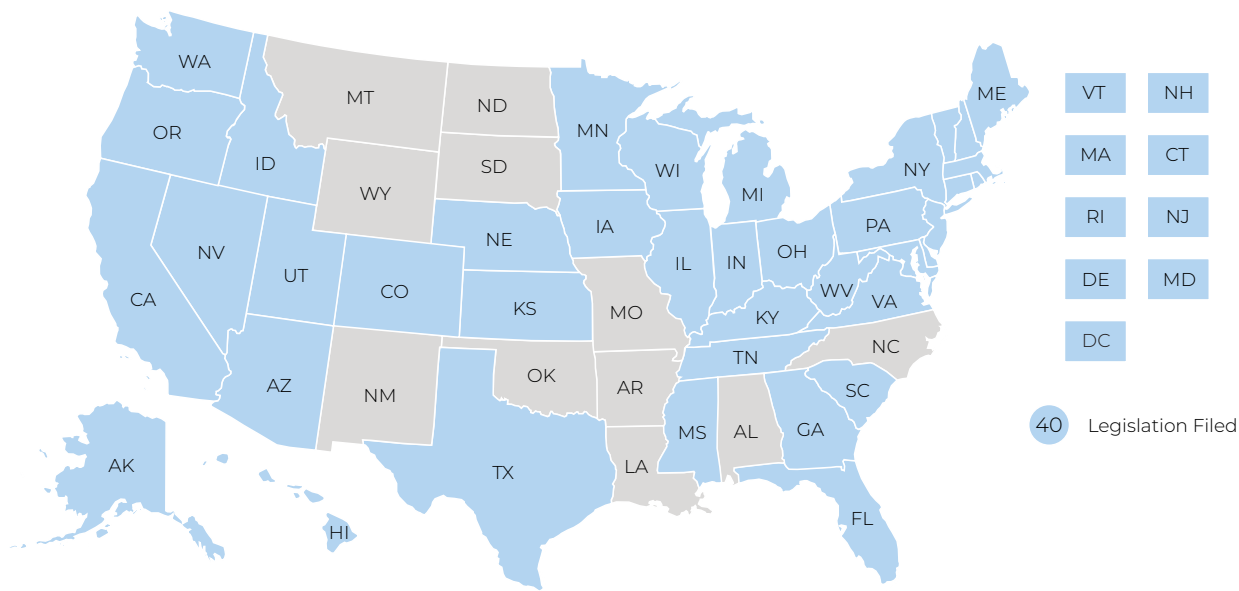
LePage v. Center for Reproductive Medicine, P.C.



In response to the Alabama Supreme Court's February [ruling](#), which classified embryos outside a uterus as “children” under the “[Wrongful Death of a Minor Act](#)”, states are now taking action to protect IVF practices. This decision greatly impacts the practice by potentially criminalizing the discarding of unused embryos and introducing new restrictions on abortion. By expanding “personhood” to embryos, the ruling complicates reproductive healthcare and threatens both fertility treatments and abortion rights.

Rent Algorithms

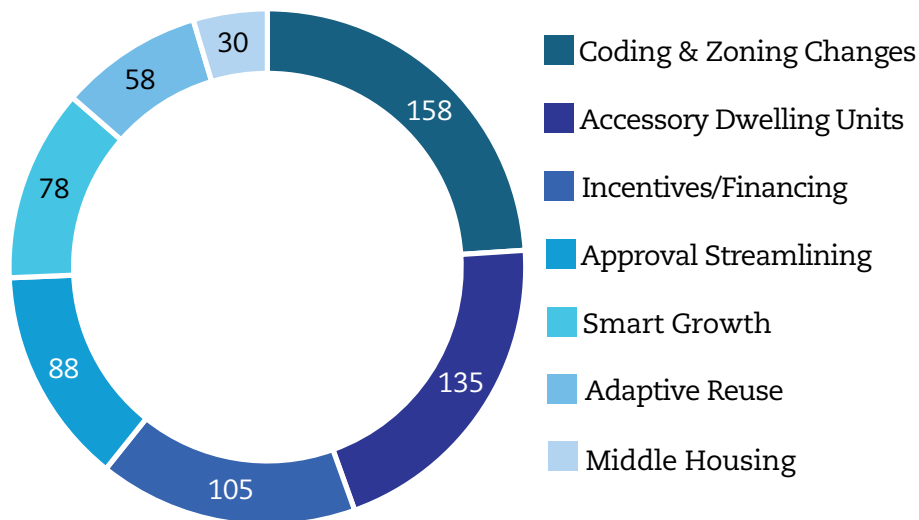
There have been 13 bills introduced this session in **Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island** and the **U.S. Congress** that would prohibit the use of an algorithm or artificial intelligence to set rent amounts.



A related **New Hampshire** bill, [HB 1368](#), would have prohibited evictions for a tenant’s failure to pay rent that was increased by vertical price fixing, and, if the lessor increased rent using an algorithmic pricing tool, there is a presumption that the eviction was unlawful.

Housing Supply

This year, 582 housing supply bills were introduced across 40 states. These bills generally fall under seven legislative strategies: allowing and incentivizing accessory dwelling units, adaptive reuse of under-utilized commercial buildings, streamlining approval and permitting processes, code and zoning changes, incentives and financing, middle housing development, and smart growth or transit-oriented development.

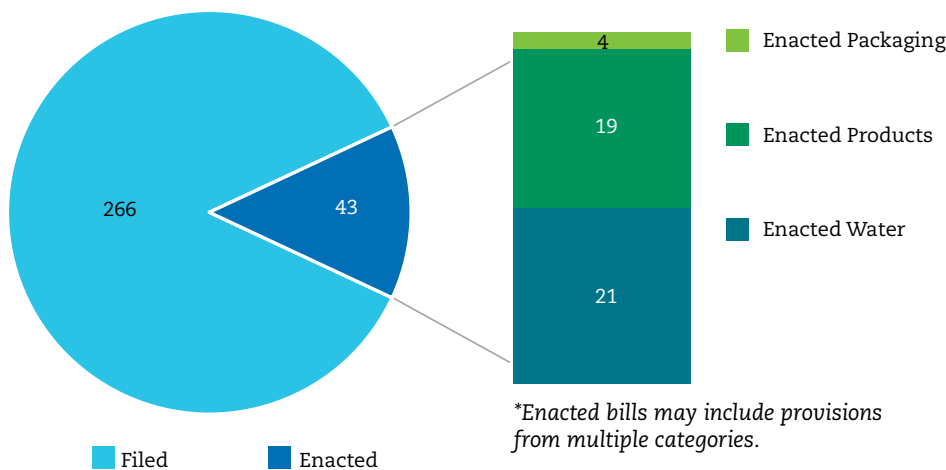


PERFLUOROALKYL & POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES:

In 2024, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) received increased attention by legislators addressing those harms to health linked to these “forever chemicals.” Between December 2023 and November 2024, 266 bills related to PFAS were either introduced or carried over, ending in 43* passing into law. With substantive interest in regulating forever chemicals having now spread to 36 states, we can expect its expansion in 2025, especially concerning consumer products, water quality and producer-funded cleanup efforts.

Products:

The trend in bans or restrictions on PFAS-containing products continued through 2024, with states as distant as [Alaska](#) and [Connecticut](#) passing laws limiting sales of PFAS-laced items including in pans, pants, foam or turf. Notably, focus was placed on menstrual products, with [Vermont SB 25/ Act 131](#) being emblematic of this legislative interest.



Packaging:

Legislation restricting PFAS-containing packaging had a lackluster record in 2024, with few states passing PFAS packaging restrictions. [Rhode Island HB 7619 Sub A./Chapter 120](#) stands out in particular because, despite the year’s record, it will likely inform legislation in other states, come 2025.

Note: Much PFAS policy making occurs via regulations, rather than legislation, which is not reflected in this graphic. *FOCUS offers robust regulation tracking, so contact your analyst with any and all interests.

Water:

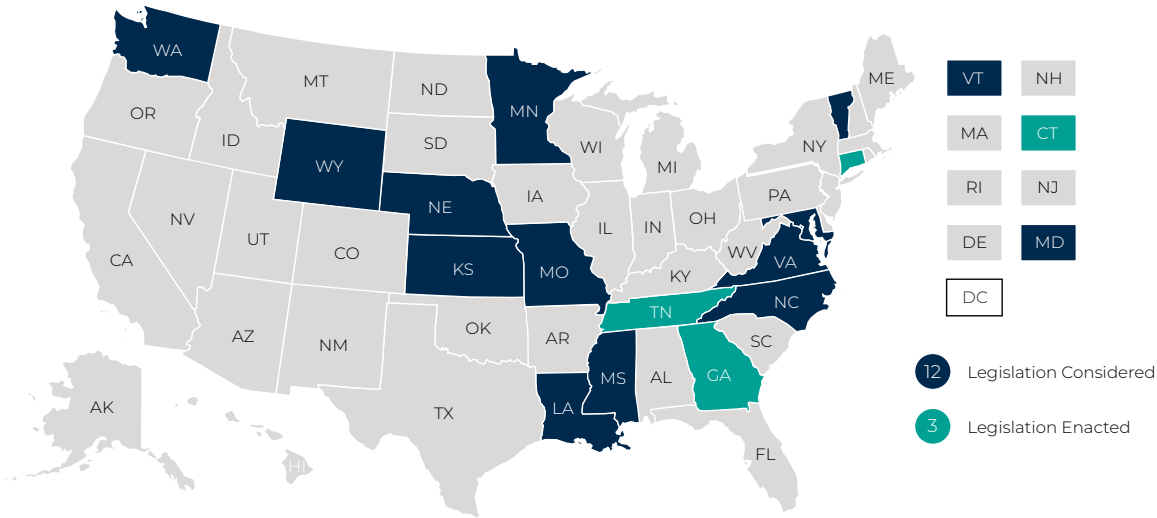
Months before the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published its PFAS [regulation](#) in April, legislatures from [California](#) to [Kentucky](#) were working on mitigating the chemical class’s place in public waters. Be it [Virginia HB 1085/Chapter 316](#), mandating regular PFAS water testing and reporting, or [Minnesota, HF 3911/Chapter 116](#), to study future fines on producer-caused contamination, legislators have become increasingly keen on these concerns.



Worries of water-laced PFAS extend even to oil and gas operations; [Texas](#) prefile [HB 1145](#) would study the effects of PFAS in hydraulic fracturing on water contamination.

DIGITAL PRODUCTS & GOODS:

There were 15 states that considered legislation with provisions concerning the taxation of digital goods and products in 2024, which either would have modified existing laws or imposed tax on such goods for the first time in the state. Of the 35 bills that were introduced, however, only a few were enacted in [Connecticut](#), [Georgia](#) and [Tennessee](#), which made modifications to existing tax law. A contested bill in **Vermont** ultimately had its relevant provisions removed before being sent to the governor.



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Louisiana pushed to expand the imposition of sales tax on digital products during its special session held in November, as part of Republican Gov. Jeff Landry's state tax reform package; Governor Landry is [expected to sign](#) the legislation.

States that introduced legislation that would have newly imposed taxes on digital goods or products in 2024 also included **Kansas**, **Missouri** and **Virginia**. Virginia's Republican Gov. Glenn Youngkin attempted to extend the sales tax to include digital products through the state's 2024 budget, however, the provisions were ultimately left on the [cutting room floor](#) by legislators. It remains to be seen if renewed efforts to include digital products in the sales tax will take place in 2025; there is an active study commission in Virginia that includes digital products taxation as part of its [work plan](#).

