

REPORT

# 2021 State Legislative Trends Report

| Quorum State



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# 2021 State Legislative Trends Report

The United States is navigating a high-stakes time of digital modernization, economic revitalization, green innovation, and pandemic recovery. In this fast-evolving landscape, public affairs professionals need a clear line of sight into policy developments.

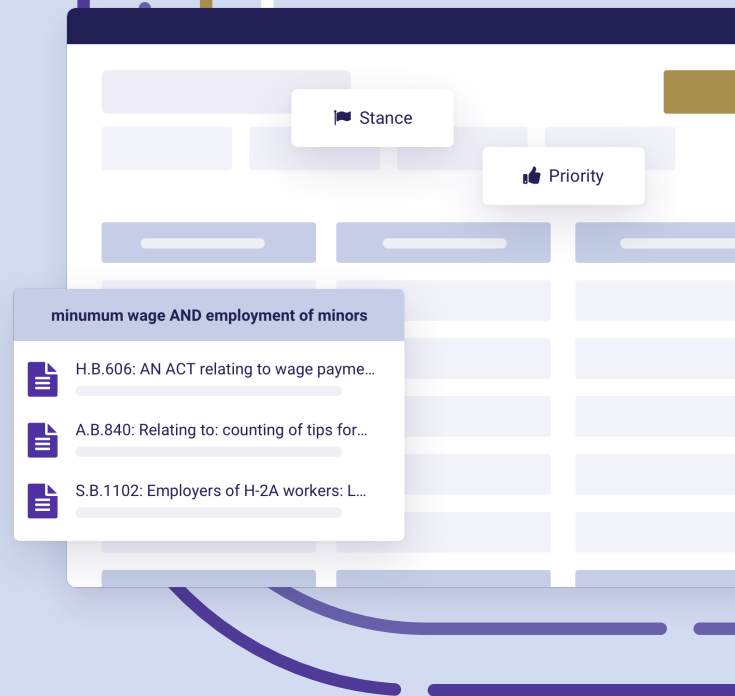
Quorum helps public affairs professionals to track legislation in Congress, all 50 states, and the European Union. In our report, we uncover and explore key legislative trends and priorities at the state level.

The concept of mindshare has roots in the advertising and media industry, with the specific term describing the amount of attention that a topic receives. There are several ways to measure mindshare, including time, awareness, and visibility.

So what topics are capturing the attention of state legislatures?

In our 2021 recap, we examine 8 topics at the center of American life:

- Health
- Public Safety
- Housing
- Climate
- Democracy
- Infrastructure
- Economy
- Education



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## U.S. State Legislature Activity

In order to quantify the total mindshare picture, we begin with an aggregate-level view of how many bills were introduced and enacted from January 1, 2021 to August 25, 2021.

In total, there were 104,189 bills introduced and 15,502 enacted in aggregate across all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia.

### Wonk Note: Understanding the Data

Every bill is unique — one state could pass 100 one-page bills and another state could pass one 100-page bill, so the count of bills is interesting but not sufficient on its own to assess a state legislature's efficacy.

**Table 1.** 2021 Aggregates of U.S. State Legislature Activity

State	State Population*	Bills Introduced	Bills Enacted
Alabama	5,024,279	1,066	493
Alaska	733,391	371	33
Arizona	7,151,502	1,726	419
Arkansas	3,011,524	1,591	1,049
California	39,538,223	2,201	132
Colorado	5,773,714	624	503
Connecticut	3,605,944	2,810	241
Delaware	989,948	444	114
District of Columbia	689,545	372	163
Florida	21,538,187	2,801	241
Georgia	10,711,908	1,115	291
Hawaii	1,455,271	2,814	251
Idaho	1,839,106	631	364
Illinois	12,812,508	7,087	661
Indiana	6,785,528	1,012	218
Iowa	3,190,369	2,073	184
Kansas	2,937,880	769	116
Kentucky	4,505,836	760	164
Louisiana	4,657,757	959	486
Maine	1,362,359	1,737	620
Maryland	6,177,224	1,570	503
Massachusetts	7,029,917	6,961	51
Michigan	10,077,331	1,900	81

**Table 1.** 2021 Aggregates of U.S. State Legislature Activity, Cont.

State	State Population*	Bills Introduced	Bills Enacted
Minnesota	5,706,494	5,363	43
Mississippi	2,961,279	2,623	331
Missouri	6,154,913	1,157	22
Montana	1,084,225	150	30
Nebraska	1,961,504	741	197
Nevada	3,104,614	820	434
New Hampshire	1,377,529	749	212
New Jersey	9,288,994	1,502	82
New Mexico	2,117,522	814	144
New York	20,201,249	14,960	420
North Carolina	10,439,388	1,670	142
North Dakota	779,094	847	502
Ohio	11,799,448	621	47
Oklahoma	3,959,353	3,057	582
Oregon	4,237,256	2,390	680
Pennsylvania	13,002,700	2,445	85
Puerto Rico	3,285,874	1,498	41
Rhode Island	1,097,379	2,057	532
South Carolina	5,118,425	595	63
South Dakota	886,667	501	247
Tennessee	6,910,840	3,263	619
Texas	29,145,505	6,464	911
Utah	3,271,616	583	350
Vermont	643,077	605	81
Virginia	8,631,393	891	523
Washington	7,705,281	954	285
West Virginia	1,793,716	2,096	308
Wisconsin	5,893,718	1,026	79
Wyoming	576,851	353	132
<b>Totals</b>	<b>334,735,155</b>	<b>104,189</b>	<b>15,502</b>

\*Source: <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2020/dec/2020-apportionment-data.html>

## Bills Relative to State Populations

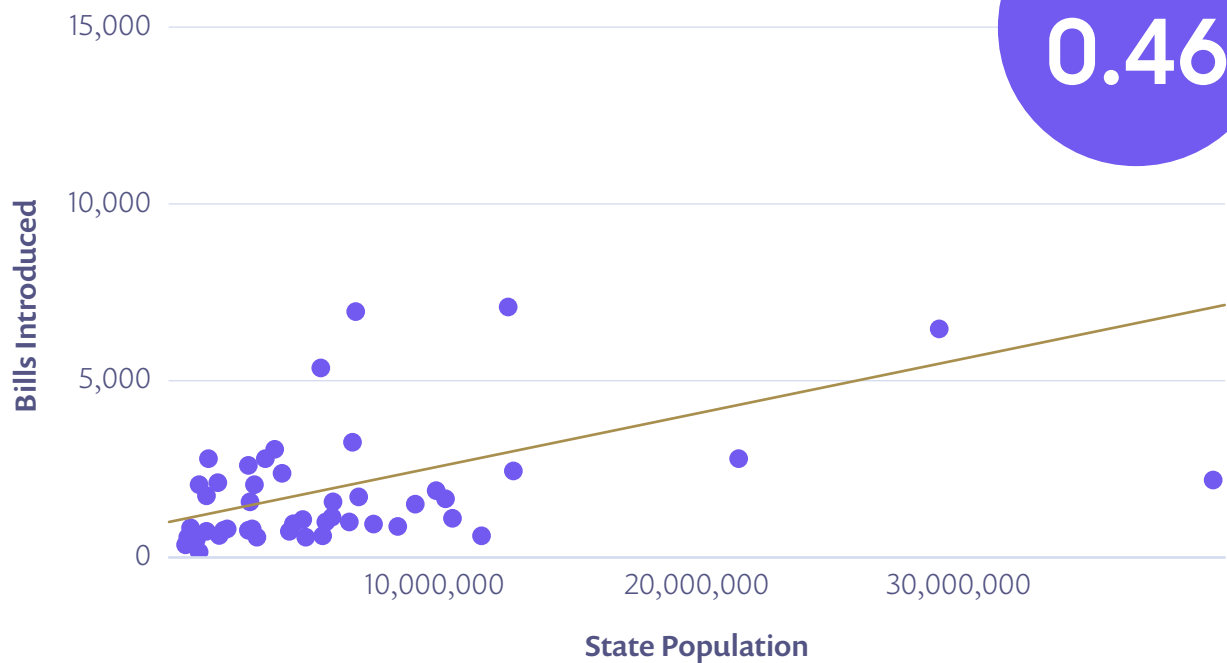
It's valuable to see the ways in which relationships exist within the datasets. Are there underlying factors that influence overall mindshare trends?

First, we were interested in learning whether any correlations between state population and state legislature activity were present. We used a statistical analysis technique called the Pearson Correlation Coefficient, which measures the strength of a relationship between two variables between the range -1 to 1, where -1 represents a negative correlation, 0 represents no correlation, and 1 represents a strong positive relationship. We found an interesting correlation between introduced bills and state population, but there was no correlation between enacted bills and state population counts.

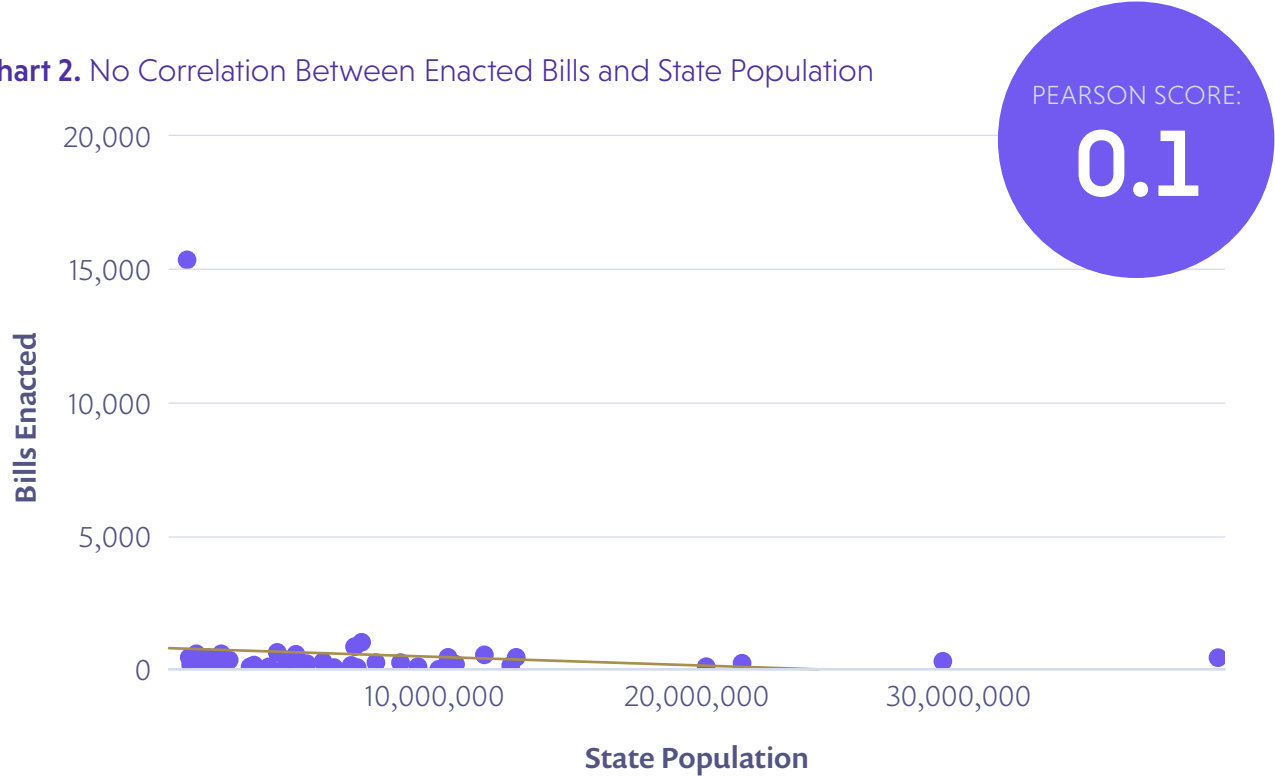
### Wonk Note: Understanding the Data

There's an important statistical rule that "correlation is not causation." That means there's further analysis necessary to determine the meaning behind these trends and if a potential causal relationship exists.

**Chart 1.** Correlation Between Introduced Bills and State Population



**Chart 2.** No Correlation Between Enacted Bills and State Population



## Bills and Legislators

States use different rules for apportioning legislators to districts, leading to different ratios of legislators to population across the country. For example, New Hampshire has a population of 1,377,529 but 418 legislators, for a ratio of one legislator for every 3,295 residents. Texas, on the other hand, has a population of 29,145,505 and 179 legislators, for a ratio of one legislator for every 162,824 residents. We were curious to examine relationships between bills and legislators during the 2021 legislative session.

Our biggest question was whether it's simply the number of legislators influencing the introduction and enactment of bills. We found a slight correlation between the number of legislators and the number of bills being introduced (Pearson Score: 0.29). We found no correlation between the number of legislators and the bills being enacted (Pearson Score: -0.02).

Across all state legislatures combined, there were 14.8 bills introduced and 2.7 bills enacted per legislator. Here is what these trends looked like for each state:

**Table 2.** 2021 Aggregates of U.S. State Legislature Activity

State	Bills Introduced Per Legislator	Bills Enacted Per Legislator	Total # of Legislators
New York	70.2	2.0	213
Illinois	40.0	3.7	177
Hawaii	37.0	3.3	76
Texas	36.1	5.1	179
Massachusetts	34.8	0.3	200
District of Columbia	28.6	12.5	13
Minnesota	26.8	0.2	200
Oregon	26.6	7.6	90
Tennessee	24.9	4.7	131
Puerto Rico	21.1	0.6	71
Oklahoma	20.5	3.9	149
Arizona	19.4	4.7	89
Rhode Island	18.4	4.8	112
California	18.3	1.1	120
Florida	17.5	1.5	160
West Virginia	15.8	2.3	133
Mississippi	15.3	1.9	171
Nebraska	15.1	4.0	49
Connecticut	15.0	1.3	187
Iowa	14.0	1.2	148



**Table 2.** 2021 Aggregates of U.S. State Legislature Activity, Cont.

State	Bills Introduced Per Legislator	Bills Enacted Per Legislator	Total # of Legislators
Nevada	13.0	6.9	63
Michigan	13.0	0.6	146
New Jersey	12.6	0.7	119
Arkansas	11.8	7.8	135
North Carolina	9.8	0.8	170
Pennsylvania	9.7	0.3	251
Maine	9.4	3.4	185
Maryland	8.4	2.7	187
Wisconsin	7.8	0.6	132
Alabama	7.7	3.6	138
New Mexico	7.3	1.3	111
Delaware	7.2	1.8	62
Louisiana	6.8	3.4	141
Indiana	6.7	1.5	150
Washington	6.5	1.9	147
Virginia	6.4	3.7	140
Colorado	6.2	5.0	100
Alaska	6.2	0.6	60
Idaho	6.0	3.5	105
North Dakota	6.0	3.6	141
Missouri	5.9	0.1	196
Kentucky	5.6	1.2	135
Utah	5.6	3.4	104
South Dakota	4.8	2.4	105
Georgia	4.7	1.2	235
Ohio	4.7	0.4	131
Kansas	4.7	0.7	165
Wyoming	3.9	1.5	90
South Carolina	3.5	0.4	170
Vermont	3.4	0.5	180
New Hampshire	1.8	0.5	418
Montana	1.0	0.2	149
<b>Totals</b>	<b>14.0</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>144</b>

## Partisanship and Bills

The topic of partisanship is a key theme in American politics and represents considerable mindshare in the media. We were interested in examining correlations between partisanship and state legislative activity. In total, 31 states held a Republican majority in their state legislatures, and 18 states held a Democratic majority.

We examined if there were any correlations between partisanship, bills being introduced, and bills being

enacted. We quantified partisanship as the percent-difference between the minority group relative to the majority group in each state legislature.

The Pearson Scores suggest no correlation between partisanship and bills introduced (-0.03) or partisanship and bills enacted (0.06).

**Table 3.** Party Representation in State Legislatures

State	Republicans	Democrats	Other (Independents, Libertarians)	Partisanship
Alabama	103	35		66%
Alaska	34	23	3	32%
Arizona	47	40		11%
Arkansas	105	29	1	72%
California	28	91	1	69%
Colorado	39	61		36%
Connecticut	67	120		44%
District of Columbia	0	11	2	100%
Delaware	22	40		45%
Florida	102	58		43%
Georgia	137	98		28%
Hawaii	5	71		93%
Idaho	86	19		78%
Illinois	63	114		45%
Indiana	109	40		64%
Iowa	91	58		36%
Kansas	115	50		57%
Kentucky	102	33		68%
Louisiana	94	44	3	53%
Maine	78	102	5	24%

**Table 3.** Party Representation in State Legislatures, Cont.

State	Republicans	Democrats	Other (Independents, Libertarians)	Partisanship
Maryland	57	130		56%
Massachusetts	32	165	1	80%
Michigan	78	68		13%
Minnesota	98	101	2	3%
Mississippi	112	59		47%
Missouri	137	59		57%
Montana	98	52		48%
Nebraska	0	0		0%
Nevada	25	38		34%
New Hampshire	221	197		12%
New Jersey	42	77		45%
New Mexico	39	72	1	45%
New York	63	148		58%
North Carolina	97	73		25%
North Dakota	120	21		83%
Ohio	89	42		53%
Oklahoma	121	28		77%
Oregon	35	55		36%
Pennsylvania	141	109	1	23%
Puerto Rico	38	30	3	21%
Rhode Island	15	97		85%
South Carolina	111	59		47%
South Dakota	94	11		88%
Tennessee	99	32		68%
Texas	100	79		21%
Utah	81	23		72%
Vermont	53	122	5	57%
Virginia	64	76		16%
Washington	61	86		29%
West Virginia	100	32		67%
Wisconsin	82	50		39%
Wyoming	79	9	2	89%

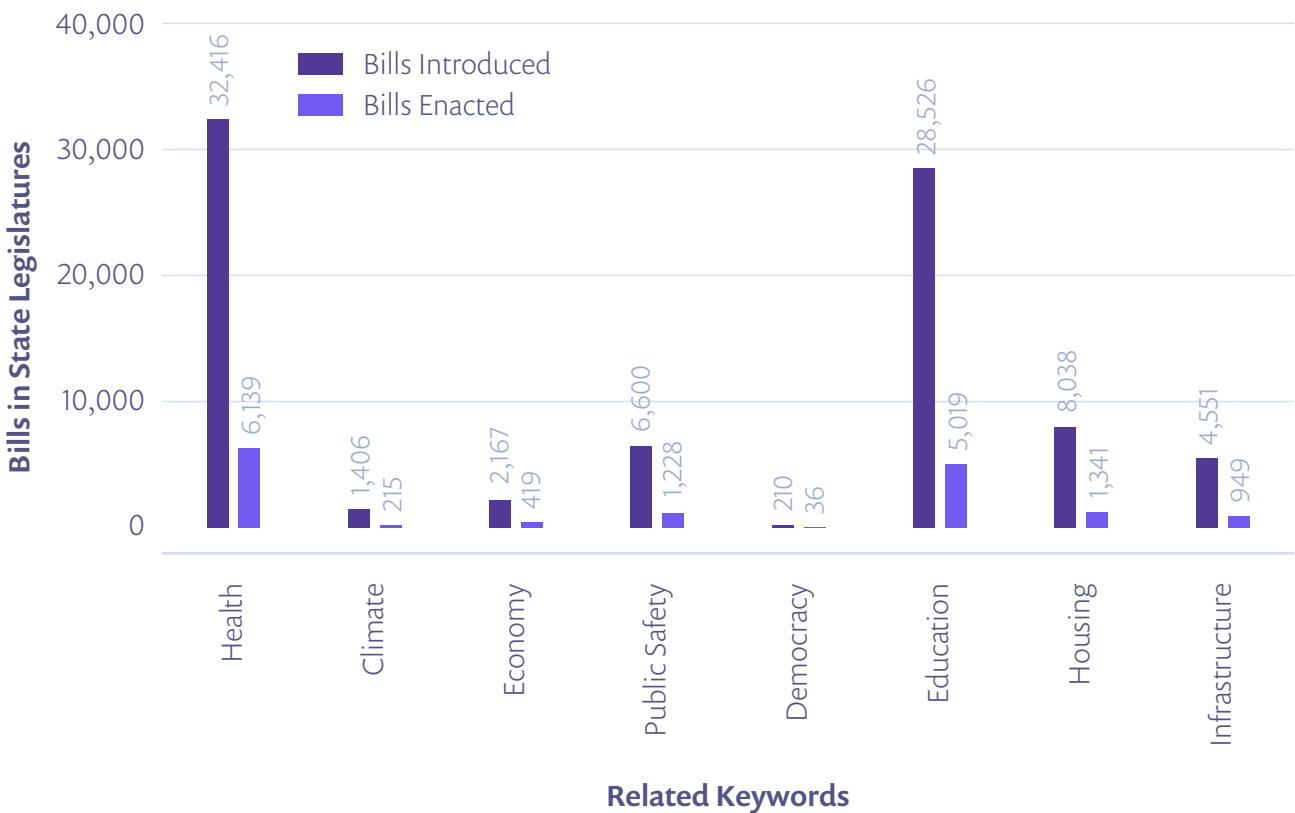
## Key Issues and Themes

How do high-level numbers translate into policies that define American life?

For every topic area, we share count data from Quorum’s database based on keywords included in bill text or titles. The list below is a collection of key topics that arose in state legislatures (i.e. mindshare) in 2021.

How do high-level numbers translate into policies that define American life?

Chart 3. Mindshare in State Legislatures



**Table 4.** Mindshare in State Legislatures

Relevant Topics	Bills Introduced	Bills Enacted
<b>Bills Mentioning Health</b>		
Health	32,416	6,139
COVID-19	3,830	635
Vaccines	1,293	222
Hospitals	8,383	1,679
Prescription Drugs	1,716	333
Mental Health	6,224	1,200
Abortion	809	151
<b>Bills Mentioning the Climate</b>		
Climate	1,406	215
Renewable Energy	1,134	212
Carbon Emissions	140	17
Environmental Protection	2,351	349
Natural Resources	4,024	719
<b>Bills Mentioning the Economy</b>		
Economy	2,167	419
Minimum Wage	735	95
Employee Rights	455	55
Jobs	7,542	1,078
<b>Bills Mentioning Public Safety</b>		
Public Safety	6,600	1,228
Emergency Services	1,463	302
Emergency Shelter	296	70
Weapons	2,306	353
First Responders	727	126
Gun Control	52	3
School Shootings	14	4
Mass Shootings	22	2
Violence	3,973	757
<b>Bills Mentioning Democracy</b>		
Democracy	210	36
Voting	7,940	3,670
Elections	15,301	3,674

**Table 4.** Mindshare in State Legislatures, Cont.

Relevant Topics	Bills Introduced	Bills Enacted
<b>Bills Mentioning Democracy</b>		
Protest	852	216
Taxes	19,131	3,374
<b>Bills Mentioning Education</b>		
Education	28,526	5,019
K-12	594	132
Higher Education	5,473	1,248
Preschool	802	198
Education Funding	894	192
Equal Opportunity	337	73
Scholarships	1,665	401
Financial Aid	765	193
Schools	21,191	3,677
<b>Bills Mentioning Housing</b>		
Housing	8,038	1,341
Affordable Housing	1,079	185
Evictions	746	117
Mortgages	2,677	551
Property Rights	781	190
Landlords	1,338	196
Tenants	2,719	421
<b>Bills Mentioning Infrastructure</b>		
Infrastructure	4,551	949
Transportation	16,331	2,915
Roads	4,893	1,107
Highways	6,298	1,365
Parks	6,273	1,303
Public Facilities	573	149
Water	8,402	1,740
Bridges	2,442	753

## Rankings of Issues

Which issues are capturing more mindshare in state legislatures than others? To explore this question, we ranked key issues based on the number of bills being introduced and enacted. This perspective creates a comparative, landscape-level view of state legislature priorities across the United States.

### Wonk Note: See the Volume of Bills on Your Issues

This list of issues is not exhaustive of everything that happened in state legislatures this year. If you're interested in seeing how you can use Quorum to see the mindshare your organization's issues are capturing, [request a demo](#).

**Table 5.** Bills Introduced, State Legislature Priority Rankings

Relevant Topics	Bills Introduced
Health	32,416
Education	28,526
Schools	21,191
Taxes	19,131
Transportation	16,331
Elections	15,301
Water	8,402
Hospitals	8,383
Housing	8,038
Voting	7,940
Jobs	7,542
Public Safety	6,600
Highways	6,298
Parks	6,273
Mental Health	6,224
Higher Education	5,473
Roads	4,893
Infrastructure	4,551
Natural Resources	4,024
Violence	3,973
COVID-19	3,830
Tenants	2,719
Mortgages	2,677
Bridges	2,442
Environmental Protection	2,351

**Table 6.** Bills Enacted, State Legislature Priority Rankings

Relevant Topics	Bills Enacted
Health	6,139
COVID-19	5,019
Vaccines	3,677
Hospitals	3,674
Prescription Drugs	3,670
Mental Health	3,374
Abortion	2,915
Climate	1,740
Renewable Energy	1,679
Carbon Emissions	1,365
Environmental Protection	1,341
Natural Resources	1,303
Economy	1,248
Minimum Wage	1,228
Employee Rights	1,200
Jobs	1,107
Public Safety	1,078
Emergency Services	949
Emergency Shelter	757
Weapons	753
First Responders	719
Gun Control	635
School Shootings	551
Mass Shootings	421
Violence	419

## Social Media Trends

Tracking social media dialogue is another way to understand which issues occupy the mindshare of legislators. We looked at the most active legislators across Twitter, Facebook, and per state to understand which voices are dominating the mindshare of those who follow the legislature. Rep. David Livingston (R-AZ) is the most active state legislator on social media from Jan 1, 2021 to August 25, 2021, tweeting most commonly about immigration—his most commonly used hashtag is #bordercrisis. Sen. Linda Stewart (D-FL) is the most active state legislator on Facebook, posting most frequently about COVID-19, using hashtags like #washyourhands, #100daymaskchallenge, and #keepyourdistance.



**Linda Stewart, Florida State Senator District 13**

June 18 at 6:27 PM · 🌐

During the 2021 Session, I was proud to be Co-Introducer to [Senator Randolph Bracy's Juneteenth Day Bill](#) and I am happy to hear he will continue to work to get this done in Florida!

<https://floridapolitics.com/archives/436165-randolph-bracy-pledges-new-florida-juneteenth-bill/>



**Table 7.** The Top 15 Most Active Legislators on Twitter

Legislator	Tweets
Sen. David Livingston (R-AZ)	20,928
Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson (D-NM)	14,122
Rep. Gloria Johnson (D-TN)	13,392
Assemb. Yuh-Line Niou (D-NY)	10,734
Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-FL)	9,839
Sen. Chris Eaton (D-MN)	9,222
Rep. Sherry Frost (D-NH)	8,723
Rep. Eric Gallager (D-NH)	8,542
Rep. Andrea Dalessandro (D-AZ)	8,486
Assemb. Buffy Wicks (D-CA)	8,100
Rep. Mathew "Matt" Muratore (R-MA)	6,845
Rep. Mindy Domb (D-MA)	6,259
Del. Danica Roem (D-VA)	5,891
Sen. Mimi Stewart (D-NM)	5,850
Sen. Vincent Hughes (D-PA)	5,642

**Table 8.** The Top 15 Most Active Legislators on Facebook

Legislator	Posts
Sen. Linda Stewart (D-FL)	3,336
Rep. Anna Eskamani (D-FL)	3,242
Sen. Doug Mastriano (R-PA)	2,896
Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D-WI)	1,803
Rep. James White (R-TX)	1,794
Sen. Annette Taddeo (D-FL)	1,592
Rep. Kimberly "Kim" Williams (D-DE)	1,519
Sen. Robert "Rob" Hogg (D-IA)	1,444
Rep. Anita Kulik (D-PA)	1,375
Assemb. Benjie Wimberly (D-NJ)	1,335
Assemb. Angelo Santabarbara (D-NY)	1,095
Sen. Chris Larson (D-WI)	1,093
Sen. Jennifer "Jenn" McClellan (D-VA)	1,050
Rep. Benjamin "Ben" Sanchez (D-PA)	944
Rep. Abe Hudson (D-MS)	922



**Table 9.** The Most Active Legislator on Facebook and Twitter, by State

State	Legislator	Social Posts
AL	Rep. Poncey Robertson (R)	1,881
AK	Sen. Scott Kawasaki (D)	538
AZ	Sen. David Livingston (R)	20,948
AR	Rep. Jamie Scott (D)	3,651
CA	Assemb. Buffy Wicks (D)	8,180
CO	Rep. Steven Woodrow (D)	4,100
CT	Sen. Matt Lesser (D)	1,924
DE	Rep. Kimberly "Kim" Williams (D)	2,743
DC	CM Janeese George (D)	3,413
FL	Rep. Anna Eskamani (D)	13,081
GA	Sen. Jennifer "Jen" Jordan (D)	3,257
HI	Sen. Donna Kim (D)	907
ID	Rep. Tammy Nichols (R)	1,154
IL	Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch (D)	2,456
IN	Rep. Martin Carbaugh (R)	1,166
IA	Sen. Robert "Rob" Hogg (D)	3,994
KS	Rep. Brandon Woodard (D)	2,505
KY	Rep. Attica Scott (D)	2,753
LA	Sen. Karen Peterson (D)	3,267
ME	Speaker Ryan Fecteau (D)	815
MD	Del. Gabriel Acevero (D)	2,829
MA	Rep. Matthew "Matt" Muratore (R)	6,931
MI	Sen. Erika Geiss (D)	3,490
MN	Sen. Chris Eaton (D)	9,222
MS	Rep. Abe Hudson (D)	2,276
MO	Rep. Lane Roberts (R)	2,657
MT	Rep. Danny Tenenbaum (D)	759
NE	Adam Morfeld (D)	1,577
NV	Assemb. Lesley Cohen (D)	3,283
NH	Rep. Sherry Frost (D)	8,812
NJ	Assemb. Benjie Wimberly (D)	2,671
NM	Rep. Elizabeth "Liz" Thomson (D)	14,122
NY	Assemb. Yuh-Line Niou (D)	10,754

**Table 9.** The Most Active Legislator on Facebook and Twitter, by State, Cont.

State	Legislator	Social Posts
NC	Rep. William "Billy" Richardson (D)	2,408
ND	Rep. Karla Hanson (D)	987
OH	Sen. Jay Hottinger (R)	1,402
OK	Sen. Mary Boren (D)	3,600
OR	Rep. Werner Reschke (R)	1,361
PA	Sen. Vincent Hughes (D)	5,642
PR	Rep. Jesus Ortiz Gonzalez (PPD)	2,006
RI	Sen. Samuel "Sam" Bell (D)	3,192
SC	Rep. Gilda Cobb-Hunter (D)	5,369
SD	Rep. Linda Duba (D)	1,651
TN	Rep. Gloria Johnson (D)	13,443
TX	Rep. Diego Bernal (D)	4,743
UT	Rep. Andrew Stoddard (D)	1,805
VT	Rep. Linda Sullivan (D)	558
VA	Rep. Danica Roem (D)	6,380
WA	Sen. T'wina Nobles (D)	1,702
WV	Del. Kayla Young (D)	3,744
WI	Rep. Jonathan Brostoff (D)	4,927
WY	Sen. Anthony Bouchard (R)	1,587

## Conclusion

Public affairs professionals need a streamlined way to keep track of priorities and monitor legislative activities.

Understanding mindshare of your issues compared to others can help understand the way a legislator will approach your conversation — will your message fall on deaf ears because your issue makes up a tiny fraction of the bills they've sponsored? Or is it one of their top issues and so will be a key figure in moving your issue forward?

There are many contributing factors that influence a bill's likelihood of being enacted, and what issues it is competing against is a major one. There are only so many hours in a day, so even important legislation gets passed by when other issues dominate the conversation. With knowledge of how your issue fits into the wider policy landscape, you can better understand the path you'll need to take to achieve your desired outcome.

## Use Quorum State to map, track, change, and report on your organization's policy landscape.

[REQUEST A DEMO →](#)

