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# ADVOCATING FOR FOOD SAFETY WITH POLICY MAKERS

LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS 2018 AND 2019



## NCSL OUTREACH TO STATE LEGISLATURES

- 6,211 Attendees to NCSL Boston Legislative Summit
  - 1,203 State Legislators
  - 1,111 Legislative Staff
- 13,003,731 Visits to NCSL Website
- 67 Webinars
- 49 Trainings or Testimony before Legislative Committees
- 10 issues of State Legislatures Magazine
- 335,000 visits to Social Media

## WYOMING FOOD FREEDOM LAWS

“This act (Chapters 56 & 111) is a home-run. Wyoming's local food options have exploded and we still have had 0 foodborne illness outbreaks due to this Act passing into law.”

Wyoming Rep. Tyler Lindholm



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

# STATE LEGISLATURES 2019

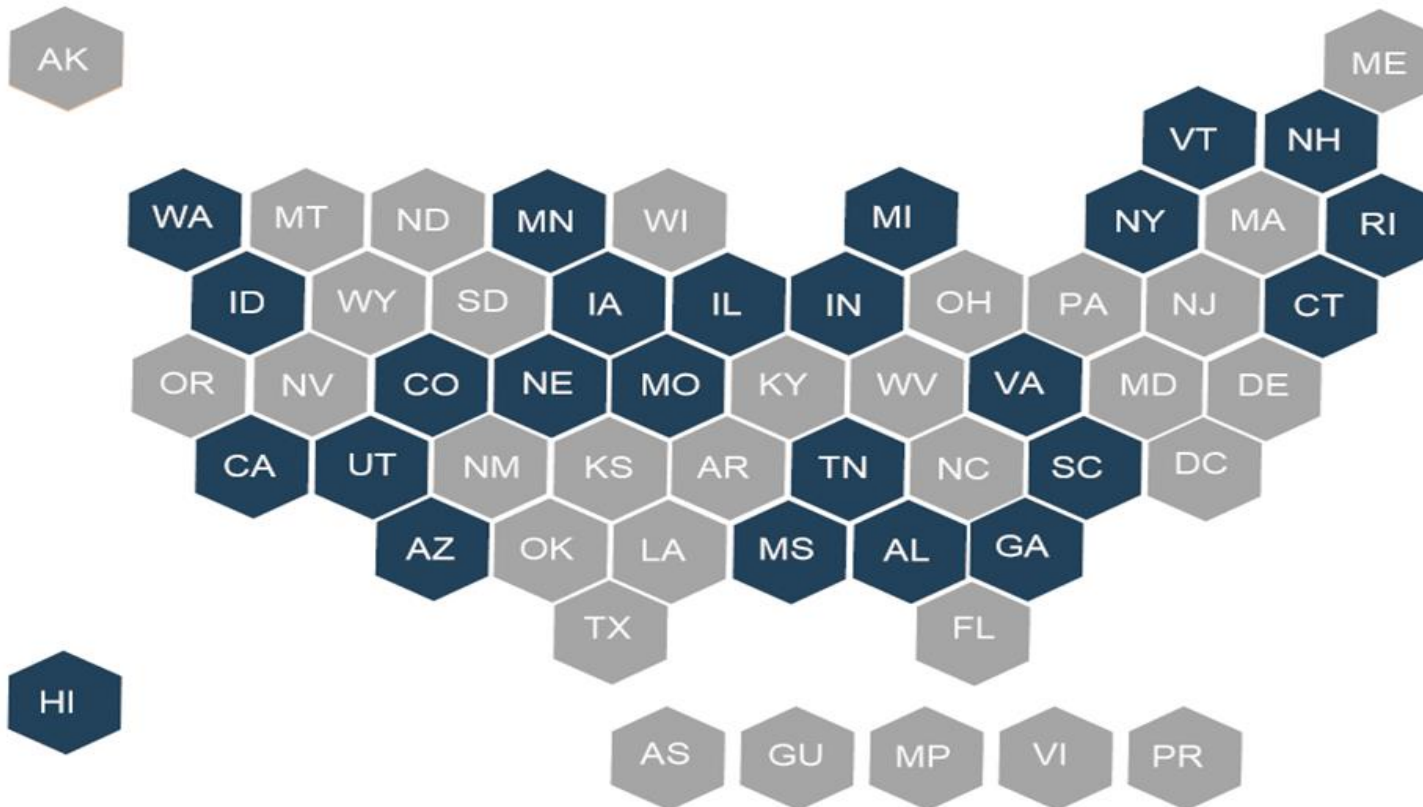
## Current Composition

	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Other</b>
Legislators (7,383 total)	3,830 / 52%	3,446 / 47%	107 (Independent, Other or Undecided)
Chambers (98 total)	61 / 62%	37 / 38%	Nebraska Unicameral
Legislatures (49 total)	30 / 61%	18 / 37%	1 divided legislature
State Control (49 total)	22 / 45%	14 / 29%	13 divided states



# FOOD SAFETY LEGISLATION IN 2018

## U.S. States with Enacted Food Safety Legislation 2018



- 756 bills relating to Food Safety; 170 enacted
- Foremost Issues
  - Food Donation – 72 bills
  - Food Service in Schools – 57 bills
  - Restaurants – 57 bills
  - Milk or Raw Milk – 45 bills
  - Cottage Foods – 48 bills
  - GMO – 18 bills

## STATE LEGISLATURES' PROFESSIONALIZATION EFFECTS

- Greater capacity
- Ability to make decisions independent of executive, lobbyists
- Stable membership
- Allows for more voices, more interests represented
- Decentralization and fragmentation
- Avoids Policy gridlock



## STATE LEGISLATURES' “DEPROFESSIONALIZING” FORCES

- Term limits
- Limits on taxing and spending authority
- Staff reductions
- Ethics/campaign finance laws that prevent openness
- Anti-government attitudes
- Decline of trust of government

## NON-PARTISAN FORCES OF EFFICACY

- State constitutions and rules such as single subject requirements for bills, limited sessions with effective deadlines, requirements for balanced budgets, and the fair and consistent application of rules.
- Governors and legislative leaders who are able to see the big picture, communicate and work together effectively, and make efforts to treat the minority party fairly and value their input.
- Empowered committees that deliberate effectively and make efforts to incorporate minority party ideas.
- Personal relations, cultures and traditions among legislators that promote interparty communication and engender trust and respect.
- Nonpartisan staff.
- A determination/requirements to get things done, unlike Congress.





## CONSTRAINTS ON INTERACTIONS WITH STATE LEGISLATURES

- Not allowed to initiate contact with **legislators**
- Communication via **legislative liaison** – no direct interaction
- Legislators who reach out directly **do not** receive calls back
- Direct communication **is monitored** or must be documented
- Have to **constrain information** to that which is within the context of the food safety agencies' mission.
- Cannot **lobby or advocate** for food safety
  - Cannot contact legislators to promote idea or policy



# APPROACHES TO INTERACTION WITH LEGISLATORS

- Field trips / tours of **facilities**
- Providing information and information products that address legislators **areas of interest or districts**
- Provide **unbiased, scientific** information
- Face to face meetings, ad-hoc meetings, visiting offices of legislators
- Cultivation of **personal relationships**
- Establishing trust by **delivering more than is asked for on time and within budget**
- Stakeholders advocating for **state agencies'** products and services
- **Talk with legislators** about how you can help them achieve their goals

## DO NOT:

- Communicate with state legislators **via the media**
- Do not advocate or take sides in **politically-charged issues**
- Don't issue **political statements**
- Don't talk to legislators as if they are **experts in your field**
- Don't invite them to **technical meetings**; that will simply bore them
- **No freebies** (calendars, notepads, etc.), no mass distribution of maps, publications, etc.
- Don't assume legislators care to be **educated about your agency's mission**

# COMMUNICATING WITH LEGISLATORS

- **Involve legislators** early in the planning process
- **Educate legislators** before the legislative sessions
- Know the political circumstances; **parties matter less** than personalities
- Have either money, votes or **credible information**
- Present information on **costs of effort** or program
- **Translate data** into meaningful information
- **Be succinct**
- **Never surprise** a legislator
- Speak with **one voice**
- **Relationships** are all-important



# WHY WE NEED LEGISLATURES

*POVO SEM PARLAMENTO É  
POVO ESCRAVO*

**People without parliament  
are people in chains.** *Motto of  
Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) Legislative  
Assembly*

Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

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