

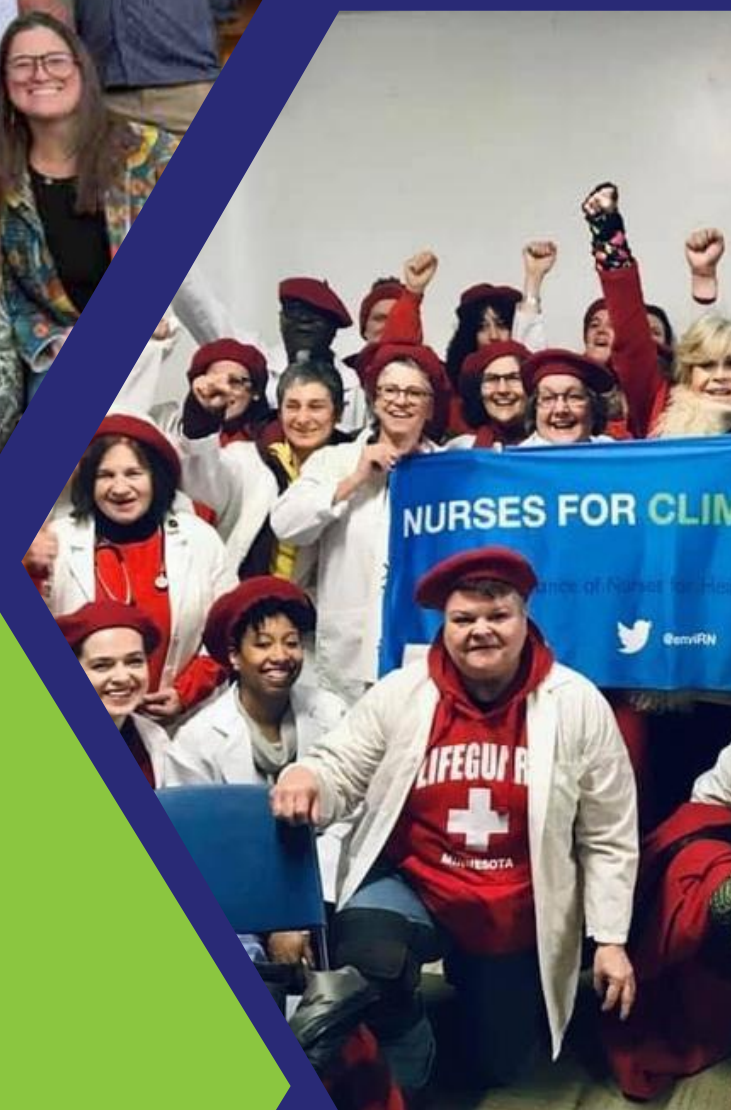


Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments

The Importance of Nursing Engagement in Advocacy

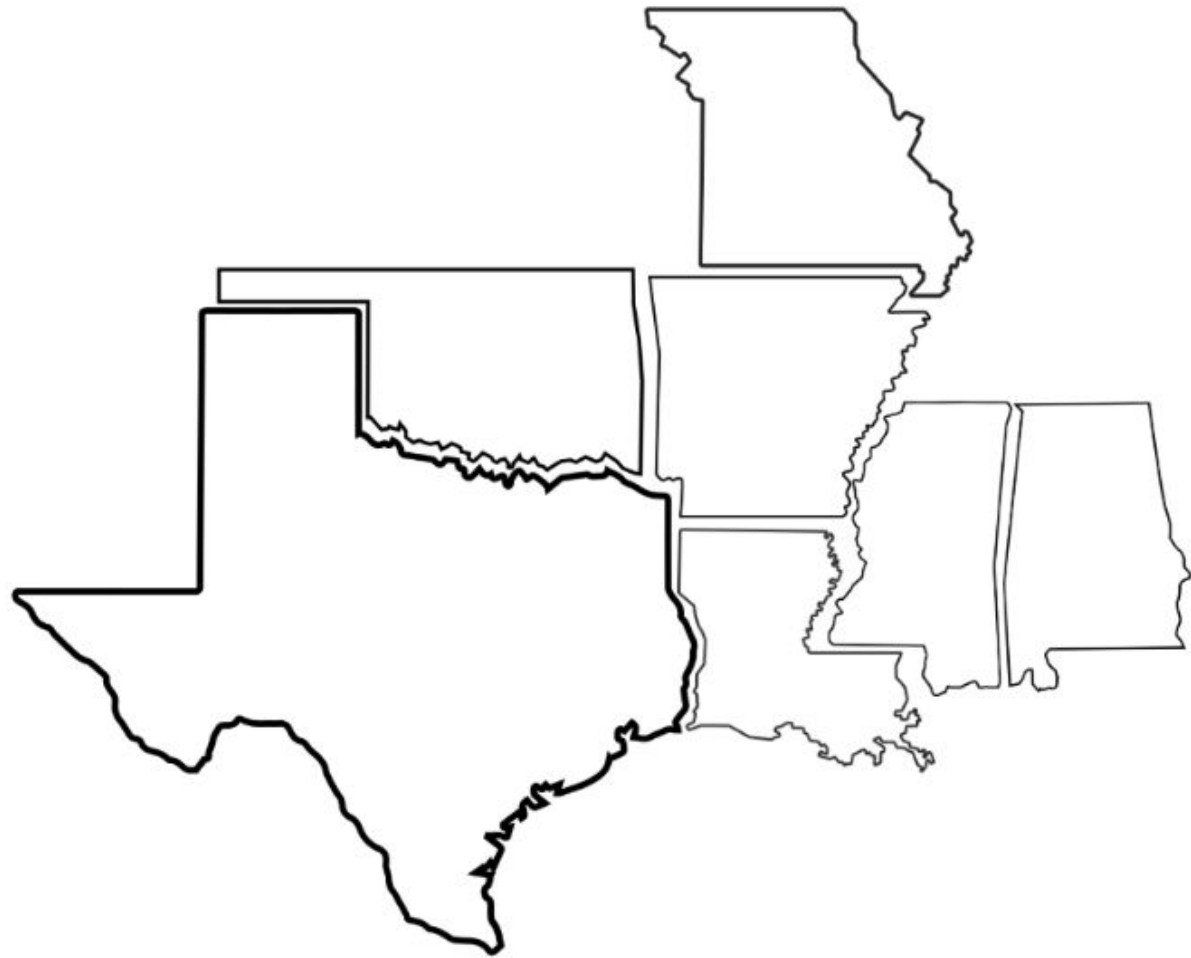
Sarah Bucic, MSN, RN, PMHCNS-BC, ANHE Policy Analyst

August 26, 2026





ANHE Regional Forum: South



We have over 400 ANHE members in Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma, and Texas! Let's join together to assure that our patients, families, and communities have access to a healthy environment to live, work, learn, worship, and play. We host events, share information about what's going on, and create opportunities for nurses to talk to their legislators and each other about all things environmental health.

<https://envirn.org/anhe-regional-forums>

Importance of State Advocacy



- D.C. vs State Politics; State politics is where democracy touches everyday life!
- State governments decide how we vote, what our schools teach, how our communities police and protect, and whether our rights expand or erode.
- State legislatures draw the district lines that shape political power, determine access reproductive healthcare, env. protections, voting rights...



Image from Canva
Content from democracygroup.org/topics/state-politics

Overview: Legislative Session



- 50 States, 50 State Legislatures
- Period of time when legislative members are actively lawmaking: debating and voting on bills.
- During this time legislators are “away” from the districts they represent
- When legislature not in session, members typically return to the districts they represent

The State Legislative Process



- State governments PASS 80 bills for every 1 federal bill
- Healthcare is largely regulated and implemented at the state level
- Not “one-size-fits-all” model
 - Full time vs part time legislatures
- Nationwide
 - 7,383 legislators
 - 6,764 state legislative districts

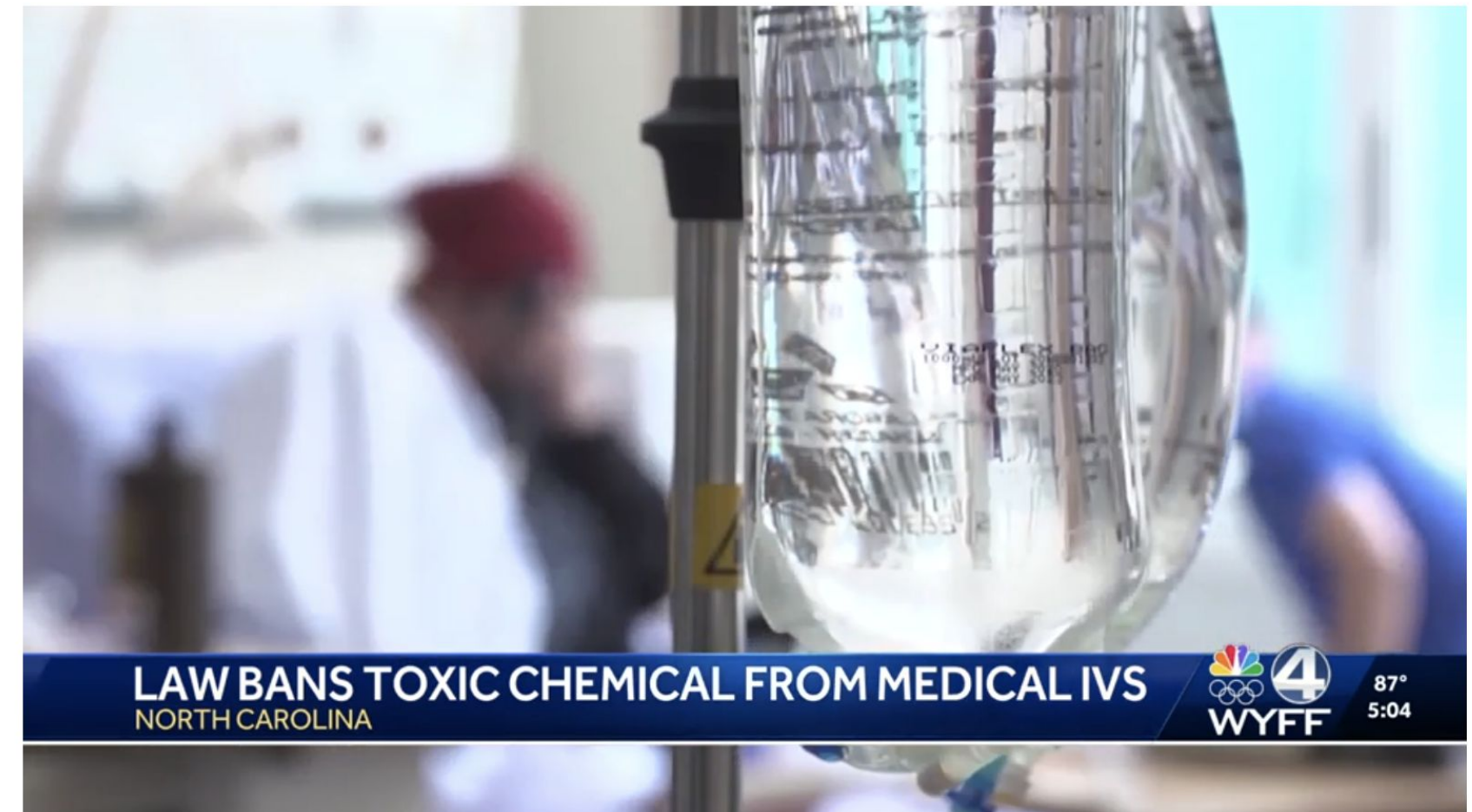
State and local policy matters



- States and local policy can influence other states
 - Can change the market
- Several significant federal bills have attempted to block state legislation (state preemption)

North Carolina law bans DEHP toxins from IV bags, tubing materials

DEHP is a chemical used in 70-75% of IV bags and materials across the U.S.



Does state and local policy matter? Yes!

Since 2001:

- 40 states have **adopted** 438 policies just around toxic chemicals
- When federal policy stalls, states can step up!

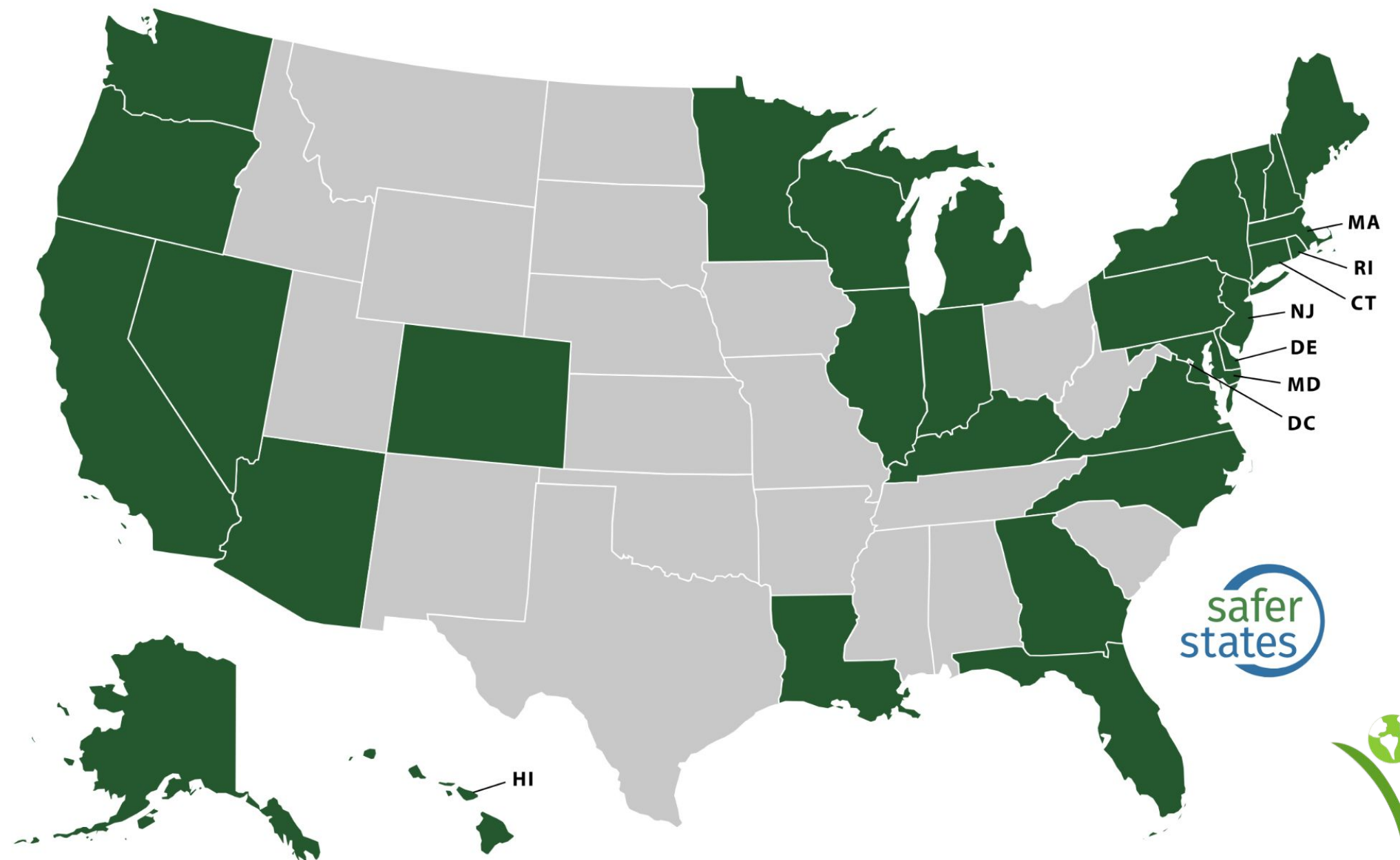
INSIGHTS

States Leading the Way: Takeaways from the 2025 Legislative Session on Toxic Chemicals and Plastics

July 23, 2025



Introduced Adopted Introduced & Adopted



Nursing advocacy is needed



Image from Canva

- Most legislators → **not** health-care professionals!
 - Need guidance
 - Nurses declined in state legislatures from 97 in 2013 to 72 in 2023
- Many opportunities for nurse advocates to become involved!

Nursing advocacy is needed



Image from Canva

- Educate yourself & your colleagues
- Grassroots organizing
- Share Your Story: Personal stories carry immense power.
- Join professional groups & Regional Forum - meet like minded nurses!
- Educating communities, nurses identify clinical problems and frame solutions before lawmakers write laws.

Resources



- American College of Surgeons. (nd). An Overview of State Legislatures.
<https://www.facs.org/media/uv2ovw0u/fact-sheet-state-legislature-overview.pptx>
- MultiState (2026). 2027 MultiState Insider Resources. Legislative Session Dates.
<https://www.multistate.us/resources/2027-legislative-session-dates>
- National Conference on State Legislatures
<https://www.ncsl.org/legislative-staff/civics-education/learning-the-game>
- Rock the Vote. (December 8, 2021). State Legislatures: An Explainer.
<https://www.rockthevote.org/explainers/state-legislatures/>



Alliance of Nurses for
Healthy Environments

THANK YOU!

www.envirn.org