

# Introduction to Legislative Advocacy



Caren Gellin, MD

## C. Everett Koop (2004)

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### □ Prospects for child health?

*"I think it depends. **In the long run, child health is about advocacy.** Children don't vote. They can't lobby, unlike, say, the geriatric community. I think that is one of the major reasons why groups such as handicapped children have never made the same kind of progress that the elderly population has. **One of the keys to the future of child health is advocacy for children and their causes.**"*

# Outline

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- What is legislative advocacy
- Why providers don't advocate
- How to advocate
- Advocacy Resources
  - Federal, state, local, general
- Local issues

# Legislative Advocacy

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- ❑ Proposing new laws or changes to existing laws
- ❑ Attempting to persuade legislators to adopt a particular stance on an issue (ie, lobbying)



# Why Providers Don't Advocate

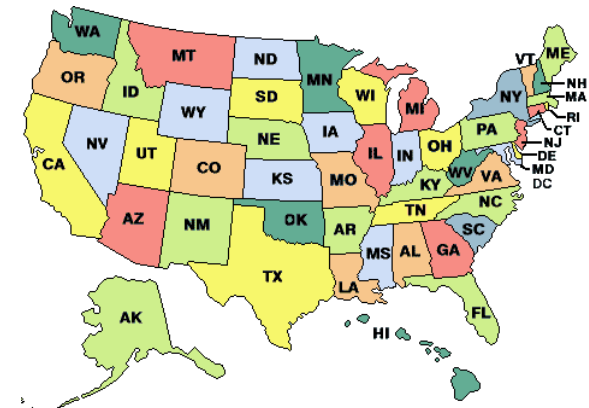
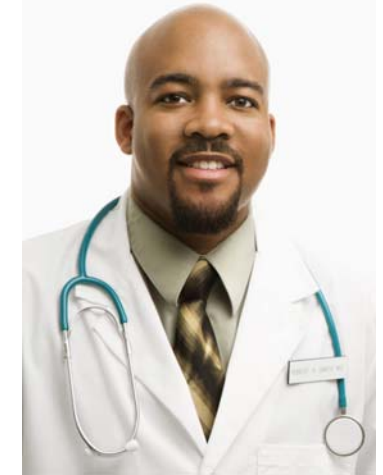
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- I don't have time
- I don't know what to say
- I don't know my legislator
- I don't know the address
- I don't have any envelopes, paper, stamps
- I can't

**I don't know HOW!**

# Why get involved?

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# How to Advocate

- Editorial or Letter to the Editor in the newspaper

ROCHESTER, NEW YORK DemocratandChronicle.com

**Family Matters: Child abuse**

## Visiting nurses could help fortify family well-being



**DR. JEFFREY M. KACZOROWSKI**  
GUEST  
ESSAYIST

**T**here were 6,300 cases of child abuse reported in Monroe County in 2004. This is the highest level of child abuse reports in the county in more than a decade and represents a 6 percent increase over 2003. Also, the rate of reported child abuse is higher in Monroe County than many other New York state counties.

Child abuse is not only traumatic in itself, but it also increases the risk of adverse consequences among maltreated children, such as early pregnancy, drug abuse, school failure, incarceration and mental illness. Children who have been physically abused are also more likely to perpetrate aggressive behavior and violence later in their lives.

Child abuse is a terrible and important problem, nationally and in Rochester. However, does anything work to prevent it?

At The Children's Agenda, we have been working on this issue, and the answer is yes.

The Children's Agenda mission is to improve the health and well-being of





IN SPORTS

## They'll root only for the home team

No road games for Monroe County League squads

Alena Gillette, Brockport

# Hoop dreams

In Sports Rush-Henrietta boys favored in Monroe County League  
Online Extra Preview capsules at DemocratandChronicle.com

ROCHESTER

# Democrat and Chronicle

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 2006

DemocratandChronicle.com

50 CENTS NEWSSTAND

INSIDE TODAY



LIVING

HOLIDAY COOKIE #4, THE MEXICAN CORN MASA COOKIE, IS GLUTEN-FREE

TURN TO PAGE 1C

# Coffin story sparks uproar

## Army to probe Rochester incident

JOSEPH SPECTOR  
STAFF WRITER

The Army said Thursday it will look into reports that a soldier's coffin was put into a baggage cart last month with other luggage at the Greater Rochester International Airport.

A woman and her three

friends said they witnessed a flag-draped wooden box with a coffin inside taken from an airplane's luggage conveyor and placed in a cart alongside other luggage on the runway.

Cynthia Hoag of Dansville, Livingston County, wrote an op-ed piece in the

*Democrat and Chronicle* on Tuesday describing the incident.

Since then, local political leaders have called for new procedures and an investigation into what happened.

"We are looking into the circumstances now," Army spokesman Lt. Col. Kevin

Online Extra

DEMOCRATANDCHRONICLE.COM

► Join the Story Chat by clicking on this story. Read Cynthia Hoag's essay.

Arata said in an e-mail statement, adding:

"The Army is always



**Tony Knier**  
Believed to be soldier whose body was coming home from Iraq.



**Cynthia Hoag**  
Her op-ed piece said coffin was put on a baggage cart.

concerned with treating all of our fallen comrades' remains with the utmost dignity and respect."

Rep. Thomas Reynolds,

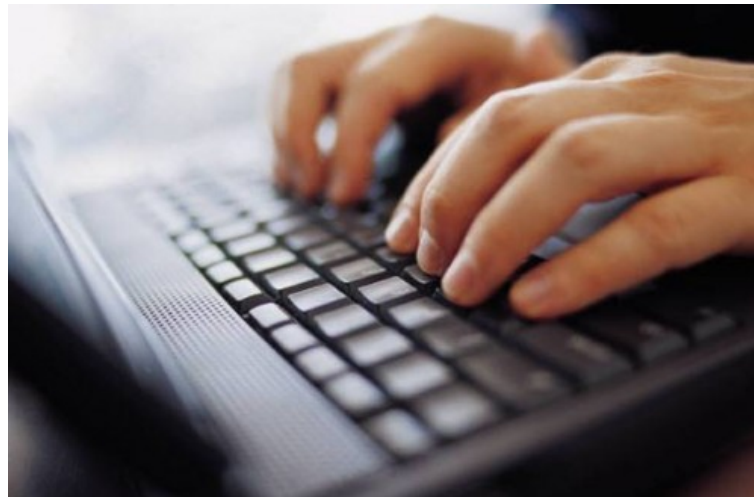
R-Clarence, Erie County, said he requested that the Army conduct a full

COFFIN, PAGE 4A

# How to Advocate

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- Editorial or Letter to the Editor in the newspaper
- Write or email your legislators
  - Keep written letters to one page



# Response letter

**A message from Senator Charles E. Schumer**

**[senator@schumer.senate.gov](mailto:senator@schumer.senate.gov)**

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**Nov. 11, 2008**

Dear Dr. Gellin:

Thank you for your letter in support of S. 358, the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) of 2008. I agree with you that Americans must be protected from health and employment discrimination based on genetic testing. This is why I co-sponsored and voted for this legislation. I am pleased to let you know that this bill is now law.

This new law provides important protections for Americans. It has been reported that two-thirds of major U.S. companies require medical examinations of new employees. Prior to the passage of GINA, some of these examinations included genetic tests which allowed employers to view family medical history and subsequently base hiring decisions on genetic information. Health insurance companies have also used genetic test results as the basis for coverage denials. As a result, Americans have feared genetic testing, which can be crucial for detecting certain diseases and health problems in earlier stages.

GINA will ensure that Americans are protected from genetic discrimination. The new law prohibits employers and health insurance providers from requesting or demanding a genetic test, and from making decisions based on information derived from test results. By removing the fear of health and employment discrimination, I am hopeful that more Americans will feel comfortable taking these tests that can be so important for early detection and life-saving treatment.

Thank you for contacting me on this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future if I can ever be of assistance to you on this, or any other matter.

Sincerely,

Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

Please do not respond to this email. To send another message please visit my website at <http://schumer.senate.gov/SchumerWebsite/contact/webform.cfm> . Thank you.

# How to Advocate

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- Editorial or Letter to the Editor in the newspaper
- Write or email your legislators
  - Keep written letters to one page
  - Advocacy alerts
    - Federal Advocacy Action Network (FAAN) - AAP
    - Children's Defense Fund
      - <http://www.childrensdefense.org>
    - Kaiser Family Foundation
      - <http://www.kff.org>
    - First Focus
      - <http://www.firstfocus.net/>



I CAN'T ELECT LEADERS WHO WILL CARE ABOUT MY NEEDS  
**VOTE FOR ME**



**For the first time in our nation's history, a majority of Americans believe that the next generation will fare worse than their parents.**



**FIRST FOCUS**

MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

[WWW.FIRSTFOCUS.NET](http://WWW.FIRSTFOCUS.NET)

**America has always been about ensuring a brighter future for our children and grandchildren.**

Yet, the share of federal spending on children has fallen by more than 10 percent over the past five years. With **14 million children** living in poverty, **9 million kids** without health insurance, and **1.2 million students** dropping out of school each year, we owe the next generation more than empty promises.

Our nation's future deserves better. **This fall, cast a vote to make children a priority.** It's time to elect candidates who will support the leaders of tomorrow.

*- I'm Emily (age 3) and I approve this message.*

I CAN'T ELECT LEADERS WHO WILL CARE ABOUT MY NEEDS  
**VOTE FOR ME**



In the 2008 Olympics the United States was the world's best, finishing first in medals. But when it comes to caring for our children, are we even a contender?

  
**FIRST FOCUS**  
MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY  
[WWW.FIRSTFOCUS.NET](http://WWW.FIRSTFOCUS.NET)

America has always risen to the challenge of ensuring a brighter future for our children and grandchildren. Yet today, we rank 20<sup>th</sup> out of 21 industrialized nations in child poverty and well-being. America has the second worst infant mortality rate, and our graduation rates place us 13<sup>th</sup> in the world. We shattered records in Beijing, but have a long way to go to achieve victory for our children.

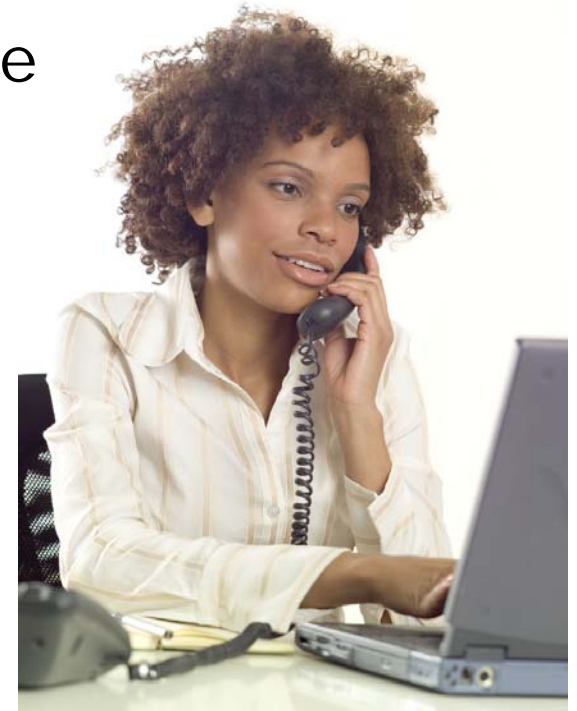
Our nation's future deserves better. **This fall, cast a vote to make children a priority.** It's time to elect candidates who will support the leaders of tomorrow.

*- I'm Jacob (age 7) and I approve this message.*

# How to Advocate

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- Editorial or Letter to the Editor in the newspaper
- Write or email your legislators
  - Keep written letters to one page
  - Advocacy alerts
- Call or visit your legislator
- Testify at hearings



# How to Advocate

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## TAKE FIVE FOR KIDS

- Advocacy Made Easy for Busy People
  - <http://www.npaction.org/article/articleview/673/1/229>

# Child Advocacy Resources

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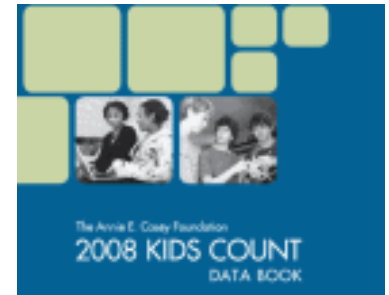
- PLC website

- <http://www.plccare.org>



- Kids Count Data Book Online

- <http://www.kidscount.org/sld/databook.jsp>



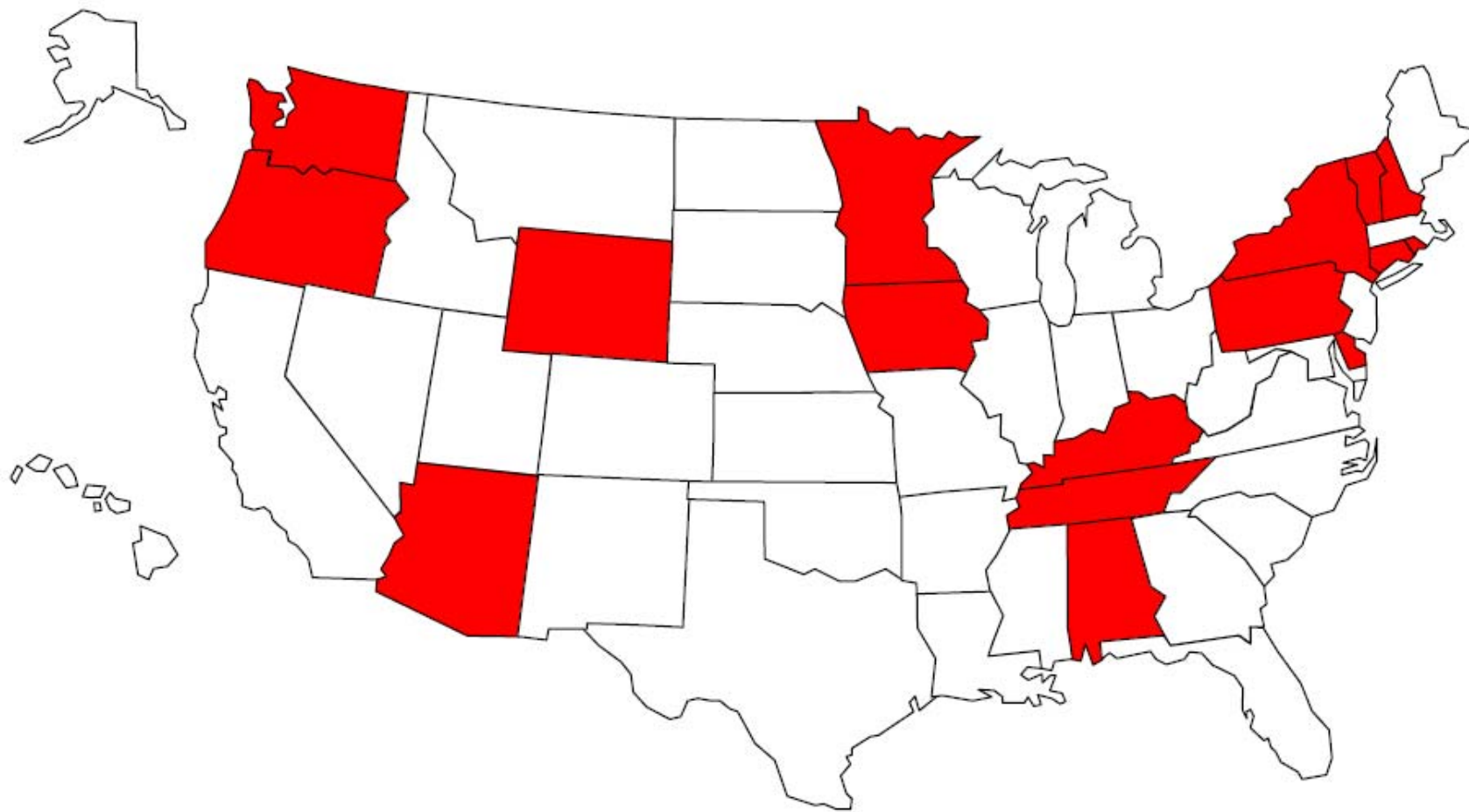
- AAP

- <http://www.aap.org>



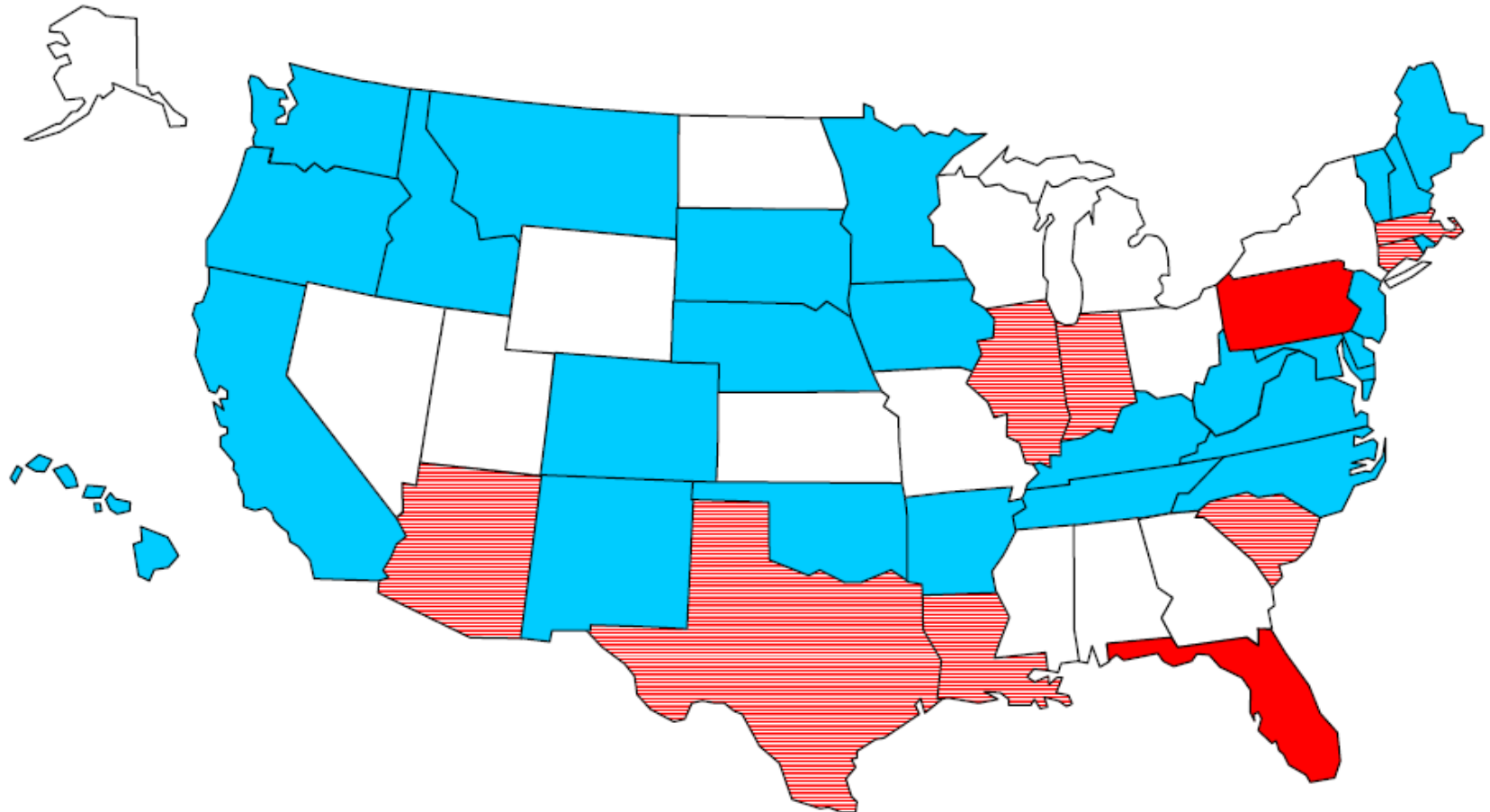





# MEDICAL LIABILITY REFORM



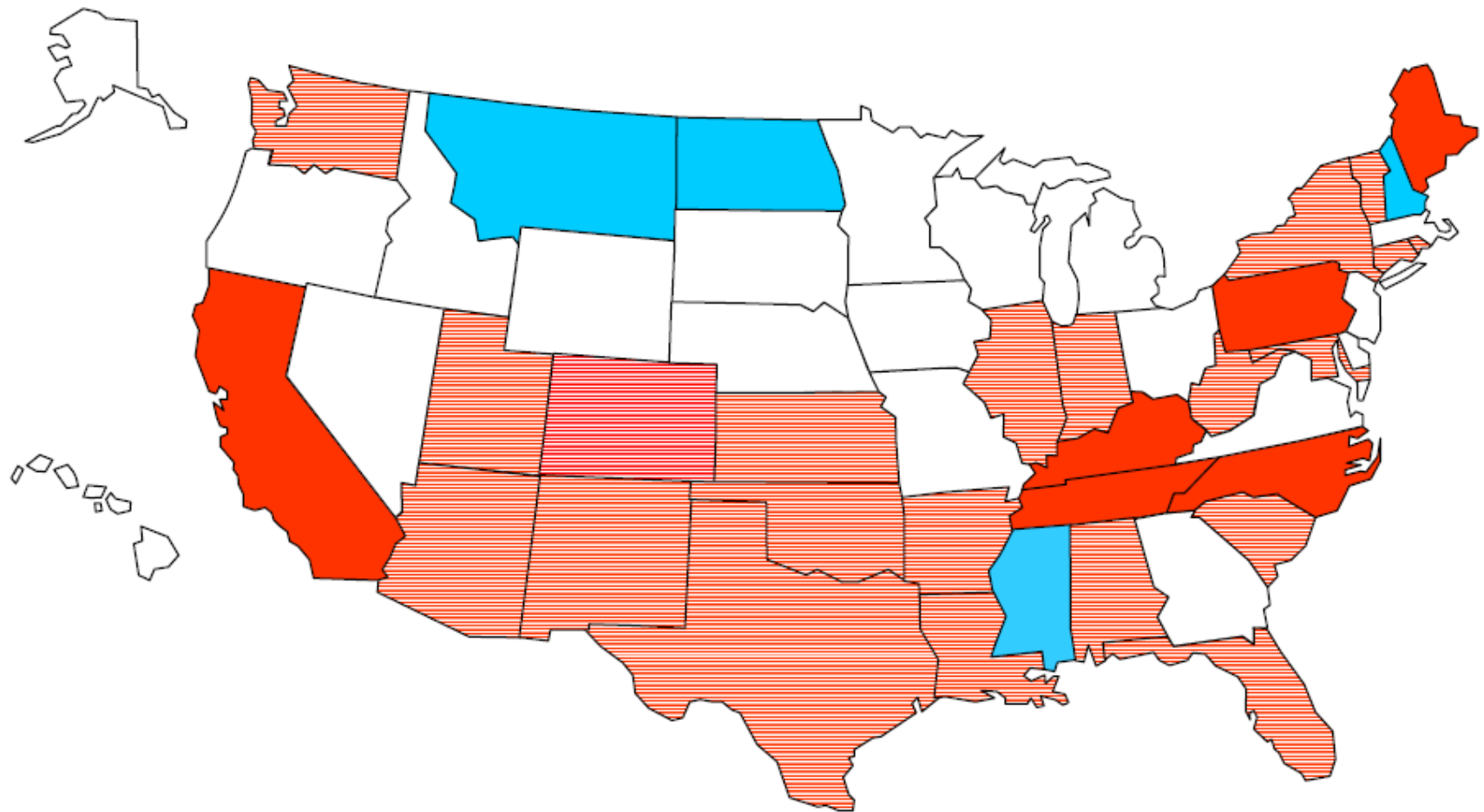
 = States with no cap on damages in medical liability cases




# MENTAL/BEHAVIORAL HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE



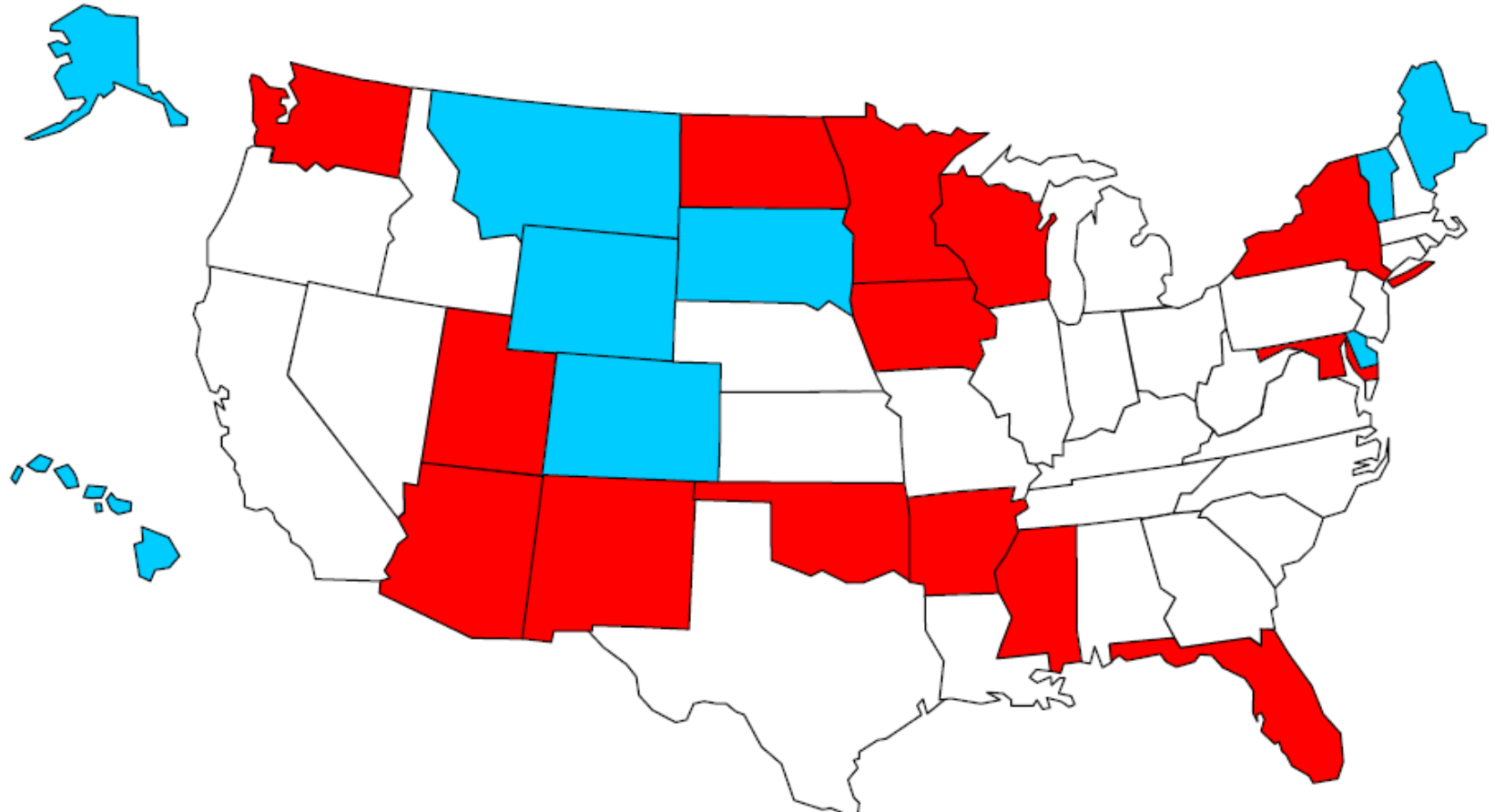
-  = States with only mental health parity laws
-  = States with only autism services laws
-  = States with both autism services and mental health parity laws



# CHILDHOOD OBESITY PREVENTION



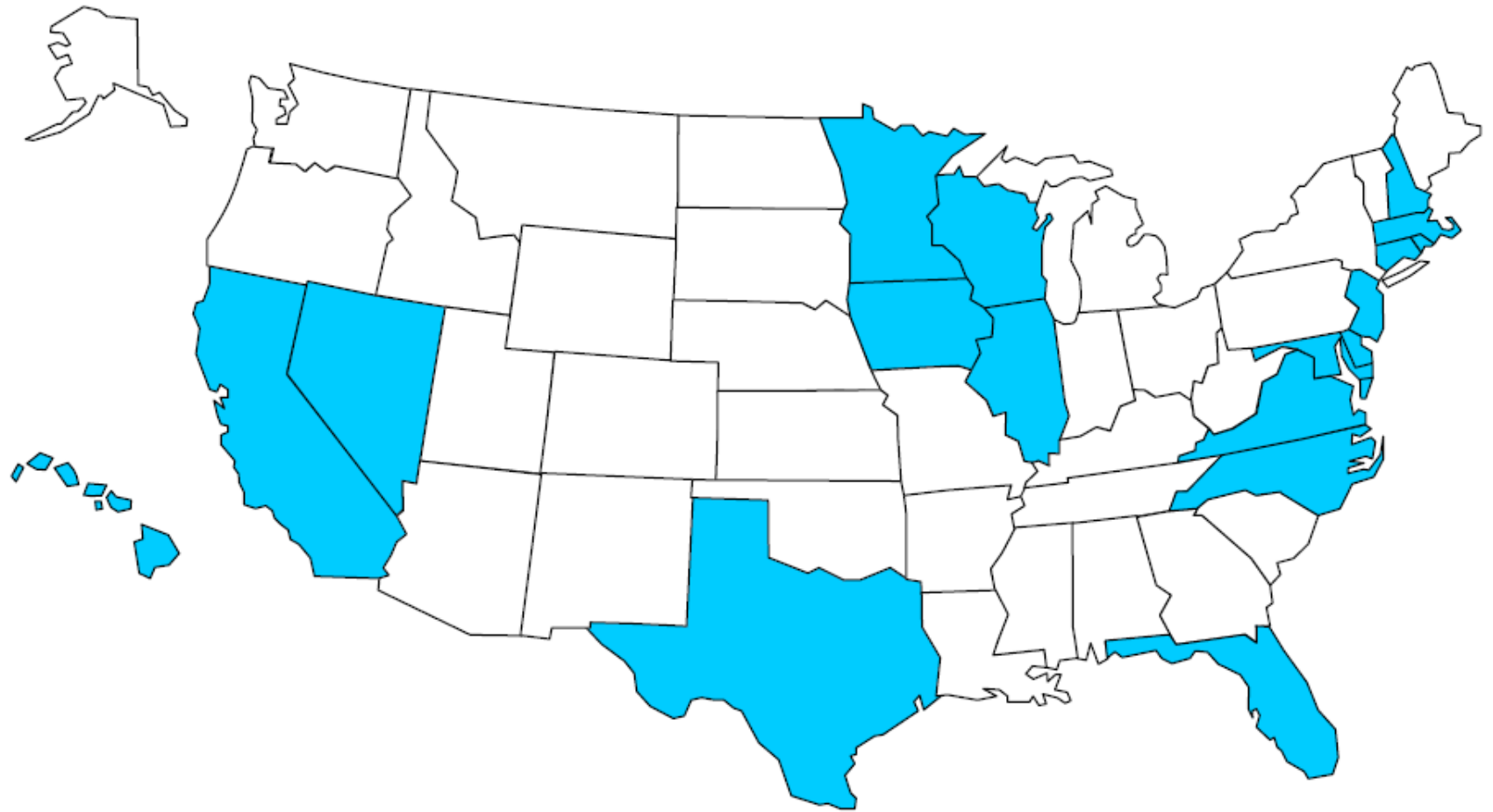
-  = State laws addressing school nutrition (enacted since 2003)
-  = State laws addressing physical education in schools (enacted since 2003)
-  = States with laws that address both


# TOBACCO PREVENTION



-  = States where 2009 funds are committed to tobacco control at amounts 50 - 100 % of CDC guidelines (amounts vary)
-  = States where 2009 funds are committed to tobacco control at amounts 25 - 49% of CDC guidelines (amounts vary)

# SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

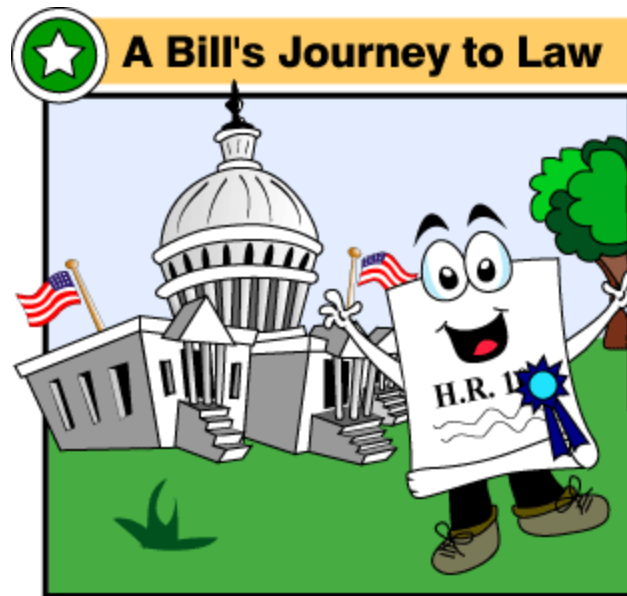


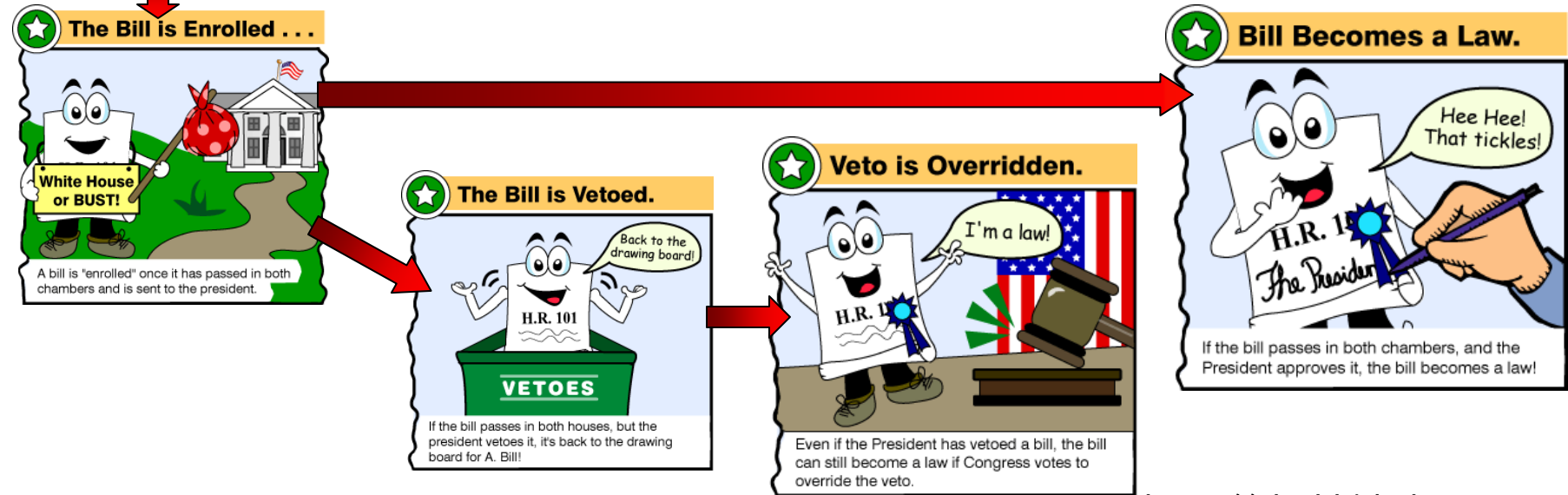
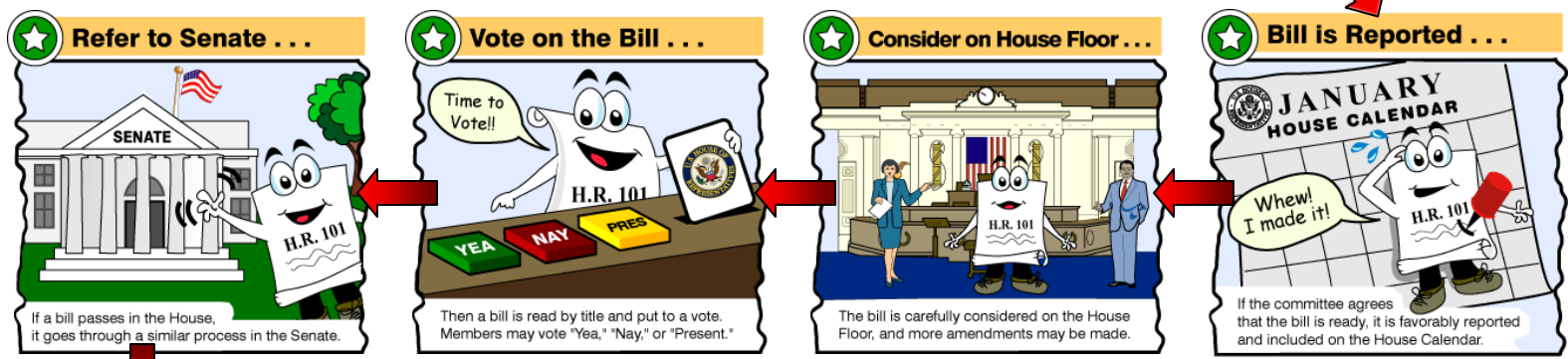
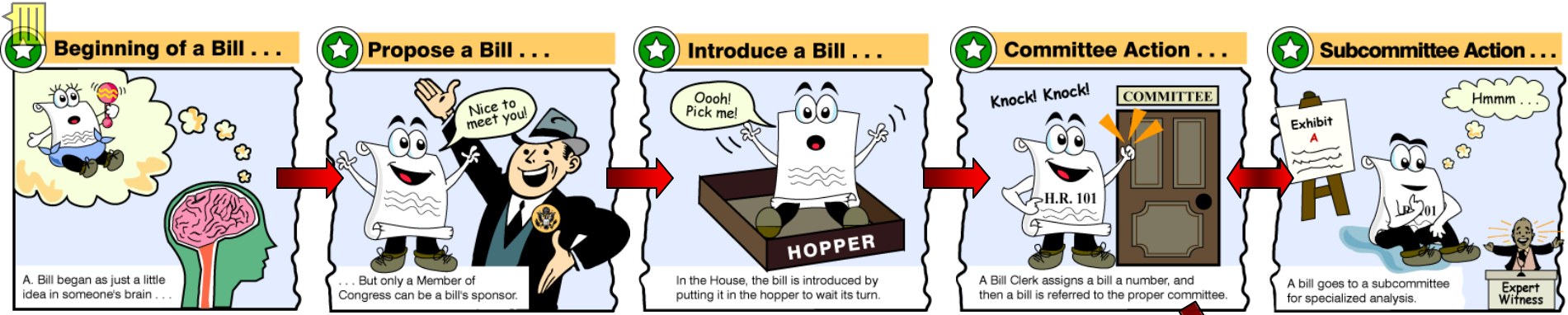
 = States with a firearm safe storage law

# Federal Government

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- How a bill becomes a law
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mEJL2Uuv-oQ>





# Federal Government

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## □ Federal Government Websites

- <http://www.senate.gov/>
- <http://www.house.gov>

## □ Another helpful website

- <http://www.vote-smart.org>



# 110<sup>th</sup> Congress (2007-08)

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- Toy Safety
  - Reauthorize and modernize Consumer Product Safety Commission (law on 8/14/08)
- Head Start
  - Reauthorize act to improve quality and expand access (law on 12/12/07)
- Minimum Wage
  - Increased to \$7.25 over 2 years (law on 5/27/07)
- Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research
  - Presidential veto

# Some Current Issues in Federal Government

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- Responsible Expansion of SCHIP Act (S.275 / H.R.2)
  - Recently signed into law by President Obama
  
- Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act (H.R.1108/S.625)
  - Passed House, in Senate committee
  
- Fulfilling the Potential of Women in Academic Science and Engineering Act (H.R.1144)
  - In House Committee



# State Government

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## □ Legislature



- <http://assembly.state.ny.us/>

- Senate

- <http://www.senate.state.ny.us>



# Issues in State Government

## □ Healthy Teens Act

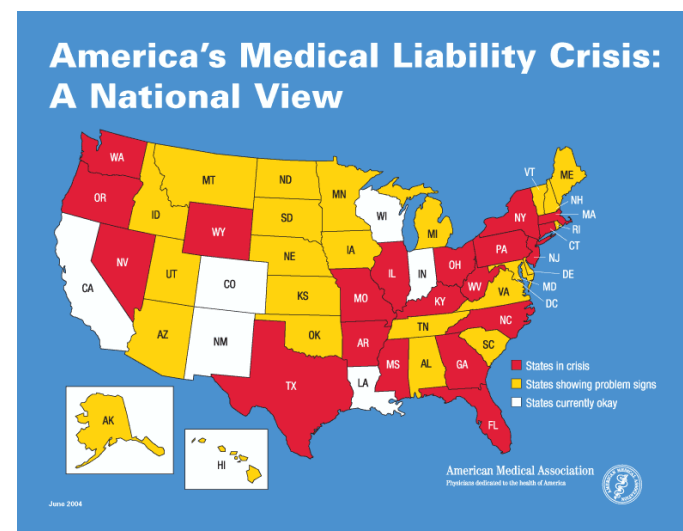
- 2007 & 2008 - passed Assembly, died in Senate
- 2009 (A.1806) – in Assembly committee

## □ Medical Liability Reform Act (A.6184)

- Referred to committee

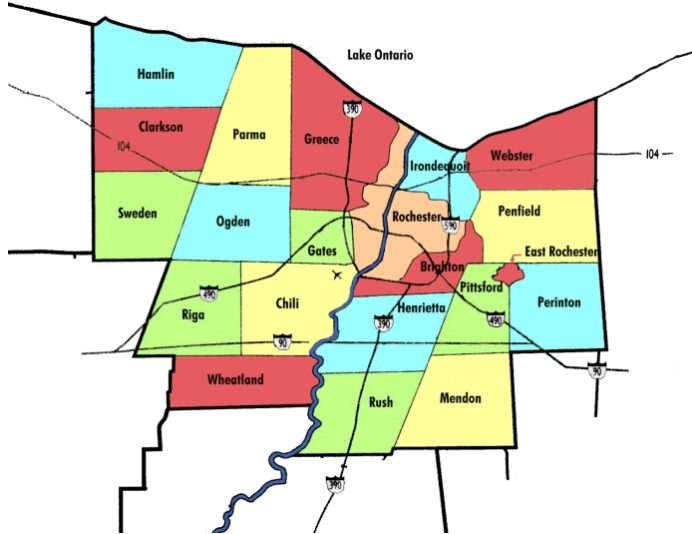
## □ Managed Care Reform (A.4301)

- Referred to committee



# Local Government

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- Monroe County Legislature
  - <http://www.monroecounty.gov/>
    - Includes link for absentee voting

- Monroe County Health Initiatives
  - <http://www.healthaction.org>

- City of Rochester
  - <http://www.ci.rochester.ny.us/>



# County Government

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## □ Monroe County Budget

- Approximately \$1 billion dollar budget
- Budget deadline pushed back to Nov. 15; vote on budget in Dec.
  - Gives public short window of time for analysis

## ■ **TheChildren'sAgenda**

- How will kids be affected?
- Evidence-based programs
- <http://www.thechildrensagenda.org/index.html>

# Why You Can Make a Difference

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- You already advocate for your patients on an individual basis
- You are an expert in healthcare
- You are a valued member of your community
- You now have some basic strategies