



By: TA | AP Insight

Anti-science ideas translated into hundreds of bills across America



A wave of anti-science bills has been introduced in statehouses across America this year, pushed by people with special interests who have close ties to Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.

An Associated Press [investigation](#) found more than 420 bills attacking longstanding public health protections such as vaccines, milk safety and fluoride in most states. More than two dozen have already been enacted or adopted.

They are part of an organized, politically savvy effort that normalizes ideas fueled by the [anti-vaccine](#) movement that Kennedy has helped lead for years.

His [Make America Healthy Again](#) agenda masks anti-science ideas while promoting goals such as making food more natural or reducing chemicals.

Meanwhile, [vaccination](#) rates continue to fall, allowing the infectious diseases [measles](#) and [whooping cough](#) to make comebacks as Kennedy has sought to broadly remake federal policies on public health matters including [fluoride](#) and vaccines.

Kennedy's allies dispute that their agenda is anti-science or driven by conspiracy theories, but many experts disagree.

Hundreds of anti-science bills were introduced

The AP focused on three public health policies – vaccines, fluoridation of water and milk safety – which have clear medical evidence behind them yet are targets of the MAHA movement.

AP searched 2025 legislation in all 50 states, analyzing bills collected by the [National Conference of State Legislatures](#) and the bill-tracking software [Plural](#) for whether they undermined science-based protections for human health.

Anti-vaccine bills – at least 350 of them – were by far the most common. Most haven't passed, but at least two dozen anti-vaccine laws have been adopted in 11 states this year.

Most of the bills that were enacted were supported by at least one of four national groups connected to Kennedy

AP found more than 70 bills that would roll back access to fluoride or make it easier to sell or consume raw milk products. Many fluoride bills would prohibit its addition to water systems outright.

Most of the bills that were enacted were supported by at least one of four national groups connected to Kennedy: MAHA Action, Stand for Health Freedom, the National Vaccine Information Center and the Weston A. Price Foundation. The groups also opposed dozens of science-driven bills.

A well-organized effort with a clear strategy to change policies

The groups AP tracked send out alerts, organize phone campaigns, flood lawmakers' inboxes and social media, hold Zoom calls with activists nationwide, and send members to testify in statehouses.

Their work reflects the small anti-vaccine movement's growing clout, said Northe Saunders, president of American Families for Vaccines.

Advocates know how to raise money for candidates and create anti-vaccine champions and use legislative maneuvers to hold up some bills and help others past hurdles, he said.

"They're really a sophisticated political operation as opposed to just a couple of parents that don't want to vaccinate their kids," Saunders said.

The groups defended their advocacy, and

some leaders said they were gratified by their success.

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NVIC's leader said the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic was heavy-handed and a wake-up call in state legislatures, where "lawmakers understood the danger to liberty posed by vaccine mandates."

One MAHA leader who has joined the Zoom calls said his positions "are rooted in credible scientific literature and the public's right to make informed choices," while the current leader of MAHA Action said the point of the calls is to educate people.

He objected to the term anti-science, saying, "It's just an inflammatory statement meant to get millions of people to think something bad is happening."

The president of Weston Price told AP the benefits of raw milk are immense and the risks minimal, denying that such beliefs are conspiracies.

Stand for Health Freedom did not respond to emails. A spokesman for Kennedy and the Department of Health and Human Services would not comment to AP for this story.

Lucrative careers

Powerful anti-vaccine advocates and people selling potentially harmful goods such as raw milk are profiting from the push to write anti-science **policies** into law across the U.S.



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Whether by advancing their careers or selling more products, these leaders are finding ways to benefit.

One way activists promote those ideas is through state legislation.

Supporters argued that making money or increasing sales for businesses — such as dairy farmers — was a reason to pass some of the bills that would remove consumer protections, AP found. In at least one case, that reasoning was spelled out in the text of the bill.

Anti-science sentiment is taking a toll

For example, vaccination rates are continuing to fall, allowing making it easier for infectious diseases to spread.

Ashlee and Erik Dahlberg of Lowell, Indiana, lost their 8-year-old son, Liam, to a vaccine-preventable disease in April.

"I thought having the vaccines would protect our children," Erik Dahlberg said. "Unfortunately, it did not because other kids, other adults, need to be vaccinated as well in order for it to work."

Liam was particularly vulnerable because he had severe asthma and allergies.

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He was vaccinated against Haemophilus influenzae type b, or Hib, but it still caused his brain to swell and killed him less than two days after he complained of a headache.

Hib is transmitted by respiratory droplets, often spread by coughs and sneezes. Doctors said Liam's case likely stemmed from someone who was unvaccinated, Ashlee Dahlberg said.

With two other children, the Dahlbergs worry about living in one of the many U.S. communities with low immunization rates.

State statistics show one in five kindergartners in their county don't meet vaccination requirements.

"There's no pain that is worse than the pain of losing a child," said Ashlee Dahlberg. "I do not – and can't – live through the loss of another."