



# Assessing Anti-Vaccine Political Action, 1998-2012

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# Outline of today's presentation

1. Research Question
2. Methods
3. Overview of State Legislative Trends, Wins and Losses for the Anti-Vaccine Movement
4. Conclusions

# Want more information?

Our original database (n=636) is available by request as an Excel file from Denise Lillvis ([dlillvis@umich.edu](mailto:dlillvis@umich.edu)).

The paper is being revised for *Milbank Quarterly* and will be available by request when we finish the edits in a few weeks.

My contact information is Anna Kirkland, [akirklan@umich.edu](mailto:akirklan@umich.edu), (734) 647-6181 (office).

# Our Research Questions

- How much success have vaccine critics had in advancing their preferred policies?
- How well did they fend off bills that were adverse to their interests?
- How did these fortunes vary over time and across states? What might the future hold?

# Methods: Charting the Trends

- Created an original database of relevant state legislation introduced (n=636), coded by **intent** and **outcome** (1998-2012).
- Data sources: LexisNexis State Capitol, NCSL, the Access World News database, ASTHO, NVIC and the American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Each bill introduced during the calendar year was counted as one legislative effort; if the bill was identified as part of a House/Senate bill pair, the pair was counted as one effort.

## Methods, cont'd:

### Qualitative and Primary Source Analysis

Phone interviews with legislators (10), staffers (7), and members of the public health community (3) across several states, asking *why* and *how* policy change occurred in their state.

Primary source analysis of 266 state and local newspaper articles across 30 states, as well as bill analyses, testimonies, a signing statement, and other relevant documents across 12 states to capture “primary voices” of policymakers.

# Intent: Types of Childhood Vaccine Bills

## I. Struggles over the *boundaries* of state childhood vaccine mandates:

1. **Exemption expansion**
2. Exemption contraction
3. Mandate expansion
4. **Mandate contraction**
5. **Mercury ban expansion**
6. Mercury ban contraction

**Vaccine Critics:  
Favorable Bills**



# Intent: Types of Childhood Vaccine Bills

## II. Struggles over the *information* conveyed about vaccines:

1. Mercury information
  2. Ingredient information
  3. Disease risk information
- Vaccine Critics:  
Favorable Bills
- 
- ```
graph LR; A[Vaccine Critics: Favorable Bills] --> B[1. Mercury information]; A --> C[2. Ingredient information];
```

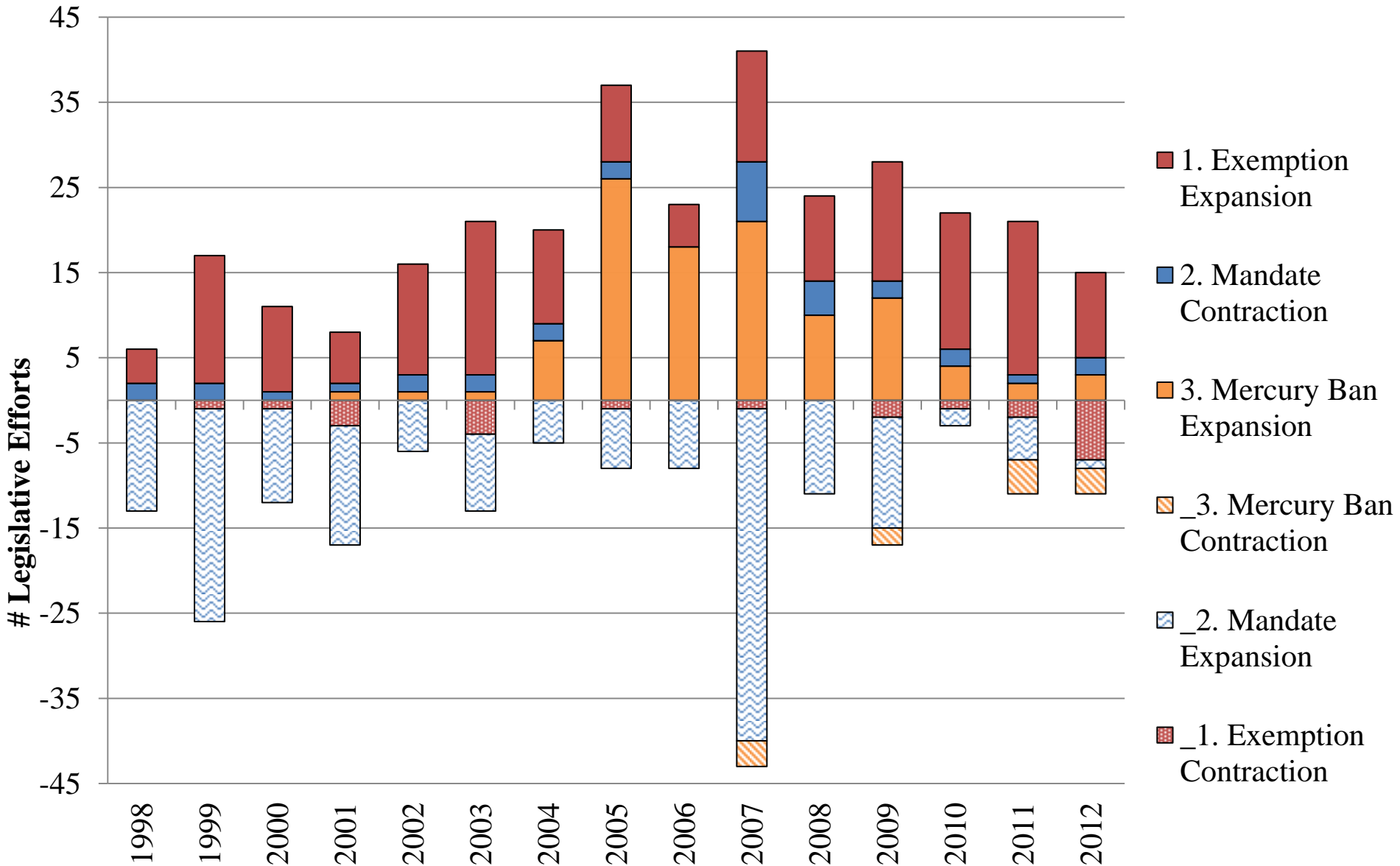


# Outcomes coded

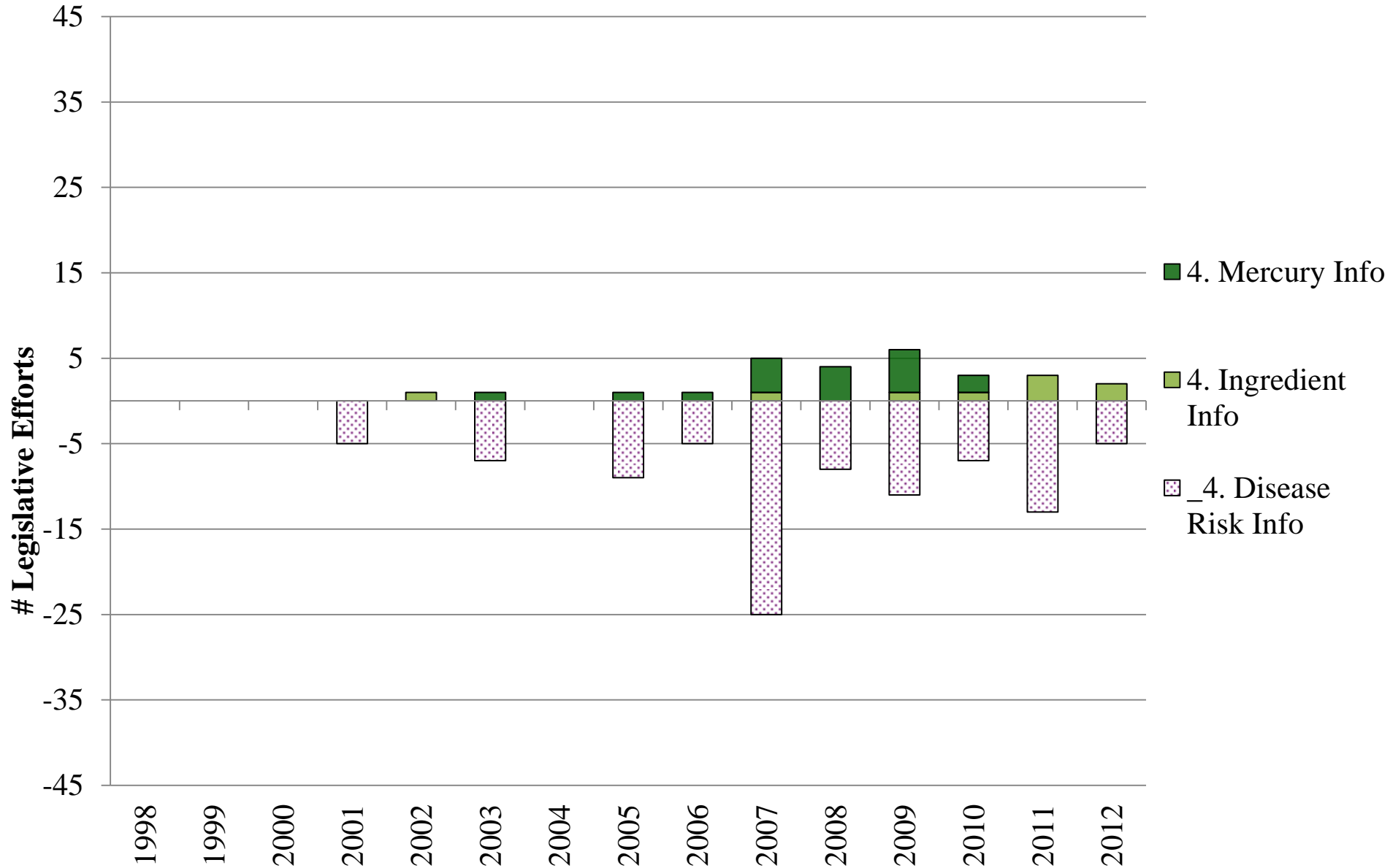
## *from the anti-vaccine perspective*

- 1. Offensive win:** Enactment of a law supported by vaccine critics (i.e., exemption expansion, mandate removal, mercury ban expansion, mercury information, or ingredient information).
- 2. Offensive loss:** Failure of a bill type listed above.
- 3. Defensive win:** Failure of a bill opposed by vaccine critics (i.e., an exemption contraction, mandate enactment, mercury ban contraction, or disease risk information).
- 4. Defensive loss:** Enactment of a bill type listed above.

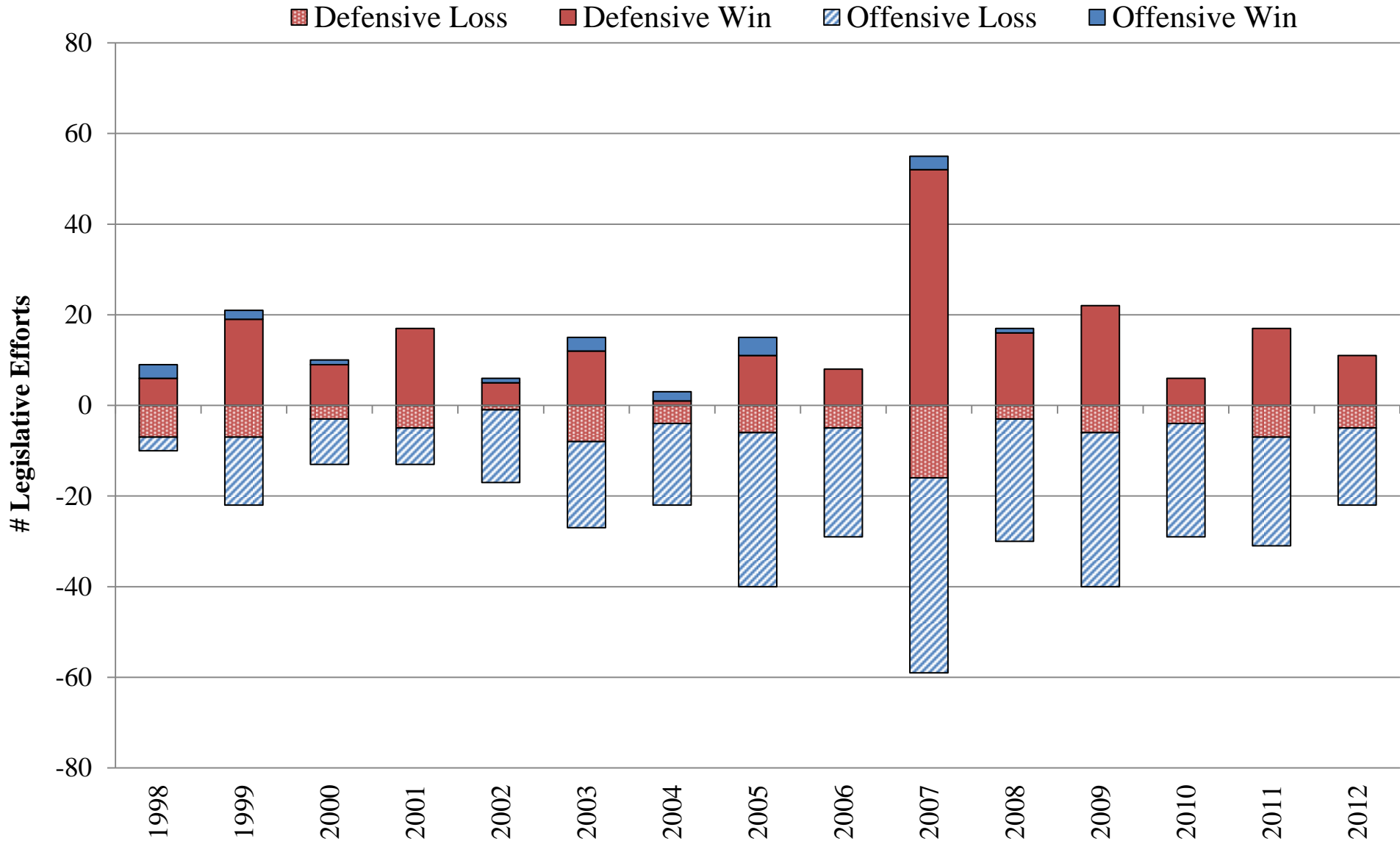
# Boundary Struggles: Trends In Vaccine Bills Introduced, 1998-2012



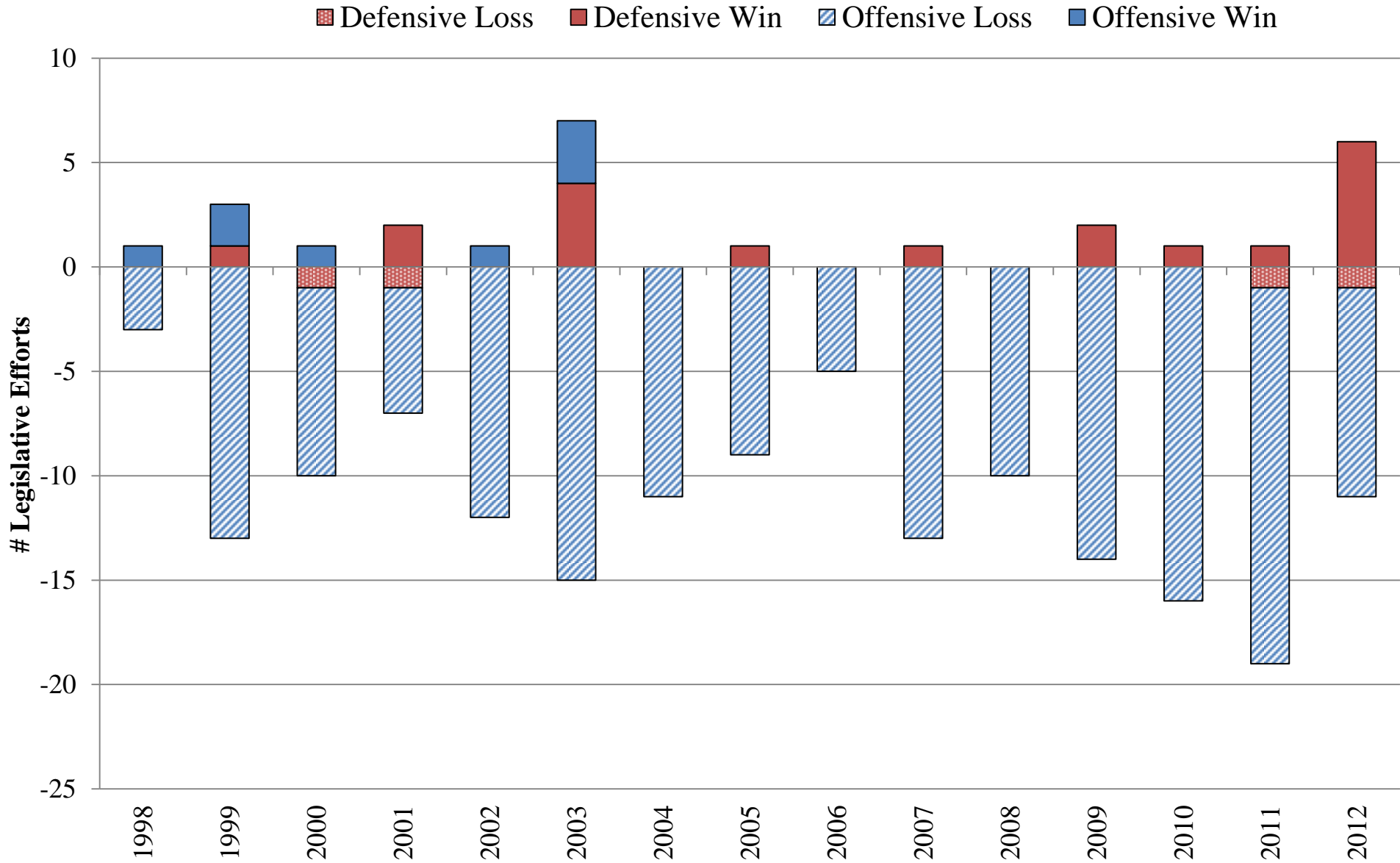
# Information Struggles: Trends In Vaccine Bills Introduced, 1998-2012



# Vaccine Critical Legislative Scorecard, 1998-2012



# Vaccine Critical Legislative Scorecard, EXEMPTIONS 1998-2012



# Wins and Losses that Resulted in Policy Change

|                      | Change Favorable                                                                                                        | Change Unfavorable                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Proposed Favorable   | Offensive Win (15 states)<br><br>AR    CA    DE    FL    IA<br>IL    KY    MO    ND    NH<br>NJ    NY    OK    TX    VA | Offensive Loss<br><br>TN                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| Proposed Unfavorable | Defensive Win<br><br>VT                                                                                                 | Defensive Loss (34 states)<br><br>CA    CO    DE    GA    HI<br>IA    IL    IN    KS    KY<br>LA    MA    MD    ME    MI<br>MN    MO    MS    NC    ND<br>NE    NJ    NM    NY    OH<br>OK    OR    RI    SC    SD<br>TN    TX    VA    WA |

# Overall Scorecard, 1998-2012

(636 legislative efforts across all states)

| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Defensive Loss</b> | <b>Defensive Win</b> | <b>Offensive Loss</b> | <b>Offensive Win</b> |
|--------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1998         | 7                     | 6                    | 3                     | 3                    |
| 1999         | 7                     | 19                   | 15                    | 2                    |
| 2000         | 3                     | 9                    | 10                    | 1                    |
| 2001         | 5                     | 17                   | 8                     |                      |
| 2002         | 1                     | 5                    | 16                    | 1                    |
| 2003         | 8                     | 12                   | 19                    | 3                    |
| 2004         | 4                     | 1                    | 18                    | 2                    |
| 2005         | 6                     | 11                   | 34                    | 4                    |
| 2006         | 5                     | 8                    | 24                    |                      |
| 2007         | 16                    | 52                   | 43                    | 3                    |
| 2008         | 3                     | 16                   | 27                    | 1                    |
| 2009         | 6                     | 22                   | 34                    |                      |
| 2010         | 4                     | 6                    | 25                    |                      |
| 2011         | 7                     | 17                   | 24                    |                      |
| 2012         | 5                     | 11                   | 17                    |                      |
| <b>Total</b> | <b>87</b>             | <b>212</b>           | <b>317</b>            | <b>20</b>            |

# Conclusions

1. Newest trend on the west coast, could be expanded in hospitable states: additional requirements to consult a health care provider before opting out one's child [WA (2011), CA (2012), OR (2013)].
2. But no exemptions have been successfully removed entirely in any state.
3. Last expansions were in conservative states and from a bygone era (TX, AK 2003).
4. Vaccine critics remain formidable defenders of a favorable status quo, but have lost ground because of outbreaks, low credibility, and increased awareness of higher opt-out rates.