

Enhancing Unemployment Insurance Data For Policy Research and Public Health Practice



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INTRODUCTION

- More generous unemployment insurance (UI) is associated with reductions in poverty, improved subjective well-being and mental health
- UI generosity is a target to improve population health.
- UI accessibility is a comparatively less studied potential policy target due to the absence of easy-to-use publicly available data

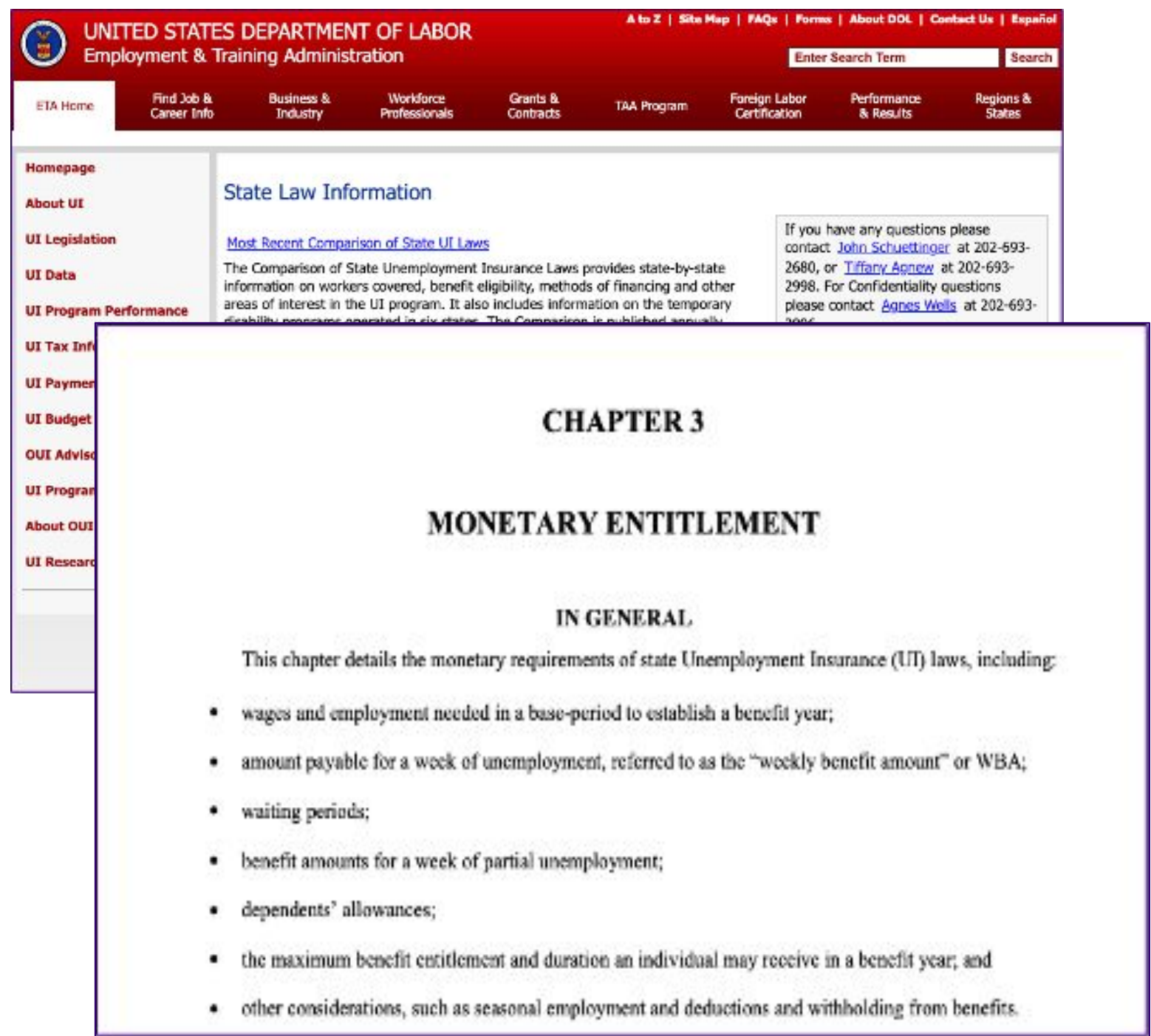
OBJECTIVE: To create a database of annual state-level UI accessibility policy indicators and to examine how UI accessibility differs between states and within states over time.

METHODS

Data Source: US Department of Labor’s annual documentation (1992-2020) on state comparisons of unemployment insurance policies

Abstraction Approach: We first worked to identify the dimensions most pertinent to UI accessibility. State-level UI law data were abstracted in duplicate. A third reviewer resolved abstractor discrepancies.

Descriptive Analyses: Used Principal Components Analysis to create a UI accessibility index from the abstracted eligibility data dimensions. Rescaled from 0 (worst) to 10 (best). Examined annual trends in changes in UI accessibility.

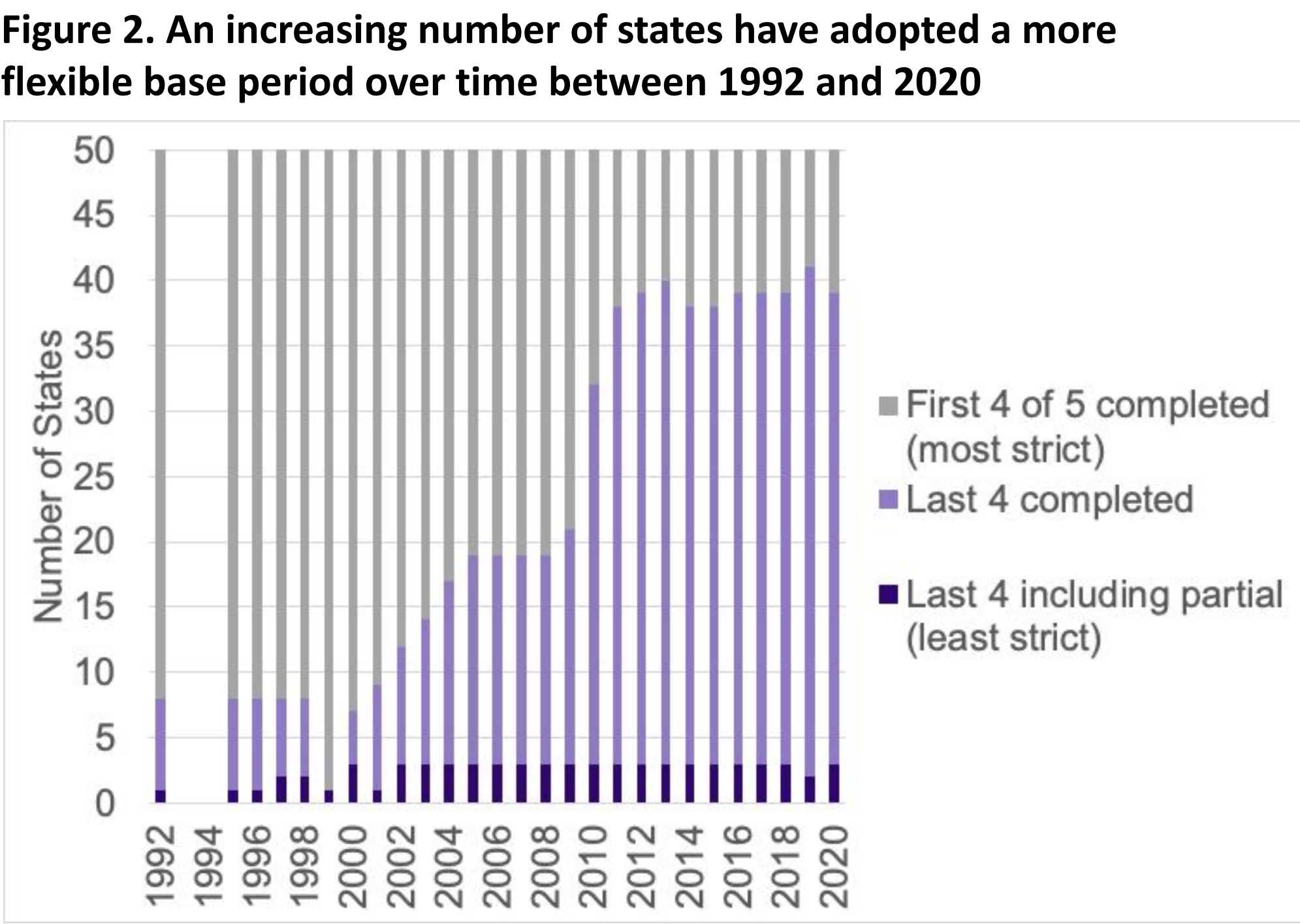


State	Year	Before 2002: In Table 300, "First 4 of Last 5 quarters" column, there is an "X" with a footnote or "****" (0: X only; 1: X with footnote or ****)	Before 2002: Corresponding footnote in Table 300 says something like "SP may be last 4 completed quarters" (0: X only; 1: X with footnote or ****)	Before 2002: Corresponding footnote in Table 300 indicates inclusion of partial quarters e.g., "last 3 quarters plus any weeks of work in quarter in which claim is filed" (0: X only; 1: X with footnote or ****)	Before 2002: Indicates extension of BP for something like illness, workers comp, disability etc in the footnotes (0: X only; 1: X with footnote or ****)
1516 NJ	2020	1	1	1	0
1517 NM	2020	1	1	1	0
1518 NY	2020	1	1	1	0
1519 NC	2020	1	1	1	1
1520 ND	2020	0	0	0	0
1521 OH	2020	1	1	1	0
1522 OK	2020	1	1	1	1
1523 OR	2020	1	1	1	0
1524 PA	2020	1	1	1	1
1525 PR	2020	1	1	1	0

RESULTS

Table 1. Created a new database for public health research and practice with 9 dimensions of UI eligibility by state and year (1992-2020)

Measure	Analytic Coding
Alternative base period of last 4 completed quarters available?	Yes:1; No:0
Alternative base period of last 3 completed quarters with partial 4th quarter available?	Yes:1; No:0
Extended base period available for extenuating circumstances (e.g., illness, disability, job-related illness)	Yes:1; No:0
Required wages in at least 2 quarters	Yes:1; No:0
Required wages outside of “High Quarter”	X-X Dollars
Base Period Wage Requirement	X-X Dollars
“High Quarter” Earnings Requirement	X-X Dollars
Required Weeks Worked During Base Period	X-X Weeks
Required Hours Worked During Base Period	X-X Hours



*Data for 1993-1994 were not available on the DOL website

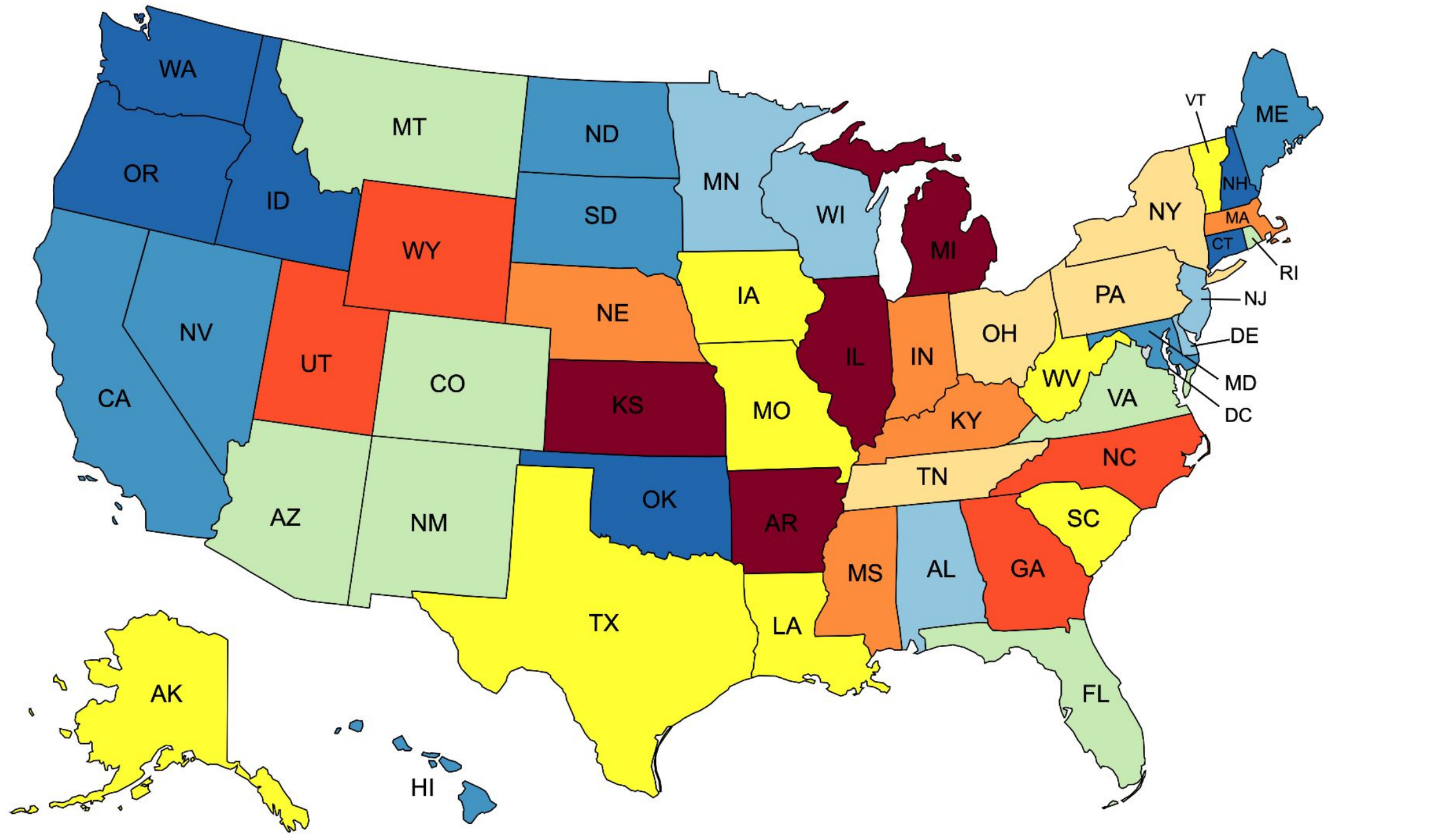
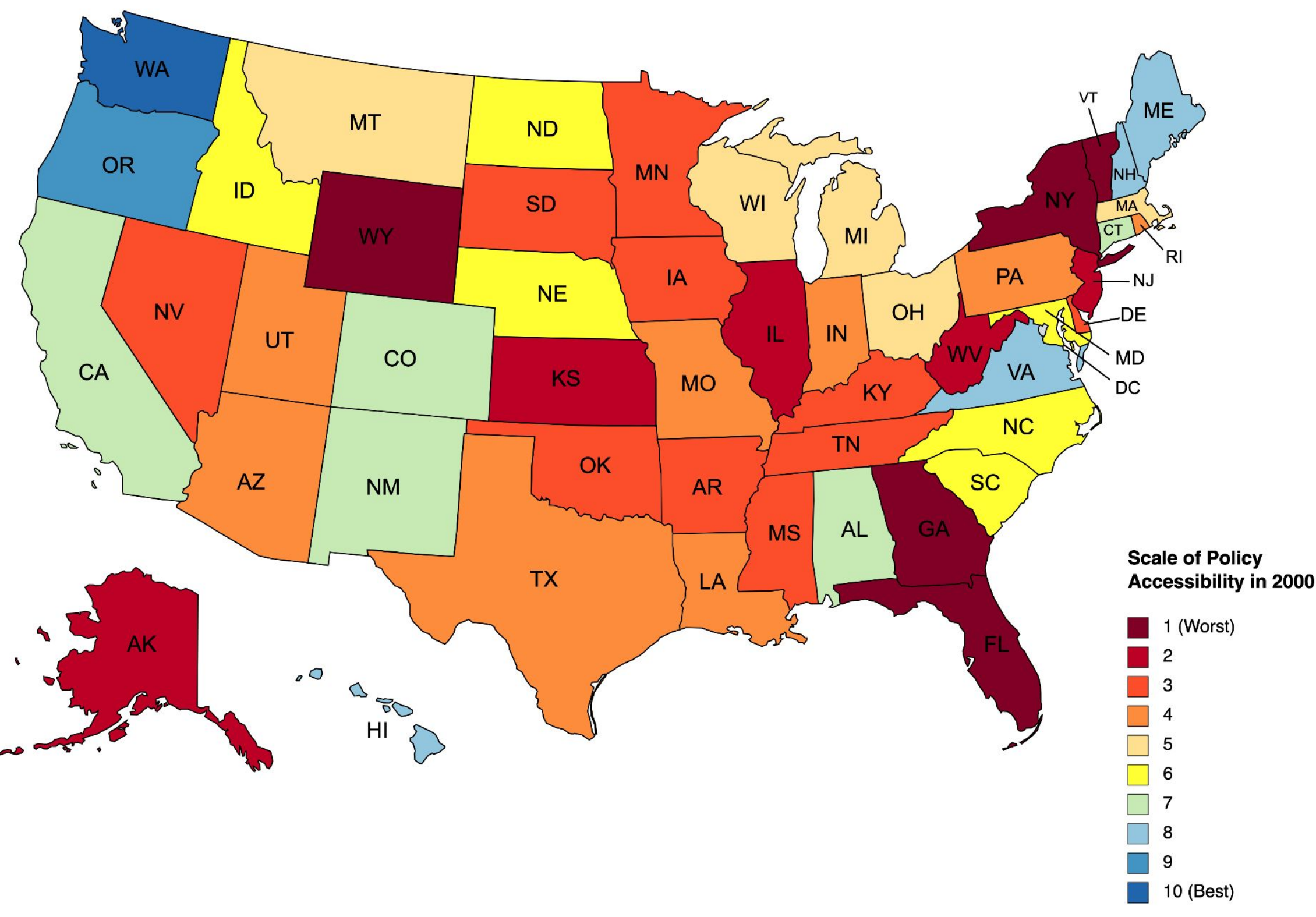


Figure 3. From 2000 to 2020, many states across the country changed their UI accessibility policy; some for the better, and others for the worse

CONCLUSION & NEXT STEPS

- There is considerable variation in unemployment insurance accessibility across states and within states over time
- An initial set of publicly available UI accessibility data will facilitate policy research and public health practice
- Releasing initial UI accessibility data on GitHub for public use; additional abstraction efforts are warranted:
 - Data preceding 1992
 - Other elements of UI accessibility (e.g., job search requirements)

Interested in using these data? Reach out to Sarah Andrea!
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