

Hi, this is Chris Micheli with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea and Micheli and an adjunct professor here at McGeorge School of Law in the Capital Lawyering program. Today's podcast concerns the role of local government in California. I think that the role of local government cannot be overstated. The 58 counties, the 482 cities, and over 3000 special districts from transportation agencies to local air districts, water boards, and vector control agencies, all play a very critical role in making and implementing public policy throughout the state of California.

As you may be aware, counties are specified as quote-unquote political subdivisions of the state according to the California Constitution. Nonetheless, they're very critical because they run so much of government that affects individuals in our society on an almost daily basis. For example, they provide health and human services funding, law enforcement. With our November elections coming up, they conduct elections at the local level. Local governments in California not only implement state laws but also they have rulemaking authority themselves. They can adopt county ordinances or city ordinances that govern conduct in their respective jurisdictions.

Some examples of a municipal ordinance could include regulating parking to even allowing or disallowing the sale of cannabis in their city or county. State laws are certainly critical to our society, but local laws cannot be ignored. There are even local political laws such as those in major cities, such as Los Angeles and San Francisco or San Jose, that require everything from lobbyist disclosure and registration to local election laws that cap individual contributions to candidates - even as low as \$250. Regardless of whatever activities that you may be engaged in, you should not only be aware of the relevant state laws, but you also have to examine any local ordinances to ensure yours or your clients' compliance with all of the laws that might impact your business or your conduct.

Pursuant to Article II Section 6 of the California Constitution, elections for county, city, school, and judicial offices are officially nonpartisan. Any party affiliations aren't included on local ballot. Let's take a look at a brief overview of how local government are structured here in the state of California. We'll look at counties, cities, school districts, and special districts, again very broadly. Let's start with counties. There are 58 of them in the state. The entire state is covered by those 58 counties. As I mentioned earlier, the California Constitution deems them political subdivisions of the state and obviously, they provide very important and valuable services on behalf of the state of California.

Again, be it health and human services funding, law enforcement, property tax assessment, elections, et cetera, note that counties are authorized to have both taxing and police powers. There are 13 charter counties and the remaining 45 are called general law counties. They're governed by 5-member elected board of supervisors with the exception of San Francisco, which has an 11 member board because San Francisco is both a city and a county. Almost all supervisors are elected by district except in a few instances and they in turn generally utilize executives to manage the county functions. The main county executive is the CAO or the Chief Administrative Officer.

Note that in all 58 counties, the district attorneys and the sheriffs are elected countywide. In most counties, they also elect their treasurers or tax collectors. Turning briefly to the cities. There are over 480 of them that provide a wide range of municipal

services including police, fire, parks, libraries. Generally, the city government is headed by an elected or appointed mayor to whom department heads are then responsible. City councils usually appoint a city manager to oversee city services and staff. Like counties, the cities in California are either deemed charter or general law cities. The general law cities have their powers enumerated by statute in California's government code. On the other hand, charter cities have more powers and their cities are governed by charters, which are adopted and changed by a vote of their local electorate. Note that incorporated cities have the power of taxation and law enforcement as well as powers such as zoning, providing for parks, recreational services and other municipal services.

The third type is school districts. These districts basically oversee public education in our state. School districts are governed independently from cities and counties. There are more than 1100 school districts in California that are generally overseen by an elected board of education for the county, as well as an appointed superintendent. The school districts statewide are governed by an elected school board. Just to note that there are elementary school districts, there are high school districts, there are unified districts, and there are even community college districts throughout the state of California.

The last type of local government is a special district. These special districts in California are generally defined as, "Any agency of the state for the local performance of governmental or proprietary functions within limited boundaries". These special districts, they all provide specific services within a defined geographic area. They are most often single purpose districts without police powers. There's a rough estimation of about 3,000 plus special districts throughout the state of California. Now, note some of the different types of special districts in broad categories. They are independent, meaning that they have an elected board or they're dependent special districts, meaning they're governed by the city or the county that created that special district. Other districts are regional boards whose members are appointed by city and county governments.

There are assessment districts, which have voting based upon assessed value of the properties that are within their specific assessment district. Then in addition, note that these districts are deemed to be enterprise or non-enterprise. Enterprise means that they operate as a business and they're funded by user fees. For example, good ones are water, power, waste disposal, transportation services. These are enterprise special districts.

Then you have the non-enterprise special districts, which of course are those that don't receive such funding. The most common of which are utility districts and transit agencies. With that, we conclude our podcast with a brief review of the role of local governments in the state of California. We hope you found this podcast helpful. Thanks for joining.