Hi, this is Chris Micheli with the Sacramento governmental relations firm of Aprea & Micheli, and an adjunct professor at McGeorge School of Law. Today's podcast is looking briefly at the question whether the California Legislature represents a bill factory.

In California, during its last legislative session, the 2018 session, the Legislature and Governor enacted 1,016 new laws - most of which took effect on January 1, 2019. This particular statistic raises the age old question - Is the California Legislature too much of a bill factory?

While we leave until another a day the answer to that question and whether the answer is good or bad, we want to compare that statistic to those of other states and allow you to ponder an answer to this question.

So, how many laws did this state enact, California, versus the other states? In summary, there were over 15,000 bills that were enacted in the fifty states in 2018. Just a few were not in session and did not enact any bills. Now, according to news media reports and other sources, I put together a sampling of states that enacted new laws in 2018, and the total number of new laws. Please note that no state was close to California's total.

For example: Alaska, 145 new laws; Arizona, 347 new laws; Colorado, 424 new laws; Florida, 193 new laws; Georgia, 15 new laws; Illinois, 595 new laws; Kansas, 118 new laws; Kentucky, 624 new laws; Maine, 200 new laws; Massachusetts, 343 new laws; Michigan, 689 new laws; Minnesota, 100 new laws; New Jersey, 329 new laws; New York, 522 new laws; North Carolina, 162 new laws; Ohio, 115 new laws; Oregon, 153 new laws; Pennsylvania, 179 new laws; Tennessee, 612 new laws; Utah, 486 new laws; Washington, 306 new laws; Wisconsin, 241 new laws.

So based upon this selected data from other states, obviously California has enacted many more new laws than any other states. Although 2018 was a high water mark for the last year of Governor Jerry Brown's administration, the state of California's averaged an enactment of 700-800 new laws each year pretty consistently.

So why does California enact so many laws each year? Well, it's hard to determine for certain the reason or reasons why. It could be attributable to a number of factors. For example, is the high number of new laws enacted due to the large number of bill introductions in California versus the other states? In other words, are legislators in this state allowed to introduce too many bills versus those legislators in other states? Or, do too many bills make it through the California legislative process in comparison to other states?

Another answer could be that California has a full time Legislature. Not every state does. And California's Legislature is in session for roughly 8 to 8 1/2 months each year. Some other states have sessions lasting only 90 or 120 days. California's also the most populous state in the nation. Its large population very well may require a large number of new laws to be enacted each year.

Obviously, there's much more data required in order to get better insight into the answer to the question whether California enacts too many laws. We would need to find out additional details

from these other states and make some comparisons, such as the number of legislators in each state, the number of bills introduced each year, the number of bills that legislators are permitted to author, [and] how many days their Legislatures are in session.

One other and final interesting data point is the percentage of bills that become law in California. In very broad terms, the California Legislature introduces about 2,200 bills a year, and roughly 40% of those bills become law each year. That's a pretty high percentage of bills getting enacted in comparison to the number of bills actually introduced. At the federal level, for example, roughly 2-3% of the introduced bills actually become law. So not only does the California Legislature introduce a lot of bills, but they also get a very high percentage of those bills becoming law each year.

I hope you found this podcast interesting. Thanks for joining.