

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 taking a quick look at the impact of the coronavirus on bills in the California Legislature. As you may be aware, there were 2,200 bills - 2,203, to be exact - introduced by the February 21st deadline for the 2020 California legislative session.

Since that time, there were 20 additional bills introduced -- 14 in the Assembly and 6 in the Senate. There are a few bills like committee bills that are not subject to that February 21st deadline. Out of the 2,223 bills introduced in the 2020 session, there were 682 Senate bills and 1,541 Assembly bills.

In mid-May, the Legislature scheduled Policy Committee hearings in both the Assembly and the Senate, and just over 160 Senate bills and roughly 400 Assembly bills were set for hearing in those committee hearings during the month of May. So roughly 560 bills were set for hearing out of that over 2,200 bills introduced, which is about 25 percent.

I estimated about 24 percent of the Senate bills and 26 percent of the Assembly bills got set for hearing. 19 Senate policy committees heard the 163 bills with one committee hearing just a single bill, and two committee hearings at 16 bills apiece.

There were 26 Assembly policy committees that held hearings on those 400 bills. One Assembly policy committee had a single bill hearing, and one committee heard 52 bills. There were actually three Assembly policy committees that didn't hear a single bill.

As you can imagine, not all the bills passed, and of course, about 375 or so went to the Appropriations Committee, and now about 340 bills are on the Assembly floor.

As you are probably aware, legislators in both the Assembly and the Senate this year were actually asked by their leadership to substantially reduce the number of bills that each legislator was going to carry this year, plus legislators, staff, and even interest groups recognized the need to prioritize bills that would be considered during this legislative session, and whether they were directly related to the pandemic or not.

As you can see from the numbers, bill packages were substantially reduced, and the number of bills set for policy committee hearings I think clearly recognizes the deep impact of the coronavirus pandemic on California's legislative process.

There are a few months left in the legislative session, which means perhaps some additional measures could spring to life later in the legislative session, but at this point, it's easy to make a determination that the coronavirus and COVID-19 have in fact had a significant impact on bills in the California Legislature.

Thanks for joining. Hope you enjoyed this podcast.