

## Legislature Adjourns. Newsom Survives.

By Jason Schmelzer, Legislative Advocate

The California State Legislature has adjourned the first year in the 2021-2022 legislative session and are scheduled to be in recess until they return to Sacramento on January 3, 2022. This year alone, the legislature introduced 2,421 individual pieces of legislation, but only about 700 passed and were sent to Governor Newsom's desk for action. In a typical year the legislature will send around 1,000 bills to the Governor for consideration, but COVID-19 has slowed business in the legislature. During 2020, for example, only 425 bills were sent to Newsom.



Governor Newsom has until October 10, 2021, to act on the bills that were sent to him by the legislature. As Governor, he can take one of three actions. He can sign a bill, veto a bill, or allow it to become law by simply doing neither (this is very rare). Governor Newsom tends to veto legislation at about the same rate as other Democratic governors - between 10-15% depending on the year. Governor Schwarzenegger, who was a Republican governor responding to bills passed by a majority Democratic legislature, vetoed between 25-35% of the bills sent to him.

The legislature's operations were limited once again due to the COVID-19 environment. Most legislative business was conducted under strict safety protocols. Legislative offices were closed to drop-in visits from lobbyists, legislators were limited in the number of bills they could introduce, and much of the legislative staff worked from home. Despite these challenges, the legislature was quite successful at conducting business this year and at no time did they have to completely shut down like they did in 2020.

The CCWC advocacy team was also quite successful in 2021. CCWC aggressively opposed 10 very problematic proposals, some of which have been described in past installments of our [Capitol Update](#). These proposals would have expanded presumption policy for public agencies, upended bill review rules, shattered Medical Provider Networks, and even slashed the time employers have available to investigate claims. CCWC worked with our employer and insurer coalition partners to inform the legislative process and make sure that members of the legislature understood the true impacts of these proposals. Luckily, none of the CCWC-opposed measures survived the legislative process.

Most of the bills opposed by CCWC in 2021 will be eligible once again in 2022, and we expect a substantial volume of new bills to be introduced in the new year.

Also impacting the 2021 legislative session was the effort to recall Governor Gavin Newsom. The recall effort was initiated in February of 2020, just before the COVID-19 pandemic took hold of the world. Newsom's response to the COVID-19 pandemic became a focus of recall proponents, but it was the Governor's dinner at French Laundry in Napa that put him in political hot water. Governor Newsom, however, responded to the political heat by focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, economic recovery, and avoiding controversy. Summer polling, largely fueled by assumptions that Democrats weren't going to be voting in the recall election, seemed to indicate that Governor Newsom was indeed at risk of being removed from office. Nonetheless, Governor Newsom and his supporters mounted a well-funded and aggressive campaign in the closing months of the election. Californians, when faced with a much more conservative option to replace Newsom, ultimately balked at the recall and voted overwhelmingly to retain Newsom.

We'll be talking about it all on October 12 from 10:00 am to 11:00 am - just two days after the deadline for Governor Newsom to sign or veto bills - during CCWC's annual Legislative & Political Update as part of our continuing Educational Webinar Series, presented by Sedgwick. If you haven't already registered, we encourage you to tune in as CCWC's Chair Jen Hamelin, Managing Director Paul Yoder and myself will not be holding back. [Register here today.](#)