A Snapshot of Connecticut Regulation in 2017

96,247 Restrictions, 5.9 Million Words, and 8 Weeks to Read

by James Broughel and Daniel Francis

September 2017

It would take an ordinary person more than three years to read the entire US *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR), which currently contains more than 112 million words.[1] The sheer size of the CFR poses a problem not just for the individuals and businesses that want to stay in compliance with the law, but also for anyone interested in understanding the consequences of this massive system of rules. States also have sizable regulatory codes, which add an additional layer to the enormous body of federal regulation. A prime example is the online version of the 2017 *Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies* (RCSA).[2]

A tool known as State RegData[3]—a platform for analyzing and quantifying state regulatory text—was developed by researchers at the Mercatus Center at George Mason University. State RegData captures information in minutes that would take an ordinary person hours, weeks, or even years to obtain. For example, the tool allows researchers to identify the industries that state regulation targets most by connecting text relevant to those industries with restrictive word counts. Known as regulatory restrictions, the words and phrases *shall*, *must*, *may not*, *prohibited*, and *required* can signify legal constraints and obligations.[4] As shown in figure 1, the three industries with the highest estimates of industry-relevant restrictions in the 2017 RCSA are ambulatory healthcare services, nursing and residential care facilities, and chemical manufacturing.

State RegData also reveals that the RCSA contains 96,247 regulatory restrictions and 5.9 million words. It would take an individual about 329 hours—or more than 8 weeks—to read the

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1. "The QuantGov Regulatory Clock," QuantGov, accessed September 1, 2017.
2. Connecticut Secretary of State, Connecticut eRegulations System, *Regulations of Connecticut State Agencies*, accessed September 5, 2017.
3. State RegData is part of a broader project called QuantGov, which seeks to quantify legal text. See Patrick A. McLaughlin and Oliver Sherouse, "QuantGov—A Policy Analytics Platform," QuantGov, October 31, 2016.
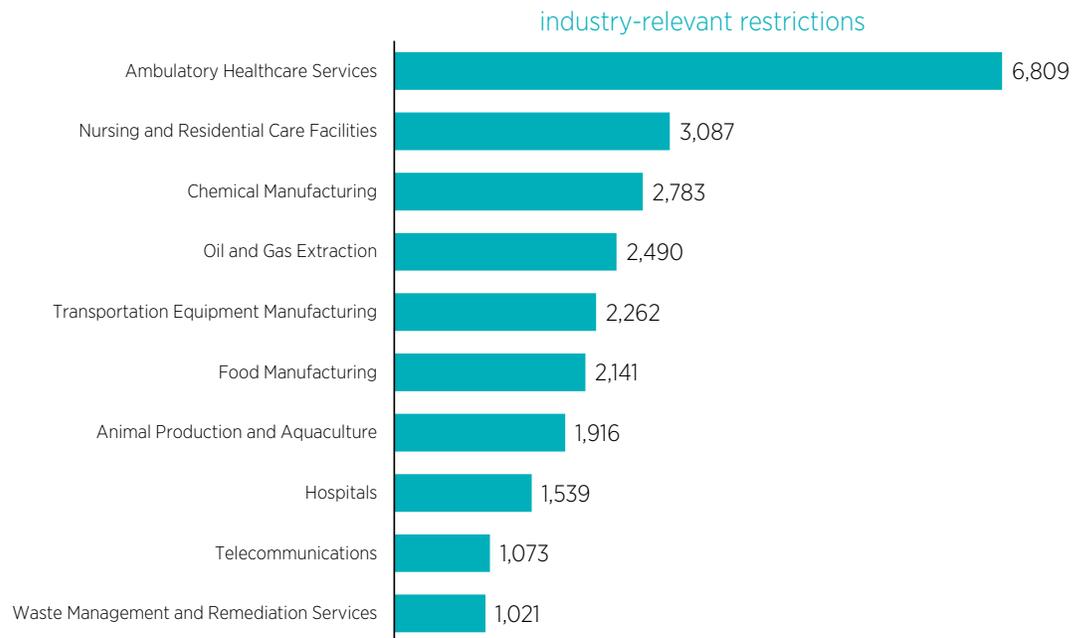4. Restrictions can also occur in legal text for other purposes, such as for definitional purposes. At times, restrictions may relate to government employees rather than the private sector.

entire RCSA. That's assuming the reader spends 40 hours per week reading and reads at a rate of 300 words per minute. For comparison, in 2017 there were more than 1.15 million additional restrictions in the federal code.[5] Individuals and businesses in Connecticut must navigate these different layers of restrictions to remain in compliance.

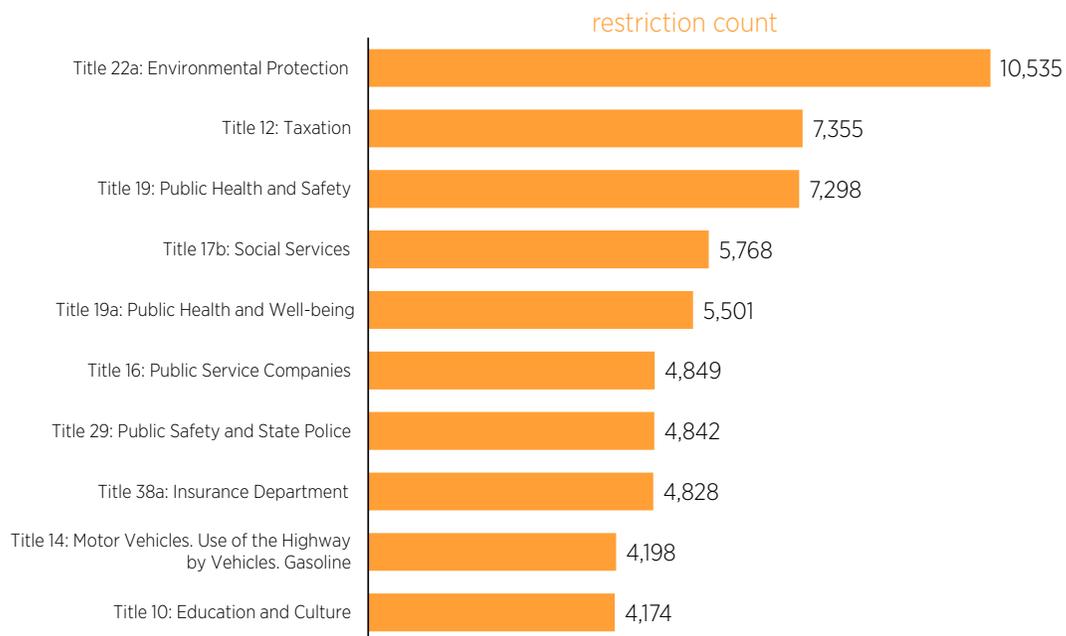Figure 1. The Top 10 Industries Targeted by Connecticut State Regulation in 2017

industry-relevant restrictions

Industry	Restrictions
Ambulatory Healthcare Services	6,809
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	3,087
Chemical Manufacturing	2,783
Oil and Gas Extraction	2,490
Transportation Equipment Manufacturing	2,262
Food Manufacturing	2,141
Animal Production and Aquaculture	1,916
Hospitals	1,539
Telecommunications	1,073
Waste Management and Remediation Services	1,021

Source: State RegData, "Connecticut," http://www.quantgov.org/data/.

The titles of the RCSA are organized on the basis of the types of regulations they contain. Figure 2 shows that Title 22a, which is related to environmental protection, contains more than 10,000 restrictions. By this measure, this is the biggest title in the RCSA. Coming in second is Title 12, related to taxation, with more than 7,000 restrictions.

Federal regulation tends to attract the most headlines, but it is important to remember that the more than 112 million words and 1.15 million restrictions in the federal code significantly understate the true scope of regulation in the United States. States like Connecticut write millions of additional words of regulation and tens of thousands of additional restrictions. State-level requirements carry the force of law to restrict individuals and businesses just as federal ones do.

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5. "The QuantGov Regulatory Clock," QuantGov.

Figure 2. The Top 10 Titles in the 2017 Connecticut Administrative Code

restriction count

Title 22a: Environmental Protection	10,535
Title 12: Taxation	7,355
Title 19: Public Health and Safety	7,298
Title 17b: Social Services	5,768
Title 19a: Public Health and Well-being	5,501
Title 16: Public Service Companies	4,849
Title 29: Public Safety and State Police	4,842
Title 38a: Insurance Department	4,828
Title 14: Motor Vehicles. Use of the Highway by Vehicles. Gasoline	4,198
Title 10: Education and Culture	4,174

Source: State RegData, "Connecticut," http://www.quantgov.org/data/.

Researchers are only beginning to understand the consequences of the massive and growing federal regulatory system on economic growth and well-being in the United States.[6] Meanwhile, the effects of state regulation remain largely unknown. If this snapshot of Connecticut regulation in 2017 is a good indicator, then the states are also active regulators, suggesting that the true impact of regulation on society is far greater than that of federal regulation alone.

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6. See, for example, Bentley Coffey, Patrick A. McLaughlin, and Pietro Peretto, "The Cumulative Cost of Regulations" (Mercatus Working Paper, Mercatus Center at George Mason University, Arlington, VA, 2016).

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