



**WEEKLY UPDATE JUNE 23 - 29, 2019**

**THIS WEEK**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
SUMMER RECESS FOR TWO WEEKS**

**PLANNING COMMISSION TO CONSIDER SINGLE HOME  
PERMITS & A TASTING ROOM – NO HEAVY POLICY  
INITIATIVES**

**WHY DO HOMES IN RESIDENTIAL ZONES EVEN NEED “MINOR” USE  
PERMITS, WHEN THEY ARE ALREADY ON AN APPROVED LOT?**

**COUNTY, CITY OF PASO, TEMPLETON CSD, & SAN  
MIGUEL WATER DISTRICT SPENT \$6 MILLION TO  
FIGHT SMALL OVERLIERS BUT ONLY GOT 2,063  
ACRE FT. OF WATER PER YEAR BETWEEN THEM  
QUIET TITLE HOLDERS TO STATE, COUNTY, PASO, DISTRICTS:  
GET LOST!**

**LAST WEEK**

**INDUSTRIAL HEMP MORATORIUM ADOPTED  
FIRST AG CROP TO BE REGULATED  
(CANNABIS CONSIDERED NOT AN AG CROP)**

**PASO WATER MORATORIUM WILL BE EXTENDED  
BEYOND SGMA 2020 PLAN ADOPTION  
IT COULD TAKE YEARS FOR PLAN PROVISIONS TO TAKE EFFECT**

**HOMELESS DEAL AT \$267K PER DWELLING UNIT  
APPROVED**

**FY 2019-2020 BUDGET ADOPTED**

**SLO COLAB IN DEPTH  
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**HEALTHCARE TAX FOR CITIZENS, FREE  
HEALTHCARE FOR NONCITIZENS  
BY JON COUPAL**

**AMERICA'S THIRD WORLD STATE  
BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

**AN ADDICTION CRISIS DISGUISED AS A HOUSING CRISIS  
OPIOIDS ARE FUELING HOMELESSNESS ON THE  
WEST COAST  
BY CHRISTOPHER F. RUFO**

**ALERT**

**PASO BASIN WATER PRESCRIPTORS LOSE BIG**

The County, City of Paso Robles, Templeton Community Service District, and the San Miguel Community Service District suffered a major embarrassing loss in their attempt to deny 850 or so Paso Basin overlying residents, farmers, and ranchers their ability to confirm their constitutionally protected primary water rights. The government agencies (known in water law as prescriptors)<sup>1</sup> formed an alliance and hired special lawyers, hydrologists, and other experts in a failed attempt to nullify the citizen effort.

In the end Santa Clara County Superior Court Judge Peter H. Kerwan found that the prescriptors could prove that they had a right to only 2,063 acre feet per year out of about 100,000 acre feet, which is the average annual natural recharge to the basin over the long haul.

Reportedly the governments cost their taxpayers and their water users \$6 million dollars to fight citizens in the unincorporated area. It is asserted that the County's share was \$1.5 million and that the City of Paso spent considerably more. The County was awarded 310 acre feet. At \$1.5 million, that's \$5,000 per acre ft.

Worse yet, the County expended the \$1.5 million to fight its own citizen taxpayers. When we asked the Supervisors why they did it, they said that it was explained to them in Executive Session and they can't talk about it.

Now that the Quantification of Prescriptive Rights portion of the trial is over, the County should explain why it attacked its own citizens and wasted so much taxpayer money doing so. This is no longer a protected subject in Executive Session. The Judge issued a detailed order which is part of the public record. Did the County and other governments want to steal the people's water?

1).A water prescriptor is someone who historically over a period of years made use of the water. The Judge found that the government entities had not used very much.

## THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### **No Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, June 25, 2019 (Not Scheduled)**

The Board will be on a two-week summer recess.

### **Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, June 27, 2019 (Scheduled)**

**In General:** The agenda contains a request for a tasting room and several approvals of single-family homes. Why should a home which is being constructed on an approved residential lot require an expensive "minor" use permit?

# LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

## Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, June 18, 2019 (Completed)

**Item 14 - Authorization for the County to accept a \$1.6 Million Dollar Homeless Grant.** The Board approved the grant and program 5/0 on the consent calendar. Homelessness has become such a sacred cow that elected officials are afraid to ask questions lest they be accused of being anti-homeless reprobates.

**Background:** The grant is part of the billions which the California Legislature is doling out to attempt to counter the homeless problem. The State is issuing \$2 billion in debt) in its attempt to support this endeavor. It has also bulked up the Proposed FY 2019 – 20 Operating Budget. The County will use the funding to contract with the not-for-profit Transitions Mental Health Association. Transitions will acquire and renovate a 6-unit property to add to its portfolio of homeless serving properties. This means the renovated apartments will cost \$266,667 dollars per unit. See our article in last week's **Weekly Update** on the *Homeless Industrial Complex*. It seems as though the County needs a plan and some standards. That fact that "it's not general fund" is not the point. We are all being taxed for the profligate and un-managed homeless industrial complex.

**Item 21 - State Ground Water Management Act (SGMA) Plans Status by Basin.** The item was received on the consent calendar 5/0. Supervisors Gibson and Arnold again debated the issue of using water agency funds and general fund contributions to pay for the SGMA planning. Gibson thinks the overlies should be taxed anew for it, even though they have been paying into the water fund for decades. Many small users are exempt from SGMA.

**Background:** An attachment to the item contained extensive presentations on the status of plan development to comply with SGMA for the 6 subject County water basins.

Basin <sup>(2), (3)</sup>	GSP Development Phase Duration In Fiscal Years <sup>(4)</sup>	Current Fiscal Year Budget Status <sup>(1)</sup>			
		FY 2018-19 Budget	FY 2018-19 Costs to Date	Remaining FY 2018-19 Budget	Total SGMA Costs to Date (7/1/17 - Current)
<i>SGMA Program</i>		\$ 3,875,626.00		\$ 3,875,626.00	
<i>Cuyama Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-19/20</i>		\$ 50,027.96	\$ (50,027.96)	\$ 62,251.66
<i>Los Osos Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-19/20</i>		\$ 52,897.32	\$ (52,897.32)	\$ 68,533.93
<i>Paso Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-19/20</i>		\$ 730,553.90	\$ (730,553.90)	\$ 804,469.06
<i>San Luis Obispo Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-21/22</i>		\$ 32,784.01	\$ (32,784.01)	\$ 89,364.96
<i>Santa Maria Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-21/22</i>		\$ 10,767.01	\$ (10,767.01)	\$ 41,012.44
<i>Atascadero Basin</i>	<i>FY 17/18-21/22</i>		\$ 3,593.74	\$ (3,593.74)	\$ 4,650.15
County General Fund (GF) Contribution Total		\$ 3,875,626.00	\$ 880,623.94	\$ 2,995,002.06	\$ 1,070,282.20
Flood Control Zone General (FCZ) Contribution Total			\$ 728,878.88		\$ 1,835,808.00
<b>SGMA Program Total (GF + FCZ)</b>			<b>\$ 1,609,502.82</b>		<b>\$ 2,906,090.20</b>

The actual reports for each basin are accessible at the link below. They seem to be on schedule. For some reason the link to the draft plan sections for the Paso Basin will not open. These need to be available to the public and interested organizations. What sort of pumping reductions will be necessary to bring the Basin into compliance?

<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/agendaitem/details/10342>

**Item 38 - Formal Adoption of the FY 2019-2020 Annual County Budget.** The Board unanimously adopted the Budget. There was no comment. It is balanced by the use of fund balances and by omitting to estimate the cost of salary increases that have been negotiated or that are currently in negotiation. Actual balancing will occur next May, when the Board considers a series of transfers from departments which underrun their budgets and the use of contingency reserves.

**Item 39 - Hearing to consider and adopt an Industrial Hemp Urgency Ordinance to establish a temporary moratorium on the cultivation of industrial hemp, with some exemptions, in all unincorporated portions of San Luis Obispo County, by 4/5 vote.** The Board adopted an urgency ordinance moratorium on the approval of new hemp grows by a 4/5 vote – Arnold, Compton, Hill, and Peschong in the affirmative and Gibson dissenting. Growers who have been approved and those who have filed valid applications will be exempt for now.

There were 47 speakers at the meeting who opposed the moratorium, 3 who supported it, and 1 who was unclear. Supervisor Hill, who in the past has supported everything marijuana, voted for the moratorium. He appeared to be uncomfortable justifying his vote with a long rambling soliloquy concluding with a “time out is not a ban.” Apparently some of his Edna Valley constituents are concerned about odors and negative impacts of hemp odor on the wine experience.

The moratorium is for 45 days and can be extended for up to 2 years. The purpose is to allow the County time to develop a regulatory ordinance. This will probably take some time, especially if the environmental assessment determines that a modified negative declaration or full EIR, would be required to assess the impact of the proposed regulatory ordinance.

COLAB opposed the moratorium on the grounds that urgency moratoria require that the Board make a substantiated finding that the expansion of hemp planting constitutes an “imminent threat to public health safety and welfare.” Government land use moratoria must meet the strict standards for adoption. This is because they can negatively impact property rights and civil rights guaranteed under the Constitution. This is why a governing body considering an urgency moratorium must make the finding of an imminent threat to public safety, health, and welfare, and the finding must be backed up with factual evidence that continuation of the activity is harming the public safety and public health. The County presented no statistics, no expert testimony in this regard, and no published academic or other data. In fact, its weak finding states that there is a “potential” problem with odor.

**Background:** Hemp is an agricultural crop, unlike Cannabis which is separately regulated. There is concern that any regulation of hemp could then serve as a model or precedent for regulating other Ag crops which have been considered exempt from most land use type regulation. What if someone decides broccoli, garlic, cauliflower, cattle, horses, goats, poultry, or some flowers are too smelly?

Hemp is a close cousin to cannabis. The main difference is that the THC level (the active psychotropic activator in cannabis) is very low in hemp. Reportedly, some varieties of hemp smell like cannabis. Many people are worried that its widespread cultivation could result in odor problems for neighbors. It is also reported that hemp in the field looks like cannabis and thus could serve as cover for illegal cannabis operations and/or present a severe inspection workload for County agencies. Legal marijuana is now tracked from the field to production, and samples are inspected in the lab. The chemical tags from an approved operation would be missing from an illegal grow, thus mitigating this concern.

**Item 43 - Request for direction regarding expiration of the Water Neutral New Development programs as related to the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin and the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act.** The Board directed staff to return with ordinance modifications designed to deal with a regulatory gap which will occur pertaining to groundwater restrictions in the Paso Basin.

**Background:** Back in 2015 the Board, recognizing the Paso Water Basin as a level of severity III (overused) water source, imposed a rural water offset program (for every new acre foot of water used, the owner has to find somewhere to purchase or otherwise cancel the use of an acre foot of water. These controls were to be cancelled when the new mandated State Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) Plan is adopted in 2020. It has now been realized that simply adopting the Plan does not change anything. It will take up to 5 years for various water regulatory control and supply measures to be implemented. The gap period from the adoption and approval of the Plan and its actual effect might result in a sudden detrimental use of more water.

**San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution District Meeting of Wednesday, June 19, 2019 (Completed)**

**In General:** Most of the meeting time covered routine matters, such as the Agency's budget and updates on various programs. The one wrangle occurred over the status of dunes dust reduction at the State Park Off-road Vehicle Riding Area. Many of the usual Mesa gadflies attended and spoke to the issue, urging the Board to take faster and stronger action. The Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) covered the various steps being taken pursuant to a stipulated Court agreement between the State Parks Department and the APCD. The agreement is multi-year and sets progressive dust particulate reduction levels which must be achieved.

Supervisors Hill and Gibson both expressed their impatience, but there is little they can do until the measurements are reported. Ironically, there have been less exceedances days this year than in the past

because there were reportedly fewer windy days. This seems strange to us, since this spring seemed much colder and windier than some years.

**Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Thursday, June 20, 2019 (Cancelled)**

**Please be advised that the June 20, 2019 meeting of the LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION (LAFCO) has been cancelled.** The next LAFCO meeting will be held on Thursday, July 18, 2019.

## **COLAB IN DEPTH**

**IN FIGHTING THE TROUBLESOME, LOCAL DAY-TO-DAY ASSAULTS ON OUR FREEDOM AND PROPERTY, IT IS ALSO IMPORTANT TO KEEP IN MIND THE LARGER UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL, POLITICAL, AND ECONOMIC CAUSES AND FORCES**

## **HEALTHCARE TAX FOR CITIZENS, FREE HEALTHCARE FOR NONCITIZENS**

**BY JON COUPAL**

If there was any question whatsoever as to whether California has gone completely off the rails, proposals in the new state budget should remove all doubt. Perhaps the most egregious of these involve changes in state law as they relate to health care.

As of this writing, those proposals have yet to be adopted by both houses of the legislature – which is constitutionally required to pass the budget bill by June 15th every year – but statements by legislative leaders have caused a great deal of angst among the taxpayer public.

First among the inexplicable ideas is the proposal to force citizen and legal immigrant taxpayers to pay a new healthcare tax in order to subsidize healthcare for California residents who are living in the country illegally. Yes, you read that right. The tax that Gov. Gavin Newsom wants to impose is a penalty on all those who don't comply with the "individual mandate." If this sounds familiar, it should. The individual mandate was a key component of Obamacare at the federal level until the penalty was repealed by the Republican-led Congress in 2017.

If it passes, California would be one of only four states imposing a tax on those who won't or can't obtain the kind of health insurance coverage the government requires. The state-imposed mandate would parallel the federal mandate which, in 2016, amounted to \$695 per adult or 2.5 percent of yearly household income, whichever was higher. The tax is projected by Newsom to generate about \$1 billion over three years.

Adding insult to injury, a portion of that \$1 billion generated would go to provide healthcare coverage to people living in the country illegally. Currently, full-scope Medi-Cal benefits are provided to illegal immigrants up to the age of 19. This proposal, estimated to cost about \$100 million, would extend that eligibility to the age of 26.

We doubt that imposing a healthcare tax on citizens and legal residents to generate funds for healthcare benefits for illegal residents will resonate with voters. At this point, it is unclear whether the penalty will be labeled as a tax by the legislature. Its inherent unpopularity might compel politicians to call it a "fee" or a "charge" instead of a tax. But proponents need to understand two things. First, the United States Supreme Court has labeled Obamacare's penalty as a tax — indeed that is the only thing that saved Obamacare's constitutionality and, second, California voters know a tax when they see one.

In California, if the Legislature imposes a tax, it must receive a two-thirds vote of each house. Because the Democrats have a solid two-thirds-plus majority, one would assume that this threshold will be met. However, after the recall of then-Sen. Josh Newman for his support of the infamous gas tax hike, and the recent drubbing of Measure EE in Los Angeles, who knows what moderate Democrats may be thinking about voting for a new tax hike.

Finally, there is something unseemly about the individual mandate and the penalty for non-compliance. The tax for not buying insurance was one of the Affordable Care Act's most unpopular features and many Americans cheered when it was repealed as part of the federal tax reform legislation.

The notion that government can force you to buy a product that you may not want is inconsistent with basic precepts of freedom and individual responsibility. In resurrecting the individual mandate and penalty, California is only reinforcing its image as a high-tax and limited-freedom place to live. That's probably why more than one million residents — mostly middle class — have bailed out to other states that still retain a modicum of sanity.

*Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. This article first appeared on the Association's website on June 16, 2019.*

## **AMERICA'S THIRD WORLD STATE**

### **America's First Third-World State**

**By Victor Davis Hanson**



“Third World” is now an anachronistic geographical term of the Cold War. But after 1989, “Third World” was reinvented from a political noun into an adjective to mean more than just Asian, African, and Latin American nations nonaligned with either the West or the Soviet bloc.

Rather, the current modifier “Third World” has come to transcend geography, politics, and ethnicity. It simply denotes poor failed states all over the globe of all races and religions. Third World symptomologies are predictably corrupt government, unequal or nonexistent applicability of the law, two rather than three classes, and the return of medieval diseases. Third World nations suffer from high taxes and poor social services, premodern infrastructure and utilities, poor transportation, tribalism, gangs, and lack of security.

Another chief characteristic of a Third World society is the official denial of all of the above, and a vindictive, almost hysterical state response to anyone who points out those obvious tragedies. Another is massive out-migration. Residents prefer almost any country other than their own. Think Somalia, Venezuela, Cuba, Libya, or Guatemala.

Does 21st-century California increasingly fit that definition — despite having the nation’s most amenable climate and most beautiful and diverse geography, with major natural ports facing the dynamic Asian economies, and being naturally rich in timber, agriculture, mining, and energy, and blessed with a prior century’s inheritance of effective local and state government?

### **The California Manor**

By many criteria, 21st-century California is both the poorest and the richest state in the union. Almost a quarter of the population lives below the poverty line. Another fifth is categorized as near the poverty level — facts not true during the latter 20th century. A third of the nation’s welfare recipients now live in California. The state has the highest homeless population in the nation (135,000). About 22 percent of the nation’s total homeless population reside in the state — whose economy is the largest in the U.S., fueling the greatest numbers of American billionaires and high-income zip codes.

But by some indicators, the California middle class is shrinking — because of massive regulation, high taxation, green zoning, and accompanying high housing prices. Out-migration from the state remains largely a phenomenon of the middle and upper-middle classes. Millions have left California in the past 30 years, replaced by indigent and often illegal immigrants, often along with the young, affluent, and single.

If someone predicted half a century ago that a Los Angeles police station or indeed L.A. City Hall would be in danger of periodic, flea-borne infectious typhus outbreaks, he would have been considered unhinged. After all, the city that gave us the modern freeway system is not supposed to resemble Justinian’s sixth-century Constantinople. Yet typhus, along with outbreaks of infectious hepatitis A, are in the news on California streets. The sidewalks of the state’s major cities are homes to piles of used needles, feces, and refuse. Hygienists warn that permissive municipal governments are setting the stage

— through spiking populations of history’s banes of fleas, lice, and rats — for possible dark-age outbreaks of plague or worse.

High tech does its part not to clean the streets but to create defecation apps that electronically warn tourists and hoi polloi how to avoid walking blindly into piles of sidewalk excrement. In Californian logic, public defecation butts up against progressive tolerance, so it is exempt from the law. Yet for a suburbanite to build a patio without a permit, for example, costs one dearly in fines. Indeed, a new patio without a permit can be deemed more dangerous to the public health than piles of excrement in the public workplace.

One out of three Californians who enters a hospital for any cause is now found to be suffering from either diabetes or pre-diabetes, an epidemic that hits the Hispanic community especially hard but for a variety of reasons has not led to effective public-health efforts and sufficient publicity. State-run dialysis clinics now dot the towns and communities of the Central Valley — a tragic symptom of dietary culture, massive illegal immigration, and poor public-health education.

### **Infrastructure Is for the Unwoke**

California’s transportation system, to be honest, remains in near ruins. Despite the highest gas taxes in the nation, none of its major trans-state freeways — not the 99, not I-5, not the 101 — after 70 years off use, are yet completed with six lanes, resulting in dangerous bottlenecks and wrecks. Driving the 99 south of Visalia, or the 101 near Paso Robles, or the 5 north of Coalinga is right out of Road Warrior — but not as dangerous as the fossilized two-line feeder lines such as 152 into Gilroy, or the 41 west of Kettleman City. The unspoken transportation credo of Jerry Brown’s aggregate 16 years as governor apparently was “If you don’t build it, maybe they won’t need it.”

Meanwhile the concrete carcass of the recently cancelled multibillion-dollar high-speed rail system dots the skyline over Fresno. Bureaucrats now insist that more billions must be spent to ensure that a short segment of the least traveled route will be finished, though they obviously do not anticipate spurring a new tourist or commercial corridor between Merced and Bakersfield.

High-speed-rail gurus insist on salvaging something of the boondoggle not because they have an economic rationale justifying more dollars — they would be far better invested in improving freeways, airports, and rails — but largely out of pride and shame that demand some small token rescued from a very bad pipe dream.

In 1973, when I first visited and lived in Greece, the roads were medieval. The old Hellinikon Airport was dysfunctional, if not creepy. Highway rest stops were filthy. I have lived in or visited Greece in the ensuing 45 years since, including occasionally after the 2008 meltdown and European Union standoff. And yet today, the freeways, chief airport, and rest stops of relatively poor Greece are in far better shape than are California’s. LAX’s poor road access, traffic, uncleanness, crowds, and chaos seem premodern compared with the current Athenian airport.

It is an eerie experience to see America's once premier state, currently at its supposed acme, now resemble Greece of the colonels a half-century ago, while 2019 Greece seems more like a functioning 1973 California. Athens and Thessaloniki are still dirty in a few places, and there are homeless and illegal immigrants. But one does not see needles and feces on the sidewalks, and it is safe to walk in the evening. Greek public restrooms, once notorious, are far more sanitary than those at rest stops in Fresno, San Francisco, or Los Angeles.

Power outages are characteristic of Third World countries. Here in California we are advised to brace for lots of them, given that our antiquated grid apparently contributes to brush fires on hot days. As a native, I do not remember a single instance of our 20th-century state utilities shutting down service in the manner that they now routinely promise.

### **California for Others**

Crime the last three years has increased. It is epidemic in local jails. San Francisco has the highest property-crime rate per capita of any major city. The California prison system is a mess, and sanctuary cities ensure that illegal aliens charged with crimes will not be deported. Pick up a McClatchy paper and you'll see that the day's fare of Central Valley criminality, even after sanitization and editorialization, is mind-boggling.

California's cycles of wet boom years and dry bust years continue because the state refuses to build three or four additional large reservoirs that have been planned for more than a half-century, and that would store enough water to keep California functional through even the worst drought. The rationale is either that it is more sophisticated to allow millions of acre-feet of melted snow to run into the sea, or it is better to have a high-speed-rail line from Merced to Bakersfield than an additional 10 million acre-feet of water storage, or droughts ensure more state control through rationing and green social-policy remedies.

Twenty-seven percent of Californians were not born in the United States, a large minority of them residing in the United States illegally. Yet California's universities and popular culture are at the forefront of salad-bowl and identity-politics policies that obstruct assimilation, integration, and intermarriage — the historical remedies for the natural tensions that arise within multiracial and multiethnic societies. In this perfect storm, at the very moment the world's poorest citizens from Oaxaca and Central America flooded into America, de facto rejecting the protocols of their home, their hosts' messaging to them was that they should lodge complaints about the social injustice of their new home and romanticize the culture that they had just forsaken for good cause.

California schools are usually in the bottom decile of national rankings. No one in polite conversation asks why that is so, given that the state's K–12 schools used to be among the most competitive in the United States.

Yet, again in medieval fashion, the professional schools and science and technology departments of California's premier research universities — Cal Tech, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA, USC — are

among the highest-rated in the world. Imagine something like the scribal oases of Padua, Oxford, or Paris in an otherwise frightening 13th century. If one wishes to be schooled as an electrical engineer or cancer researcher, California is an attractive place; if one wishes to be a knowledgeable graduate of a public elementary and high school, it most certainly is not.

California's Department of Motor Vehicles is perhaps the worst public-service entity in the United States. To enter any branch office is to venture into a Dante's Inferno of huge lines, chaos, unkept rest rooms, and rude and often incompetent unionized employees. The only efficient DMV office in the state is the unmarked and secret branch in Sacramento reserved for state legislators and grandee insiders who oversee the DMV for the rest of the population. For a fee, concierge private auto clubs and firms often duplicate some DMV services, a de facto admission that the state needs something else besides itself to offer basic services. I once asked a DMV clerk, after a long wait in line, if it was right to be wearing a purple SEIU organizing T-shirt; she replied, "Do you still want to be served?"

The DMV scandals are multifarious: Thousands of motor-voter registrations sent to the wrong people, including illegal aliens supposedly ineligible to vote; corrupt employees who sell commercial truck driver's licenses to the unqualified; and private corporations and occasionally individuals selling hard-to-obtain reservations and appointments.

California now has the nation's highest basket of sales, gas, and income taxes. With a state surplus, and a slowing economy, one would think that the legislature and governor would pause before even considering raising more taxes. After all, new federal tax law limits write-offs of state and local taxes to \$10,000 — radically spiking upper-bracket Californians' federal tax liabilities.

Yet the rule in California is to punish the upper middle class while pandering to the rich and romanticizing the poor. Thus, the legislature is now considering a punitive new inheritance tax, and it just imposed an Internet sales tax.

Again, the message is that if Californians can survive a recent 13.3 percent top state-income-tax rate, and a vast increase in their federal tax liability, then certainly they can be easily squeezed further after death to pony up 40 percent of their already taxed estates that are over \$3 million in value. Translated, that can mean that a tract house in Los Angeles or the Bay Area and a modest 401K are proof that you did not build your wealth on your own, so the state has a second shot at appropriating your postmortem capital, to ensure that your children will see no benefit from your parsimony and thrift.

California's apocalyptic present has created an alternate universe, in good Third World style, of pay-for-play services. To avoid the emergency room (the last time I used one, two gangs squared off in the waiting room, to continue what their wounded members were under treatment for), progressive Californians often pay for concierge medicine and anything private to avoid at all costs using any state services.

The coastal corridor elite often put their kids in tony prep schools that have sprung up or vastly expanded, in the fashion of the 1960s white Southern academies that were designed to circumvent

federal desegregation edicts. Elite progressives mimic old-style, 1960s segregationists but feel that their children's green and multicultural curricula offer enough penance to assuage their guilt over abandoning the state's much praised "diverse" schools.

### **Our Dreams, Your Nightmares**

What caused this lunacy?

A polarity of importing massive poverty from south of the border while pandering to those who control unprecedented wealth in Silicon Valley, Hollywood, the tourism industry, and the marquee universities. Massive green regulations and boutique zoning, soaring taxes, increasing crime, identity politics and tribalism, and radical one-party progressive government were force multipliers. It is common to blame California Republicans for their own demise. They have much to account for, but in some sense, the state simply deported conservative voters and imported their left-wing replacements.

In a reductionist sense, perhaps if former governor Jerry Brown knew that he would one day retire to Delano and drive the 99 daily, rather than to Grass Valley, with several state pensions in his bank account, or if Dianne Feinstein dwelled in an East Palo Alto or Redwood City residence rather than in Pacific Heights, or if all the Pelosi grandchildren had to attend state public schools, then the architects of 21st-century California might have had to live with the consequences of their own dreams and been less eager to inflict their nightmares on the other 40 million Californians.

But then again, such a radical divergence between a few insider elites and a massive underclass, with little in between, is perhaps what best defines "Third World."

*Victor Davis Hanson is a Senior Fellow at the Stanford University Hoover Institution, Historian, Classicist, and most prescient writer since Winston Churchill. He is the top commentator in the nation today. This article first appeared in the National Review on June 18, 2019 and is nationally syndicated by the Tribune News Corporation.*

**Please see the comparative Churchill sample below .It was included as part of a speech in 1938 at the University of Bristol.**

*There are few words which are used more loosely than the word "Civilization." What does it mean? It means a society based upon the opinion of civilians. It means that violence, the rule of warriors and despotic chiefs, the conditions of camps and warfare, of riot and tyranny, give place to parliaments where laws are made, and independent courts of justice in which over long periods those laws are maintained. That is Civilization—and in its soil grow continually freedom, comfort and culture. When Civilization reigns, in any country, a wider and less harassed life is afforded to the masses of the people. The traditions of the past are cherished, and the inheritance bequeathed to us by former wise or valiant men becomes a rich estate to be enjoyed and used by all.*

It is certainly a counterpoint to the policies of the dominant political forces at play in California today.

## AN ADDICTION CRISIS DISGUISED AS A HOUSING CRISIS

# OPIOIDS ARE FUELING HOMELESSNESS ON THE WEST COAST.

BY CHRISTOPHER F. RUFO

By latest count, some 109,089 men and women are [sleeping on the streets](#) of major cities in California, Oregon, and Washington. The homelessness crisis in these cities has generated [headlines](#) and speculation about “root causes.” Progressive political activists allege that tech companies have inflated housing costs and forced middle-class people onto the streets. Declaring that “no two people living on Skid Row . . . ended up there for the same reasons,” Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti, for his part, blames a housing shortage, stagnant wages, cuts to mental health services, domestic and sexual abuse, shortcomings in criminal justice, and a lack of resources for veterans. These factors may all have played a role, but the most pervasive cause of West Coast homelessness is clear: heroin, fentanyl, and synthetic opioids.

Homelessness is an addiction crisis disguised as a housing crisis. In Seattle, prosecutors and law enforcement recently [estimated](#) that the majority of the region’s homeless population is hooked on opioids, including heroin and fentanyl. If this figure holds constant throughout the West Coast, then [at least](#) 11,000 homeless opioid addicts live in Washington, 7,000 live in Oregon, and 65,000 live in California (concentrated mostly in San Francisco and Los Angeles). For the unsheltered population inhabiting tents, cars, and RVs, the opioid-addiction percentages are even higher—the City of Seattle’s homeless-outreach team estimates that 80 percent of the unsheltered population has a [substance-abuse](#) disorder. Officers must clean up used needles in almost all the homeless encampments.

For drug cartels and low-level street dealers, the business of supplying homeless addicts with heroin, fentanyl, and other synthetic opioids is extremely lucrative. According to the Office of National Drug Control Policy, the [average heavy-opioid](#) user consumes \$1,834 in drugs per month. Holding rates constant, we can project that the total business of supplying heroin and other opioids to the West Coast’s homeless population is more than \$1.8 billion per year. In effect, Mexican cartels, Chinese fentanyl suppliers, and local criminal networks profit off the misery of the homeless and offload the consequences onto local governments struggling to get people off the streets.

West Coast cities are seeing a [crime spike](#) associated with homeless opioid addicts. In Seattle, police [busted two sophisticated criminal rings](#) engaged in “predatory drug dealing” in homeless encampments (they were found in possession of \$20,000 in cash, heroin, firearms, knives, machetes, and a sword). Police [believe](#) that “apartments were serving as a base of operations that supplied drugs to the streets,

and facilitated the collection and resale of stolen property.” In other words, drug dealers were exploiting homeless addicts and using the city’s maze of illegal encampments as distribution centers. In my own Fremont neighborhood, where property crime has [surged 57 percent](#) over the past two years, local business owners have formed a group to monitor a network of RVs that circulate around the area to deal heroin, fentanyl, and methamphetamines. Dealers have become brazen—one recently hung up a [spray-painted sign](#) on the side of his RV with the message: “Buy Drugs Here!”

What are local governments doing to address this problem? To a large extent, they have adopted a strategy of deflection, obfuscation, and denial. In her [#SeattleForAll](#) public relations campaign, Mayor Jenny Durkan insists that only one in three homeless people struggle with substance abuse, understating the figures of her own police department as well as the city attorney, who has claimed that the real numbers, just for opioid addiction, rise to 80 percent of the unsheltered.

The consequences of such denial have proved disastrous: no city on the West Coast has a solution for homeless opioid addicts. Los Angeles, which spent \$619 million on homelessness last year, has adopted a strategy of palliative care—keeping addicts alive through distribution of the overdose drug naloxone—but fails to provide access to on-demand detox, rehabilitation, and recovery programs that might help people overcome their addictions. The city has been cursed, in this sense, with temperate weather, compounded by permissive policies toward public camping and drug consumption that have [attracted 20,687 homeless individuals](#) from outside Los Angeles County.

No matter how much local governments pour into affordable-housing projects, homeless opioid addicts—nearly all [unemployed](#)—will never be able to afford the rent in expensive West Coast cities. The first step in solving these intractable issues is to address the real problem: addiction is the common denominator for most of the homeless and must be confronted honestly if we have any hope of solving it.

*Christopher F. Rufo is a contributing editor of City Journal. He is a documentary filmmaker and research fellow at Discovery Institute’s Center on Wealth, Poverty, & Morality. Follow him on Facebook here.*

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(Revised 2/2017)