



WEEKLY UPDATE
JUNE 20 - 26, 2021

COLAB
San Luis Obispo County



12th Annual

**DINNER &
FUNDRAISER**

2020-2021 What the Heck Happened?
There has never been a more crucial time
To Raise the Lantern of Liberty

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2021
ALEX MADONNA EXPO CENTER

5:00 pm Social Hour, Open Bar

6:15 pm Filet Mignon Dinner including Wine

\$125 a person

\$1,250 a table, seating for 10

For tickets:

On-Line Reservations & Payment can be made **HERE** at
www.colabslo.org/events.asp

or

Mail your check to

COLAB SLO County, PO Box 13601, SLO, CA 93406

Cocktail Attire Optional

More info at (805) 548-0340 or colabslo@gmail.com

THIS WEEK

**IWMA SETS EXEC COMM. ILLEGAL SPECIAL MEETING
VIOLATES 72 HOUR NOTICING REQUIREMENT BY 2 HOURS/33 MINUTES**

BOS OFFICIAL BUDGET ADOPTION

BOS PLUGS 400 SQ. MILE OCEAN WIND FARM

LOS OSOS SEWER RATE INCREASES

**EMPLOYEE PENSION RATES UP
BUT COUNTY PAYS FOR MOST OF THEIR SHARE**

**COUNTY FINALLY BIDS PUBLIC DEFENDER
CONTRACT AFTER DECADES
BUT SAME FIRM WINS IT REGARDLESS – OTHER FIRMS AFRAID TO BID?**

**UPDATE ON SUPERVISORIAL REDISTRICTING
LATE CENSUS MEANS TIME CRUNCH IN DECEMBER**

LARGE EIR ON PASO MORATORIUM RELIEF

**FUTURE OF CANNABIS REVIEW
THE COUNTY IS LOSING ITS SHIRT FINANCIALLY**

**APCD TO ADOPT ITS BUDGET
AND CONSIDER 5 DUNES-RELATED LAWSUITS IN CLOSED SESSION
THE ANNOYING AGENCY SPARKED THE COASTAL COMMISSION SHUTDOWN**

OTHER ISSUES



SEE THE VIDEO BELOW ON PAGE 13

**CAL FIRE SHAKES DOWN THE MID STATE FAIR
AGENCY IS ASSERTED TO REQUIRE ON SITE STAFFING/COULD COST \$250K**

**FORMER SUPERVISOR ADAM HILL'S EX WIFE DEE
TORRES CLAIMS SUPERVISOR COMPTON
CONTRIBUTED TO HILL'S SUICIDE
PERHAPS SHE WILL FILE A CLAIM AGAINST THE COUNTY**

LAST WEEK

**PERFUNCTORY BUDGET REVIEW "COMPLETED"
\$807 MILLION PROGRAM APPROVED IN JUST FOUR HOURS**

LAFCO JUNE MEETING CANCELLED

**SPECIAL IWMA MEETING
RECRUITMENT OF AN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – NO ACTION SO FAR**

COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 16

AMERICAN STAGNATION PLAN BY STEVEN MALANGA

ANATOMY OF THE WOKE MADNESS

How did such collective madness infect a once pragmatic and commonsensical America?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Integrated Waste Management Authority Exec Committee (IWMA) Special Meeting of Monday June 21, 2021. 2:00 PM (Not Scheduled). At the end of a special meeting on Friday, June 18th, the IWMA set the meeting for 2:00 PM on Monday June 21st to work on the appointment of an interim Director and presumably recruitment plans for a permanent Director.

The meeting is called for 2:00 PM, which is 2 hours and 32 minutes short of the 72 hour noticing required by the Open Public Meeting law (Brown Act). The meeting will be illegal if it occurs.

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, June 22, 2021 (Scheduled)

Item 10 - Submittal of a resolution recognizing the potential of renewable wind power generation for, and clean energy infrastructure, as long-term economic benefits to San Luis Obispo County. The Resolution supports the 400 sq. mile floating windfarm off the Coast of SLO County. It hedges a little bit in terms of protecting the fishing industry and the ancestral homelands of the yak tityu tityu yak tilhini Northern Chumash people, the Aboriginal titleholders. Otherwise the Board is hopeful about plans that need to be developed to improve existing waterfront facilities that could support a range of floating offshore wind energy development activities. These might create nearly 12,000 specialized temporary wind port construction jobs over 5 years and up to 650 operations and maintenance jobs annually in perpetuity for a 3GW wind farm.

Could the waterfront activities even be permitted in SLO County given the attitude of local regulators, not to mention the Coastal Commission? The project might end up benefitting Long Beach or Port Hueneme. The actual power cables might come ashore at Marina near Fort Ord.

As we recommended 2 weeks ago, the County should become engaged from the standpoint of energy feasibility and economic development. Just exactly what will be the energy produced,

how much will it cost, how reliable will it be, and how will it compare with the existing Diablo energy?

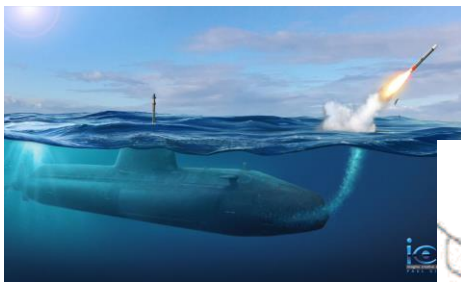
The County as the regional jurisdiction should have its former Community Choice Energy consultant, Willdan Financial Services, take a look at the matter. Willdan is an expert in all aspects of electrical energy and could advise the Board on the particulars of the off shore wind farm proposal. Likewise, just what will be the economic benefits to the County in terms of taxes, permanent jobs, and economic multipliers?

There are several versions of the project which will have different levels of benefit, cost, and impact. How does this stack up with retention of Diablo? At some point and if the project moves forward, the County is likely to become involved in permitting outside the City of Morro Bay, as a large construction port is proposed and there will be facilities for construction mobilization and ultimately electrical transmission outside the County.

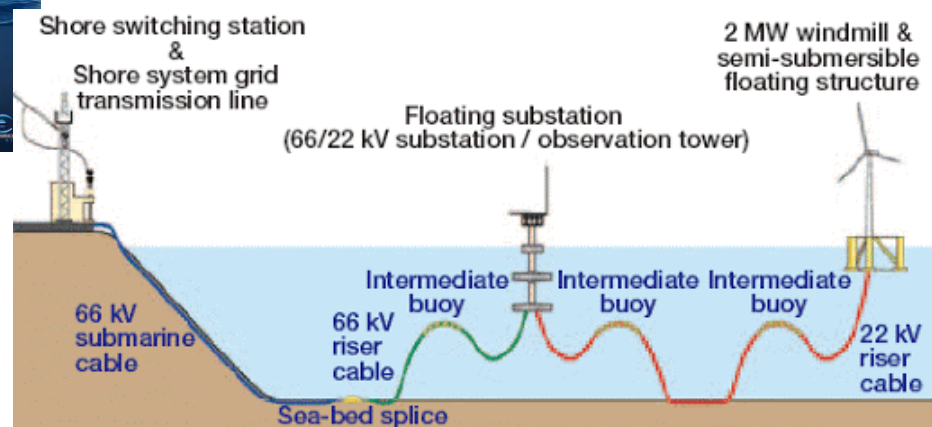
The County might as well get some expert help now in deciding if it supports the project.

Certainly Gibson and some past Board members did not help PG&E with relicensing and raised all sorts of objections to activities within, next to, and under the ocean. But now, it appears a huge development within the Ocean and major construction port facility are no problem.

What ever happened to the Navy's concern about its operations in the area being compromised by the floating towers, floating mid depth transmission lines, and undersea anchor cables? Perhaps the new Secretary of Defense or Secretary of the Navy told the Admirals to let it be. Patrolling for quiet Chinese diesel submarines that might sneak in close and launch undetectable hypersonic nuclear tipped cruise missiles at Vandenberg's two anti ICMB interceptor squadrons is now unimportant?



Nuclear is so much simpler and places no structures in the ocean except the cooling water discharge which is right on the natural rocks next to the plant.



Item 21 - Submittal of a resolution approving 1) increases in employee-paid pension contribution rates and employer appropriation rates for the listed San Luis Obispo County Employees Retirement Plan's Contracting Agency employers per applicable instructions of

officers of said agencies, and 2) amendments to the San Luis Obispo County Employees Retirement Plan Appendices for employees in the San Luis Obispo County Superior Courts, the San Luis Obispo County Local Agency Formation Commission, and the San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority. Note, per the table below, that the County picks up the largest percentage share of the cost increase. The Board item does not disclose the actual dollar cost or whether the County's share is included in the new budget.

Contracting Agency Employer	BU	Employees	Pension Rate Increase Effective 7/1/2021	Employee Share	Employer Share
SLO County Superior Court	BU17 – Interpreter BU18 – Technical BU19 – Supervisory Employees BU20 – Court Employees BU24 – Management BU25 – Subordinate Judicial Officers BU26 – Confidential BU27 – Professional BU28 – Attorney	120	3.91%	1.96%	1.95%
LAFCO	BU07 – LAFCO Staff	1	3.91%	1.96%	1.95%
RTA	BU71 – Employees hired before 01/12/2020 BU72 – Employee hired on or after 01/12/2020	12	3.91%	3.91%	0.00%

These pension rate increases shall be effective and implemented the pay period including July 1, 2021.

The table below shows the percentages of salary that the County pays for retirement for various groups of employees. The POB column is the additional amount that the County pays for post-retirement health premiums.

Employee Group	Tier 1 and Tier 2 Retirement			Tier 3 Retirement		
	County 2020-21	POBs 2020-21	Total	County 2020-21	POBs 2020-21	Total
Elected Officials	25.53 %	6.00 %	31.53 %	25.04 %	6.00 %	31.04 %
Deputy County Counsel	26.27	6.00	32.27	25.78	6.00	31.78
Attorneys	26.42	6.00	32.42	25.93	6.00	31.93
Deputy District Attorneys	26.42	6.00	32.42	25.93	6.00	31.93
Management and Confidential	25.53	6.00	31.53	25.04	6.00	31.04
Public Services, Clerical and Supervisory	24.22	6.00	30.22	23.73	6.00	29.73
Trades, Crafts and Services	24.79	6.00	30.79	24.30	6.00	30.30
Probation Management	23.43	6.00	29.43	22.93	6.00	28.93
Probation Officers/Supervisors	25.67	6.00	31.67	25.17	6.00	31.17
Law Enforcement Safety Management	38.31	6.00	44.31	31.26	6.00	37.26
Law Enforcement Safety (Patrol)	42.59	6.00	48.59	41.98	6.00	47.98
Law Enforcement Safety (Corrections)	42.01	6.00	48.01	41.40	6.00	47.40
Law Enforcement Non-safety	25.75	6.00	31.75	25.26	6.00	31.26
District Attorney Investigators	37.30	6.00	43.30	36.69	6.00	42.69

The next table below displays the additional contributions that the County pays to employees to offset their contribution to retirement. Neither the Budget document nor any other public report details the actual dollar costs for these “percentages.”

Additionally, the County pays a portion of the employee's retirement contribution (Employer Paid Member Contribution, or "EPMC") for Tier 1 and 2:

Employee Group	2020-21
Elected Officials	13.55 %
Attorneys	9.29
Management and Confidential	9.29
Public Services, Clerical and Supervisory	8.75
Trades, Crafts and Services	10.38
Probation Management	9.29
Probation Officers/Supervisors	5.75
Law Enforcement, Safety	7.00
Law Enforcement Non-Safety	4.20
District Attorney Investigators	7.20

Item 22 - Request to approve a contract with Rincon Consultants, Inc. in an amount not to exceed \$244,668 to prepare an Environmental Impact Report for the proposed Paso Basin Land Use Planting Ordinance, contingent on adoption of the Fiscal Year 2021-22

Recommended Budget. The EIR is required for the Board to process ordinance amendments to the Paso Basin water moratorium that would provide relief to some small and medium users who are trapped between SGMA implementation and the moratorium. The Board letter states in part:

On Tuesday, January 26, 2021, and April 6, 2021, the Board of Supervisors (Board) directed staff to develop a new land use policy to require planting permits for irrigated crops using water from the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin until the year 2045, with a 2-tiered framework (Paso Basin Land Use Planting Ordinance): – Tier 1: Exemption Clearance Permit for plantings using up to 25 acre-feet per year/site of irrigation; and – Tier 2: Ministerial Permit for plantings maintaining neutral water use with a 6-year lookback period. The Board direction also acknowledged that developing a new land use framework to be effective until 2045 will require preparation of an EIR.

Item 26 - It is recommended that the Board adopt the attached resolution implementing increases in sewer service charges for Fund Center 430 - Los Osos Wastewater System from Ordinance No. 3413 adopted on April 21, 2020. Last year's rate increase was postponed due to COVID. The write-up states in part:

At that time, estimated revenue of \$842,000 was expected to be lost due to the delay in enacting the new rate ordinance. Based on actual data, the true loss in revenue for FY 2020-21 is about \$774,000. If the rate ordinance is postponed for another fiscal year, an additional \$1,745,450 in revenue is expected to be lost for FY 2021-22, which would put the System in further financial uncertainty. If the Board reinstates the approved rate ordinance, The System will be able to complete the postponed maintenance over time and start to build reserves in order to better stabilize the System's financial position and health.

The Board might as well raise the rates, as most of the people are Gibson supporters and he pushed the plant through in the first place. It is not prudent to run up a maintenance and capital deficit.

Item 38 - Hearing to consider adoption of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Recommended Budget including: 1) a resolution adopting budgets for the County and Board of Supervisors governed Special Districts; and 2) a resolution adopting the FY 2021-22 position allocation list. The Board completed its review of the \$807 million dollar budget on Monday, June 14, 2021. This year they spent about 4 hours, or about \$201.75 million per hour.

It is not expected that anything earth shaking will occur at this point.

Fund Name	Total Financing Sources				Total Financing Uses		
	Fund Balance Available as of June 30, 2021	Decreases to Obligated Fund Balances	Additional Financing Sources	Total Financing Sources	Financing Uses	Increases to Obligated Fund Balances	Total Financing Uses
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Governmental Funds							
General Fund	\$34,535,239	\$6,891,554	\$558,771,962	\$600,198,755	\$597,249,938	\$2,948,817	\$600,198,755
Special Revenue Fund	661,000	4,882,370	62,444,003	67,987,373	59,469,418	8,517,955	67,987,373
Debt Service Fund	284,000	0	16,885,251	17,169,251	13,333,451	3,835,800	17,169,251
Capital Projects	0	0	7,981,755	7,981,755	7,981,755	0	7,981,755
Total Governmental Funds	\$35,480,239	\$11,773,924	\$646,082,971	\$693,337,134	\$678,034,561	\$15,302,572	\$693,337,133
Other Funds							
Special Revenue Fund	\$7,563,335	\$48,659	\$8,048,642	\$15,660,636	\$13,664,967	\$1,995,668	\$15,660,635
Enterprise Fund	0	2,299,836	26,065,116	28,364,952	26,016,627	2,348,325	28,364,952
Internal Service Fund	0	9,678,788	60,748,628	70,427,416	70,126,254	301,162	70,427,416
Total Other Funds	\$7,563,335	\$12,027,283	\$94,862,386	\$114,453,004	\$109,807,848	\$4,645,155	\$114,453,003
Total All Funds	\$43,043,574	\$23,801,207	\$740,945,357	\$807,790,138	\$787,842,409	\$19,947,727	\$807,790,136

Item 39 - Supervisorial District Redistricting. The staff will be presenting an updated schedule based on the continued delays in obtaining Census information. There will be special Board meetings in the fall where citizen input can be received. The work will be very compressed, as the final product must be completed in December for adoption in January. The political parties and other interest groups will attempt to calculate and then manipulate the process to secure their best advantage within the rules. The overarching rule is that the 5 districts must be as close to equal in population as is physically possible.

Everyone gets exercised about this, but the boards of supervisors have limited discretion within the State laws, mandates, and funding enticements. In the end the big public sector unions control Sacramento and the public has very little influence at any level. Until the regular work-a-day folks adopt the methods of the progressive left and rock the system, don't expect any real relief but do expect ever increasing taxes, fees, regulations, and rationing of land, housing, water, medical care, and ultimately food.

Please see the schedule on the next page:

Updated Tentative Redistricting Timeline			
Official Hearings	Required Action(s)	Date	Known/Legal Timelines
	Board meeting- Redistricting timeline update, request approval for appropriation for additional resources	April 2021	
	Launch redistricting website and public facing mapping tool	May-June 2021	
Hearing #1	Board hearing - gather preliminary input and identify communities of interest	July 20, 2021 (Regular Meeting - afternoon)	
	Release of Census population data	September 24, 2021	New date provided by USCB
	Prison adjusted information release to counties	October 24, 2021	State has 30 days after receipt of Census data
Hearing or Workshop #2	Board meeting or public workshop (evening or weekend)	October 26, 2021 (Special Evening Meeting)	
	Publish 3-4 draft redistricting maps	November 15, 2021	Minimum 21 days after prison adjusted info released to the public
Hearing #3	Board hearing - 1st post draft maps	November 19, 2021 (Special Meeting)	
	Publish revised maps based on comments received (at least 7 days prior to adoption)	November 23-24	At least 7 days before final adoption (12/14)
Hearing #4	Final hearing to approve redistricting plan	November 30, 2021 (Special Meeting)	
	Legal Metes and Bounds complete and ordinance drafted	December 3, 2021	72 hours agenda publication deadline
	Introduce County ordinance amendment	December 7, 2021	
Hearing #5	Amend County ordinance to reflect Board approved revised redistricting map	December 14, 2021	
	Effective date of ordinance amendment	January 14, 2022	
* Updated dates in red *Current legal deadline to adopt (Registrars requesting earlier completion) December 15, 2021 *Note: All hearing dates need to posted at least 5 days prior to hearing			

Item 40 - Request to 1) award a four (4)-year contract to private attorney firm San Luis Obispo Defenders, a Professional Law Corporation in the amount of \$4,920,401 for the first year, FY 2021-22, as well as other negotiated compensation as outlined in the attached contract for such services; and 2) authorize the County Administrative Officer to A) execute two (2) additional two (2)-year extended terms to the contract and B) provide consent for the vendor to change physical office locations. San Luis Public Defenders is the law firm that has held the contract for decades. Over eight years ago the County Administrator did not bid the contract. Some Board members complained. He promised to bid the contract the next time (a four year cycle). By then there was a new County Administrator, but no one on the staff remembered to tell him to bid it.

The proverbial manure hit the fan and there was a serious conflict between the County and the law firm over the provisions of the ensuing contract.

This time the County bid it and sent 67 firms copies of the bid documents. Only one firm responded. You guessed it, the San Luis Obispo Public Defenders. The costs are displayed below:

Item	FY 2020-21	CPI	Additional Resources	FY 2021-22
Base Services	\$4,758,634	1.5%	\$9,387	\$4,839,401
Specialty Court Advocate	\$83,430	0.0%	-\$2,430	\$81,000
Witness Fees (up to)	\$174,735	0.0%	\$1	\$174,736
Total	\$5,016,799	n/a	\$6,958	\$5,095,137

Fiscal Year	Estimated Cost	Average CPI
FY 2021-22	\$5,095,137	2.7%
FY 2022-23**	\$5,240,304	2.7%
FY 2023-24	\$5,379,696	2.7%
FY 2024-25	\$5,522,796	2.7%
Total Estimated Four (4)-Year Initial Term Cost	\$21,237,934	
FY 2025-26	\$5,669,703	2.7%
FY 2026-27	\$5,820,517	2.7%
Total Estimated Two (2)-Year Extended Term #1 Cost	\$11,490,220	
FY 2027-28	\$5,975,343	2.7%
FY 2028-29	\$6,134,287	2.7%
Total Estimated Two (2)-Year Extended Term #2 Cost	\$12,109,629	
Maximum* Total Expenditure Authorized by this Contract	\$44,837,783	
*Does not include expenses for PRCS/Parole Hearings, Capital Cases, Service of Process Fees, Routine Discovery, Transcripts, Translators, Out of County Cases, Cases Ongoing at Time of Termination		
**In FY 2022-23, the prior year amount to which the CPI is applied is increased by \$9,387.42, per the contract terms		

Table 3. Other Compensation Terms		
Item	Term	Change
PRCS/Parole Hearings (Section 2(h) and (i) Cases)	\$300/Case	No Change
Capital Cases	Reimbursed Per PC 987.9 and PC 987(d)	No Change
Service of Process Fees, Routine Discovery, Transcripts, Translators	Provided at no charge or reimbursed with Court Approval	No Change
Change in Venue Cases (Section 11)	\$100/hr + expenses	No Change
Representation After Termination Cases (Section 4)	Hourly rate for appointed counsel + expenses	No Change
All Other Expenses not Specifically Noted	No additional reimbursements for expenses not noted	No Change

This contract is a good example of where privatization can be used both to save money and to provide competitive quality service. For example, the contract provides 25 lawyers and their admin support at a cost of around \$5.5 million per year. Santa Barbara County, which runs the Defender office in house with 41 lawyers, has a budget of \$17 million. The Santa Barbara County version is flush with support staff, investigators, IT help, and all the rest. All in and with support, Santa Barbara County’s cost to field and support an attorney is \$440,000, while SLO County’s cost is \$220,000, about one-half.

The Board could bring in McKinsey or equivalent and assess the feasibility of privatizing Planning, Public Works, Health, Social Services, IT, and Community Services.

MATTERS AFTER 1:30 PM

Item 42 - Cannabis Update – Submittal of the 2021 Countywide Cannabis Program Update and request to approve, in concept, the Compliance Monitoring Program Plan and provide staff direction as deemed necessary. This is a very extensive 54-page report, which details the costs and revenues and the County’s losses. The PowerPoint is an excellent summary of the situation. The slow process of permitting the grows in SLO County has raised the question of whether the County should conduct a program EIR, which if completed could make the permitting process for individual applicants shorter and easier. The production of the EIR could cost in excess of \$800,000 and take a year.

The meeting should be lively, as various segments of the community have differing views of the cannabis industry and the permitting process.

The total cost of the Cannabis Program (both legal and illegal) from July 1, 2017 through March 31, 2021 has been evaluated to equal \$7 million, total revenue, including revenue from the Cannabis Business Tax, has been \$3.8 million indicating a total General Fund support impact of \$3.2 million. Of the General Fund support impact, an estimated \$2.4 million is attributable to legal cannabis, \$1.4 million is attributable to illegal cannabis, both civil and criminal, and the Cannabis Business Tax has provided \$586,518 in revenue to the General Fund after accounting for the development and administration of the tax.

The full Report can be read at this link:

<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/133904>

The Power Point can be reviewed at this link:

<https://agenda.slocounty.ca.gov/iip/sanluisobispo/file/getfile/133906>

These are quite sobering and informative. Note that after our deadline, the County posted an update, changing many of the tables and writings. At this point we are not sure of the impact.

Santa Barbara County, which rolled out the red carpet for cannabis, is expected to generate \$20 million in taxes this coming fiscal year after costs. The bottom line is the County is spending more money on regulating cannabis than it receives in revenue. One thrust of the Report is to raise fees and taxes. This is likely to have the exact opposite effect which the County is attempting to achieve. Consider some of the problems:

Page 31 – Staff recommends that they increase the compliance monitoring fee because it was based on non-cannabis businesses, but they just raised the fee about \$300! How much more will they have to raise it to cover the additional employees contained in the table below?

Table 13: Additional Needs for the County Cannabis Compliance Monitoring Team

Resource	Description
Ongoing Resource	
1.00 FTE Sheriff's Sergeant	A full time Sheriff's Sergeant is needed to oversee the Cannabis Program. Most recently, the position was filled by a Temporary Reserve Sergeant at 20 hours per week. The Sergeant would manage and direct the Cannabis Program and provide the leadership and direction needed by a full-time Sergeant.
1.00 FTE Compliance Monitoring Program Manager	Given the management needed for a successful Compliance Monitoring Program coordinated with the three County departments, a new position is recommended. The Compliance Monitoring Coordinator would work in conjunction with Planning and Building and ACTTC but would be located in the Sheriff's Office. With compliance monitoring for cannabis businesses, the proximity to Sheriff's deputies is ideal for a seamless transition from a civil situation to criminal if needed. This position would be responsible for the oversight of Cannabis Code Enforcement, the designated auditor from ACTTC and would coordinate with County Fire.
1.00 FTE Auditor-Analyst	A full-time Auditor-Analyst fully dedicated to Cannabis Tax Enforcement is proposed to accompany Code Enforcement and Sheriff staff on site visits to conduct in-person audit procedures.
1.00 FTE Senior Planner	A Senior Planner is needed to focus on the quarterly monitoring inspections to ensure project conditions are met.
1.00 FTE Resource Protection Specialist	A new Resource Protection Specialist position is needed to make these quarterly inspections and program as efficient as possible for operators and County departments.
1.00 FTE Administrative Services Officer	A new Administrative Services Officer position is needed to assist with the administrative role of program and work with the operators and various County departments participating in this program.
Services and Supplies	Outside of salaries, additional costs would be necessary including services and supplies and equipment.

Page 32 - Talk about government overreach: How many levels of monitoring are they now proposing? Third party vendors for cannabis fee study, development of a tax enforcement program, and a new County cannabis compliance monitoring team? All this is for just 20 operators and a few more as they trickle in?

Page 32 - They recommend the creation of a cannabis monitoring team: sheriff deputy, senior planner, code enforcement, auditor/analyst - all to make sure growers are compliant with their conditions of approval, and then that they are reporting their taxes correctly?

Whatever one thinks about cannabis in general, the regulatory overreach and costs are ridiculous, given that the County chose to allow the industry in the first place.

Amended Agenda Added Item - Addendum to Item 12- Submittal of a resolution proclaiming Saturday, June 19, 2021 as “Juneteenth Day” in the county of San Luis Obispo. Staff is amending the resolution to reflect “Juneteenth Day” as a National Holiday. Apparently, the scrivener of the original version missed the fact that it is now a national holiday. Will the County negotiate with its labor groups to make this an additional paid holiday?

San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District Meeting of Wednesday, June 23, 2021 (Scheduled)

Item B-1: Adoption of FY 2021-22 Annual Budget. There does not seem to be any significant news here. The annoying agency continues to exist by State mandate. It made so much fuss about the dunes riding that the Coastal Commission took notice and decided to force closure of the dunes in 3 years. It is analogous to sending noisy satellite probes out beyond the solar system. Sooner or later someone or something is going to notice, and who knows with what consequences?

AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT
COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
SUMMARY BUDGET REQUEST - FY 2021-2022 06/23/21

	BUDGET 2020-21	ESTIMATED 2020-21	REQUESTED 2021-22
REVENUES			
Property Taxes	\$ 413,060	\$ 412,658	\$ 417,642
Operating & Authority to Construct Permits	1,982,000	1,995,387	1,954,000
Other District Fees (Asbestos, Environ Assess, Burn Fees)	226,932	318,381	248,304
Mutual Settlements	64,000	106,561	75,000
Interest Revenue	40,000	44,160	40,000
DMV Air Fees	1,075,000	1,094,332	1,080,000
State & Federal Aid	593,004	663,796	298,997
Other Sales & Miscellaneous Revenues	26,508	44,007	16,853
Cancelled Reserves & Designations	0	0	0
Fund Balance From Prior Year	1,251,955	1,251,955	1,184,137
Encumbrance Reserve From Prior Year	55,387	55,387	0
TOTAL FINANCING	\$ 5,727,846	\$ 5,986,624	\$ 5,314,933
EXPENDITURES			
Salaries, Benefits, & Taxes	\$ 3,981,055	\$ 3,576,957	\$ 3,838,612
Communications - Phones, Mail	32,940	20,323	32,940
Computers, Software, & Computer Support	183,083	144,945	195,240
County Services (excluding Computer Support)	117,713	102,520	118,683
Insurance	47,500	50,006	54,000
Leases & Rents	4,000	4,400	4,000
Maintenance - Equipment & Facilities	161,990	150,544	156,190
Office Supplies & Copies	29,986	9,649	33,786
Other Department Expenses	19,140	30,952	20,210
Professional Services	316,678	171,129	293,300
Public Outreach & Education	58,000	58,000	53,000
Training & Travel	51,754	5,332	51,754
Utilities	19,700	11,600	19,700
Vehicles - Maintenance & Fuel	24,400	17,734	24,400
Subtotal - Services & Supplies	1,066,884	777,134	1,057,203
Other Charges / Contributions to Other Agencies	2,500	1,000	6,000
Fixed Assets	230,992	142,375	192,000
Contingencies	141,394	0	152,814
Increased Reserves & Designations	305,021	305,021	68,304
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,727,846	4,802,487	5,314,933
Net District Cost	\$ -	\$ (1,184,137)	\$ -



**COASTAL COMMISSION ALIENS ATTACK SLO COUNTY DUNES RIDERS
THE APCD LURED THEM IN**

OTHER ISSUES

Item 1 - Critical Race Theory Video. Please watch the concise video which details the inherent Bolshevik origins and planned outcomes of Critical Race Theory (CRT).



Control click on the link and push the start arrow:

<https://youtu.be/cfmpnGV0IGc>

Item 2 - Mid Coast Fair Threatened by Excessive Cal Fire Staffing Requirements. Fair exhibitors, auction supporters, and longtime Fair leaders report that CAL Fire has severely increased its requirements for Fire staffing, which is a condition of the permits required. Several have asserted that the cost could be as much as \$250,000, which could jeopardize the operation of the Fair. If anyone has any detail, please send it to us for analysis. What are the risks that caused CAL Fire to invoke the higher staffing levels and costs?

Item 3 - Hill's Wife Accuses Supervisor Compton of Murder. Former Supervisor Adam Hill's estranged wife, Dee Torres, whom he had divorced or was in the process of divorcing (we can never keep up with the social calendar in SLO County), posted a Facebook statement

accusing Supervisor Lynn Compton of somehow causing his death. It has been covered widely in the media. Torres has not volunteered exactly how Compton was a contributing factor.

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meetings of Monday, June 14, 2021; Tuesday, June 15, 2021; and Wednesday, June 16, 2021 (Completed). Budget Hearing Week.

Item 2 - Budget Hearing for the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Recommended Budget. The Board reviewed the proposed Budget in about 4 hours. It will be on next Tuesday's agenda for formal adoption. The County's Recommended and Supplemental Budget documents can be viewed at the following Link: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/budget>.

The media, the Federal Government, and the State overreacted to the pandemic and compelled the counties and cities to overreact with the massive and economically destructive lockdowns. These in turn have generated the knock-on effect of massive government stimulus packages, which are adding trillions in debt and expanding the scope to the national government, blue states, and localities. Overall, the County is wallowing in money, with more to come. See agenda **Item 3** below for more information on the County's approach to the previous tranches and new tranches of Federal money.

See last week's Update at the link below for our full analysis.
[Weekly Update June-13_June-19_2021.pdf \(colabslo.org\)](#)

Fund Name	Total Financing Sources				Total Financing Uses		
	Fund Balance Available as of June 30, 2021	Decreases to Obligated Fund Balances	Additional Financing Sources	Total Financing Sources	Financing Uses	Increases to Obligated Fund Balances	Total Financing Uses
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Governmental Funds							
General Fund	\$34,535,239	\$6,891,554	\$558,771,962	\$600,198,755	\$597,249,938	\$2,948,817	\$600,198,755
Special Revenue Fund	661,000	4,882,370	62,444,003	67,987,373	59,469,418	8,517,955	67,987,373
Debt Service Fund	284,000	0	16,885,251	17,169,251	13,333,451	3,835,800	17,169,251
Capital Projects	0	0	7,981,755	7,981,755	7,981,755	0	7,981,755
Total Governmental Funds	\$35,480,239	\$11,773,924	\$646,082,971	\$693,337,134	\$678,034,561	\$15,302,572	\$693,337,133
Other Funds							
Special Revenue Fund	\$7,563,335	\$48,659	\$8,048,642	\$15,660,636	\$13,664,967	\$1,995,668	\$15,660,635
Enterprise Fund	0	2,299,836	26,065,116	28,364,952	26,016,627	2,348,325	28,364,952
Internal Service Fund	0	9,678,788	60,748,628	70,427,416	70,126,254	301,162	70,427,416
Total Other Funds	\$7,563,335	\$12,027,283	\$94,862,386	\$114,453,004	\$109,807,848	\$4,645,155	\$114,453,003
Total All Funds	\$43,043,574	\$23,801,207	\$740,945,357	\$807,790,138	\$787,842,409	\$19,947,727	\$807,790,136

Item 3 - Request to receive and file a report on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) and provide direction to staff. All Districts. The Board gave staff general direction as to how to allocate the \$55 million in ARPA funding among the Federally allowed "buckets"

Preliminary Recommendation			
Eligible Use Category	Specific Language per Department of US Treasury Interim Final Rule (summary)	Maximum allowed towards eligible use category	Preliminary Recommendation
Public Health and Negative Economic Impacts Response	<i>Respond to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts</i>	\$55M	\$34M
Premium Pay to Essential Workers	<i>Providing premium pay to eligible workers</i>	\$55M	\$ -
Restoration of Government Services	<i>Provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue</i>	\$25M	\$15M
Water, Sewer, or Broadband	<i>To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure</i>	\$55M	\$6M
			\$55M

Fortunately, thanks to Supervisor Arnold, backed by the conservative majority, the somewhat amorphous category of Public Health and Economic Impacts Response was reduced, and Water Sewer and Broadband was increased.

As we warned last week:

The \$34 million RESPOND TO THE PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OR ITS NEGATIVE ECONOMIC IMPACTS bucket is the most problematical. First of all, the public health emergency is over, and costs were largely covered by the first round of COVID aid last year. What if they used the \$34 million to boost infrastructure designed to facilitate housing? This would be far better than wasting it away on bottomless pit therapeutic homeless programs.

Grab Bag Approach: Apparently the ad hoc committee on the ARPA consisting of staff and Supervisors Peschong and Gibson staff had decided that the program will be a big grab bag, with everybody and their brother lining up for the money. This is a terrible idea, as it will be frittered away in a hundred places with no strategic impact. It would seem that under the category *RESTORATION OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES*, County could claim deferral of many capital projects which could not be designed or executed. What about deferred maintenance on buildings? Certainly the roads were not funded at required levels to make a dent in the Pavement Condition Index (PCI).

In regard to the Grab Bag approach, Supervisor Gibson had a large coalition of child care advocates lined up to get the jump on everyone else and cream about 5% of the money off before any formal process had been launched. The Board majority rejected this preemptive grab.

As of this more recent action, it is not clear if there will be less funds made available for grab bag approach. The more that goes into capital funding, the better.

The write-up outlines the general approach:

Concepts into Action: Staff anticipates receiving direction from the Board on how to turn the preliminary recommendations contained in this Board item into action. A key starting point is finalizing the use category allocations. Assuming that is completed today, staff would immediately begin to pursue additional actions which would begin getting the funds into the community. **Related to business, non-profit, and childcare grant programs, staff would begin working to form a selection subcommittee, finalize selection criteria, and issue a general “call for projects” to the community. The notice would provide guidance to locals who wish to submit a proposal to the County for the use of ARPA funds.**

The expectation is that proposals would be submitted this summer and that ranked and prioritized recommendations would be brought back to the Board for final approval in late summer

Local Agency Formation Commission Meeting of Wednesday, June 9, 2021 (Cancelled)

The June meeting was cancelled.

Special Integrated Waste Management Authority Meeting of Friday, June 18, 2021 (Not Scheduled)

Item 3 - Appointment of and Executive Director. After the meeting (an executive session), it was indicated that no reportable action had been taken. It’s likely that there was a discussion about who could serve as an Interim Director. The Board probably also talked about the parameters for recruiting a permanent director. Later it was announced that there will be a Special Executive Committee Meeting on Monday June 21, 2021. The notice was posted on Friday at 4:28 PM.

The meeting is called for 2:00 PM, which is 2 hours and 33 minutes short of 72 hour noticing required by the Open Public Meeting law. The meeting will be illegal if it occurs.

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

AMERICAN STAGNATION PLAN BY STEVEN MALANGA

Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis famously called states “laboratories of democracy,” by which he meant that American local governments were free to undertake policy initiatives that might help determine what ideas work—and what don’t. The Biden administration’s American Rescue Plan will likely be the biggest funder of local government experimentation in the nine decades since Brandeis coined that phrase.

Far from an actual rescue for local governments suddenly flush with cash, the hundreds of billions of dollars that Washington is sending around America have unleashed a flood of ambitious ideas meant to transform communities through vague, speculative, and untested programs that local governments are often ill-suited to carry out. Many of these initiatives are just versions of decades-old programs, with a new spin but the same questionable incentives. At best, the result will be billions of wasted dollars, though we shouldn’t discount the government’s ability to make things much worse. In any event, this can’t be what Brandeis had in mind.

To understand where states and cities are headed, it’s helpful to think about how Biden’s plan evolved. When the economic lockdowns were imposed in the spring of 2020, local governments witnessed unprecedented collapses in tax collections. They began pleading with the Trump administration for aid to bolster their shrinking budgets. Washington responded by sending billions of targeted dollars to help with pandemic-related costs, including money for hospitals, schools, transit systems, child care, and disaster relief. The biggest part of the stimulus was aid to individuals and businesses via enhanced unemployment benefits and business loans. What local governments didn’t get, however, was unrestricted aid for their budgets.

Many mayors and governors spent the ensuing months complaining about their treatment from the Trump administration and lobbying for budget assistance. Trump balked at sending them money directly, though in December 2020 he signed a new \$900 billion stimulus package extending federal benefits to individuals. By then, tax collections in many places were already bouncing back, killing any further talk of money to bolster spending by cities and states.

As a presidential candidate, Joe Biden sided with local governments in their budget pleas. One of his first legislative accomplishments on assuming office was the \$1.9 trillion rescue plan, signed into law in March, which included some \$350 billion for states, cities, and other types of municipalities. By then, stories about the significant rebound in local tax collections were so common that the Biden administration changed how it defined its “rescue” plan. White House officials [admitted](#) that the enormous chunk of money was meant to be a stimulus, to ensure that the painfully slow economic rebound that took place during Barack Obama’s presidency didn’t occur again. Though the Obama administration had passed a nearly \$800 billion stimulus package of its own in 2009, it also raised taxes on high-income earners, small businesses, investors, and health-care companies, and significantly expanded business regulations—all of which stifled growth. With a similar agenda in mind for his presidency, Biden decided to go even bigger with stimulus.

The result might not be so stimulating. The Trump administration’s enhanced unemployment benefits, extended by Biden’s rescue plan until September, have proved so generous that many

businesses and economists blame them for suppressing employment growth, as workers opt to collect benefits instead of getting back to work. The Biden administration has now given state governments the go-ahead to use stimulus funds to lure workers back with bonuses, even as the rescue plan pays them not to work. Connecticut is offering the long-term unemployed \$1,000 if they get a job but is still paying generous jobless benefits.

In California, the Biden stimulus, combined with the bullish stock market, has helped produce a \$75 billion budget surplus—surely the biggest surplus any state has ever experienced. Governor Gavin Newsom is spending \$12 billion of it in direct payments to state residents, on top of the payments provided to them by the relief bills in March and December 2020—even as the state struggles to get residents back to work. Even local Native American governments are getting in on the splurge.

The Cherokee Nation, which received \$1.8 billion from the Biden plan, is sending \$2,000 to nearly 400,000 of its members. So far, this free money has mostly produced more cash in the bank, not economic stimulus. Last year, even amid double-digit unemployment, Americans' savings rate increased to 17 percent of income, up from 7 percent in 2019.

Some cities are looking to use federal money to help fund the latest progressive idea for the poor: unrestricted annual payments to low-income households. Touted as universal basic income, the idea is to provide these households with a regular stipend that acts as a safety net. Milton Friedman [once proposed](#) something similar to replace welfare checks and the government social-services bureaucracy that accompanies anti-poverty programs.

Today, cities including Chicago and Philadelphia are eyeing UBI payments not to replace the rest of the welfare state but simply to add to it, based on a pilot program in Stockton, California, that gives residents \$500 a month. Chicago would spend \$30 million to give monthly incomes to 5,000 low-income families as a form of “disaster relief” on top of the generous individual benefits the Trump administration had served up.

Some programs sound still more ambitious but lack details. Detroit plans to use stimulus dollars to create a \$400 million fund with goals that include eliminating intergenerational poverty. The federal government has spent trillions of dollars over the last 50 years on just such a goal, to no avail.

Do Detroit officials know something everyone else does not? It seems not: they plan to ask community residents how to spend the money. The idea is reminiscent of when President Richard Nixon took billions of poverty-program dollars and sent them to local activist groups based on the notion that they knew best what their communities needed. That money [did](#) many things, but reducing poverty was not one of them.



Just like the SLO BOS in last week's Item 3 above.

Local officials, who once spoke of needing this money to keep delivering basic services during the pandemic, now foresee the Biden dollars funding “transformational” programs. In a

Zoom [call](#) last month hosted by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, city officials spoke of building community centers or offering incentives to lure businesses like supermarkets into low-income neighborhoods that need them. Yet these are precisely the kinds of projects that federal block-grant programs and empowerment zones have funded for decades to attract investment into underdeveloped neighborhoods. Collectively, such programs have rarely accomplished the overarching goals of dramatically improving neighborhoods—but the Biden rescue law provides a new funding source, albeit a temporary one, for more of the same.

With so much money floating around, anything qualifies as stimulus. Connecticut wants to spend \$15 million in Biden money to send kids for free to museums, aquariums, and zoos during the summer. The state also proposes using stimulus funds to provide “safe, fun and healthy spaces for teenagers,” though what this would entail is not clear.

It can seem almost passé to complain about wasted federal money when Republicans and Democrats alike seem to have dismissed the idea that deficits and debt matter. The Trump administration, hardly filled with fiscal hawks, unleashed a torrent of spending with the enhanced unemployment benefits and business loans that states and the federal government were clearly ill-equipped to manage. The result: one report after another of [massive fraud](#) in both efforts. Now Democrats have devised a Great Society–style blowout that is unlikely to deliver much more of a long-term payoff than Lyndon Johnson’s original programs produced.

The Great Society did more than just waste money—outcomes among the poor, including employment and social mobility, declined during that period as incentives to work declined. The Biden money may produce similar results. Consider, for example, subsidized housing. California, among other states, is using the cash to make massive investments in government-bankrolled residential construction to offset housing shortages.

The real problem, though, is that places like California have created so many barriers and added costs to building that the private housing market hasn’t been able to [keep up with demand](#) at affordable prices. Even government-backed “affordable” housing [costs](#), on average, a whopping \$750,000 per unit in California. At those prices, the Biden money will produce much less housing than it should. And when the cash is spent, California will still have a housing shortage and a market even more dominated by government-financed homes because the state didn’t address the causes of the problem.

Spreading federal government largesse around is easier than making painful reforms—but far less productive. It’s not a new lesson, but we’re about to relearn it.

[Steven Malanga](#) is the senior editor of City Journal and the [George M. Yeager Fellow at the Manhattan Institute](#).

ANATOMY OF THE WOKE MADNESS

How did such collective madness infect a once pragmatic and commonsensical America?

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Wokeism has become our most popular secular religion—at least for a moment dethroning climate change. It reduces all of the past and present into puerile binaries between “whites” and “non-whites.”

Its aim is for the present generation to rewrite our history—whether by The 1619 Project and cancel culture or iconoclastic statue-toppling and Trotskyization of names and places. Wokeism becomes a child’s morality tale of noble non-white victims versus villainous white victimizers. Erasing the past and its language supposedly fuels a recalibration of the future, all in the here and now, a holy Year Zero

In the process, wokeism has done a lot of damage to America, and will do even more if left unchecked. Here are its chief characteristics.

Elites vs. Elites

First, remember that wokeism is a top-down phenomenon. It started in academia with “critical race theory” and “critical legal theory.” These are bastard offshoots of harebrained “critical theory,” which arose from a demoralized and adrift Europe after the cataclysms of two devastating European-spawned world wars.

These ‘theories’ are merely adolescent delusions that norms, customs, traditions, laws, and rules are just arbitrary “constructs.” Thus they should have no authority over those whom they “oppress.” These relativist props are the tools of the white male hierarchy to gain and consolidate their “power.” So they can only be resisted by rejecting all these insidious “norms,” whether the canons of physics and math, jurisprudence, standardized test scores, or the idea that police keep the “peace.”

Outside of the campus, the media, the entertainment industry, the corporate boardroom, Wall Street, and Silicon Valley, thousands of rank-and-file social justice warrior demonstrators are not demanding, for example, to enroll women in Special Forces combat units. Grassroots America does not insist on subsidized transgendered surgeries.

Instead, leftist Washington politicians and bureaucrats pressure the Pentagon brass, in quid pro quo fashion. The subtext is that those who promote woke policies are assured of promotion and future exemption from audit of lucrative retirement consulting for defense-related corporations.

The people—that is, 51 percent of America—is not organizing for more cancel-culture censorship on Facebook, or even greater percentages of college admissions determined largely by race. Inner-city residents are not clamoring for less police patrolling. Defunding law enforcement is an elite obsession of those who do not live in insecure places.

Whether in the corporate boardroom or in Hollywood casting meetings or in the campus president’s office, race-based obsessions mostly reflect intramural wars between elites for the

lucrative spoils of the one-percent's news anchorships, roles in TV shows and commercials, diversity deanships, and admissions quotas to the Ivy League.

As a result, class considerations have vanished. They are replaced by absurd racial reductionism. For example, CNN mediocrity Don Lemon, by virtue of his race-mongering, can pose as a multimillionaire victim. The anonymous white deplorables at Walmart, caricatured as smelly in the Lisa Page-Peter Stroz text trove, are his proverbial anonymous oppressors.

Apparently, we can only prevent the tragedy of thousands of young black males killing each other and hundreds of innocent bystanders each year in our major cities—if Oprah, at her \$90 million estate, conducts a series of TV interviews with Meghan Markle (denizen of a \$15 million mansion) about the psychodramatic slights she feels she received from the Royal Family, or if Black Lives Matter founder and Marxist Patrisse Marie Khan-Cullors Brignac gets her \$35,000 new fence around her new Topanga Canyon home, in an era when “walls don't work.”

The elite Woke are now obsessed about race because of leftist failures in the past to galvanize a permanent class of victims of the grasping rich—given the upward mobility and expanding economy of the United States.

Race, in contrast, is deemed immutable. The Left sees it as permanent proof, a stamp of victimization and thus deserving of reparatory government action. LeBron James may be worth \$1 billion, but he will always be a needy voice of the helpless given his race. Or so the woke would have us believe.

Performance Virtue Signaling

Second, given its elite origins and spread, it is no surprise that wokeism is a psychological mechanism that exempts the privileged by virtue signaling and performance grievance-mongering in lieu of meaningful real action. Wokeism is neither consistent nor logical. Its self-serving selectivity means Hunter Biden's serial use of the N-word is not inconsistent with his father's lectures that the deplorables pose an existential racist threat to the nation.

America's inner cities are unsafe, violent, often dangerously unclean, and characterized by terrible schools, plagued by terrible municipal administration, and suffering terrible housing. Yet wokeism never holds the mayors, the district attorneys, or the city councils of these urban failures accountable for the misery they inflict on the non-white and poor.

When a shrill Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-N.Y.) produces a selfie video about the planet burning up in 12 years, or claims “racism” explains efforts to ensure that immigrants come in legal fashion, she believes that she is then exempt both from doing anything concrete about urban crises, and from any guilt about living a privileged lifestyle.

Kicking “racist” Donald Trump off social media apparently means Mark Zuckerberg does not feel too bad about building a monstrous 57,0000-square foot mansion on a pristine Hawaiian island site. The social justice warrior and Facebook billionaire might as well have been a 15th -

century Florentine Catholic sinner, ponying up 1,000 golden florins to gift a few blocks on the rising Duomo to ensure he could indulge himself on his \$12,000 electric surfboard, and that his future stay in Purgatory would be short, and in Paradise long.

Before being pre-COVID-19 woke, Colin Kaepernick of mixed racial ancestry, was a so-so multimillionaire NFL quarterback. He was known mostly for being suspended for using a racial N-word slur. Kaepernick was raised by white parents and apparently worried whether he was authentically one of the oppressed.

But after joining the church of wokeism, he became an approved voice of the victimized. And so he began lodging collective grievances against the supposed sins of America while building a fortune hawking Chinese-approved products.

So wokeism is so often an empty indulgence for the elite that enjoys exemptions it never extends to others.

When Individuals Disappear

Third, Wokeism destroys individualism. We cease being persons and instead become categorized peoples. What does it matter that Al Sharpton was a racist demagogue, that Jesse Jackson a skilled shakedown artist of corporate America, that Bayard Rustin, in contrast, a brilliant civil rights strategist, or that Martin Luther King, Jr. was an ecumenical believer in the inherent goodness of a flawed America of his times—once they are all to be reduced to being just black, and therefore just equally victims?

In the same manner, did Robert Kennedy, Lester Maddox, Hubert Humphrey, and Bull Connor equally suffer from “whiteness”? Wokeism, then, is a nonstop tribal warfare that reduces everyone on one side into uniform victims, despite their naturally varying morality, and on the other into cookie-cutter victimizers, although some were and most were not.

Racist obsession strangles individual character and renders everything irrelevant in comparison. Are we now to stop watching “Saving Private Ryan” because most of those who died on Normandy Beach were white? Thus what does it matter that some soldiers were braver than others? And what did it matter in a larger sense that a mostly white majority America defeated an all-white Nazi Germany? Were Churchill and Roosevelt, and Stalin and Hitler, just a bunch of old white people, given it was irrelevant that the former were democratic leaders who saved Western civilization and the latter were mass murderers?

Racism Everywhere—and Thus Nowhere

Fourth, race is not unimportant, but it is not the only catalyst of history or arbiter of life in the present. Cancer couldn't care less about the race of the cells it warps. COVID-19 is not a white or black pandemic, for all the efforts to make it so. Google “racism” and learn that everything from gluten allergies to robots are now products of racism.

Segregation of the U.S. military was a travesty during World War II, and had grave implications of abject hypocrisy for a democracy at war, but it was still not the central issue that explained the global conflict, at least not in comparison to the 6 million dead of the Holocaust, or the 20 million killed on the Eastern Front, or the 15 million whom Japan butchered in China. To the extent racism drove the death count of World War II, by the numbers it was mostly a matter of the Japanese intersectionally slaughtering supposedly inferior Asian Chinese and Germans exterminating white, supposedly non-“Aryan” Jews and Russian “Untermenschen.”

Pericles’ Funeral Oration, the Magna Carta, and the Declaration of Independence can be appreciated apart from race and gender. In contrast, wokeism takes every event of the past and present and warps it into a racial litmus test, and thus a banality of oppressor and oppressed, as if history is always third-grade melodrama rather than complex tragedy.

Merit is Racist

Fifth, wokeism’s existential enemy is merit. Critical Race Theory claims that meritocratic criteria are rigged or “constructed” in subtle ways to reflect the dominant hegemonies of the white male heterosexual hierarchy. Thus physics has no innate laws across time and space. There are no race-neutral skills or lack of the same in a United Airlines pilot.

We know the wages of such woke relativism. Indeed, we have seen the pernicious effects when sex or religion or race or ideology in the past has been used to calibrate talent in lieu of merit, whose measurement can transcend how we look or in what faith we believe.

Wokeism dictates that if the “oppressed” are “underrepresented,” it is because of society’s rigged rules of exploitation. So the woke’s remedies trump considerations of quality and excellence. Yet we know what happened when ideologues in 1930s Germany purged university departments, when commissars overruled Soviet officers in World War II, when Jim-Crow white racists found ways to ensure talented blacks could not go to college, or when brilliant female law graduates were offered only secretarial work in prestigious law firms: Society at large suffered from unscientific, crackpot -isms that knowingly warred on talent for purposes of political control.

The ancient American idea is now dead that if a group was collectively underrepresented in particular fields and professions, the remedy was simply twofold: organize to ensure equality of opportunity, and then when a fair shot was guaranteed, prepare, study, and sacrifice to ensure quantifiable excellence to capitalize on the opportunity. All that to the woke is now “racism.”

The final irony of wokeism? Its efforts to intrude on private lives come right out of the pages of 1984 and Animal Farm. Its racism is a more sophisticated form of Confederate one-drop racial lunacy. Its methodology operates according to the rules of the Spanish Inquisition. And its cancel culture mimics the system of Soviet commissars.

How did such collective madness infect a once pragmatic and commonsensical America?

Nascent wokeism went viral during the terror of COVID-19, our first global pandemic in a century, the first ever national quarantine, the first ever self-induced recession, the most destructive riots in U.S. history after the death of George Floyd, and the first ever election where well over 60 percent did not vote on election day. And the country went stark-raving mad in response.

As the virus fades, the lockdown becomes porous, pent-up demand fuels an economic recovery, the absence of law enforcement becomes far more deadly than its omnipresence, violent crime spikes and seeps into the suburbs, and the people resist the Left's unconstitutional hijacking of state protocols of voting, then what happens?

Do we revert to the norms of the civil rights movement where the content of our character alone matters, not the color of our skin?

Or have we sunk so deeply into the woke quicksands, that we cannot thrash our way up to the air, and thus suffocate from the ancient pressures of the bog that have always destroyed civilizations?

*Victor Davis Hanson is a distinguished fellow of the Center for American Greatness and the Martin and Illie Anderson Senior Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution. He is an American military historian, columnist, a former classics professor, and scholar of ancient warfare. He has been a visiting professor at Hillsdale College since 2004. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush. Hanson is also a farmer (growing raisin grapes on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author most recently of *The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won* and *The Case for Trump*.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

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Sustaining Member: \$5,000 + \$ _____

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General members will receive all COLAB updates and newsletters. Voting privileges are limited to Voting Members and Sustainable Members with one vote per membership.

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(Revised 2/2017)