



WEEKLY UPDATE
JANUARY 16 - 22, 2022

COLAB
San Luis Obispo County

13TH ANNUAL
DINNER &
FUNDRAISER

SAVE THE DATE
March 24, 2022
Alex Madonna Expo Center
San Luis Obispo, CA

Event Details Coming Soon...

**MAKE SLO COUNTY
PROSPER AGAIN!**

COLAB of San Luis Obispo County
(805) 548-0340 colabslo@gmail.com

NEWS FLASH – The front group progressive leftists (“SLO County Citizens for Good Government”) filed their Petition for a Writ of Mandate, Friday, against the redistricting plan adopted by the Board. They want an injunction to void the new map. [SLO County Citizens for Good Government \(sloccgg.org\)](http://sloccgg.org) When it opens, go to the tab: “Legal Effort” to read it.

THIS WEEK

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

LAFCO FOCUS ON MORRO BAY'S FUTURE - 1:00 PM

LAST WEEK

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

BRUCE GIBSON APPOINTED AS BOARD CHAIRMAN

\$7.6 MILLION PASO BASIN SGMA GRANT APPLICATION APPROVED

EXTENSION AND EXPANSION OF STUCK SOFTWARE PROJECT APPROVED

BIG SPENDING PLAN FOR HUGE FEDERAL DEBT FUNDED SLUSH APPROVED

PLANNING COMMISSION

CANNABIS FARM PERMIT NORTHEAST OF SANTA MARGARITA DENIED

COMMISSION NOT HAPPY WITH CANNABIS ORDINANCE

MAY ASK SUPERVISORS TO ENACT REVISIONS

IWMA

PAVO OGREN CONVERTED FROM CONSULTANT TO INTERIM EXEC DIRECTOR

BIG RATE IMPACTS TO COME FROM WET GARBAGE RECYCLING MANDATE

EMERGENT ISSUES

COVID INFECTION RATE HIGHEST EVER IN COUNTY

AFTER OMICRON, WHAT IF A MORE LETHAL STRAIN IS NEXT?

IS IT BY DESIGN OR NATURAL MUTATION?

POLITICIZING COVID-19 FROM THE START

SINGLE PAYER HEALTHCARE FOR CALIFORNIA

\$200 BILLION ON TOP OF \$286 BILLION BUDGET

COULD DOUBLE YOUR TAXES

RECKLESS STATE BUDGET OF \$286 BILLION PROPOSED

EXPANSION OF SOCIAL PROGRAMS, CLIMATE PATRONAGE, HIGH
SPEED RAIL, KILLING FOSSIL FUELS, OCEAN “CLEAN-UP”, RENT
SUBSIDIES, PERMANENTIZATION OF THE SUBSIDIZED POOR &
UNION PORK

INFLATION HITS MOST ECONOMIC SECTORS
SEE THE GRAPHS

COLAB IN DEPTH
SEE PAGE 22

THE TRUTHS WE DARED NOT SPEAK IN 2021
AT THE END OF THIS TERRIBLE YEAR, WE ARE LEFT ONLY WITH IRONIES
BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

THE YEAR OF LIVING STUPIDLY
*How long will America continue witnessing our unalienable rights and
political freedoms?*
BY BRUCE THORNTON

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS
ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

No Board of Supervisors Meeting This Week (Not Scheduled)

The next regularly scheduled Meeting is set for Tuesday, January 15, 2022.

**Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of Thursday, January 20, 2022, 1:00 PM
(Scheduled)**

MEETING ACCESS AND COMMENTS

LAFCO Commission Meetings Can be Viewed at:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81757623348?pwd=cGQyRC9LZi9ra3c5eWpMS1lyT3Zudz09>

Webinar ID: 817 5762 3348

Password: 200441

Call-in Number: 1 669 900 6833

Public Comments: On the agenda cover page

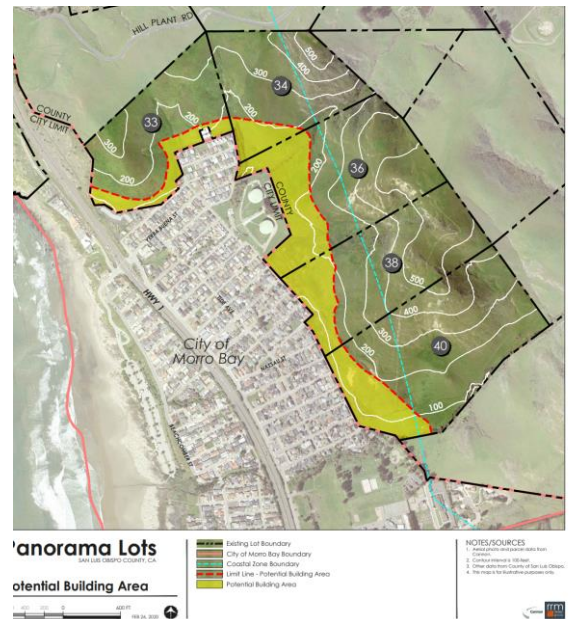
Item B.1 - Receive Notice of Submittal Of Proposal File No. 4-R21 For Sphere of Influence Amendment and Annexation #1 to the Shandon San Juan Water District.

The San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) received a landowner petition of application proposal for a Sphere of Influence Amendment and Annexation No. 1 to the Shandon San Juan Water District (SSJWD), LAFCO File no. 4-R-21 for two parcels APN's 037- 321-016 and 037-331-014, consisting of approximately 2,494-acres.

Item C.3 - Sphere of Influence Amendment to City of Morro Bay (Panorama Lots) The write-up states in part:

The territory proposed for a sphere of influence amendment is comprised of 212.81 acres located within the western boundary of the County of San Luis Obispo and surround the northeastern portion of the City of Morro Bay with Highway 1 situated to the west. The vicinity maps in Attachment C show the sphere of influence (SOI) amendment area.

The area would remain agricultural, but a few large homes could be permitted. There is substantial opposition including a 900-signature petition opposing the annexation.



LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Tuesday, January 11, 2022 (Completed)

Item 1- Reorganization of the County Board of Supervisors: Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for the 2022 term. The Board appointed Bruce Gibson as Chair on a 4/1 vote, with Debbie Arnold dissenting. John Peschong was appointed Vice-Chair unanimously.

Under the Board rules of Procedure, the position is rotated. The general principle is that Vice-Chair becomes the Chair.

There was minimum public opposition. In past years there has been opposition by some citizens to appointing Bruce Gibson to the position on the basis of his total commitment to left progressivism, flaunting of community standards, constant support for former Supervisor Hill, and displays of arrogance.

Item 10 - Request to approve a resolution authorizing the Director of Groundwater Sustainability, or designee, to file an application and execute a grant agreement with The California Department of Water Resources for Funding under the Sustainable Groundwater Management Grant Program for implementation of the Paso Robles Sub basin Groundwater Sustainability Plan. The Board authorized the application for \$7.6 million in State finding that has been made available for financing State Groundwater Plan (GSP) implementation in SLO County. If the State approves the application, the funding will go a long way to help defray some of the early implementation costs. It would be used to work on the Paso Basin. Eligible activities include:

Through pre-determined grant award formulas developed by DWR, the Paso Basin is eligible to receive up to \$7,600,000 in 2021 SGM Grant Program funding. Eligible GSP administration and SGMA compliance activities include the following:

- *Preparation of GSP Water Year Annual Reports*
- *Preparation of the GSP 5-Year Update*
- *Biannual (or Quarterly) GW Level Measurements*

In addition to GSP administration, monitoring and reporting, the following are the data gaps, projects and management actions that are generally identified in the Paso Basin GSP which may be considered for grant funding:

- *Expand the monitoring well network by including additional existing wells (Paso Robles Formation and Alluvial) into the monitoring well network*
- *If appropriate, perform supplemental hydrogeologic investigations to sufficiently improve our understanding of the hydrogeologic conceptual model to support the adaptive management of the Paso Basin. Specific attention could be directed towards assessing surface water - groundwater interconnectivity and the impact on surface water from groundwater pumping.*

COLAB Note: Perhaps this study could explain how the County determined that the Basin was in a 14,000 acre-feet per year deficit on average in the first place. This has never been cleared up.

- *Install new monitoring wells (Paso Robles Formation and Alluvial), stream gages, and climatologic stations, as deemed appropriate, and incorporate these new data sources into the Basin monitoring network to ensure that sufficient data is available to meet monitoring objectives, including Basin groundwater quality, relative to GSP sustainable management criteria (SMC)*
 - *If appropriate, update and recalibrate the GSP hydrogeologic model or replace it with a new open-source model. New data and refinements to the hydrogeologic conceptual model, and possibly the updated numerical model, would be used for the following purposes:*
- *Refining the*

aquifer parameters and model input values • Updating the estimated sustainable yield of the Basin

• Evaluating benefits of alternative sustainability programs or projects Specific management actions that were identified in the GSP include the following:

- Develop and implement a Basin-wide well verification and registration program.*
- Develop and implement a Basin-wide groundwater extraction measurement (i.e., metering / remote sensing) program (subject to the exclusion of de minimis users)*
- Develop and implement a Basin-wide pumping fee program (subject to the exclusion of de minimis users) • Develop and implement a location(s) specific well interference mitigation program (Focus on areas of concentrated shallow domestic wells)*
- Develop and implement an irrigated lands best management practices (BMP) program*
- Develop and implement a multi-benefit land repurposing program*
- Develop and implement a groundwater pumping allocation program*

In addition to the programs and management actions listed above, the GSP identified the following projects that could help achieve sustainability throughout the Subbasin. These projects included the following:

- City of Paso Robles recycled water supply in-lieu of groundwater pumping*
- San Miguel CSD recycled water supply in-lieu of groundwater pumping*
- Projects that use Nacimiento Lake supplies via the Nacimiento Pipeline to be used directly for irrigation in lieu of groundwater pumping or be blended with recycled water supplies and used for irrigation in-lieu of groundwater pumping*
- Expansion of the Salinas Dam to increase storage capacity*
- Projects that provide for floodplain expansion to provide storage of supplemental water supplies for in-lieu use of groundwater pumping and / or benefit groundwater recharge or habitat (e.g., basin recharge using peak flows from a river, creek, or stream)*
- Use of San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (SLOFCWCD) State Water Project (SWP) allocations, and other supplemental water supplies, for the benefit of the Paso Basin • Distributed Stormwater Collection and Managed Aquifer Recharge (DSC-MAR) Facilities (Urban, Rural, OnFarm)*

Some of the Supervisors are scratching their heads and wondering why no one ever told them about the availability of the grant before. Apparently, it took a new director, to bring it forward.

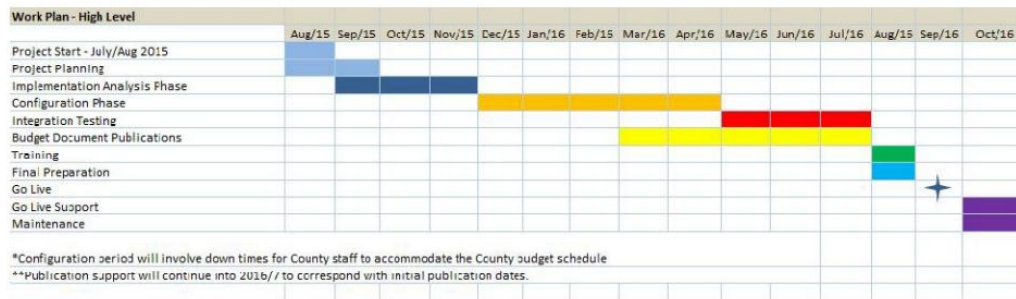
Item 17 - Request to approve a contract amendment with Sherpa Government Solutions LLC, to provide budgeting software and administrative system support in the amount up to \$60,000 from designated project funds in the Countywide Automation Fund - FC 266 Countywide Automation Fund, and authorize the County Administrative Officer, or his designee, to approve future contract amendments up to \$200,000 in designated project funds for system support in future budget years. This item was approved on the consent calendar without question or review. It provides for the extension of a software vendor contract that would provide software and training to enable the County to produce a more refined program performance budget. It would take data from the existing county system and allow its presentation in ways that are more useful to both management and the Board.

The original contract was approved in 2015. It appears that actual work did not begin until 2018. This item would extend the contract term to December 31, 2022. It does not include expanded

funding at this point, but as the item title states, it would authorize the administration to add up to \$200,000 in future budget years.

What is the status of the project today? The original contract provided the schedule shown below on the next page. What happened to this? The question was never asked or answered , at least in public.

Following is a high-level plan and a work plan that will be completed with additional detail working in conjunction with the County team.



What contracted features are in production now? The contract is very explicit about what they are. Are any running? Could the Board see a quick demo? They never asked.

Items 31 and 32 - Allocation of American Rescue Plan Act funds.

Summary: **Item 31** focused on new and expanded programs that are eligible to be funded under the Federal ARPA program. **Item 32** focuses on “restoring” funds to various County departments that are alleged to have experienced budget reductions and/or revenue shortfalls due to COVID .

The County has received somewhere north of \$95 million in COVID relief funds from the Feds and the State. The ARPA amount is reported as \$54.9 million. It is not clear exactly what the sources are for the balance. It would be nice to see a comprehensive spreadsheet that displays the big picture prior to having the Board dive into this piecemeal. The format used by Public Works to explain the funding status of the various SIGMA water basin plans would be a good start. What are the other funding sources? Again, how much has been expended in which years, how much in the current year, and how much in the future years. This presentation should not just include ARPA, but also other COVID grants.

Warning: In the Big picture, all this funding is a part of trillions of dollars funded by debt through the Federal Reserve (The Fed). The Board of Supervisors, the County Auditor Controller, the CEO, and other senior managers should have carefully warned the public about the consequences.

The federal government will spend around \$413 billion in 2021 on debt interest alone, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Debt service was a comparably reasonable \$197 billion in 2010. Even the World Bank knows that’s a problem. It figures that a country reaches a negative tipping point when the debt-to-GDP ratio hits 77 percent. The U.S. debt-to-GDP ratio today is around 125 percent and climbing.

But remember that is at about one percent interest. Each one-percent interest-rate increase costs another \$413 billion. More precisely, each one-percent interest-rate increase costs American taxpayers another \$413 billion (and climbing.) If the Fed was serious and raised rates to five percent—which still may not be enough—that would be close to \$2 trillion in interest the federal government would need to pay annually. That’s half of the entire federal budget. Americans will be outraged to discover that Social Security, Medicare, defense spending, infrastructure, and everything else will need deep cuts in order to pay interest on money long spent by craven, irresponsible politicians.¹

Item 31 - Request to receive and file a report and to provide direction to staff on the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding for businesses, non-profits, and child care. The Board unanimously approved allocating ARPA money for new programs designed to mitigate the negative impacts of COVID on businesses and families. The categories are specifically eligible under the Federal rules.

This report to the Board provides further detail on a recommended approach to allocating \$9 million in funding for businesses, non-profits, and child care. Staff requests direction from the Board regarding this proposed approach and will return to the Board at a later meeting with more specific allocations and contracts for consideration, as noted in each of the three categories below.

Category	Amount	Purpose	Implementation
Businesses	\$500K total (\$100K per supervisorial district)	Grants to small businesses to mitigate financial hardships or to implement COVID-19 prevention or mitigation tactics.	The Workforce Development Board (WDB) is proposed to administer the grants using a similar process as the two prior County business assistance grant rounds; business services specialists within the Central Coast Coalition of Chambers, through contracted services with the WDB, are proposed to manage application intake and technical assistance and support.
	\$2.5M	Contracts with organizations providing technical assistance to businesses, workforce development, or job training for individuals impacted by COVID-19.	Staff is exploring working with the WDB to assist with allocating the funds and contract management.
Non-profits	\$3M	Grants to non-profit organizations to mitigate financial hardships, implement COVID-19 prevention or mitigation tactics, or to provide programs/services to respond to needs created by the COVID-19 public health emergency.	The County Administrative Office is proposed to manage the intake, evaluation, and administration of grants using a similar process as the one for the Community Based Organization grant program.
Child care	\$3M	Funding for child care sector organizations to provide child care sector program relief and stabilization, tuition assistance, program expansion (new slots) and quality improvement, and reinvigoration of the child care workforce.	The County Board of Education is proposed to serve as a fiscal lead for a coalition of partners, including First 5 SLO County, the SLO County Child Care Planning Council, and the Community Action Partnership (CAPSLO).

1) Rod Thomson in *The Coming Financial Vise No One Will Talk About.*

1. What happens to these programs, their employees, and clients when the one-time money runs out? The County will be under severe pressure to continue them. Was everyone banking on the approval of President Biden’s Human “Infrastructure” bill, which now seems stalled?
2. Are the problems which are proposed to be solved documented? For example, if thousands of people do not wish to return to work, and unemployment is low and decreasing, how does spending \$2.5 million of job training help? What does "reinvigoration" of the childcare workforce mean? Perhaps they will put them in the sound pods.

Item 32 - Request to 1) approve a FY 2021-22 through FY 2024-25 Restoration of Government Services spending plan funded by a combination of American Rescue Plan Act funding and the General Fund COVID-19 Designation; 2) adopt a resolution amending the Position Allocation List as outlined in the recommendation; 3) approve a corresponding budget for the FY 2021-22 components of the spending plan totaling \$7,147,161 as outlined in the recommendation by 4/5 vote; and 4) approve an additional corresponding budget adjustment to include \$25,500 of other revenue and appropriations to Fund Center - 160 Public Health and \$11,244 of state aid and appropriations to Fund Center – 141 Ag Commissioner. The Board approved the program unanimously and praised the staff for its excellent work. There were no real high level policy questions and no remorse about the debt exploring and inflation exploding impacts of the Federal Funding.

The expenditure list is called the “Restoration of Government Services Funding Plan.” Rather than a real Plan, it seems to be a list of expenditures that departments did not make or could not make due to alleged COVID related cutbacks. Our recollection is that the Board actually made cuts of only around \$9 million and made up most of the rest using transfers from fund balances. Moreover, the second table displayed below, “ARPA RGSA and FBA Recommendations,” contains restorations of \$7.1 million for the current fiscal year and then projects forward for 3 additional fiscal years to 2025.

Ultimately, in 3 or 4 years the Feds will audit these expenditures. Will the County be able to prove that they were eligible? If not, the County will have to pay the money back from its general funds.

Since these are extra-ordinary revenues that will end, how will the County sustain the recurring expenditure programs that are being funded here?

The detailed lists were too extensive to include here. They can be seen at the link: [139427 \(ca.gov\)](https://www.ca.gov/139427) It is a big file and may take some seconds to open.

**Integrated Waste Management Authority Meeting of Wednesday, January 12, 2022
(Completed)**

Item - 13 Paavo Ogren Converted from Consultant to Interim Chief Executive Officer.
The salary will be \$186,000 per year. The contract does not specify whether he must devote his

full time to the IWMA or if he could accept consulting contracts from other agencies. He will serve until a permanent Executive Director is on board.

Item 14 - Analysis of SB 1383 Impacts on IWMA Budget and Associated Revenue Streams Report. The IWMA Board, now minus the Board of Supervisors, heard a lengthy report on the impacts of the State SB 1383 wet garbage recycling mandated on its budget. The bottom line is that the hauler fee rates will have to increase substantially and thus the per-can monthly rates for those in the cities and districts which remain in the IWMA will rise substantially (5.4% each year for at least the next 3 consecutive years).

Table 1: Revised Hauler Fee Percentage Determination

Description	Projected Actuals FY 21-22	FY 22-23	FY 23-24	FY 24-25
EXPECTED UNRESTRICTED OPENING FUND BALANCE - JULY 1, 2021 ⁽¹⁾	\$ 1,745,474	\$ 304,658	\$ 367,452	\$ 660,017
PROJECTED EXPENDITURES				
Operating Expenditures	\$ 3,256,329	\$ 3,655,022	\$ 3,764,673	\$ 3,877,615
Capital Expenditures	\$ 140,108	\$ 385,843	\$ 141,650	\$ 44,181
Transfers to Restricted Funds	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
REVENUE REQUIREMENT	\$ 3,396,437	\$ 4,040,865	\$ 3,906,323	\$ 3,921,796
PROJECTED REVENUES				
Operating Revenue ⁽²⁾	\$ 891,032	\$ 893,393	\$ 895,825	\$ 898,330
Non-Operating Revenue	\$ 117,000	\$ 117,000	\$ 117,000	\$ 117,000
Hauler Fee Revenue	\$ 947,589	\$ 3,093,266	\$ 3,186,063	\$ 3,281,645
TOTAL REVENUE	\$ 1,955,621	\$ 4,103,659	\$ 4,198,888	\$ 4,296,975
GROSS RECEIPTS	\$ 48,478,933	\$ 57,282,695	\$ 59,001,175	\$ 60,771,211
HAULER FEE REVENUE	\$ 947,589	\$ 3,093,266	\$ 3,186,063	\$ 3,281,645
REVISED HAULER FEE %	N/A	5.40%	5.40%	5.40%
PROJECTED UNRESTRICTED FUND CLOSING BALANCE				
Unrestricted Fund Closing Balance	\$ 304,658	\$ 367,452	\$ 660,017	\$ 1,035,196
Target Unrestricted Fund Closing Balance ⁽³⁾	25%	25%	25%	25%
Unrestricted Fund Closing Target Balance	\$ 913,756	\$ 941,168	\$ 969,404	\$ 998,486
Closing Fund Balance Surplus/(Shortfall)	\$ (609,098)	\$ (573,717)	\$ (309,387)	\$ 36,711

⁽¹⁾ Does not include Funds held for HHW closure or Emergency fund

⁽²⁾ Includes Landfill Tipping Fees and Hazardous Waste Program Fees

⁽³⁾ Target Unrestricted Fund Closing Balance is 25% of the next fiscal year's operating expenditures

Planning Commission of Thursday, January 13, 2022 (Completed)

Item 8 - Hearing to consider a request by Bigfoot Valley, LLC for a Conditional Use Permit (DRC2018-00234) for the phased development of outdoor cannabis cultivation canopy, outdoor ancillary nursery, ancillary processing activities, and ancillary transport. Phase 1 includes up to one acre of outdoor cultivation canopy within two separate cultivation areas; up to 3,000 square feet of outdoor ancillary nursery canopy in existing hoop structures; ancillary transport; portable restrooms; a compost area; installation of security fencing and equipment; installation of a new driveway entrance; relocation of six existing 190-watt solar panels; revegetation of a previous as-built driveway; and use of existing parking, water storage tanks, and storage sheds.

Phase 2 includes ancillary processing within an existing 2,403 square foot barn; realignment of an existing driveway; additional parking; and installation of a 10,000-gallon water tank. The project includes a request to modify the fencing standards set forth in Section 22.10.080 of the County Code to allow deer fencing around the perimeter of each outdoor cultivation area and no fencing around the processing building.

The project is located at 5145 Calf Canyon Hwy, approximately 6 miles northeast of the community of Santa Margarita.

The project application was rejected 4/1, with Commissioner Multari dissenting. The neighboring community just flat out did not want the project. The Commission rejected it on the grounds that it was a threat to water wells of a neighbor, that it could not be definitively proven the odors would not escape into the neighborhood, and that it was “incompatible” with the neighborhood. People do not like the smell of Cannabis. The public also cited problems of strangers crossing into cannabis grows whom they suspect as being criminal elements.

A Larger Issue: The Commissioners struggled. The project basically meets the terms of the County’s Cannabis permitting ordinance. Obviously, the Commission does not think the current scheme of regulation is clear enough for them to decide which projects should be approved or rejected. The Board has updated the ordinance 3 times since 2018.

The real problem is that cannabis is a Federally illegal Class I narcotic and is still illegal nationally and in many states. The public is very suspicious of the industry as well. The sketchy background of some operators and the criminal bribery conviction of Helios Day Spring, combined with the bribery related suicide of former Supervisor Adam Hill, further reinforced the negative tone

Concurrently exacerbating the policy conflict is the fact that since the 1960’s, the progressive left has pushed the legalization of cannabis. Accordingly, even people who might have no objection to its actual use resent it because of its association with the left. Filthy anti-war pot smoking hippies spitting on troops returning from Viet Nam and other associated anti-patriotic cultural affectations have convinced many that the entire age was rotten, including the spread of cannabis. On the other hand, benign and creative culture and business icons such as Willie Nelson, Bob Marley, Snoop Dog, Jerri Garcia, Steve Jobs, and others have been big promoters.

The fact that the progressive left has advanced the legal status of cannabis in recent years is a further reason for many people to be suspicious or in opposition. If a leader’s position on basic values such as the proper scope of government, capitalism, personal security, private property, and the other key fundamentals is wrong, their position on cannabis could be wrong. Moreover, some avowedly see wide use of cannabis as tool to further control society. A bunch of docile self-absorbed deadheads are much more malleable than upwardly mobile, anxiety driven, clear headed raw meat eaters who can carry 18 units at a first-class university and then work 18-hour days in their younger work years.

The problem for the Commission is that the County has attempted to split the baby and satisfy everyone.

The denial is very likely to be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

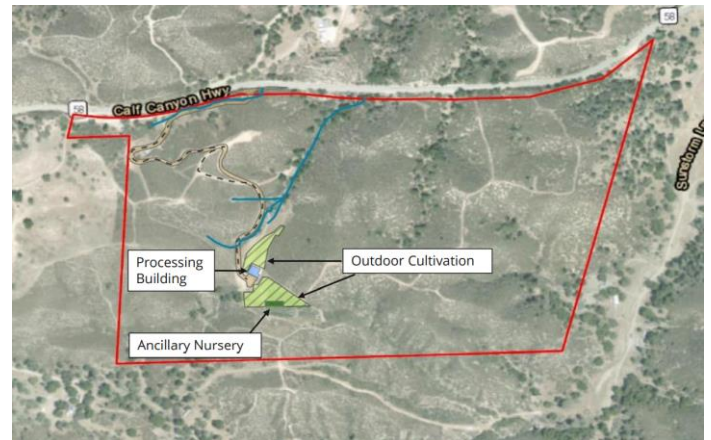
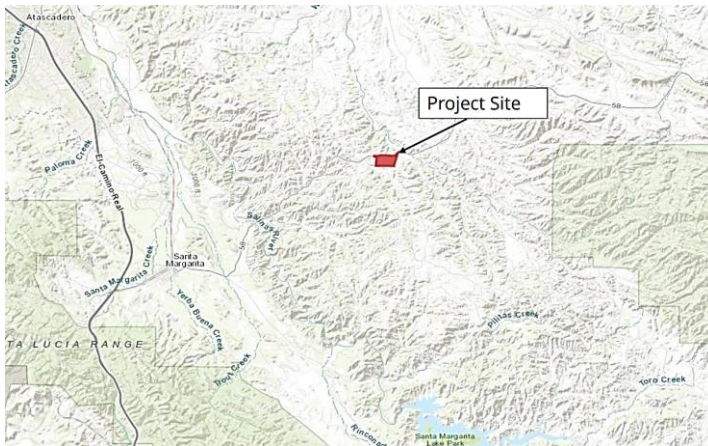
Regulatory Efficiency? Note that the Planning Department control number for this application, highlighted in yellow above, is DRC2018-000234. This indicates that the application was filed in 2018. Now, four years later, it is pending before the Planning Commission. Does the Commission care about the length of time and cost of permitting? What took so long? The

Commission should require that all staff presentations of applications contain a Regulatory Efficiency analysis box, which includes:

- **Length of time from filing (not acceptance of the application)**
- **List of all County permitting fees for all Departments paid to date and/or pending**
- **Aggregate cost for attorneys, architects, engineers, geologists, hydrologists, engineers, and others whom the applicant engaged to prepare the application and revisions (names of the consultants need not be divulged, just the type)**

By expending four years to review the application, how much in foregone estimated revenue in cannabis taxes did the County lose?

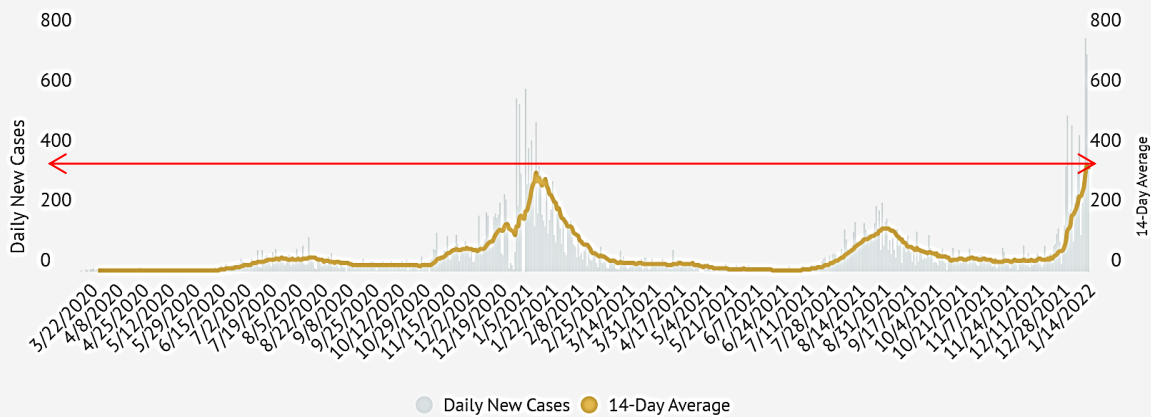
Although the staff recommended approval of the permit, it pointed out that the owners have been cited for violations under their interim permit. This elicited concerns by the Planning Commission. There was no public comment in the record as of this writing.



EMERGENT ISSUES

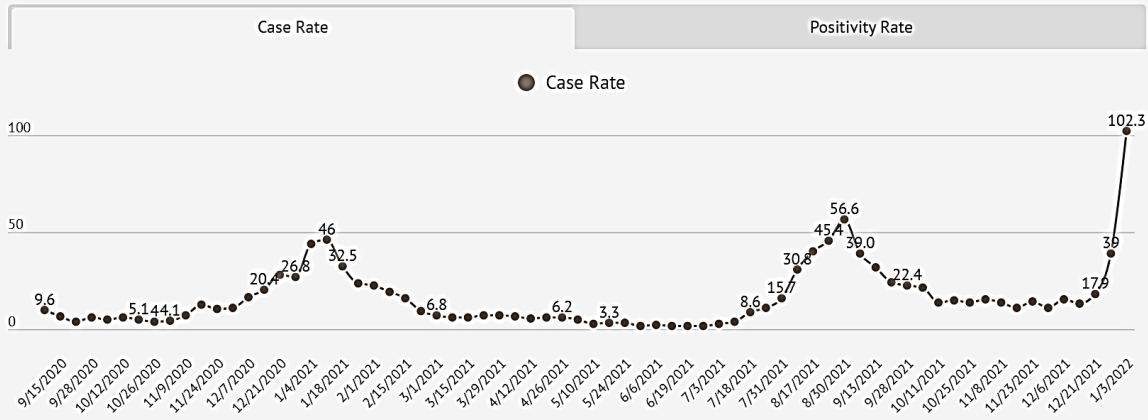
Item 1 - COVID – Another Government Failure: County Health Officer, Dr. Penny Borenstein reports the high trajectory of increase for COVID infections. The County population suffers a mix of the Delta and Omicron variants. At this point the infection rate is the highest since the pandemic began and is higher than its peak this time last year.

Daily New Cases (and 14-Day Average)



51 Hospitalized (6 in ICU)

Case Rate & Positivity Rate



Debate rages within the medical community, governments, and the public about whether masks, vaccines, isolation, and testing actually do any good. All the private physicians we know insist that vaccines, although they do not stop infection, cause people to be less sick when they get it. Fortunately, and so far, the Omicron variant does not seem as lethal as earlier versions.

The scarier unknown is, given that the virus seems to evolve quickly, could it not morph into a very infectious and high mortality version? Public Health authorities don't seem to be talking about this or outlining what steps would have to be taken if this eventuality occurred. Some experts are arguing that the vaccines actually weakened natural defenses and have caused more people to be sick.

Finally, and as we have pointed out before, the development and spread of the Wuhan Virus resulted from "gain of function experiments" in a Chinese Army laboratory where biological weapon research, and perhaps development, is undertaken. In addition, our government was complicit in funding it. What is the real difference between bio-engineering gain of function and weaponization? Millions of people have died world-wide. Meanwhile, the United States

Government and the media are focused on Chinese Government persecution of a Muslim minority in western China and its relationship to the Olympic games being hosted by China. This trivialized distraction is emblematic of the incompetence at the National level, which is being fed upwards by soft headed politicians at the local level.

What if the escaped virus is pre-programmed to rapidly evolve for the purpose of outrunning the effectiveness of vaccines? We wonder if the CIA and other intelligence agencies are investigating this potential. After all, we went into an 18-year war over the destruction of the NY World Trade Center without accomplishing anything – no tribute, no reparations, no acquisition of resources, no mandatory military alliances, no real punishment except for Bin Laden and Hussein (who actually may not have been involved). Meanwhile, the Chinese have completely abrogated the Hong Kong deal and are again saber-rattling about Taiwan.

Meanwhile, our Federal Representative, Salud Carbajal, is promoting a marine sanctuary next to the county instead of asking these hard questions. One of the Congressman's news releases states in part:

Santa Barbara, CA – Today, Rep. Carbajal and the U.S. Department of Commerce announced that the proposed Chumash Heritage National Marine Sanctuary (CHNMS) off the Central Coast of California will advance to the [designation phase](#). This announcement marks the start of a public process to safeguard the marine resources along 140 miles of California's coastline from oil drilling and recognize those waters for their cultural, economic, and ecological significance. Rep. Carbajal was joined by Senators Feinstein and Padilla (D-CA) in issuing the announcement.

"I am thrilled the Biden administration has taken this step to protect our coastal areas from further oil and gas drilling and strengthen our state's \$1.9 trillion coastal economy, which is propped up by tourism and commercial fishing," said Rep. Carbajal. "Bringing the proposed sanctuary into the designation phase is the result of years of public engagement and I am grateful that we are one step closer to permanently protecting our coastline for future generations to inherit and enjoy. I am also thankful for the steadfast leadership of the late Fred Collins, Chairman of the Northern Chumash Tribal Council, whose legacy of advocacy was instrumental in moving this project forward."

See the article, "Politicizing COVID-19 From the Start" immediately below for the damning story.

POLITICIZING COVID-19 FROM THE START

Thousands of Americans have died needlessly because of weaponized disinformation about China's culpability, vaccines, useful drugs, lockdowns, racial preferences, and long-term care facilities.

By Victor Davis Hanson

From the moment COVID-19 appeared, the pandemic became inseparable from politics.

Political frenzy was inevitable since the SARS-CoV-2 virus likely escaped from a level-4 security virology lab in Wuhan, China.

The rapid-fire spread soon threatened to indict the communist Chinese government for nearly destroying the world economy and killing millions.□

Western elites, in response, feared that their own lucrative investments in China would be jeopardized by such disclosures—and so acted accordingly in defending Beijing.□

Nonetheless, the most likely scenario remains that the escaped virus was birthed by gain-of-function research scientists—overseen by elements of the Chinese communist military. Worse, the lab was given subsidies by U.S. health authorities, routed through third parties. Hiding all of that damaging information warped government policy and media coverage.□

Belatedly, a panicked China shut down all domestic travel in and out of Wuhan—but not flights abroad to Western Europe and the United States.□

The rest is history.□

From the outset, the World Health Organization simply spread false talking points about the outbreak from the Chinese government, delaying a robust global response.□

Donald Trump’s political opponents initially told Americans to shop and travel as usual—only to pivot as cases mounted and they blamed the president.□

The U.S. 2020 ban on travel from China was met with charges of racism and xenophobia from presidential candidates. Ironically, many were simply channeling racist and xenophobic China’s propaganda.□

Many doctors kept hammering the need for therapeutics, including taboo off-label use of cheap generic drugs. The use of hydroxychloroquine and ivermectin was widely ridiculed—despite continuing studies from abroad attesting to their usefulness.□

Trump’s Operation Warp Speed project to develop vaccinations was also pilloried. Candidates Kamala Harris and Joe Biden did their best to talk down the safety of the impending inoculations. But once in power, they projected their own prior harmful rhetoric onto so-called “anti-vaxxers.”

Then they claimed credit for the initial success of the Trump vaccinations.□

The Pfizer corporation had promised a major pre-election announcement about its likely rollout of a vaccine in October, just days before the 2020 election.□

Then, mysteriously, Pfizer claimed the vaccine, in fact, would not be ready before November 3. A few days after the election of Joe Biden, the company reversed course and announced the vaccinations would soon be available.□

Then-New York Governor Andrew Cuomo obstructed most all federal help with Trump’s fingerprints on it. That way Cuomo became a media, Emmy-winning darling—before resigning in disgrace.□

Cuomo’s policies of steering infected patients into long-term-care facilities doomed over 10,000 of the elderly. New York is now illegally using race to grant preferences in the allotments of tests and new drugs.□

The rhetoric of the media-progressive nexus that mandatory, massive lockdowns were necessary all but destroyed a booming Trump economy and denied critical medical care to millions. Emphasizing therapeutics, natural herd immunity, and the resilience of the youth to the disease were all pronounced “anti-science” by the demagogues on the Left.

Various celebrities and politicians—such as California Governor Gavin Newsom and failed presidential candidate Hillary Clinton—boasted the pandemic lockdown offered the perfect crisis that must not go to waste politically. Actress Jane Fonda even crowed that COVID-19 was a “gift from God to the Left” in helping to end Donald Trump.

In the waning days of the 2022 campaign, Biden went so far as to blame Trump personally for *all* the deaths from the virus.□

Once the vaccinations had seemed to work in early 2021, an upbeat Joe Biden boasted that he would end the virus by summer 2021, by following “the science.” He went so far as to claim that no one had been vaccinated prior to his inauguration even though 17 million, including Joe Biden himself, had been.□

Then Nemesis answered such hubris.□

The unforeseen Delta and Omicron variants hit. A new phrase, “breakthrough case,” revealed that the vaccinations often could only prevent serious illness, but *not* infection or infectiousness.□

Suddenly the best and brightest people with three shots, who had blasted the red-state rubes as the ignorant unvaxxed—got sick. More have now died from the virus on Biden’s than on Trump’s watch.□

A warped economy amid renewed COVID-19 outbreaks helped to further destroy Biden’s waning popularity.□

In reaction, the Left now calls for realism, emphasis on treatments, and acknowledgment of the value of natural immunities. It is even newly curious about the origins of the virus—and the need to “get back to normal.”□

We are suddenly told that thousands had died “with” rather than “because” of COVID—the exact opposite of what we heard in the Trump era.□

A skeptic might suggest terror over the impending midterms finally made the Left face reality.

Politicizing the pandemic is a euphemism. In truth, thousands of Americans have died needlessly because of weaponized disinformation about China's culpability, vaccines, useful drugs, lockdowns, racial preferences, and long-term care facilities.

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, [The Case for Trump](#) and the newly released [The Dying Citizen](#).

Item 2 - Assembly Constitutional Amendment (ACA) 11 - Single Payer Healthcare Proposed by Governor and Legislators. The legislature would have to place the proposed Constitutional amendment on the ballot. If the voters approve it, taxes will have to be doubled to cover the new \$163 to \$ 200 billion in annual costs. Note that the Governor's proposed FY \$2022-23 annual budget is already \$286 billion without this proposal. The excellent article below summarizes the impacts and taxes.

CALIFORNIA CONSIDERS DOUBLING ITS TAXES BY JARED WALCZAK

Editor's Note: The California Policy Center has earmarked ACA 11 as a high impact bill in 2022. The following analysis of ACA 11 was conducted and first posted at The Tax Foundation. The California Policy Center encourages our readers to visit our "Take Action" portal to contact your legislator without leaving this site.

A [proposed constitutional amendment](#) (ACA 11) in California would increase taxes by \$12,250 per household, roughly doubling the state's already high tax collections, to fund a first-in-the-nation single-payer health-care system. The top marginal rate on wage income would soar to 18.05 percent—nationally, the median top marginal rate is 5.3 percent—and the state would adopt a new 2.3 percent [gross receipts tax](#) (GRT), at a rate more than three times that of the country's highest current pure GRT.

All told, the new tax package is intended to raise an additional \$163 billion per year, which is more than California raised in total tax revenue any year prior to the pandemic.

The new taxes would [take three forms](#):

1. Surtaxes atop the current individual income tax structure beginning at \$149,509 in income;
2. A graduated-rate payroll tax system with the top rate kicking in for employees with more than \$49,990 in annual income; and
3. A gross receipts tax of 2.3 percent, excluding the first \$2 million of business income.

Two states currently have [payroll taxes](#) for purposes other than funding their unemployment insurance system. In Massachusetts, a recently adopted payroll tax of 0.68 percent is imposed atop the state's 5.0 percent flat [individual income tax](#). In Nevada, there is a payroll tax of 1.475 percent in lieu of any individual income tax. California would impose a payroll tax of up to 2.25 percent atop an individual income tax that already has a top marginal rate of 13.3 percent.

Similarly, several states have gross receipts taxes in lieu of corporate income taxes. In Ohio, for instance, there is a 0.26 percent gross receipts tax, adopted to replace the state's corporate income tax, capital stock tax, and business tangible property tax. In California, by contrast, a 2.3 percent gross receipts tax—almost nine times Ohio's rate—would be imposed *in addition to* tangible property taxes and an 8.84 percent corporate income tax, and an aggressive one at that, the only state-level corporate income tax in the country with a worldwide [tax base](#).

And while 16 states either implemented or enacted individual or corporate income tax cuts in 2021, and more are looking to join them in 2022, California policymakers want voters to approve five new [surtaxes](#), with a top rate of 2.5 percent atop the current 13.3 percent top marginal income tax rate and the proposed new 2.25 percent payroll tax, for a combined top marginal rate of 18.05 percent. This is more than 7 percentage points higher than the next-highest rates in Hawaii (11 percent), New York (10.9 percent), and New Jersey and the District of Columbia (both at 10.75 percent).

Issues with the proposal abound.

For instance, the payroll tax exempts employers with fewer than 50 resident employees, punishing small businesses for expanding and creating a meaningful tax cliff. Imagine, for instance, the overly simplified hypothetical of a company with 49 employees making \$80,000 each. At 49 employees, the company has no payroll tax burden. Hiring one additional employee generates a tax bill of \$90,000—more than that employee's salary!

Gross receipts taxes are widely understood as extremely disruptive and inequitable taxes, because they are imposed on businesses without regard to their profit margins. For low-margin businesses like supermarkets, 2.3 percent of gross receipts may literally exceed current profits even if the company is doing well. For instance, Kroger's profit margins dipped to 0.75 percent in late 2021 and have historically [hovered around](#) 1.75 percent. These taxes are even worse for businesses posting losses, including startups that haven't turned profitable yet, because they are

taxed on their receipts even if their expenditures exceed revenues. For startups, a high-rate gross receipts tax could be disastrous.

The surtax, meanwhile, with additional rates of 0.5 percent to 2.5 percent atop the current income tax, does not take married filers into account. So, while California’s state income tax avoids a [marriage penalty](#) for most filers by doubling bracket widths (there is already an additional 1 percent above \$1 million which is not adjusted), the new surtaxes do not. The \$149,509 kick-in of the 0.5 percent surtax applies to individual or household income equally.

Similarly, these surtaxes do not align with current brackets, so they yield a highly convoluted tax system. Add the payroll tax—which is borne economically by taxpayers even if remitted by their employers—and it is essentially 18 brackets, as follows. Taxpayers earning less than \$50,000 would face (inclusive of the new payroll tax) double-digit [marginal tax rates](#).

Proposed Income Surtax and Payroll Tax Would Create 18-Bracket System

Rate	Bracket Kick-In	
	Single	Married
2.25%	\$0	\$0
3.25%	\$9,324	\$18,649
5.25%	\$22,106	\$44,213
7.25%	\$34,891	\$69,783
9.25%	\$48,434	\$96,869
10.25%	\$49,900	\$99,800
11.55%	\$61,213	\$122,427
12.05%	\$149,509	\$149,509
12.55%	\$299,509	\$299,509
13.05%	—	\$599,013
13.55%	\$312,865	—
14.05%	—	\$625,371
14.55%	\$375,220	—
15.05%	\$599,013	\$750,441
16.05%	\$625,368	\$1,000,000
17.05%	\$1,000,000	\$1,250,737
17.30%	\$1,299,500	\$1,299,500
18.05%	\$2,484,121	\$2,484,121

Sources: ACA 11 (2022); Tax Foundation calculations.

These taxes, moreover, could be increased by simple majorities in the legislature, as the bill exempts the three new taxes from the constitution’s supermajority requirements for tax increases. If a future legislature decides that doubling the state’s tax collections was insufficient, the constitution’s supermajority requirement would not stand in its way. And while the new surtaxes are inflation-indexed (the payroll tax’s second bracket is not), the legislature is authorized to suspend inflation indexing at any time, which would lead to the particularly curious case of inflation-indexing the standard income [tax brackets](#) but not the surtax brackets.

This is not the first time California lawmakers have considered creating a single-payer health system, which previous estimates pegged as requiring [\\$200 billion](#) in additional state funding. This assumes, moreover, that California secures federal approval to redirect approximately \$200 billion in federal funding toward a health-care match, since the full cost of the program is about \$400 billion per year. Even with that match, the numbers only balance if a single-payer system generates significant cost savings, an assumption that is, at minimum, controversial. And as with prior considerations of one-state single-payer proposals, there are questions of whether residents would still need health insurance to cover them [while outside the state](#), depending on how the program is designed.

The proposal for a \$163 billion a year tax increase comes at a time when the [California Legislative Analyst's Office](#) is projecting a \$31 billion surplus, after tax collections grew at an annual rate of 30 percent, the fastest in at least four decades. The \$163 billion in additional revenue that proponents of ACA 11 hope to generate each year exceeds *all* state revenue for any year prior to FY 2020.

Like most states, California's revenues grew rapidly over the past two years. Unlike most states, however, California faces a downside risk in the form of a continuing exodus of taxpayers, accelerated by the rise of remote work and [increased workplace mobility](#). California lost 0.8 percent of its population between April 2020 and July 2021, the [fourth-largest decline in the country](#) after the District of Columbia, New York, and Illinois.

Practically doubling state taxes—even if the burden is partially offset through state-provided health coverage—could send taxpayers racing for the exits.

Jared is Vice President of State Projects with the Center for State Tax Policy at the Tax Foundation. He is the lead researcher on the annual State Business Tax Climate Index and Location Matters, and has authored or coauthored tax reform guides on Alaska, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Nevada, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, West Virginia, and Wisconsin. Jared's work is regularly cited in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Los Angeles Times, Politico, AP, and many other prominent national and state outlets. This article first appeared on the California Policy Center f January 7 , 2022.

Item - 3 Governor's Proposed Budget Requests \$286.4 Billion. Excerpts from an excellent article by Cailforan Globe's investigative reporter Katy Grimes outlines the stunningly reckless proposal.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom's Record \$286.4 Billion Proposed Budget 'Gavin Newsom's budget gets a big fat F for failing Californians' By Katy Grimes

California Gov. Gavin Newsom released his record \$286.4 billion proposed budget Monday to praise and criticism. His 2022-2023 budget proposes to spend:

\$22.5 billion over the next five years to fight climate change including \$500 million for “climate workforce” programs that involve professional training

An “Oil-free” future includes \$6.1 billion for electric trucks, school buses, heavy-duty vehicles, 100,000 new charging stations, and more transportation projects, \$2 billion clean energy projects, \$1 billion in tax credits for companies working on climate solutions, \$9 billion in transportation projects for transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian safety, climate adaptation and high-speed rail

Wildfire support including \$3.7 billion and add more than 1,200 new CalFire positions and \$1.2 billion for forest management

On top of the \$12 billion in last year’s budget for the homeless, Newsom proposes another \$2 billion in spending and \$1.5 billion for housing for homeless including tiny homes and shelters

Drought spending including \$750 million in water conservation, efficiency, groundwater recharge

\$2 billion for coastal and ocean protection, community resiliency projects, urban greening and a state climate corps

Universal health care for everyone in the state (previously estimated at more than \$400 billion) \$2.7 billion on efforts related to vaccines, boosters, COVID-19 testing and “increased medical personnel”

\$20 million in scholarships for doctors who commit to providing abortions
In addition to paying for the health care of low-income young adults and people 50 and over in the country illegally, Newsom is adding \$2.2 billion per year to pay for the health care expenses for every low-income adult in the state regardless of their immigration status

\$1.5 million to repurpose empty housing areas in prisons

\$102 billion to education to deal with pandemic costs in schools

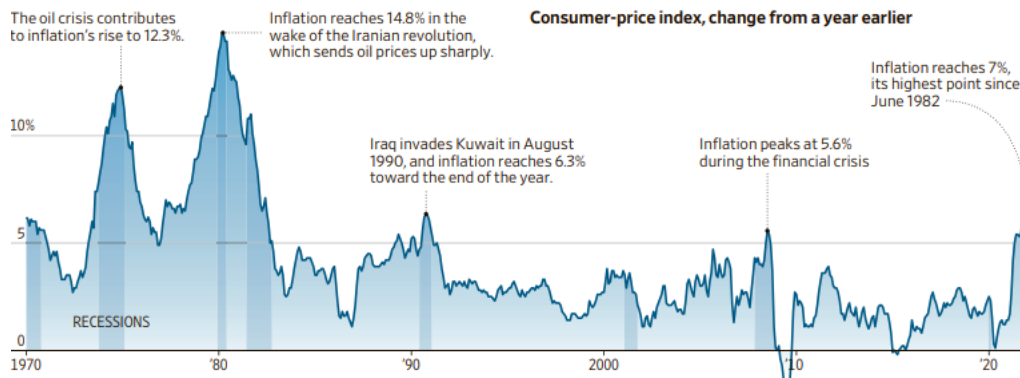
\$1 billion for universal transitional kindergarten for all 4-year-olds by 2025

\$3.4 billion before- and after-school programs for low-income elementary school students, and “expanded learning”

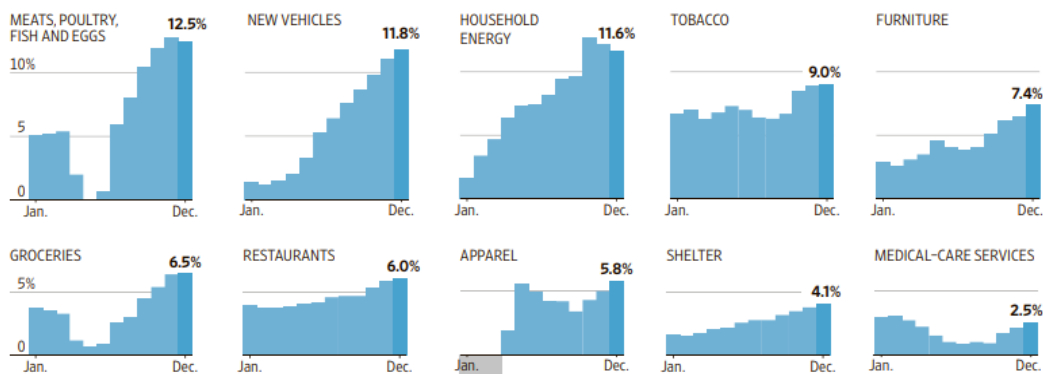
This article first appeared in the January 22, 2022, edition of California Globe.

Item 4 – Inflation. The Wall Street Journal tables below summarize the nasty impacts so far.

Inflation Hits Fastest Clip Since '82



Consumer-price index for select categories, change from a year earlier



Source: U.S. Labor Department via the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis

Kurt Wilberding/THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

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

THE TRUTHS WE DARED NOT SPEAK IN 2021 AT THE END OF THIS TERRIBLE YEAR, WE ARE LEFT ONLY WITH IRONIES. BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

As the long year of 2021 finally came to a close, there were a number of truths Americans on the Left found themselves privately acknowledging but unable to say in public for fear of doing damage to their political cause, their own reputations, or their sense of security. But as 2022 advances, it will become even more difficult to hide these truths.

Collusion, RIP

No one wishes to speak of the “dossier” anymore. Everyone knows why: it was never a dossier. It was always a mishmash concoction of half-baked fantasies and outright lies, sloppily thrown

together by the grifter and has-been ex-British spy and Trump hater, Christopher Steele—all in the pay of Hillary Clinton, the original architect of the collusion hoax.

Steele himself admitted that he had no sources or notes to substantiate his “research.” Most of those who had seeded the dossier around Washington now either agree it was fake, or “partially” false, or remain silent in embarrassment.

The perpetual NeverTrump revisionism is reduced to “The Russian Hoax,” in pathetic fashion suggesting Putin still colluded with Trump and such “collusion” is provable even without the dossier.

The logic is Orwellian: in 2017-2020 we heard, “But the dossier shows that . . .” In 2020-2021 we heard, “Whoever said the dossier had anything to do with Russian collusion?”

The FBI—that in part used their paid informant Steele’s lies to birth FISA warrants—now disowns it. The entire 22-month, \$40-million Mueller charade ended up in tragicomic style with Robert Mueller under oath denying he knew much of anything about either the purveyor of the dossier, Fusion GPS, or the dossier itself.

James Comey when asked about it and the investigations it spawned, on 245 occasions under oath claimed he lost his memory or had no knowledge of it.

The Russian collusion hoax will go down in history as one of the most shameful examples of Washington, D.C. mass hysteria, and of a concentrated effort to destroy an elected president, in modern American political history.

In the end, we always come back to where we started: Hillary Clinton.

She used the three firewalls of the Democratic National Committee, the Perkins Coie legal firm, and Fusion GPS, to pay Steele, a foreign national, likely barred by law from providing such dirt to a U.S. presidential campaign.

Steele then grabbed Clinton and FBI money, and in lazy fashion made a few calls to the now indicted Igor Danchenko, a Russian working in Washington, D.C. at the left-wing Brookings Institution, along with a Clinton crony Charles Dolan doing business in Moscow. Presto, Steele typed up their myths, in scary intelligence white-paper fashion, and passed them off as top-secret “Russian sources.” The dossier became the “proof” needed to show that Trump, in the words of former CIA director John Brennan, was “treasonous” or, as former Director of National Intelligence General (ret.) James Clapper alleged, was a “Russian asset.”

The Russian collusion hoax is now akin to Joe Biden’s cognitive decline; everyone knows it, but few bother to state the obvious—or rehash their now embarrassing earlier denials.

When the Musical Chairs Music Stops

Everyone knows the government cannot keep running up astronomical annual deficits. It is piling up a near \$30 trillion national debt, printing trillions of dollars—and hoping to keep inflation

down to 7 percent per year. Everyone knows that, and no one wishes to talk, much less do anything, about it.

Instead, we simply will go on redistributing money, inflating the economy, and hoping that the middle classes are naïve enough to believe that their inflated paychecks outpace their greater inflationary costs that, in truth, have more than wiped out all their wage gains.

When the interest rate hikes invariably come—the longer we wait, the worse will be the reckoning—we will again know the stagflation of the 1970s and 1980s.

The only calculus the Democrats weigh is whether they can print their way to a semblance of normality through 2022, in hopes the helium-over-inflated economy blows up only after the elections.

Who knows, maybe then they can blame Joe Biden in 2023 for empowering them to wreck the economy and losing the Congress, as a way of arguing his clear cognitive decline suddenly warrants resignation.

Spiraling Crimes without Criminals

Almost every statistic related to violent crime is up. Smash-and-grab has reached tony places like Union Square in San Francisco, Walnut Creek, and Carmel by the Sea.

Car-jackings are endemic. Gun sales are booming—among terrified upscale white liberals.

An entire blame-the victim protocol emerges—drive your oldest car, dress down, hide your jewelry, hire security guards for your person and business—because mysteriously there are no victimizers, or at least none that can be mentioned.

The once popular, but now discredited BLM has been reduced to a caricature, arguing that such violent crimes are constructs created by white people to jail black people, that Jussie Smollett was innocent and a victim of racism, and that the Waukesha massacre was the apparent start of a needed “revolution.”

Everyone knows that defunding the police failed and dangerously so. The public accepts that the Soros DAs are both incompetent and sinister. People of all classes and races look at crime statistics. They watch internet videos. They compare firsthand experience with robbery, assault, and theft. And they surmise that young black males are disproportionately—in terms of their percentages in the population—responsible for much of the violent crime wave, from murders to car-jackings to smash-and-grab mass thefts.

The more the media fails to print descriptions of suspects in criminal assaults, the more universities cavalierly violate the federal Clery Act by failing to provide their campus communities needed information about criminal suspects’ descriptions, and the more big-city mayors and district attorneys deny an epidemic of violent assault, the more the public knows that crime is even worse than what they hear, see, feel, and experience first-hand.

The public also assumes that voicing the truth is deemed “racist” and thus will earn them a doxing or canceling—and so in Soviet-style keep quiet. We do not dare speak of disproportionate black perpetrators of hate crimes, rare interracial crimes, and the killing of police.

Yet such silence does not hide the truth that cannot be quite smothered . In a recent op-ed, Heather Mac Donald estimated that “A police officer is about 400 times as likely to be killed by a black suspect as an unarmed black is to be killed by a police officer.”

So, we have a crime wave without criminals in the manner we had a SUV on autopilot without a driver that killed six and injured 62 in Waukesha.

Unofficially, the paradox plays out with the upscale blue-city suburbanite still with the BLM sign on his lawn but with a new 12-gauge under the bed, with the BLM hierarchs and their loud enablers living like Patrisse Cullors, Colin Kaepernick, or LeBron James in rich, mostly white areas, with ample walls and security fences and gates.

So, the year ended with a near record of black-on-black homicides, and a new record of lethal shootings—of police officers on duty.

Biden, A Robust 95?

Everyone knows that Biden may be chronologically 78, but mentally and physically he is at best 95 or more. People sense that he is failing at a geometric rate that makes his ability to last even another year “problematic.”

But no one says much because the nation has never removed a president or, other than Richard Nixon, had a president resign.

The Left knows that they were on record from 2017-2020 with incessant 25th Amendment coup talk and went so low as to wheel out a Yale psychiatrist to claim Trump was crazy and needed an intervention removal. Their constant haranguing forced Trump to take the Montreal Cognitive Assessment—which he aced and which Joe Biden most assuredly will not take, nor will be encouraged to take.

Apparently, Biden’s handlers believe in the next three years he can imitate the last few months of Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, where the inactive president was kept incommunicado in bed while the wall of his family and close associates deluded the country and lied about Wilson’s true health condition.

Kamala Harris plays a bad Spiro Agnew. True, she is so incompetent that calls to ask Biden to step down resemble the early voices who asked the same of Nixon but were met with, “So you want Agnew?”

But unlike Agnew who resigned in disgrace after pleading nolo contendere to a single charge of tax evasion, Kamala Harris is in no legal jeopardy. And so, the idea of a “President Harris” who is not non compos mentis apparently is more frightening to the public than keeping Joe Biden

who is non compos mentis. And thus, talk of Biden's diminishing capacity always is interrupted by "So you want President Harris?"

In the end, we are left only with such ironies. The Left, which damned John McCain for selecting Sarah Palin as his running mate, is mute about the far less qualified Kamala Harris as an actual vice president. The matters of race and gender preferences that ensured the incompetent Harris her job are now transmogrified into matters of racism that supposedly explain the charges of her critics.

The Virus is Dead, But the Virus Will Never Die!

We all know the administration has little clue how to deal with COVID-19. We nod that it does and meanwhile scramble in "everyman for himself" fashion. Who wishes to say or admit that his own government has no idea how to stop the virus, but has a great number of ideas about how to weaponize it for political purposes?

Now there are more dead from COVID-19 in Biden's tenure than during Trump's, despite well over 60 percent of the population being fully vaxxed and 2-years' experience in treating the virus. A 2020-Biden would demand that 2021-Biden be charged with responsibility for well over 400,000 COVID-19 deaths on his watch and thus should resign.

Everyone knew Biden had no plan, at least not any different from what Trump was doing. His autopilot agenda was simply to claim ownership of the Warp Speed inoculations and assume that by March 2021 COVID was finally burning itself out as it bumped into too many people with prior natural or vaccinated immunity.

In Biden's logic, nature and Trump had stopped COVID-19, but he would credit his own inaction and 90-day miracle leadership from Washington.

Now Biden is a sanctimonious, Oedipus-like figure, the deliverer who cannot stop the plague that in an eerie way exposes his existential flaws.

So, Delta and then Omicron arrived. Breakthrough cases accompanied both. Suddenly Biden was calling for the states to step up, given "there is no federal solution" to the crisis. He meant that vaccinations do not guarantee immunity from COVID infections anymore.

Masks and social distancing do not stop Omicron's spread. There is no federal success in supplying easy testing and an array of therapeutics and medicines to the public.

Like the proverbial cranky "get off my grass" neighbor, an oblivious and irate Biden still ignores the shortage of tests, the value of therapeutics and natural immunity, and the reality of thousands of breakthrough infections—caught in his senility warp to croak on about "masks" and "vaccinations."

In 2020, Biden was attacking Trump as if he were acting under "The Articles of Confederation" in outsourcing authority to governors to adopt and manage the crisis as they saw best. In 2021 Biden was praising such Trumpist federalism as he renounced his former much ballyhooed

federal authority when blasting Trump as an anti-Federalist who followed the Articles of Confederation.

In the end, Americans are in 2022 where they were at the beginning of the virus in March 2020: China has successfully hidden the origins of the COVID.

The WHO cannot be trusted.

The CDC, NIH, and NIAID are incompetent and politically weaponized.

The pharmaceutical industries see relief only in more multi-billion-dollar booster rollouts and \$700-a-pill remedies.

Dr. “I am the science” Fauci in cyclical fashion is on TV all day.

He claims on Tuesday that what he said on Monday needed updating, with the intention of saying on Wednesday that his correction on Tuesday was also wrong, while he awaits more bookings for Thursday’s clarifications—all the while damning the ignorant mob who disseminates supposedly false information.

The Year’s Ironies

At the end of this second terrible year, we are left only with ironies.

Vaccinations are a must for soldiers and federal employees, but no barrier to entry for 2 million illegal aliens (is breaking the law a way to avoid the mandate?).

If you are vaxxed, you are safe; but if your antibody level is even higher from natural immunity, you are not?

If you get COVID, you are on your own, given the government has no idea what affordable pill you should swallow or what protocol you should follow.

Social distancing and masks are vital—unless you go out on the street protesting in concert with BLM or are a California official dining at the French Laundry, or a liberal politician getting your hair done.

Those Americans in 2020 who claimed their president was all too real, know now they voted in a president who is all too false.

Those Americans who thought up every conceivable legal and illegal way of forcing the hated Trump out of office are racking their brains in vain to use those talents to find just one way of easing out their beloved Joe Biden.

Those Americans, who love the free cash for staying home, fear that the money they got might help to explain why it is now less valuable.

Those Americans, who claimed moral superiority for their masks and three shots—and still got COVID—cannot decide whether they were lied to by Donald Trump, lied to by Joe Biden—or simply lied to themselves.

Those Americans who praised defunding the police and excused looting, arson, and violence are pondering whether it is better to renounce their idiocy, or to stay quiet and take one more carjacking, one more assault, or one more break-in—for the cause.

Those Americans who applauded the disreputable efforts of Michael Avenatti, John Brennan, James Clapper, James Comey, Andrew McCabe, Robert Mueller, Adam Schiff, Christopher Steele, and Alexander Vindman to destroy Trump at all costs, got all they wanted—and thereby have all but destroyed the progressive cause, and likely made Donald Trump all the more powerful, the more so they sought to ruin him.

*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*, *The Case for Trump* and the newly released *The Dying Citizen*. This Article first appeared in the January 11, 2021 *Front Page Magazine*.*

THE YEAR OF LIVING STUPIDLY

How long will America continue witnessing our unalienable rights and political freedoms?

BY BRUCE THORNTON



In 2021, political, social, and cultural trends that had been developing for decades reached a level of surreal absurdity. Under the stress of the pandemic crisis, we witnessed our alleged “cognitive elites” in government, schools, popular culture, and media saying and doing things that an illiterate peasant in the 18th century would consider the words and deeds of a lunatic. In every

dimension of our existence, gross violations of logic and common sense were shamelessly indulged, the lies never acknowledged even when exposed.

The presidency of Donald Trump was the accelerant of these developments. The bipartisan ruling elite found the straight-talking, braggadocios celebrity plutocrat a gross insult to their technocratic pretensions and guild “norms.” The depth of his challenge was especially obvious in the corporate legacy-media, which colluded with the progressive Democrats to inflate preposterous rumors of “collusion” with Russia into existential crises endangering “our democracy.”

Even when two years of a dishonest, corrupt investigation by the special counsel couldn’t provide a scintilla of legitimate evidence to support these charges, the Dems and their media flunkies simply moved on to the next fabrication. The four-hour mini-riot at the Capitol building on January 6 was similarly inflated into an “insurrection” and assault on the same “temple of democracy” that progressives have been vandalizing for over a century. The House conducted a second dead-end impeachment of Trump, and when that collapsed, shifted to a still-ongoing investigation of the January 6 protests in order to short-circuit our democratic process by preemptively disqualifying Trump from the 2024 election.

The dishonesty, hypocrisy, and sheer cognitive incoherence of the reaction to a president who for all his crude and insulting rhetoric, had one of the most successful first terms of a president in the postwar period—a judgement the validity of which it took “Joe Biden,” the simulacrum of a president, less than a year of failures and disasters to confirm. Inflation, supply-chain bottlenecks, unfilled jobs, hysterical covid protocols, drunken-sailor spending, exploding violent crime, a dishonorable abandonment of Afghanistan, geopolitical adventurism by our rivals and enemies, loss of our energy independence, runaway gasoline prices, and schools blatantly indoctrinating students with transgender and literally racist propaganda—all are the wages of the Trumpophobia epidemic.

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the peculiar stupidity of modern progressives than Critical Race Theory, a snazzy moniker for old-school racist drivel. Claiming that all “white” people—regardless of their numerous and diverse ethnic origins and socio-economic status—are without exception “racist” and “privileged” by “systemic racism” is as morally idiotic and stupid as the “scientific racism” that a century ago justified legal segregation.

Yet the success of intimidating and blackmailing our institutions into accepting and promoting these illiberal ideas has led to embedding racism more deeply into the culture. Superficial physical characteristics, especially crude signifiers of color like “black” or “white,” now are being used to privilege, literally and concretely, some groups and to exclude others. The segregation outlawed by the Civil Rights Act and the 14th Amendment is, for now, legal again.

So over the past year we’ve seen the accelerating abandonment of equal opportunity, and its replacement with a coerced equality of outcome. Grammar and high schools, for example, are increasingly offering services, programs, and courses forbidden to “white” students. Worse are the so-called elite universities, for the nonsense taught there ultimately trickles down into K-12 education. So Harvard, the temple of “Veritas et Lux,” is ditching merit-based admissions in order to achieve a superficial, cosmetic “diversity,” the Danegeld our institutions pay to the race-

industry Vikings ever ready to plunder and sack businesses, institutions, and reputations that resist their illiberal, self-aggrandizing strictures and orthodoxies.

A close second to Critical Race Theory in the stupidity sweepstakes is “Climate Change,” or more honestly, Anthropogenic Catastrophic Global Warming. In 2021 we saw the UN’s 26th “Conference of Parties,” the globalist confab about how to mitigate the alleged catastrophic warming threatening the planet. This century-old hypothesis that humans’ dumping CO2 into the atmosphere will destroy the planet hasn’t fared so well lately given its serial failures of prediction, and its dubious computer models that plug the holes in empirical evidence that result from our ignorance of how an intricately complex global climate functions over time.

But there’s an obvious fact about proposals to mitigate ACGW that bespeak the stupidity of true believers, and the machinations of green hustlers: even if every program and policy for slowing warming were implemented, global temperatures would not be reduced sufficiently to avoid the alleged catastrophe, because big emitters like China and India are not going to play along. China alone emits twice as much greenhouse gases as the U.S, and more than all the developed nations combined. And if the threat is so dire and imminent, why wouldn’t the climate-change Chicken Littles support clean, renewable nuclear power-plants, or push for replacing coal-fired plants with ones fueled by cleaner, abundant natural gas?

This brings us to the causes of these obviously incoherent ideas, ideologies, and policies they promote. Stupidity, of course, is always a factor in bad folly. In the past, a lack of higher intelligence was offset by common sense and practical wisdom, the intelligence most critical for living together, surviving, and flourishing. Our modern world and its technologies, however, have made it possible for people in daily life to survive without practical intelligence.

But we have mistaken that technical expertise for the wisdom about human nature that comes from tradition, experience, and common sense. We look instead to “experts” who are skilled in narrow professions and disciplines, and give them the authority to speak more broadly about human nature and society, subjects that are not amenable to scientific protocols for discovering truth.

This mistake is our age’s peculiar “stupidity.” Indeed, for two years, we’ve seen this phenomenon in the contradictory, shifting, downright absurd “mandates” and protocols federal and state governments have imposed on sovereign citizens, at an exorbitant cost to our well-being, children’s education, quality of life, and economic development.

The other cause is the pursuit of power and wealth that justifies anything, no matter how preposterous, that serves a faction’s self-interests and ambitions. The attacks on Trump were about weakening him and his administration before the 2020 elections so the progressive Dems could take power and advance their ideological agenda. Critical Race Theory enriches those who promote it by writing bestsellers and providing, like the Attorney General’s son-in-law, curricula and other training materials sold to schools, corporations, and government agencies. “Climate Change” has for decades been a global grift, transferring billions in taxpayer money to climate researchers, “clean energy” companies, electric vehicle and solar panel manufacturers, globalist foundations and NGOs, legions of government bureaucrats, and battalions of consultant and lobbyists.

Finally, there's the stupidity of the true believer for whom these ideologies are the doctrines, and the policies the sacraments, of a cult. Climate-change maenad Greta Thunberg is merely the most hysterically flamboyant of such people who, like Holly Golightly, actually believe all the crap they believe. They are the shrill "Karens" scolding the maskless or condemning the unvaxed as heretics wantonly endangering everybody. They are the embodiment of the eternal human flaw of self-righteousness and condemning those they deem sinners.

Whatever the causes or the varieties of stupidity, this year we've seen it dominate the culture. Will we see the policies of stupidity implode like most episodes of mass delusion, and common sense return to our culture, schools, and politics? Or will this stupidity and the policies it spawns continue until our country is fundamentally transformed, and our unalienable rights and political freedom further weakened?

November 8, 2022 will be the day those questions are answered.

Bruce Thornton is a Shillman Journalism Fellow at the Freedom Center, a Research Fellow at Stanford's Hoover Institution, and a Professor of Classics and Humanities at the California State University. He is the author of nine books and numerous essays on classical culture and its influence on Western Civilization. His most recent book, Democracy's Dangers and Discontents (Hoover Institution Press), is now available for purchase.



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