COLAB
San Luis Obispo County
The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

WEEKLY UPDATE
DECEMBER 1 - 7, 2024

REMEMBER PEARL HARBOR
PURSUE VIGILANCE
LOVE PEACE/APPLY LETHALITY
HONOR & DEFEND LIBERTY

IN THE END THEY ALWAYS LAUNCH SURPRISE ATTACKS AS THEY ARE DESPARATE
WHY DO THEY ALL GOOSE STEP ON THE WAY?
(FACISTS, NAZIS, COMMUNISTS, ISLAMISTS, & THE OTHER TOTALITARIANS)

ANNOUNCEMENT

DEBBIE ARNOLD'S RETIREMENT PARTY

SEE FULL FLYER ON PAGE 35 BELOW

Supervisor Debbie Arnold's Retirement Party
and our annual Christmas Celebration!

Enjoy a delicious Lasagna Dinner, catered by
Stein's Catering.
Please register below and join the festivities!

Wednesday - December 18th

Please Register by
Dec 12th

The Pavilion at the Lake

9315 Pismo Ave
Atascadero Lake

Please Register by
Dec 12th

Drinks and Appetizers: 6:00 PM
Dinner: 6:30 PM
Doors Open at 5:30 pm

Wine & Refreshments Provided

Donation: $50

Register

THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 6

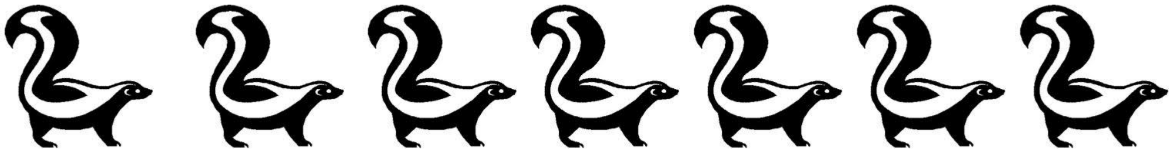
NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS - SLOCOG

NEW SALES TAX SCHEME PROPOSED

IT STINKS LIKE DEAD FISH GARNISHED WITH SKUNK

THEY SNEAKED IT ONTO THE AGENDA THANKSGIVING WEEK



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$500K ENGINEERING SEGMENT REDESIGN CONTRACT

ATTMEPT TO SAVE BOB JONES TRAIL PROJECT

LONG TERM ROAD FUNDING GAP: $2.3 BILLION

BUT EQUITY AND CO_2 REDUCTION DRIVE THE GAME

INCLUDING MORE BUSES, TRAINS, TRAILS, BIKEPATHS, ROTARIES, AND OTHER CO_2 FETISHES YOU "WANT"

LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 11

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

OTHER REGIONAL AGENCIES OFF

SLO COUNTY CLERK RECORDER'S OFFICE

VOTE COUNT WAS THE SLOWEST IN THE STATE EVEN LA COUNTY HAD LESS TO COUNT DATE FOR DATE

EMERGENT ISSUES
SEE PAGE 15

SOLAR POWER GLUT BOOSTS CALIFORNIA ELECTRIC BILLS - OTHER STATES REAP THE BENEFITS

CALIFORNIA IS MAKING SO MUCH SOLAR ENERGY THAT LARGE COMMERCIAL OPERATORS ARE INCREASINGLY FORCED TO STOP PRODUCTION, RAISING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STATE'S COSTLY PLAN TO SHIFT ENTIRELY TO CARBON-FREE SOURCES OF ELECTRICITY.

APPARENTLY CALIFORNIA IS ALREADY A SOCIALIST STATE

96.5% OF NEW JOBS IN CALIFORNIA THIS YEAR WERE GOVERNMENT JOBS

ON THE NAUGHTY LIST AGAIN: CALIFORNIA HAS THIRD-WORST TAX CLIMATE IN THE U.S.

THE STATE IS ALSO DRAMATICALLY OUT OF CONFORMITY WITH THE FEDERAL TAX CODE, WHICH ADDS TO 'TAX COMPLEXITY'

COLAB IN DEPTH

SEE PAGE 26

THE IMMORALITY OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Democratic leaders are facing backlash over the Biden administration's handling of illegal immigration, leading to a surge in crime, strained services, and a Trump victory focused on border security

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Got Debt? Try Some Fiscal Federalism

NEW YORK TIMES EDITORIAL

WASHINGTON CAREENS TOWARD THE ABYSS OF WORLD WAR

BY DOUG BANDOW

SPONSORS

THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, December 3, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

San Luis Obispo County Council of Governments Meeting of Wednesday, December 4, 2024 (Scheduled)

C-8 - Ratify Contract with Wallace Group – Bob Jones Trail Project (RATIFY CONTRACT WITH WALLACE GROUP IN THE AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $522,316). Stephen Hanamaikai. The route modification is necessary, due to a property owner's refusal to sell a right of way to the County for the trail. Supervisors Arnold and Peschong refused to vote for condemnation. The contract provides for design of an alternate segment. Ultimately, the State will have to approve the alternative and agree to the County shuffling the funding around so that the new transportation grant pays for the alternative route segment. If the State declines, the entire project will be dead.

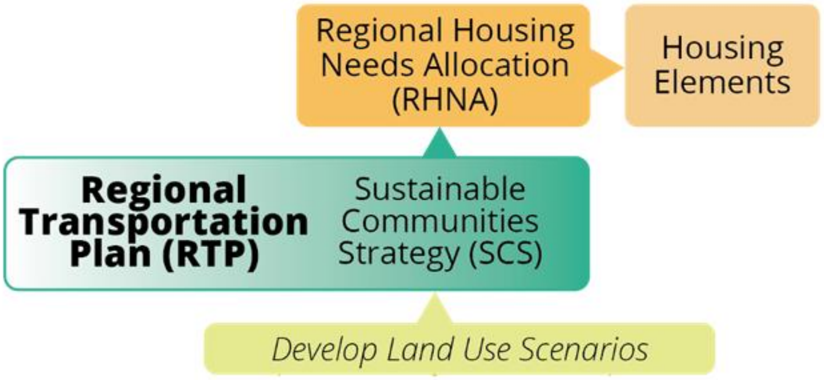
In parallel with this effort, the County is declaring that the trail is a part of its overall transportaion plan so that it will qualify for the transportation grant. The theory is that people will use the trail for communting and not just for recreation.

The write-up states in part:

*The scope of work includes critical tasks necessary to advance the project toward construction funding allocation anticipated to occur in March 2025. The project is partially funded through the Active Transportation Program (ATP) administered by the California Transportation Commission. Agencies with projects funded through the ATP must meet Timely Use of Funds deadlines identified in the program guidelines or risk being deleted from the program. The tasks in the scope of work are a continuation of environmental and engineering work carried out under a separate expiring/underfunded contract with the County of San Luis Obispo, which continues to lead and coordinate the design phase***.**

F - 4 - 2027 - Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the 2027 Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA): Background, Requirements, and Schedule (VOICE VOTE – REVIEW AND COMMENT; SUPPORT DIRECTION). James Worthley/Sara Sanders. The item introduces the next RTP development cycle and its relationship to the RHNA. These two required plans are essentially used by the State to force cities and counties to comply with State housing policies and CO2 reduction mandates. Each jurisdiction must comply or risk losing millions in Federal and State transportation funding. The graphic below illustrates the interrelationship:

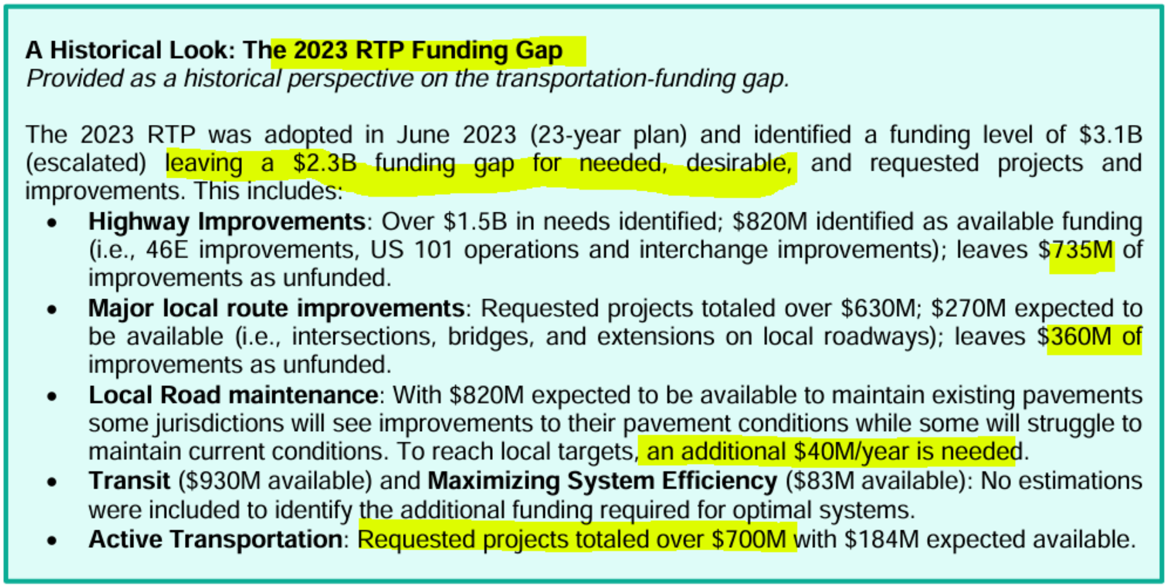
Figure 1: Connecting the RTP & RHNA



A portion of the narrative states:

2027 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) Plan Since 1980, the State of California has required each jurisdiction to plan for its share of the state's housing need for people of all income levels. The RHNA is the process by which each community is assigned its share of the housing need for an eight-year period. The RHNA identifies each jurisdiction's responsibility for planning for housing and is divided into four income categories (very low, low, moderate and above moderate). The RHNA Plans are prepared in conjunction with RTPs. The San Luis Obispo region will initiate the 7th RHNA Housing Element Cycle in 2025.The allocation process consists of three steps.
1. Determination: The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total housing need for the region.
2. Plan: The RHNA Plan establishes a distribution methodology. As the Council of Governments for the San Luis Obispo region, it is SLOCOG's responsibility to create a plan in coordination with the local jurisdictions. The RHNA Determination is distributed to the local jurisdictions by the four income categories.
3. Result: The eight local jurisdictions must update the Housing Element of their General Plans to show how it plans to meet the housing needs in its community. State law requires housing elements to be completed 18 months after the adoption of SLOCOG's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

The County and its component cities have an estimated $2.3 million funding gap for needed road improvements, road maintenance, and mass transit. See the summary table below:



A Historical Look: The 2023 RTP Funding Gap
Provided as a historical perspective on the transportation-funding gap.

The 2023 RTP was adopted in June 2023 (23-year plan) and identified a funding level of $3.1B (escalated) leaving a $2.3B funding gap for needed, desirable, and requested projects and improvements. This includes:

- **Highway Improvements**: Over $1.5B in needs identified; $820M identified as available funding (i.e., 46E improvements, US 101 operations and interchange improvements); leaves $735M of improvements as unfunded.
- **Major local route improvements**: Requested projects totaled over $630M; $270M expected to be available (i.e., intersections, bridges, and extensions on local roadways); leaves $360M of improvements as unfunded.
- **Local Road maintenance**: With $820M expected to be available to maintain existing pavements some jurisdictions will see improvements to their pavement conditions while some will struggle to maintain current conditions. To reach local targets, an additional $40M/year is needed.
- **Transit** ($930M available) and **Maximizing System Efficiency** ($83M available): No estimations were included to identify the additional funding required for optimal systems.
- **Active Transportation**: Requested projects totaled over $700M with $184M expected available.

This gap will be used to generate support for a new ½ cent sales tax in 2026. This year, a number of the cities had tax measures on the November 5th ballot . These passed. Accordingly, they may be more receptive to a countywide transportation tax in ’26, as it would not compete with their own measures. It will be interesting to see how Supervisor Paulding’s position on this one develops, as he will be up for reelection.

Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS)

The most insidious component of the RTP is the SCS, which injects the leftist mantras of “equity” and CO2 reduction into Plan.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy is required by Senate Bill 375 (2008) which dramatically shifted the context and framework for RTP development, placing new emphasis on performance and outcomes and presenting significant opportunities to create healthier, more equitable communities and regions. The SCS is an integrated plan for transportation, land use, and housing that must meet, if feasible, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction targets for cars and light trucks set by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). SLOCOG’s SCS will integrate transportation infrastructure, housing, and environmental planning as a bottom-up, consensus-driven, long-term growth strategy. It will also complement the region’s emphasis on building and maintaining an integrated, intermodal transportation system that supports and maintains the unique geographical qualities of the region.

A major challenge of the SCS is the likelihood that CARB will set new targets for GHG reductions. Our modeling methodology (approach and variables) and off-model tool considerations must be developed, submitted to, and approved by CARB. Staff is currently testing modeling tools and developing the 2060 Regional Growth Forecast Update to be used in modeling scenarios in the SCS.

F-5 - Year-End Legislative Report (VOICE VOTE – APPROVE STAFF RECOMMENDATION). Gus Khouri, Legislative Consultant / Tim Gillham a) Review enacted bills and modify processes and requirements accordingly. b) Support legislation on a regional 2% sales tax cap waiver.

NO - AND HELL NO!!!!! FOR THIS ITEM

The staff recommends that the SLOCOG support legislation that would make it easier to adopt up to a 1% increase for transportation sales taxes. Currently, State law caps the cumulative amount allowed in any county to be a maximum 2%.

As noted in the write-up excerpt below, several cities, when their sales taxes are combined, are approaching this limit. It is proposed that the law be amended to permit a 1% override for a county-wide measure that is generated by a voter initiative. Again, there is no limit to the appetite for more taxes.

This request may also be seen as a way to get a new transportation measure on the ballot when and if the SLOCOG Board cannot obtain a majority vote to do so.

The SLOCOG Board should reject this idea out of hand. They should reflect on the trillions of dollars spent by the Federal Government and the billions by the states on COVID slush funding, the American Rescue Plan Act, the so called Climate - Infrastructure Act, million dollar homeless studio apartments, commuter train subsidies, high speed rail, sea level rise projects, DEI, $88 billion worth of new American military equipment abandoned to the Taliban in Afghanistan, government employees at all levels of government still “working” at home, abandoned borders (and related social costs), State and Federal funding for universities that allow attacks on their Jewish students, coddling of criminals, County staffing that grew from 2,400 FTE at the end of the 2010 recession to 3,000 FTE today, irritating bike lanes all over the place, traffic circles (why not $250,000 traffic signals instead of a $3.5 million “roundabouts”), electric buses and garbage trucks, $70,000 EV chargers (many are broken already), natural gas bans, fossil fuel vehicle bans, endless steps and COLAS, failure to pursue real economic development (giant offshore windmills and Vandenberg spaceport), importing energy from Arizona while paying Arizona Public Service to take our over-produced solar, not enough new land zoned for homes, free air purifiers for the poor, empty subsidized buses roaring up and down the streets, failed multi-billion dollar homeless programs, $500,000 sound booth programs playing gongs to the mentally ill, a new government regulator - the so-called Chumash Heritage Marine Sanctuary, a new government agency - 3CE Energy is given unfair advantage and imports fake energy certificates for out of state, while exporting our utility jobs out of state etc. Meanwhile, we are hiring and paying [stat] the state to think all this stuff up.

The staff report sugar coats the issue:

Proposed Sales Tax Cap Waiver Legislation ***The purpose of the proposed legislation is to provide an exemption to the 2% cap on the local transaction and use taxes (also known as the Bradley-Burns district tax) in the County of San Luis Obispo to allow SLOCOG to pursue a local sales tax measure dedicated for transportation purposes. The proposed legislation would provide no more than a 1 percent exemption to place items before voters to fund regional***

transportation programs. This legislation would also allow a qualified voter initiative for transportation purposes to be placed on the ballot under certain conditions.

COLAB NOTE: OF COURSE THE 1% CAP WOULD LAST FOR ONLY A FEW YEARS, AND THEN "NEED" TO BE INCREASED.

Then the staff asserts that the cap is obsolete:

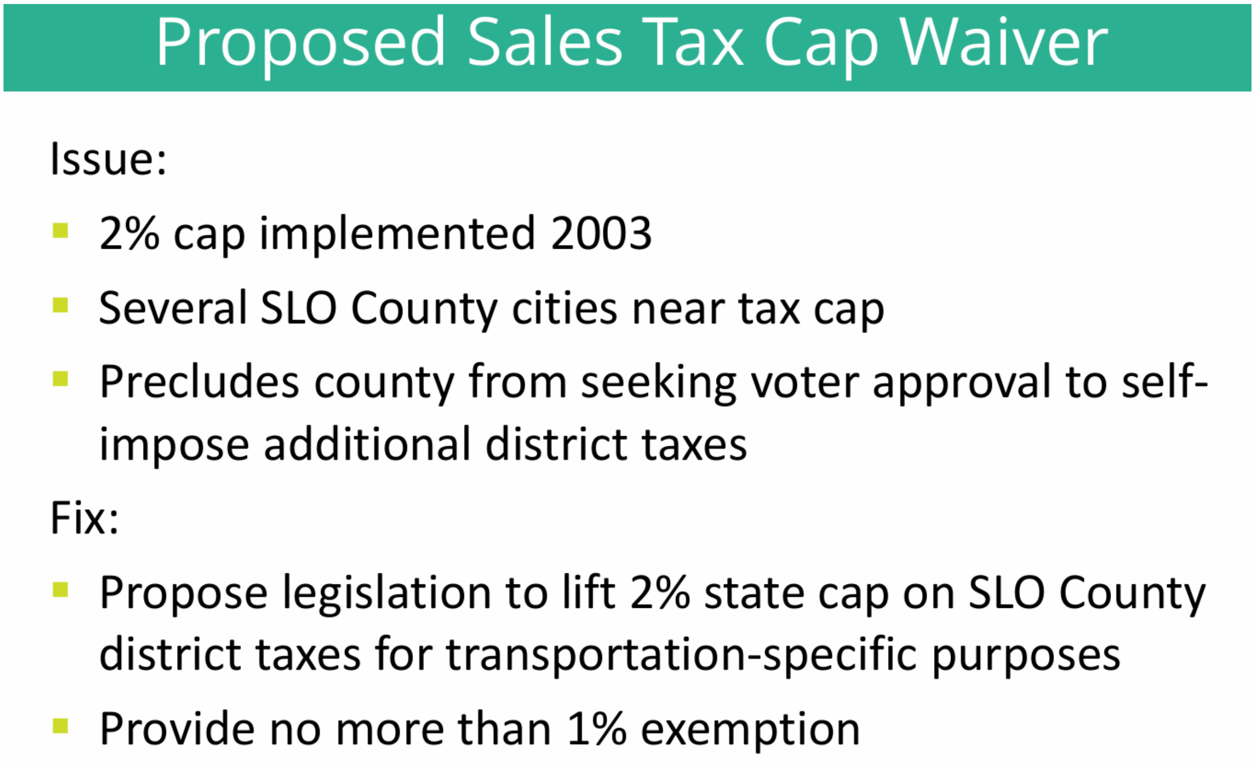
Problem and Background The 2% cap was implemented in 2003, over two decades ago. Since then, several bills have passed the Legislature to create exceptions to the cap. This cap is quickly reached since cities and counties each enact district taxes. It is particularly problematic for counties because if one city within a county has reached the cap, then the county is precluded from seeking voter approval to self-impose additional district taxes.

Similarly, cities that have already reached the cap are constrained when seeking additional funding for programs and services above the cap. San Luis Obispo County has several cities near the local sales cap tax which could impact SLOCOG pursuing a sales tax measure to address the severe traffic along the U.S. 101, goods movement and safety along SR 46, auxiliary routes such as SR 227, and fund several multimodal projects countywide.

While the SLOCOG Board can currently elect to place a sales tax measure on the ballot, a voter-approved qualified initiative process will enhance community engagement and help inform and affirm the development of an expenditure plan. This would provide greater accountability and direction for how best to dedicate future resources in Sam Luis Obispo County. Solution Proposed Legislation that lifts the 2% state cap on San Luis Obispo County district taxes for transportation specific purposes, allowing SLOCOG or a qualified voter initiative to seek voter approval for a local transportation sales tax measure in the future.

You want to enhance community engagement, conduct labor negotiations in public meetings.

Stop: Insist that the State and Feds reprioritize their programs to capital investment. Then do the same in all the LAFCO jurisdictions.



Proposed Sales Tax Cap Waiver

Issue:

- 2% cap implemented 2003
- Several SLO County cities near tax cap
- Precludes county from seeking voter approval to self-impose additional district taxes

Fix:

- Propose legislation to lift 2% state cap on SLO County district taxes for transportation-specific purposes
- Provide no more than 1% exemption

LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

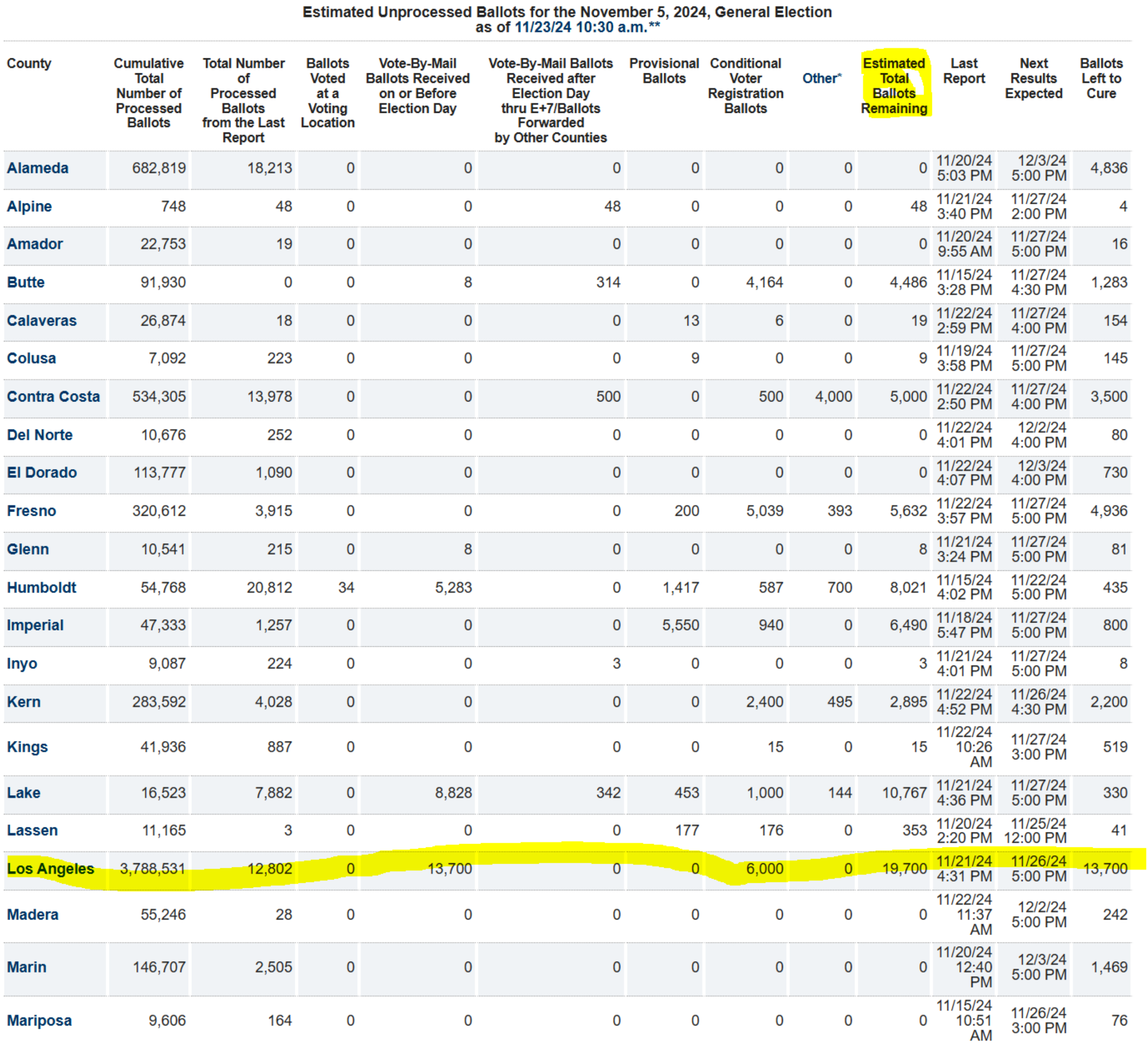
No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, November 26, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, December 10, 2024.

SLO County Clerk Recorder Elections Office - Slowest in the entire State

There were still 24,846 votes that had not been counted as of the close of business on November 20, 2024. The table below (from the Secretary of State) indicates that as of November 20, SLO County had the highst number of uncounted votes of all 58 counties. Even LA County, with 3.8 million votes to count, had only 19,700 left. If California is the slowest State in the nation, could SLO County be the slowest County in the nation? Even as of November 27, 2024, there were 3965 ballots waiting to be counted.

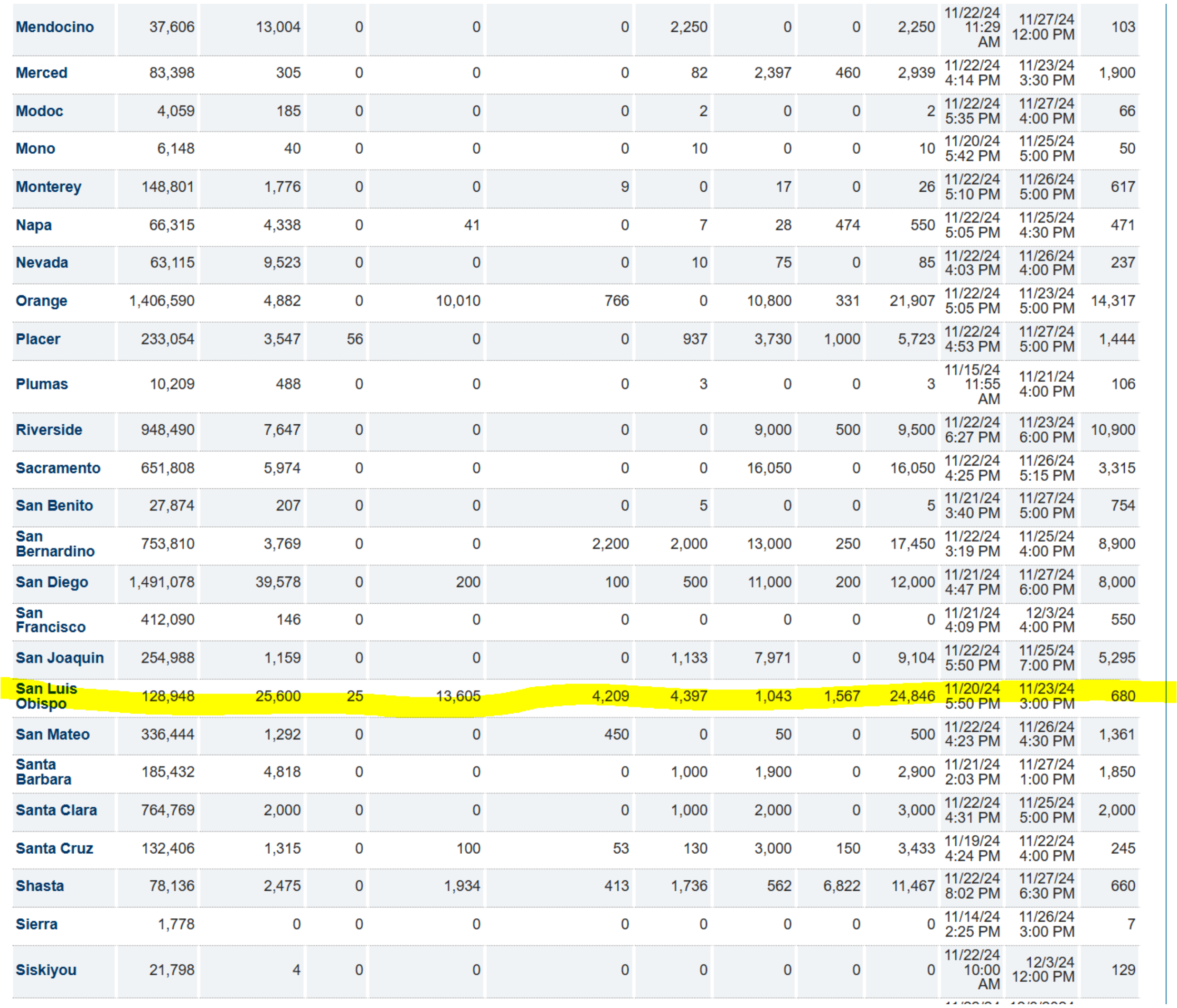
The California Secretary of State's tabulation is displayed on the next several pages. Note the column "Estimated Total Ballots Remaining" as of November 23, 2024.



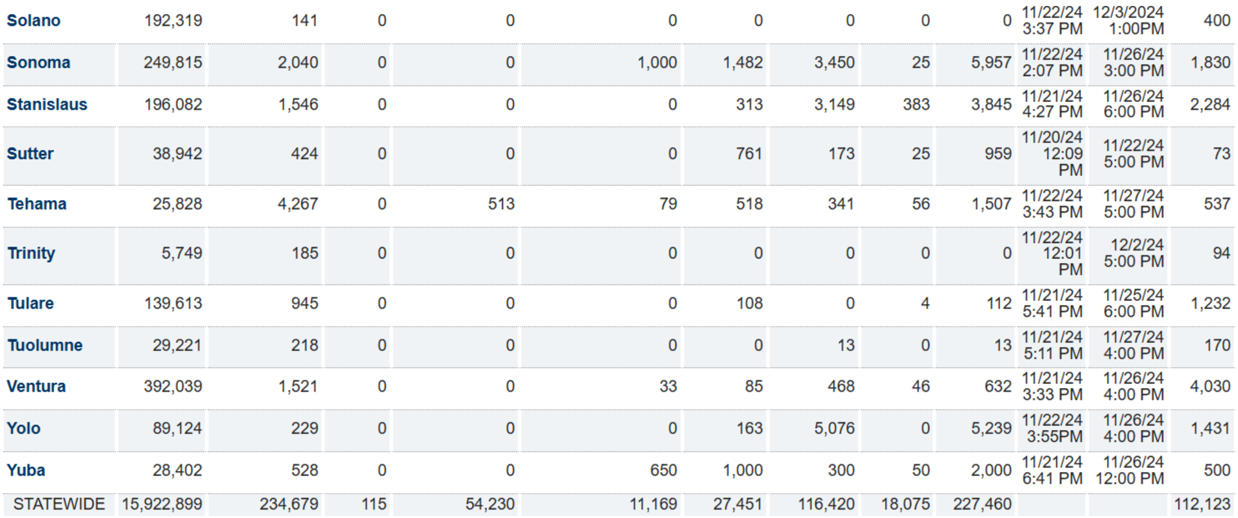
Estimated Unprocessed Ballots for the November 5, 2024, General Election
as of 11/23/24 10:30 a.m.**

County	Cumulative Total Number of Processed Ballots	Total Number of Processed Ballots from the Last Report	Ballots Voted at a Voting Location	Vote-By-Mail Ballots Received on or Before Election Day	Vote-By-Mail Ballots Received after Election Day thru E+7/Ballots Forwarded by Other Counties	Provisional Ballots	Conditional Voter Registration Ballots	Other*	Estimated Total Ballots Remaining	Last Report	Next Results Expected	Ballots Left to Cure
Alameda	682,819	18,213	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/20/24 5:03 PM	12/3/24 5:00 PM	4,836
Alpine	748	48	0	0	48	0	0	0	48	11/21/24 3:40 PM	11/27/24 2:00 PM	4
Amador	22,753	19	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/20/24 9:55 AM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	16
Butte	91,930	0	0	8	314	0	4,164	0	4,486	11/15/24 3:28 PM	11/27/24 4:30 PM	1,283
Calaveras	26,874	18	0	0	0	13	6	0	19	11/22/24 2:59 PM	11/27/24 4:00 PM	154
Colusa	7,092	223	0	0	0	9	0	0	9	11/19/24 3:58 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	145
Contra Costa	534,305	13,978	0	0	500	0	500	4,000	5,000	11/22/24 2:50 PM	11/27/24 4:00 PM	3,500
Del Norte	10,676	252	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 4:01 PM	12/2/24 4:00 PM	80
El Dorado	113,777	1,090	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 4:07 PM	12/3/24 4:00 PM	730
Fresno	320,612	3,915	0	0	0	200	5,039	393	5,632	11/22/24 3:57 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	4,936
Glenn	10,541	215	0	8	0	0	0	0	8	11/21/24 3:24 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	81
Humboldt	54,768	20,812	34	5,283	0	1,417	587	700	8,021	11/15/24 4:02 PM	11/22/24 5:00 PM	435
Imperial	47,333	1,257	0	0	0	5,550	940	0	6,490	11/18/24 5:47 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	800
Inyo	9,087	224	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	11/21/24 4:01 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	8
Kern	283,592	4,028	0	0	0	0	2,400	495	2,895	11/22/24 4:52 PM	11/26/24 4:30 PM	2,200
Kings	41,936	887	0	0	0	0	15	0	15	11/22/24 10:26 AM	11/27/24 3:00 PM	519
Lake	16,523	7,882	0	8,828	342	453	1,000	144	10,767	11/21/24 4:36 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	330
Lassen	11,165	3	0	0	0	177	176	0	353	11/20/24 2:20 PM	11/25/24 12:00 PM	41
Los Angeles	3,788,531	12,802	0	13,700	0	0	6,000	0	19,700	11/21/24 4:31 PM	11/26/24 5:00 PM	13,700
Madera	55,246	28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 11:37 AM	12/2/24 5:00 PM	242
Marin	146,707	2,505	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/20/24 12:40 PM	12/3/24 5:00 PM	1,469
Mariposa	9,606	164	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/15/24 10:51 AM	11/26/24 3:00 PM	76

Table continues on next page.

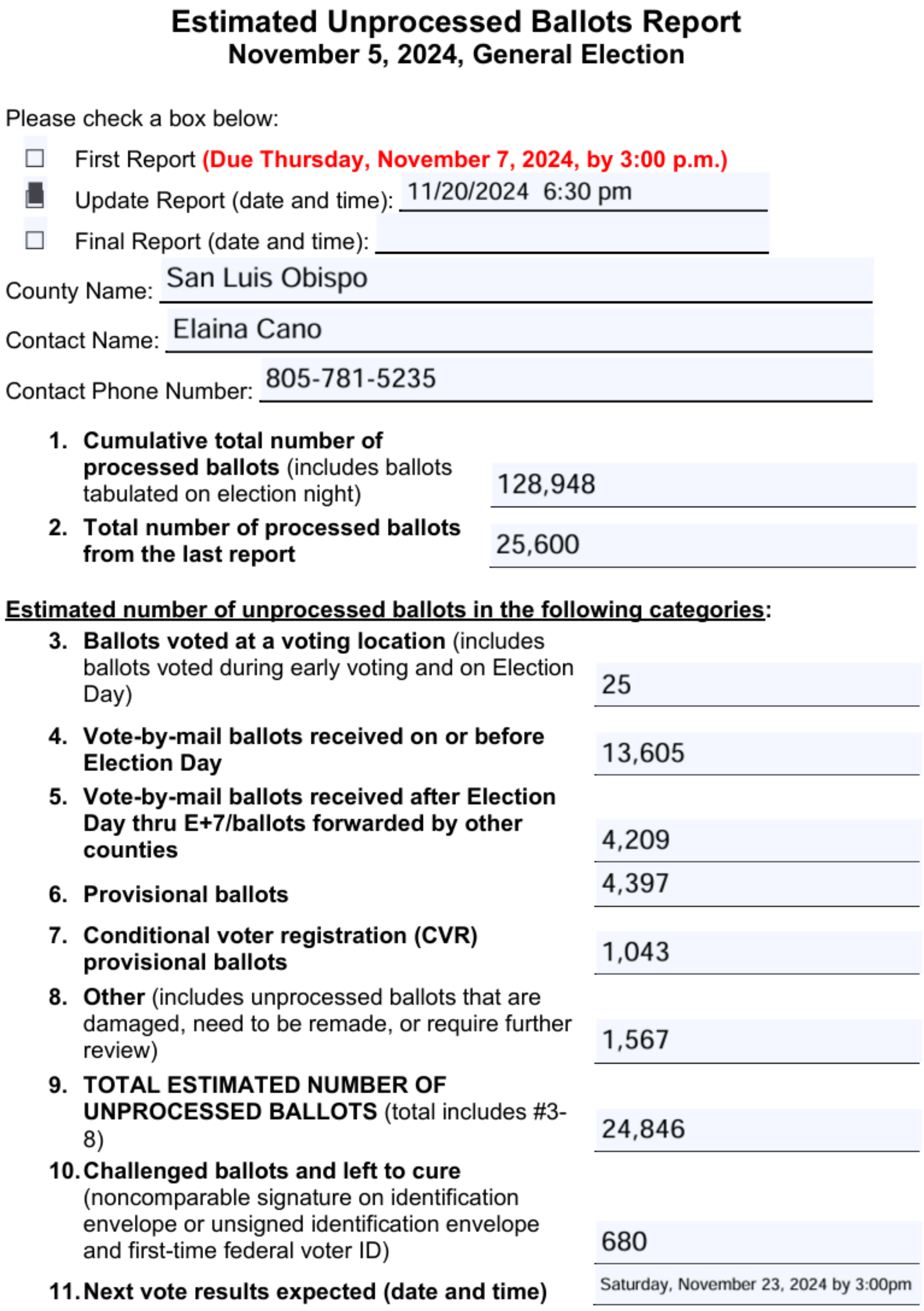


Mendocino	37,606	13,004	0	0	0	2,250	0	0	2,250	11/22/24 11:29 AM	11/27/24 12:00 PM	103
Merced	83,398	305	0	0	0	82	2,397	460	2,939	11/22/24 4:14 PM	11/23/24 3:30 PM	1,900
Modoc	4,059	185	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	11/22/24 5:35 PM	11/27/24 4:00 PM	66
Mono	6,148	40	0	0	0	10	0	0	10	11/20/24 5:42 PM	11/25/24 5:00 PM	50
Monterey	148,801	1,776	0	0	9	0	17	0	26	11/22/24 5:10 PM	11/26/24 5:00 PM	617
Napa	66,315	4,338	0	41	0	7	28	474	550	11/22/24 5:05 PM	11/25/24 4:30 PM	471
Nevada	63,115	9,523	0	0	0	10	75	0	85	11/22/24 4:03 PM	11/26/24 4:00 PM	237
Orange	1,406,590	4,882	0	10,010	766	0	10,800	331	21,907	11/22/24 5:05 PM	11/23/24 5:00 PM	14,317
Placer	233,054	3,547	56	0	0	937	3,730	1,000	5,723	11/22/24 4:53 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	1,444
Plumas	10,209	488	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	11/15/24 11:55 AM	11/21/24 4:00 PM	106
Riverside	948,490	7,647	0	0	0	0	9,000	500	9,500	11/22/24 6:27 PM	11/23/24 6:00 PM	10,900
Sacramento	651,808	5,974	0	0	0	0	16,050	0	16,050	11/22/24 4:25 PM	11/26/24 5:15 PM	3,315
San Benito	27,874	207	0	0	0	5	0	0	5	11/21/24 3:40 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	754
San Bernardino	753,810	3,769	0	0	2,200	2,000	13,000	250	17,450	11/22/24 3:19 PM	11/25/24 4:00 PM	8,900
San Diego	1,491,078	39,578	0	200	100	500	11,000	200	12,000	11/21/24 4:47 PM	11/27/24 6:00 PM	8,000
San Francisco	412,090	146	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/21/24 4:09 PM	12/3/24 4:00 PM	550
San Joaquin	254,988	1,159	0	0	0	1,133	7,971	0	9,104	11/22/24 5:50 PM	11/25/24 7:00 PM	5,295
San Luis Obispo	128,948	25,600	25	13,605	4,209	4,397	1,043	1,567	24,846	11/20/24 5:50 PM	11/23/24 3:00 PM	680
San Mateo	336,444	1,292	0	0	450	0	50	0	500	11/22/24 4:23 PM	11/26/24 4:30 PM	1,361
Santa Barbara	185,432	4,818	0	0	0	1,000	1,900	0	2,900	11/21/24 2:03 PM	11/27/24 1:00 PM	1,850
Santa Clara	764,769	2,000	0	0	0	1,000	2,000	0	3,000	11/22/24 4:31 PM	11/25/24 5:00 PM	2,000
Santa Cruz	132,406	1,315	0	100	53	130	3,000	150	3,433	11/19/24 4:24 PM	11/22/24 4:00 PM	245
Shasta	78,136	2,475	0	1,934	413	1,736	562	6,822	11,467	11/22/24 8:02 PM	11/27/24 6:30 PM	660
Sierra	1,778	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/14/24 2:25 PM	11/26/24 3:00 PM	7
Siskiyou	21,798	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 10:00 AM	12/3/24 12:00 PM	129



Solano	192,319	141	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 3:37 PM	12/3/2024 1:00PM	400
Sonoma	249,815	2,040	0	0	1,000	1,482	3,450	25	5,957	11/22/24 2:07 PM	11/26/24 3:00 PM	1,830
Stanislaus	196,082	1,546	0	0	0	313	3,149	383	3,845	11/21/24 4:27 PM	11/26/24 6:00 PM	2,284
Sutter	38,942	424	0	0	0	761	173	25	959	11/20/24 12:09 PM	11/22/24 5:00 PM	73
Tehama	25,828	4,267	0	513	79	518	341	56	1,507	11/22/24 3:43 PM	11/27/24 5:00 PM	537
Trinity	5,749	185	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	11/22/24 12:01 PM	12/2/24 5:00 PM	94
Tulare	139,613	945	0	0	0	108	0	4	112	11/21/24 5:41 PM	11/25/24 6:00 PM	1,232
Tuolumne	29,221	218	0	0	0	0	13	0	13	11/21/24 5:11 PM	11/27/24 4:00 PM	170
Ventura	392,039	1,521	0	0	33	85	468	46	632	11/21/24 3:33 PM	11/26/24 4:00 PM	4,030
Yolo	89,124	229	0	0	0	163	5,076	0	5,239	11/22/24 3:55PM	11/26/24 4:00 PM	1,431
Yuba	28,402	528	0	0	650	1,000	300	50	2,000	11/21/24 6:41 PM	11/26/24 12:00 PM	500
STATEWIDE	15,922,899	234,679	115	54,230	11,169	27,451	116,420	18,075	227,460			112,123

See the SLO County report from November 20th below:



Estimated Unprocessed Ballots Report

November 5, 2024, General Election

Please check a box below:

☐ First Report **(Due Thursday, November 7, 2024, by 3:00 p.m.)**

☒ Update Report (date and time): 11/20/2024 6:30 pm

☐ Final Report (date and time):

County Name: San Luis Obispo

Contact Name: Elaina Cano

Contact Phone Number: 805-781-5235

1. **Cumulative total number of processed ballots** (includes ballots tabulated on election night)	128,948
2. **Total number of processed ballots from the last report**	25,600

Estimated number of unprocessed ballots in the following categories:

3. **Ballots voted at a voting location** (includes ballots voted during early voting and on Election Day)	25
4. **Vote-by-mail ballots received on or before Election Day**	13,605
5. **Vote-by-mail ballots received after Election Day thru E+7/ballots forwarded by other counties**	4,209
6. **Provisional ballots**	4,397
7. **Conditional voter registration (CVR) provisional ballots**	1,043
8. **Other** (includes unprocessed ballots that are damaged, need to be remade, or require further review)	1,567
9. **TOTAL ESTIMATED NUMBER OF UNPROCESSED BALLOTS** (total includes #3-8)	24,846
10. **Challenged ballots and left to cure** (noncomparable signature on identification envelope or unsigned identification envelope and first-time federal voter ID)	680
11. **Next vote results expected (date and time)**	Saturday, November 23, 2024 by 3:00pm

Why are there so many provisional ballots? Did someone register 4,397 new voters on Election Day? It is unlikely that 4,379 people suddenly woke up and ran in.

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1- Solar power glut boosts California electric bills. Other states reap the benefits. Story by Melody Petersen

Westlands Solar Park, near the town of Lemoore in the San Joaquin Valley ((Carolyn Cole/Los Angeles Times))

California is making so much solar energy that large commercial operators are increasingly forced to stop production, raising questions about the state's costly plan to shift entirely to carbon-free sources of electricity.

In the last 12 months, California's solar farms have curtailed production of more than 3 million megawatt hours of solar energy, either on the orders of the state's grid operator or because prices had plummeted because of the glut, according to an analysis of data by The Times.

On some days, more than half the available solar power goes to waste, said Phillippe Phanivong of the California Institute for Energy and Environment located at UC Berkeley.

He calculates that the amount of power curtailed increased by 500% between 2017 and 2022 — a rise he called "alarming." During that same time, the state's renewable energy generation increased by 40%.

"Can we even get to 100% renewable energy with this growth rate of curtailment?" Phanivong asked.

The solar glut also means higher electricity bills for Californians, since they are effectively paying to generate the power but not using it.

California's electric rates are roughly twice the nation's average, with only Hawaii having higher rates. Rates at Southern California Edison and Pacific Gas & Electric increased by 51% over the last three years.

"Ratepayers aren't getting the energy they've paid for," said Ron Miller, an energy industry consultant in Denver. He calculates that the retail value of the solar energy thrown away in a year would be more than $1 billion.

Gov. Gavin Newsom's advisors and those who manage the state's electric grid say they are working to reduce the curtailments, including by building more industrial-scale battery storage facilities that soak up the excess solar power during the day and then release it at night.

Officials in the governor's office declined to be interviewed, but issued a statement saying the curtailments are often because of congestion on transmission lines, rather than a statewide oversupply of power. The state has been spending heavily to upgrade transmission lines to ease the congestion.

"It's also important to have extra energy resources available that can help the state during periods of extreme weather and historic heatwaves when demand is particularly high, which have happened the past few years," the statement said.

German developer E.ON built 20 megawatts of solar at Maricopa Orchards. ((Al Seib / Los Angeles Times))

The solar energy glut was one reason the California Public Utilities Commission, whose members are appointed by the governor, voted in late 2022 to slash financial incentives for residential rooftop solar panels.

Homes with rooftop solar have increased the curtailments at the industrial solar farms by decreasing electric demand, said Guillermo Bautista-Alderete, an official with the California Independent System Operator, which runs the state's power grid.

Grid operators must match the amount of power being produced to demand to prevent the grid from overloading, he said.

Bautista-Alderete said the state has been able to reduce the amount of curtailed power by creating a broader market where power can be sent to other states. Because other states may not need the power, California often has to pay them to take it, he said.

Asked how much the state has paid utilities in other states to take the excess solar, he said, “We don’t track that number specifically.”

Reports from the grid operator, which is also known as CAISO, provide hints of which out-of-state utilities have benefited.

In 2022, the Public Service Company of New Mexico paid an average of $14 less per megawatt hour when California’s grid became clogged with solar, according to a CAISO report. That year, the New Mexico utility said it saved $34 million by participating in the market California created to get rid of its excess power.

Other utilities that benefited in 2022 from reduced prices, according to the report, were PacifiCorp and the Bonneville Power Administration, which both have headquarters in Portland, Ore., as well as Avista Corp., based in Spokane, Wash., and Tacoma Power.

CAISO, a nonprofit company, is overseen by a board nominated by the governor and confirmed by the state Senate.

The commercial solar industry contends that the expansion of storage capacity to bank solar power will eventually eliminate the glut.

“Successfully increasing storage and solar together will reduce our reliance on natural gas power plants, helping to meet California’s clean energy goals,” said Shannon Eddy, executive director of the Large-Scale Solar Assn., a trade group.

Eddy acknowledged that curtailments deprive Californians of cheap energy.

“Other states do benefit, which helps reduce carbon emissions more regionally,” she said.

Some experts are skeptical that battery storage capacity can be expanded quickly enough to eliminate the glut.

Most industrial-sized batteries can store power for just four hours, not long enough to last through the night. And when batteries are added to solar facilities, the cost is twice as expensive as solar alone, said Andrew Chien, a computer science professor at the University of Chicago.

“They tried all these things, there are all these programs in place, yet curtailment continues to increase,” said Chien, who has led studies of the curtailments, including one published in January.

Economics upended

California already produces more solar than any other state. Newsom administration officials say the state must triple the rate of the construction of industrial-scale solar installations over the next two decades to get to a carbon-free electrical grid by 2045.

To create incentives for companies to build that much solar power, a 2018 law known as Senate Bill 100 requires utilities and locally run electricity providers to purchase an increasing amount of renewable energy, which then becomes part of the electrical mix delivered to customers.

By 2030, 60% of the state's electricity must be from renewable sources.

Westlands Solar Park in Lemoore, Calif. ((Gary Kazanjian / For The Times))© (Gary Kazanjian / For The Times)

The state's utilities buy most of that energy in advance at a fixed price set by long-term contracts negotiated with the solar farms and other renewable energy producers.

Eddy at the solar association said these contracts protect ratepayers from price hikes during times of high demand. But the contracts can also require electric customers to pay the fixed prices even if they must stop producing because the state has too much electricity.

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power says that many of its contracts contain such terms.

"Curtailed energy is energy that has already been paid for but cannot be used," LADWP explained in its 2022 strategic plan, which emphasized it was trying to minimize the curtailments.

To stop the solar farms from sending energy to the grid, CAISO sometimes calls the operator and orders it to shut down, Bautista-Alderete said.

More frequently, however, the software that operates CAISO's electricity market automatically sends prices plummeting when too much energy is flowing onto the grid, he said. The operator then decides to shut down to avoid losing money.

In the last two years, experts say, a strange thing has happened. When prices fall to $0 on the market, the solar farms keep producing. Some keep generating even when prices plummet to deeply negative prices, where they then have to pay heavily to put their power on the grid.

Ackerman said energy producers are willing to pay to put their power on the grid because they are making money elsewhere.

Among solar farms' revenues are federal tax credits. Miller, the energy industry consultant, estimated that federal taxpayers paid $54 million to subsidize the 2.6 million megawatt hours that California curtailed in the 12 months ending in October 2023.

An even bigger source of revenue for solar farms is the so-called renewable energy credit, or REC, Ackerman and others say.

Producers of renewable energy get one REC for each megawatt hour they put on the grid. Companies buy the RECs, allowing them to take credit for the environmental benefits of that megawatt hour of solar. A utility or an airline can buy the RECs and then say it burned less fossil fuels than it actually consumed, a practice some criticize as greenwashing.

As California and other states have required utilities to buy more renewable power, demand for the RECs has skyrocketed. So has their price, from $15 to $75 a megawatt-hour in the last two years, experts say.

“All of a sudden there was a huge demand” for the credits, Ackerman said.

That means a solar farm can still earn a profit even when prices are deeply negative. Last year, prices plunged to negative $145 per megawatt-hour or below as the sun was shining, CAISO said in a recent report.

Then the sun sets. And power prices can spike to $50, $100 or far more.

This volatility is a gold mine for electricity traders.

“Any fluctuation, any variation, they’re making money off that,” Chien said.

Traders see profit

Scores of traders buy and sell electricity on the wholesale market that CAISO runs.

Many of the traders work for utilities trying to buy power at the lowest price possible. But some, including banks like Citigroup and hedge funds like Citadel, are not distributing power. They are in the market to make money.

“These profits are losses to ratepayers,” CAISO officials warned about traders trying to collect money from grid congestion in their most recent annual report.

Consulting firms help the traders by closely tracking data on curtailments, weather and congestion on the grid. They calculate when prices are expected to fall and then surge.

“Power traders need to make a living — which means it doesn’t make sense for them to move power from one market to another if prices are the same,” explained Jake Landis at Yes Energy, a consulting firm tracking California’s market, in a blog post.

One popular strategy is to buy power during the day when prices are low or even negative and then sell it as the sun sets and prices soar as solar panels stop producing.

The traders also include those working for utilities in other states, including Arizona Public Service, which operates a 24-hour trading floor in Phoenix looking for California's cheap or negatively priced solar power.

Solar field construction expanding

California grid officials say that paying other states' utilities to take the excess solar power is a benefit to the environment since it can replace electricity that would otherwise be produced by fossil fuels.

But sometimes, Arizona Public Service turns off its own solar fields to take California's excess.

"We may make adjustments to our generation to purchase power … at prices that are economically beneficial to customers," said Yessica Del Rincon, a spokesperson for the Arizona utility.

In a 2021 report, the Newsom administration estimated California needs another 70 gigawatts of industrial solar farms by 2045 to get to a carbon-free electrical grid. That would require solar to be built across another 300 to 450 square miles, an area that would cover nearly half of Rhode Island.

Some of those projects have cleared thousands of acres of pristine land in the Mojave Desert, where it has angered local residents worried about declining property values and environmentalists concerned about the loss of wildlife habitat.

"We have this planet to save and they are throwing away power?" said Mark Carrington, a resident of Desert Center, a town east of Joshua Tree National Park, which has been nearly surrounded by solar projects. "That can upset people."

Sean Greene, assistant data and graphics editor, contributed to this report.

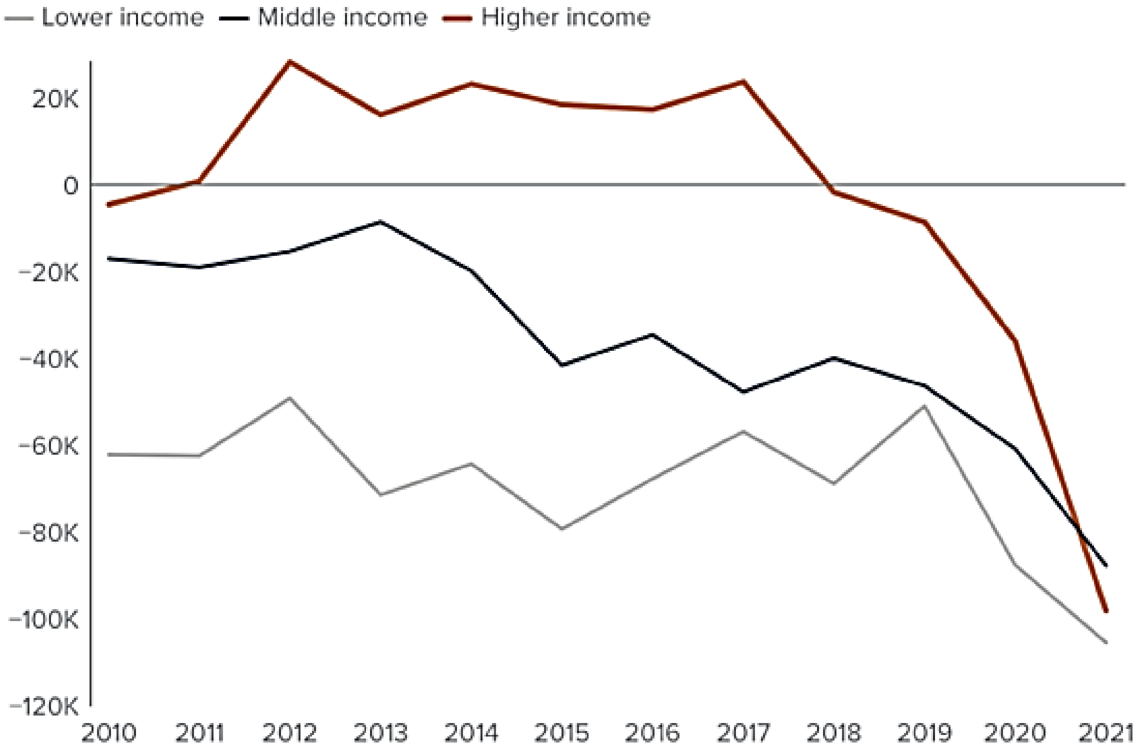
This story originally appeared in Los Angeles Times.

Item 2 - POSTED ON NOVEMBER 27, 2024 BY STEVEN HAYWARD IN THE DAILY CHART

THE DAILY CHART: THE CALIFORNIA EXODUS UPDATE

As everyone knows, California is losing population. It's quite a progressive achievement: how do you make a place of such beauty and benign climate so unfavorable that for the first time since statehood in 1850, California is no longer attractive to people to stay or come in the first place (except, of course, for foreign "migrants").

A few years back I saw some data from the Public Policy Institute of California (supposedly a centrist organization, which means its liberal) that it was the middle class that was mostly moving from California, while the state will still a net gainer of upper income households, which is not surprising given the dynamism and riches of Silicon Valley and Hollywood. But more recent PPIC data suggest that every income class is now leaving the state on net:



California is losing households at all income levels

Net interstate migration among adults ages 18-64

SOURCE: PPIC calculations based on American Community Survey data through 2021.

Chaser: I hear from good sources that Kamala Harris and her team are contacting leading Democratic donors and party leaders around California asking that they prepare to clear the field for her to run for governor in 2026. Surely just what California needs.

This article first appeared in the Powerline of November 27, 2024.

Item 3 - 96.5% of New Jobs in California This Year Were Government Jobs ←

November 28, 2024 **By** Katy Grimes

Apparently California is already a Socialist state

While California Governor Gavin Newsom is traveling around the state gaslighting residents and the media about his purported successes, no one is doing business in the once Golden State. That's because California is the only employer doing the hiring.

96.5% of new jobs in California this year were government jobs.
Is it any wonder so many people are fleeing the state?
Government jobs do not create wealth – they consume wealth and redistribute it because it is taxpayers who pay for all of it.

The Hoover Institution reported in August:
Between January 2022 and June 2024, employment in US private businesses increased by about 7.32 million jobs. Of these 7.32 million jobs, about 5,400 were jobs created in California businesses—representing about .07 percent of the US figure. Put differently, if California private-sector jobs grew at the same rate as in the rest of the country, they would have increased by over 970,000 during that period, about 180 times greater than the actual increase.
[Data is from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics. For total jobs, see the data tool. The calculation for California private-sector jobs is derived from total jobs minus California government jobs.]

Apparently California is already a Socialist state.
There were just 5,460 private sector jobs in a state of 39 million people.
At the same time, hundreds of thousands of people have been leaving the state, while illegal aliens have moved in. But they are not producers – they are dependents – dependent on the government and taxpayers for support.

“Socialism in general has a record of failure so blatant that only an intellectual could ignore or evade it,” economist Thomas Sowell explained. “Despite a voluminous and often fervent literature on income distribution, the cold fact is that income is not distributed: It is earned.”
The Hoover Institution reported:

It is well known that California has been among the worst-performing states in the country in terms of job growth. But the latest statistics show that nearly all jobs that are being created in California are government jobs. Between January 2022 and June 2024, total California jobs grew by about 156,000, with government jobs accounting for 96.5 percent of that growth.

California’s job creation record has been even more dismal over the last 18 months. Since January 2023, private-sector employment in the state declined by over 46,000 workers. California’s private-sector job collapse is unprecedented, and with the state representing nearly 12 percent of the country’s population, it is a drag on the nation’s economy.

Part of California’s job weakness reflects the number of people and businesses leaving the state. California’s population declined by about 75,000 between 2022 and 2023 (the latest data available), and a number of business headquarters have departed.

So while Gov. Gavin Newsom’s office has been gaslighting everyone falsely claiming that “California was the second most popular state for Americans to move to in 2024,” the truth is the Californians and businesses are leaving in droves.

California is losing more workers than it’s gaining, new report shows, the
Globe reported Tuesday. The five US states that lost the most residents in 2023 were California(-690,502), Florida (-514,259), New York (-483,523), Texas (-480,822) and Illinois (-297,765). The states with the largest population have the most inbound and outbound migration – just by sheer numbers. But there is much more chasing Californians to other states.

Hoover explains:
Economic factors are the primary reasons behind these departures. Households are moving because of the cost of living and deficient public services. The median single-family home price is over $900,000, and the median price of a condominium or townhouse is nearly $700,000. Electricity prices are the fifth highest in the country. Gasoline prices are the second highest in the

country, reflecting in part the nation’s highest gasoline taxes. With the country’s highest gas taxes, California roads should be among the best, but they are among the worst. California public schools are grossly underperforming, with only 25–30 percent of students proficient in math, language arts, or science.

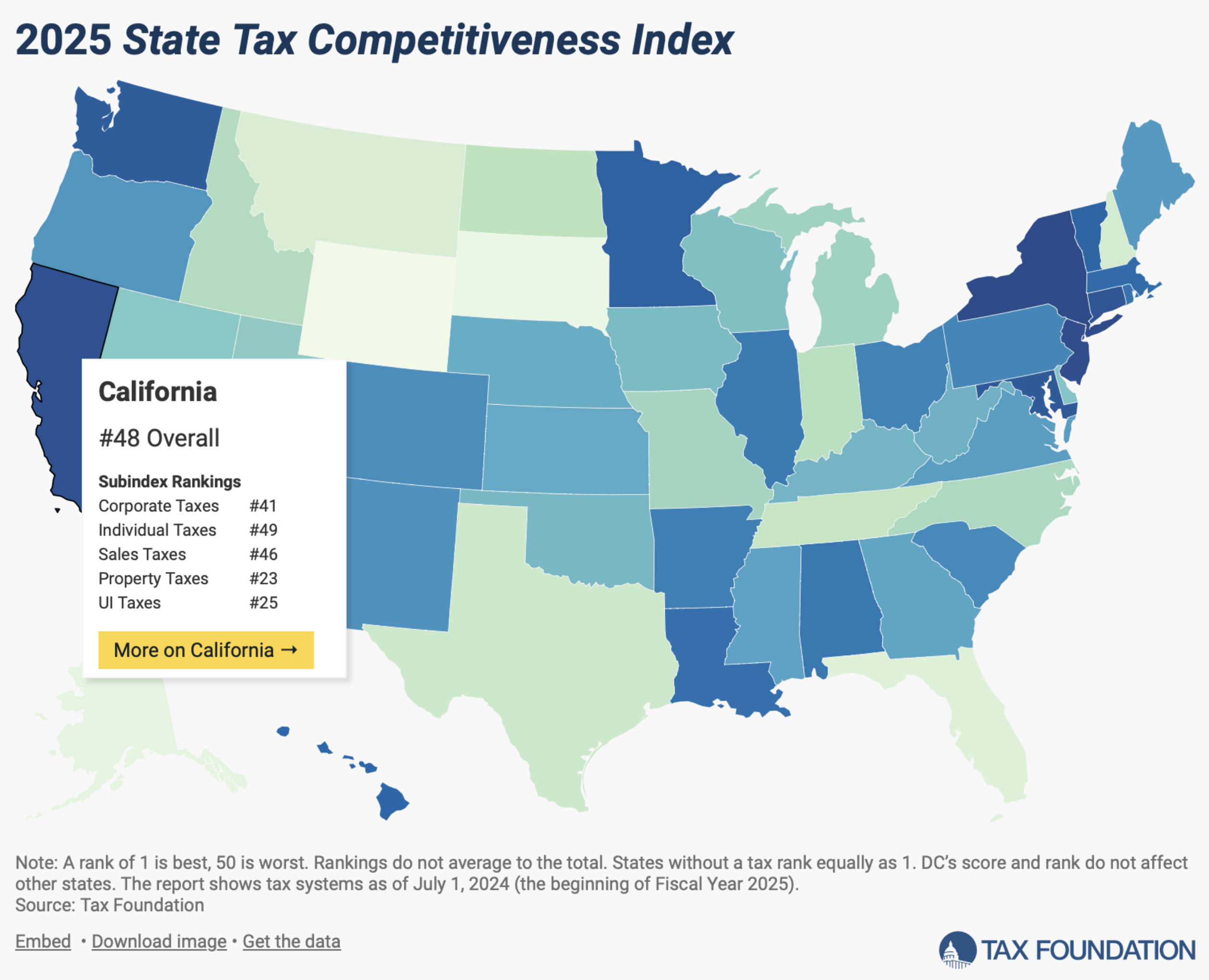
Businesses are also leaving because of the state’s economic climate. The Tax Foundation, a nonpartisan research center that focuses on tax policies, ranks California as having the fifth worst tax climate, eclipsed only by New York, Vermont, Connecticut, and Hawaii. Chief Executive magazine’s annual survey of the best states to do business in invariably ranks California as the least business-friendly state in the country. And California is ranked second worst among states in regulatory burdens.

Click here to read the full article in the California Globe

Item 4 - On the Naughty List Again: California Has Third-Worst Tax Climate in the U.S.

‘The state is also dramatically out of conformity with the federal tax code, which adds to tax complexity’

By Katy Grimes, November 29, 2024 7:08 am



2025 *State Tax Competitiveness Index*

California

#48 Overall

Subindex Rankings

Corporate Taxes	#41
Individual Taxes	#49
Sales Taxes	#46
Property Taxes	#23
UI Taxes	#25

Note: A rank of 1 is best, 50 is worst. Rankings do not average to the total. States without a tax rank equally as 1. DC’s score and rank do not affect other states. The report shows tax systems as of July 1, 2024 (the beginning of Fiscal Year 2025).
Source: Tax Foundation

Having one of the highest costs of living in the country, California's tax climate is the third-worst in the country, AGAIN, ahead of only New Jersey and New York, the Tax Foundation recently reported.

This is the 13th year California is on the naughty list – formerly known as the "Business Tax Climate Index" and this year referred to as the "State Tax Competitiveness Index."
The Tax Foundation's *State Tax Competitiveness Index* enables policymakers, taxpayers, and business leaders to gauge how their states' tax systems compare. While there are many ways to show how much state governments collect in taxes, the *Index* evaluates how well states structure their tax systems and provides a road map for improvement.
The 10 lowest-ranked, or worst, states in this year's *Index* are:

41. Massachusetts
42. Hawaii
43. Vermont
44. Minnesota
45. Washington
46. Maryland
47. Connecticut
48. California
49. New Jersey
50. New York

What lands the 10-worst states at the bottom of the list? The Tax Foundation explains:

"The states in the bottom 10 tend to have a number of issues in common: complex, non-neutral taxes with comparatively high rates. New Jersey, for example, is hampered by some of the highest property tax burdens in the country, has the highest-rate corporate income tax in the country, and has one of the highest-rate individual income taxes. Additionally, the state has a particularly aggressive treatment of international income, levies an inheritance tax, and maintains some of the nation's worst-structured individual income taxes."
Which states are on the nice list?"

The 10 best states in this year's *Index* are:

1. Wyoming
2. South Dakota
3. Alaska
4. Florida
5. Montana
6. New Hampshire
7. Texas
8. Tennessee
9. North Dakota
10. Indiana

The Tax Foundation explains that the absence of a major tax is the common factor among many of the top 10 states. "Property taxes and unemployment insurance taxes are levied in every state, but there are several states that do without one or more of the major taxes: the corporate income tax, the individual income tax, or the sales tax. South Dakota and Wyoming have no corporate or individual income tax; Alaska has no individual income or state-level sales tax; Florida and Texas have no individual income tax; and New Hampshire and Montana have no sales tax, with New Hampshire also only imposing a narrow tax on interest and dividend income."

California received the low ranking again with an “uncompetitive tax structure”:
“California is the only state to deny all net operating loss carry forwards; the state’s NOL provisions have been suspended on multiple occasions and are not currently in effect.

California has a throwback rule, exposing in-state businesses to additional corporate tax liability for certain out-of-state income that would not be taxed elsewhere.

The state is also dramatically out of conformity with the federal tax code, which adds to tax complexity, though it has certain benefits: the state does not, for instance, incorporate global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI), which does not belong in state tax codes but has been incorporated by some states.”

California has a graduated state individual income tax, with rates ranging from 1.00 percent to 13.30 percent. There is also a jurisdiction that collects local income taxes. California has an 8.84 percent corporate income tax rate. California also has a 7.25 percent state sales tax rate and an average combined state and local sales tax rate of 8.85 percent. California has a 0.68 percent effective property tax rate on owner-occupied housing value.
California does not have an estate tax or inheritance tax. California has a 68.1 cents per gallon gas tax rate and a $2.87 cigarette excise tax rate. The State of California collects $9,229 in state and local tax collections per capita. California has $13,845 in state and local debt per capita and has a percent funded ratio of public pension plans. California’s tax system ranks 48th overall on the *2025 State Tax Competitiveness Index.*
Additionally, nonresidents must file income taxes if they work even a single day in the state, and California is one of only four states to still impose an alternative minimum tax.”

Compare California to Indiana, which ranked 10th on the nice list:

“Indiana has a flat 3.05 percent individual income tax rate. There are also jurisdictions that collect local income taxes. Indiana has a 4.9 percent corporate income tax rate. Indiana also has a 7.00 percent state sales tax rate and does not have local sales taxes. Indiana has a 0.71 percent effective property tax rate on owner-occupied housing value.
Indiana does not have an estate tax or inheritance tax. Indiana has a 51.7 cents per gallon gas tax rate and a $1.32 cigarette excise tax rate. Indiana collects $5,354 in state and local tax collections per capita. Indiana has $7,548 in state and local debt per capita and has a 78 percent funded ratio of public pension plans. Indiana’s tax system ranks 10th overall on the *2025 State Tax Competitiveness Index.*

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses Nov 29, 2024

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 IMMORALITY OF ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION

Democratic leaders are facing backlash over the Biden administration's handling of illegal immigration, leading to a surge in crime, strained services, and a Trump victory focused on border security

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Donald Trump will not be president for almost another two months.

Yet Democrat politicians, both federal and local, vie to be the most strident in denouncing his plans to begin deporting millions of foreign nationals who, over the last four years, have entered the U.S. illegally. Trump pledges to focus initially only on the 400,000 to 500,000 current felons and some 1.4 million additional aliens who have ignored legal summons for their deportation.

Weekly we read of thousands of illegal immigrants arriving from areas controlled by violent Mexican cartel gangs or failed, strife-torn South American countries that have emptied their jails to send their felons northwards. Hundreds of thousands of them have been committing violent crimes while demanding still more free housing and support from strapped American taxpayers.

Big-city left-wing mayors and city councils boast that they will do all their best to nullify federal immigration laws, even as their cities face near insolvency housing, feeding, and monitoring the influx. More specifically, they brag they will continue to order local and state authorities to resist all efforts of federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers. They scream about possible "massive deportations" to come under Trump, callously ignoring that their own advocacy has fueled rising crime waves of unaudited illegal aliens. And they appear absolutely indifferent to the social costs imposed by illegal immigration upon their own poor and middle-class constituents.

Virtue-signaling Democratic governors and mayors have so far not dared to utter a word of criticism about what has been the Biden administration's truly historic "massive importation" of illegal aliens into the U.S. over the last four years.

Why?

Largely because these political grandees and media demagogues have the money, connections, zip codes, and influence to be immune from the fallout of their own performance-art advocacy of illegal immigration. They take for granted that the baleful consequences of open borders always falls upon the distant and vulnerable Other.

Again, consider the left-wing logic: it is deemed moral to dismantle the border, disrupt the social fabric of the country, and destroy federal immigration laws. But it is immoral to restore U.S. sovereignty, secure the border, stop the flux of lethal cartel-supplied fentanyl and child sex trafficking, and follow the law?

In this regard, the party that prides itself as progressive is regressively adopting the states' rights arguments of 19th-century southern states that boasted they would resist all federal enforcement of tariffs. By the late 1850s, these future Confederates were asserting that the national government had no jurisdiction in their state domains. Such brazen nullification would lead to the Civil War.

Note the left assumes that conservatives will not emulate their tactics and thus declare swaths of federal firearms or environmental laws null and void within their red state and county jurisdictions. They know that doing so would start a cycle of lawlessness that would eventually result in either civil war, total anarchy, or both.

The open-borders left's more immediate spiritual predecessors are states' rights resisters like former segregationist Governor George Wallace. He boasted that federal civil rights legislation had no sway over his own state's laws. Wallace, remember, in a historic moment, was removed from blocking the entry of black students to the University of Alabama by federal troops.

Given that nullification now has been turned upside down, will California Governor Gavin Newsom or New York Governor Kathy Hochul block the entrance to their state jails to prevent federal agents from sending home murderers and rapists who arrived in the U.S. illegally?

The left has learned nothing and forgotten nothing from the recent election and decisive Trump victory. The defeat of left-wing candidates was a result most prominently of the Biden administration's deliberate destruction of the southern border and the illegal welcoming of some 12 million foreigners without legal sanction or health and criminal background audits.

This lawlessness ensured that Kamala Harris, who had sanctioned it, was going to lose the election. The daily sight of thousands swarming the border with impunity, coupled with Orwellian assertions of President Biden, "Border Czar" Vice President Harris, and Homeland Security Director Alejandro Mayorkas that the border was absolutely "secure," doomed the Biden and then Harris campaigns.

Violating U.S. sovereignty and laws while sending millions into already frayed health, food, housing, medical, legal, and education social services designed to help American citizens was never a winning campaign strategy.

Yet almost nothing could deter the Biden-Harris administration from their fixation with undermining the border and federal immigration law while seeking to change the very demography of the American southwest. The resulting influx of illegal aliens within just three years proved comparable in size to the creation of some 12 American cities, all the size of San Francisco.

The mass crossings resulted from an effort by Joe Biden to utterly disregard his oath to faithfully execute the laws of his country. He was also helped in his lawlessness by some 600 state and local "sanctuary city" jurisdictions that subverted federal law by using their own offices to thwart immigration enforcement. Indeed, left-wing state and local officials pledged their own greater fealty to the welfare of the illegal millions who ignored the law and swamped the border than to their own overtaxed and underserved American citizen constituents.

Finally, on November 5, the people said no more. In historic fashion, traditional Democratic constituencies of the working class and minorities turned on their own left-wing politicians who had first turned on them.

Yet the cynicism of the left had known no bounds. As the presidential campaign had heated up, and the polls, first for Biden and then for his surrogate Harris, began to erode, both began to lie that their vanished border was in fact “secure.”

In other words, they knew they had permanently alienated the American public, knew that it would cost them the election, and so then frantically first tried to deny the truth they had welcomed in millions of illegal aliens. Then they pivoted and sought belatedly to stop the public relations disaster at the border for a few weeks before the election, vainly hiding the sheer cynicism of such an insincere effort.

Earlier, they had tried blaming border hawk Republicans for not signing onto a false border “bipartisan,” red-herring bill. The left introduced it in Congress solely to allow blanket amnesties for millions of illegal aliens while still allowing 4,000 illegal aliens daily to enter the U.S.

The great majority of sane senators who did not sign the Trojan Horse bill were then immediately demonized for the mess by Biden and Harris themselves, who deliberately created the catastrophe.

Now that the election is over, an enfeebled Joe Biden has two months left on his presidency and no longer worries about reelection. So, in its final gasp, the left is again trying to invite in more illegal aliens. Apparently one final huge caravan is forming south of the border and plans to make its way northward just days before Trump takes office and begins to fulfill his promises to the majority of voters to close the border.

Finally, why did illegal immigration explode to levels never seen before?

One, the left saw millions of desperately poor foreign nationals as a natural long-term constituency for their big-government, anti-poverty programs. They felt that some 20-30 million illegal aliens over the last 50 years, along with their children, had flipped California, Nevada, New Mexico, Colorado—and soon Arizona—from blue to red as planned. Of course, should the sudden Hispanic backlash against the immigration insanity of bicoastal elites persist, then the left might turn on their Hispanic voters as illiberal or brainwashed by the right—and ironically move to close the border to preclude more MAGA boosters.

Two, Mexico and Latin America received some 120 billion dollars per year in remittances, mostly sent by their own citizens residing illegally in the U.S. and reliant on American government services that free them up to send billions into the coffers of our own increasingly hostile neighbors. Mexico further sees its 20 million expatriate illegal aliens as a strong lobby group to promote Mexico City’s agendas. The more Mexico exports its impoverished citizens, the more it saves on social services for them, while cynically noting that the more distant and longer their citizens reside away from Mexico, the more they romanticize it, safely from afar.

Three, corporate employers like cheap labor from Latin America, especially when the U.S. government subsidizes such workers with massive housing, food, transportation, and health social services.

On the other side of the ledger, the left cares little that an open border is destroying support for legal immigration and de facto punishes immigrants who wish to follow our laws. A cynic might argue that the left also may fear legal immigrants applying under meritocratic standards, as too independent, self-supporting, educated, skilled, and law-abiding to become its predictably loyal constituents at the polls.

So, what might change to close the border and stop the massive influx?

Donald Trump won the electoral college and the popular vote with a mandate to restore border security and immigration sanity. He received a near-record number of minority voters for a Republican candidate, given they believed that most often must deal with the realities of what elites have unleashed.

In other words, the proverbial people are on to the no-borders elites. They suffer firsthand from their utopian bromides and are tired of being smeared as racists and xenophobes for simply wishing the United States to follow the law, restore secure borders, and end illegal immigration.

And now they have the power and mandate to do all of that.

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, and is the 2023 Giles O'Malley Distinguished Visiting Professor at the School of Public Policy, Pepperdine University. Hanson was awarded the National Humanities Medal in 2007 by President George W. Bush, and the Bradley Prize in 2008. Hanson is also a farmer (growing almonds on a family farm in Selma, California) and a critic of social trends related to farming and agrarianism. He is the author of the just released New York Times best seller, The End of Everything: How Wars Descend into Annihilation, *published by Basic Books on May 7, 2024, as well as the recent* The Second World Wars: How the First Global Conflict Was Fought and Won, The Case for Trump, *and* The Dying Citizen.

Got Debt? Try Some Fiscal Federalism

By John F. Cogan

Excessive spending has been a way of life for lawmakers in Washington for more than half a century. Since 1969 federal outlays have exceeded revenue every year, except briefly during the high-tech bubble of the late 1990s. Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy's Department of Government Efficiency will attempt to put an end to this fiscal profligacy. Both men will soon discover that the root cause of this problem lies with the federal government's abandonment of federalism in fiscal matters.

We have all been taught that the Constitution limits the federal government's powers—that there is a sharp division between federal, state and local responsibilities. Yet this couldn't be further from the truth in fiscal affairs: It is difficult to think of a single activity that state and local governments spend money on that isn't also financed by Washington's check-writing machine. The feds spend on local roads, social services, police and fire protection and education. Washington also appropriates funds for building and maintaining municipal parks and playgrounds, bike paths and hiking trails, city sidewalks, bus stops, railroad crossings, traffic signs and stop lights, and beautification projects. This is all in addition to its most costly outlays on the plethora of welfare, disability, healthcare and income-support programs.

My analysis of federal budget data shows that the chronic federal budget deficits since the 1950s are due to the federal government's failure to raise tax revenues required to finance its spending on state and local activities. The federal government has instead chosen to take on and finance additional responsibilities by using debt alone. This is a sharp, and dangerous, break from its past fiscal restraint.

The Founders believed that, among its benefits, federalism would serve as an effective constraint on federal spending and a barrier to structural budget deficits. They figured that a constitutional balanced-budget requirement was unnecessary, and the historical record mainly vindicated them.

From 1789 to the first decade of the 20th century, Congress largely adhered to James Madison's view that the federal spending power was limited to executing the Constitution's enumerated powers. Congress repeatedly rejected bills appropriating federal aid to elementary and secondary education, income support for citizens, and state grants for the poor. Notable exceptions were made for the Cumberland Road, waterway clearance projects beginning in the 1820s and cash aid for land grant colleges in 1890. Yet the constitutional barrier that prevented federal spending on state and local activities largely held. The federal government experienced budget deficits only during war and economic recession—and, in other years, ran budget surpluses to pay down any debt it had incurred.

Musk and Ramaswamy can end Washington's habit of paying for everything from bike paths to bus stops.

Fiscal federalism started to erode more seriously around World War I. Congress began spending on state and local activities through new programs that matched states' spending on their existing efforts for highway construction, vocational education and rehabilitation, agricultural extension services and maternal and child health. These small programs were inconsequential for the federal budget totals but nevertheless planted the seeds for future expansions.

Policymakers finally abandoned fiscal federalism during the Great Depression. It was initially unclear whether this would be temporary or permanent. The Supreme Court, by concluding in the 1930s that Congress had the authority to spend to promote the "general welfare," ensured the latter.

Following World War II, and especially during the peak years of the Great Society (1965-74), the federal government greatly expanded its spending on activities that were traditionally regarded as state and local affairs. Federal spending increased from around 18% of gross domestic product in the early 1960s to 21% in 2019 and an estimated 24% in 2024. New expenditures on traditionally state and local activities as a share of GDP accounted for more than the growth in total federal spending during this period. Meanwhile, tax revenues remained mostly between 16.5% and 18.5% of GDP. In other words, the entire increase in national debt is traceable to the federal government's spending on state and local activities.

The consequences for the national debt are mainly unchanged even if we set aside Social Security and the Medicare Hospital Insurance program. Until the last decade, payroll taxes adequately financed both programs. Only in recent years have they contributed to the rise in national debt.

The abandonment of fiscal federalism has affected more than our towering national debt—it has also begun to undermine our security. National defense should be the federal government's highest priority. Yet since the 1950s spending on traditionally state and local affairs has taken its place. Funding these projects has come at the expense of the defense budget, which as a share of the federal total has fallen from around 60% in the mid-1950s to some 13% today. That level is wholly inadequate to meet rising global threats.

The federal government needs to reverse its priorities, prizing national defense and returning state and local affairs to their proper place. Sorting out which programs should go first could be a natural starting point for Messrs. Musk and Ramaswamy.

Mr. Cogan is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and author of "The High Cost of Good Intentions: A History of U.S. Federal Entitlement Programs."

This article first appeared in the Wall Street Journal of November 27, 2024. Mr. Cogan is a senior fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and author of "The High Cost of Good Intentions: A History of U.S. Federal Entitlement Programs."

NOTE ON THE ARTICLE BELOW: COLAB DOES NOT USUALLY COMMENT ON INTERNATIONAL AFFIARS. HOWEVER, THE DANGEROUS STRATEGIC

SITUATION FOISTED ON THE NATION BY PRSIDENT BIDEN ALLOWING FIRING STRATEGIC INTERMEDIATE RANGE MISSELS ON RUSSIAN TERRITORY RAISES A SERIOUS QUESTION FOR THE STATE , COUNTY & CITIES: WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS TO HELP THE CITIZENS SURVIVE THE COLLATERAL EFFECTS OF ATTACKS ON VANDENBERG, NAVY BASE PT. MAGU, SAN FRANCISCO, AND LOS ANGELES? These could include food, water, medical care, radiological illness, sanitation, mass burials, and the influx of refugees fleeing the metro areas.

Credit: image via Shutterstock

WASHINGTON CAREENS TOWARD THE ABYSS OF WORLD WAR

BY DOUG BANDOW

What could possibly go wrong? The president, now perhaps in name only, reportedly decided to loose American munitions on Russia, a step avoided even during the Cold War. Moscow's response was to use a nuclear-capable hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile against Ukraine. The American people, more focused on the coming Thanksgiving holiday than the latest eruption in Europe's deadly proxy war, yawned. Ukraine and its European acolytes, however, held emergency talks and demanded action, meaning a U.S. response.

Never has it been so dangerous to be a great power, for both the dominant great power and the wannabe imperial power. The United States began its history by emphasizing its distance from Europe. The Monroe Doctrine, claiming the Western Hemisphere as America's own, was arrogant presumption when first issued in 1823. Within a few decades, however, no foreign power could seriously challenge the U.S. in its neighborhood. In reality, America was already one of the most secure nations ever established, in practice vulnerable only to internal conflict.

When World War II ended, the Old World had wrecked itself twice in little more than a generation. America enjoyed global preeminence, which turned into primacy after the demise of the Soviet Union and its satellite system. Then came George H.W. Bush's infamous "what we say goes," when the Monroe Doctrine was inverted to mean that Washington expected no challenge when it intervened up to every other nation's border, and sometimes within those nations as well. U.S. policymakers seemed to believe that America was the eternal unipower.

Yet President George W. Bush and his more arrogant than merry band crashed the glorious bandwagon just a few years later. Manipulated into war on a lie, Uncle Sam destabilized the Mideast, wrecked multiple nations, left hundreds of thousands of civilians dead, and loosed deadly new geopolitical viruses upon the world. It was "a heckuva' job!" by the younger Bush and his successors. We continue to pay the price today.

The biggest miscreants, however, were President Bill Clinton and the triumphalists around him, who not only treated Russia as a defeated nation but expected it to gamely bear its diminished status. In 2007 Vladimir Putin, who once sought inclusion in the Western order, announced that Russia accepted neither Uncle Sam's militaristic pretensions nor NATO's race eastward. Oblivious, Washington and Brussels officials missed their chance to turn the end of the Cold War into an enduring peace with the former KGB operative and his gang of nationalists. That illusion finally died in 2014 when Putin responded to the allies' encouragement of a street putsch against Ukraine's elected president by seizing

Crimea and backing separatism in the Donbas.
That, however, is not the most frightening aspect of U.S. and allied behavior. Far worse, with a gaggle of Western leaders convinced that Moscow would passively accept every insult, indignity, and threat, the West is now firmly, and increasingly directly, at war with Russia. The fact that Putin has not launched a nuclear first strike on America is taken as evidence that the allies can indirectly target Russia with their missiles with no consequences. This assumption is both reckless and stupid.

Reckless because confronting a great and especially nuclear power over interests that it views as existential risks sacrificing everything. In 1962 the Soviet Union was the challenger and almost provoked the U.S. to war, one which would probably have gone nuclear. American policymakers—they matter most because the U.S., not Europe, would be the major combatant against Russia—must ask whether Ukraine is worth that risk. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Ronald Reagan wisely said no to intervention when the USSR imposed its will on, respectively, Poland, Hungary,

Czechoslovakia, and Poland again. There is no more convincing reason to go to war with Moscow over Kiev's status today.

Stupid because Russia continues to demonstrate its ability and willingness to respond, even if only indirectly so far. Russia likely is responsible for multiple instances of sabotage, including, most recently, cutting communication cables between Germany and Finland. As relatively open societies which have generally left unpleasant duties like security to America, the European states are vulnerable to a heightened campaign against major infrastructure.

More significant has been Moscow's rising cooperation with China, Iran, and North Korea. This has been mistakenly presented as a new "axis" of sorts. Pyongyang and Tehran previously worked together as fellow pariah states. Beijing long has had close if difficult relations with the North and developed important economic ties with Tehran even while supporting nonproliferation. China and Russia had become friendlier as their relationship recovered from the 1969 border battle. The recent increase in cooperation is all about Moscow, which has intensified its relations with the other three countries, dramatically increasing military links with Iran and North Korea, and abandoning its commitment to contrary policies, such as nonproliferation. In short, this supposed “axis of upheaval” is primarily a response to allied policy. And it could get worse, much worse. Beijing wants to build quieter subs. Pyongyang wants to deploy ICBMs capable of carrying multiple warheads and targeting the U.S. Tehran probably wants to become nuclear-capable. Russia could help all three do so. And doing so might seem to be the perfect riposte to the allies’ indirect defense of Ukraine, which now means enabling attacks on Russian territory and people. Moscow, too, could play that game.

Finally, the undeniable allied threat against Russia is spurring the latter’s technological advancement. The hypersonic Oreshnik reportedly reached Mach 11 and carried six warheads, each of which could release six smaller munitions. The missile is experimental and as yet Russia lacks a significant stockpile of them. However, Moscow has demonstrated an impressive ability to innovate and deliver, despite Western sanctions.

Ukraine took notice. The Rada cancelled its next session, fearing that it might be a target. President Volodymyr Zelensky called on “the world to sound serious in response—to make Putin really afraid of expanding the war and feel the real consequences of his actions.” But wasn’t that the idea behind shipping weapons to Ukraine and reducing restraints on their use? Contrary to the claim that Russia was a paper tiger, unwilling to respond to Western escalation, Putin has carefully calibrated his response.

Some European leaders recognize the serious challenge. Czechia’s Foreign Minister Jan Lipavský denounced what he termed an “escalatory step and an attempt of the Russian dictator to scare the population of Ukraine and to scare the population of Europe.” He said that Prague would not restrict the use of its weapons given to Ukraine. However, America and other European states already have begun doing that. Moreover, Czechia is a rounding error when it comes to European security. If things go really bad—the Putin government has recently reduced its official threshold for using nuclear weapons—the U.S., not the Czech Republic, will be tasked with defeating Russian Bear.
Top of Form

The bizarrely insouciant attitude of America’s foreign policy establishment to the risk of escalation and expansion of the war is nothing short of scary. The U.S. has never been involved in this sort of proxy war. The Soviets and Chinese supported North Korea and North Vietnam against America. The U.S. backed the Afghan mujahideen against the Soviet Union. There were claims, later discredited, that Russia helped fund the Taliban against Washington. To varying degrees, Moscow and Washington have been responsible for the deaths, hundreds or perhaps thousands of deaths, of the other country’s military personnel. But not for attacks on the proxy adversary’s homeland, until now.

The U.S. and its allies are providing missiles, intelligence for aiming them, and personnel for firing them. Imagine if Russia did the same to America. The demand for overwhelming retaliation would be cacophonous in Washington. Those most certain that Moscow won’t dare strike back now would be most determined to strike back then.

Indeed, it is widely agreed that the U.S. and Russia came closest to a nuclear conflagration when Moscow was paying Washington back in kind by stationing nuclear-tipped missiles only a few minutes flight time away from the American homeland. Despite the public perception that Washington "won," the Cuban Missile Crisis ended only when the U.S. privately promised to remove its comparable nuclear force deployed in Turkey. If Washington continues to press forward today, Moscow might decide that a similarly dangerous response is necessary. President-elect Donald Trump has warned about the risks of nuclear conflict. His top foreign policy priority should be to end the Russo–Ukrainian War if possible, and if not America's participation in the conflict. He can't force the parties to cease fighting. However, he can stop fueling the conflict and dragging the U.S. steadily if slowly toward the abyss. In this, his responsibility to the American people should come above all else.

Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute. A former Special Assistant to President Ronald Reagan, he is author of Foreign Follies: America's New Global Empire. This article first appeared in the April 28, 2024 edition of Reason.

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