



**WEEKLY UPDATE
JUNE 9 - 14, 2024**

**THIS WEEK
SEE PAGE 3**

NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

FLOOD ZONE ORDINANCE REVISIONS

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

**MAY APPROVE LOS OSOS COUNTY PLAN
COUNTY COULD THEN LIFT DEVELOPMENT MORATORIUM**

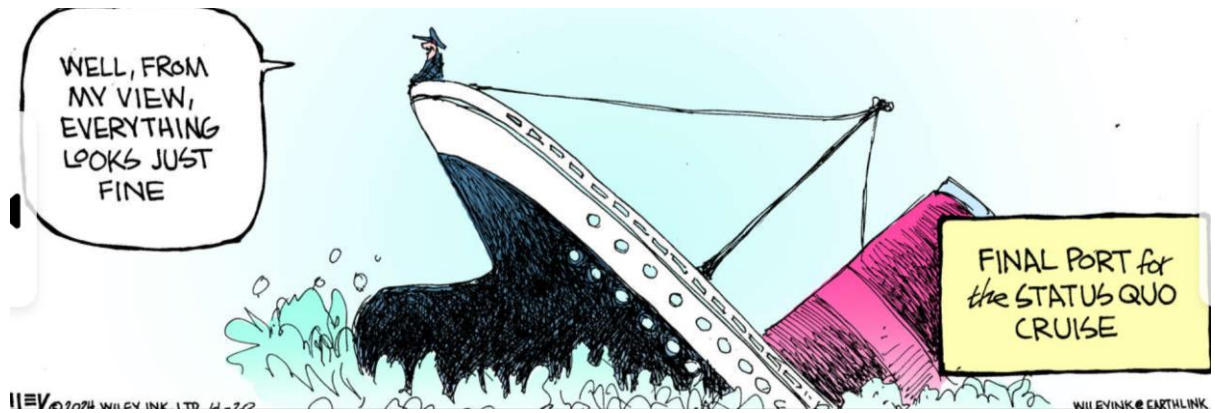
**LAST WEEK
SEE PAGE 11**

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

**BOARD ADOPTS CLOSE TO A \$1 BILLION “STAUS
QUO” BUDGET 4/1 VOTE
IN A 6 HOUR LOVE FEST**

REDUCTIONS & QUESTIONS IGNORED

**PAULDING LECTURES MIKE BROWN ON WHY COLAB SHOULD
SUPPORT NEW TAXES**



3CE ENERGY SUPPLIER TO BULLDOZE 3,500 JOSHUA TREES - SEE PAGE 6

COLAB San Luis Obispo is seeking an experienced Executive Director to lead the organization's advocacy and education efforts. This position will report directly to the Board of Directors, and will oversee administration, staffing, scheduling, and communications in addition to being COLAB's principal advocate for a stronger business environment in our region. Qualified candidates will have experience in government, public policy, advocacy, and/or law, experience managing employees, and exemplary communication skills. (This is a 1099 Misc. position.) Interested parties may submit questions, or resumes and cover letters to colabslo@gmail.com.

EMERGENT ISSUES SEE PAGE 31

CALIFORNIA LAWMAKERS REJECTED GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM'S BID TO INCLUDE ANOTHER \$400 MILLION FOR PACIFIC GAS & ELECTRIC

DMV ANNOUNCES NEW HOURS FOR SELECT OFFICES
To improve efficiency and to better serve the evolving needs of customers as part of its digital transformation, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will modify public hours at 20 offices throughout the state.

COLAB IN DEPTH SEE PAGE 37

THE DESTRUCTIVE GENERATION - PROVING AMERICA'S WEAKEST LINK

*A single generation has broken apart the great chain of
American civilizational continuance*

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

**WE HAVE BEEN SUBVERTED
WHAT IS AT STAKE IN OUR ABILITY TO SEE THE
THREAT PLAINLY? NOTHING LESS THAN THE
PRESERVATION OF OUR WAY OF LIFE**

BY AYAAN HIRSI ALI

SPONSORS



THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

ALL MEETINGS ARE AT 9:00 AM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED

No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, June 11, 2024 (Not Scheduled)

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, June 18, 2024. The Board will then be on a 2 week summer recess from June 23, 2023 - July 6, 2024. The next meeting after that will be on July 9, 2024. The Weekly Update will shut down after June 18, 2024 until the Week of July 9, 2024.

2024 Board of Supervisors Meeting Calendar - June & July, 2024

June						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

Board Meetings
Special Redistricting Eve Mtg

Swearing in Meeting
Budget Hearings

Board Break
Holidays

CSAC Annual Conference
BOS Chambers AV Work



SUMMER RECESS

Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, June 13, 2024 (Scheduled)

Item 6 - Hearing to consider a request by the County of San Luis Obispo (LRP2024-00003) to amend the County Inland and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinances and the Local Coastal Plan to update the Flood Hazard Area Standards and associated definitions per updated flood hazard data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Countywide. Exempt from CEQA. The Commission letter summarizes the proposed actions as:

In accordance with FEMA direction, it is recommended that the Planning Commission recommend that the Board of Supervisors amend the County Inland and Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinances and the Local Coastal Plan to update the Flood Hazard Area Standards and

associated definitions per updated FEMA flood hazard data. The following is a summary of the recommended amendments:

- Updated references, administrative procedures, and definitions to be consistent with FEMA floodplain management guidance.
- Added and revised floodplain management definitions: base flood; base flood elevation; flood fringe; Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM); Flood Insurance Study; flood plain; flood profile, storm; floodproofing; floodway; lowest floor; new construction; start of construction; substantial damage; and substantial improvement.
- Moved flood hazard-specific definitions to the appropriate ordinance sections for clarity.
- Defined the duties and responsibilities of the Floodplain Administrator to be consistent with NFIP and California Building Code requirements.

If your property is in a flood plain, you should go by Planning or call to see if they are doing anything bad to you.

California Coastal Commission Meeting of Thursday, June 13, 2024 (Scheduled)

Item 14a - Public hearing and potential action on request by San Luis Obispo County to add a Los Osos Community Plan to the LCP's Estero Area Plan, where the Community Plan is structured to address long-standing issues related to development constraints in that unincorporated community just south of Morro Bay, including related to water supply, wastewater services, and ESHA, and if the Commission does not take a final action, possible action to extend the deadline for final Commission action on the amendment. (RM/DJ-SC)

The bottom line of the 31-page staff report is that the proposed County Plan protects water resources sufficiently to allow the removal of the development moratorium in Los Osos. The report notes that the pumping of groundwater has been reduced. The staff report congratulates the County on its long term work efforts to reach this stage. The write-up states in part:

In conclusion, the end result of such suggested modifications is to provide for infill development in a manner that has adequate water supply to serve it, wastewater capacity to treat it, and all within a protected habitat greenbelt area that will preserve the community's periphery while allowing for infill development. The amendment as modified serves to implement many Coastal Act goals and requirements, including ensuring that development in Los Osos is sustainable, that the legal framework to build housing and community services to keep Los Osos a thriving community is provided, and that statewide and local housing supply needs are met. All of which can hopefully provide some certainty for this community, and all of which definitely shows that, with good planning, communities can indeed solve tough problems related to public services and natural resources. The community should be proud of its efforts and commitment to doing so, and it can be reflected in a comprehensive coastal land use planning document that should ably serve the Los Osos community into the future. Thus, the proposed LUP amendment with the suggested modifications can be found consistent with the Coastal Act.

There are members of the community who disagree with the data and who will oppose the approval/concurrence with the County Plan. Thus, the matter is not a slam dunk.

Non-Meeting Item - Central Coast Energy Authority (3CE) Supplier to bulldoze 3,500 Joshua Trees near Boron. Central Coast Community Energy contracted for the energy back in 2020. Will San Luis Obispo County request that this issue be agendized by the Operations Board and Policy Board?

One of 3CE's contracted "green energy" suppliers is about to wipe out 3,500 Joshua trees in order that the effete environmental elites in SLO County can crow about their environmental righteousness. The LA Times article below details the situation. SLO County Supervisors Jimmie Paulding and Bruce Gibson voted against the Dana Reserve homes project last month, in part, because, it would require removal of oak trees. As champions of 3CE, will they complain to the 3CE Board?

Solar project to destroy thousands of Joshua trees in the Mojave Desert

May 31, 2024 by Melody Petersen Staff Writer LA Times
BORON, Calif.

A renewable energy company will soon begin clearing thousands of protected Joshua trees just outside this desert town, including many thought to be a century old, to make way for a sprawling solar project that will generate power for 180,000 homes in wealthier coastal neighborhoods.

The 2,300-acre project has angered residents of Boron and nearby Desert Lake, two small Kern County towns where the poverty rate is twice the California average. Residents say their concerns about construction dust, as well as the destruction of the mostly pristine land that is habitat for endangered desert tortoises; have been ignored by the county and state officials who approved it.

"Let's destroy the environment to save the environment. That seems to be the mentality," said Deric English, who teaches at Boron Junior-Senior High School. "It's hard to comprehend." English was part of a group that found the fungus that causes valley fever in samples of soil from the five parcels surrounding the two towns where the solar panels will be built.

"How are kids going to be able to play outside?" asked Melanie Richardson, a nurse who has sons at schools near the site. "So many people from our community were begging them not to approve this project, and they passed it regardless."

The controversy over the Mojave Desert project is an example of the trade-offs being made in California as state and local government officials press for a rapid expansion of clean energy. Although solar and wind fields are expected to help mitigate climate change, they are also tearing up undeveloped land, harming threatened plants and wildlife and causing concern in nearby communities, which are often small and far from the state's cities.

"Rural communities that don't have political power just get ramrodded over," English said. The site, known as the Aratina Solar Project, is being developed on private land by Avantus, a California company that is mostly owned by KKR, the global private equity firm.

Crews have been scheduled to start clearing the site of the iconic Joshua trees Monday, said a person who was briefed on the project. The person declined to be named since they were not authorized to discuss it.

The company decided to take the extra step of shredding the trees onsite, rather than leaving them in piles or hauling them away whole, the person said, to reduce the visibility of the tree clearing.

Avantus executives would not confirm the June 3 date but said that the contractors had begun site preparations this month and “will soon begin selectively clearing the area of vegetation and other large natural obstacles” approved for removal by the county and state wildlife officials. The company said the massive solar and battery storage project will have environmental benefits that outweigh the destruction of the Joshua trees and habitat of protected wildlife.

“While trees will be impacted during project construction, vastly more Joshua trees are being threatened by climate change caused by rising greenhouse gas emissions, which the Aratina solar project directly addresses,” the company says on its website.

“Avantus takes care on all projects to minimize any unnecessary impacts such as noise, dust, or traffic throughout all phases of the project,” the company told The Times in a statement. It added that it was “committed to being a good neighbor.”

The Kern County Board of Supervisors unanimously approved the project in October 2021 despite comments and letters from dozens of residents.

“It was like the decision had already been made,” Richardson said.

Aratina will be the ninth solar project that Avantus, formerly named 8minute Solar, has built in Kern County.

During the board meeting, Alexander Sundquist, a company executive, said the benefits of the project to the county included \$3 million in sales taxes and \$73 million in property taxes.

When asked why the company decided to put the project on land next to the two towns, Sundquist said that executives wanted to keep the solar field in Kern County rather than farther south in San Bernardino. “We like doing business here,” he said.

In 2019, San Bernardino County Supervisors voted to ban the construction of large solar and wind farms on more than 1 million acres of private land.

Kern County, home to the state’s largest oil patch, has long been friendly to energy companies. Lorelei Oviatt, director of Kern County Planning and Natural Resources, has repeatedly spoken at industry conferences to emphasize how the county tries to quickly approve projects.

Oviatt told The Times that so far the county has approved 160,000 acres of solar and wind energy projects. Most of those projects are in the desert, she said, because of the easier access there to electric transmission lines.

“

I am pro Kern County not necessarily pro solar,” Oviatt said. “There was an over 18-month process and nothing was rushed. My recommendation (to approve the project) carefully considered all the community comments.”

“Land use is always a balance of private property rights and people’s viewpoints,” she said. The county said that Avantus had put \$1.4 million into a fund that will be used to protect Joshua trees in other areas of the state.

To mitigate the damage from Aratina and several other solar projects, Avantus has also purchased the grazing rights on 215,000 acres of federal land in Kern County and is working with government officials to preserve it.

Avantus declined to disclose the details of where the power would be sent. But earlier the company signed contracts to send some of the power to Silicon Valley Clean Energy and Central Coast Community Energy, nonprofit agencies that deliver green energy to homes in those regions.

“The generated energy doesn’t even stay here,” English said. “It’s shipped to other communities hundreds of miles away.”

Joshua trees, with their twisted, otherworldly shape, are often said to look like they were taken from the pages of a Dr. Seuss book. They grow just 1 to 3 inches a year, which means a 16-foot tree could be more than 100 years old.

The environmental impact statement for Aratina said that nearly 4,700 Joshua trees were found on the site during a survey. More than 500 of those trees are at least 16 feet tall.

“I’m not aware of other projects where this many trees will be removed,” said Kevin Emmerich of Basin and Range Watch, an environmental group.

Avantus agreed to reduce the project’s original footprint to create more space between the solar panels and the two communities. The person with knowledge of the project said the company’s plan now included destroying 3,500 Joshua trees.

Last year, state legislators passed the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act, which bans unpermitted killing of the trees, while also providing a mechanism for the construction of green energy and housing projects.

State officials approved the Aratina project, however, before that law and before an earlier state decision to make the Joshua tree a candidate for protection under the California Endangered Species Act.

In 2020, the California Fish and Wildlife Commission agreed that Aratina and 14 other green energy projects would not be subject to the increased measures to protect the tree.

Unfortunately, said Brendan Cummings, conservation director at the Center for Biological Diversity, “thousands of Joshua trees will be sacrificed.”

State wildlife officials told The Times that the company must still relocate any desert tortoises or

Mohave ground squirrels, which are listed as threatened under California law, that are found during construction.

English said little attention has yet been paid to his group’s discovery on the site of the soil-dwelling fungus *Coccidioides*, which causes valley fever.

Valley fever has been found repeatedly to infect workers building solar fields in California.

On Thursday, half a mile from Boron’s Little League field, a construction crew, wearing yellow vests, was building a fence at the edge of the site, while a truck sprayed water, trying to keep the dust down.

Antje Lauer, professor of microbiology at Cal State Bakersfield, worked with English and Richardson to test the soil samples.

“Desert land is really cheap and there are not that many regulations,” Lauer said. “We need renewable energy, but it needs to be done correctly.”

Back in 2020, 3CE signed the deal to procure from the plant, which was then in the planning stages. The press release is shown below.

8minute¹ Solar Energy Signs Contract with MBCP and SVCE to Develop 250 MW Solar-Plus-Storage Project

June 16, 2020

Aratina Solar Center is 8 minute’s first project with Community Choice Energy providers, delivering clean, reliable, and affordable energy to power 93,000 homes

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA—JUNE 16, 2020:

8minute Solar Energy (8minute) announced that the company has executed a power purchase agreement (PPA) with Monterey Bay Community Power Authority (MBCP) and Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE), marking 8minute’s first contract with Community Choice Energy (CCE) providers. The 250-megawatt (250 MWdc / 200 MWac) Aratina Solar Center includes 150 megawatt-hours (MWh) of energy storage and will provide enough power for 93,000 homes.

“Community Choice Energy providers across California are taking proactive and ambitious action on behalf of their communities and are playing a critical role in helping the state reach its aggressive clean energy goals,” said Dr. Tom Buttgenbach, President and CEO of 8minute. “Our first partnership with Community Choice Energy providers has been a positive experience for 8minute, giving us an opportunity to partner directly with communities to put more affordable, clean energy on the grid. We look forward to continuing to build strong and mutually beneficial partnerships with MBCP, SVCE and other community aggregators as we pioneer a new generation of solar and storage.”

¹ **Prior to a name change to Avantus, the company was called 8minute energy. The project itself has been named the Aratina Solar Center. 3CE had been originally known as Monterey Bay Community Power (MBCP).**

Scheduled to come online before the end of 2023, the Aratina Solar Center will offset carbon emissions by approximately 430,000 metric tons each year, the equivalent of planting 7 million trees annually or removing 90,000 cars from the road.

The Aratina Solar Center will serve approximately 7-8% of MBCP’s retail load with 120 MWac solar generating capacity, 30 MWac battery energy capacity and a 3-hour discharge duration, while SVCE will be contracting for 80 MWac solar generating capacity and 20 MWac battery energy capacity, with a 3-hour discharge duration, serving 6.6% of SVCE’s annual retail load. “Securing renewable, reliable, affordable energy to power our community and support our clean energy goals is our top priority, and we have been proud to work with the state’s largest solar developer to ensure that we meet that goal,” said Tom Habashi, Chief Executive Officer of MBCP. “This large-scale, long-term solar project with storage launches us into an even stronger position in doing our part to reduce carbon emissions while meeting our customers’ needs.”

“Our partnership with 8minute is another success shared with MBCP as we continue to take significant steps to expand California’s renewable energy portfolio,” said Girish Balachandran, Chief Executive Officer of SVCE. “The Aratina Solar Center, complete with battery storage, will allow us to store and deliver solar power when our customers need it — well into the evening hours — reducing our reliance on carbon-emitting gas plants and moving us ever closer to a decarbonized grid.”

The Aratina Solar Center is being built in Kern County, California, where 8minute has been a significant player in accelerating solar and storage development. This marks the company’s ninth project in the county, where it has already developed and placed in operation more than 500 MWdc of solar, including the Springbok Solar Cluster and the Redwood Solar Cluster.

The Aratina Solar Center alone is expected to generate hundreds of millions in total capital investment, more than \$12 million in local tax revenues, \$16 million in land payments over the life of the project and 300 direct construction jobs.

This contract is a result of the Joint Request for Offers (RFO) issued by MBCP and SVCE in April 2019. The Aratina Solar Center will be the seventh project the CCE’s have jointly acquired.



LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

Board of Supervisors Meeting of Monday, June 3, 2024 (Completed)

Item 1 - Public Comment for matters not on the agenda. This item consumed the first half hour of the morning, as a group of Supervisor Paulding's constituents from east of Arroyo Grande showed up to complain about the County's failure to repair a bridge that was damaged in the winter storms. The closure has forced them to use a longer and less friendly route out of their neighborhood.

Paulding attempted to pre-hijack the budget hearing to see if he could convince the Board to commit to special funding. He had met with the community during the previous week and probably invited them to the hearing. "Come on down..." In the end and after interrogating the Public Works Director on a matter that was not on the agenda and some ritual handwringing, the Board directed staff to bring the issue back in the future.

Item 2 - Hearing to consider the Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget, including Special Districts with requests to 1) review and discuss the FY 2024-25 Recommended and Supplemental Budget documents; 2) approve a resolution adopting the FY 2024-25 budget; 3) approve a resolution adopting the FY 2024-25 Position Allocation List; 4) approve a resolution to accept the FY 2024-25 Appropriation Limitation calculation for the County of San Luis Obispo and Board governed special districts, as required by the Gann Amendment to the California State Constitution; 5) close the FY 2024-25 budget hearing; and 6) authorize the Auditor-Controller Treasurer-Tax Collector Public Administrator to make loans between funds for cash flow purposes. The Board may have adopted a billion dollar budget, but no one kept a running total. Suffice it to say, in the New England idiom, they are within a skootch. The skootch may well be only \$2 or \$3 million. It is likely that this will be added to in one way or another as the fiscal year proceeds. The Budget was adopted on a 4/1 vote with Arnold dissenting. She disagreed with some of the priorities (such as the omission of road maintenance) and the fact there were no large reductions even though revenues are weak and the State will probably engender cuts to counties when it adopts its budget on June 15th 2024. The following can be gleaned from the less than one day hearing:

1. The Board spent about 6 hours on the \$1 billion Budget. As noted in **Item 1**, above, the Budget hearing really didn't get rolling until 9:35 AM. The Board then broke for lunch around 11:30 AM, came back at 1:00 PM, and then finished around 5:30 PM.

We have recommended for years that the Board hold real workshops in late May and early June prior to Budget adoption hearings. They should go through the detail to examine if the expenditures and performance measures actually make sense. About every 3 years they need to take a look at the detail, which they never see.

2. The Budget is divided into 10 "Service Group" sections, Public Safety, Health and Human services, etc. There are 23 departments. But the public is allowed only 3 minutes to speak per functional section. At least the Board should allow 3 minutes per department.

3. As we have pointed out for years, the Budget is a hodgepodge financial pages labeled “fund centers,” which in some cases correspond to the organizational structure and in some cases do not. It is not a true program performance budget with performance measures program tied to the cost centers. The Social Services Department presents a good example in which most of the staff expenses are lumped in a section entitled Administration. The so-called fund center contains a number of actual programs

Adult Services Adult Services includes two major programs: Adult Protective Services (APS) and In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS), including Public Authority. APS provides services to elders and dependent adults who are unable to protect their own interests or to care for themselves. APS Social Workers investigate allegations of abuse or neglect, intervening when necessary, and provide community education and connection to resources. The IHSS Program assists with payment of personal and domestic services that enable blind, or disabled adults and children, and elderly individuals, who have a Medi-Cal eligibility determination, to remain safely in their home. The Public Authority program works with IHSS care providers to complete background checks, enrollment processes and assistance with other caregiver related services. Total Expenditures: \$17,292,111 General Fund Support: \$4,948,758 Total Staffing (FTE): 87.00

CalFresh (formerly Food Stamps) This Federal program provides nutritional assistance to low-income households. The Department of Social Services is actively engaged in promoting outreach in the community to increase participation in the program. The receipt of CalFresh assistance helps stretch the household’s budget and combat the increasingly expensive cost of living in our county. CalFresh program eligibility is based upon the application of Federal and State regulations. Total Expenditures: \$15,730,158 General Fund Support: \$2,442,649 Total Staffing (FTE): 76.00

CalWORKs The purpose of CalWORKs is to provide welfare-to-work employment training programs and temporary cash assistance to lift families out of poverty and become self-sufficient. Participants are required to participate in certain activities to work toward self-sufficiency and are required to work a certain number of hours. Total Expenditures: \$20,949,124 General Fund Support: \$861,312 Total Staffing (FTE): 102.0

Child Welfare Services In collaboration with other departments, agencies, and the community, the Child Welfare Services program provides services to strengthen families and reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect. Social Workers investigate allegations of abuse and/or neglect and work with 307 Health and Human Services County of San Luis Obispo Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget Health and Human Services FC 180 — Social Services - Administration families to develop plans to ensure the safety of children. When necessary, children are removed from the home and placed in foster care while plans for reunification are pursued and implemented. When reunification is not feasible, children are found permanent homes through adoption or guardianship. Total Expenditures: \$26,897,461 General Fund Support: \$1,918,643 Total Staffing (FTE): 135.00

County Only Program This includes the eligibility and administrative costs of the General Assistance Program that provides public assistance of last resort to indigent county residents. This mandated program is for persons who are otherwise ineligible for Federal, State, or other community aid programs. Total Expenditures: \$1,660,119 General Fund Support: \$1,660,119 Total Staffing (FTE): 6.00

Medi-Cal California's version of the Federal Medicaid program provides financial assistance for health care including medical and mental health services, devices, and prescription drugs for eligible people. The Department of Social Services determines program eligibility based upon the application of Federal and State regulations, which include the consideration of a person's age, physical or mental disability, other public assistance status, property, and income. The purpose of the Medi Cal program is to provide comprehensive medical care benefits to all public assistance recipients and to certain other eligible persons who do not have sufficient funds to meet the costs of their medical care. Total Expenditures: \$20,009,551 General Fund Support: \$0 Total Staffing (FTE): 97.00

Other Programs This includes other programs provided by the department primarily for Children's Services, but also for foster care eligibility and services, CalFresh Employment and Training (CFET), and family preservation services. Total Expenditures: \$2,866,647 General Fund Support: \$821,678 Total Staffing (FTE): 23.00

Entity and Fiscal Agent for WIOA. In this capacity, the department receives the WIOA Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs are designed to provide quality employment and training services to assist eligible individuals in finding and qualifying for meaningful employment and to help employers find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in business. The Department of Social Services serves as the Administrative Title I grant funds from the Employment Development Department and contracts with program service providers for the operation of the local One-Stop delivery system and program services for adults, dislocated workers, and youth. Total Expenditures: \$3,211,508 General Fund Support: \$0 Total Staffing (FTE): 4.50

Actually, none of these service programs have anything to do with the Administration of the Social Services Department. They are discrete programs unto themselves. The Budget does not even isolate the true costs of the executive leadership of the Department and its organic HR functions, organic financial accounting functions, organic IT functions, etc.

In another bizarre example, the cost of providing health care to the prisoners in the County Jail is classified as being in the Health and Human Services Group. If there were no jail, this large program (\$12.6 million per year) would not even exist. Why is it not in the Sheriff's budget? It has nothing to do with providing health care to the honest citizens. It is a function of criminality.

There are scores of examples of this type of misclassification and incorrect presentation throughout the document. No wonder the Board seems both inert and bedazzled.



Virtually every effort at every level to reform this situation has been rebuffed over the years.

4. The Budget is simply a cost plus aggregation of building on the status quo. Programs are hardly ever eliminated, evaluated, or modified unless there is chance to expand them, add staff, and add overhead.

5. Simple structural analyses, which should be part of the departmental section such as regular payroll, overtime, temporary help, and other special pays, are absent. There are no tables showing how much the County pays for social security, employee health insurance, and the various types of public assistance.

In essence, the San Luis Obispo County Budget document is a catalogue, not a proper analytical document for setting policy, establishing resources, measuring progress, establishing accountability, and communicating with the various clients served or the public in general.

6. Once the State Legislature adopts its deficit laden Budget around June 15, 2024, the County will have to assess the impacts and determine if any reductions are required, as more than 30% of its revenue comes from the State.

7. The Board had discussions about beefing up economic development during its questions and deliberations. This recognized both the need for career jobs that can support a family and an economy that can fund the County's ever growing cost plus budgeting. These discussions resulted in provisionally adding a 2nd Deputy County Administrator and a Management Analyst. They also resulted in adding Funding for REACH. There was no real discussion of reversing the

County’s head-in-the-sand policies of actually undermining those areas where it enjoys true competitive advantage. Real action would include:

1. Development of the County’s considerable oil resources.
2. Preservation of the Diablo Nuclear Plant and expansion of nuclear energy.
3. Development of destination resorts tied to wine, seashore, and western heritage.
4. Promotion of high value fancy estates and ranchettes.
5. Promotion of workforce housing through land use reform and re-zoning.
6. Development of desalination.
7. Horse racing with para-mutual betting.

Current efforts are focused on Vandenberg Airforce Base as a commercial space and technology center, very speculative offshore wind energy projects, and growth of small scale specialty technology and manufacturing firms.

Background: The County's Recommended and Supplemental Budget documents can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Departments/Administrative-Office/Administrative-and-Budget-Services/Services/About-the-County-s-Budget.aspx>

The overall FY 2024-25 Proposed County Budget originally totaled \$993,748,366, just \$6.3 million shy of \$1 billion. It is likely they will “discover” more revenue during the hearings or later in the year, which will allow them to scale up expenditures and join the billion dollar club. This might not happen this year if the State substantially reduces funding to Counties as a result of its large multi-year Budget deficits. It will not be known until the middle or end of June if there will be any State engendered major reductions.

State Controller Schedules		County of San Luis Obispo				Schedule 1	
County Budget Act		All Funds Summary				Fiscal Year 2024-25	
Fund Name	Total Financing Sources				Total Financing Uses		
	Fund Balance Available June 30, 2024	Decreases to Obligated Fund Balances	Additional Financing Sources	Total Financing Sources	Financing Uses	Increases to Obligated Fund Balances	Total Financing Uses
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Governmental Funds							
General Fund	\$ 42,262,881	\$ 4,989,492	\$ 693,931,513	\$ 741,183,886	\$ 736,413,003	\$ 4,770,882	\$ 741,183,885
Special Revenue Fund	609,325	3,041,327	73,795,580	77,446,232	70,996,804	6,449,429	77,446,233
Debt Service Fund	2,900,000	---	23,886,172	26,786,172	19,178,372	7,607,800	26,786,172
Capital Projects	---	---	6,360,000	6,360,000	6,360,000	---	6,360,000
Total Governmental Funds	\$ 45,772,206	\$ 8,030,819	\$ 797,973,265	\$ 851,776,290	\$ 832,948,179	\$ 18,828,111	\$ 851,776,290
Other Funds							
Enterprise Fund	\$ ---	\$ 4,903,117	\$ 35,277,816	\$ 40,180,933	\$ 35,461,036	\$ 4,719,897	\$ 40,180,933
Internal Service Fund	---	3,462,158	87,675,469	91,137,627	86,545,564	4,592,063	91,137,627
Special Districts and Other Agencies	346,084	919,168	9,388,264	10,653,516	10,476,172	177,344	10,653,516
Total Other Funds	\$ 346,084	\$ 9,284,443	\$ 132,341,549	\$ 141,972,076	\$ 132,482,772	\$ 9,489,304	\$ 141,972,076
Total All Funds	\$ 46,118,290	\$ 17,315,262	\$ 930,314,814	\$ 993,748,366	\$ 965,430,951	\$ 28,317,415	\$ 993,748,366

The arrow points to the true grand total, which is only disclosed in an obscure table on page 667. The published Budget book and Board review focuses on a sub-component technically listed as the Governmental Funds Budget. This is summarized in the 3 data view table below. It totals \$852.8 million. The 3 data views include the same totals but display them as:

1. Financing Sources (Revenues)
2. Use of Financing by Function (Expenditures)
3. Uses of Financing by Type (What the dollars actually buy)

In the end and with several technical adjustments and some add backs, the Budget will hit \$1 Billion now or during the fiscal year.

Financing Sources and Uses Summary

Description	2021-22 Actual	FY 2022-23 Actual	2023-24 Final	FY 2024-25 Recommended
Financing Sources				
Taxes	246,503,420	259,485,120	268,681,743	282,232,856
Licenses and Permits	12,561,188	14,923,826	16,393,245	15,904,306
Fines, Forfeitures and Penalties	3,821,371	3,902,820	4,369,539	4,469,186
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	4,183,530	9,137,417	8,197,099	10,618,404
Intergovernmental Revenues	323,675,921	362,558,813	355,025,785	376,260,952
Charges for Services	31,791,694	34,080,965	34,590,758	33,685,978
Other Revenues	34,629,778	38,271,045	40,630,460	40,744,554
Fund Balance	0*	0*	57,088,334	45,772,206
Use of Reserves & Designations	0*	0*	19,265,855	8,030,819
Other Financing Sources	57,264,973	48,597,998	40,780,605	34,057,028
Decreases to Fund Balance	0	0	0	0
*cancellation of reserves and designations and use of fund balance included in Other Financial Sources				
Total Financing Sources	714,431,875	770,958,004	845,023,423	851,776,290
Uses of Financing by Function				
Land Based	55,853,366	68,678,108	69,910,794	69,416,706
Public Protection	183,878,614	200,485,901	210,582,453	226,046,790
Health and Human Services	269,555,065	302,882,295	331,653,681	350,588,823
Community Services	24,804,433	27,192,770	27,715,530	28,091,374
Fiscal and Administrative	31,665,053	35,918,176	33,667,683	33,366,573
Support to County Departments	37,316,447	44,320,133	47,069,174	48,388,138
Financing	41,016,292	52,429,117	43,618,476	34,009,734
Capital and Maintenance	3,486,341	3,543,551	14,892,118	9,074,000
Contingencies	0	0	34,116,916	33,966,041
Reserves & Designations	0	0	31,796,598	18,828,111
Increases (Decreases) to Fund Balance	66,856,264	35,507,953	0	0
Total Financing by Function	714,431,875	770,958,004	845,023,423	851,776,290
Uses of Financing by Type				
Salary & Benefits	335,560,816	361,936,502	402,286,271	415,891,219
Services & Supplies	227,845,653	260,417,236	256,749,422	278,874,100
Other Charges	122,370,694	145,367,432	134,037,833	127,971,334
Fixed Assets	39,800,037	39,611,706	22,756,460	16,311,203
Transfers	(78,001,589)	(71,882,825)	(36,720,077)	(40,065,718)
Increases to Reserves/Designations	0*	0*	31,796,598	18,828,111
Increases/(decreases) to Fund Balance	66,856,264	35,507,953	0	0
Contingencies	0*	0*	34,116,916	33,966,041
*use of reserves and designations and contingencies are included in individual financing types				
Total Financing by Type	714,431,875	770,958,004	845,023,423	851,776,290

A major omission in the County's presentation within all of its summary presentations is that the estimated actual amounts for the current FY 2023-24 fiscal year are omitted. These should be included in a column between the Final and the Recommended. The data are available, as they are presented at the Department level in the detail. Thus, the public and the Board are missing

some of the most critical summary data for assessing the reasonableness of the New Year budget requests in the big picture.

The balance of the Budget, not included in the Government Funds Book, is included in a separate publication entitled the **Special Districts and other Agencies Book**, which is prepared by the Department of Public Works. The actual presentation is largely incomprehensible and is in a very different format from the regular budget. There are no explanations, performance data, or other interpretation.

This **\$141.9 million** therefore flies under the radar and receives no formal scrutiny. Each year COLAB has pointed this out. Various staffers have told us that presentation reforms might come in the future; however, the County's current financial software cannot handle a more comprehensive program performance approach. Reportedly, the County has contracted with a software vendor and will be installing a new system.

One project listed in the workload (Page 468) of the Information Technology Department states:

Complete requirements gathering, evaluate solutions, select a vendor, and initiate the implementation of a new Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

This might be the new finance system, but it's not clear from the title.

The Auditor Controller also lists this effort as a project (Page 410):

As part of the replacement of the County's Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system, the County will complete a County wide needs assessment; issue a vendor Request for Proposal (RFP); evaluate and select a software vendor and implementor; and execute a contract and Statement of Work by the end of 2024

The project is not listed in the CAO's budget narrative.

In General: In the past, the Board's budget review has been confined to a few hours and absent any real penetrating questions. In fact, the session is generally a lovefest, with CAO staff and some of the Department Heads receiving praise for all of their great work.

A key presentation issue is that the staff calculates the change (growth of the budget) from the 2023-24 Final **Adopted** Budget to the FY 2024 -25 **Recommended**. Because many departments underrun their adopted Budget, this technique has the effect of making the growth look smaller than it actually totals. A number of examples are listed below. The Board should minimize the staff presentations and take the time to go through each Fund Center in detail to ascertain the actual year over year difference from the **estimated actual** and reduce the proposed increases accordingly. Other than contractual labor costs or staffing increases generated by policy approved program improvements, why would the Board provide more funding in the New Year than they expended in the current year, given that the overall budget **policy is a status quo budget?** The Board should rigorously apply this decremental process.

Some Examples, Reductions, & Questions

Page 139 - Planning and Building:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Licenses, Permits, and Franchises	\$8,876,308	\$7,196,869	\$8,326,751	\$8,326,751	\$(549,557)
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$43,534	\$48,296	\$24,549	\$24,549	\$(18,985)
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$0	\$370,195	\$0	\$0	\$0
Charges for Current Services	\$1,426,873	\$950,170	\$1,291,742	\$1,263,987	\$(162,886)
Other Revenues	\$1,647,749	\$2,896,851	\$1,459,571	\$1,459,571	\$(188,178)
Total Revenue	\$11,994,464	\$11,462,381	\$11,102,613	\$11,074,858	\$(919,606)
Salary and Benefits	\$17,480,272	\$15,510,763	\$18,075,480	\$17,577,726	\$97,454
Services and Supplies	\$2,927,592	\$6,606,045	\$3,150,833	\$3,420,032	\$121,440
Other Charges	\$336,000	\$361,688	\$89,153	\$70,848	\$(265,152)
Gross Expenditures	\$20,736,864	\$22,478,496	\$21,315,466	\$20,690,606	\$(46,258)
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(138,243)	\$(85,022)	\$(150,690)	\$(150,690)	\$(12,447)
Net Expenditures	\$20,598,621	\$22,393,474	\$21,164,776	\$20,539,916	\$(58,705)
General Fund Support	\$8,604,157	\$10,931,093	\$10,062,163	\$9,465,058	\$866,001

The adopted salary budget was \$17.5 million. But they are going to spend only \$15.5 million (\$2 million less). Then staff recommends \$17.6 million in the New Year, FY 2024 -25 (\$2.1 million more). The write-up indicates that negotiated salary increases account for only 1%, or \$97,000. The Board should reduce the salary line by \$2 million and general fund support by \$2 million. Alternatively, reduce fees by \$2 million.

Page 150 - Public Works:

Please see the analysis on the next page below:

Land Based
FC 405 — Public Works

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$65,231	\$260,000	\$260,000	\$260,000	\$194,769
Other Revenues	\$319,198	\$242,866	\$250,152	\$250,152	\$(69,046)
Interfund	\$50,163,399	\$51,036,309	\$53,589,178	\$53,675,156	\$3,511,757
Other Financing Sources	\$0	\$41,851	\$0	\$0	\$0
Total Revenue	\$50,547,828	\$51,581,026	\$54,099,330	\$54,185,308	\$3,637,480
Fund Balance Available	\$795,636	\$0	\$832,712	\$832,712	\$37,076
Total Financing Sources	\$51,343,464	\$51,581,026	\$54,932,042	\$55,018,020	\$3,674,556
Salary and Benefits	\$39,901,324	\$38,779,561	\$41,677,371	\$41,713,349	\$1,812,025
Services and Supplies	\$4,437,535	\$10,992,318	\$11,512,883	\$11,512,883	\$2,075,348
Other Charges	\$7,303	\$100,449	\$6,787	\$6,787	\$(516)
Capital Assets	\$1,097,300	\$1,226,042	\$1,735,000	\$1,785,000	\$(212,300)
Gross Expenditures	\$51,443,462	\$51,098,370	\$54,932,041	\$55,018,020	\$3,674,558
Total Financing Requirements	\$51,343,462	\$51,098,370	\$54,932,041	\$55,018,020	\$3,674,558

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

The adopted salary Budget was \$39.9 million. But they are going to expend only \$38.7 million (1.2 million less). Then staff recommends \$41.7 million in the New Year, FY 2024-25. The write-up does not specify how much of the difference is attributable to negotiated salary increases, as it lumps services and supplies and salaries increases together. The Board should reduce the salary line by \$3 million. The budget indicates that no general fund is utilized in this fund center. Since the County does not use a true program-performance budget, it is impossible for the lay person or the Board to understand how the salaries are allocated to various units and services of the Public Works Department.

Page 171 - Public Works Roads:

The overall road quality is stuck around a pavement condition index of 60 (out of 100).

Please see the County data on the next page below:

Department Goal: Maintain a good quality county-road system.

1. Performance Measure: Average Pavement Condition Index (PCI) for all county roads.

The Pavement Condition Index (PCI, also called Pavement Condition Rating) is a numerical index between 0 and 100 which is used to indicate the general condition of a pavement system. A PCI of 81-100 represents a Best road, 61-80 a Good road, 41-60 a Fair road, 21-40 a Poor road and below 21 a Bad road. The Board of Supervisors has established the goal of maintaining an average PCI of 65 or better, with no one road category (arterial, collector, local) falling below a PCI of 60. Maintaining a PCI 65 or better requires surface treating 60 miles and repaving 15 miles of roads each year.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00	65.00
Actual	59.00	59.00	60.00	60.00	

Notes: The average pavement condition index for all county roads is 60. Substantial and consistent investments beyond current program funding levels is necessary for the countywide average PCI to measurably improve.

2. Performance Measure: Percentage of County paved roads in Good condition having a PCI (pavement condition index) of 60 and above.

A PCI of 60 and above is considered a Good road with reasonable drive quality which can be cost effectively maintained in perpetuity.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	66.70%	66.70%	67.00%	67.00%	67.00%
Actual	58.30%	61.36%	62.00%	64.00%	

Notes: Consistent with Board direction, staff continues to focus on increasing the miles of good condition roads. Meeting the target of 67% of Good roads is a multi-year effort and incremental improvement continues to be made.

The amount of local general fund contribution to roads decreased propitiously. A few years ago it was around \$13.9 million, and now it's down to \$6.5 million.

**Land Based
FC 245 — Public Works - Roads**

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Taxes	\$2,104,577	\$2,259,292	\$2,140,033	\$2,140,033	\$35,456
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$100,000	\$379,905	\$100,000	\$100,000	\$0
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$24,001,242	\$46,559,812	\$23,220,537	\$23,220,537	\$(780,705)
Charges for Current Services	\$358,022	\$566,970	\$358,751	\$358,751	\$729
Other Revenues	\$0	\$469,502	\$0	\$0	\$0
Other Financing Sources	\$6,740,576	\$15,793,831	\$6,451,076	\$6,451,076	\$(289,500)
Total Revenue	\$33,304,417	\$66,029,312	\$32,270,397	\$32,270,397	\$(1,034,020)
Fund Balance Available	\$825,356	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(825,356)
Cancelled Reserves	\$1,030,000	\$0	\$1,184,528	\$1,184,528	\$154,528
Total Financing Sources	\$35,159,773	\$66,029,312	\$33,454,925	\$33,454,925	\$(1,704,848)
Services and Supplies	\$25,434,081	\$37,530,227	\$26,291,940	\$26,291,940	\$857,859
Other Charges	\$549,470	\$1,556,700	\$550,000	\$550,000	\$530
Capital Assets	\$8,238,000	\$50,375,087	\$6,500,000	\$6,500,000	\$(1,738,000)
Transfers-Out	\$112,866	\$112,866	\$112,985	\$112,985	\$119
Gross Expenditures	\$34,334,417	\$89,574,880	\$33,454,925	\$33,454,925	\$(879,492)
New Reserves	\$825,356	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(825,356)
Total Financing Requirements	\$35,159,773	\$89,574,880	\$33,454,925	\$33,454,925	\$(1,704,848)

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

Note: Ten years ago the County actually allocated more of its General Fund to roads than it does today. In fact, the entire Roads' budget was higher (see the page below).

**Roads
Fiscal Year 2014-15 Final Budget**

Fund Center 245

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide public services related to the safe and efficient movement of traffic on the County maintained roadways.

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2014-15	2014-15
<u>Financial Summary</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Adopted</u>
Taxes	\$ 1,460,779	\$ 1,500,826	\$ 1,504,077	\$ 1,504,077	\$ 1,504,077
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	15,878	13,861	15,000	15,000	15,000
Intergovernmental Revenue	18,771,928	20,254,775	27,651,885	27,651,885	27,651,885
Charges for Current Services	176,968	211,597	127,500	127,500	127,500
Other Revenues	217,155	167,691	26,830	26,830	26,830
Other Financing Sources	10,950,132	6,472,862	6,520,503	9,103,603	9,103,603
Interfund	104,528	143,473	0	0	0
Total Revenue	\$ 31,697,368	\$ 28,765,085	\$ 35,845,795	\$ 38,428,895	\$ 38,428,895
Fund Balance Available	\$ 1,056,718	\$ 416,539	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 3,249,984
Cancelled Reserves	847,000	944,564	541,202	541,202	541,202
Total Financing Sources	\$ 33,601,086	\$ 30,126,188	\$ 36,386,997	\$ 38,970,097	\$ 42,220,081
Salary and Benefits	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Services and Supplies	17,208,794	17,170,436	16,686,195	17,269,295	17,269,295
Other Charges	550,685	370,461	1,298,958	1,298,958	1,298,958
Fixed Assets	13,614,312	8,982,152	18,401,844	20,401,844	20,401,844
Gross Expenditures	\$ 31,373,791	\$ 26,523,049	\$ 36,386,997	\$ 38,970,097	\$ 38,970,097
Contingencies	0	0	0	0	0
New Reserves	1,186,718	416,539	0	0	3,249,984
Total Financing Requirements	\$ 32,560,509	\$ 26,939,588	\$ 36,386,997	\$ 38,970,097	\$ 42,220,081

It was \$11.7 million in FY2015-16 and \$13.8 million in FY 2016-17. The FY 2024-25 amount of \$6.5 million is less than half.

See the County data on the next page below:

**Public Works - Roads
Fiscal Year 2015-16 Final Budget**

Fund Center 24

MISSION STATEMENT

Provide public services related to the safe and efficient movement of traffic on the County maintained roadways.

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2015-16	2015-16
<u>Financial Summary</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Requested</u>	<u>Recommended</u>	<u>Adopted</u>
Taxes	\$ 1,500,826	\$ 1,592,407	\$ 1,578,162	\$ 1,578,162	\$ 1,578,162
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	13,861	38,646	20,000	20,000	20,000
Intergovernmental Revenue	20,254,775	20,519,931	19,656,386	19,656,386	19,656,386
Charges for Current Services	211,597	160,195	140,500	140,500	140,500
Other Revenues	167,691	52,052	8,204	8,204	8,204
Other Financing Sources	6,472,862	8,830,840	8,032,835	11,773,390	11,773,390
Interfund	143,473	74,387	0	0	0
Total Revenue	\$ 28,765,085	\$ 31,268,458	\$ 29,436,087	\$ 33,176,642	\$ 33,176,642
Fund Balance Available	\$ 416,539	\$ 3,249,984	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 1,764,500
Cancelled Reserves	944,564	541,202	5,922,470	5,922,470	5,922,470
Total Financing Sources	\$ 30,126,188	\$ 35,059,644	\$ 35,358,557	\$ 39,099,112	\$ 40,863,612
Salary and Benefits	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0	\$ 0
Services and Supplies	17,170,436	19,223,877	19,500,428	19,650,428	19,650,428
Other Charges	370,461	750,474	711,414	561,414	561,414
Fixed Assets	8,982,152	8,155,876	15,146,715	18,887,270	18,887,270
Gross Expenditures	\$ 26,523,049	\$ 28,130,227	\$ 35,358,557	\$ 39,099,112	\$ 39,099,112
Contingencies	0	0	0	0	0
New Reserves	416,539	3,249,984	0	0	1,764,500
Total Financing Requirements	\$ 26,939,588	\$ 31,380,211	\$ 35,358,557	\$ 39,099,112	\$ 40,863,612

Page 229 - Probation:

See the Budget on the next page below:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$52,450	\$85,698	\$70,450	\$70,450	\$18,000
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$16,162,726	\$15,429,945	\$16,378,010	\$16,778,869	\$616,143
Charges for Current Services	\$824,526	\$531,011	\$550,100	\$550,100	\$(274,426)
Other Revenues	\$10,270	\$10,810	\$10,270	\$10,270	\$0
Total Revenue	\$17,049,972	\$16,057,464	\$17,008,830	\$17,409,689	\$359,717
Salary and Benefits	\$24,446,503	\$22,563,794	\$25,281,228	\$25,633,532	\$1,187,029
Services and Supplies	\$6,719,994	\$6,682,176	\$7,081,221	\$6,777,082	\$60,088
Other Charges	\$119,000	\$498,891	\$0	\$0	\$(119,000)
Capital Assets	\$40,980	\$46,280	\$0	\$0	\$(40,980)
Gross Expenditures	\$31,326,477	\$29,791,068	\$32,362,450	\$32,410,614	\$1,087,137
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(277,260)	\$(440,978)	\$(454,123)	\$(454,123)	\$(176,863)
Net Expenditures	\$31,049,217	\$29,350,090	\$31,908,327	\$31,956,491	\$910,274
General Fund Support	\$13,996,245	\$13,292,626	\$14,899,497	\$14,546,802	\$550,557

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

The adopted salary Budget was \$24.4 million. But they are going to expend only \$22.5 million in the current year (\$1.9 million less). Then staff recommends \$25.6 million in the New Year, FY 2024-25. The write-up states:

Salary and benefits are increasing by \$1,187,029 or 5% due to negotiated salary and benefits increases and recommended budget augmentation requests that will increase the Position Allocation List (PAL) by 3.00 FTE.

The Board should grab the \$700,000 difference between the FY 2023-24 estimated actual and the augmented FY 2024-25 recommended (grossed up for labor contract costs and new positions.)

The performance measures for this department demonstrate a low level of achievement. Moreover, they are expressed as percentages. This means that no one on the Board or in the public has any idea of how large or difficult the Probation workload could be.

Page 247 - Sheriff:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Licenses, Permits, and Franchises	\$873,933	\$621,255	\$910,706	\$881,729	\$7,796
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$645,673	\$625,284	\$633,594	\$633,594	\$(12,079)
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$35,570,482	\$37,585,456	\$38,512,030	\$38,884,826	\$3,314,344
Charges for Current Services	\$1,801,965	\$1,834,181	\$1,846,511	\$2,056,995	\$255,030
Other Revenues	\$153,265	\$441,970	\$904,170	\$904,170	\$750,905
Interfund	\$760,337	\$789,112	\$793,169	\$793,169	\$32,832
Total Revenue	\$39,805,655	\$41,897,257	\$43,600,180	\$44,154,483	\$4,348,828
Salary and Benefits	\$85,820,157	\$89,436,096	\$92,017,159	\$92,065,251	\$6,245,094
Services and Supplies	\$18,678,059	\$20,477,729	\$20,844,775	\$20,615,166	\$1,937,107
Other Charges	\$0	\$448,205	\$152,708	\$152,708	\$152,708
Capital Assets	\$507,065	\$2,206,874	\$268,137	\$159,854	\$(347,211)
Gross Expenditures	\$105,005,281	\$112,568,904	\$113,282,779	\$112,992,979	\$7,987,698
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(1,596,977)	\$(2,741,131)	\$(152,602)	\$(152,602)	\$1,444,375
Net Expenditures	\$103,408,304	\$109,827,773	\$113,130,177	\$112,840,377	\$9,432,073
General Fund Support	\$63,602,649	\$67,930,515	\$69,529,997	\$68,685,894	\$5,083,245
County of San Luis Obispo		247			Fiscal Year 2024-25 Recommended Budget

Here the reader can see the fact that the Department’s salaries were underfunded in the Current FY 2023-24 year by \$3million, which has to be added by means of a 3rd quarter transfer. This was due to the County practice of refusing to forecast labor negotiations. The question then arises, is the \$92.1 adequate for the new fiscal year or does the budget start out underfunded?

In this regard the write-up states in part:

Expenditures are recommended to increase by \$9.4 million or 9%, due primarily to a \$6.2 million or 7% increase in salaries and benefits driven largely by negotiated salary and benefit increases.

Does this cover all of FY 2024-25?

Page 293 - Public Health:

See the data on the next page below:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Licenses, Permits, and Franchises	\$33,072	\$33,636	\$47,057	\$47,057	\$13,985
Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties	\$103,000	\$80,307	\$103,000	\$103,000	\$0
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$19,130,602	\$22,013,877	\$19,953,716	\$20,520,993	\$1,390,391
Charges for Current Services	\$5,277,345	\$5,323,204	\$5,359,947	\$5,359,947	\$82,602
Other Revenues	\$1,238,174	\$1,370,543	\$1,370,174	\$1,370,174	\$132,000
Interfund	\$497,408	\$509,578	\$459,937	\$459,937	\$(37,471)
Total Revenue	\$26,279,601	\$29,331,145	\$27,293,831	\$27,861,108	\$1,581,507
Salary and Benefits	\$36,222,948	\$34,052,467	\$36,786,274	\$36,452,586	\$229,638
Services and Supplies	\$10,096,758	\$14,748,055	\$11,415,022	\$11,288,465	\$791,707
Other Charges	\$375,200	\$6,515,523	\$811,700	\$811,700	\$(63,500)
Capital Assets	\$0	\$38,132	\$0	\$0	\$0
Gross Expenditures	\$47,694,906	\$55,354,677	\$49,012,996	\$48,552,751	\$957,845
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(5,332,301)	\$(5,405,543)	\$(6,079,202)	\$(6,079,202)	\$(746,901)
Net Expenditures	\$42,362,605	\$49,949,134	\$42,933,794	\$42,473,549	\$210,944
General Fund Support	\$15,583,004	\$20,617,989	\$15,639,963	\$14,612,441	\$(1,370,563)

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

The adopted salary Budget was \$36.2 million. But they are going to expend only \$34.0 million in the current year (\$2.2 million less). Then staff recommends \$36.4 million in the New Year, FY 2024-25. The write-up states in part:

Expenditures are recommended to increase by \$210,944 or less than 1%. Salaries and benefits are recommended to increase by \$229,638 or less than 1% due to increases in salary and benefit costs.

The Board should reduce the Budget by \$2 million. The stated comparison is from the 2023-24 adopted Budget. It should be from the FY 2023-24 estimated. They are simply just padding here.

Page 311 - Social Services Administration:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$89,083,400	\$92,334,514	\$93,299,009	\$95,169,827	\$6,086,427
Charges for Current Services	\$14,000	\$14,400	\$14,000	\$14,000	\$0
Other Revenues	\$265,000	\$264,891	\$265,000	\$265,000	\$0
Interfund	\$51,587	\$51,587	\$0	\$0	\$(51,587)
Total Revenue	\$89,413,987	\$92,665,392	\$93,578,009	\$95,448,827	\$6,034,840
Salary and Benefits	\$67,414,120	\$67,349,440	\$70,607,334	\$70,882,246	\$3,468,126
Services and Supplies	\$22,876,221	\$24,272,732	\$25,047,015	\$24,615,758	\$1,739,537
Other Charges	\$12,097,717	\$13,712,037	\$12,976,072	\$13,050,551	\$952,834
Capital Assets	\$25,000	\$247,322	\$68,124	\$68,124	\$43,124
Gross Expenditures	\$102,413,058	\$105,581,122	\$108,698,545	\$108,616,679	\$6,203,621
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(84,690)	\$(84,690)	\$(276,396)	\$(514,693)	\$(430,003)
Net Expenditures	\$102,328,368	\$105,496,432	\$108,422,149	\$108,101,986	\$5,773,618
General Fund Support	\$12,914,381	\$12,831,040	\$14,844,140	\$12,653,159	\$(261,222)
	Source of Funds		Use of Funds		

The employees in this unit received a 3% salary increase (COLA) in the current FY 2023-24 fiscal year. This resulted in a FY 2023-24 salary and benefits budget of \$67.3 million.

The contract for the large SLO County Employees Association (SLOCEA) states in part:

8.2 Fiscal Year 2023-24 Salary Adjustment Effective the start of the pay period that includes July 1, 2023, wages shall be increased by 3.0% for all classifications in this unit, shown in Appendix A.

8.3 Fiscal Year 2024-25 Salary Adjustment Effective the start of the pay period that includes July 1, 2024, wages shall be increased by 2.5% for all classifications in this unit, shown in Appendix A.

The labor contracts for these employees indicate that they received a 3% increase on July 1, 2023, and are to receive a 2.5% increase on July 1, 2024. The Budget write-up grosses it up to 5% overall for 2024-25. But if the 3% was included in the FY 2023-24 \$67.4 million, why does 2024-2025 go up by \$3.5 million? The 2.5% scheduled for 2024-25 should at the most be \$1.65 million, not \$3.5 million.

Page 331 - Social Services Homeless Services:

The unit is slated to spend \$10.6 million in FY 2024-25. The General Fund contribution is almost \$5 million.

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$7,091,386	\$20,052,137	\$5,046,987	\$5,697,543	\$(1,393,843)
Other Revenues	\$723,273	\$1,283,138	\$50,204	\$50,204	\$(673,069)
Other Financing Sources	\$6,642,193	\$7,522,105	\$5,291,814	\$4,909,148	\$(1,733,045)
Total Revenue	\$14,456,852	\$28,857,380	\$10,389,005	\$10,656,895	\$(3,799,957)
Fund Balance Available	\$(522,600)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$522,600
Total Financing Sources	\$13,934,252	\$28,857,380	\$10,389,005	\$10,656,895	\$(3,277,357)
Salary and Benefits	\$3,162,109	\$3,464,269	\$3,050,650	\$3,461,113	\$299,004
Services and Supplies	\$2,735,228	\$739,846	\$750,523	\$987,214	\$(1,748,014)
Other Charges	\$8,306,863	\$24,944,571	\$6,884,716	\$6,505,451	\$(1,801,412)
Gross Expenditures	\$14,204,200	\$29,148,686	\$10,685,888	\$10,953,778	\$(3,250,422)
Less Intrafund Transfers	\$(269,948)	\$(269,948)	\$(296,883)	\$(296,883)	\$(26,935)
Net Expenditures	\$13,934,252	\$28,878,738	\$10,389,005	\$10,656,895	\$(3,277,357)
Total Financing Requirements	\$13,934,252	\$28,878,738	\$10,389,005	\$10,656,895	\$(3,277,357)

The performance measures seem weak in terms of what was scheduled in the 5-Year Plan to reduce Homelessness. One note in the write-up states:

The specific goal is to add a total of 1667 low- and very low-income housing units, including 500 Permanent Supportive Housing beds and 300 interim housing units over the course of the County's Five-Year Plan

The performance measures suggest that at the rate they are producing units and supportive housing beds, they would come nowhere near the overall goal of 1667 in the remaining 4 years of the 5-Year Plan. Given that this is the County's highest stated new service priority, the Board should explore this item in detail and determine if the Plan is working as designed.

2. Performance Measure: Number of Permanent Supportive Housing beds, interim housing units, and low- and very low-income housing units added in the County.

In accordance with the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness, the Division will work to increase the number of permanent supportive housing beds available to people who are experiencing chronic homelessness and will also work to increase the overall supply of interim housing and low- and very low-income housing units in the County. The specific goal is to add a total of 1667 low- and very low-income housing units, including 500 Permanent Supportive Housing beds and 300 interim housing units over the course of the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	0.00	0.00	0.00	200.00	0.00
Actual	0.00	0.00	113.00	49.00	

Notes: This measure is being deleted for FY 2024-25. This measure is being deleted to split the measure into two new measures for clarity on data reporting. One measure will report on permanent supportive housing beds and the other measure will report on interim housing units.

3. Performance Measure: Add 500 Permanent Supportive Housing beds over the course of the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness

In accordance with the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness, the Division will work to increase the number of permanent supportive housing beds available to people who are experiencing chronic homelessness.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	100.00
Actual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Notes: New Measure for FY 2024-25.

4. Performance Measure: Add a total of 300 interim housing units over the course of the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness.

In accordance with the County's Five-Year Plan to Address Homelessness, the Division will work to increase the number of interim housing beds available to people who are experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	90.00
Actual	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	

Notes: New Measure for FY 2024-25.

If they ultimately house the current group of 1667, how do they know that more homeless people will not develop within the County and/or immigrate into the County naturally? What is the elasticity of their projections? What if the supply of homeless people is unlimited over time?

It should be noted that the Veterans Services Unit has a great performance measure that tracks the value of the Federal benefits that its clients receive.

See Below:

Department Goal: To ensure all veterans, eligible dependents, and survivors receive the highest possible benefit rating of filed and consequently awarded claims.

2. Performance Measure: Dollar amount of compensation and pension benefits secured for new monetary claims directly attributable to work done by the County of San Luis Obispo Veterans Services Office (cumulative).

The cumulative dollar amount awarded to veterans by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for new compensation and pension claims filed for clients of the County of San Luis Obispo Veterans Services Office.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	78,053,376.00	78,981,408.00	97,277,792.00	107,649,888.00	110,729,768.00
Actual	79,900,544.00	89,696,288.00	97,260,816.00	106,722,704.00	

Notes: Anticipating 3.125 % of current Veteran population continue to pass or move away at the current rate.

The Homeless Division should report on how well it does in moving clients onto Social Security programs, State aid programs, and even jobs.

Page 354 - Libraries:

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Taxes	\$11,735,589	\$11,954,974	\$12,439,022	\$12,439,022	\$703,433
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$44,876	\$44,876	\$47,576	\$47,576	\$2,700
Intergovernmental Revenue	\$278,264	\$256,085	\$155,478	\$307,478	\$29,214
Charges for Current Services	\$85,300	\$84,165	\$90,100	\$90,100	\$4,800
Other Revenues	\$360,930	\$435,134	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$(345,930)
Other Financing Sources	\$1,402,258	\$625,525	\$596,050	\$538,343	\$(863,915)
Total Revenue	\$13,907,217	\$13,400,759	\$13,343,226	\$13,437,519	\$(469,698)
Fund Balance Available	\$958,978	\$0	\$609,325	\$609,325	\$(349,653)
Total Financing Sources	\$14,866,195	\$13,400,759	\$13,952,551	\$14,046,844	\$(819,351)
Salary and Benefits	\$8,206,373	\$7,811,697	\$8,789,243	\$8,797,961	\$591,588
Services and Supplies	\$4,724,007	\$4,021,972	\$4,554,195	\$4,514,433	\$(209,574)
Other Charges	\$808,170	\$9,607	\$10,000	\$162,000	\$(646,170)
Gross Expenditures	\$13,738,550	\$11,843,276	\$13,353,438	\$13,474,394	\$(264,156)
Contingencies	\$572,450	\$0	\$572,450	\$572,450	\$0
New Reserves	\$555,195	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$(555,195)
Total Financing Requirements	\$14,866,195	\$11,843,276	\$13,925,888	\$14,046,844	\$(819,351)

The adopted salary Budget was \$8.2 million. But they are going to expend only \$7.8 million in the current year (\$394,000 less). Then staff recommends \$8.8 million in the new year, FY 2024-25.

1. Performance Measure: Percentage of current cardholders per capita in the County.

This measure showcases market penetration of library services within the County based upon the number of library cardholders per capita. Current cardholders are customers who have used their library card within the last two years.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22	FY 2022-23	FY 2023-24	FY 2024-25
Target	22.00%	22.00%	21.00%	27.00%	26.50%
Actual	18.00%	27.00%	27.00%	26.00%	

Notes: No additional notes.

What are the age demographics of this data? How many are children in school, adults 18-65, and adults over 65?

Page 455 - Liability Self-Insurance

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$0
Interfund	\$4,700,000	\$4,700,000	\$5,890,000	\$5,890,000	\$1,190,000
Total Revenue	\$4,715,000	\$4,730,000	\$5,905,000	\$5,905,000	\$1,190,000
Total Financing Sources	\$4,715,000	\$4,730,000	\$5,905,000	\$5,905,000	\$1,190,000
Services and Supplies	\$5,757,719	\$6,289,905	\$8,292,921	\$8,292,921	\$2,535,202
Other Charges	\$1,000,000	\$835,793	\$1,000,000	\$1,000,000	\$0
Gross Expenditures	\$6,757,719	\$7,125,698	\$9,292,921	\$9,292,921	\$2,535,202
Total Financing Requirements	\$6,757,719	\$7,125,698	\$9,292,921	\$9,292,921	\$2,535,202

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

This Fund Center cost is increasing significantly. The write-up states in part:

Expenditures are recommended to be \$9.3 million, an increase of \$2.5 million or 38% compared to the FY 2023-24 adopted budget due to increases in insurance premiums for the underlying \$25 million liability insurance program, additional premiums from the County electing to begin membership in the PRISM Optional Excess Liability program and increases in outside legal counsel.

Is the County experiencing increasing losses as a result of law suits and settlements? What is the year over year data in this regard for the past 5 years?

Page 464 - Workers Compensation Costs

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	FY 2023-24 Adopted	FY 2023-24 Estimated	FY 2024-25 Requested	FY 2024-25 Recommended	Change from FY 2023-24
Revenue from Use of Money & Property	\$85,000	\$170,000	\$163,889	\$163,889	\$78,889
Charges for Current Services	\$7,450,000	\$8,000,000	\$10,037,333	\$10,037,333	\$2,587,333
Other Revenues	\$500,000	\$1,000,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$0
Total Revenue	\$8,035,000	\$9,170,000	\$10,701,222	\$10,701,222	\$2,666,222
Total Financing Sources	\$8,035,000	\$9,170,000	\$10,701,222	\$10,701,222	\$2,666,222
Salary and Benefits	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$600,000	\$0
Services and Supplies	\$5,154,458	\$5,208,174	\$5,665,996	\$5,665,996	\$511,538
Other Charges	\$3,000,000	\$3,362,588	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$0
Gross Expenditures	\$8,754,458	\$9,170,762	\$9,265,996	\$9,265,996	\$511,538
Total Financing Requirements	\$8,754,458	\$9,170,762	\$9,265,996	\$9,265,996	\$511,538

Source of Funds

Use of Funds

Total revenues are recommended to increase by \$2.7 million or 33% compared to FY 2023-24 adopted levels due primarily to an increase in charges to County departments to avoid underfunding of this self-insurance fund. Rates charged to departments are set to generate \$10 million in FY 2024-25. Expenditures are recommended to increase by \$511,538 or 6% primarily due to increases in insurance premiums, an increase in Total Temporary Disability (TTD) payments for long-term orthopedic claims requiring surgery and extended time off from work, and outside legal counsel

Actually, it is the costs that are increasing. The “revenues” are simply charges to the Departments, which reduce the amount available for actual program expenditures. The write-up also states that no general fund is appropriated for this cost. Don’t they charge the general fund departments for their proportionate share?

What is the County’s workers comp experience year over year for the past 5 years?

EMERGENT ISSUES

Item 1 - California lawmakers in standoff with Gavin Newsom over \$400M loan to keep Diablo Canyon open BY ARI PLACHTA UPDATED JUNE 05, 2024 3:12 PM

California lawmakers rejected Gov. Gavin Newsom's bid to include another \$400 million for Pacific Gas & Electric Co. in the state budget, in a political standoff that began in 2022 with a bargain to keep the Diablo Canyon Power Plant open. Newsom cut a \$1.4 billion deal to keep the nuclear plant operational until 2030 amid record summer temperatures and a budget surplus in 2022. Now that the state is facing a deficit, legislative leaders cut the money in their budget proposal last week.

In hearings and in a flurry of letters, lawmakers have raised concerns that the state may never be paid back for hundreds of millions in loans to PG&E despite promises of reimbursement — at a time when core government services are being cut.

The federal government is only partially covering the loan, with specific terms attached, and lawmakers say they are concerned that the ultimate hit to California's general fund could be up to \$659 million.

"It feels like we're being taken advantage of here," said Sen. Benjamin Allen, D-El Segundo, in a budget committee hearing last month. "A lot of the terms that we were sold have not been fulfilled by the administration. We were all asked to support it although many of us didn't want to ... and now we're being asked for this loan with conditions I'm not clear on."

The governor's office declined to comment on the issue. Newsom's \$288 billion proposed budget is sparking tough negotiations with lawmakers and painful cuts to core government services, including Medi-Cal insurance for low-income residents.

The budget process was a far more unworried affair in 2022, when, at Newsom's urging, the Legislature approved \$1.4 billion in loans to keep the Diablo Canyon plant open to help maintain reliability of the state's power grid. PG&E had been preparing to shutter it in 2025.

The measure, SB 846, authorized \$600 million from the state's general fund to keep the plant open with a plan to approve the rest later. PG&E was expected to repay the state loan with a federal grant from the Department of Energy.

But the federal grant amounted to a maximum of \$1.1 billion. Of that, \$741 million can be used to cover expected operating losses at the plant through 2026. The other \$359 million will not be provided unless PG&E demonstrates an unscheduled outage.

Now the Newsom administration's department of finance is urging lawmakers to approve a final \$400 million loan disbursement to the utility, an amount that lawmakers say will unfairly be left to taxpayers and could grow next year.

Diablo Canyon, located near Avila Beach in San Luis Obispo County, is California's last nuclear power plant. The 2,240-megawatt plant began operating in 1985 and supplies roughly 9% of the state's energy.

At the time of the deal, Newsom argued that allowing Diablo Canyon to provide electricity until 2030 is needed to preserve grid reliability as California transitions to renewable energy and weans itself off fossil fuels.

Matt Freedman, staff attorney at The Utility Reform Network, said it's unclear that the plant is needed to keep the lights on especially as more clean energy sources come online.

Yet the state's bill to keep it open is growing. "Legislators were told that the \$1.4 billion would be completely repaid by the federal government. That turned out not to be true, and the delta between the promise and reality is getting larger as time goes on," he said.

He called Newsom's arrangement with PG&E back in 2022 a "last-second, stinky political deal that provided a series of benefits and protections to PG&E shareholders," he said, including performance-based disbursements for investors.

"Every dollar that goes to Diablo Canyon is a dollar that doesn't go to some other essential government service." The Legislature must pass a budget by June 15, an agreement that could serve as a placeholder while leaders continue to negotiate with Newsom. The governor must sign the budget bill by June 27.

Ari Plachta is a climate and environment reporter for The Sacramento Bee. She joined the newsroom after reporting on water for the Los Angeles Times, schools for the LA Daily News and politics as a freelancer in Israel-Palestine. Born and raised in the San Fernando Valley, she is a graduate of UC Berkeley's Goldman School of Public Policy. Sacramento Bee, June 5, 2024

Item 2 - DMV ANNOUNCES NEW HOURS FOR SELECT OFFICES

See the double speak in this news release.

Contact: Office of Public Affairs
2415 First Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95818
(916) 657-6437 | dmvpublicaffairs@dmv.ca.gov

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 3, 2024

Modified schedule will help offices improve efficiency while continuing to serve the community

Sacramento – To improve efficiency and to better serve the evolving needs of customers as part of its digital transformation, the California Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) will modify public hours at 20 offices throughout the state. The offices will remain open to the public two to three days a week beginning July 1.

On weekdays when these offices are closed to the public, DMV team members will process transactions started online that require additional processing or virtual customer interaction. This will help improve efficiency and speed up processing times for all customers as more tasks are completed online. **As previously announced**, starting today the DMV will no longer process simple transactions in offices that can easily be completed online or through other convenient options.

The DMV’s ongoing customer-focused digital transformation provides many opportunities online or through other convenient options to complete DMV tasks. Most DMV transactions do not require an office visit and can be conveniently started or completed online at dmv.ca.gov/online.

“We are committed to providing services to customers when and where they want,” said DMV Director Steve Gordon. “As a mobile-first organization, we are serving Californians through many channels on any device while at the same time still serving customers who must visit an office.”

Before making these decisions, the DMV closely reviewed transaction volumes, staffing, wait times and other criteria at its 170 offices statewide to determine which offices to move to a modified schedule while still being able to meet the in-office needs of the communities they serve. The DMV expects the change to have minimal impact on overall wait times.

Staff at offices with modified service hours will work on [Virtual Office](#) items during the days the offices are closed to the public.

DMV Office	Days Open to the Public
Bishop (1115 W. Line St.)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Blythe (430 S. Broadway)	Tuesday and Thursday
Coalinga (406 E. Elm Ave.)	Tuesday and Thursday
Colusa (1025 Bridge St., Suite B)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Crescent City (1475 Parkway Drive)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Fall River Mills (43467 Highway 299E)	Tuesday and Thursday
Fort Bragg (410 S. Franklin St.)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Garberville (1180 Evergreen Road)	Tuesday and Thursday
Hollister (80 N. Sally St.)	Tuesday and Thursday
Lake Isabella (5520 Lake Isabella Road G-1)	Tuesday and Thursday
Lakeport (965 Parallel Drive)	Tuesday and Thursday
Mariposa (5264 Highway 49)	Tuesday and Thursday
Mount Shasta (154 Morgan Way)	Tuesday and Thursday
Needles (1040 E. Broadway St.)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
San Andreas (745 Mountain Ranch Road)	Tuesday and Thursday
Susanville (2615 Main St.)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday
Taft (165 Center St.)	Tuesday and Thursday
Weaverville (1511 Main St.)	Tuesday and Thursday
Willows (815 N. Humboldt Ave.)	Tuesday and Thursday
Yreka (1848 Fort Jones Road)	Monday, Wednesday and Friday

Customers should note that regular DMV office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, offices open at 9 a.m.

COLAB NOTE: Watch this spread to all the offices over time.

Based on the busiest days in each community, the following offices will have modified service. Customers should note that regular DMV office hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, offices open at 9 a.m.

Before Going to an Office – Try Online First!

The DMV has taken many steps to offer more digital services. Most DMV tasks do not require an office visit. The DMV encourages customers to use its [online services](#) and other service channels to complete transactions, including eligible driver's license and vehicle registration renewals. Customers can also use the [Service Advisor](#) on the [DMV website](#) to learn their options to complete DMV tasks.

To sign up for paperless vehicle registration and driver's license renewal notices, customers must sign in or create a secure online account at dmv.ca.gov and then opt in.

Sign up to receive the latest DMV News Alerts: [DMV NEWS ALERTS – California DMV](https://www.dmv.ca.gov/news-alerts)



TYPICAL DMV DAY



Starting July 1st

MODIFIED OFFICE HOURS

We Encourage You to Use Our Online Services
dmv.ca.gov/online

MONDAY
CLOSED

TUESDAY
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

WEDNESDAY
CLOSED

THURSDAY
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.

FRIDAY
CLOSED

Enjoy a new **DMV** digital experience.
dmv.ca.gov/MyDMV

A woman in a blue lab coat is smiling and holding a tablet that displays the MyDMV website interface. The background is a solid blue color.

TSA LINES

**Berkeley Co-Op
"Supermarket"**

Health Care Soon



Socialism has come to an industry near you.

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 DESTRUCTIVE GENERATION—PROVING AMERICA’S WEAKEST LINK

*A single generation has broken apart the great chain of
American civilizational continuance*

BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON

Governor Ronald Reagan, in his 1967 inaugural address, famously remarked, “Freedom is a fragile thing and it’s never more than one generation away from extinction.”

Reagan today might have expanded on his theme by declaring that civilization itself is both fragile and can be lost by a generation that recklessly spends its inheritance while neither appreciating nor replenishing it—if not ridiculing those who sacrificed so much to provide it.

Such is the noxious epitaph of the Baby Boomer generation that is now passing after a half-century of preeminence and whose Jacobin agendas have nearly wrecked the nation they inherited.

In contrast to them, eighty years ago this week, the Allied powers of World War II—chiefly the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canada—landed on five Normandy beaches to begin what Gen. Dwight Eisenhower, supreme commander of the Allied expeditionary forces, would call the great “crusade” to liberate Western Europe from four years of brutal Nazi occupation.

The plan was to land within a few hours and in stormy weather well over 150,000 Americans, British, and Canadians on the Atlantic Coast beaches of France, where they were to charge directly into the fire of tens of thousands of enemy troops. They were to charge uphill in the sand while being fired upon by entrenched German troops occupying the hills above. From there, the beachhead was to serve as the launching pad for two million more troops, who were to somehow drive eastward through France and into Germany to end the war and the devastation the Third Reich had inflicted on the world.

All that was accomplished in the ensuing 11 months. That can-do American generation assumed that impoverished teenagers emerging from the Great Depression, with equipment often inferior to their seasoned German enemies, would, over the ensuing months, surely prove able to route

Waffen SS veterans. Many of them were hastily transferred from the murderous Eastern Front, such as the nihilist 2nd SS Panzer Division *das Reich* (“The Empire”). No matter, the Americans did the impossible in less than a year—from the Normandy beaches to well across the Rhine River.

That same generation went on to save South Korea, build an anti-totalitarian world order, defeat Soviet communism, and pass on to the Baby Boomer generation the strongest economy, military, and political system in history, or, to paraphrase the poet Horace, “monuments more lasting than bronze.” Or so we, the inheritors, thought.

And what are the now septuagenarian and octogenarian children of the veterans of Omaha Beach and Iwo Jima, leaving as their own legacy?

The self-infatuated and do-your-own-thing generation that gave us the Sixties and the counterculture has left the country \$36 trillion in debt, now borrowing *\$1 trillion nearly every three months*. Worse, there is not just no plan to balance budgets, much less to reduce the debt, but also no intention to stop or even worry about *the borrowing of some \$10 billion a day*.

The U.S. military is almost unrecognizable to that of just a few decades ago. It was humiliated in Kabul. In surrealistic fashion, it abandoned some \$50 billion in lethal weaponry to the Taliban—along with our NATO allies, American contractors, and loyal Afghans. And our supreme command labeled that rout a brilliant retreat. Meanwhile, the military suffers from depleted inventory of key munitions while being short 45,000 annual recruits.

The Pentagon is torn by internal dissension over DEI, woke, anti-meritocratic promotions, and a politicized officer class—well, apart from now also being outmanned and outgunned by the Chinese. Many of the world’s key maritime corridors—the Red Sea, the Straits of Hormuz, the Black Sea, and the South China sea—are apparently beyond our navy’s ability to ensure the world safe transit.

For perceived cheap political advantage, the Baby Boomers destroyed the southern border, most recently allowing in nearly 10 million unaudited illegal aliens. With the disappearance of our national sovereignty, so too was lost the once-cherished idea of a melting pot of legal immigrants arriving in America longing to assimilate, to integrate in self-reliant fashion, and to show gratitude for the chance of something far better than what they left.

The country’s major cities are increasingly medieval, with a million homeless camped on fetid streets. Criminals terrorize the law-abiding. They assume their violence will be contextualized away by vacuous “critical legal” or “critical race” or “critical penal” theories. This generation releases violent felons to prey on the weak and sheds hardly a tear as police officers are shot unnoticed at the rate of nearly one a day.

America’s once great universities—such as Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Stanford, and MIT—are now into their fourth year of abolishing much of their prior standards. The youth who sought to wreck them from the outside in the 1960s now succeed in finishing the job as elders on the

inside. These bankrupt campuses now adjudicate admissions and hiring by race, tribe and gender and then wonder why their students are entitled, ignorant, and arrogant yet unable to meet the very standards that the universities once insisted were critical to ensuring their preeminence.

Worse, the more elite the campuses, the more they became hotbeds of unapologetic anti-Semitism, gratuitous violence, and hatred for the country's very institutions that guarantee their own freedom of action and speech. Who taught them and allowed them to think that as they illegally occupied buildings, defaced and defiled monuments, and shouted Jew hatred, they were absurdly entitled to free food deliveries and amnesties?

A rapacious higher education welcomed in profitable anti-American students and billions of dollars in hostile foreign cash from those who mock the laws of their host and feel a covetous America can be bought for 10 cents on the dollar. And as we learned after October 7, they were mostly correct.

Abroad, our nomenklatura opportunistically demonizes a democratic Israel trying to fight a terrorist Hamas that slaughtered 1,200 mostly unarmed citizens at a time of peace in the most grotesque fashion of the 21st century.

Yet our elite cannot distinguish killers from our democratic allies. Hamas deliberately drafted their own citizens to serve as shields to protect the terrorists safely ensconced in the tunnels below—on the sick assurance that Israel would surely try to avoid killing civilian shields whom the cynical Hamas apparat deliberately exposed to protect itself.

America hectors its most loyal ally in a way it does not its chief enemies, communist China and theocratic Iran. Not content with hiding its role in birthing the gain-in-function COVID-19 virus, now with impunity China helps kill 100,000 Americans a year through the export of fentanyl. It sends nearly 30,000 adult males into the US illegally. It relies on the espionage abilities of its students and visitors—and apparently exempt spy balloons—to ensure the People's Liberation Army's technological parity with the U.S.

But the greatest baleful legacy of this fading generation is the weaponization of the government against its own perceived American citizen enemies. That bastardization of institutions extends now to the very destruction of the once-hallowed tradition of American jurisprudence.

The degeneration was not just that our government and its political ancillaries cooked up the Russian collusion hoax that warped the 2016 campaign and crippled a presidency—but that, to this day, its unapologetic architects remain smug that they pulled it off and would do it again.

Ditto the efforts of “intelligence authorities” to delude the American people about “Russian disinformation” and the Hunter Biden laptop. The Sixties generation's new normal is to impeach a president twice, to try him as a private citizen, and to seek to remove him from state ballots.

All that was now characteristic of a generation that learned in the 1960s that if it did not get its way, it would wreck what it could not control. So, it was logical that it sought to pack the court,

to end the filibuster, to destroy the Electoral College—and to corrupt the law to achieve political ends. Or as the Sixties generation taught us, “by any means necessary”—an arrogant affirmation of Machiavelli’s dictum that “the ends justify the means.”

Now we are left with a final toxic gift from this generation: the destruction of jurisprudence, a system designed not to easily protect the popular and admired but those often pilloried in the public square, the unorthodox, eccentric, and unliked.

Even Trump’s antagonists know that had Donald Trump been a man of the left, or had he not run again for president, he would never have been charged, much less convicted, of felonies or been punished with nearly a half-billion dollars in legal fees and fines.

We all accept that the charges brought against him by a vindictive and left-wing Letitia James, Alvin Bragg, Fani Willis and Jack Smith—all compromised by either past politicized prosecutorial failures or boasts of getting Trump—have never before been brought against any prior political figure or indeed any average citizen. They were instead invented to target a single political enemy. So what hallowed law, what constitutional norm, what ancient custom, or what Bill or Rights has the fading left not destroyed in order to erase Donald Trump from the political scene?

There is now no distinction between state and federal law. Once a prosecutor targets an enemy, he can flip back and forth between such statutes to find the necessary legal gimmick to destroy his target.

Statutes of limitations are no more as errant prosecutors and political operatives in the legislature can change laws to dredge up supposed crimes of years past, to destroy their political enemies, by employing veritable bills of attainder.

The very notion of an exculpatory hung jury depends on who is to be hung.

Judges can overtly contribute to the political opponents of the accused before them. Their children can profit in the tens of millions by selling to politicians their relationship to the very judge who holds the fate of their political opponents in his hands.

In sum, the First Amendment guaranteeing the right of the defendant to free speech is now not applicable. Asymmetrical gag orders are.

The Fourth Amendment is now torn to shreds by those who boast of “saving democracy.” When the FBI, on orders from a hostile administration, storms into the home of the leading presidential candidate and ex-president’s home, armed to the teeth, treats a civil dispute as a violent felony, and then doctors the evidence it finds, then constitutional insurance against “unreasonable searches and seizures” becomes a bitter joke for generations.

The Fifth Amendment’s protection that no person “shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law” has been destroyed when an ex-president cannot summon expert

legal witnesses to testify on his behalf and when he cannot bring in evidence that contradicts his accusers. There is no due process when one ex-president is indicted for the very crimes his exempted successor has committed.

The Sixth Amendment's various assurances are now kaput. No one believes that Trump was tried "by an impartial jury of the State"—not when prosecutors deliberately indicted him in a city where 85 percent of the population voted against him and are by design of a different political party.

No longer will an American have the innate right "to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor" when Donald Trump was never informed by prosecutor Alvin Bragg of the felony for which he was charged, with little advance idea of all the hostile prosecutorial witnesses to be called, and with no right to call in experts to refute the prosecution's bizarre notion of campaign finance violations.

The Seventh Amendment is likewise now on the ash heap of history. The publicity-seeking judge Arthur Engoron, a political antagonist of Trump, warped the law in order to serve as judge, jury, and executioner of Trump's fate, without recourse to a jury of even his biased New York peers.

The Eighth Amendment will offer assurance no longer to the American people that "excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted."

Donald Trump was fined \$83.3 million in the E. Jean Carroll case for an alleged assault of three decades past, brought by partisan manipulative waving of the statute of limitations, with the politicized accuser having no idea of the year the assault took place, with her accusations arising only decades later when Trump became a political candidate, with her own employers insisting she was fired for reasons having nothing to do with Donald Trump, and with her narrative eerily matching a TV show plot rather than any provable facts of the case.

By what logic was Trump fined \$175 million for supposedly inflated asset valuation to obtain a loan that was repaid with interest to banks that had no complaint? Since when does the state seek to inflict such "unusual" punishments for a crime that never before had existed and never will again henceforth?

In sum, our departing weak-link generation leaves us this final Parthian shot— that when a toxic ideology so alienates the people who are rising up to prevent its continuance, then the desperate architects of such disasters can dismantle the rule of law to destroy its critics.

And so, a single generation has broken apart the great chain of American civilizational continuance. But if this weak-leak generation thinks the evil that they wrought is their last word, they should remember the warning of a great historian:

“Indeed men too often take upon themselves in the prosecution of their revenge to set the example of doing away with those general laws to which all alike can look for salvation in adversity, instead of allowing them to subsist against the day of danger when their aid may be required.” – Thucydides 3.84.3

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**WE HAVE BEEN SUBVERTED
WHAT IS AT STAKE IN OUR ABILITY TO SEE THE
THREAT PLAINLY? NOTHING LESS THAN THE
PRESERVATION OF OUR WAY OF LIFE
BY AYAAN HIRSI ALI**

If you wonder why I—a woman of color, an African, a former Muslim, a former asylum seeker, and an immigrant—look at the antics of today’s anti-Israel, anti-American protesters with such fear and trembling, allow me to explain.

I was born in Somalia in 1969. The country had achieved independence nine years before. But less than a month before I was born—on October 21, 1969—a junior member of the brand-new Somali armed forces seized power with the help of the Soviet Union. The first two decades of my life were shaped by the upheaval that followed that coup.

The Somalia that gained its independence was a young, optimistic society full of national pride. We had such hope for growth, political stability, prosperity, and peace. But, in a story sadly familiar to many of my fellow Africans, those hopes were dashed.

What followed was a nightmare.

For me it is all captured in the earliest memories of my youth: statues of [Mohamed Siad Barre](#), our dictator, sprung up across Mogadishu, flanked by a trio of dark seraphim: Marx, Lenin, and

Engels. This particular communist experiment plunged Somalia into bloodshed, mass starvation, and a 20-year period of suffocating tyranny. I recall my grandmother and mother smuggling food into our house. I also remember the whispering: we felt the state was omnipresent. It could hear everything.

My father was thrown into prison. His friends—those other pioneers in pursuit of a democracy modeled on America—were either jailed like him or, in many cases, executed.

By the time I was eight, my family knew we needed to escape. We left in 1977. By 1990, the country had descended into a civil war from which it has never fully recovered.

I never stopped longing for the kind of freedom my father had taught me about. And at the age of 22, I fled to the Netherlands seeking it. There—and later, in America—I discovered what we’ve come to call “Western” values.

The West’s inheritance springs from a peculiar confluence of habits and customs that had been practiced for centuries before anyone branded them as “ideas.” But they are principles—radical ones—that have given us the most tolerant, free, and flourishing societies in all of human history.

Among these principles are the rule of law, a tradition of liberty, personal responsibility, a system of representative government, a toleration of difference, and a commitment to pluralism. Each of these ideas might have been extinguished in their infancy but for the grace of God and the force of their appeal.

Perhaps it is because I was born into a part of the world where these principles were nonexistent that I feel a particular love for them—and an instinct for when they are in danger.

Right now, so many Western nations are under grave threat from the twin forces of cultural Marxism and an expansionist political Islam familiar to me from my youth.

For a time, many refused to believe that anything was actually wrong. The tide of populism was, they insisted, a momentary manifestation of frustration. The decline of each of our institutions was viewed in isolation, as a problem of poorly selected leadership, which could be corrected after the next election or with a changing of the guard. The sense of hopelessness that people felt was explained away as the temporary consequence of the rapid transition away from industrialism and the ushering in of the digital age.

In this light, though there were problems, they were distinct from each other and would be corrected in time.

Can any serious person believe this now?

People are encountering our current crisis in different ways, though a compelling explanation, let alone a solution, remains elusive. I am reminded of the Buddhist parable of the blind men and the elephant. The story goes that a group of blind men, who have never encountered an elephant

before, hear that one has been brought to their town. They go to touch the elephant to work out what it might look like. One man touches the elephant's trunk and thinks it must be like a large snake. Another touches its leg and likens it to a tree. A third who grasps the elephant's tail says it feels like a rope. A fourth presses its sides, and when it does not budge, compares it to a wall. The fifth touches its tusk and thinks it to be like a spear.

Each of the blind men touches the same elephant and comes up with a different interpretation. Although there is truth in each of their assessments, none is able fully to comprehend the elephant in its totality. Those who feel the decline in Western society are like these blind men, encountering the elephant in their own ways and grasping at explanations in the half-light of dusk.

When the omni-breakdown burst forth in 2020 with the crises the Covid-19 pandemic and the draconian controls that governments imposed, and the George Floyd riots, most of us awoke from our slumbers and behaved like the blind men, ping-ponging around theories with the tremulous (sometimes furious) chatter that heralds the turning of an age.

As one of those blind men—and surely I, too, am encountering only part of the elephant—my perception is that we are a society subverted. By this, I do not mean that we are subverted in the sense that a few spies and saboteurs are conducting covert operations, blowing up a bridge or an airfield. I mean we are subverted in a more systematic and totalizing way.

Listen to Ayaan read this essay today on Honestly:

Before I explain who might be doing the subverting, and for what reason, let me first explain what I mean by it. The best description comes from [Yuri Bezmenov](#)², who says that this form of subversion is very gradual, but ultimately transformational.

Bezmenov had been a KGB agent promoting foreign subversion when he grew disillusioned with the Soviet system. In 1970, he defected to the West—to Greece, then Canada. The rest of his life was dedicated to exposing the secret Soviet apparatus of subversion in the West.

Living in the West in 1983, Bezmenov gave a [lecture](#) in which he explained “Psychological Warfare, Subversion, and the Control of Society.” It begins:

² **Yuri Alexandrovich Bezmenov** ([Russian](#): Юрий Александрович Безменов; December 11, 1939 – January 5, 1993; alias: **Tomas David Schuman**^[1]) was a [Soviet](#) journalist for [Novosti Press Agency](#) (APN). In 1970, as a member of the KGB Soviet mission in New Delhi, India, Bezmenov defected to the West and was re-settled in Canada pursuant to an arrangement between American and Canadian security agencies.^[3]

After being assigned to a station in [India](#), Bezmenov eventually [grew to love](#) the [people](#) and the [culture of India](#). At the same time, he began to resent the KGB-sanctioned repression of [Soviet dissidents](#) and other intellectuals who dissented from Moscow's policies^[4] and he decided to defect to the West.^[4] Bezmenov is best remembered for his [anti-Marxist](#), anti-Soviet, and anti-atheist lectures and books published in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s.

Subversion refers to a process by which the values and principles of an established system are contradicted or reversed in an attempt to sabotage the existing social order and its structures of power, authority, tradition, hierarchy, and social norms. It involves a systematic attempt to overthrow or undermine a government or political system, often carried out by persons working secretly from within. Subversion is used as a tool to achieve political goals because it generally carries less risk, cost, and difficulty as opposed to open belligerency. The act of subversion can lead to the destruction or damage of an established system or government. In the context of ideological subversion, subversion aims to gradually change the perception and values of a society, ultimately leading to the undermining of its existing systems and beliefs.

This kind of subversion is familiar to me because of my background. Somalia wasn't the only African country subverted by the USSR. And those that were warped by Soviet infiltration—such as Ethiopia and Angola—bear the scars to this day.

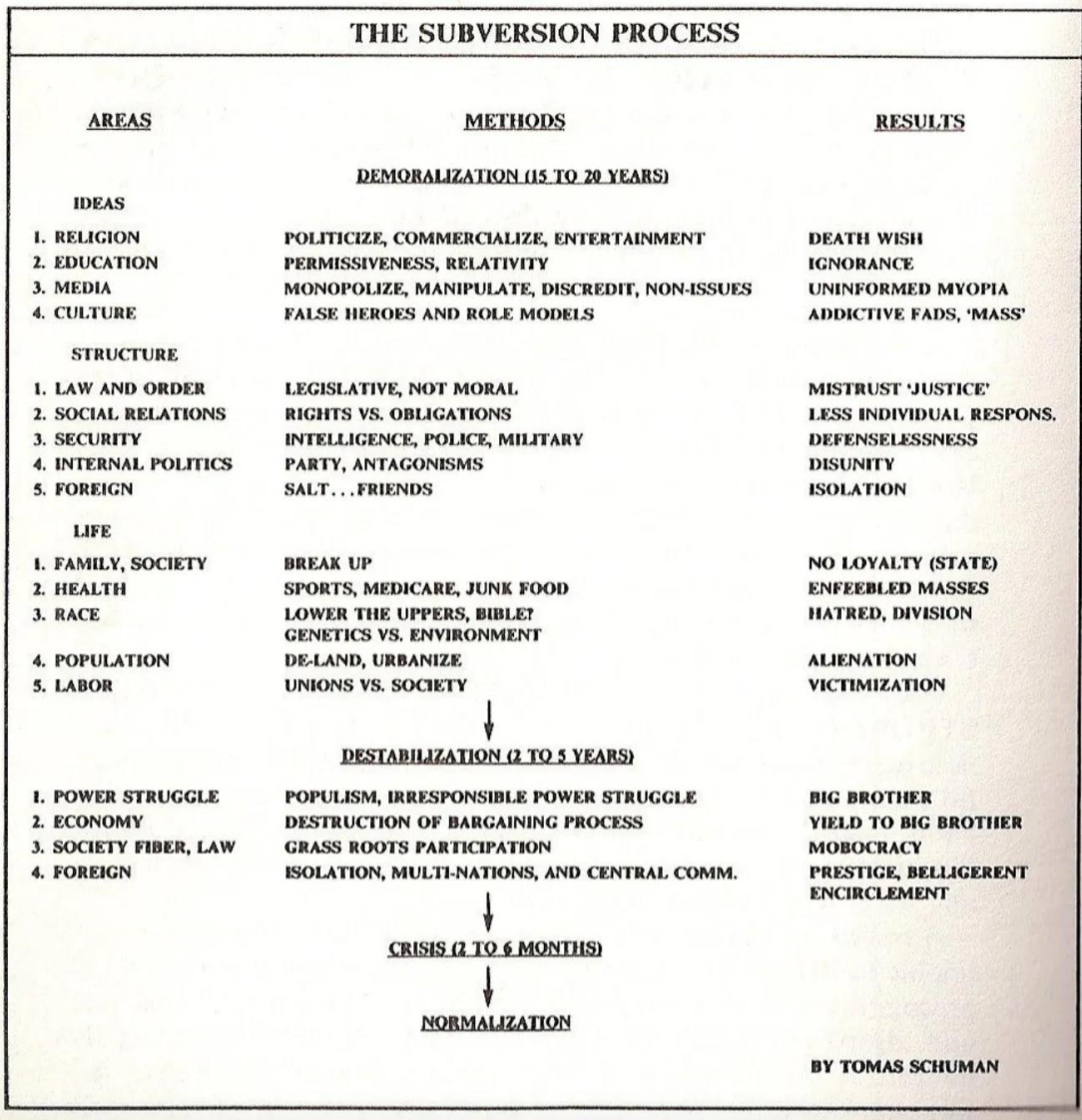
One of the key insights Bezmenov expresses about a subverted society is that, for a while, there is only a passing sense that something is wrong. It's a mood—a vibe. I believe that's what many of us have been witnessing for several years now, maybe even as long as a decade or two.

The pressure makes society rumble like a volcano, quiet one minute and flaring the next. Then, finally—and seemingly suddenly—the revolution bursts into view.

When, on October 8, protests erupted across the Western world in support of Hamas—and not the democracy that had been overrun by terrorists—I saw the revolution. When I look at the recent spectacle at Columbia or Yale or UCLA or Harvard or Stanford—students tearing down American flags and raising Palestinian ones; or chanting in Arabic “from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free”—it is hard not to see the fruit of this long process. I hear the same when, week after week, the streets of London, Amsterdam, Brussels, and Hamburg ring with cries of “intifada” or [open demands](#) for a caliphate or Sharia law in the heart of Europe.

How did it happen?

Bezmenov described the subversion process as a complex model with four successive stages, a diagram of which I have provided. These are, in order: **demoralization**, **destabilization**, **crisis**, and finally, **normalization**.



Demoralization is the first stage and requires the subverters' greatest investment of time and resources. Bezmenov claims the process of demoralization can take between 10 to 30 years, because that is the amount of time it takes to educate a new generation.

The demoralization process targets three areas of society: its ideas, its structures, and its social institutions. The targeted institutions include religion, education, media, and culture. In each realm the old ways of thinking, the old heroes, are discredited. Those who believed in them come to doubt themselves and their ability to discern reality itself.

Think of the cynicism and selective truth-telling young Americans encounter in most classrooms. *You know Jefferson owned slaves, right? You know Columbus killed millions?* Again, never mind that Jefferson set us on the path to emancipation, or that Columbus knew nothing about epidemiology. A little learning, as the saying goes, is a dangerous thing.

Once inside, it is very difficult to escape the mosh pit of civilizational self-loathing. Maybe you can climb to the top for a while by being the white person who hates white people most loudly, or the straight person who goes to the most debauched parades. But most people give up.

The ultimate intended outcome is that the afflicted willingly embrace self-destructive behaviors and ideas. Thus, all moral constraints can be eschewed in the pursuit of “just” and “virtuous” causes.

What else can explain the daily displays of moral panic attacks masquerading as righteous activism, from the [destruction of artwork](#) to [self-immolation](#)? As human life ceases to look inviolable, we might also expect measures like euthanasia to gain steam, not just to help end terminal anguish but to end all manner of non-debilitating hardship. It’s no surprise, then, that we are seeing [movements speeding ahead for “assisted dying”](#) in the U.S., UK, the Netherlands, Canada, France, Ireland, and the rest of the West.

Next, the fundamental structures of society—like the rule of law and social relations—are targeted. For example, demoralization in the rule of law would entail undermining our trust in legal institutions and eroding the basis for legal authority. This could be accomplished by presenting the justice system as corrupt or illegitimate and by sowing distrust in the mechanisms of law enforcement. Think of the movements to “defund the police” because of “systemic racism.” Or the conviction last week of the front-runner presidential candidate on 34 counts of obvious political charges.

As a consequence, citizens lose confidence in the administration of justice, paving the way for untold social disorders, including legal nihilism, where people disregard the law en masse.

In America in 2019, 14 unarmed black men [were shot](#) by police—most, apparently, in self-defense. And yet, when polled, most Americans who described themselves as “very liberal” [estimated](#) the number at 1,000 or more. A fifth thought 10,000 or more. Were the BLM riots, then, any surprise?

To be sure, this isn’t just a progressive problem. Republicans also demonized the Justice Department, the FBI, and members of the judiciary when it suited them. Conservatives are also losing their confidence in law enforcement, in part because of what they see as the lax enforcement of the law as applied toward groups like antifa, Black Lives Matter, and pro-Hamas demonstrators.

The subversion here appears to be working, with both sides agreeing: there is a two-tiered police and justice system—one set of rules for me, and another for thee.

The third area—which Bezmenov called “life”—includes core social institutions such as family, health, race, population, and labor. Demoralization of the family is probably a familiar concept to us all. It involves promoting ideas that weaken the bonds between members of the family, promoting narcissistic individualism over family unity, creating financial stressors that discourage family formation, acrimony between the sexes, and the replacement of parental authority with the state.

Thus, the retrograde practice of polygamy is rebranded as polyamory. The natural human urge to create and nurture new human life is treated derisively by “[DINKS](#)” with slightly more latte money, or, more seriously, as an irresponsible and selfish choice to make because of climate change. Meantime, parents are told at every turn that they don’t know what they’re doing—and to defer to the experts instead.

The result is that not only do individuals feel less attachment to family, the fundamental unit of a healthy civilization, but they even end up detached from society itself. As we now know, the breakdown of family is strongly correlated with the epidemic of mental health crisis and explosive rise in violent crime: 85 percent of American [youth in prison](#) come from fatherless homes.

The goal of demoralization is to gradually degrade the foundations of a healthy society across all domains by erasing moral lines and exploiting preexisting discontents. What a society used to call abnormal and pathological, subversion normalizes. Just consider, for example, our culture’s attitude toward pedophiles, now rebranded as “[minor-attracted persons](#).” By hijacking the legacy and language of the civil rights movement, nearly any “marginalized” group has a vehicle to try to “mainstream” deviant behavior. Consider the fact that across civilized societies it is not just “wrong” to say that a man cannot become a woman. It is thought to be *cruel*. So cruel that the [Scots have made it illegal](#).

What’s striking about the demoralization process is that the law doesn’t typically change—at least not initially. Subversion abuses the tolerance of an open culture, forcing the host society to accomplish its aims like a virus attaches to a host.

In the Soviet case, according to Bezmenov, a successful subverter could come to be employed by a major university and teach a class on communism. When professors, donors, and students raise eyebrows, they get labeled as cranks or retrograde. The subverter responds: “Who are you to decide what can’t be taught?” Meanwhile, the subverter works to indoctrinate more young and impressionable minds and to secure positions for allies or useful ideologues. If you oppose this, you are asked: “What do you have against intellectual diversity?” Or “Do you oppose free thinking?” Thus, dissenters are silenced.

Over time, as the subverters come to dominate an institution, they apply institutional pressure. Curbs on academic freedom, the curriculum, and alterations to the hiring process inevitably follow. Think of the novel instruments to enforce uniformity of thought among academics: [DEI statements](#), now a requirement at universities across America. Repeat *ad infinitum*.

Even in the cases where subversive activity is clearly illegal, such as with destruction and violence during the 2020 riots and at many anti-Israel protests today, crimes committed in service of some larger goal—like “decolonization”—are presented as righteous. *Decolonization* is a word that’s become as common these days as *social justice*. But what does it mean? Gal Beckerman of *The Atlantic* [has written](#) about the Marxist origins of this concept and one of its chief proponents, Frantz Fanon. Fanon, Beckerman writes, is “the patron saint of political violence,” and his “concepts have provided intellectual ballast and moral justification for actions that most people would simply describe as terror.” Listen to Fanon

himself: “whatever may be the headings used or the new formulas introduced, decolonization is always a violent phenomenon.”

When young people say “resistance is justified,” many—if not most—of them believe they are simply standing up for the downtrodden. But the deeper implications of that statement are about justifying the morally reprehensible. How else to explain that at our most prestigious college campuses, students can be found glorifying Hamas terrorists and openly praising North Korea?

As far as I can tell, we are on our way to being considerably demoralized. If you look at the last few years, standards have declined, and subversive content, like Fanon’s, fills the media and our children’s curricula from K–12 to college and beyond. By *beyond* I mean even the Girl Scouts: [here’s a St. Louis chapter](#) learning to cheer for “the intifada.”

Do most elementary school teachers really want to racially stratify fourth graders? No. I think they dislike the racism of the past and want to do what they can to fix it. Since their betters in college told them that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is the way to go, well, so be it. Likewise, I don’t think your local high school history teacher wants to bring about a Bolshevik revolution. He has simply been told to replace the focus on 1776 with something from [The 1619 Project](#). So he gets with the times. And on and on and on.

We have also come to a place where it is difficult for anyone to dissent for fear of incurring the wrath of the adherents—witting or not—of subversion. So people go along, keep their heads down, and try not to make a fuss.

Destabilization is the next phase. This process is considerably shorter, taking anywhere between five months to two years. With demoralization now reaching its full maturity, society is increasingly paralyzed by harsh domestic turmoil across all sectors. Democratic politics take on the character of a vicious struggle for power. Factionalism takes hold. Economic relations degrade and collapse, obliterating the basis for bargaining. The social fabric frays, leading to mob rule. Society turns inward, leading to fear, isolationism, and the decline of the nation-state itself, leading to **crisis**.

It is important to understand that, at this stage, the process of subversion is largely self-propelled. What once required active involvement on the part of a subverter has now taken root and grows organically. Then, society ruptures all at once in a rolling series of crises as the full extent of the cancer manifests.

Finally, says Bezmenov, a subverted society enters the **normalization** stage, which is when the subversive regime takes over, installing its ideology as the law of the land. By then, the enemy has totally conquered the target society—without ever firing a shot.



A view of the Manhattan skyline with the Empire State Building in the center, as seen from Crown Heights in Brooklyn on January 18, 2023, in New York City. (Roy Rochlin via Getty Images)

The question, of course, is who is doing the subverting. Who is trying to unravel America and the West?

Again, I am feeling only my part of the elephant, but I can discern at least three forces.

The first: **American Marxists**. This category includes old card-carrying communists, red-diaper baby socialists, antifa anarchists, and many of whom we now call *woke*. Though the Soviet Union collapsed decades ago, the Soviet worldview has found familiar proponents: young Americans and their professors. They are no longer advancing their cause merely through class struggle, but through the fusion of racial, class, and anticolonial struggles. Theirs is now a [cultural communism](#); they lead subversion through the institutions with the ultimate aim of overthrowing the West.

The thundering socialists of the past (think of poor Bernie) seemed to earnestly care about the working class. Perhaps they did so naively, but at least they loved the poor. Does AOC? Rashida Tlaib? My former countrywoman, Ilhan Omar?

The second force is the **radical Islamists**, who are riding the coattails of the communists to power. A good example is the Muslim Brotherhood and its many tentacles. Of these tentacles, some are openly religious, like the Council on American-Islamic Relations and the Muslim Students Association, each with chapters in nearly every American university. Other organizations don a secular mask, like the so-called Students for Justice in Palestine. These groups have become increasingly confident over the past months. Anti-Israel Muslim candidates [recently won](#) elected seats in countries like England, where imams talk openly about [reestablishing the caliphate](#) in Europe.

The third force is the **Chinese Communist Party**. The most obvious avenues through which the CCP has spread subversion in America is through its numerous [Confucius Institutes](#). These organizations have been vehicles for Chinese espionage within major American academic

institutions. Then there is TikTok, an addictive social media app controlled by the CCP, which presents Chinese children wholesome, educational content while [wreaking havoc](#) on American kids—polarizing them and feeding them anti-American propaganda.

I believe Vladimir Putin is currently waging his own subversion campaign by supporting and advancing the three other forces. That is why I do not place him in one particular category.

What unites [these enemies](#)? On the surface, they have little in common. We all know [what happens](#) to “Queers for Palestine” in the Palestinian territories. Or [Muslims in China](#). We all know what [CCP mandarins](#) think of Black Lives Matter activists. Or rather, what they would think, if they deigned to do so.

But they have wisely chosen the same common enemy: the West.

I am not saying that Bezmenov’s formulation explains all that we are seeing. It clearly does not address all the West’s problems. But once I immersed myself in his formulation, many of the topsy-turvy developments in our institutions fell into place.

The widespread acquisition of useless, aggressively ideological degrees in gender and race, or the claims of the possibility of an unlimited number of genders, or the total racialization and “decolonization” of our political discourse, or the demands to defund the police, the toppling of statues, the defacing of art, the “spontaneous” protests to dismantle our structures, and much else, I now understand as acts of subversion rather than mere expressions of discontent or youthful energy run amok.

It’s important to note that not all activism is subversive. My life would not be possible without the righteous activism of those who fought for women’s rights and civil rights. So how to tell the good activism from the bad?

I regret to tell you that there is no easy way. One thing to pay attention to is your gut. Another is your mind: be discerning and skeptical of people recruiting you to their cause. Does their cause ask toleration of you or require compelled speech? Are you being recruited to fight for a cause you know nothing about? Is that cause maximalist and uncompromising; does it glorify violence?

Regardless of whether you agree with my interpretation of events, subversion is a risk to all open societies. As Bezmenov says, subversion is a two-way street. A closed society is immune to subversion because it simply tells potential subverters to leave. Free and open societies cannot rely on this defense.

During the Cold War, the United States was able to forestall subversion because its institutions and people had the necessary antibodies to stave off subversive ideas. Doing so is easier when you have a visible peer as an enemy. But when the Cold War came to an end and we declared victory, we mistakenly thought our enemies laid down their arms and that history had ended—so we let our guard down.

Orwell said that “To see what is in front of one’s nose needs a constant struggle.” Everyone with eyes to see is now scrambling to do just that.

What is at stake in our ability to see plainly? Everything. What is at stake is nothing less than the preservation of our way of life.

Now is the time for all of us blind seekers to come together. To restore what we have lost will be the work of our lifetimes. Can there be a more important project?

Ayaan Hirsi Ali is the author of several books, including most recently, [Prey: Immigration, Islam, and the Erosion of Women’s Rights](#).

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