



**WEEKLY UPDATE**  
**JANUARY 26 - February 1, 2025**

**THIS WEEK**  
**SEE PAGE 4**

**SLO PENSION TRUST MEETING**

**THE FUND EARNED 7% IN 2024**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**OTHER AGENCIES DORMANT**

**LAST WEEK**  
**SEE PAGE 10**

**NO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING**

**APCD**

**APCO<sup>1</sup> TO RETIRE, NEW BOSS TO BE RECRUITED**  
**DO WE ACTUALLY NEED AN APCD?**

***WHAT IF WE USED THE MONEY TO BUY MORE FIRE ENGINES?***

**ANNUAL AIR QUALITY REPORT**  
***THERE REALLY ISN'T MUCH OF A PROBLEM IN SLO COUNTY***

---

<sup>1</sup> The APCO is the Air Pollution Control Officer who functions as the CEO of the agency.

## **PLANNING COMMISSION**

***YET ANOTHER PLAN TO PRETEND TO INCREASE HOUSING  
YET ACTUALLY RESTRICT IT – COMMISSION PUNTED THE  
ISSUE TO THE APRIL 10, 2025 MEETING***

### **EMERGENT ISSUES**

**SEE PAGE 14**

**CALIFORNIA'S PROFESSIONAL POLITICAL  
CLASS CAUSED THE STATE'S DEMISE**

**TRUMP WANTS TO DEPORT IMMIGRANTS  
ACCUSED OF CRIMES. CALIFORNIA SHERIFFS  
COULD MAKE THAT EASY**

**WE ASKED ALL 58 CALIFORNIA SHERIFFS  
ABOUT IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT UNDER  
TRUMP. HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID**

**THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT  
BE TO MANDATE WHAT WE GROW ON OUR  
PROPERTY OR TO RATION OUR WATER USE**

### **COLAB IN DEPTH**

**SEE PAGE 26**

**MAGA AGONISTS<sup>2</sup>**

**BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

***ON THE NEW PRESIDENT'S PLANS***

---

<sup>2</sup> Agonist: One that is engaged in a struggle. ;

**CALIFORNIA'S DIVIDED OLIGARCHY**  
***SILICON VALLEY BILLIONAIRES BROKE WITH DEMOCRATS***  
***IN 2024, BOOSTING TRUMP AND SPARKING A REALIGNMENT***  
***THAT CHALLENGES CALIFORNIA'S OLIGARCH-DRIVEN,***  
***ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE.***  
**BY EDWARD RING**



**SPONSORS**



TRAFFIC CONTROL SOLUTIONS ▲ EQUIPMENT RENTALS & SALES



# THIS WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

## San Luis Obispo County Pension Trust Meeting of Monday, January 27, 2025 (Scheduled)

**Item 15 - Monthly Investment Report for December 2024 (Full Year).** The fund returned 7%. Its annual assumption rate is 6.75%. It was on track to make more in December, but markets turned down. The write-up states in part:

*In December, U.S. equities declined, with the S&P 500 dropping -2.4% as investors reassessed the Fed's 2025 rate-cut trajectory, though the index still ended 2024 up +25.0%, largely driven by the Magnificent Seven stocks. Unlike typical years, there was no "Santa Claus Rally" - the usual late-December stock market boost - as concerns over interest rates and economic strength weighed on sentiment. Inflation edged up to 2.7% year-over-year, with shelter costs remaining a persistent challenge.*

### Agenda Item 15: Monthly Investment Report for December 2024

	1-month	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Total Fund (%) (Gross)	(1.80)	7.0	8.9	(8.0)	15.2	8.9	16.3
Policy Index (%)	(1.30)	8.5	10.2	(9.7)	12.8	10	16.4

	YTD	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Market Value (millions)	\$1,763	\$1,694	\$1,614	\$1,775	\$1,552	\$1,446

\* Policy index as of Nov. 2021 Strategic Asset Allocation Policy with 2024 Interim targets:  
 Public Mkt Equity- 20% Russell 3000, 17% MSCI ACWI ex-US  
 Public Mkt Debt- 4% Bloomberg/Barclays US Aggregate,  
 Risk Diversifying 8% Barclays 7-10yr Treasury, 7% Barclays 5-10yr US TIPS  
 Real Estate & Infrastructure- 14% NCREIF Index (inc. Infrastructure)  
 Private Equity- 12% actual private equity returns  
 Private Credit- 10% actual private credit returns  
 Liquidity- 8% 90-day T-Bills  
 Pending annual updates to interim targets.

*Overall, the country did better. State and local **pension** returns exceeded expectations at 10.3% in 2024, thanks to strong stock markets. While last year's returns were beneficial for the financial outlook of the public pension system, there is still more than \$1.3 trillion worth of unfunded pension liabilities.*

### Other Matters:

Much of the meeting will be devoted to training of the Trust members on fiduciary responsibilities, ethics, and financial policy development. It's pretty rigorous. Scroll down to **Item 20** and then to the section on "fiduciary refresher" on their website.

<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/pension-trust/board-of-trustees-meetings/board-meeting-documents/agendas/2025/january-27,-2025-slocpt-board-meeting-materials>

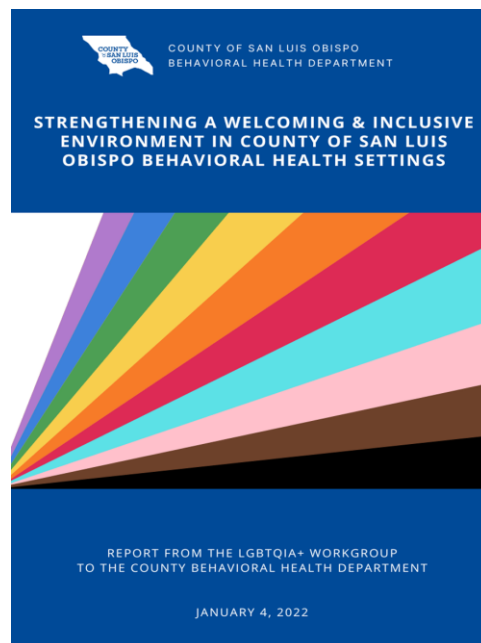
**No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, January 28. (Not Scheduled)**

The next meeting is set for Tuesday, February 4, 2025.

**Concurrent Issues Not Yet on the Board Agenda.**

### **County Behavioral Health Department still promoting DEI**

Two weeks ago we pointed out to the Board and the public that the County Behavioral Health Department's website contains a very broad and deep presentation on the Department's commitment to DEI. So far, nothing has happened. The entire illegal policy is still prominently displayed and is backed up by a 31-page glossy full color manual ordering the Department staff to be completely subjected to the DEI policy.



<https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/health-agency/behavioral-health/diversity,-equity,-inclusion,-and-belonging/additional-resources/resources/lgbtqia-report-2022>

- Is it legal?
- Who authorized it?
- What did it cost?
- What do the Board members think?

The County receives tens of millions in Federal Revenues each year. It is seeking \$40 million in FEMA reimbursement for the 2023 winter storms. This is in violation of Federal orders. Shouldn't all these funds be suspended?

## Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

The **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Program** is the embodiment of an unwavering commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within the Behavioral Health Department. Rooted in the principles of cultural humility and propelled by a steadfast dedication to progress, this program transcends the conventional scope of initiatives. It is the foundational pillar of our mission, intricately woven into the fabric of our operations to foster an environment that is not just inclusive but deeply understanding and welcoming for everyone involved.

The program's journey is rooted in the belief that true excellence in healthcare is achieved only when we fully embrace and celebrate the rich diversity of our community. We recognize the myriad dimensions of diversity, including but not limited to culture, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, sexuality, abilities, veteran status, spiritual beliefs, and language. It is our pledge to not only acknowledge these differences but to honor and elevate them in every aspect of our work.

**Our Mission:** To cultivate a Behavioral Health Department where every individual—whether an employee, client, or community member—feels valued, understood, and empowered. We are committed to transforming our internal culture to one that exemplifies inclusion and belonging, thereby enhancing our ability to serve our community effectively and compassionately.

**Our Vision:** To lead by example, demonstrating how an organization can effectively integrate DEI principles into its core operations, thereby improving health outcomes and ensuring equitable access to all services. We aspire to create spaces—both physical and metaphorical—that are safe, respectful, and welcoming to everyone, fostering a sense of belonging and community well-being.



**When will The Board end DEI in the County?**



# Executive Order: Ending Radical And Wasteful Government DEI Programs And Preferencing

Executive orders are directives the president writes to officials within the executive branch requiring them to take or stop some action related to policy or management. They are numbered, published in the [Federal Register](#), cite the authority by which the president is making the order, and the Office of Management and Budget issues budgetary impact analyses for each order.

## Text of the order

“ By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered:

Section 1. Purpose and Policy. The Biden Administration forced illegal and immoral discrimination programs, going by the name “diversity, equity, and inclusion” (DEI), into virtually all aspects of the Federal Government, in areas ranging from airline safety to the military. This was a concerted effort stemming from President Biden’s first day in office, when he issued Executive Order 13985, “Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.”

Pursuant to Executive Order 13985 and follow-on orders, nearly every Federal agency and entity submitted “Equity Action Plans” to detail the ways that they have furthered DEI’s infiltration of the Federal Government. The public release of these plans demonstrated immense public waste and shameful discrimination. That ends today. Americans deserve a government committed to serving every person with equal dignity and respect, and to expending precious taxpayer resources only on making America great.

Sec. 2. Implementation. (a) The Director of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), assisted by the Attorney General and the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), shall coordinate the termination of all discriminatory programs, including illegal DEI and “diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility” (DEIA) mandates, policies, programs, preferences, and activities in the Federal Government, under whatever name they appear. To carry out this directive, the Director of OPM, with the assistance of the Attorney General as requested, shall review and revise, as appropriate, all existing Federal employment practices, union contracts, and training policies or programs to comply with this order. Federal employment practices, including Federal employee performance reviews, shall reward individual initiative, skills, performance, and hard work and shall not under any circumstances consider DEI or DEIA factors, goals, policies, mandates, or requirements.

(b) Each agency, department, or commission head, in consultation with the Attorney General, the Director of OMB, and the Director of OPM, as appropriate, shall take the following actions within sixty days of this order:

(i) terminate, to the maximum extent allowed by law, all DEI, DEIA, and

”

“environmental justice” offices and positions (including but not limited to “Chief Diversity Officer” positions); all “equity action plans,” “equity” actions, initiatives, or programs, “equity-related” grants or contracts; and all DEI or DEIA performance requirements for employees, contractors, or grantees.

(ii) provide the Director of the OMB with a list of all:

(A) agency or department DEI, DEIA, or “environmental justice” positions, committees, programs, services, activities, budgets, and expenditures in existence on November 4, 2024, and an assessment of whether these positions, committees, programs, services, activities, budgets, and expenditures have been misleadingly relabeled in an attempt to preserve their pre-November 4, 2024 function;

(B) Federal contractors who have provided DEI training or DEI training materials to agency or department employees; and

(C) Federal grantees who received Federal funding to provide or advance DEI, DEIA, or “environmental justice” programs, services, or activities since January 20, 2021.

(iii) direct the deputy agency or department head to:

(A) assess the operational impact (e.g., the number of new DEI hires) and cost of the prior administration’s DEI, DEIA, and “environmental justice” programs and policies; and

(B) recommend actions, such as Congressional notifications under 28 U.S.C. 530D, to align agency or department programs, activities, policies, regulations, guidance, employment practices, enforcement activities, contracts (including set-asides), grants, consent orders, and litigating positions with the policy of equal dignity and respect identified in section 1 of this order. The agency or department head and the Director of OMB shall jointly ensure that the deputy agency or department head has the authority and resources needed to carry out this directive.

(c) To inform and advise the President, so that he may formulate appropriate and effective civil-rights policies for the Executive Branch, the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy shall convene a monthly meeting attended by the Director of OMB, the Director of OPM, and each deputy agency or department head to:

(i) hear reports on the prevalence and the economic and social costs of DEI, DEIA, and “environmental justice” in agency or department programs, activities, policies, regulations, guidance, employment practices, enforcement activities, contracts (including set-asides), grants, consent orders, and litigating positions;

(ii) discuss any barriers to measures to comply with this order; and

(iii) monitor and track agency and department progress and identify potential areas for additional Presidential or legislative action to advance the policy of equal dignity and respect.

Sec. 3. Severability. If any provision of this order, or the application of any provision to any person or circumstance, is held to be invalid, the remainder of this order and the application of its provisions to any other persons or circumstances shall not be affected.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or



otherwise affect:

- (i) the authority granted by law to an executive department or agency, or the head thereof; or
- (ii) the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budgetary, administrative, or legislative proposals.
- (b) This order shall be implemented consistent with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.
- (c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its departments, agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person. [\[1\]\[4\]](#)

## LAST WEEK'S HIGHLIGHTS

### No Board of Supervisors Meeting on Tuesday, January 21, 2025 (Not Scheduled)

**The next Board Meeting is set for Tuesday, February 4, 2025.**

### San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) Meeting of Wednesday, January 22, 2025 (Completed)

**D-1 Selection of an Executive Search Firm to Conduct Recruitment Process for Air Pollution Control Officer and Recommendation to Appoint an Ad Hoc Committee to Assist the Selected Firm.** Air Pollution Control Officer Gary Willey seeks to retire by August 2025. The District will review 4 proposals by executive search firms and select one to conduct the recruitment.

*The Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) is the Chief Executive Officer of the District under California air pollution control laws. This position is responsible for organizing, coordinating, and directing all District functions and activities, providing policy guidance and strategies regarding air quality management, and fostering cooperative working relationships with various stakeholders<sup>2</sup>. The APCO works under the direction of the Air Pollution Control District Board and is accountable for achieving and maintaining State and federal clean air standards.*

Willey seems to be a reasonable administrator and was never hysterical about the dunes dust. He actually helped to resolve the issue substantially. It is not known if the Coastal Commission will attempt to close the Dunes, even though Willey made good progress in reducing the dust.

Do rural and suburban coastal counties actually need to regulate air quality via a separate agency? Since they have very low pollution, no big industries, and lots of fresh ocean wind,

couldn't the counties do it as a part of their normal code enforcement? After all, it's not as if we are in LA, Fresno, or some Chinese coal town.

For example, if the local funeral home's crematorium is out of whack, why couldn't the County cite them? Similarly, why are they regulating the emissions from wine fermentation? It's been happening for thousands of years and smells kind of good.

SLO County has lost all of its large emission generators, including the Morro Bay Power Plant and Phillips 66 Refinery.

What if the State allowed the grants it provides to air districts and the portion of local property tax allocated to them to be reprogrammed to buy fire engines and hire more firefighters - something the County really needs? It is over \$6 million per year. The public needs to understand that it's just like your household. You can't have everything. For example, you can't send Gwen to Stanford for 4 years, take annual cruises, and redo the kitchen.

### **D-3 Report on 2023 Air Quality in San Luis Obispo County (Annual Air Quality Report).**

The report was received with much praise from the Board members. It appears that it is going to be business as usual. No one seems interested in phasing down **the agency**. The County does not have much of a problem with air pollution. The report states in summary:

*Air quality continues to show overall steady long-term trends of decreasing pollutant concentrations and improving air quality with some year-to-year variability.*

*Ozone trends show continued improvements with decreasing design values at all locations except for Red Hills whose design value remained unchanged in 2023. Most stations saw a decrease in the number of days with ozone levels in the Moderate AQI range.*

*PM10 on the Nipomo Mesa continued to show marked improvement relative to 10-year trends. The state 24-hour PM10 standard of 50 µg/m<sup>3</sup> was exceeded 23 times at CDF and 19 times at Mesa 2, which is the fewest number of exceedances since daily monitoring began in 2010. Similarly, annual averages at all stations decreased with Mesa 2 now attaining the state annual average standard of 20 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.*

*PM2.5 annual averages decreased across the county with many sites near the lowest annual averages they have recorded. Notably at current levels all sites will meet the new more stringent federal PM2.5 annual average standard of 9 µg/m<sup>3</sup> that was implemented on February 7th, 2024. South County air quality continues to be impacted by dust blown from the Oceano Dunes State Vehicle Recreation Area (ODSVRA) but shows continued improvements.*

Again, it would be great if the resources applied to APCD could be rerouted to the purchase of fire engines and fire staffing. This would require State action.



## AIR POLLUTION CONTROL DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### *County of San Luis Obispo*

#### 2025 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

Meetings begin at 9:00 a.m. and convene in the County Board of Supervisors Chambers.

Date	Time	Meeting
January 22, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting – election of Chair and Vice Chair
May 21, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting – first budget hearing
June 18, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting – budget adoption
September 17, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting
November 12, 2025	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting
January 28, 2026	9:00 a.m.	Regular meeting – election of Chair and Vice Chair

#### Planning Commission Meeting of Thursday, January 23, 2025 (Completed)

**Item 5 - A continued hearing from January 9, 2025 to consider a minor County Code “clean-up”, which includes: 1. Amendment to County Code Title 1 (General Provisions) regarding cannabis violation correction period, 2. Amendment to County Code Title 22 (Land Use Ordinance for inland areas) regarding a Shandon Habitat Buffer, and 3.**

**Amendment to County Code Titles 22 and 23 (Land Use Ordinances for inland areas and Coastal Zone, respectively) regarding limitations on garage sizes for accessory dwellings (LRP2024-00011).** This item is a clean-up ordinance designed to update provisions of various zoning ordinances. The Commission approved parts 1 and 2 and but stalled on part 3, after speakers rightfully objected to the 450 sq. ft. cap on garage conversions to ADUs. Only 3 Commissioners were present. The issue will come back onto the agenda on the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Part 1** reinforces the provision that cannabis grows that are an immediate threat to health and safety must be abated immediately. Clearly, Commissioners Wyatt and Shah are trapped in the old line thinking that preference must be given to smaller units to enforce the idea that they must be small to be affordable. This ignores the housing ladder and expanding the pie. See **Part 3**, below.

*This recommended amendment to County Code Title 1 is intended to update County Code Title 1 to be consistent with the changes to County Code Titles 22 and 23 in accordance with the Board's action on July 9, 2024. More specifically, the recommended amendment would remove language specifying that the correction period identified in Notice of Violations shall be no less than five (5) calendar days after service of the notice. The purpose in removing this language is to avoid potential confusion, as County Code Titles 22 and 23 allows for immediate abatement of cannabis violations.*

**Part 2** corrects some language about wildlife corridors in the Shandon area.

*This recommended amendment would modify County Code Section 22.94.020.D to make the applicability of development restrictions relating to preserving a wildlife corridor consistent with the intent of the Shandon Habitat Buffer Area when it was adopted as part of the Shandon Community Plan.*

**Part 3** restricts the size of garages converted to accessory dwellings to 400 sq. feet. Staff asserts that allowing a larger floor area would discourage the resulting ADUs from being available as affordable housing. This is stupid because it ignores the whole issue of the housing ladder and expanding the number of housing units in general. Again, ideology trumps practicality in the name of social engineering.

*This recommended amendment would establish size limitations on garages for accessory dwellings. County Code Titles 22 and 23 currently allow detached garages to be up to 1,000 square feet and attached garages to be unlimited in size. Since accessory dwellings are accessory uses to primary residences and the maximum size of an accessory dwelling is 1,200 square feet, to maintain accessory dwellings as truly accessory uses, it is necessary to limit the size of garages for accessory dwellings. In addition, accessory dwellings are part of the County's affordable housing strategy and oversized garages would reduce the likelihood of accessory dwelling units being affordable to moderate-income and low-income households. **In keeping with the incidental purpose and character of an accessory dwellings, this recommended limitation would apply a 450-square foot maximum for attached and detached garages for accessory units.***

## EMERGENT ISSUES

### **Item 1 - California's Professional Political Class Caused The State's Demise**

#### **Supported by dense voters, Democrats have destroyed the once Golden State**

By Katy Grimes, January 20, 2025

As California Governor Gavin Newsom makes the rounds on every available media outlet, on every podcast and media interview insisting that now is not the time to point fingers over the responsibility of the Pacific Palisades and Los Angeles fires, he is wrong – now is exactly the right time to ask who, what, when, where, why and how this happened?

The residents of Los Angeles whose homes burned to the ground deserve to know.

There is a lot of evidence that Governor Gavin Newsom has failed up his entire political career. If California had an honest, principled media, Newsom never would have made it out of San Francisco after two rocky terms as Mayor. While he is the head of the state and all of the policies within the state, many other politicians are a part of the government that allowed this disaster to take place.

Former Gov. Jerry Brown signed many bad bills into law which undermine California's wildfire management, sane energy policies, energy independence. He even vetoed a bipartisan wildfire management bill in 2016, despite unanimous passage by the Legislature, 75-0 in the Assembly and 39-0 in the Senate.

I reported in 2018:

“As California residents were burned out of their towns, homes, neighborhoods, schools, hospitals and businesses, Gov. Jerry Brown was jetting around the world spouting climate change propaganda, and calling the fires California's ‘new normal.’ Gov. Brown had many chances to sincerely and realistically address California's increasing wildfires since his election in 2011, but instead chose to play politics, placing his new friends at the United Nations over the people of California.”

President Donald Trump in 2018 acknowledged the importance of forest management:

About the bill Brown vetoed in 2016:

“SB 1463 would have given local governments more say in fire-prevention efforts through the Public Utilities Commission proceeding making maps of fire hazard areas around utility lines. In a gross display of politics, this is especially pertinent given that Cal Fire and the state's media are now blaming the largest utility in the state for the latest wildfires.

While hindsight is always 20-20, California was on fire when this bill made its way through the Legislature and on to Jerry Brown's desk.”



It is notable that the same “climate change” Jerry Brown touted and Gavin Newsom and Democrats claim is the cause of California’s latest wildfires, impacts private lands as well as public lands, but private forests are not burning down because they are properly managed. Today, only privately managed forests are maintained through the traditional forest management practices: thinning, cutting, clearing, prescribed burns, and the disposal of the resulting woody waste. And notably, privately managed lands are not on fire.

So who are these politicians responsible for California’s terrible policies which have and continue to result in devastation, loss of property and loss of life? The Globe will write about the revolving doors in City Halls, County Supervisors’ Chambers, and the State Capitol that professional politicians use to ensure they are never out of elected office.

We are starting with Los Angeles, with the recent devastation from the Palisades Fire, Eaton Fire, Hurst Fire and others.

As we already noted, California Governor Gavin Newsom is at the top of the heap.

In Los Angeles, we have some long-time politicians, with decades of implementing leftist policies, are leftist activists, who now serve as County Supervisors:

LA County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis: A Democrat, Solis was United States Secretary of Labor from 2009 to 2013 appointed by President Barack Obama. She served in the United States House of Representatives from 2001 to 2009.

LA County Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell: A Democrat, Mitchell served as a State Senator from 2013 to 2020. Prior to being Senator, she also served as a Capitol staffer, Consultant to the Senate Health Committee, and as a legislative advocate for the Western Center on Law and Poverty.

LA County Supervisor Lindsey Horvath: A Democrat, Horvath was previously a West Hollywood City Council member and West Hollywood mayor twice.

LA County Supervisor Janice Hahn: A Democrat, Hahn was a U.S. Representative from California from 2011 to 2016. She was a member of the Los Angeles City Council from 2001 to 2011. From 1997 to 1999, she served as an elected representative on the Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission.

LA County Supervisor Kathryn Barger: A Republican, Barger previously served as Chief Deputy Supervisor and Chief of Staff to her predecessor Mayor Michael D. Antonovich.

Los Angeles City Council is also filled with long-time Democrat politicians and leftist activists: Mayor – Karen Bass: A Democrat, the 43rd mayor of Los Angeles since 2022. Bass previously served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 2011 to 2022 and in the California State Assembly from 2004 to 2010, serving as Assembly Speaker during her final Assembly term.

Councilwoman District 1 – Eunisses Hernandez: A Democrat and Socialist, Hernandez is an American activist and politician, currently serving as a member of the Los Angeles City Council for the 1st district since 2022.[<sup>3</sup>] A member of the Democratic Party and the Democratic



Socialists of America, Hernandez defeated incumbent council member Gil Cedillo (another former State legislator, 1998 – 2012) during the primary in an upset in the 2022 election.

Councilman District 2 – Adrin Nazarian: A Democrat, Nazarian previously served in the California State Assembly from 2012 to 2022. In 1999, then-Governor Gray Davis appointed Nazarian as Special Assistant to the California Trade and Commerce Agency. Nazarian served as chief of staff to then-Assemblyman Paul Krekorian 2006 – 2010. Nazarin announced that he intends to run in 2024 to replace Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Krekorian, who cannot seek another term due to term limits.

Councilman District 3 – Bob Blumenfield: A Democrat, Blumenfield previously represented the 45th district in the California State Assembly 2008 – 2013. From 1989 to 1996, he worked in Washington, D.C., as a staff person to Senator Bill Bradley, Congressman Howard Berman and as staff designee to the House Budget Committee. He later worked as Director of Government Affairs for the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and then as District Chief of Staff to Congressman Berman in the San Fernando Valley.

Councilwoman District 4 – Nithya Raman: A Democrat and Socialist, activist, and politician serving as the Los Angeles City Councilmember for the 4th District since 2020. Raman, a member of the Democratic Party and the Democratic Socialists of America. Prior to entering politics, Raman founded and headed a homelessness nonprofit in Los Angeles and was the executive director of Time's Up Entertainment.

Councilwoman District 5 – Katy Yaroslavsky: A Democrat, Yaroslavsky is the daughter-in-law of Los Angeles politician Zev Yaroslavsky (a former LA County Supervisor 1975-1994), she worked in the office of Sheila Kuehl (former state legislator 1994-2008, LA County Supervisor 2014-2022), whom her mother previously worked for.

Councilwoman District 6 – Imelda Padilla: A Democrat, worked as a field deputy for former LA City Council President Nury Martinez, who resigned in 2022, following the release of an audio recording where she disparaged fellow council members and their children and used racist language.

Councilman District 8 – Marqueece Harris-Dawson: A Democrat, currently serving as the president of the Los Angeles City Council, has represented the 8th district of the Los Angeles City Council since 2015. Harris-Dawson joined the Community Coalition in 1995, recognized as one of the most progressive non-profits in the country. In 2004 he succeeded U.S. Congresswoman Karen Bass (current LA Mayor) as President and CEO. In response to the 2020 George Floyd Uprisings, Harris-Dawson supported a \$150 million reallocation (defunding) of LAPD funding for community-led public safety investments, the LA Times reported.

Councilman District 9 – Curren D. Price, Jr.: A Democrat, Price was a California State Senator, representing the state's 26th Senate District which he won in the May 19, 2009 special election to fill the seat vacated by Mark Ridley-Thomas (convicted felon). He previously served as a member of the California State Assembly, representing the state's 51st Assembly District. He was first elected to that position in 2006, and was re-elected in 2008. Price resigned as state senator on July 1, 2013, to be sworn in as Los Angeles city councilman. Price's tenure as District Councilman has been marked by accusations of pay to play and FBI investigations, according to the LA Times. On June 13, 2023, Price was charged with ten criminal counts relating to corruption; including five counts of embezzlement of government funds, three counts of perjury,

and two counts of conflict of interest. From 1993 to 1997, Price was a member of the Inglewood City Council.

Councilwoman District 10 – Heather Hutt: A Democrat, Hutt was hired as a District Director for Assemblyman, then Senator Isadore Hall III. In February 2017, Hutt was named the Regional Deputy Director, then California State Director for then-Senator Kamala Harris. Previously a candidate for California’s 54th State Assembly district in 2021, Hutt was endorsed by politicians Janice Hahn, Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, and Maxine Waters.

Councilwoman District 11 – Traci Park: formerly a Republican, now a Democrat, Park entered politics in 2020 when she organized to block the city of Los Angeles from converting a Ramada Inn on her street into housing for homeless people. She voted in favor of a measure to curtail homeless encampments by banning sitting, sleeping and storing property within 500 feet of schools, day-care centers, parks, recreation centers, and opposed a measure to create hundreds of miles of bus lanes and bike lanes. Park opposed converting two city-owned parking lots on Venice Boulevard into 140 housing units for the homeless. She opposes California state legislation that restricts the ability of localities to ban new housing.

Councilman District 12 – John Lee: formerly a Republican, now an Independent, Lee worked for City of Los Angeles for two decades for Councilmembers Joel Wachs, Greig Smith, and Mitch Englander, who pled guilty to federal charges related to the on-going Los Angeles City Hall corruption probe and began serving a 14-month sentence in federal prison in June, 2021. Lee has been one of the biggest supporters of the Los Angeles Police Department on the council. Lee has stated his opposition for defunding the LAPD.

Councilman District 13 – Hugo Soto-Martínez: a Democrat, Socialist, labor organizer. After graduating from the University of California, Irvine, he became an organizer for UNITE HERE Local 11 and involved with the Los Angeles chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America. He canvassed for politicians like Barack Obama, against Joe Arpaio, and helped flip the two Georgia Senate seats with Stacey Abrams.

Councilwoman District 14 – Ysabel J. Jurado: A Democrat and is a tenants’ rights lawyer, Jurado ran for the Los Angeles City Council in 2024, challenging incumbent Kevin de León, former State Assemblyman and State Senator 2006-2018, LA City Councilman 2020-2024. After an audio recording of de León and other council members making racist, homophobic, and derogatory remarks was leaked, he was pressured to resign. Instead he ran for LA City Council again, losing to Jurado.

Councilman District 15 – Tim McOsker: A Democrat, attorney, and former lobbyist. He was the CEO of AltaSea at the Port of Los Angeles from 2018 to 2022 and chief of staff to Los Angeles City Attorney and later Mayor James Hahn from 1997 to 2005. The voters of these supervisory and council members, having just faced losing their homes, businesses, schools, neighborhoods, and some lost their loves.

Voters must remember this when considering who should lead Los Angeles.

Item 2 - **Trump wants to deport immigrants accused of crimes. California sheriffs could make that easy.** BY NIGEL DUARA AND TOMAS APODACA, JANUARY 20, 2025



*Immigrant advocates are closely watching California sheriffs to see how they'll uphold the state's sanctuary law in a new Trump administration. Here, people seeking asylum are detained by border patrol after crossing the U.S. and Mexico border near Campo on June 3, 2024 Photo by Robert Gauthier, Los Angeles Times via Getty Images*

#### IN SUMMARY

**President Donald Trump wants to deport undocumented immigrants arrested on suspicion of various crimes. That could put sheriffs overseeing California jails in conflict with the state's sanctuary law.**

*Welcome to CalMatters, the only nonprofit newsroom devoted solely to covering issues that affect all Californians. Sign up for WhatMatters to receive the latest news and commentary on the most important issues in the Golden State.*

California sheriffs once again find themselves navigating a difficult political calculus on immigration as President Donald Trump begins his second term.

They can enforce a state sanctuary law that some of them personally oppose, or they can roll out the welcome mat to federal immigration enforcement authorities whom Trump has promised will carry out the largest deportation program in American history.



Some California sheriffs have pledged not to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement authorities, based on their own policies or laws passed by their counties, and will forbid immigration agents from using county personnel, property or databases without a federal warrant.



**Item 3 - We asked all 58 California sheriffs about immigration enforcement under Trump. Here's what they said**

*Katy Grimes*

January 20, 2025

Others said that while California law prevents direct cooperation with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, immigration authorities are free to use their jail websites and fingerprints databases to identify people of interest.

“Several state leaders would prefer we do not have any communication with ICE, however, that is not what (the laws) say,” said Fresno County Sheriff John Zaroni. “ICE may access jail bookings through our public website and fingerprint information put into the national database to identify any incarcerated persons of interest to them.”

And one sheriff, Chad Bianco of Riverside County, said he would work around California law, if he could, to ensure more people are deported.

CalMatters attempted to contact all 58 sheriff's offices in California. Twenty-seven responded by Friday afternoon. Most sheriffs who responded simply said they will follow state law, spelled out in a bill passed during the first Trump administration that limited California law enforcement participation in immigration enforcement.

Before Trump's inauguration today, immigration raids in the Central Valley earlier this month already had undocumented migrants and their families concerned about massive enforcement sweeps on immigrant-dependent industries like agriculture. Trump and cabinet officials from his first term have pledged "targeted arrests" of undocumented people, and view local law enforcement as "force multipliers" of that effort.

California sheriffs could play an influential role in determining whether someone gets arrested and deported because they manage the state's local jail system, where people suspected of committing crimes are held while awaiting trial. A bill named after a slain Georgia nursing student that is expected to pass in Congress could enhance sheriffs' sway over immigration enforcement by prioritizing deportations of undocumented immigrants arrested on suspicion of burglary and shoplifting, regardless of whether they're convicted.

The majority of sheriffs who responded to a CalMatters inquiry said they were balancing their duties with their need for cooperation from frightened immigrant communities. They worry those communities will shun all law enforcement if they fear deportation based on their immigration status alone.

"You don't know how many calls I've gotten from Hispanics in my area that I've known, I've grown up with, they're all worried about family members," said Mendocino County Sheriff Matt Kendall. "I've got in-laws through my children calling me because they're concerned, but let's look at the ability to actually enforce this crap."

"Hell, I've got 50 deputies and I can barely keep a lid on crime in a county of 90,000. How are these guys coming out here with all of this 'We're gonna deport 10 million people' or something. No, that's ridiculous. It's not gonna happen."

Kendall said he undoubtedly has people in his community who have committed serious crimes and are also undocumented, and wants those people arrested.

"If they want to go out and deport all the criminals, knock yourselves out, but let's pick and choose what's important and what is not," he said.

One consistent theme: Every sheriff who responded to CalMatters said immigration enforcement isn't their job. But some of them went further, pledging not to honor immigration holds, while others said they will neither "prevent nor hinder" immigration enforcement agents from doing their jobs.

## Sanctuary law divided California sheriffs

When Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation making California a sanctuary state in 2017, barring police from inquiring about people's immigration status and participating in federal immigration enforcement, the reaction from the Trump administration was immediate.

The administration cut off hundreds of millions of dollars in law enforcement grants to sanctuary cities that limited cooperation with federal immigration authorities. The Biden administration restored the grants in 2021.

Several California sheriffs were outspoken critics of the sanctuary law during Trump's previous presidency. A group of San Joaquin Valley sheriffs traveled with Trump to the border in 2019, where they endorsed his immigration policies.



Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux speaks during a news conference in Visalia on Feb. 3, 2023. Photo by Ron Holman, The Times-Delta via AP

One of them, Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux, said he doesn't agree with California's sanctuary law, and said any governor who supports it should be removed from office.

But Boudreaux said he wants to distinguish between targeted enforcement of "felonious" people, which he supports, and massive immigration raids.

"Now, if they come into the area saying, 'Hey, we're just going to scoop up as many people as we can that are here illegally,' we're not going to do that, because (we) have a community to serve," Boudreaux said. "If you can separate the difference between that, you should be able to see what I mean."



Boudreaux pledged to keep working with federal immigration authorities within the parameters of California law.

“(If) I have a federal counterpart that comes into my county asking for assistance, I’m going to give it to them,” Boudreaux said.

Bianco, the Riverside County sheriff and one of Trump’s most outspoken allies in California, took office in 2019. Now, Bianco said he’s ready to work around state law to step up immigration enforcement.

“I will do everything in my power to make sure I keep the residents of Riverside County safe,” Bianco said to KTTV-TV in November. “If that involves working somehow around (California’s sanctuary law) with ICE so we can deport these people victimizing us and our residents, you can be 100% sure I’m going to do that.”

Immigrant advocates watching sheriffs

Eva Bitran, Immigrants’ Rights project coordinator at the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, said her organization would be watching for violations of the state sanctuary law, which would typically involve police calling federal immigration authorities at jails or during arrests.

That’s what happened to Daniel Valenzuela in 2019, when Corona police interrogated him about his immigration status during a traffic stop, then transferred him to U.S. Customs and Border Protection agents. Valenzuela was then deported.

The ACLU sued the city of Corona, which paid Valenzuela a \$35,000 settlement.

“Our expectation is that the sheriffs will follow the law,” Bitran said. “We will be watching to ensure they do so.”



Migrants wait to receive toiletry items at Movimiento Juventud 2000 in Tijuana on July 26, 2023. Photo by Adriana Heldiz, CalMatters

In 2020, Los Angeles County banned the warrantless transfer of inmates to immigration enforcement custody. Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna said his department does not honor immigration detainers unless presented with a federal warrant.

Between 2018 and 2023, the last date for which data was available, there were 4,192 transfers of people from California jails to immigration authorities.

But it's street enforcement that has people worried in both the Central Valley and downtown Oakland, where the Alameda County Sheriff's Office is already trying to tamp down rumors of immigration raids.

"We want to assure you that this information is false," said Alameda County Sheriff's Sgt. Roberto Morales. "This information has caused panic and anxiety in our communities."

"While we respect criminal warrants issued by a judge, Sheriff's Office personnel do not comply with administrative immigration warrants. Importantly, we believe that local law enforcement involvement in ICE deportation operations undermines our community policing strategies and depletes local resources."

*CalMatters reporter Cayla Mihalovich contributed to this story. Cal Matters, January 21, 2025.*

**Item 4 - Ringside: Quantifying the Upside of More Lawns, By Edward Ring, January 22, 2025 2:47 pm**

## **The business of government should not be to mandate what we grow on our property or to ration our water use**

A respected advocate for farming interests in California once explained to me that every acre of lawn requires 5 acre feet of water per year. The unsubtle implication was that the more lawn we kill, the less water we waste. But this is zero sum thinking. How much lawn are we talking about, and how much water?

In August 2023, the editorial board of the *Los Angeles Times* offered their unequivocal take on lawns with a column titled “Say Goodbye to Grass.” They claimed that the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California has 218,000 acres of turf in their service area, and 23 percent of that is deemed “nonfunctional.”

Let’s suppose that 50 percent of Met’s sprawling service area is within Los Angeles County. That would mean that 109,000 acres of turf (“functional” and “nonfunctional”) are requiring 545,000 acre feet of water per year to keep green. The horror.

But is any lawn “nonfunctional?” A study conducted at the University of Minnesota found that lawns reduce temperature by between 7-14 degrees and that “lawns and other landscape plants could reduce total U.S. air conditioning energy requirements by 25 percent.”

Imagine if the energy savings from planting (or preserving) more lawn and trees were truly that significant. A typical American home uses 2,500 kilowatt-hours per year on air conditioning. That’s probably the low number for Los Angeles County, where there are 3.3 million households. If electricity consumption for air conditioning in Los Angeles County, using these assumptions, was cut by 25 percent, that would save 2,063 gigawatt-hours per year.

To add some perspective to that calculation, at 4 kilowatt-hours per cubic meter, one gigawatt-hour will desalinate 285 acre feet of water, meaning that 2,063 gigawatt-hours would desalinate 412,500 acre feet of water per year. That’s enough to water 82,500 acres even at a lavish 5 acre feet per acre application. And that, to finish the thought, is equivalent to 76 percent of all of the water guzzling lawn acreage in Los Angeles County.

Lawns don’t just lower the temperature, they raise the ambient humidity. More lawn, and more trees, ought to be part of our strategy to mitigate fire risk. Unlike PFAS laden artificial turf that can get hotter than concrete, or water-sipping palm trees that launch long-range balls of fire during wind driven firestorms, well-hydrated temperate landscaping counters the urban heat island effect and increases humidity.

The biggest mistake farmers and urban more-water activists can make is to succumb to the divide and conquer strategy so effectively waged by California’s scarcity lobby. Constructing desalination plants could be paid for by simply canceling SB 1157, a water rationing annoyance that will cost an estimated \$7 billion, saving about 400,000 acre feet of water per year, while turning otherwise lush urban environments into micromanaged deserts.

There is an attractive symmetry to all of these numbers, albeit politically subversive to the powers that currently run the state. The presence of lawns in Los Angeles County might actually be saving enough electricity to desalinate the same amount of water, 400,000 acre feet per year, that SB 1157 aims to conserve; nearly enough water to irrigate the lawns themselves. Equally symmetrical is the fact that the \$7B cost to implement SB 1157 is enough money to construct plants with a total capacity to desalinate that same 400,000 acre feet.

So much for “nonfunctional turf.” If the issue is fertilizer and pesticide and herbicide runoff, then we may focus our regulatory energies on restricting or banning their use. We don’t need our lawns to sport a neon shade of green. Lawn will still grow without all those supplements. And if open turf laden areas are truly unusable for sports or lounging, then by all means, plant water guzzling flowers for the bee population. But the business of government should not be to mandate what we grow on our property, nor is it to ration our water use. A more appropriate role for our state and local governments is to invest in more water supply infrastructure. Repealing SB 1157 and redirecting the funds that it would have cost into supply projects would be a good start.

Farmers can make common cause with urban activists to fight California’s scarcity agenda. They can work together to abolish the Coastal Commission and evict the scarcity activists who control the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife. They can work together to force the State Water Resources Control Board to invest in projects that will actually help delta species instead of just leaving more water in the rivers. They can fight for productive alternatives – upgraded treatment plants that no longer discharge nitrogen into the estuaries, a higher limit on bass fishing, and expanded, more innovative hatcheries, nurseries and restored habitat for salmon and smelt.

At the same time, if California’s urban and rural water agencies united behind a common infrastructure agenda, they might finally pressure the state into water supply projects that will make a difference – fish friendly delta diversions, extending the Folsom South Canal all the way to the Clifton Court Forebay, a legal framework and permanently streamlined permit process for farmers to harvest floodwater, and desalination at scale, to name but a few.

Lawns are synonymous with resilience because the surplus they consume, and the expanded distribution infrastructure they require, is then always available for more urgent needs during a crisis. Lawns are also beautiful, cooling, hydrating assets that mitigate the impact of asphalt. The defense of lawns is bigger than the blades of grass that make them. It is to defend a healthy choice. It is to embrace possibilities instead of constraints. It is to reject scarcity in favor of a life with abundance.

*Edward Ring is the director of water and energy policy for the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. The California Policy Center is an educational non-profit focused on public policies that aim to improve California’s democracy and economy. He is also a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. Ring is the author of two books: "Fixing California - Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism" (2021), and "The Abundance Choice - Our Fight for More Water in California" (2022).*

## 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**

### **CALIFORNIA'S DIVIDED OLIGARCHY *SILICON VALLEY BILLIONAIRES BROKE WITH DEMOCRATS IN 2024, BOOSTING TRUMP AND SPARKING A REALIGNMENT THAT CHALLENGES CALIFORNIA'S OLIGARCH-DRIVEN, ONE-PARTY DOMINANCE.* BY EDWARD RING**

Donald Trump is again president of the United States, and Republicans now control both houses of the U.S. Congress. In California, however, Gavin Newsom is still governor, and Democrats remain in absolute control of the state legislature. Whatever realignment may have swept the rest of America in 2024 has not yet affected California. But adding critical weight to the momentum of Trump's victory was the decision by some of California's wealthiest entrepreneurs and investors to walk away from the Democratic Party and support the MAGA movement.

Needless to say, this unexpected development has left Democrats scrambling to discredit the defectors. One of the highlights of outgoing President Biden's farewell address on January 15 was what he hoped would be accepted as a dire warning to the American people. Two of his statements stand out. The first identifies the alleged threat:

"Today, an oligarchy is taking shape in America of extreme wealth, power, and influence that literally threatens our entire democracy, our basic rights and freedoms, and a fair shot for everyone to get ahead."

The second describes, at least according to Biden, the possible consequences if the threat isn't contained:

"But powerful forces want to wield their unchecked influence to eliminate the steps we've taken to tackle the climate crisis, to serve their own interests for power and profit."

It's difficult to imagine a more hypocritical pair of utterances. American politics have always been heavily influenced by oligarchs, but in recent decades it is the Democratic Party that has been the primary instrument of America's oligarchy. In the modern era, the Democratic Party's embrace of the oligarchy took off when President Clinton approved financial deregulation and gave a green light to offshoring American manufacturing. The process accelerated during Obama's alliance with Wall Street special interests and was again furthered during Biden's term with the Green New Deal. The Democratic party is now firmly in the hands of



oligarchs, and with Trump, the Republican party is now the party of working families across America.

While Biden claims oligarchs are contributing to Trump's MAGA movement, everybody knows that for the last several election cycles, billionaire donors have favored Democrats. Biden's party is supported by wealthy individuals including Bill Gates, Michael Bloomberg, Dustin Moskovitz, Reid Hoffman, Fred Eychaner, James Simons, Stephen Mandel, and more. Democrats also continue to receive support from Wall Street firms. Then there are the billions in soft money going to Democrat-aligned C4 advocacy groups from the above-listed direct donors, along with George Soros, Laurene Powell Jobs, and thousands of other supporters who fly under the radar.

But something changed in 2024. The billionaires split. And the schism happened in an unlikely place: Silicon Valley. Biden's Democrats, and the oligarchy controlling them, went too far. They pissed off the so-called tech bros.

It's hard to know exactly when the split began. You can go all the way back to longtime libertarian Peter Thiel's decision to support candidate Trump, expressed in his speech at the 2016 National Republican Convention. Or more recently, you can point to Elon Musk's realization that woke ideology had spawned institutions that deceived him, at great personal cost, with medical half-truths that were peddled as urgent and beyond debate. And then there's Mark Zuckerberg, who spent more than \$400 million in 2020 paying for get-out-the-vote efforts in Democrat-heavy precincts in swing states, performing an abrupt political about-face to publicly announce his political neutrality. Zuckerberg then claimed the threat to free speech was coming from Democrats.

Even though the Democratic politicians who still run California are doing everything they can to drive the tech bros and the companies they run out of the state, it remains the epicenter of a political realignment at the top. California's oligarchs are no longer united, which brings us to the second highlight of Biden's farewell speech, where he suggests these oligarchs want to "eliminate the steps we've taken to tackle the climate crisis, to serve their own interests for power and profit."

Let's be clear. The "steps we've taken to tackle the climate crisis" so far, thanks to Biden's oligarchs, have served their interests for power and profit. The climate crisis industry is literally the biggest money and power grab in the history of the world. Biden, in his remarks, went on to paraphrase President Eisenhower's farewell address, where he warned Americans of the military-industrial complex.

That's almost funny because Biden perfectly embodies the menace he's warning us about. To use one of Biden's own favorite phrases, here's the deal: The military-industrial complex is alive and well, along with the woke-DEI industrial complex, the affordable-housing industrial complex, the homeless industrial complex, and most definitely the climate-crisis industrial complex. And all of these manifestations of special interest regulatory capture, politically connected industries and NGOs, and government bureaucracies— all prioritizing their own aggrandizement and unconcerned about its impact on the American people—are products of Biden's oligarchs. These are the oligarchs behind the Democratic Party.



Trump's mandate is often questioned by people who underestimate its strength. Outside of America's big cities, which remain dominated by political machines controlled by unions of government employees and their cronies in the private sector, Trump commands supermajorities of the American people. Any national map showing the geographic distribution of Trump's support proves this. Add to that, finally, the decision by a handful of extremely powerful Silicon Valley titans to reject the direction of the national Democratic Party, and you have a coalition that wins national elections.

California is a mess. Its Democratic politicians are a disgrace. Watch these performances by Senator Padilla, Senator Schiff, Governor Newsom, and former Senator Harris. These are California's political elite: self-serving, malevolent hacks who lack integrity or substance. Like Joe Biden, they will do whatever their donors tell them to do. The idea that they care about the freedom and prosperity of individual families is laughable.

We may hope that while the tech bros and their populist allies, the American people, are busy cleaning up Washington, DC, they'll focus some of their attention on California. Because maybe, just maybe, the people in that beleaguered state have had enough.

*Edward Ring is a senior fellow of the Center for American Greatness. He is also the director of water and energy policy for the California Policy Center, which he co-founded in 2013 and served as its first president. Ring is the author of Fixing California: Abundance, Pragmatism, Optimism (2021) and The Abundance Choice: Our Fight for More Water in California (2022). American Greatness, January 22, 2025.*

**COLAB NOTE: The article below is an essential review for those who support government reform and the ultimate survival of our civilization in terms of the challenges facing President Trump.**

## **MAGA AGONISTS<sup>3</sup>**

### **BY VICTOR DAVIS HANSON**

### ***ON THE NEW PRESIDENT'S PLANS***

The Trumpian agenda to "Make America Great Again" emerged during the 2015–16 campaign and ensured Donald Trump's nomination and his eventual victory over Hillary Clinton. This counterrevolutionary movement reflected the public's displeasure with both the Obama administration's hard swing to the left and the doctrinaire, anemic Republican reaction to it.

Although only partially implemented during Trump's first term, MAGA policies nevertheless marked a break from many past Republican orthodoxies, especially in their signature skepticism concerning the goal of nation-building abroad and the so-called endless wars, such as those in

---

<sup>3</sup> Agonist : One that is engaged in a struggle.

Iraq and Afghanistan, that tended to follow. But like all counterrevolutions, there were intrinsic challenges in the transition from simply opposing the status quo to actually ending it.

There was a promising start during Trump's first administration. Corporate interest in a porous border to ensure inexpensive labor was ignored; immigration was deterred or restricted to legal channels, and the border was largely secured. Deregulation and tax cuts, rather than deficit reduction, were prioritized. Selective tariffs were no longer deemed apostasies from the free market, but acceptable and indeed useful levers to enforce reciprocity in foreign trade. Costly middle-class entitlements were pronounced sacrosanct. Social Security and Medicare were declared immune from cost-cutting and privatization.

This "action plan to Make America Great Again" went hand in hand with an effort to transform the Republican Party. What had once been routinely caricatured as a wealthy club of elites was reinvented by Trump as a working-class populist movement. Racial chauvinism and tribalism were rejected. Race was to be seen as incidental to shared class concerns—notably, reining in the excesses of a progressive, identity-politics-obsessed bicoastal elite. Athletes who in 2020 had bent a knee to express outrage at "systemic" racism were in 2024 celebrating their scores by emulating Trump's signature dance moves.

Despite intense resistance from the media, the Democratic Party, and the cultural Left, the first Trump term enjoyed success in implementing many of these agendas. After losing the 2020 election—in which nearly 70 percent of voters in key swing states voted by mail-in ballot—Trump left office without a major war on his watch. He had overseen a period with 1.9 percent annualized inflation, low interest rates, steady economic growth, and, finally, after constant battles and controversy, a secure border with little illegal immigration.

Yet during the succeeding four-year Biden interregnum, the world became far more chaotic and dangerous, both at home and abroad. Biden's general agenda was to reverse by executive order almost every policy that Trump had implemented. And while Trump was successfully reelected in 2024 after reminding voters that they had been far better off under the MAGA agenda than during Biden's subsequent shambolic tenure, the changed conditions in 2024 will also make implementing that agenda even more difficult than after Trump's first victory.

Trump has now inherited an almost bankrupt country. The ratio of debt to annual GDP has reached a record high of nearly 125 percent—exceeding the worst years of World War II. The nation remains sharply divided over the southern border, which for most of Biden's term was nonexistent. Trump's own base demands that he address an estimated twelve million additional unvetted illegal aliens, diversity, equity, and inclusion mandates and racial quotas, and an array of enemies abroad who are no longer deterred by or content with the global status quo. The eight-year Obama revolution in retrospect did not change American institutions and policies nearly as much as the more radical four-year Biden tenure. And so often, when drastic remedies are proposed, their implementation may appear to the inured public—at least initially—as a cure worse than the disease.

Take the example of illegal immigration. Since Trump left office in January 2021, two major and unexpected developments have followed during the Biden years. First, the border did not just become porous but virtually disappeared. Indeed, Biden in his first hours of governance stopped further construction of the Trump wall, restored catch-and-release policies, and allowed illegal immigrants to cross the border without first applying for refugee status.

Given the magnitude of what followed—as many as twelve million illegal aliens crossed the border during the Biden tenure—the remedy of deportation would now necessitate a massive, indeed unprecedented, effort. The public has been increasingly hectored by the Left to fear the supposedly authoritarian measures Trump had in mind when he called for “massive deportations.” Left unsaid was that such deportations would only be a response to the prior four years of lawless and equally “massive” importations of foreign nationals. And yet, while the twelve million illegal entrances over four years were an insidious process, the expulsion of most of those entrants will be seen as abrupt, dramatic, and harsh. In addition, it was much easier for felons and criminals to blend into the daily influx of thousands than it will be to find them now amid a population of 335 million.

Second, in the 2024 election, Trump won a record number of Hispanic voters (somewhere between 40 and 50 percent, depending on how the term “Hispanic” is defined) in one of the most dramatic political defections from the Democratic Party in history. While voters’ switch to Trump can be largely attributed to the deleterious effects of the Biden-Harris open border on Hispanic communities, schools, and social services, no one knows what, if any, might be the paradoxical political effects of the mass deportation of many within these same Hispanic communities.

Will Hispanic voters continue to resent the ecumenical nature of illegal immigration across the southern border, which now draws millions from outside Latin America? Will they wish to focus primarily on violent criminals while exempting on a case-by-case basis Mexican nationals, many of whom have kinship ties to Hispanic U.S. citizens? In sum, no one yet knows the political consequences of deporting all—or even 5 to 10 percent—of the Biden-era illegal aliens, given their unprecedented numbers. Even if polls tell us that 52 percent of Americans support “massive” deportations, will that number still hold true if they eventually include friends and relatives or entail five or six million deportations?

Trump’s fiscal policies pose similar known unknowns. During the 2024 campaign, Trump promised a number of large tax cuts to various groups. For example, eliminating taxes on service workers’ tips might cost the treasury in excess of \$10 billion a year. Trump’s call to make tax-free the incomes of police officers, firefighters, veterans, and active-duty military personnel would translate into at minimum a shortfall of \$200 billion a year in federal tax revenue. Another \$200 billion in annual revenue would be lost if, as promised, Trump once again allowed state and local taxes to be deducted from federal income taxes. Some \$300 billion per annum would also vanish under Trump’s proposals to cease taxing hourly overtime pay. Other promises to eliminate taxes on Social Security income, cut corporate taxes to 15 percent, or reextend his 2017 tax cuts could in toto reach \$1 trillion in lost federal revenue per year.

The 2024 yearly deficit was projected at about \$1.83 trillion. So how would Trump reach his goal of moving toward a balanced budget if all the promised tax reductions were realized, with a yearly loss of at least \$1 trillion in revenue added to the nearly \$2 trillion currently borrowed each year? No one knows the precise increase in annual revenues that will accrue from greater productivity and economic growth due to Trump’s deregulatory and tax-reduction agendas. Furthermore, how much income can be expected from proposed reciprocal tariffs on foreign imports? And how much will realistically be gained in savings from Elon Musk and Vivek Ramaswamy’s new Department of Government Efficiency and their promise to cut \$2 trillion from the annual federal budget?

So far, Trump's proposed radical tax cuts are quite popular, mostly transparent, and often detailed, while the commensurate massive reductions in federal spending are as yet none of the above. The political success of Trump's tax and spending reductions will hinge on the degree to which he can eliminate massive unpopular waste, slash useless programs, increase federal revenue from targeted foreign tariffs, and through incentives grow the size and incomes of the taxpaying public and corporations—without touching sacrosanct big-ticket items like defense, Social Security, and Medicare. It bears noting that no prior administration has been able to cut the annual deficit while also massively reducing federal income taxes.

Trump has also promised a radically new and different cohort to run his cabinet posts and large agencies. In his first term, Trump's agenda was stymied by both his own political appointees and the high-ranking officials of the administrative state. Starting in 2017, they saw their new jobs as either warping MAGA directives into their own preferred policies or colluding to block a supposedly unqualified and indeed “dangerous” Trump. Almost monthly, his cabinet heads or agency directors—John Bolton, James Comey, John Kelly, James Mattis, Rex Tillerson, Christopher Wray—were at odds with their politically inexperienced president.

Anonymous lower-ranking officials routinely claimed to the media that they were internally frustrating Trump initiatives and leaked embarrassing (and possibly fabricated) anecdotes about their president. One supposedly high-ranking Trump official known as “Anonymous” —later revealed to be a rather low-ranking bureaucrat named Miles Taylor—began a *New York Times* hit piece, “I Am Part of the Resistance Inside the Trump Administration.” He further boasted of how appointees deliberately tried to sabotage Trump policies and executive orders.

But paradoxes also arise from Trump's 2024 remedies for this earlier internal obstruction. Given this past experience, only genuine outsiders appear immune to the compromises and careerism endemic among veterans of the administrative state. And yet such would-be reformers often lack the insider knowledge, expertise, and familiarity with the government blob needed to reduce or eliminate it.

The radical growth in the federal government, the surge in entitlements, the increases in regulations and taxes, and the soaring deficit and national debt were overseen by so-called experts in the bureaucracy as well as by traditional politicians on both sides of the aisle. In response, would-be reformers have talked grandly about the dangers of unsustainable national debt, the interest payments that now exceed \$1 trillion per year, and the need to rein in nearly \$2 trillion in annual budget deficits. But few, especially in Congress, may be willing to cancel the sacred-cow programs that have enriched their constituents, provided jobs for millions of Americans, and offered high-paying revolving-door billets for retired politicians and their staffers.

For example, the general public, liberal and conservative alike, acknowledges vast waste and wrongheaded procurement at the Pentagon. Auditors quietly grant that massive subsidies and corporate welfare to pharmaceutical companies, agribusiness, and crony-capitalist wind- and solar-energy companies are near scandalous. An increasing number of voters now believe that the government needs to get out of the business of guaranteeing student loans that are nonperforming, stop funding boondoggles like high-speed rail, and dismantle the vast DEI-commissar system at government agencies.

Yet those most familiar with these programs are their beneficiaries. And those who could most effectively discontinue them are precisely those who perhaps could least be trusted to do so. Therefore, outsiders are needed, even or especially those without the degrees and résumés customarily required to run these huge government entities.

Trump's cabinet nominee Pete Hegseth, for example, a decorated combat veteran who wrote a book on the Pentagon's pathologies, is by conventional standards unqualified to be the defense secretary. He is not a four-star officer, former Fortune 500 CEO, or prior cabinet official. Unlike his two predecessors, however, he would not revolve into the office from a post at a defense corporation with huge Pentagon contracts.

The FBI nominee Kash Patel has a lengthy record of government service in Congress, the executive branch, and legal circles. But he also is a fierce critic of the FBI and was once himself a target of agency monitoring. Indeed, Patel wrote a book about FBI misadventures, incompetence, and political weaponization. He promises to move the agency outside of Washington, D.C., and to end its political contamination—which has earned him fierce opposition from within the bureau and its congressional and media supporters.

In rejection of the Republican establishment that obstructed him in his first administration, Trump has often opted for anti-big-government picks who were once Democrats or who otherwise emphatically reflect the populist nature of the new Republican Party, such as Tulsi Gabbard (National Intelligence), Robert F. Kennedy Jr. (Health and Human Services), Dr. Marty Makary (Food and Drug Administration), Dr. Jay Bhattacharya (National Institutes of Health), or Lori Chavez-DeRemer (Labor).

In sum, while it is not impossible for reformers to emerge from the status quo, it is precisely those “unqualified,” “firebrand,” or “dangerous” outsiders without “proper” experience in government, without prestigious degrees and credentials, and without sober and judicious reputations within the bureaucracies (indeed, they are sometimes the very targets of the agencies that they are tasked to reform or end) who are most immune to being compromised by those bureaucracies.

But it is abroad where the implementation of the MAGA agenda will be most severely stress-tested, particularly regarding China, Russia, Ukraine, and the Middle East. Trump's first term was neither isolationist nor interventionist. He loathed nation-building, but he also ridiculed the appeasement strategies of prior administrations. Recalling the Roman military commentator Vegetius's famous aphorism *si vis pacem, para bellum* (If you desire peace, prepare for war), Trump's strategy in building up the nation's defenses and reforming the Pentagon was not to fight elective ground wars or to democratize foreign nations, but to avoid future conflicts through demonstrable deterrence.

A good example is his first-term experience with radical Islamists in the Middle East. On January 3, 2020, the Trump administration killed by drone the Iranian major general Qasem Soleimani near the Baghdad airport. Soleimani had a long record of waging surrogate wars against Americans, especially during the Iraq conflict and its aftermath. After the Trump cancellation of the Iran deal, followed by U.S. sanctions, Soleimani reportedly stepped up violence against regional American bases in Iraq and Syria—most of which, ironically, Trump himself wished to remove.



A few days after Soleimani's death, Iran staged a performance-art retaliatory strike of twelve missiles against two U.S. airbases in Iraq, assuming that Trump had no desire for a wider Middle Eastern war. Tehran had supposedly warned the Trump administration of the impending attacks, which killed no Americans. Later reports, however, did suggest that some Americans suffered concussions and that more damage was done to the bases than was initially disclosed. Nonetheless, this Iranian interlude seemed to reflect Trump's agenda of avoiding "endless wars" in the Middle East, while restoring deterrence that prevented, rather than prompted, full-scale conflicts.

Yet in a second Trump administration, such threading of the deterrence needle may become far more challenging. The world today is far more dangerous than it was when Trump left office in 2021. The U.S. military is far weaker, suffering from munitions shortages, massive recruitment shortfalls, DEI mandates, and dwindling public confidence. The State Department is far less credible, and America's enemies have been long nursed on Biden-era appeasement. Four years ago, for example, no one would have dreamed that hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians and Russians would become casualties in a full-scale war on Europe's doorstep.

Indeed, an inept Biden administration crippled U.S. deterrence abroad through both actual and symbolic disasters. In March 2021, Chinese diplomats brazenly dressed down newly appointed Biden-administration diplomats in Anchorage without rebuke. The debacle in Afghanistan in August 2021 marked the greatest abandonment of U.S. arms and facilities in American military history. Six months later, an observant Vladimir Putin correctly surmised that a Russian invasion of Ukraine would likely face few countermeasures from a now humiliated and unsteady United States.

In late January 2023, the meandering and uninterrupted week-long flight of a Chinese spy balloon across the American homeland seemed to exemplify the general disdain enemies now held for the Biden administration. Indeed, foreign foes assumed that there would be few Western consequences for their aggression, at least during a window of opportunity never before seen—nor likely to be repeated.

On October 7, 2023, Hamas terrorists, followed eagerly by a ragtag mob of Gazans, stormed into Israel. They murdered, tortured, raped, or took hostage some 1,200 Israeli victims, sparking a theater-wide war against Israel instigated by Iran and its surrogates.

The serial Houthi attacks on international shipping intensified to such a degree that the Red Sea joined the Black Sea, the Strait of Hormuz, the South China Sea, and the Eastern Mediterranean as virtual no-go zones for Western shipping, given the absence of visible American and NATO deterrents. By autumn 2024, Iran had launched five hundred missiles, rockets, and drones at the Israeli homeland, with the United States loudly enjoining de-escalation and restraint on our Israeli ally.

By year's end, tens of thousands of North Korean combat troops were fighting with Russians on the Ukrainian border. And by late 2024, the combined Russian and Ukrainian dead, wounded, and missing had passed one million, in the greatest European charnel house since the World War II battle for Stalingrad.

All these foreign wars and quagmires pose dilemmas for MAGA reformers. Again, Trump was not elected to be a nation-builder, globalist, or neoconservative interventionist. Conversely, he is no



isolationist or appeaser, on whose watch the world would continue to descend into the chaos of the past four years. Yet Trump in 2024 is much more emphatic about the need to avoid such dead-end overseas entanglements, or even the gratuitous use of force that can lead to tit-for-tat entanglements. That caution may obscure his Jacksonian foreign policy and wrongly convince opportunists to test his frequent braggadocio and purported deterrence credentials.

In this regard, Trump's selection of J. D. Vance as vice president and Tulsi Gabbard as director of national intelligence, along with Tucker Carlson and the once-Democratic pacifist Robert F. Kennedy Jr. as close advisors—coupled with his announcements that the hawkish former secretary of state Mike Pompeo and the former UN ambassador Nikki Haley would not be in the administration—may be misinterpreted by scheming foreign adversaries as proof of a new Trumpian unilateral restraint.

The Republican Party is now the party of peace, and Trump the most reluctant president to spend American blood and treasure abroad in memory. Trump broke with previous Republican interventionism largely because he damned past American misadventures in Afghanistan and Iraq that cost thousands of lives and trillions of dollars while they distracted from an unsustainable national debt, a nonexistent southern border, and a floundering lower-middle class. Similarly, it is no wonder that the public often sees the use of force abroad as coming at the zero-sum expense of unaddressed American needs at home. Moreover, a woke, manpower-short military has disparaged and alienated the working-class recruits who disproportionately sought out combat units and fought and died in far-off Afghanistan and Iraq.

Recently, however, even as President Trump's inner circle emphasized a stop to endless conflicts, Trump himself in November 2024 warned Vladimir Putin not to escalate his attacks against Ukraine. Yet that warning was followed by massive Russian air onslaughts against largely civilian Ukrainian targets—and further threats of tactical nuclear weapons deployed against Ukraine. Trump also instructed Hamas and Hezbollah to cease their wars against Israel, and advised the former to release the hostages, Americans particularly—or else.

Vladimir Putin no doubt took note, but he also may have wished to encourage America's enemies to test Trump's Jacksonian rhetoric against his campaign's domestic promises to mind America's own business at home. So, is there a way to square the circle of neither appeasing nor unwisely intervening?

Trump will have to speak softly yet clearly while carrying a club. For the first few months of his tenure, his administration will be tested as never before to make it clear to Iran and its terrorist surrogates, as well as China, North Korea, and Russia, that aggression against U.S. interests will swiftly incur disproportionate and overwhelming repercussions—in order to prevent wider wars that eventually might require the use of much larger forces.

Ukraine is, paradoxically, a case study of both the dangers of American intervention in distant foreign wars and the consequences of being regarded as weak, timid, and unable or unwilling to protect friends and deter enemies. The cauldron on the Ukrainian border, as already noted, has likely already caused between 1 and 1.5 million Ukrainian and Russian casualties, soldiers and civilians alike. There is no end in sight after three years of escalating violence. And there are increasing worries that strategically logical and morally defensible—but geopolitically dangerous—Ukrainian strikes on the Russian interior could escalate and lead to wider wars among the world's nuclear powers. Joe Biden's post-election decision to allow Ukraine to launch

sophisticated American missiles deep into the Russian homeland was met by further Russian warnings of escalation to the use of nuclear weapons.

Many on the right wish for Trump immediately to cut off all aid to Ukraine for what they feel is an unwinnable war, even if that cessation would end any leverage to force Putin to negotiate. They feel the conflict was egged on by a globalist Left, as a proxy conflict waged to ruin Russia to the last Ukrainian soldier. These critics see the war as conducted by a now undemocratic Ukrainian government, without elections, habeas corpus, a free press, or opposition parties, led by an ungracious and corrupt Zelensky cadre that has intrigued with the American Left in an election year. Preferring negotiations that might cede Ukrainian territories already occupied by Russia for guarantees of peace, they point to polls revealing that less than half of the Ukrainian people are confident of a full military “victory” that would restore the country’s 1991 borders.

In contrast, many on the left see Putin’s invasion and the Right’s weariness with the costs of Ukraine as the long-awaited proof of the Trump–Russia “collusion” unicorn and generally perfidious Trumpian Russophilia. They judge Putin, not China’s imperialist juggernaut, as the real enemy. And they discount the dangers of a new Russia–China–Iran–North Korea axis. To see Ukraine at last defeat Russia, recover all of the Donbas and Crimea, and destroy the Putin dictatorship, they are willing to feed the war with American cash and weapons—again, to the last Ukrainian.

Trump vowed to end the catastrophe within a day by doing what is now taboo—namely, calling up Vladimir Putin and making a deal that would do the seemingly impossible and entice Russia back inside its pre-invasion borders of February 24, 2022, thus preserving a reduced but still autonomous, and even secure, Ukraine. How could Trump pull this off?

Ostensibly, Trump would be following the advice of a growing number of Western diplomats, generals, scholars, and pundits who have reluctantly outlined a general plan to stop the slaughter. But how would the dictator Putin face the Russian people with anything short of an absolute annexation of Ukraine, after wasting a million Russian casualties?

Perhaps, after the deal, Putin could brag to Russians that he institutionalized forever his 2014 annexations of the majority-Russian Donbas and Crimea; that he prevented Ukraine from joining NATO on the doorstep of Mother Russia; and that he achieved a strategic coup in uniting Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea in a grand new alliance against the West and particularly the United States, with the acquiescence if not support of the NATO member Turkey and an ever more sympathetic India.

And what would Ukraine and the West gain from such an example of the Trumpian “art of the deal”? Kyiv might boast that, as the bulwark of Europe, Ukraine heroically saved itself from Russian annexation, as was envisioned by Putin in the 2022 attempt to decapitate Kyiv and absorb the entire country. Ukraine was subsequently armed by the West and fought effectively enough to stymie the Russian juggernaut and humiliate and severely weaken the Russian military—to the benefit of NATO and EU nations. Trump might then pull off the agreement if he could further establish a demilitarized zone between the Russian and Ukrainian borders and ensure EU economic help for a Ukraine fully armed to deter an endlessly restless Russian neighbor.

What would be the incentives for such a deal, and would they be contrary to the interests of the American people or antithetical to the views of the new Republican populist-nationalist coalition? First, consider that if Trump were to cut all support for Ukraine, it would likely soon be absorbed by Russia. The MAGA Right would then be blamed for a humiliation comparable to the Kabul catastrophe. Indeed, the fallout would likely be worse, since the situation in Ukraine, unlike the Afghanistan mess, required only American arms, rather than lives.

In contrast, if the conflict grinds on and on, at some point the purportedly humanitarian yet pro-war Left will be permanently stamped as the callous party of unending conflict, and seen as utterly indifferent to the Ukrainian youth consumed to further its endless vendetta against a Russian people who also are worn out by the war.

Both Russia and Ukraine are running out of soldiers, with escalating casualties that will haunt them for years. Russia yearns to be free of sanctions and to sell oil and gas to Europe. The West, and the United States in particular, would like to triangulate with Russia against China and vice versa, in Kissingerian style, and thus avoid any multi-power nuclear standoff.

Trump wants global quiet in order to increase and stockpile American munitions with an emboldened China on the horizon. He will inherit a U.S. military budget dangerously exhausted by wasteful procurement of overpriced systems like the F-22 aircraft and the littoral combat ship, by cuts in training for troops and maintenance of ships, and by massive aid to Ukraine and Israel. Accordingly, Trump prefers allies like Israel that can win with a few billion, rather than those that continue to struggle after receiving \$200 billion, as Ukraine has done.

Last, Europe is mentally worn out by the war, and increasingly reneging on its once-boastful unqualified support for Ukraine, as it hopes the demonic Trump can both end the hated war and be hated for ending it.

The same challenge of forcefully dissuading bullies while avoiding exhausting wars will confront Trump in the Middle East. To restore deterrence, Trump will have to put the Houthis on notice that their attacks on international shipping in the Red Sea will earn them something more deleterious than the Biden administration's passive deflections of shore-to-ship missile attacks. That passivity has so far cost the United States about \$2 billion in munitions without achieving tangible results.

Iran, of course, is at the nexus of Middle Eastern tensions. Both fear of Tehran's missiles and the Biden administration's opposition paralyzed the Abraham Accords. Iran supplies all the terrorist organizations— Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis—that have attacked Israel since Trump's departure. Accordingly, Trump will likely lift American restraints on Israel, supply the necessary heavy-duty ordnance should it wish to retaliate against Iranian attacks by taking out Iran's nuclear program and oil-export facilities, and deter Russia and China from intervening to help their client Iran.

In sum, to ensure that there are no theater-wide conflicts in the Middle East, as well as in Eastern Europe and beyond, Trump will have to use disproportionate force to dispel the image of the United States as indifferent to aggression due to fears of costly intervention.

The MAGA revolution that will now ensue in the four years of Trump's second and last presidential term promises to remake America in ways only haphazardly realized four years ago. In Trump's favor this time around are his past years of governance and his knowledge of the sort

of opposition he will now face—after two impeachments, five weaponized civil and criminal court cases, repeated efforts to remove his candidacy from state ballots, two assassination attempts, and three brutal presidential campaigns.

The failed Biden years—the entrance of twelve million illegal aliens through a deliberately opened border, wars abroad, inflation, and soaring crime—helped propel the most spectacular political resurrection in American political history. The backroom Biden removal from the Democratic nomination, the subsequent listless Harris campaign, and the ever more radical trajectory of the increasingly unpopular Democratic Party have all put Trump in a far more powerful position than when he entered the presidency in 2017 or when he left office in 2021.

Trump's success in resetting the United States will hinge not merely on outwitting the desperation of his enemies, but also on navigating the paradoxes of implementing his own MAGA agenda.

*Victor Davis Hanson is a Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University, and the author of The Second World Wars (Basic Books). He is The New Criterion's Visiting Critic for the 2021–22 season and the 2018 recipient of the Edmund Burke award. New Criterion, January 22, 2025.*



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### ANDY CALDWELL SHOW NOW LOCAL IN SLO COUTY

**Now you can listen to THE ANDY CALDWELL SHOW  
in Santa Barbara, Santa Maria & San Luis Obispo Counties!  
We are pleased to announce that The Andy Caldwell Show is now  
broadcasting out of San Luis Obispo County on FM 98.5 in  
addition to AM**



**1290/96.9 Santa Barbara and AM 1240/99.5 Santa Maria**  
**The show now covers the broadcast area from Ventura to**  
**Templeton -**

**THE only show of its kind on the Central Coast covering local,**  
**state, national and international issues! 3:00-5:00 PM**  
**WEEKDAYS**

**You can also listen to The Andy Caldwell Show LIVE on the [Tune](#)**  
**[In Radio App](#) and previously aired shows at: 3:00-5:00 PM**  
**WEEKDAYS**

**COUNTY UPDATES OCCUR MONDAYS AT 4:30 PM**  
**MIKE BROWN IS THE REGULAR MONDAY GUEST AT 4:30!**

*A Voice for Reason*  
3:00 PM to 5:00 PM Monday thru Friday  
- Ventura to San Luis Obispo -

*Listen to The Andy Caldwell Show "LIVE"*

**KSMARADIO**  
NEWS • TALK  
**1240 | 99.5**  
1240ksma.com

**KZSBRADIO**  
**SANTA BARBARA**  
**1290 | 96.9**  
am1290kzsb.com

**K-NEWS**  
**98.5**  
*The Power of Information*  
knews985.com

*The Only Talk Radio Show to Cover*  
*Santa Barbara, Santa Maria & San Luis Obispo !*



**SUPPORT COLAB**





**MIKE BROWN ADVOCATES  
BEFORE THE BOS**



**VICTOR DAVIS HANSON ADDRESSES A COLAB FORUM**



**DAN WALTERS EXPLAINS SACTO MACHINATIONS AT A COLAB FORUM**



**AUTHOR & NATIONALLY SYNDICATED COMMENTATOR/RADIO HOST BEN  
SHAPIRO  
APPEARED AT A COLAB ANNUAL DINNER**



**NATIONAL RADIO AND TV COMMENTATOR HUGH HEWITT AT COLAB DINNER**



**MIKE BROWN RALLIED THE FORCES OUTDOORS DURING COVID LOCKDOWN**

**JOIN OR CONTRIBUTE TO COLAB ON THE NEXT PAGE**  
**Join COLAB or contribute by control clicking at: [COLAB](https://colabslo.org)**  
**[San Luis Obispo County \(colabslo.org\)](https://colabslo.org) or use the form below:**

Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business  
San Luis Obispo County  
"Your Property – Your Taxes – Our Future"  
PO Box 13601 – San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 / Phone: 805.548-0340  
Email: colabslo@gmail.com / Website: colabslo.org

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

### MEMBERSHIP OPTIONS:

General Member: \$100 – \$249 ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Voting Member: \$250 – \$5,000 ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Sustaining Member: \$5,000 + ☐ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*(Sustaining Membership includes a table of 10 at the Annual Fundraiser Dinner)*

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

### MEMBER INFORMATION:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### How Did You Hear About COLAB?

Radio ☐ Internet ☐ Public Hearing ☐ Friend ☐

COLAB Member(s) / Sponsor(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### NON MEMBER DONATION/CONTRIBUTION OPTION:

For those who choose not to join as a member but would like to support COLAB via a contribution/donation.  
I would like to contribute \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to COLAB and my check or credit card information is enclosed/provided.

Donations/Contributions do not require membership though it is encouraged in order to provide updates and information.

Memberships and donation will be kept confidential if that is your preference.

Confidential Donation/Contribution/Membership ☐

### PAYMENT METHOD:

Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ Amex NOT accepted.

Cardholder Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Billing Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV: \_\_\_\_\_

TODAY'S DATE: \_\_\_\_\_