



## **Weekly Update January 26 - February 2, 2026**

The January 27 San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting is expected to be long and complicated. The most intense item on the agenda, the Sheriff's TRUTH Forum, is scheduled to be presented after lunch. The rest of the agenda is filled with important issues as well, so anybody planning to attend will have a lot to take in.

We do hope that supporters of Sheriff Parkinson will be there to balance out what is expected to be a very large contingency of ICE protesters. We also hope that the proceedings remain peaceful and respectful.

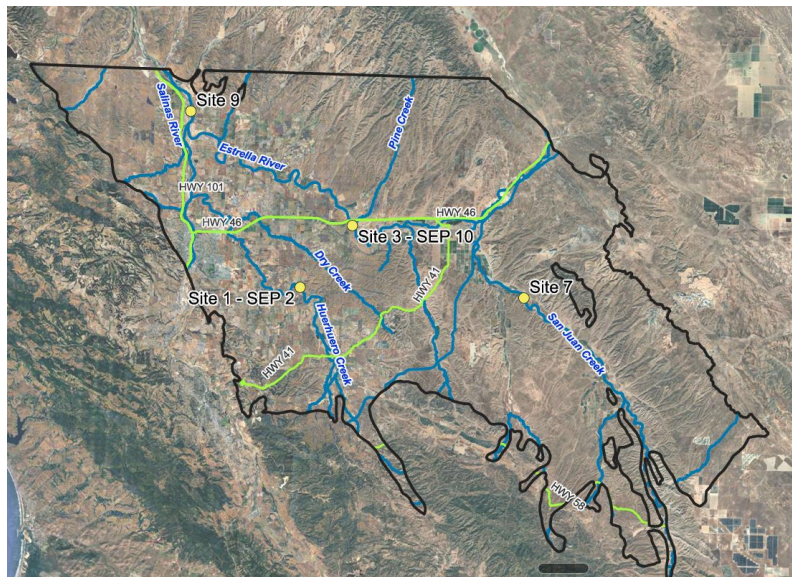
It's worth noting that due to holidays and other schedule complications, the following two Board of Supervisors meetings are set for February 3 and 10, meaning that we are treated with three meetings in a row.

## Paso Groundwater Measuring Measure

It's not a typo. The first item on the agenda for the January 27th Board of Supervisors meeting is the submittal of a bid opening report for the Paso Robles Groundwater Sub-Basin Alluvial Monitoring Well Network Expansion Project. This seems like a good project because the more data available, the better the decision-making can be about whether the basin is truly in overdraft, and by how much.

As we've said frequently, there's a severe lack of trust between the general public and policymakers in the Paso Basin. Current, clear data that tells the true story will help to define what the real needs are for that region. For too long, arguments about who said what or which figures are accurate have dominated any attempt to come up with reasonable solutions about groundwater sustainability.

Below, a map illustrates the various well sites for this contract. To be certain, some will complain that those sites don't produce accurate data. While others will have full confidence in the numbers that they produce. Either way, there will be fresh data to explore.



# Taxpayer Doom and Gloom

Some people claim that property taxes are just a means for the government to take property. Others say that property tax is, in essence, rental, where you're renting your property from the government and paying that rent through your taxes.

Certainly, if you fail to pay your property taxes, there are consequences. Item 5 on the agenda is a submittal of a resolution accepting notice and approval for a sealed bid sale for tax-defaulted properties subject to the tax collector's power to sell.

Below is just the first of three pages listing properties proposed for sale through tax lien collections.

## EXHIBIT A - List of Parcels

**James W. Hamilton, CPA**

(ATTACHMENT TO SALE RESOLUTION)

**San Luis Obispo County Auditor • Controller • Treasurer • Tax Collector • Public Administrator**

NOTICE OF INTENT TO SELL TAX-DEFAULTED PROPERTY  
SEALED BID SALE #270 ON MAY 27, 2026

| Item    | Assessment Number<br>Last Assessee               | Tax Rate Area | Default Number<br>Default Date<br>POS Document Number | Minimum Bid |
|---------|--|---------------|---|-------------|
| 270-001 | 083,191,006<br>BRENNERKE JASON K ETAL            | 054-061       | D7457<br>6/30/2013<br>2018030616                      | \$3,400.00  |
| 270-002 | 083,191,013<br>HUNTSUCKER JEFFREY ETAL           | 054-061       | C8746<br>6/30/2009<br>2014020155                      | \$4,900.00  |
| 270-003 | 083,191,018<br>MCEACHERN DOROTHY C HEIRS OF ETAL | 054-061       | B2241<br>6/30/2005<br>2010036266                      | \$5,900.00  |
| 270-004 | 083,191,019<br>MCEACHERN DOROTHY C HEIRS OF ETAL | 054-061       | B2242<br>6/30/2005<br>2010036266                      | \$5,900.00  |
| 270-005 | 083,191,024<br>BARRIOS ENRIQUE C                 | 054-061       | B8772<br>6/30/2007<br>2012-099038                     | \$6,200.00  |
| 270-006 | 083,191,052<br>CORRECES STEVE H & GEMMA C        | 054-061       | D0135<br>6/30/2010<br>2016034449                      | \$4,300.00  |
| 270-007 | 083,191,053<br>FUTURE ESTATES LAND HOLDINGS LLC  | 054-061       | D2842<br>6/30/2011<br>2016034448                      | \$4,000.00  |
| 270-008 | 083,191,060<br>NESTOROFF BERNARD G               | 054-061       | F2771<br>6/30/2020<br>2025-020188                     | \$1,800.00  |
| 270-009 | 083,331,028<br>DEMEOWSKI LORIN M                 | 054-061       | C2848<br>6/30/2005<br>2013039200                      | \$4,900.00  |
| 270-010 | 083,331,035<br>CONNER WILLIAMS HEIRS OF ETAL     | 054-061       | E7924<br>6/30/2018<br>2023-020493                     | \$2,200.00  |
| 270-011 | 083,331,045<br>LAND OF FREEDOM LLC               | 054-061       | E1583<br>6/30/2015<br>2020-040720                     | \$2,900.00  |
| 270-012 | 083,331,058<br>PASTOR MARIA E ETAL               | 054-061       | D5318<br>6/30/2012<br>2017032202                      | \$3,500.00  |
| 270-013 | 083,341,005<br>YAP PRMY R & CONNIE V             | 054-061       | C2849<br>6/30/2008<br>2013039201                      | \$4,500.00  |
| 270-014 | 083,341,006<br>BARAJA JUAN                       | 054-061       | D3875<br>6/30/2011<br>2018034510                      | \$3,400.00  |
| 270-015 | 083,341,027<br>TATE CLARENCE & DONNA M           | 054-061       | C6805<br>6/30/2009<br>2014029071                      | \$5,700.00  |
| 270-016 | 083,341,029<br>CARTEAU JAMES L HEIRS OF ETAL     | 054-061       | D2877<br>6/30/2011<br>2016034508                      | \$3,600.00  |

Page 1 of 4 of Exhibit A - List of Parcels

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The only upside when thinking about the impacts of this process on those families affected is to imagine what this list would look like if we didn't have Proposition 13 to protect from such dire circumstances.

## **The Cost of Gerrymandering**

Item 11 on the agenda is a bit of a slap in the face to taxpayers and voters. The item is a request to authorize budget adjustments to the Clerk Recorder's Office in the amount of \$1.2 million for costs associated with the November 4, 2025, statewide special election. It requires a 4/5 vote.

This, of course, was Proposition 50 - the Democrats' attempt to "save democracy". Gavin Newsom thought that it was brilliant to let politicians draw their own lines. The true cost of the election was obfuscated by the mainstream media. But now we can see what Prop 50 costs San Luis Obispo taxpayers. Statewide estimates run from \$200 - \$300 million.

The rest of the Board resolution calls for an additional amount of \$700,000 for using state voting system replacement contract funds and unanticipated state revenue for the purchase of a vote by mail processing system and the poll book systems. This also requires a 4/5 vote.

Most election reformers are pointing out numerous problems that exist with the vote-by-mail system. The biggest problems are:

1. There is really no verification that the ballots are coming from people who are entitled to vote
2. Ballots are not protected from being fraudulently cast
3. Computerized vote counting could be subject to manipulation

This agenda item might help to put a spotlight on the operations of the San Luis Obispo County Clerk's Office and their vote counting processes.

## **Hot Topic – Glowing Embers or Disaster?**

Item 12 is one of those “under the radar” topics that has the potential to sail through without anybody recognizing the terrible implications. It reads: Request to: 1) approve the re-establishment and update of the Fire Code Board of Appeals, and 2) direct the County Clerk to notice any existing vacancies on the Fire Code Board of Appeals in accordance with standard County procedures.

What isn’t spelled out is that this appointed board’s decision-making process may be final. It doesn’t appear that there is any appeal process.

We have seen countless flawed decisions from similar boards where the appeal process was the only way to protect property owners. The last thing that we need in this county is a board with the authority to make arbitrary decisions that could have enormous impacts on property values.

We hope the Board of Supervisors will take a stand for property rights and protect the public from a board that could impose unreasonable findings with no recourse.

## **Hope and Accountability**

As we've reported in the past, we have high hopes for the success of the new efforts by the Community Foundation in San Luis Obispo County. This highly organized and very accountable private organization is able to match funds from donors and find grants to be paired with government funds for San Luis Obispo County service providers.

Their grants are predicated on very low overhead and efficient workings of non-profit organization grant applicants. They have very high standards but provide a tremendous avenue for help to the various organizations we have around the county offering charitable services.

Item 13 on the agenda is a request to receive a summary report from the Community Foundation regarding the implementation of the county's community resiliency grant funds. Below is a summary of their first report:

#### Review Committee and Grantmaking Process

The grant review committee met on November 21<sup>st</sup> 2025, and decided on grant awards totaling \$2,256,080.

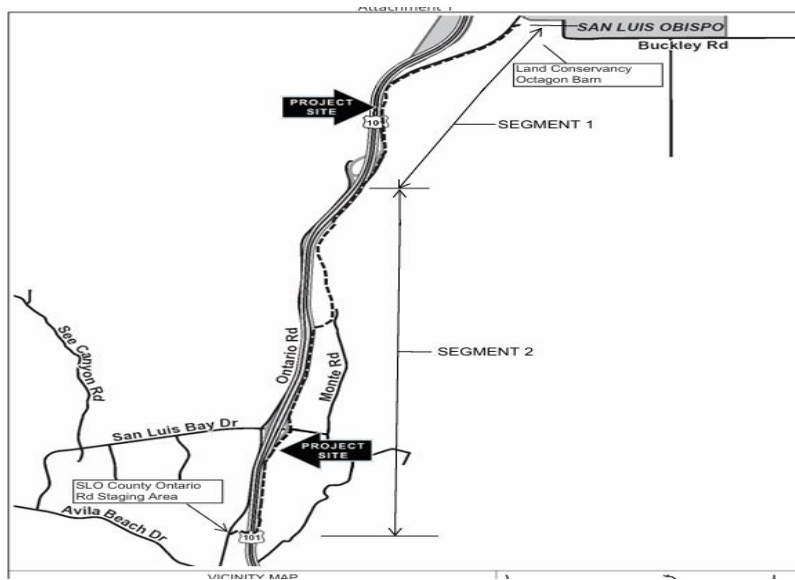
- County Contribution: \$1,200,000
  - CFSLOCO 3% fee: \$36,000
  - Grants: \$1,164,000
- CFSLOCO Grant Dollars Raised: \$1,056,080

Community Foundations in other counties have been successful in making government support go much further with matching support from private sources. It will be great to see such efforts flourish here.

## **A Nice Day for a \$40 Million Stroll**

As congestion on 101 gets worse, our roads crumble, and we squabble amongst ourselves about whether we should charge ourselves additional taxes, we wonder how many people will be saying to themselves, "thank goodness we put in so much money, time, and effort into the Bob Jones Trail."

The latest chapter in this long and expensive saga comes up as item 22 on the agenda. It's a request to authorize to advertise Bob Jones' Pathway Gap Closure project segment. Illustrated below is a map of the gap that they're trying to close and a chart including the budget so far for the project.



**Project Cost Estimate (WBS 320096)**

| <b>Expenditures:</b>                                   | <b>Amount</b>       |
|--|---------------------|
| Programming  | \$250,000           |
| Design   | \$5,245,705         |
| Bidding  | \$26,307            |
| Construction   | \$35,314,270        |
| Close Out  | \$100,000           |
| <b>Total Expenditures:</b>                             | <b>\$40,936,282</b> |
| <b>Approved Funding Sources:</b>                       | <b>Amount</b>       |
| Capital Projects Fund Facilities Planning Designation  | \$5,000,000         |
| Active Transportation Program (ATP)                    | \$1,690,855         |
| Regional State Highway Account (RSHA)                  | \$1,250,000         |
| CA Dept of Fish & Wildlife                             | \$822,999           |
| Parks - Public Facility Fees (PFF)                     | \$334,904           |
| CA DOT/Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)           | \$235,852           |
| PG&E Mitigation  | \$145,672           |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <b>\$9,480,282</b>  |
| <b>Approved Pending Appropriation Funding Sources:</b> | <b>Amount</b>       |
| Active Transportation Program (ATP)                    | \$15,953,000        |
| State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) | \$6,000,000         |
| State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)        | \$5,730,000         |
| Senate Bill 125 Formula Funds                          | \$2,000,000         |
| SLOCOG Local Funds                                     | \$1,773,000         |
| <b>Total:</b>  | <b>\$31,456,000</b> |
| <b>Total Funding:</b>                                  | <b>\$40,936,282</b> |

This year will bring some soul-searching questions about our financial priorities as we struggle with a budget that is not keeping up with the county's expenditures. We



wonder if our county leadership won't start looking at things like bicycle paths and quaint walkways as extra goodies we could only afford during the best of times.

Lots to ponder next time you are in heavy traffic or hit a pothole...

## **Sales Tax – Do We, or Don't We?**

Transportation expenses will be a hot topic. The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) is presenting its Half Cent Sales Tax Measure proposal to the Board. Below are some of the details about the tax measure.

Proponents of the tax will point out that as a self-help county (one that has a local transportation sales tax), we would qualify for millions of dollars of state grants that we don't currently. They'll also point out the fact that our county leadership has dedicated very little priority to funding transportation projects, so if we want to see improvements, we need to find funding.

Opponents of the tax measure will focus on finances and the extra costs involved with this measure. Many will point out that it's already very expensive to live in San Luis Obispo County. And some will complain that if the county doesn't want to invest in transportation, why should the taxpayers kick in extra?

Faith that the funds will go to what is promised is likely to also be a big factor.

Listed below are the distribution priorities for anticipated tax revenues.



## Revenue Distribution

Annual revenues shall be allocated as follows:

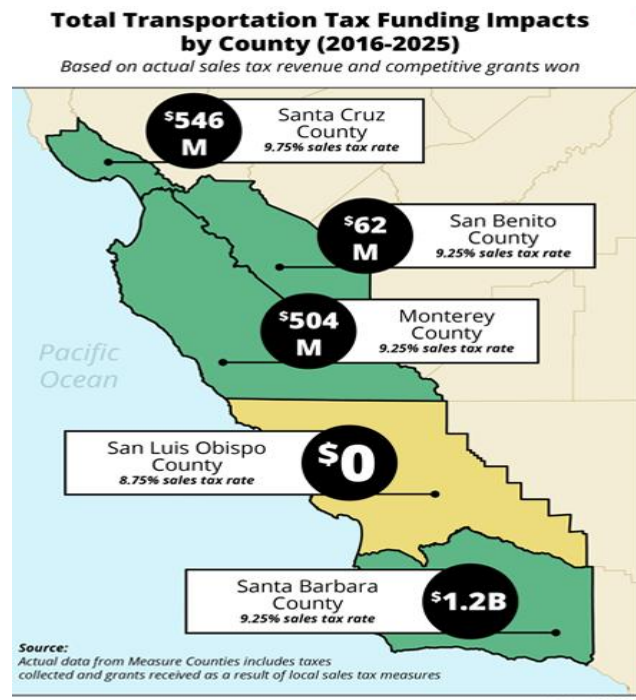
- **55% Local Road Repairs, Safety, and Improvements** distributed by population to cities and the County. (Reviewed every ten years based on census data<sup>1</sup>).
- **40% Regional Corridor Improvements** distributed by subregion population within the areas defined as shown.
- **4% Seniors, Veterans, and Mobility Challenged Transportation Services**, regionwide.
- **1% Administration**

The following chart lists the revenues that neighboring counties receive because they are self-help counties.

**Currently, 25 Counties (89% of Californians) **HAVE** a Voter-approved Transportation Tax**

| Region             | Collected ('16-pres) | Grants Won    |
|--------------------|----------------------|---------------|
| Santa Cruz         | \$196M               | <b>\$350M</b> |
| Monterey           | \$277M               | <b>\$227M</b> |
| Santa Barbara      | \$458M               | <b>\$759M</b> |
| <b>SLO</b>         | <b>\$0</b>           | <b>\$0</b>    |
| <b>Lost out on</b> | <b>\$270M</b>        | <b>\$430M</b> |

The map illustrated below shows how neighboring counties' sales tax levels are impacted by being self-help counties.



Below is a map illustrating the regions that the county will be broken into for funding purposes.



The following graph breaks out the anticipated distribution according to those districts illustrated in the map above.

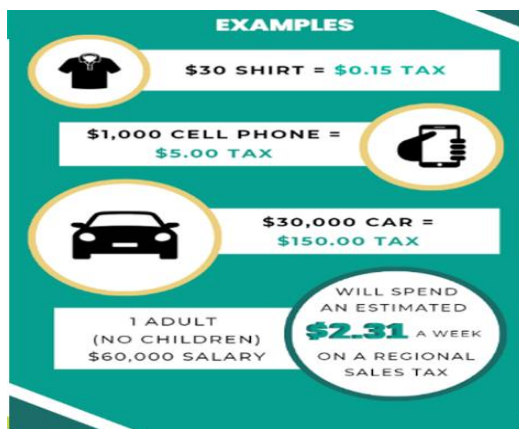
## 1/2% Sales tax generates ~

**\$35,000,000**

**Distribution of \$35M would be:**

| <b>55% for Local Road Repairs, Safety and Improvements</b>                       |    |           | <b>\$19,250,000</b> |
|--|----|-----------|---------------------|
| Arroyo Grande  | \$ | 1,256,955 |                     |
| Atascadero   | \$ | 2,029,354 |                     |
| Grover Beach   | \$ | 865,712   |                     |
| Morro Bay  | \$ | 733,207   |                     |
| Paso Robles  | \$ | 2,146,387 |                     |
| Pismo Beach  | \$ | 550,195   |                     |
| San Luis Obispo  | \$ | 3,207,856 |                     |
| Unincorporated*  | \$ | 8,460,335 |                     |
| <b>40% for Regional Corridor Improvements</b>                                    |    |           | <b>\$14,000,000</b> |
| North County   | \$ | 4,923,893 |                     |
| South County   | \$ | 4,001,218 |                     |
| Central County   | \$ | 3,085,830 |                     |
| North Coast  | \$ | 1,989,059 |                     |
| <b>4% for Senior/Disabled/Veterans' mobility improvements</b>                    |    |           | <b>\$1,400,000</b>  |
| <b>1% Administration Costs (Maximum)</b>   |    |           | <b>\$350,000</b>    |
| *Unincorporated to be distributed, equally, between five Supervisorial Districts |    |           |                     |

SLOCOG has been kind enough to make some estimates of what the average person might pay extra in sales taxes if this measure passes. What they leave out is the other 8.5% or so sales taxes that everyone already pays, or all of the other taxes that people must put out on a daily, monthly, and annual basis.



The timeline for taking this measure to the ballot is illustrated below.

- Dec. 10, 2025: **SLOCOG Board** – Reviewed Draft Investment Plan and Guidelines; Sent to Cities/BOS
  - Dec. 2025 - Jan. 2026: 7 Cities and County Review Draft Investment Plan
  - 1-27-26: BOS, review and comment
- Feb. 4, 2026: **SLOCOG Board** – Review/Approve Final Measure Materials, Introduce Ordinance
  - Feb. 2026 – Mar. 2026: 7 Cities and County Consider Approval of Plan
- Apr. 1, 2026: **SLOCOG Board** – Consider Adoption of Ordinance with Measure Materials; Send to Ballot
  - Nov. 3, 2026: **Election Day** / Voter-Consideration of Measure
    - Fail -> No Change
    - Pass -> Delivers Expenditure Plan
  - Other /Future Election

As we mentioned in last week's edition, rumors have the polling results being in the mid-50s for this measure. Since it is a specialized tax, it would require a two-thirds majority to pass. This brings into question whether the county should make the investment required to put it on the ballot.

The possibility of a “citizen’s Initiative” (which would only require a simple majority) remains but would need to fund a signature gathering campaign in order to get it on the ballot. That will be expensive and a challenge given the short time frame.

## Truth or Hyperbole?

The afternoon session of the Board of Supervisors meeting will be taken up by Sheriff Parkinson's TRUTH Forum. As required by statute, the Sheriff will disclose all interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Here is the government code that spells out the requirement:

- Government Code 7283.1(d), requires that the Board of Supervisors hold a community forum to provide information to the public about ICE's access to individuals and to receive and consider public comment.
  - The Code also specifies that the Sheriff may provide data to the Board of Supervisors as part of this forum.

The Sheriff has been very clear at every public forum about how his office handles immigration issues. Here is a summary of how they conduct themselves at the Sheriff's Office.

## What we do

- Publicly provide all incarcerated persons release dates via Sheriff's website
- Allow due process rights under CA Law (SB54)
- Comply with CA DOJ Reporting
- Inform of the right to refuse an interview or have an attorney present.
- Jail will provide a copy of ICE's requests to the incarcerated person.
- Any compliance or non-compliance will be provided on the copy of the request.
- Protect public safety
- Help undocumented victims get U-Visas

## What we DO NOT do

- Enforce Federal immigration law
- Deport anyone
- Have authority over ICE
- Ask about immigration status (SB54)
- Conduct Immigration Sweeps
- Hold/ Detain anyone in jail for extra time

There will be a lot of second-guessing and accusations of misconduct from the ICE protesters. Below is an explanation from the Sheriff's Department of how they set their priorities.

## Why

Our responsibility is to navigate and comply with both federal and California law, even when those laws create narrow requirements for local agencies.

The Sheriff's Office does not invite or facilitate civil immigration enforcement actions in the community. Our role is to protect the community.

The following chart illustrates the kinds of offenses that the Sheriff's Department's immigrant customers have committed.

## Statistics

### 2024

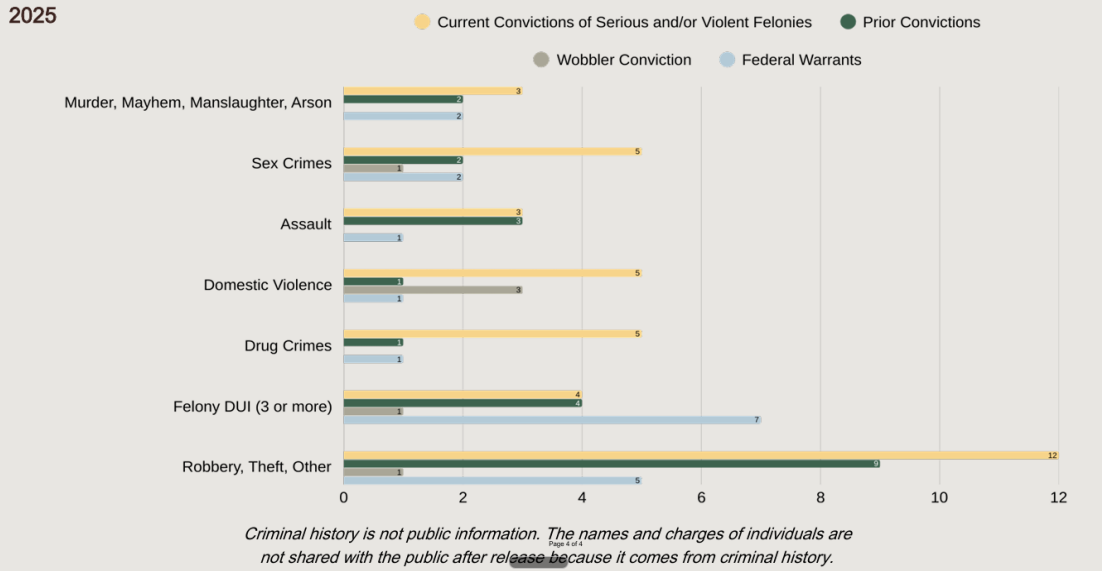
- 111 - Detainer/ Notification Requests from September 2024-December 2024
  - None were complied with
- 1 - US District Court/Federal Warrants (to US Marshal's Office)
- 1 - Releases turned over to ICE (CDCR arranged transfer)
- 4 - Requests for Interviews
  - None were complied with

### 2025

- 287 - Detainer/ Notification Requests for calendar year 2025
  - 83 were complied with
  - 204 were not complied with
- 19 - US District Court/Federal Warrants
- 69 - Releases turned over to ICE
- 11 - Requests for Interviews
  - None were complied with

## Qualifying Charges

2025





It's extremely difficult to understand the passion that some people have to protect these kinds of criminals. It's just as difficult to understand how the protesters can justify obstructing and committing acts of violence against our federal law enforcement personnel.

We can only hope that they will behave themselves at the January 27 meeting and maybe even listen to some of the compelling facts that the sheriff has to share.

## **Katy Grimes – Headline Speaker**

The question that everybody has been asking – who will be the speaker for the COLAB Annual Dinner on March 26 has finally been answered.

Katy Grimes is a seasoned investigative journalist and the Editor in Chief of California Globe, known for her indepth coverage of California politics and her contributions to various publications.

Her articles are often featured in these pages, and frequent listeners of the Andy Caldwell Show will find her sharing the latest news on the air from time to time.



Look forward to hearing the rest of the story from Katy as she discusses important details about current California issues that you will never hear from mainstream media. Be sure to get your tickets early – this will be a popular event.



# 17TH ANNUAL DINNER & FUNDRAISER

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026  
MADONNA INN EXPO CENTER

## COME HEAR THE REST OF THE STORY

*Mainstream coverage of California Issues is pathetically thin with the legacy media avoiding the tough questions that define life in the Golden State.*

*Katy Grimes, Editor-in-Chief of The California Globe, is known for fact-filled, hard hitting investigative reporting that exposes the real consequences of Sacramento's policy-making.*

*Join us to hear firsthand from Katy about California's essentially one-party system of governance and the realities most media outlets routinely ignore - along with some good news, too.*



Katy Grimes, Editor in Chief of  
The California Globe

**\$175/ PERSON  
\$1,750/ TABLE (SEATS 10)**

5:00 PM SOCIAL HOUR & OPEN BAR  
6:15 PM FILET MIGNON DINNER & WINE

AUCTION WILL BE HELD AFTER DINNER  
(AUCTIONEER TODD VENTURA)

### INQUIRE ABOUT SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

For tickets:

Mail your check to: COLAB SLO County, PO Box 13601, SLO, CA 93406

or

On-Line Reservations & Payment can be made at [www.colabslo.org/events.asp](http://www.colabslo.org/events.asp)

Cocktail Attire Optional - More info at (805) 548-0340 or [colabslo@gmail.com](mailto:colabslo@gmail.com)

## **Last Week**

### **Cordial Candidates Confer**

The first candidates' debate of the season took place on Thursday evening, January 15. Fourth district Incumbent Supervisor Jimmy Paulding debated challenger Adam Verdin in an on-line forum presented by the Tribune newspaper.

Hosted by two Tribune Editorial Board members, the discussion was civil and informative, with no clear winner. Paulding supporters will declare his performance best, while Verdin's supporters will feel fine that he did so well.

The dominant takeaway was that both candidates know the issues well.

Two standout differences came up. One regarding immigration, where Verdin said that he doesn't like what is going on but understands it. Paulding dragged out that tired old chant about people being grabbed off the streets by masked men in unmarked cars. Neither candidate mentioned the criminal aspect of so many of the people being picked up by ICE, nor was there any acknowledgement of the victims left without justice when such criminals are protected by ICE protesters.



Another contrast came up with the subject of the Oceano Dunes. Neither candidate suggested closing the dunes to off-road vehicles, but Paulding was clear that he thought further restrictions and reductions in allowable activities should be made. Verdin was well informed on the economic impact and about the variety of activities that take place at the dunes and was clear about his support for ongoing activity at the current level.

When asked about changing his position on Diablo Canyon, Paulding appeared defensive while pointing out that he was opposed to the 20-year operating permit for the power plant only until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission issued its report declaring the facility safe to operate for that period of time. He was equally defensive about his stand on Proposition 13 when he explained that he supported one facet of legislation that made some sort of modification to the measure but was supportive of the Proposition as a whole. The explanation sounded a bit more equivocated than he probably intended.

The Tribune showed its colors with a question about gerrymandering in Texas and the terrible consequences that such redistricting was causing for California. The question then drifted into the last San Luis Obispo County redistricting process. Really, neither candidate handled the question as well as they could have. Paulding got points when mentioned his work to establish a citizen redistricting panel, but said he took no position on Proposition 50 – kind of a weird contradiction. Verdin said he opposed Prop 50 but didn't point out how the measure did exactly the thing that Paulding was boasting about having eliminated – politicians drawing their own lines. Both went into detail about coastal communities such as Oceano and how they should be represented. The comments probably made sense to Oceano residents.

On the subject of campaign contributions, Paulding attempted to make a big deal about Verdin's acceptance of a maximum contribution from a developer. Paulding said that he is striving to take many small donations from lots of people rather than a few big donations. The inference was that Verdin would somehow be beholden to the donor, but Verdin had a good answer and pointed out that all donations were public record, that he had nothing to hide and that he is a pro-housing guy.

Paulding was obviously sensitive about the battery storage issue and took great care to assemble a timeline that attempted to explain differing understandings about when and how he engaged in helping the developers of the Caballero Battery Storage facility with permit assistance. It all sounded somewhat plausible until he tried to turn it around and accuse Verdin of misinformation.

Perhaps the starkest difference between the two candidates was the delivery style. Verdin's answers were short. He never seemed to take up his full allotment of time and even caught the moderators off guard a couple times when his answer was only a few seconds long. Paulding rarely finished before the time limit and included more details in his responses. We are not sure whether one approach was better than the other.

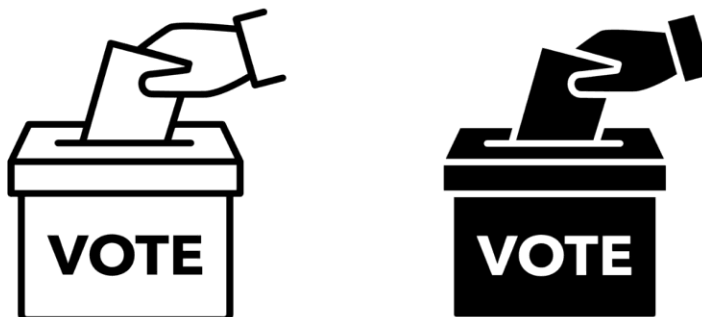
In the end, the forum established both candidates as well informed and prepared. With the event taking place so early in the race, it came off more as a discussion than a debate which was a good thing. It told us as much about who the candidates are as it did about their positions on the important issues. We thank both candidates for their participation and the Tribune for hosting. We hope to see more such events over the next few months, both for the 4<sup>th</sup> district as well as for the 2<sup>nd</sup> district and any other countywide races that develop.

## **Ballot Integrity**

We live in a time where many people who dislike the current administration feel perfectly content interfering with law enforcement and are quite comfortable disrespecting laws. It could make one wonder if someone is willing (proud?) to get arrested for other crimes, why not do a little voter fraud as well? Civil disobedience while sticking it to the bad guys...

But wait – according to mainstream media, no one ever abuses the electoral process! Ever!

Yet we have a system that is wide open, some could say inviting to fraud and misuse. As important as free elections are to our society, we do absolutely nothing to ensure that only those entitled are voting nor do we make sure they only vote once per election.



It's as if we work harder to protect the potential for fraud than we do to prevent it. But the concern about fraud continues to grow, and the more steadfast in support of the status quo people become, the more vocal the reformers get. A few steps are currently underway to address the issue.

In yet another story about Californians doing battle with the Trump administration, we learn recently that Federal Court Judge David O. Carter has dismissed a lawsuit brought by the Department of Justice requesting the ability to review California's voter rolls.

Carter is known as an opinionated and activist judge who has been removed from at least one case because his overreach jeopardized any future involvement in litigation on the issue at hand.

In this case, the DOJ, concerned about possible poor maintenance of our voter rolls, sought to verify their accuracy and current condition. We often hear concerns and allegations about voters who have passed away, but their name remains active on the voter list and a ballot is automatically mailed to their last known address. We hear about noncitizens being encouraged to register. We hear about multiple voters registered at the address of a studio or one bedroom apartment.

Carter expressed concern that any review of the voter rules could discourage potential registrants for fear of their information being used for other purposes.

On another front, the California Voter ID Initiative seems to be moving along well with some predicting that it will have enough signatures to qualify. We applaud the effort and hope for success but still see a major flaw in the voting system.

Anyone can fill out a voter registration postcard in private, send it in and automatically be set to cast a vote. Then, when election time rolls around, they fill out the ballot that was mailed to them -again in private - and simply drop it in the mail. No checks, no verification other than a possible cursory glance to see if the signature is similar. No one checks to see that the person registering is who they say they are. This leaves the system vulnerable to misuse and manipulation regardless of ID requirements at the polling place.

It is amazing how diligent people get in protecting the process from any sort of validation while labeling anybody who shows concern about protecting the vote from fraud as a kook or a conspiracy theorist. Fraud and abuse exist in almost every other aspect of our lives, so why do we open our voting process up for such easy manipulation? The real question is how can we get a reasonable discussion about ballot sanctity going without being dismissed as crazy?

The people studying the issue say the best answer is single day in-person paper balloting. A noble concept challenged by the required manpower and by a society that has become accustomed to accomplishing most of their needs with a couple clicks on a computer.

With fraud becoming such a prominent issue in our culture, verifications and protections are commonplace. When will we do something to protect and preserve our right to vote in a clean election?

## **Sales Tax Vote Workaround?**



There is talk around town that a group of individuals are interested in taking over the SLOCOG half cent sales tax campaign and submitting it as a “citizen initiative”. We do not have names, nor do we know if any organizations are involved. We don’t even know if it’s just a concept being floated around or if it’s a real effort. However, the grapevine is also buzzing with thoughts that the polling for the SLOCOG measure isn’t as strong as many supporters would hope.

The motivation appears to be a loophole in the law that would allow a “citizen initiative” tax measure to pass with a simple majority vote rather than the 2/3 vote required for a “referred” initiative. This loophole is somewhat vague, but several local tax measures have been approved around the state with this process.

The simple majority possibility was created by a measure in San Francisco that passed with 61%. It was challenged, approved by the lower court and appealed to the California Supreme Court who declined to hear the appeal leaving the lower court approval in place.

Other “citizen initiatives” have since passed in Fresno, Oakland and Los Angeles with majorities ranging from 51-58% and have all been upheld.

That a special tax can be imposed by a simple majority vote due to court actions may seem outrageous to supporters of Proposition 13. Frequent readers may recall an article that we did a few months ago about the Save Prop 13 effort by the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. This situation is precisely why HJTA is undertaking the effort. Our courts have allowed too many loopholes to form resulting in too many taxpayer protections being lost to litigators.



In the meantime, we are curious about who would provide the financial support required to qualify a citizen initiative in San Luis Obispo County. As we understand it, the number of signatures required amount to 10% of the total county wide votes cast for Governor in the last election. This means that about 12,100 valid signatures would need to be filed by late July. To get that number of valid signatures, it's likely that nearly 20,000 signatures would be needed. The short time frame for gathering those signatures makes it more difficult and expensive. We don't know exactly how much signatures are costing these days, but \$5.00 a signature might be in the ballpark.

At that rate, the signatures would cost \$100,000. There would also be legal services, management costs and additional expenses that could easily double that figure.

This raises many questions. Where will such financial support come from? Would SLOCOG still move forward with their version? What would be the result if two measures were on the ballot? What would it say about the measure if the citizen effort failed to get enough signatures to qualify?

We are hearing varying comments about the idea of a sales tax for transportation. On the support side, many point out the fact that counties with such a sales tax, called "self-help" counties, qualify for hundreds of millions of dollars of state grant money that we cannot access because we don't have such a tax. Many also point out that our roads are only getting worse and the longer we wait, the more expensive it will be to repair or build them. On the negative side, we hear people saying that if the county doesn't prioritize transportation projects, why should taxpayers be asked to pay extra? We also hear that despite built in safeguards; many don't trust that the funds will go to the right projects. The recent Cecchetti Bridge kerfuffle is commonly cited as an example.

In terms of SLOCOG's next steps, we understand that they will present at the Jan, 27 Board of Supervisors meeting and take any feedback to their board of Directors Feb. 4 meeting, along with reactions from the seven cities that they have presented to in the last month. That board will then incorporate what suggestions they can in a

semi-final version for one more round of presentations before making the formal referral with final language.

It all sounds a bit daunting and we wonder if it's being overthought, or if there are too many cooks in the kitchen. Mostly, though, we wonder if SLO County voters have the appetite for additional taxes.

## **Annual COLAB Dinner – March 26**

Our Annual COLAB dinner is a big deal. Details are falling into place for the March 26 event at the Madonna Inn Expo Center. The delicious dinner menu is lined up. The hosted bar will have your favorite cocktails. Fine wine will be on your table. Some really great auction items have already been procured. The guests will include practically every community leader you would want to see.



We are looking forward to announcing the keynote speaker. It is someone we think that you will enjoy immensely.

The most important item on our list, though, is you. Tickets will go on sale soon, and we hope that you will get yours early.

## **Important Dates**

The next Board of Supervisors meeting takes place on Tuesday, January 27. As a reminder, this will be a long and intense meeting. Two big items on the agenda are the TRUTH Forum presented by the Sheriff and the SLOCOG presentation on the Sales Tax Proposal.

We expect a long and emotional public comment period packed full of ICE protesters. It would be great to see some balance of speakers with supporters of the Sheriff there to convey their confidence in the department.

Also, a forum on Fraud prevention is being put on by the District Attorney's office on January 30, also in the Board of Supervisors chambers. We hope to see you at both important events.

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| <b>9:00 am - 11:00 am</b><br>Exposure to current<br>fraud schemes aimed at<br>local residents | <b>12:00 pm - 2:00 pm</b><br>Identifying fraud schemes<br>targeting real estate sales<br>professionals | <b>3:00 pm - 5:00 pm</b><br>Learn how to<br>protect your<br>small business assets |

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# Governor Gavin Newsom's Record on Raising Taxes on the Rich Speaks for Itself

*This is communism-light*

By Katy Grimes, January 24, 2026

Well, Brandon Richards (He/Him), Governor Gavin Newsom's Deputy Director of Rapid Response, climbs out from under his rock claiming that Gavin Newsom has opposed taxes on the rich for years.

As the **Globe reported** Friday, California billionaires are leaving the state in record numbers, and taking their billions with them. According to one billionaire, more than \$1 Trillion has already left California.

California Governor Gavin Newsom, Democrats and the SEIU are pushing a retroactive billionaire tax targeting the roughly 220 billionaires residing in California in 2025, ignoring that these individuals are the most financially mobile and can live anywhere. Expecting them to remain in the state as if they will happily and willingly hand over even more of their wealth surely must be facetious, the **Globe reported**.

Brandon Richards (He/Him) **responded** to our article on X about the SEIU's billionaire tax, where we correctly note that Gavin's "opposition" was quite delayed.

Brandon (He/Him) replied:

Hey @KATYSaccitizen, why are you engagement-farming by using the Governor's photo despite his years of opposition to this?

I replied back:

Oh Brandon (He/Him), the governor's "delayed opposition" to the billionaire tax proposal is well known. Even David Sacks said this... you know, billionaire entrepreneur Sacks who moved to Texas. And Newsom's gratitude to the SEIU is also well known.  $A+B=C$



Brandon (He/Him) armed himself with legacy media articles:

Katy, was it “delayed” when the Governor opposed it in:

2024? <https://politico.com/news/2024/01/10/newsom-wsj-wealth-tax-editorial-shameful-00134850>

What about 2023? <https://atr.org/gavin-newsom-declares-new-wealth-tax-dead-on-arrival-in-california/?amp>

Or 2022? <https://politico.com/news/2022/07/29/newsom-wealth-tax-climate-goals-00047722>

How about even 2020? <https://sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article245672670.htm>

Oh Brandon (He/Him), Gavin isn’t going to come right out and support a tax on high earners. The Getty’s would disown him. He buries them in the budget, and gets lawmakers to carry bills. Let me count the ways.

Since 2019, Governor Newsom has increased personal income taxes for high earners.

Gov. Newsom raised income taxes on large corporations.

Governor Newsom signed the 2023 budget bill that contained business tax provisions that the Legislative Analyst’s Office estimated would raise \$15.9 billion in state revenue from 2024 to 2029.

Newsom imposed a “Mental Health Tax” on annual income over \$1 million of, which specifically hurts small business owners the most.

Newsom imposed a payroll tax by removing the wage cap for State Disability Insurance (SDI) tax, affecting high earners (Senate Bill 951).

Governor Newsom even signed a bill that doubled the taxes on sales of guns and ammunition in California, adding an additional 11 percent California tax on top of the federal taxes, making California the only state to impose its own tax on guns and ammunition. Newsom described the legislation as a “first-in-the-nation effort to generate \$160 million annually on the sale of bullets to improve school safety and fund a gun violence intervention program.” Yah, how’s that going?

California's high-wage earners provide the majority of California's General Fund with their personal income taxes. In 2024, the state personal income tax rate increased to 14.4% for earners making more than \$1 million, which is by far the highest in the country.

In 2024, rather than openly raising income taxes to shore up yet another budget deficit, Dan Walters **explained** that the fine print of Newsom's budget contained several indirect tax increases on businesses – mostly by reducing offsets of taxable income – that over the next few years would raise as much as \$18 billion. That's about as devious as it gets.

I am barely scratching the surface.

Under Gov. Gavin Newsom, California is and has been inundated in devious plans to raise taxes – on the billionaires, the millionaires, the middle class, the working class, corporations, and small businesses.

Brandon Richards' (He/Him) position is indefensible. You'll notice that Brandon (He/Him) does not refute that this is asset seizure of billionaires personal assets. This is communism-light.



### **Katy Grimes**

Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, the co-author of *California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?* and a contributor to "Taxifornia 2016."

A California native and Navy mom, Katy lives in Sacramento, CA.

## **Comments on California's Lawsuit Against the Trump Administration on an Essential Interstate Pipeline**

*Despite having the 5th largest reserves in the U.S., California imports over 67% of its oil needs from foreign countries*

By Michael Mische, January 23, 2026

As reported today, 1/23/26, in Reuters, at a time when refineries are closing, California's dependency on foreign oil, gasoline, and jet fuel from Iraq, India and China are increasing, California's State Attorney General Bonta's and Governor Newsom's lawsuit against the Trump Administration's permitting the use of an essential interstate crude oil pipeline is a desperate response to pressure from environmental and special interest groups, as well as a last gasp attempt to justify their failed policies which have resulted in Californians paying 47% more at the pump than the rest of the nation and 61% higher than Colorado. California also has the second highest residential electric utility rates in the nation. Collectively, Californians pay over \$1.44 a gallon in state and local taxes and fees, the highest in the U.S.

Where once California produced over 70% of its crude oil needs, today the Golden State is the most reliant in the nation on foreign oil. Despite having the 5<sup>th</sup> largest reserves in the U.S., California imports over 67% of its oil needs from countries such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, and Brazil. Brazil has destroyed over 24 million acres of rainforest. On average, GHG emissions from crude oil production from foreign sources such as India and Iraq are **ten** times (10x) greater than that of a California producer.

President Trump and his Administration recognize the gravity of the "California Contagion" and its adverse impact not only on the hardworking people of the Golden State but also Nevada, Arizona, and national security. That's why the President Trump designated the pipelines interstate and brought them under the purview of federal government...they are essential to the United States.

With California slated to lose another refinery within 60-days, and the collapse of the essential north-south intrastate pipeline, increasing in-state onshore and offshore oil production will help to stabilize California's energy markets and supplies and reduce its dependency on foreign crude and fuel sources, such as China and India. China is Iran's largest consumer of its crude oil production. India, a provider of gasoline and jet fuel to California, sources much of its oil from Russia.

Confronting price hikes and potential gasoline shortages, the Governor was forced to acknowledge reality over political ideology and signed SB 237 into law, allowing for more onshore oil production. In doing so, he should have been aware that SB 237 alone was inadequate to support and stabilize California's over-regulated and diminishing in-state crude oil and gasoline production. Where SB 237 might add upwards of 10,000 barrels a day to in-state crude production over a period of several years, offshore production from Sable could easily be 5 times that amount or 50,000 barrels a day, and nearly immediate.

Increasing in-state crude production and supporting critical pipelines is necessary to the keeping the surviving refineries operating in California and oil flowing in the pipelines. It is also essential to Nevada and Arizona, and U.S. national security. Failing to do so will only lead to more refinery closures in 2027 and 2028, crippling California's economy and those of Nevada and Arizona, and compromising U.S. force readiness and national security. Over 86% of all registered vehicles in the state use gasoline or diesel fuels, and most military and commercial aircraft depend on jet fuel refined from crude oil. Collectively, the oil and gas industry in California represents 8% of the state's GDP. Critically, without the first 8%, you don't get the other remaining 92%. Crude oil, in some form, is found in over 6,000 products, including EVs.

As a matter of law, it's problematic as to whether California will prevail in its efforts. Early consensus is that it will not and this latest folly will only stand as testament to more wasted taxpayer dollars in pursuit of political dogma. Those dollars could have been directed to lowering gasoline prices at the pump and keeping refineries open and pipelines operating.

If successful in their lawsuit, Governor Newsom and State Attorney General Rob Bonta will have knowingly contributed to more oil and refinery job losses, increasing consumer gasoline prices and adding to global GHG emissions due to all-time historical high dependencies on foreign oil and gasoline imports, as well as record high maritime vessel and port congestion. More alarmingly, they will have worked to compromise the security of the nation and the economies of neighboring states Nevada and Arizona while supporting the global aspirations of Russia and China.

# DOJ Files SCOTUS Brief Backing GOP Bid to Block Newsom's Prop 50 'Power Grab'

*'Constitutional violations do not become lawful simply because they are put to a popular vote,' the DOJ argues*

By Megan Barth, January 22, 2026

In a significant escalation of the legal battle over California's controversial **Proposition 50**, the U.S. Department of Justice today filed a **brief** (see below) with the Supreme Court supporting Republican plaintiffs' emergency request to enjoin the use of the new congressional map, arguing it constitutes an unconstitutional **racial gerrymander**.

The filing alleges the map—enacted after voters approved Prop 50 in November 2025—of prioritizing race in drawing District 13, violating the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause and Section 2 of the **Voting Rights Act**. The brief, submitted by Solicitor General D. John Sauer, contends that “race was the predominant factor motivating the legislature's decision to place a significant number of voters within or without a particular district.”

It cites direct evidence from mapmaker Paul Mitchell, who publicly stated the map would “bolster” Latino districts to hit specific racial targets, such as 52-54% Hispanic Citizen Voting Age Population (HCVAP) in the Central Valley. Mitchell, acting as a state agent, invoked legislative privilege and refused to testify, further fueling suspicions of racial intent.

“Constitutional violations do not become lawful simply because they are put to a popular vote,” the DOJ argues, rejecting the district court's focus on voter intent over the mapmakers' and legislators' actions. The department requests the Supreme Court grant an injunction pending appeal, reinstating the 2021 map drawn by the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission for the 2026 midterms.

The case, *Tangipa et al. v. Newsom*, stems from a lawsuit filed by the California Republican Party, Assemblyman David Tangipa, and other plaintiffs immediately after Prop 50's passage. A three-judge panel in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of California denied a preliminary injunction on January 14, 2026,

in a 2-1 decision. Plaintiffs, represented by Harmeet Dhillon's firm, **appealed** to the Supreme Court, warning of irreparable harm if the "racially gerrymandered" map is used.

Attorney Mark Meuser, also involved in the case, stated, "The Constitution is clear: states may not sort voters into districts based on race. Yet the record in this case contains unusually direct evidence that race was used in drawing multiple districts." Prop 50, dubbed the "Election Rigging Response Act" by critics, amended the state constitution to replace the commission's map with one designed to flip five Republican-held congressional seats to Democrats, ostensibly in retaliation for Texas's gerrymander.

Governor Gavin Newsom championed the measure as a defense against Trump-era policies, but opponents, including Reform California Chairman and Assemblyman **Carl DeMaio**, have decried it as a brazen power grab.

DeMaio, a vocal Prop 50 opponent, had earlier lamented the district court loss on X: "Two Democrat-appointed federal judges just rejected the CA GOP lawsuit where we sought to block the RIGGED Prop 50 maps! But we're not backing down." He pledged to push forward with voter ID initiatives and grassroots campaigns.

Public statements on the filing poured in via X on Thursday.

Assistant Attorney General Harmeet Dhillon (@AAGDhillon) emphasized the stakes: "The stakes are very high for people who have casually relied on race for their elections to be won."

The California Republican Party (@CAGOP) celebrated the DOJ's support: "The US Department of Justice filed a brief in support of our SCOTUS filing. Thank you @AGPamBondi @CivilRights. SCOTUS ordered Governor Newsom and the DCCC to respond to our emergency petition."

U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi, in earlier statements when DOJ joined the suit, called Prop 50 "a brazen power grab that tramples on civil rights and mocks the democratic process."

The Supreme Court has ordered California officials to respond by January 29, signaling potential swift action.

The governor has previously dismissed similar challenges as doomed to fail.

If SCOTUS grants the injunction, it could reshape California's 2026 House races, potentially preserving GOP seats and dealing a **another blow** to Newsom's national profile

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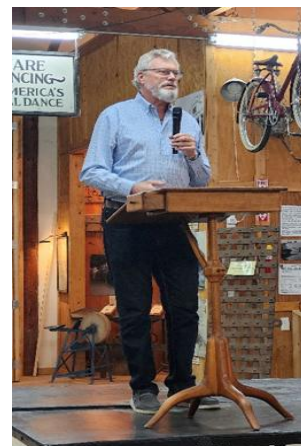
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