



Weekly Update July 27 – Aug 3, 2026

Are You a Disenfranchised Voter?

After the revelation two weeks ago that 3,313 votes cast in the June 2 election were disqualified and not counted, we expected some level of public outcry.

Crickets.

No newspaper coverage, no protests, no tv personalities reporting live.

Nothing!

Now, item 18 of the July 28 San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors agenda reads:
Request to declare the County Clerk-Recorder's certified results for the June 2, 2026, Statewide Direct Primary Election.



Where is the outrage?

As irritating as it is that the BoS is about to certify an election where 3,313 votes were tossed, it is even more confounding that anybody who points this fact out or asks why it happened and what is being done to prevent it in the future will be treated as some sort of conspiracy geek.

Anybody who has concerns or doubts about our voting system is subject to an eyeroll followed by a patronizing explanation that everything is fine, the system works perfectly, human error is not a factor and even though lots of people cheat at just about everything else in society, nobody ever abuses the voting system. Ever!!!

Yet here we have proof that the system is not perfect. Far from it.



Ready for certification

To add insult, the County Clerk filed her report that is under consideration for certification with the Clerk of the Board, but it is not included in the supporting documents with the BoS agenda. This is unlike any other business item. Perhaps its too lengthy, or perhaps it contains the data illustrating the 3,313 votes that were disallowed...

The item 18 agenda supporting documents read: “A copy of the Summary Report of Final Official Election Results and Statement of the Vote is on file with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors.”

“Clerk’s Filed documents are not available for public viewing on the website. These documents are available for public review in the County Administrative Office and/or on departmental websites.”

That’s inconvenient for anybody interested in the details of the report.

Voters are led to believe that they can simply fill out their ballot in the comfort of their own home, drop it in the mailbox and rely on the Post Office to deliver their vote for counting. Sounds pleasant and easy, but no one is disclosing the unreliability of this lazy process. No one is warning that counting on the postal service could cost you your vote. No one is calling for an explanation or an assurance that it will not continue to happen every election.



Diligence?

According to the very same County Clerk who is silent on the issue, the following statistics illustrate the votes that were counted in the June 2, 2026 San Luis Obispo County Primary Election:

JUNE 2, 2026, STATEWIDE DIRECT PRIMARY COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO FINAL OFFICIAL ELECTION RESULTS

Elector Group	Counting Group	Voters Cast	Registered Voters	Turnout
Total	Polling	4,414	182,126	2.42%
	Vote by Mail	96,337		52.90%
	Total	100,751		55.32%

By those numbers, 100,751 voters were fortunate enough to have their ballots counted. However, there is no mention of the 3,313 ballots that were received but rejected for arriving too late, or with incorrect or missing signatures.

We can only assume three thousand three hundred and thirteen ballots tossed into the trash weren't enough to matter to most folks. So how many ballots need to be tossed before someone cares? 6,000? 12,000?



San Luis Obispo County is smallish to medium sized compared to the other 57 counties in California. We have to assume that ours was not the only county with this crummy outcome. So, how many Californian's were disenfranchised by this glaring glitch in the system?

It's one thing if a voter procrastinates and waits to the last minute to post their ballot. Deadlines need to be respected, and late posted ballots should not be counted. However, a fair number of those ballots were likely posted before election day but were handled slowly by the postal service and subsequently were postmarked too late.

We believe that 3,313 voters filled out their ballot because they wanted to vote. They assumed they were doing everything right and to this day, probably believe their vote was counted. Will anybody inform them as to how the system let them down and cost them their right to vote?

In our book, having to toss just one ballot is wrong. Do you know that yours wasn't one of those disqualified?

Bonta Battles Voter ID

In another election issue that you probably won't see covered in mainstream media, California Attorney General Bonta has exercised his right to define the ballot language for the expected 14 ballot measures for the November 2 General Election.

Among the measures is the Voter ID proposition. Bonta (and presumably his fellow liberal activists, are so worried about the popularity of the measure that he

craftily worded the ballot language to confuse voters into misunderstanding what the measure does.

The attached stories on page 28 from the California Globe by Katy Grimes and by Megan Barth explains Bonta's actions in detail.

Bonta, and so many other liberal activists claim that Voter ID is unfair because there are supposedly voters who do not possess any sort of ID – and we don't want to disenfranchise any single voter. Well, how about the 3,313 San Luis Obispo County voters who were disenfranchised by the system? Multiply those by 58 counties and what do you get? Are those folks worth Bonta's consideration?



California Attorney General Rob Bonta

The California Voter ID initiative is very popular. Polling has it at a favorable rating of 70%. Signature gathering was easy because it is so popular. Simply put, it verifies that voters are eligible and only voting once. Only liberal activists have a problem with that.



Who doesn't have some form of ID?

Some legitimate voters are concerned that their vote may be cancelled out by an immigrant not legally registered to vote. This recent letter bolsters that concern.

Secretary

U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528



**Homeland
Security**

July 16, 2026

Shirley N. Weber, Ph.D.
California Secretary of State
1500 11th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Weber:

The Department of Homeland Security is responsible for immigration enforcement and protecting election infrastructure. Both of these responsibilities are critical in my mission to protect the Homeland. I am writing to make you aware of the concerning results of a recent analysis of California's publicly available voter registration database information. Preliminary review of the records revealed **that there may be as many as 190,832 non-citizens** registered to vote in California. As an example, we found 81,336 California registrants for whom the name, date of birth, address and Social Security number match a non-citizen in our files. The most efficient way to ensure the accuracy of our findings is to work collaboratively on identity verification.

I hope that you share in the commitment to ensure that only U.S. citizens participate in our federal elections. Allowing just one non-citizen to vote cancels the vote of one U.S. citizen. States are responsible for voter registration, and the federal government is responsible for maintaining immigration records to enable verification of citizenship. Working together, we can more effectively protect U.S. elections.

My team is ready to support you and has resources available to enable you to positively identify the individual non-citizens registered in your state. We will assist you with the process and provide immigration records, pursuant to 8 U.S.C. § 1373, that will allow you to take steps to protect California voters and ensure that ineligible voters will not impact upcoming federal elections.

Please contact elections@hq.dhs.gov at DHS by July 30, 2026. We look forward to this collaboration as we work together to ensure free, fair and accurate elections.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Markwayne Mullin".

Markwayne Mullin
Secretary of Homeland Security

We wish Assemblyman DeMaio success in his lawsuit against Bonta and encourage anyone interested to support his efforts. Anytime transparency and accountability are stifled, it's time to engage.

Dude, Gimme a Tax Break

Everybody knows that taxation can be a real hardship for struggling businesses. Yet, ask any small business owner and they will tell you that their taxes (including fees for licenses and permits along with compliance costs) are constantly on the rise - unless you are in the cannabis business in San Luis Obispo County.



Item 6 on the July 28 BoS agenda reads “Introduction of an ordinance to establish the Commercial Cannabis Business Tax rate at six percent (6%) of gross receipts for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-27, effective October 1, 2026, pursuant to County Code Section 3.05.050(b)(3); and setting a public hearing on August 4, 2026, to consider adoption of the ordinance.

The attached resolution reads in part:

WHEREAS, on June 5, 2018, San Luis Obispo County voters approved Measure B-18, which established a Cannabis Business Tax (“CBT”) in the unincorporated areas of the County and added Chapter 3.05 to the San Luis Obispo County Code (the “CBT Ordinance”); and

WHEREAS, the CBT Ordinance established an initial CBT rate of 4% of gross receipts, and automatic 2% increases each fiscal year starting July 1, 2020, up to a possible maximum of 10%; and

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2026, the tax rate increased from 6% to 8%;

WHEREAS, pursuant to County Code section 3.05.050(b)(3), the County Board of Supervisors may, at any time by ordinance, exempt or except different categories of cannabis businesses from the CBT or establish different CBT rates for different categories of businesses, subject to the maximum rate imposed by the CBT. The Board finds that inherent in this authority is the ability to reduce the rate of the CBT by ordinance; and The Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California does hereby ordain as follows:

In accordance with County Code section 3.05.050(b)(3) of the CBT Ordinance, the CBT rate for the balance of the fiscal year of 2026-2027 shall be 6% of the gross receipts. In accordance with County Code section 3.05.050(b)(4), testing laboratories shall continue to be exempt from the CBT.

This item presents a real conundrum for many. Cannabis is one of very few things that the BoS has discretion over for tax purposes. If they could, hopefully most board members would support lowering taxes on lots of industries. So, at least on this item, they can give local law-abiding businesses a break.

On the other hand, there are serious questions about whether the taxes paid by the cannabis industry truly cover the cost of enforcing the rules that regulate legal pot sales.

Local legal dealers say that it is very difficult to compete with illegal sales. They point out that their product is tested for health considerations and potency to ensure safe usage, but the illegal trade doesn't face any of those (costly and restrictive) safeguards. Legal dealers also have storefront rents and maintenance of their "dispensaries" to cover in their cost of doing business.

We would encourage every policy maker who supports the lower tax level for cannabis to think about all the other forms of business that would benefit from a tax break as well.

If you have a solution, or just an opinion, the 28th is your opportunity to share.

The recent retirement of San Luis Obispo County Health Director Penny Borenstein, along with some internal reorganization efforts within the County Department of Health is anticipated to foster change.

One of the biggest changes will be the new Director of Public Health, Suzanne Jed. Item 19 on the Bos agenda reads: Request to approve the employment agreement with Suzanne Jed, RN, MSN, to serve as the County of San Luis Obispo's Director of Public Health, effective August 2, 2026.



Very little information has been released about the new Director. Online bios of a nurse practitioner with the same name in Los Angeles provide an impressive professional background.

We look forward to learning more about the new Director and wish her the best in her new role.

Dial in and Dialogue

Don't forget that you can now participate in the Board of Supervisors meetings via zoom. It's audio only, so no need to dress up. You can speak during public comment times and are limited to three minutes.



It's a great way to have your opinion heard while avoiding the parking hassles of downtown SLO.

Zoom Link:

https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86117844410?pwd=NPlYUIE3AGQqP8LRJXYURPqCijsvnQ.q9SDQ7CaxjwB_aAo9

Telephone: +1 786 635 1003

Meeting ID: 861 1784 4410

Passcode: 486471

When the Chair opens public comment, remote participants may request to speak by using the "Raise Hand" feature in the Zoom app or web browser, or by pressing *9 if joining by telephone. When it is your turn to speak, staff will call on you and unmute your microphone. Telephone participants may need to press *6 to begin your comments. Remote speakers will receive the same time allotment as in-person speakers. After the comment period ends, staff will mute the speaker.

Important for Remote Speakers: Members of the public who wish to provide remote public comment must listen to the meeting through Zoom. The County's website livestream and cable broadcast may have a delay, and participants listening outside of Zoom may miss when public comment is opened or when they are called to speak.

Your Opinion Needed

The July 30 evening briefing on the Diablo Canyon Power Plant is very important. As we covered last week, this will be both informative for attendees as well as hopefully convincing for our state legislators that our community wants and needs the proposed 20-year extension to operate.

Mothers for Peace will dust off their tired old predictions of gloom and doom while pretending to be more knowledgeable than the nuclear experts and scientists at the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. Jackson Brown might have joined them, but he is too busy using gobs of electricity performing concerts.



Mothers for Peace has answers and facts and...

The Sierra Club will invent some sort of data that says we have all the solar power we need and nuclear is now obsolete.



The Sierra Club's vision (and China's) of environmental solar power

It's up to the commonsense people in our community to bring the dialogue back to reality and enlighten Assemblywoman Addis and Senator Laird.

Fall Forum Save the Date Save Prop 13

One of the biggest single events in California's political history was the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. It reigned in out-of-control politicians and saved countless

homeowners from being forced to sell their homes in order to pay the escalating taxes.

Now, we are faced with having to “save Prop 13” with a ballot measure that will shore up many of the taxpayer protections that have been watered down from bad court decisions and deceiving legislation.

Jon Coupal is President of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association and is leading the ballot measure campaign. He will be the speaker at our annual Fall Forum. The flyer below is our first draft, but we want you to have the information early to ensure you won’t miss this very special event.



Wednesday, October 21st
5:30—7:30 PM
Thousand Hills Ranch
550 Thousand Hills Rd.
Pismo Beach, CA

FALL FORUM

THOUSAND HILLS
RD. IS OFF OF PRICE
CANYON. PLEASE
USE CAUTION, AS
THE ROAD IS
SOMEWHAT
HIDDEN AROUND A
BEND IN THE ROAD
AND IT COMES UP
ON YOU SUDDENLY.
ONCE ON
THOUSAND HILLS
ROAD, FOLLOW
THE ROAD FOR
APPROXIMATELY
ONE MILE TO THE
RED ROOFED BARN
ON RIGHT!

Featuring:

HEAR FROM OUR
INDUSTRY EXPERTS,



Jon Coupal
President of HJTA

BEER, LOCAL FINE WINES, AND
HOT & COLD APPETIZERS WILL
BE SERVED

RSVP appreciated by October 14th — there is no charge for this informative event!
Email: colabslo@gmail.com or call (805) 548-0340

Last Week

Big Changes for Subsidized (Affordable?) Housing

Legislation signed into law last week by Governor Newsom is designed to cut the cost of “affordable housing” by streamlining the process and cutting certain locally imposed impact fees. AB 179 is a budget trailer bill, meaning that it is an appropriation bill authorizing \$900 million for the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention Program (HHAP) and \$700 million for Affordable Housing Finance Programs. In the bill language, it dramatically changes the local planning process for low-income housing projects.

We find it ironic and a little troubling that state legislation is required to address what is largely a local government issue and we wonder what the impact will be on affordable housing projects in San Luis Obispo County.



According to the Governor’s office; “The legislation modernizes how California finances and delivers affordable housing and builds on the Governor’s efforts that have reversed decades of inaction on housing and homelessness — creating more homes and the largest reduction in unsheltered homelessness in more than 15 years.”

They offer the following talking points:

- **Modernizing California’s housing finance system** through landmark One-Stop Shop reforms that streamline project delivery, reduce duplicative reviews, and accelerate affordable housing production.

- **Reducing the cost of building affordable housing** by an estimated \$60,000 to \$70,000 per unit through One-Stop Shop financing reforms and impact fee changes, enabling state housing dollars to finance significantly more homes and maximize the impact of future housing investments.
- **Creating a new Disaster Rebuilding Fund (DRF)** — Directs \$100 million in funding to reduce financing costs for homeowners rebuilding after disasters, helping affected households repair or reconstruct homes more quickly and affordably.
- **Extending HHAP**— Includes \$900 million in FY 2026-27 for another round of state homelessness block grant funding while strengthening accountability through new local matching requirements and Prohousing requirements for direct HHAP recipients that are cities with populations over 300,000 and the counties in which those cities are located, encouraging greater local investment and policies that support housing production.
- **Providing multifamily affordable housing resources** — Includes \$500 million for enhanced state low-income housing tax credits (LIHTC) and \$200 million for the Multifamily Housing Program to support the construction and preservation of affordable multifamily housing for low-income Californians.

It is too early to tell what specific impact this will have. Among the key questions; we wonder whether the state funding will directly replace the local revenues from impact fees that would otherwise be collected locally. We wonder whether this legislation will affect local building standards and zoning codes.

Another worry is that anytime a “gift” arrives from Sacramento, it comes with conditions, stipulations and big price tags. Will local governments be required to build the high-density high-rise tenement housing so highly preferred by so many “affordable housing” proponents? What local control will be lost in the attempt to retain local caricature and design standards? Will we be locked into forced Transit Oriented Development?



Theoretically, housing gets cheaper as it gets taller

The biggest frustration for people with basic mathematical skills is the fraudulent label of “affordable housing”. This is simply another approach to subsidized housing. It doesn’t cost any less, it just shifts some of the cost to other people – usually in some form that makes their housing costs more expensive.

Are we expected to assume that the financing for this new program comes from the state so it’s no big deal? Hopefully most people realize that those state dollars come from the earnings of Californians, many of whom struggle to afford their own housing costs as they fork over ever-increasing taxes to our generous wealth redistributing state government.



Some communities in SLO County are already unhappy with high rise development

The idea of streamlining the process and cutting local fees has been around for a long time. We couldn't agree more that doing so would lower the cost of housing. However, supplanting those local costs with state taxpayer dollars isn't honest cost cutting. It is in fact a form of subsidy. Here is the definition of the word:



Subsidy

: a grant or gift of money: such as

a

: a sum of money formerly granted by the British Parliament to the crown and raised by special taxation

b

: money granted by one state to another

c

: a grant by a government to a private person or company to assist an enterprise deemed advantageous to the public

So, will this subsidy make a difference, or simply rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic? If cutting red tape and delays is recognized as effective, why not apply the principle to all forms of housing – not just “affordable housing”?



Density is also a factor in “affordable” housing

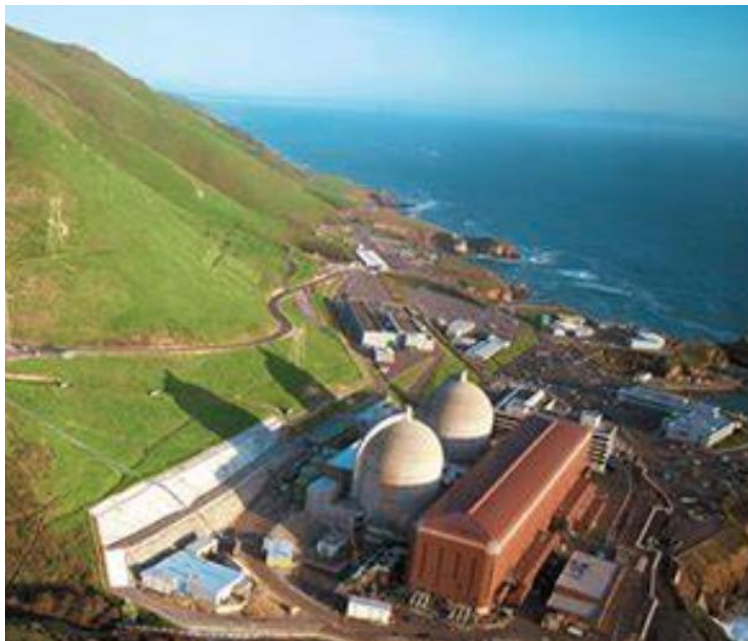
The need to cut the cost of housing is obvious to everybody who either lives in housing or wishes to do so. However, shifting cost from one segment of society to another without actually reducing the overall expense is nothing more than fraud. Eliminating local control simply compounds the already confounding problem. Local governments are mostly at fault for getting too greedy with their fees and far too bossy pants with their regulations. That, however, is really the fault of the voters who elect the big government types in the first place.

As San Luis Obispo County and its cities struggle with whether they even want more housing, and if so, what kind of housing, state government is increasingly eliminating options.

We will watch the implementation of this legislation and keep readers posted as to how it will impact our community.

Important Meeting for Those Who Use Electricity

We encourage everybody who uses electricity to attend an informational hearing on the 20-year extension of operations at the Diablo Canyon Power Plant which will be held in the evening of Thursday, July 30 from 6 to 9 PM in the Board of Supervisors chambers in downtown San Luis Obispo.



The Diablo Canyon Power Plant provides about 9% of California’s power needs

The County of San Luis Obispo is inviting the community to learn more about the proposed extension of Diablo Canyon Power Plant's operations through 2045.

The informational session, titled "Diablo Canyon 2045: Local and Statewide Implications," will take place on Thursday, July 30, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Katcho Achadjian Government Center in San Luis Obispo.

The event will feature experts discussing the economic impact of keeping the state's last operating nuclear power plant open.

Dr. John Parsons of MIT will examine the economics of extending Diablo Canyon's operations, while Dr. David Roland-Holst of Berkeley Economic Advising and Research will focus on the plant's role in San Luis Obispo County's economy.

PG&E representatives will also provide updates on plant operations, safety systems, seismic monitoring, spent fuel storage, and regulatory oversight.

The event will end with a moderated community panel featuring voices from education, business, labor, and other local sectors, giving attendees an opportunity to hear a range of perspectives on the future of Diablo Canyon.

This meeting is especially important because the last hurdle for a 20-year operating permit is an enabling bill from the state legislature. Assemblymember Dawn Addis and State Senator John Laird, both of whom have the plant in their districts, don't seem to be fully convinced that Diablo should remain open. It is important to let them know that their constituents want clean reliable power, and they want the economic stability that we rely on so heavily on the Central Coast.



A perfect way to start Thursday evening, July 30

Please keep in mind that the San Luis Obispo Farmers Market will be taking place at the same time. Plan ahead by carpooling if possible and leave a little extra time for parking. Or even better, make an evening of it by strolling through the market before hearing the latest on Diablo.



Ag at its Finest

The annual Cattlemen and Farmers Day at the Mid State Fair in Paso Robles was sold out weeks in advance. It is a 1,400-person event where ag leaders, ag producers and appreciative ag consumers get together to celebrate their vocation and honor its most contributing members.

About 20 local wineries poured delicious samples in a fulsome tasting and over a dozen barbeque pits worked away in near sweltering heat to provide an excellent meal.

Three outstanding and very deserving individuals were awarded special recognition:



2026 SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

AGRICULTURALIST
OF THE YEAR
JOHN
LACEY



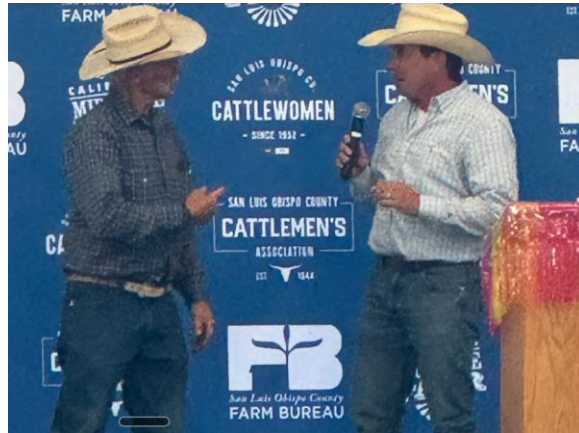
CATTLEWOMAN
OF THE YEAR
NICOLE
NICHOLSON



CATTLEMAN
OF THE YEAR
DALE
EVENSON



The Cattleman of the Year honor is presented annually by the San Luis Obispo County Cattlemen's Association, in partnership with the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau and the San Luis Obispo County Cattlewomen's Association. It recognizes individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the agricultural industry and community through ranching, farming, and advocacy for agriculture. The tradition began in 1963.



Ben Higgins congratulates BBQ master chef and Cattleman of the Year Dale Evenson



Ag people always have time for patriotism



Another sell out event!

Our congratulations to all three deserving leaders. Agriculture is a key component of our San Luis Obispo County economy and lifestyle, yet it never seems to get the recognition it deserves.

Go to the Fair – Get Involved

Speaking of the Mid State Fair, it's good to once again see the local Democrat and Republican parties doing outreach. Both have their usual booth providing voter registration services as well as opportunities to learn more about the process and how to get involved.

The Fair runs from July 15 -26 and promises a great time for all. Schedule and admission details can be found at: [Official Website of the California Mid-State Fair](#)

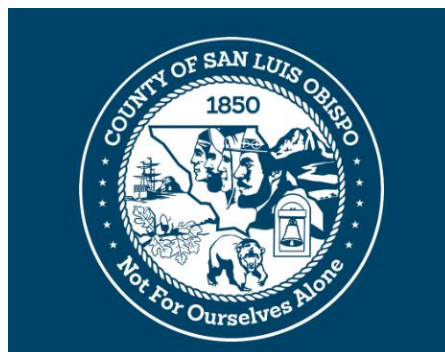




Ever wonder how to learn more about fun ways to get involved?

Williamson Act Changes in Procedure

The KPMG audits of each county department continue to foster improvements in the way our county government does business. One of the recommendations from the recent review of the Planning and Building Department is a streamlining of the procedures involving entering or managing land in the Williamson Act (which provides a tax break for agriculture dedicated land).



Item 39 on the July 7 BoS agenda read: Hearing for consideration of an amendment to the Rules of Procedure to Implement the Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Rules of Procedure) and Inland Land Use Ordinance (County Code Title 22) to update Williamson Act project review procedures in accordance with the Operational Performance Review conducted by KPMG.

Background presented included:

- Streamline Review Process for Williamson Act projects
- December 16, 2025: KPMG Operational Performance Review
 - Recommend transition from APRC hearing to project referral process
- February 2, 2026: Present Recommendation to ALAB
- February 24, 2026: Present Recommendation to APRC

A summary of the updated review process was also presented:

Current Process	Recommended Process
Step 1: Applicant Submittal	Step 1: Applicant Submittal
Step 2: APRC Agendized Item	Step 2: Referral to Stakeholders

Current Process	Recommended Process
Step 3: APRC Review	Step 3: Stakeholder Review
• Meets up to four times per year • Provides recommendations to the Board • Comments recorded in the meeting notes	• Have 30 days to submit comments or recommendations • Use the response form in the referral letter • May discuss with staff • Online meetings convened on a case-by-case basis
Step 4: Board Consideration	Step 4: Board Consideration

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors move to adopt a resolution approving amendments to the Rules of Procedure and to adopt an amendment to the Inland Land Use Ordinance at the Board of Supervisors meeting on August 4, 2026.



The Williamson Act helps to keep agriculture land viable for production

Supervisor Moreno stated that she was pleased to see the department finding more timely and efficient methods of delivering this service. She noted that the fees for filing for Williamson Act services had increased dramatically this year and asked that this new method include a tracking to determine if the efficiencies could result in fee reductions.

The measure will be considered for final vote, with Moreno's request included, at the August 4 Board of Supervisors meeting.

Thank You

We wish to express special thanks to Supervisor Dawn Ortiz Legg for adjourning the July 7 San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting in acknowledgement of Chris Darway who is facing serious health issues.

We understand that Chris is home and undergoing treatment with top-rated specialists. He must be going crazy not being able to attend every event at the fair. Our thoughts and prayers go out to Chris and his family. Thanks again for this meaningful and kind gesture.

Emergent Trends
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**BREAKING: AG Bonta To Face Lawsuit for
Manipulating Prop 39 Voter ID Ballot
Language Mid-Campaign**

**Attorney General Rob Bonta Accused of
Rigging Election After Manipulating Voter
ID Initiative Language Mid-Campaign**

COLAB in Depth
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**The Inheritance: California's Spending
Problem**

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BREAKING: AG Bonta To Face Lawsuit for Manipulating Prop 39 Voter ID Ballot Language Mid-Campaign

Assemblyman Carl DeMaio suing AG Bonta for 'rigging the ballot language for Proposition 39'

By Katy Grimes, July 24, 2026

Chairman of **Reform California**, Assemblyman Carl DeMaio, announced Friday he is filing a lawsuit immediately against State Attorney General Rob Bonta “to force him to restore a FAIR ballot title to our Prop 39 Voter ID Initiative!”

California Attorney General Rob Bonta was credibly accused this week of rigging the ballot language for Proposition 39, the **Voter Identification, Citizenship Verification, and Registered Voter List Administration Initiative**, just months before the November 2026 election, the **Globe reported** Tuesday.

“The initiative, which gathered over a million signatures from Democrats, Republicans, and Independents after more than a year of petition circulation under previously approved wording, now faces what opponents call a last-minute rewrite designed to tilt public perception against it.”

DeMaio, a co-proponent and leader of the Yes on Prop 39 effort, explains:

Without this lawsuit, voters will see a **BIASED** and **FALSE** ballot title on Prop 39 that manipulates them into voting **NO** on Voter ID!

How bad will it be? Well, I want you to read the two different ballot titles for Prop 39 – and judge for yourself:

ORIGINAL FAIR PROP 39 TITLE (September 19, 2025):

ESTABLISHES ADDITIONAL VOTER IDENTIFICATION AND CITIZENSHIP VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.

Initiative Constitutional Amendment. This measure would amend the California Constitution to further require that voters present government-issued identification at the polls or the last four digits of a government-issued identification number when voting by mail; the State provide voter identification cards on request; and

elections officials annually report percentage of each county's voters whose citizenship they have verified.

REVISED DISHONEST PROP 39 TITLE (July 21, 2026):

PROHIBITS CITIZENS FROM VOTING UNLESS THEY PRESENT GOVERNMENT-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION.

Initiative Constitutional Amendment. Invalidates mail ballots that do not have last four digits of designated government-issued identification number written on envelope. Prohibits in-person voting without presenting government-issued identification.

Attorney General Rob Bonta is corruptly trying to rig the election against Prop 39 by falsely claiming it prohibits citizens from voting!

Quite the contrary, Prop 39 ensures that every citizen's vote COUNTS by ensuring that no vote is cancelled out by non-citizens voting or fraudulent votes that are harvested without a voter's knowledge.

After remaining silent for a few days, AG Bonta released this statement Friday on X in response to the accusations of rigging the ballot language for Proposition 39:

Fact: It is common for ballot titles and summaries to change from the circulating version to the version voters see on the ballot. California law expressly allows these changes to provide further clarity for voters. This year, all nine voter-proposed initiatives had changes, including Prop. 39. California DOJ takes seriously its responsibility to provide accurate and impartial information to inform voters.

Bonta re-wrote all nine voter-proposed ballot initiatives.

“This mid-election manipulation by the democratic Attorney General goes beyond neutral summarization as required by statute, but is reflective of a larger pattern of corruption, Tangipa charged, and called for volunteers and public pressure to ‘save California’ and preserve election integrity,” California Globe’s Executive Editor Megan Barth **noted** Tuesday. “To those new to California politics, Bonta and his Democratic colleagues have long opposed stricter voter identification measures and transparency initiatives.”

Gubernatorial Candidate Steve Hilton weighed in on Bonta’s flagrant ballot Title change on Prop 39:

BREAKING: The corrupt machine that runs California (for now) has **CHANGED** the wording on the Voter ID ballot initiative to try and stop people voting for it. Why are these people so terrified of honest elections? We **WILL** pass Voter ID and we will kick them out in November.

Career Attorney and Attorney General Candidate Michael Gates posted this apropos thought:

And this:

Bonta just changed Prop 39's ballot title to say it "PROHIBITS CITIZENS FROM VOTING", deliberately deceiving voters to kill Voter ID before it even reaches the ballot box. This is election corruption from the Attorney General himself.

California needs a new Attorney General. Vote Gates + YES on Prop 39. #Gates4AG

Tuesday, when Bonta's ballot title changes were exposed, Gates posted this:

Along with DeMaio, Assemblyman David Tangipa (R-Fresno) blew the lid off Bonta's dishonest title:

Attorney General Rob Bonta Just RIGGED and MANIPULATED the Voter ID Initiative on the November Ballot

Rob Bonta changed the official language of the Voter ID initiative (Prop 39) in the middle of the election season. This language had been approved for over a year, and millions of Democrats, Republicans, and Independents signed petitions to support it.

Original Language (Approved for over a year):

"ESTABLISHES ADDITIONAL VOTER IDENTIFICATION AND CITIZENSHIP VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT." It would require government-issued ID at the polls or the last four digits when voting by mail, provide free voter ID cards, and require annual citizenship verification reports by county.

New Language (Changed by Bonta): "PROHIBITS CITIZENS FROM VOTING UNLESS THEY PRESENT GOVERNMENT-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT." It now invalidates mail ballots without the last four digits on the envelope and prohibits in-person voting without ID. This is blatant manipulation and rigging right in the middle of the election season.

We need your help to fight back and save California. Share this, sign up to volunteer, and comment FIGHT below if you're in this battle with us.

California Election law under Elections Code § 9051 states "In providing the ballot title and summary, the Attorney General is required to give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure in such language that the ballot title and

summary is neither an argument, nor likely to create prejudice, for or against the proposed measure. The Attorney General is required to invite and consider public comment in preparing each ballot title and summary.”
The Globe will continue to monitor DeMaio’s lawsuit.



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.

Attorney General Rob Bonta Accused of Rigging Election After Manipulating Voter ID Initiative Language Mid-Campaign

This mid-election manipulation by the democratic Attorney General goes beyond neutral summarization as required by statute

By Megan Barth, July 21, 2026

California Attorney General Rob Bonta faces accusations of rigging the ballot language for Proposition 39, the **Voter Identification, Citizenship Verification, and Registered Voter List Administration Initiative**, just months before the November 2026 election.

The initiative, which gathered over a million signatures from Democrats, Republicans, and Independents after more than a year of petition circulation under previously approved wording, now faces what opponents call a last-minute rewrite designed to tilt public perception against it.

To note, California law **explicitly states** that *“in providing the ballot title and summary, the Attorney General is required to give a true and impartial statement of the purpose of the measure in such language that the ballot title and summary is neither an argument, nor likely to create prejudice, for or against the proposed measure. The Attorney General is required to invite and consider public comment in preparing each ballot title and summary.”*

You be the judge.

Original Approved Language (over a year in circulation):

“ESTABLISHES ADDITIONAL VOTER IDENTIFICATION AND CITIZENSHIP VERIFICATION REQUIREMENTS. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.”

This version outlined requirements for government-issued ID at the polls (or the last four digits for mail ballots), free voter ID cards, and annual citizenship verification reports by counties.

New Language Issued by Bonta’s Office:

“PROHIBITS CITIZENS FROM VOTING UNLESS THEY PRESENT GOVERNMENT-ISSUED IDENTIFICATION. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.”

Assemblyman David Tangipa (R) broke the story Tuesday evening, calling it “blatant manipulation and rigging right in the middle of the election season.” He noted the measure’s provisions for free IDs and verification while warning that the new framing could mislead voters.

Bonta’s revised phrasing emphasizes prohibition (negative language) over establishment of requirements (neutral language) and could subtly shift voter perceptions against the measure.

Psychological Framing and Voter Behavior

For those who are new to politics, this shift from neutral to negative framing is purposeful as it taps into well-documented cognitive biases in voting psychology. Research in behavioral science shows humans exhibit a strong “**negativity bias**,” where negative information or language carries heavier emotional weight and is more memorable than positive or neutral equivalents.

In the context of ballot measures, **studies on proposition wording** demonstrate that negatively framed titles and summaries **can reduce support by 5-15 percentage points** in some cases, as they evoke feelings of restriction, loss of rights, or barriers rather than security and fairness. Voters often skim titles and summaries under time pressure; a “prohibits” frame can trigger reactance— psychological resistance to

perceived threats to freedom—or *reinforce existing partisan cues* that voter ID suppresses turnout.

By contrast, the original “establishes additional requirements” language presents the measure as a practical enhancement, aligning with how most people view commonsense safeguards. This is why ballot language fights have become a staple in California’s initiative wars— *the right wording can quietly sway undecided or low-information voters* in patterns repeatedly observed in post-election analyses. This development comes as the initiative, spearheaded by figures like Assemblyman Carl DeMaio and Senator Tony Strickland, seeks to make California the 37th state with voter ID laws and restore public trust amid historically low confidence in elections.

Reform California Chairman and Assemblymember DeMaio issued a strong response, labeling the move an attempt to “RIG ELECTION!” and sharing side-by-side comparisons of the titles.

“CA Politicians change ballot title on Prop 39 Voter ID Initiative — trying to RIG ELECTION!” DeMaio posted, urging supporters to fight back.

U.S. Rep. Ken Calvert (R) echoed the outrage: “On the same day a Democrat governor admits hundreds of non-citizens illegally voted in elections, California Attorney General Rob Bonta tries to rig the election on our California Voter ID initiative by changing the ballot title he previously signed off on. Democrats will do anything to stop us from securing our elections.”

This mid-election manipulation by the democratic Attorney General goes beyond neutral summarization as required by statute, but is reflective of a larger pattern of corruption, Tangipa charged, and called for volunteers and public pressure to “save California” and preserve election integrity.

To those new to California politics, Bonta and his Democratic colleagues have long opposed stricter voter identification measures and transparency initiatives.

In 2024, his office sued the City of Huntington Beach over Measure A, a local charter amendment requiring valid state ID to vote starting in 2026. Bonta called the measure “blatantly and flatly illegal,” arguing it conflicted with state law and disproportionately burdened certain voter groups. The state prevailed in that legal battle. The **California Supreme Court** delivered a final blow to Huntington Beach’s voter ID law earlier this year by denying review of an appellate decision striking it down.

Another California Supreme Court blow was delivered to Californians and the **Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Foundation** in 2024, when the court ruled in favor of Governor Gavin Newsom, Democratic legislators, labor unions, the ACLU, and “immigrant rights nonprofits” to remove the Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act from the general election ballot. The decision blocked key reforms aimed at requiring voter approval for new taxes and fees, further

entrenching Sacramento's ability to raise revenue without direct accountability to the people—a pattern of judicial outcomes that has left many questioning the independence of the state's highest court.

Bonta's office has not yet issued a public statement specifically addressing the language change for this ballot measure.



Megan Barth

Megan Barth is the Executive Editor of The California Globe and former, founding editor of the Nevada Globe. Specializing in investigative reporting, her work has appeared in national and local news. The highlights of her career include interviewing President Donald Trump, Vice President J.D. Vance, and FBI Director Kash Patel. When she isn't editing, writing, or talking, you can find her hiking and relaxing in Northern Nevada.

The Inheritance: California's Spending Problem

Over the past four years California accumulated roughly \$125 billion in deficits despite nearly 50% growth in personal income tax collections

By Garvin Walsh, July 20, 2026

From the cheap seats...

Herb Morgan isn't a politician. He's a retired chief investment officer and financial services executive who oversaw billions in institutional assets. Now he's running for California State Controller, arguing that California needs a financial professional in the job. His opponent, incumbent Marla Cohen, has no finance background.

Drawing on state audits and official state and federal data, Morgan estimates \$312 billion to \$425 billion in misplaced fiscal exposure over the past five years. The estimates include: \$55 billion in improper unemployment payments documented by the State Auditor; an estimated \$95–115 billion in Medi-Cal improper payments

using federal methodology; and \$24–37 billion spent on homelessness programs with auditors finding little accountability for results. His conclusion is blunt: California has one of the nation’s worst records for improper payments and financial controls.

“Audits in California tend to happen after the money is already gone,” he has said. “That is not accountability.” Past waste is gone; better controls can save billions. The Controller oversees state finances but does not set the spending agenda. Morgan’s platform — real-time oversight, automated fraud detection, a public dashboard tracking every dollar — deserves attention. But he cannot solve the problem the next governor will inherit.

According to the state’s nonpartisan Legislative Analyst’s Office, California faces a \$35 billion annual structural deficit that will confront the next governor in the 2028–29 budget. That is the inheritance. And Sacramento’s proposed response is what voters should fear.

Over the past four years California accumulated roughly \$125 billion in deficits despite nearly 50 percent growth in personal income tax collections. The Legislative Analyst’s Office says that running operating deficits during a revenue boom signals a structural—not cyclical—problem: spending commitments have grown faster than recurring revenues can sustain.

The budget’s May Revision purports to achieve balance through 2028 largely by drawing down reserves, suspending rainy-day deposits, and relying on additional borrowing. The Assembly’s own budget advisor projects an operating deficit continuing through the next governor’s entire first term. The LAO warns that a market correction on the scale of the 2000 dot-com bust — which it considers the appropriate historical parallel given current conditions — could lead to a \$100 billion revenue shortfall. But the reserves that could cushion that shock have already been spent.

Most of the General Fund is effectively off limits for cuts. Debt service is automatic, pension obligations are protected, and Proposition 98 guarantees roughly 40 percent of revenues for K-14 education. The governor has direct leverage over only a relatively small share of spending.

Here is where Sacramento’s answer becomes something voters should regard with alarm. The May Revision proposed spending reductions of only \$1.8 billion — less than one percent of the General Fund. Instead, it relied on roughly \$10 billion in annual revenue measures against a \$35 billion structural gap.

The electoral playbook is primarily spending-driven, and Xavier Becerra, candidate for governor, makes no secret of that. His platform proposes moving California

toward universal single-payer healthcare, expanding childcare assistance, and strengthening Medi-Cal — every one of them a sizable spending increase. Becerra points to his experience leading the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, but the federal government operates under fiscal rules that bear little resemblance to California's constitutional budget constraints. More notably, his tenure at HHS coincided with a historic surge in improper Medicaid payments and the continued enrollment of ineligible recipients, raising questions about his record of fiscal oversight.

Becerra's opponent Steve Hilton correctly identifies the problem: a spending surge that pushed spending growth 50 percent above inflation over a decade, while delivering worsening outcomes on every metric that matters — housing, homelessness, public safety, education. His prescription—return spending to pre-pandemic levels, eliminate income taxes for households earning under \$100,000, and pressure a Democrat supermajority into accepting cuts—is more a governing philosophy than a workable budget. Accounting for the tax cut raises the required savings to roughly \$60 billion, a target unlikely to be achieved by a Republican governor facing a Democrat supermajority. Hilton's contribution is not a detailed fiscal blueprint but a diagnosis: California has a spending problem rather than a revenue problem.

A Republican governor facing a Democrat supermajority Legislature will not close a \$60 billion gap by nicely asking lawmakers to cut a third of state spending. What Hilton offers that Becerra does not is the correct framing of the problem, with a willingness to say so publicly. In a race where his opponent wants to expand programs he cannot afford while calling the expansion a fiscal plan, that counts for something.

In January 2028, the next governor will inherit a \$35 billion structural deficit, depleted reserves, counties already under fiscal pressure, and a Legislature accustomed to balancing budgets with temporary fixes. Most major spending categories will be legally or politically difficult to cut, while revenue will remain dependent on volatile capital gains. Political pressure to increase taxes and fees will be intense, even as higher-income taxpayers remain the state's most volatile revenue source.

Herb Morgan wants to stop tomorrow's waste. The next governor must confront yesterday's promises. Gavin Newsom will depart Sacramento in January, leaving his successor the gift of a budget balanced only in his imagination. Whatever Becerra and Hilton are promising on the campaign trail, that fiction will be the next governor's inheritance.



Garvin Walsh

Garvin Walsh is a resident of Cardiff-by-the-Sea, and a member of the San Diego County Republican Central Committee, who shares his opinions about politics and policy. He can be contacted at garvin.walsh@gmail.com

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