



**COLAB**  
San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

## **Weekly Update June 22 - 29**

### **Congratulations and Appreciation**

Now that we have some fairly conclusive results from the June 2 election, we all should take a few minutes to express our thanks to each of the candidates that ran for local office.

Campaigning, fundraising, generating good publicity, dealing with bad publicity, heartwarming support and discouraging opposition, financial sacrifice, balancing family, work and other obligations with trying to be everywhere all the time – these are just a few of the challenges that candidates commit to in their effort to take their point of view to office. And lest we forget, family members, friends, supporters and volunteers all work very hard to make our election system work.

We congratulate Supervisor Paulding on his reelection. We understand that he knocked on thousands of doors and worked very hard to reassure his constituents of his commitment to represent their interests on the Board of Supervisors. Congratulations are also in order to Jim Dantona. We suspect that the campaign was much more involved than he initially anticipated. Again, he won the trust of the voters in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and promises to bring a new approach to county government.

We also wish to offer our sincere thanks to Adam Verdin who ran a very good campaign, along with Michael Woody who brought an unexpected dimension to

that race. Without quality candidates, the system breaks down. Voters had great candidates from which to choose, and that should be reassuring to the electorate.



Aside from the Supervisor races, there was an important race for County Clerk/Recorder as well as State Assembly and Congressional races. Each of those candidates deserves our appreciation.

Now we move on to November. Governor, other constitutional offices, along with congress and state legislative races will be joined by a variety of important ballot measures (statewide and local) as well as a long list of critical city council seats. Every race seems to be “the most important in years”, but this one really does have a tremendous impact on how our government moves forward on many levels.

## **Sales Tax on the Way**

Is it a surprise to anybody that the half cent sales tax will formally appear on our November 2 San Luis Obispo County General Election ballot? The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) voted on June 16 to place the measure on the ballot. That vote was confirmed by the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors at their June 16 meeting.

The measure has been referred to as “Local Roads First”, but is now being called Measure H.



There was a brief discussion about whether the BoS had any discretion in deciding whether to proceed. Supervisor Paulding said that he understood that the Board was obligated to put the measure on the ballot following the SLOCOG vote. County Council followed with an explanation that was a bit vague but seemed to support Paulding's understanding.

Whether the Board was obligated or not, they proceeded with a vote. Supervisor Moreno said that with SLOCOG's poll numbers indicating support in the best scenario of mid to high 50 %, and at a cost of \$580,000 just to put it on the ballot, she could not support moving forward. She voted no.



Here is a motion that SLOCOG approved regarding covering the estimated \$580,000 cost of putting the sales tax on the ballot:

**A-1 Election Costs to SLOCOG (ROLL CALL – PROVIDE AUTHORIZATION TO EXECUTE FORMAL MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING [MOU] WITH THE COUNTY TO FULLY PAY FOR TRANSPORTATION EXPENDITURE PLAN [TEP] MEASURE ELECTION COSTS, CONSISTENT WITH PRIOR BOARD DIRECTION).** James Worthley

Supervisor Gibson tried to assuage Moreno's concern by pointing out (mansplaining?) that the cost of putting the measure on the ballot would be reimbursed by SLOCOG. Gibson provided an excellent demonstration of how the

liberal mind works (or doesn't). Completely disregarding the fact that the \$580,000 comes from the hard-earned salaries and savings of taxpayers, Gibson was only thinking about which government fund would be spending those taxpayer dollars – no concern whatsoever about the actual taxpayers who are expected to finance the measure.

Supervisor Peschong stated that he always opposed sales taxes because of their regressive nature and joined Moreno in a no vote. The remaining Supervisors gave the measure the three votes needed to proceed.

Several people spoke in favor of the measure. Most cited the matching funds available to “self-help” counties. They pointed out that on top of the anticipated \$38 million in revenue that the tax is estimated on an annual basis, the county could see two or three times that in grant funding.

Some of the speakers were part of the “citizen” effort to put the measure on the ballot via the petition process. Had they succeeded, the measure would only require a simple majority vote to pass. Because the measure has been placed on the ballot by a government body, the measure will require a two-third vote to pass (hence Moreno's concern). The citizens' committee members pointed out that they had gathered over 12,500 valid signatures in a very short time and suggested that was an indicator of community support. Further, they said that they will run an aggressive support campaign urging a yes vote.

No one spoke against the measure at the Supervisor meeting. It is anticipated that the Central Coast Taxpayers Association will campaign against the measure, but it remains unclear about whether they will have the resources needed to have a strong voice. Ironically, none of the groups that traditionally speak out on behalf of lower income people seem to be interested in this measure. Like all sales taxes, this one is regressive – meaning that it hurts lower income consumers the most. The extra \$25 on a \$500 set of tires doesn't hurt a high-income earner nearly as much as one barely getting by. Should this tax pass, some parts of San Luis Obispo County will be among the highest sales tax communities in the state.

## Meaningless Symbolism

The ICE haters have made quite a fuss at several BoS meetings over the past year. Many demand that the BoS declare ICE to be unwelcome in our county and even demand declaring that ICE may not operate in our community.



Their focus has primarily been on the Sheriff Department and a perceived cooperation between that department and ICE in the handling of “justice involved” immigrant’s. After hours of claims and reports from the Sheriff, the ICE haters have realized that their claims are not getting traction. Still, they remain emphatic about their wish to abolish ICE activities to the extent possible.

One of the suggestions offered is to prohibit ICE access to any county property. County Council Jon Ansolabehere reported many times that there is no legal basis for prohibiting any subset of people from a public place. ICE haters ignored this fact and persevered in their zeal to exclude ICE. Prohibiting unauthorized people from restricted county spaces is legal and has always been enforced. Now we have a resolution stating that it is so.

Will this appease the ICE haters?

Below is the text listing all the details that are already in place, but now are redundantly memorialized:

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF  
SAN LUIS OBISPO LIMITING THE USE OF COUNTY PROPERTY FOR  
NON-COUNTY PURPOSES

The following resolution is hereby offered and read: WHEREAS, San Luis Obispo County (“County”) is home to a diverse and vibrant community of people representing many races, ethnicities, and national origins, and the County affirms its commitment to ensuring dignity and respect for all residents, regardless of their immigration status; and

WHEREAS, over the last year, the County has observed across the country and within the State of California the use of public agency facilities for immigration enforcement; and

WHEREAS, while the County recognizes that immigration enforcement is exclusively within the purview of the federal government, the unauthorized use of County property to facilitate civil immigration enforcement activities ignores the intended purposes of and interferes with the County’s authority over, and the use of, its own property; and

WHEREAS, the County has a strong interest in ensuring that its policies concerning the use of County-owned and County-controlled property are clear and unambiguous, including to prevent uses of such property for federal civil immigration and enforcement activity or for any other purpose not expressly authorized by the County and consistent with the County’s use of its limited resources to focus on County purposes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, as follows: 1. The above recitals are true and correct and incorporated herein by this reference. 2. That the Board of Supervisors hereby adopts the following policies limiting the use of County owned or controlled property for County purposes: a. To the fullest extent permitted by law, no County owned or controlled property shall be used for any purpose not expressly authorized by the County, including, for example, as a staging area, processing location, or operations base for federal immigration enforcement activities. b. No non-public areas of any County facility may be used for immigration enforcement without a valid warrant signed by a federal or state judicial officer, or other signed writ or order from a federal or state judicial officer authorizing such access. No County department, officer, or employee shall give consent for federal officials to access or use non-public areas of any County facility for purposes of immigration enforcement without a valid warrant signed by a federal or state judicial officer, or other signed writ or order from a federal or state judicial officer authorizing such access, and no such purported consent by a County department, agency, officer, or employee shall be deemed consent by the County for any such use. The foregoing policy shall not apply to any action by any department, officer, or employee expressly allowed by the California Values Act,

SB 54, codified in Government Code Sections 7284 et seq. as may be amended from time to time. c. For purposes of this policy, the phrase “immigration enforcement” shall have the same meaning as set forth in Government Code Section 7284.4(f). d. The County Executive Office shall ensure implementation of this policy.

## Gay Pride Month

June is Gay Pride month in San Luis Obispo County. It is so because the BoS voted to declare it.



The following resolution is hereby offered and read:

WHEREAS, the County of San Luis Obispo (County) supports the rights of all citizens to experience equality and freedom from discrimination; and

WHEREAS, the County honors the history of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Queer (LGBTQ+) liberation movement and recognizes that LGBTQ+ individuals have had immeasurable impact to the cultural, civic, and economic successes of our county and nation; and

WHEREAS, this nation was founded on the principle that every individual has equal dignity, worth, and status, and the County of San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors calls upon community members to embrace this principle and work to eliminate prejudice everywhere it exists; and

WHEREAS, Pride Month began as a protest against the profiling and violence of LGBTQ+ people, who continue to face these intense struggles to this day; and

WHEREAS, human beings deserve, not only the tools for survival, but also access to the pursuit of equitable health, liberation, and joy; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people have historically struggled to find others like themselves in media, community, and commerce, so Pride Month serves as a crucial time of visibility and community; and

WHEREAS, recognition from one's government is crucial for feeling safe and seen in one's community, and the County of San Luis Obispo is intent on ensuring that everyone in the County feels welcome, safe, and a sense of belonging; and

WHEREAS, LGBTQ+ people continue to be targeted in legislation across the country; and

WHEREAS, recognizing and celebrating Pride Month can influence awareness and provides opportunities to engage in dialogues that strengthen alliances, build acceptance, and advance equal Page 1 of 2 Attachment 1 rights for all; and

WHEREAS, Pride Month is a cornerstone of American culture that allows us to lift up our successes while working toward a better, more inclusive, and equitable future.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND ORDERED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, does hereby proclaims the month of June 2026 as Pride Month in the County of San Luis Obispo in support of the LGBTQ+ community.

## **Immigrant Month**

The following resolution is hereby offered and read:

WHEREAS, June is nationally recognized as Immigrant Heritage Month, honoring the contributions, cultures, and resilience of immigrant communities throughout the United States; and

WHEREAS, immigrants have long contributed to the economic, cultural, educational, agricultural, and civic life of San Luis Obispo County through their work, leadership, entrepreneurship, traditions, languages, and lived experiences; and

WHEREAS, The Fabric of SLO County: Understanding the Diversity and Contributions of Our Immigrant Community, a report funded by Diversity Coalition, the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors, and additional community partners and funders, highlights the rich diversity of the county's immigrant population, with residents tracing roots to Latin America, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Oceania, and other regions of the world; and

WHEREAS, the report demonstrates that immigrant residents are deeply rooted members of the community, with many having lived in the United States for decades and contributing to communities across San Luis Obispo County; and

WHEREAS, immigrant communities contribute to the county's cultural and linguistic richness, with many households speaking languages including Spanish, Mixteco, Tagalog, Mandarin, Arabic, and numerous other languages reflective of the county's global diversity; and

WHEREAS, immigrant workers, including farmworkers and indigenous Mexican families, continue to play an essential role in sustaining San Luis Obispo County's agricultural economy and broader regional prosperity, while contributing significantly across industries including hospitality, construction, food service, education, and healthcare; and

WHEREAS, community organizations, educators, advocates, workers, faith leaders, and residents across San Luis Obispo County continue to foster inclusion, connection, and opportunity for immigrant communities through education, cultural celebration, advocacy, and community support.



Imagine the staff time that went into drafting up the above resolutions. First, someone's staff aid probably took the first attempt. Then, it was probably reviewed by a few interested parties. Then it went to County Council for a legal review. Then it went to the Board Clerk who included it in the agenda, then it went to the fancy print office to get the gold seal print job. Then the BoS went through the lengthy presentations of each.

## **Cambria Water Project**

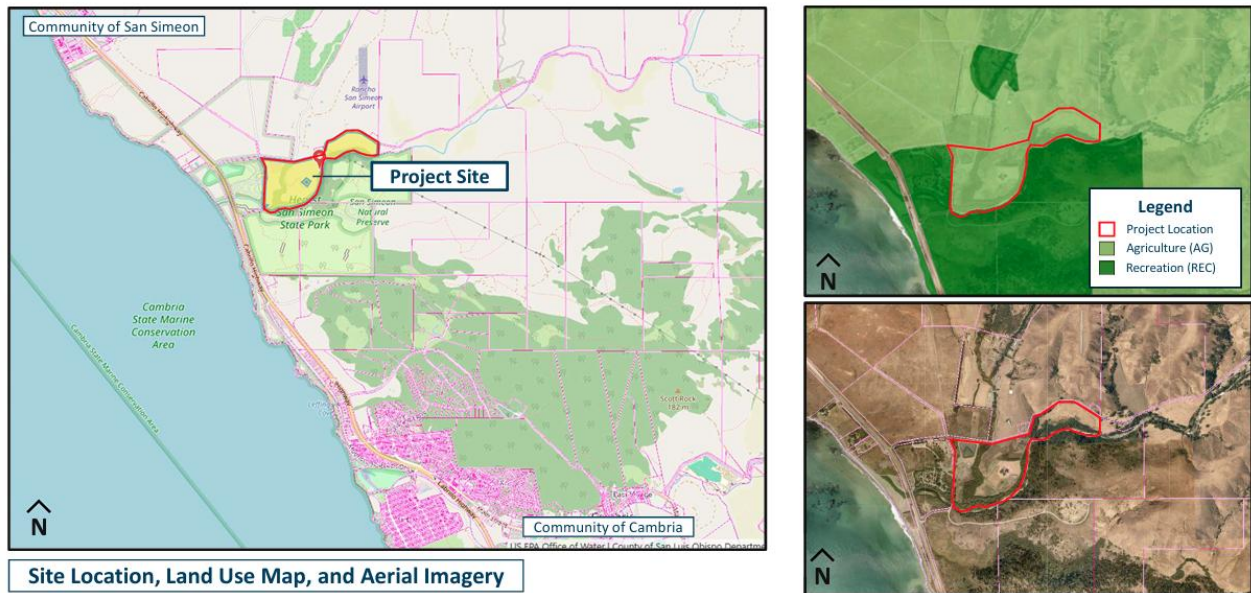
The town of Cambria is haunted by a limited water supply. New construction is almost impossible. Drought years are hugely challenging.

In an attempt to alleviate some of the problem, the Cambria Community Service District (CCSD) is endeavoring to allow for the continued operation of the CCSD Water Reclamation Facility (WRF) previously approved to operate on an emergency basis. This requires a Development Plan and a Coastal Development Permit.

The project includes the emergency permit components, including: the Advanced Water Treatment Plant, pipelines, a discharge to San Simeon Creek, four monitoring wells, recharge injection wells, conversion of the Van Gordon Reservoir to a brine evaporation pond, utilities, and access roads. Additionally, the project proposes new improvements to the access road, return of evaporation pond back to a reservoir, extension of discharge line to San Simeon Creek, and a Zero Liquid Discharge facility. The WRF would operate up to 24 hours per day, 5 days per week, for 7 months per year, depending on precipitation.



The project was approved by the County Planning and Building Department months ago, but a small group of Cambria residents appealed the permit. Among their claims was that the project was in a designated Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and that the increased water supply would be “growth inducing”.



As it turns out, the project is not and never was in an ESA. Further, the project is not tied to any new building permits. The many other claims made by the appellants were all discredited.

One notable point is that a cornerstone of current liberal policy is housing. Yet, here is a bunch of no-growthers trying to ensure that no growth can occur in their quaint village. They have theirs, and no one else should. If you have to build housing, do it somewhere else.

In the end, it appeared that the residents and the CSD leaders had a communication issue. The appeal was denied and the two sides seemed to better understand that their goals were very similar. Once again, county taxpayers are out \$6 – 11,000 to debate claims some of which are factually inaccurate.

## **Diablo Coalition Despite Gibson**

Supervisor Gibson was in full liberal battle mode at the June 17 BoS meeting. Along with suggesting the \$580,000 cost of putting the sales tax measure on the ballot was negligible because it would be coming from some different batch of

Other People's Money, he also attempted to dissuade his colleagues from agreeing to have the County join the Diablo Canyon 2045 Coalition.



His reasoning was that he felt there were too many “unresolved questions” about the plant. This, after a thorough investigation by the California Coastal Commission, the State Regional Water Quality Board and a very deep dive by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission - each of which have given the plant a green light to move forward until 2045.

Apparently, Gibson feels that he and his friends at Mothers for Peace need more time to invent a legitimate reason why the plant should be shut down. State Senator John Laird and Assemblymember Dawn Addis also joined Gibson and MfP in suggesting that the process slow down (stall) for the foreseeable future. It would seem that they all feel more qualified than the Nuclear Regularity Commission to determine the safety of the Diablo Plant.



Odd, since when Gibson, Laird and Addis didn't seem to encourage stalling when they weighed in (quite heavily) at Coastal Commission hearings last November and December. They pushed (very hard) to require that PG&E forfeit huge acreage in exchange for getting the necessary permits. What Gibson knows all too well is that the plant can't just be switched on for extra service. PG&E is obligated to continue with its decommissioning process until the 2045 plan has achieved all the permits and enabling legislation needed for ongoing operations. At some point in the next 18 months or so, the point of no return could be reached.

The next step in achieving the 2045 plan is legislation from the state. So far, no bill has been introduced. The 2026 legislative session ends this fall.

The four other Supervisors were happy to support joining the coalition. The motion to join passed.

Details about the coalition can be found at:

<https://diablocanyon2045.com/whoweare>

## **Board Break**

The Board of Supervisors is taking its annual “Board Break” from June 16 to July 7. Then, rather than repeat the usual every other Tuesday pattern, they will skip until July 28. This is good news for anybody concerned that trouble is just around the corner when the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors is in session.



We hope that the Supervisors and their staff get some quality rest and relaxation. Given the financial condition of our state government, they may need all the energy, patience and problem solving they can muster this fall.

## **Last Week**

We should state at the onset of this edition of the COLAB Weekly Update that we are a bit prickly over the majority of the Board of Supervisors' shabby treatment of District Attorney Dan Dow at the June 6 Budget Hearing.

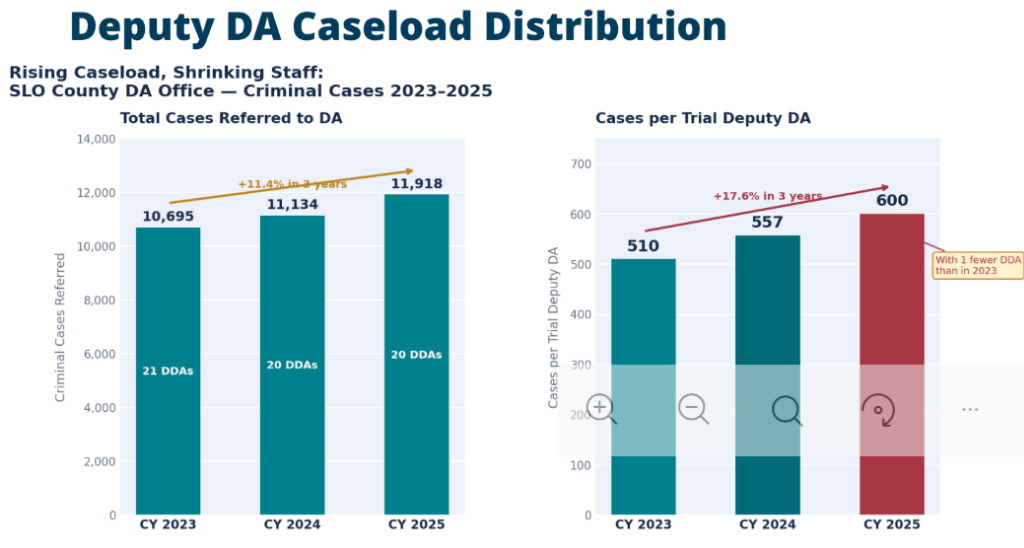
We are even more testy about how the highly detailed presentation making a solid case regarding the need for extra DA personnel was ignored. These are key public safety positions. How can the Board expect the community to believe that public safety is a propriety 144when they act so cavalier in rejecting Dow's entire request – especially when CEO Pontes indicated Opioid Settlement funds could be used to fund at least part of the request?

### **Budget Moves Forward– Priority Ignored**

The San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors held its annual Budget Hearing for the proposed 2026/27 \$1.2 billion budget. The hearing lasted about two and a half hours.

The only real discussion item was District Attorney Dan Dow's request for additional staff. Dow did a compelling presentation covering the necessity of the

additional staff. His team has not grown in five years, yet the caseload and associated work has grown at a rapid pace. Below is a graph illustrating that growth over the past three years:



One of the things that we appreciate about DA Dow is his commitment to crime victims. Too often in our society, victims are forgotten and left to deal with their situation with no help or guidance. Dow and his team work very hard at guiding them through the aftermath of what is often a deeply damaging experience. They assist with understanding the court system and parole hearings, provide information about support programs and even participate in a restorative justice program. Here is a graphic illustrating their efforts and the increasing demand:

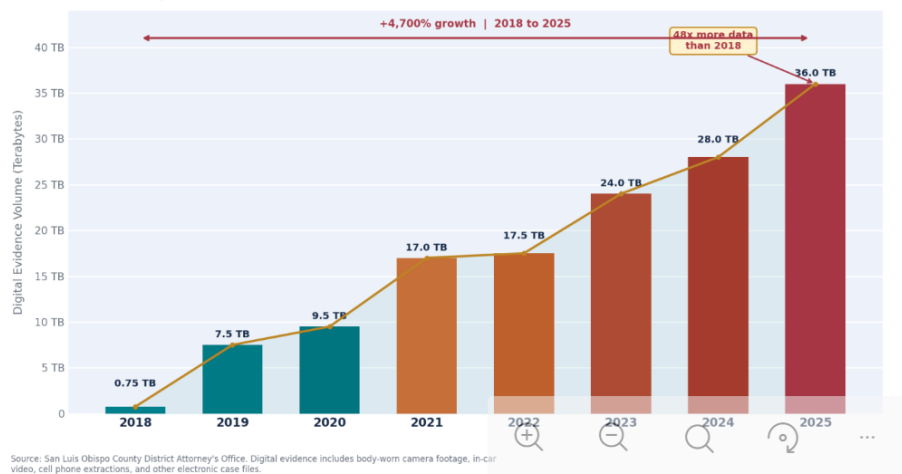
# Victim Advocate Workload – The Case for Restoring a Position



One of the most demanding areas of growth for the DA team is in data handling. Receiving, reviewing and properly filing data evidence is extremely time consuming. There are strict protocols that need to be followed, and the reliance of digital data is expanding every year. Here is a graph that shows recent growth year over year:

## Digital Data Evidence Exponential Growth

SLO County DA Office – 2018 to 2025



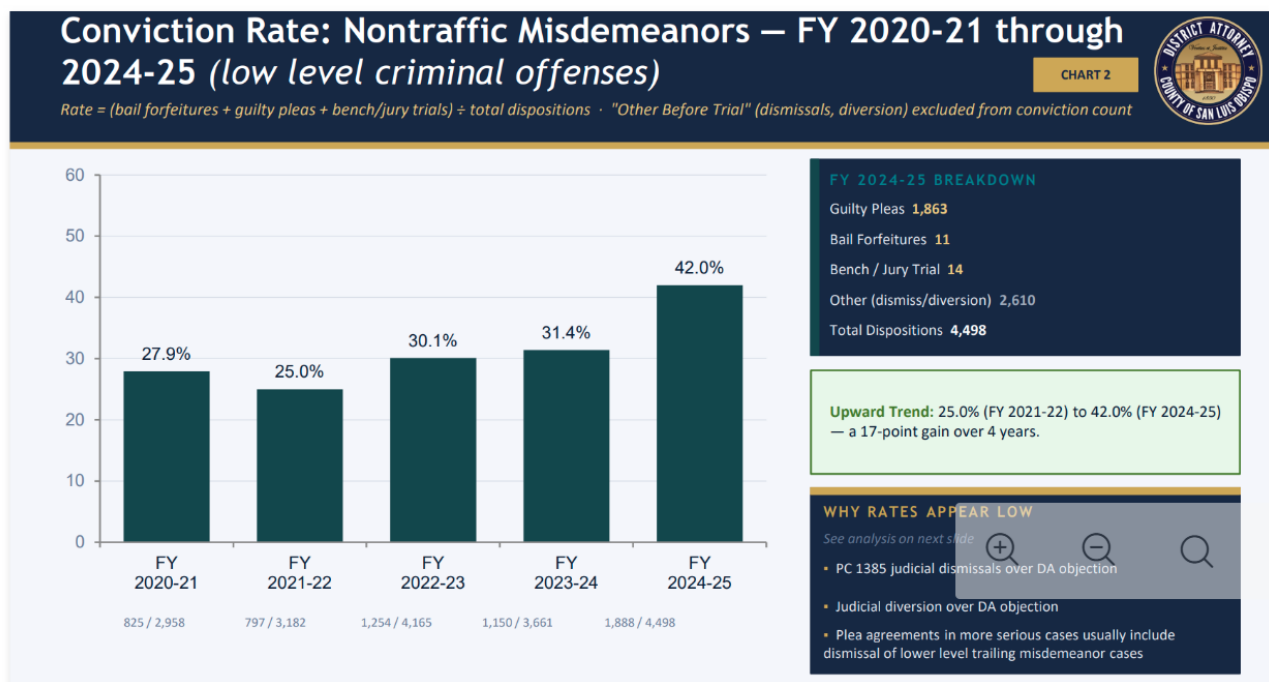
Source: San Luis Obispo County District Attorney's Office. Digital evidence includes body-worn camera footage, in-car video, cell phone extractions, and other electronic case files. Each terabyte must be received, processed, reviewed, analyzed, disclosed to defense, stored, and prepared for trial – with zero additional Paralegal positions added since 2014 to manage this workload.

Following Dow's presentation, the BoS deliberated. CEO Pontes explained that some resources are available from opioid settlement funds, but those funds would

not be long term. Still, a couple positions could be covered in the short term while long term funding could be worked out for the 2027/28 budget.

Supervisor Peschong moved, and Moreno seconded that Dow’s funding request be approved. The motion failed on a three to two vote. Supervisor Gibson then went into a rant about the request and attempted to suggest that Dow’s conviction rate was very low. He made it clear that he has a strong dislike for Dow and moved that the budget proposal be adopted with no additional help for the DAs office. This, despite the opioid funding that was offered.

Gibson’s inference that the DAs office conviction rate is low does not hold up against the data:



Will Gibson do the right and honest thing and correct the record in his wildly inaccurate statement?

## Good Money for Poor Performance

Item 10 on the June 16 BoS agenda is a :Request to approve a budget adjustment in the amount of \$350,000 using election grant funding and unanticipated revenues to fund the preservation of historical Clerk-Recorder records, software to streamline

the signature cure process, additional equipment for the ePollbook system, and primary election expenses, by 4/5 vote.

We wonder if the many irregularities with the Clerk-Recorder office will be included in the archives.



## COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Clerk-Recorder / Melanie Foster, Deputy Director, Clerk-Recorder  
805-781-5084

DATE: 6/16/2026

SUBJECT: Request to approve a budget adjustment in the amount of \$350,000 using election grant funding and unanticipated revenues to fund the preservation of historical Clerk-Recorder records, software to streamline the signature cure process, additional equipment for the ePollbook system, and primary election expenses, by 4/5 vote.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve a budget adjustment in the amount of \$350,000 using election grant funding and unanticipated revenues to fund the preservation of historical Clerk-Recorder records, software to streamline the signature cure process, additional equipment for the ePollbook system, and primary election expenses, by 4/5 vote.

It is amazing that this project costs \$350,000. It is scandalous that funds could be found for this project, but none could be found to help prosecute scammers and those who prey on elderly people.



Gibson rationalized his opposition to Dow's request by FALSELY accusing him of a low conviction rate. Will he hold Elana Cano's miserable record against her for this request? Are there four votes for this?

## **More Priority Nonsense**

San Luis Obispo County pays a lobbyist firm in Sacramento to advocate for various positions on state legislative bills. Just about every county does so. The positions are decided usually by unanimous vote by the BoS, but sometimes by a majority.

This is the time of the year when bills are shaping up. Most have had initial committee hearings, and some have passed out of their house of origin. Most have changed significantly since their introduction a few months ago. This means that bill authors are scrambling for support.

Agenda item 12 reads: "Request to consider and approve a position on current State legislative measure". That's it. No other details or subject matter references. The staff report does disclose the direction of the bill, and we think we like at least the major thrust, but we also have concerns.

# COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

## 2026 State and Federal Legislative Platform



Approved February 10, 2026

We are guessing the following document was referenced in an attempt to suggest the kinda sorta priorities of the board (in fairytale land) would justify supporting certain legislation.

We know that the priorities aren't genuine or honest because of the shabby treatment of our District Attorney who is only trying to keep his team performing in the best possible way to protect public safety. The same applies to "serving the community", maintaining "integrity, collaboration, professionalism, accountability and responsiveness". Again, safe community must be some sort of insider joke.

At any rate, these fairytale land priorities are what is supposed to guide the Board in establishing their priorities.

## **BOARD 2026 PRIORITIES**

**Ongoing:** Public Safety; Fiscal Stability; Legal Mandates; Debt Service

**First Tier:** Economic Development; Homelessness; Mental Health; Housing

**Second Tier:** Resiliency (emergency preparedness, infrastructure recovery, water);  
Organizational Effectiveness

## **MISSION**

The County of San Luis Obispo is committed to serving the community with pride to enhance the economic, environmental, and social quality of life of its residents.

## **VALUES**

Integrity, Collaboration, Professionalism, Accountability, Responsiveness

## **COMMUNITYWIDE GOALS**

A safe community, healthy community, livable community, prosperous community, and a well-governed community.

So, the bill that is in question is Assembly Bill 2691 authored by our own State Assemblywoman Dawn Addis.

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 16, 2026

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2025–26 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 2691**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Addis**  
*(Coauthor: Assembly Member Quirk-Silva)*  
*(Coauthor: Senator Rubio)*

February 20, 2026

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Here is the bill summary:

AB 2691, as amended, Addis. Elections: ~~domicile~~. *elective office: felony conviction.*

*Existing law prohibits the consideration of a person as a candidate for, and provides that the person is not eligible to be elected to, any state or local elective office if the person has been convicted of a felony involving accepting or giving, or offering to give, any bribe, the embezzlement of public money, extortion or theft of public money, perjury, or conspiracy to commit any of those crimes.*

*This bill would additionally prohibit the consideration of a person as a candidate for, and provide that the person is not eligible to be elected to, any state or local elective office if they have been convicted of a felony involving sexual assault or human trafficking, as defined.*

~~Existing law provides that a voter will lose their domicile in California if they move to another state with the intention of making it their domicile.~~

~~This bill would make nonsubstantive changes to this provision.~~

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

The idea of prohibiting felon sexual predators and human traffickers seems like a no brainer. What is troubling is the portion that is struck out. Why? It seems common sense to eliminate domicile to those who have moved away. Further, and applying even more common sense, why should anyone convicted of any felony have a right to run for office? Bad actions need to have consequences.

Just for grins and giggles, we are including the Public Safety portion of the SLO County legislative (fairytale) platform. So many of the priorities listed were addressed specifically by District Attorney Dow in his attempt to get additional staff. How can the Board tell state legislators that these are the priorities of San Luis Obispo County while denying the District Attorney the very tools needed to address these "priorities"?

1. Secure funding and policy support for implementation of Proposition 36, including probation supervision, behavioral health treatment, housing, case management, and court-aligned services. (S)
2. Support restoration and stabilization of pretrial services funding to ensure safe, data-informed release decisions. (S)
3. Support expanded mental health, behavioral health, and substance use disorder treatment services within the justice system. (S/F)
4. Clear direction on management of individuals incompetent to stand trial (IST), and elimination of penalties for counties exceeding IST growth caps. (S)
5. Funding to support criminal justice and human services to address and prevent financial elder abuse and identity theft. (S/F)
6. Protect County authority over public safety governance, including probation leadership and emergency medical services systems. (S)
7. Support funding, streamlined permitting, and state responsibility for risk in state responsibility areas; disaster preparedness, flood protection, levee systems (Arroyo Grande Creek); response and recovery from floods, wildfires, and climate-related emergencies. (S/F)

## **New Leadership at Department of Health**

Item 15 on the BoS agenda is a “Request to approve the employment agreement with Dana McEwen to serve as the County of San Luis Obispo’s Director of Behavioral Health, effective June 29, 2026.”



Dana McEwen

According to a County press release, McEwen’s experience includes more than 15 years of executive-level behavioral health leadership.

She most recently worked at Kaiser Permanente as a senior managerial consultant across multiple regions. McEwen has also served as a mental health program director who oversaw a \$48 million budget and three child welfare programs across more than 100 sites, according to the county.

Salary shall commence at Step 7 (approximately \$273,395.20 annually) of the current approved salary range. Employee shall be eligible for step increases where applicable at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer based on performance.

This comes as a result of the significant reorganization quietly going on within our County Department of Health. Many actions have taken place following the KPMG audit of the department last year, including breaking Behavioral Health off into its own department.

Other leadership changes underway include the retirement of Public Health Director Dr. Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH, who has held the position since 2008. She will retire in a few weeks. A search is underway for her replacement.



Dr. Penny Borenstein

In the meantime, item 16 on the agenda reads: “Request to 1) approve the appointment of Dr. Frederick Rosen as the Interim County Health Officer for the County of San Luis Obispo, effective July 5, 2026; and 2) delegate authority to the Director of Public Health, or designee, to provide written notification of the appointment to the California Department of Public Health on behalf of the Board of Supervisors, as required by California Health and Safety.

According to his on-line biography: Dr. Frederick Rosen, MD is an Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery Specialist in San Luis Obispo, CA. Dr. Rosen specializes in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, has 27 years of experience, and is board certified in Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. Dr. Rosen graduated from University of Southern Colorado. Patients rated Dr. Rosen an average 5.0-star rating.”

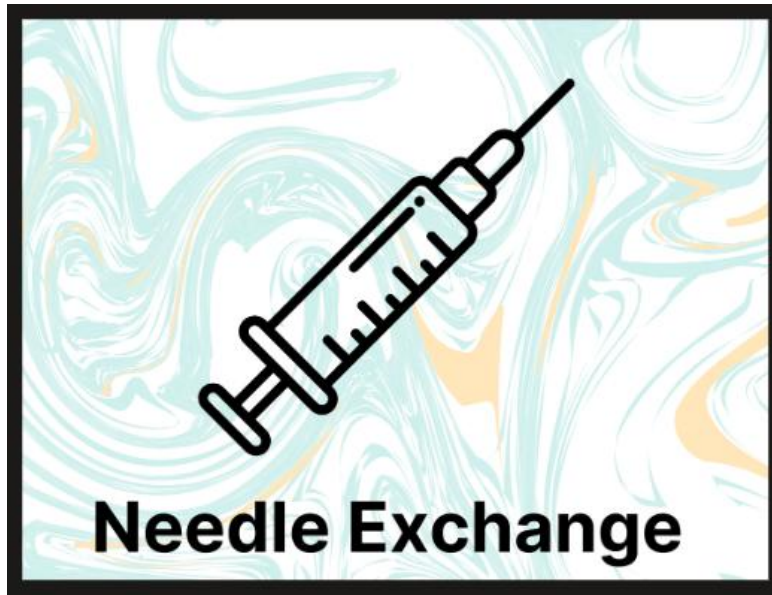


Dr, Frederick Rosen

We wish Dr. Bornstein a happy retirement as well as Ms. McEwen and Dr. Rosen congratulations on their new appointments.

## **Not so Free Needle Exchange**

Needle “exchange” programs are so very confounding. On the one hand, it’s in the public interest to prevent diseases such as HIV and hepatitis amongst intravenous drug abusers. On the other hand, it sure seems like it facilitates and fosters illegal drug use. Further, the distribution locations often become hangouts for such users, creating a discouraging environment for others nearby.



Most concerning is the expense of providing free needles. Everybody understands the costs associated with drug users who become infected and enter the public health system, but it still feels wrong to charge taxpayers to provide what is essentially free drug paraphernalia which facilitates illegal usage.

One big upside is that the program creates an interaction with health professionals that opens the door to possible treatment and rehab programs. Other upsides include a reduction in dirty needles tossed in public places.

Item 23 reads: “Request to 1) approve a contract with SLO Bangers Syringe and Overdose Prevention Program to provide harm reduction, infectious disease prevention, and linkage to treatment services to individuals suffering from opioid and stimulant use disorders for FY 2026-27 in the amount of \$298,632; and 2) approve waiving the Contracting for Services Policy for Central Services to publicly advertise for proposals/competitive solicitation process; and 3) delegate authority to the Director of Public Health or designee, in consultation with the Executive Office, to exercise a one-year Option to Renew for FY 2027-28 and to sign any other amendments or documents related to the contract that do not increase the level of General Fund support required by the Department of Public Health, provided County Counsel approves said amendments and documents as to form and legal effect and in accordance with County policies.”

Another benefit within the program is the distribution of Naloxone which is an opioid antagonist used to reverse or reduce the effects of opioids, particularly in

cases of overdose. It can be administered as a nasal spray or through injection and works by blocking opioid receptors, which helps restore normal breathing within 2 to 3 minutes after an overdose. Nalox has been credited with saving thousands of lives including those of people innocently drugged.



It would be helpful to understand exactly how many people are being served by this program, and especially the efficacy of getting people off drug dependency. At nearly \$300,000, we are concerned that the cost per recipient may be quite high. Is anybody watching for opportunities to keep costs at a minimum?

Here are more details of how the program works:

**1. Scope of Services.**

a. Contractor shall implement a countywide Syringe Exchange and Overdose Prevention Program providing harm reduction, infectious disease prevention, and linkage to treatment services. Services will be delivered five days per week across fixed and outreach sites throughout the County of San Luis Obispo, with a focus on individuals at highest risk of overdose and bloodborne infection.

b. Contractor shall deliver the following core services and achieve associated outcomes:

**i. Overdose Prevention**

- 1) Distribute approximately 6,000 doses of Naloxone annually, with additional passive distribution of approximately 600 doses in the community through Nalox Boxes;
- 2) Conduct community overdose prevention trainings as requested with multiple agencies throughout the county; and
- 3) Document overdose reversals reported by participants.

**ii. Syringe Exchange and Harm Reduction**

- 1) Provide sterile injection supplies and safe syringe disposal to prevent transmission of HIV and Hepatitis C;
- 2) Weekly, operate three fixed syringe exchange sites in San Luis Obispo, Grover Beach and Morro Bay; and four collaborative outreach sites at ECHO Paso Robles, ECHO Atascadero, 40 Prado Homeless Services Center and the Nipomo Riverbed;
- 3) Annually dispose of approximately 150,000 used syringes and distribute approximately 130,000 sterile syringes; and
- 4) Test approximately 50–60 participants annually for HIV/HCV and facilitate access to care.

We like the prevention and treatment aspect of the program but hope that the vehicle is a modest cost. Here are a few more details of the program services:

Conduct at least 3,000 participant interactions annually across all seven service sites; Expand outreach capacity through mobile outreach, including use of a dedicated outreach vehicle to increase geographic reach and accessibility of services, provide private space for testing, wound care, vaccination, and Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) services, and address identified barriers related to transportation, location, and service availability; Conduct regular outreach at shelters, encampments, and community locations throughout the county; Participate in community events and resource fairs serving vulnerable populations; and Maintain consistent engagement with high-risk and underserved populations.

The benefits of this program are important. How it is administered is equally important. Because of the sensitivity regarding the connection to illegal drug use, disease and public safety, it should be held to a high level of accountability. Extra effort is also appropriate to prevent San Francisco style “drug user hangouts”.

## More Not Public Safety Money

Libraries are great. They serve many roles in a community and are a valuable resource.

Item 30 on the agenda reads: “Request to authorize a budget adjustment for Fund Center 377 – Library in the amount of \$250,000 from Library contingencies to cover unanticipated Library Books and Materials expenditures, by 4/5 vote.”



We note this item, not because there is anything wrong with it, but because it is very much the same kind of request from District Attorney Dow. Libraries are short of resources that they need to properly do their job.



## COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Library / Christopher Barnickel / (805) 781-5785

DATE: 6/16/2026

SUBJECT: Request to authorize a budget adjustment for Fund Center 377 – Library in the amount of \$250,000 from Library contingencies to cover unanticipated Library Books and Materials expenditures, by 4/5 vote.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Board approve a budget adjustment in the amount of \$250,000 for Fund Center 377 – Library from Library contingencies to cover unanticipated Library Books and Materials expenditures, by 4/5 vote.

Will the BoS somehow find funding for this request? Will they have four votes? As usual, budgeting with limited funds is always a challenge – especially when sight of priorities is lost to political bias.

## **Election Results**

Sheesh, it's only been a couple weeks – six weeks since balloting began. What do you expect – some kind of modern-day efficiency? Maybe next week, maybe the week after... Isn't this system that we have adopted great? Such an improvement over that ancient one-day in person voting silliness!

**Emergent Trends**  
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# Democrats' Bill Would Let Officials Charge Thousands and Sue Citizens for Requesting Public Records

*Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco (D) seeks to overhaul the California Public Records Act to combat 'frivolous and overwhelming' requests*

By Megan Barth, June 19, 2026

A controversial bill advancing through the California Legislature would dramatically restrict public access to government records, allowing agencies to delay responses, impose high hourly fees, and even sue requesters they label as “malicious.”

Assembly Bill 1821, authored by Assemblymember **Blanca Pacheco** (D-Downey) and backed by the League of California Cities and the California State Association of Counties, seeks to overhaul the California Public Records Act (CPRA) in ways that transparency advocates say would make the state far less open to scrutiny. The bill would let agencies:

- Delay or reject requests deemed “improper,” including those filed outside business hours.
- Charge \$22 to \$66 per hour (or higher in some cases) for staff time spent searching, reviewing, and redacting records on “commercial” or high-volume requests.
- File lawsuits against requesters accused of “malicious intent,” with agencies able to recover legal costs.

Pacheco says the changes are necessary to combat frivolous and overwhelming requests, including those allegedly generated by AI tools. Local governments claim they are drowning in burdensome demands that divert resources from public services.

Critics, including the First Amendment Coalition, ACLU, and journalists, warn the bill would chill legitimate oversight and weaponize fees and litigation against watchdogs and the press. They argue existing law already allows agencies to reject

truly burdensome requests, and the new provisions would further shield government from accountability.

The *California Globe* has directly experienced the challenges of obtaining public records under the current system. In 2021, a CPRA request filed on behalf of the Globe exposed secret meetings by members of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission. The documents revealed handwritten notes and discussions kept hidden from the public during the redistricting process. information that might have been even harder to uncover if agencies had the expanded tools to delay, charge fees, or litigate under AB 1821.

This latest proposal fits a broader pattern of Sacramento officials seeking to limit transparency. The *California Globe* has repeatedly documented the Capitol's culture of secrecy, including chronic delays and outright stonewalling on public records requests involving legislative leadership, closed-door budget negotiations, and high-level lobbying activities. From denied access to lawmakers' calendars and travel records to heavily redacted documents on major policy deals, the Globe's repeated attempts to obtain basic information from the Capitol have often been met with obstruction, excessive fees, and legal maneuvering, even under the current Public Records Act.

The bill passed the Assembly earlier and now faces scrutiny in the Senate. If enacted, it would represent one of the most significant rollbacks of Californians' constitutional right to open government in decades.

The *California Globe* will continue to monitor AB 1821 and fight for full public access to records that belong to the people of California.



### **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.

# FBI & DHS Agents Descend on LA's Skid Row in Voter Fraud Probe

*California is still counting the votes from June 2 primary even after stunning claims of election fraud*

By Katy Grimes, June 19, 2026

Thursday, June 18, 2026, FBI agents and Homeland Security Investigations personnel descended on Skid Row in Los Angeles, and conducted interviews with homeless residents as part of a voter fraud probe tied to the June 2, 2026, statewide direct primary.

Videos surfaced after the June 2 primary showing Skid Row residents claiming they were offered or received small cash payments (e.g., \$2–\$4) to register, sign multiple forms, forge signatures, or fill out voter info/mail-in ballots, sometimes directed toward specific candidates in the LA mayoral race (e.g., incumbent Karen Bass) or other contests. LA County election officials forwarded concerns to law enforcement, the New York Post reported.

U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli announced the operation on X:

MacArthur Park Update #5 Last night, @DEALOSANGELES and @LAPDHQ conducted a joint narcotics operation in the MacArthur Park area and it sent a clear message: drug dealers are not welcome in our communities. Six individuals were arrested on suspicion of narcotics sales. Federal and state laws were enforced. This is part of a sustained, coordinated effort to dismantle the open-air drug markets that have plagued Los Angeles for too long. I want to commend our federal agents and the men and women of LAPD for their professionalism and dedication. The people of Los Angeles deserve safe parks, safe streets, and safe neighborhoods. We are delivering on that promise. Law and order is being restored in Los Angeles. This should not come as a shock to anyone. First Assistant U.S. Attorney Bill Essayli announced earlier in June that his office was conducting multiple active election fraud investigations in coordination with the FBI's Los Angeles field

office, the *Globe* **reported**. “Protecting the integrity of California’s elections is a top priority for my office. California’s election system has serious structural vulnerabilities. Universal vote-by-mail with no voter ID requirements creates conditions where fraud can go undetected and unpunished, eroding public confidence,” Essayli said in a statement.

The *NY Post* reported that about 20 agents “swooped in on the notoriously blighted area after homeless people staying there claimed they’d been bribed with cash to sign multiple registration forms, forge signatures, and fill out voter information for the mayoral and gubernatorial primaries.”

Agents questioned up to around 50 people near areas like 5th and Towne streets. The DOJ confirmed activity on a “criminal matter” but provided limited public details. No arrests from this specific sweep have been widely reported yet; it’s an active investigation, the *Post* reports.

The timing is interesting as the coordinated FBI/DHS probe came one day after the **Los Angeles City Council** voted in a charter amendment with the goal of allowing noncitizens to vote in citywide and Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) elections.

Supporters, including the **Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA)**, argue the change addresses “taxation without representation.” CHIRLA head **Angelica Salas** said green card holders, DACA recipients, and other noncitizens pay taxes, send children to public schools, and live under the same local policies, so they deserve input on who represents them, the *Globe* **reported** this week.

As the *California Globe* has long documented, this latest push builds directly on Los Angeles’ commitment to sanctuary policies that shield illegal alien residents and thwart federal law.

“The FBI probe followed the emergence of shocking videos the week after Election Day of Skid Row residents claiming they were paid to vote for incumbent Mayor Karen Bass and Councilwoman Nithya Raman,” the *Post* **reported**. Raman’s surge into second place, after initially trailing well behind change-agent candidate Spencer Pratt, came after an extraordinary tally in mail-in ballots.

In one of the clips, a man on Skid Row claimed he received \$4 to vote for Bass.”

“Thank you cleaning up the hellhole that was MacArthur Park,” someone replied to Essayli on X.



## **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.

# **The New Caste System: California's LGBTBE Program Rewards Identity Over Merit**

*Sacramento is systematically dismantling the institutional infrastructure that made the state worth staying in*

By Jay Rogers, June 20, 2026

I arrived in California in 1990, when the government was functioning and the mood was upbeat. Thirty-five years later I'm still here, watching Sacramento systematically dismantle the institutional infrastructure that made the state worth staying in.

The latest example is a program most Californians have never heard of: the CPUC's **LGBTBE supplier diversity program** — a 1.5% procurement goal for LGBT-owned business enterprises that would route roughly **\$633 million in annual utility contracts** toward firms certified on the basis of their owners' sexual identity if the state's large utilities actually hit the target.

Certification under CPUC General Order 156 requires LGBT organization letters, domestic partner affidavits, media mentions, and in some cases therapy documentation. False certifications carry county jail time. The entire structure has produced **451 certified LGBTBE firms** in the state clearinghouse — compared to 3,750 minority-owned firms — while piling compliance overhead onto utilities like PG&E, Edison, SDG&E, AT&T, and Comcast, and ultimately onto their California customers.

At SDG&E in 2024, LGBTBE spending reached only **0.44% of total procurement**, well below the 1.5% goal, while the compliance apparatus ran at full cost. **About 9% of American adults identify as LGBTQ+**; the program certifies a fraction of that community while generating the full overhead.

The Equal Protection Clause doesn't come with a carve-out for fashionable identities.

The Fourteenth Amendment protects individuals, not groups. California courts have confirmed this on directly analogous facts. In April 2022, an LA Superior Court judge struck down AB 979's board diversity quotas for race, sexual orientation, and gender identity in *Crest v. Padilla II*, holding that California's Constitution bars differential treatment on those bases without a compelling, narrowly tailored government interest.

The state produced none. The CPUC's LGBTBE procurement targets rest on the same constitutional footing and should expect the same outcome in court.

Proposition 209, which California voters **passed 54.6% to 45.4% in 1996**, prohibits preferential treatment in public contracting based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin. Voters reaffirmed that principle in November 2020, defeating a Prop 209 repeal by 57% to 43%.

The LGBTBE program extends the same identity-preference architecture to a new category — but the equal-protection principle the voters encoded in the state constitution is identical. Federally, **President Trump's Executive Order 14173**, signed January 21, 2025, revoked the six-decade-old EO 11246, eliminated affirmative action requirements for federal contractors, and directed agencies to stop workforce balancing by race, sex, or sexual preference. Washington moved toward merit. Sacramento is running in the opposite direction.

I coached high school track and field for years. The stopwatch never asked about identity.

The kid who trained hardest cleared the hurdles, and the team that executed won meets. We celebrated effort, and athletes who earned their spots knew they'd actually earned them. California's LGBTBE program sends precisely the opposite

message. It tells the next generation that some categories earn structural advantages while others compete straight up.

That doesn't level a field. It tilts one, and the athletes standing downhill know it.

The broader supplier diversity apparatus compounds the damage.

Each new protected procurement category fragments the polity further into competing client groups demanding their piece of the contracting pie.

The program now extends preferences that began with race and gender into a new identity category, and the logic has no natural stopping point.

Citizens aren't naive — they see when the rules tilt by bureaucratic favor, and trust erodes accordingly. I've advised families on preserving wealth across generations, and I can tell you: the institutions that survive are those that reward execution. The ones that substitute process for performance don't last. Neither do states.

Each new identity-based procurement category added to the GO 156 program creates another interest group with a stake in the program's expansion, another certification bureaucracy, another layer of process between a California business and a public contract.

I've advised family offices and institutional clients for thirty years.

The institutions that endure are those that reward execution. The ones that substitute affiliation for performance metrics do not survive — not in private markets, and not in the public sector either, though the feedback loop is slower and more politically insulated.

As an expert witness on fiduciary matters in federal and state courts since 2015, I've watched divided incentives fracture organizations from the inside.

Management realigns around preferred constituencies. Accountability diffuses. The connection between results and reward breaks down. It operates the same way at the state level — only more slowly, and at ratepayer expense, and with enough political insulation that the people responsible rarely face the consequences of what they built.

California has watched this dynamic play out for thirty years across pension systems, housing agencies, and regulatory bodies. The LGBTBE program is a smaller version of the same architecture: a program designed to produce the appearance of a result rather than the result itself.

It certifies 451 firms against a \$633 million target, reaches 0.44% spend at its largest covered utility, and declares the compliance infrastructure a success. That's not equity. That's California running a program that rewards affiliation over execution — the same pattern that has hollowed out institutions across the state.

The voters of California encoded a different principle in the state constitution in 1996 and reaffirmed it in 2020.

Sacramento keeps looking for ways around it. The CPUC found one by labeling a procurement mandate an aspirational goal. It won't survive a serious constitutional challenge, and it shouldn't.

The defense — modest, voluntary, aspirational goals — doesn't hold. Utilities face annual CPUC reporting requirements and regulatory scrutiny for missing targets. The program carries criminal penalties for false certifications. The **Crest** equal-protection reasoning reaches procurement programs as directly as it reached board composition mandates. Sacramento is one lawsuit away from losing this program in court.

It would be better to repeal it first.

Support for disadvantaged California businesses can be built on neutral ground: capital access, permitting reform, workforce development. Open competition on merit. None of those tools require businesses to document their owners' private lives to a state registry.

California should repeal the identity-based procurement targets in GO 156.

I've lived here long enough to remember what the state looked like when its institutions rewarded execution. I raised three sons here and watched the oldest graduate from West Point. Earned achievement is visible — it has a quality that identity-certified achievement does not and that people on the wrong end of the preference always notice. The California that built the economy worth inheriting ran on the proposition that opportunity is equal, outcomes aren't guaranteed, and effort decides the difference.

The LGBTBE program rejects that proposition. The Constitution doesn't permit it. The voters have twice rejected it.

T

he program's own compliance record — 0.44%, spent against a 1.5% goal at full compliance cost — doesn't justify its existence on any metric. Sacramento should repeal it and build something that actually works.



### **Jay Rogers**

Jay Rogers is a financial professional with more than 30 years of experience in private equity, private credit, hedge funds, and wealth management. He has a BS from Northeastern University and has completed postgraduate studies at UCLA, UPENN, and Harvard. He writes about issues in finance, constitutional law, national security, human nature, and public policy.

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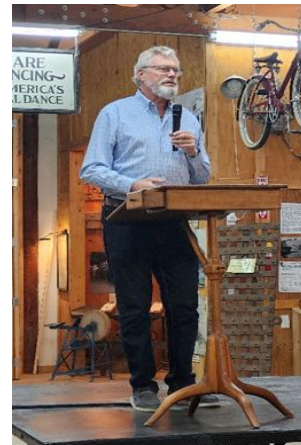
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