



**CAPIAA Welcomes Executive Director, Khydeja Alam**

PAGE 3

**A Budget Rollercoaster**

PAGE 7



# Citrus Heights Messenger

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Serving the City of Citrus Heights & Sacramento County

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**SEE INSIDE**

**CHP NEW TRAFFIC SAFETY LAWS**



PAGE 2

**THE IRA KILLS INCENTIVES FOR MEDICAL INNOVATION**



PAGE 5

**THE VETERAN HOMELESS CRISIS**



PAGE 11

## The Healing Continues



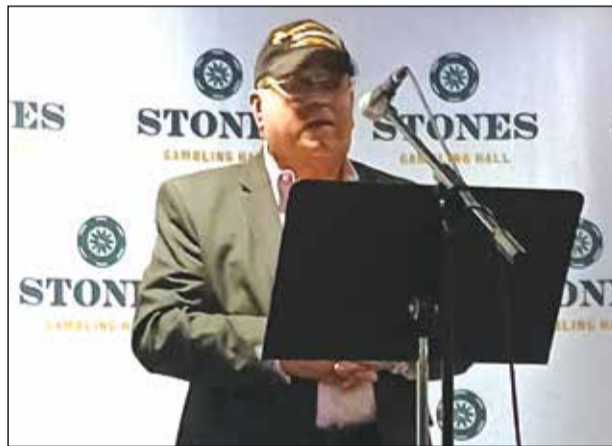
The committee gathered on stage for a group photo. All photos by Paul Scholl

By Paul Scholl

**CITRUS HEIGHTS, CA (MPG)**

- You could feel it throughout the room, what honoring our country's veterans means when good people come together to create something special. Men and women of our armed service gave everything they had to give us what we have today. The Wall That Heals shows the ultimate respect we have for those gone before us, and for their loved ones who carry on today.

Stones Gambling Hall invited guests to join in



Commander Paul Reyes offers his gratitude for all those who contributed their time and donations to bring The Wall to Citrus Heights.

for the Eighth Annual to recognize The Wall "21" Award Reception That Heals Committee on

Tuesday, December 12.

The Wall That Heals is a three-quarter scale replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial along with a mobile Education Center, that was built at Rusch Park in Citrus Heights from March 30 through April 2, 2023. The Wall That Heals honors the more than three million Americans who served in the U.S. Armed forces in the Vietnam War, and it bears the names of the 58,281 men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam.

Continued on page 2

**David Villanueva Appointed County Executive**



David Villanueva

**Sacramento County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento County Board of Supervisors unanimously agreed to appoint Assistant County Executive David Villanueva as County Executive. The appointment is effective January 28, 2024.

"I am pleased to announce that the Board of Supervisors voted unanimously to appoint David Villanueva as County Executive," said Board Chair and Third District Supervisor Rich Desmond. "David's career has been dedicated to public service with Sacramento County and the State of California, with which he has had extensive senior management and executive management experience."

"The County as an organization has made tremendous progress over the last three years. We are confident this will continue under David's leadership. David brings a unique combination of business, accounting and technology skills to this role, and he has shown in practice that his decisions are guided by honesty, integrity and a passion for service and transparency."

Appointed Assistant County Executive last May, Villanueva has been serving as Deputy County Executive for the Administrative Services Agency since 2011. Prior to that, he began his County service as Chief Information Officer/Director of the Department of Technology in 2008. Before his County service, Villanueva was the Deputy Director/Chief Information Officer for the California Department of General Services.

"I am deeply honored and grateful for the trust placed in me by the Board of Supervisors in appointing me as the County Executive," said Villanueva. "This opportunity to serve our community is both a privilege and a responsibility that I undertake with great dedication. I am committed to fostering a culture of transparency, collaboration, and customer service

Continued on page 4

## How Sac County Meets the Needs of Older Adults

**Sacramento County News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - California launched the Master Plan for Aging in 2021 to create a California for All Ages by 2030.

"We are all aging, whether we're 10, 20, 30, 40, or 70, 80, 90, or 100," says Heidi Richardson, program planner with the Sacramento County Department of Child, Family & Adult Services. The benefits of supporting older residents are the same as supporting all residents: a community where residents from birth to older ages can thrive, enjoy life, help others, and reach out for help when in need. "We think of older people as needing care and help — and some do — but we all do at points in our life. We want a society where people are able to say, 'I need help.'"



"We think of older people as needing care and help — and some do — but we all do at points in our life. We want a society where people are able to say, 'I need help.'" Photo courtesy of Kampus Production

### Sacramento's Growing Aging Population

According to the California Department of Aging, the population of Sacramento County residents over

age 60 will increase 187% from 2010 to 2060. Conversely, the population of younger residents is decreasing.

"What's going to happen in Sacramento County, in probably 2026, is the older adult population will

exceed the youth population. That will be the first time in history that that's ever happened," says Pam Miller, executive director of the Agency on Aging Area 4. "There's a whole lot of things out there

Continued on page 3



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# The Healing Continues

# CHP New Traffic Safety Laws



It was a powerful moment as the grandson of Gary Lee Strouse and his girlfriend experience the power of the Wall as they complete the rubbing of his grandfather's name and touch black granite in which his name is engraved for posterity.

Continued from page 1

The Wall That Heals Committee Members: Commander Paul Reyes, Ray Riehle, Tish Lovisone, Ron Myers, Jim Monteton, Jonathan Hitesman, Sylvia Thweatt, Gigi Rayford, Commander Kris Frey, Captain Jamie Tinker & Kermit Schayltz.

During the presentation Commander Reyes expressed his hopes that a permanent replica would be established in Citrus Heights for the Sacramento region in the near future.

Kermit Schultz, of Stones Gambling Hall, gave a very gracious speech outlining his thanks to all those who worked both on the event and the recognition ceremony at Stones. He especially mentioned Cristina Guccione of Stones for all of her support to honor local veterans.

It was announced that Rotary of Citrus Heights jumped in early and donated \$1,000. Then, when it was announced in the press and circulated within the city, the Citrus Heights community stepped up and donated approximately \$16,000 to really get the fundraising going. The City of Citrus Heights added to the cause and donated \$10,000. The total raised to bring The Wall to Citrus Heights was over \$37,000.

Presentations were made to all those who participated in making the event happen by Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost. They received honorary plaques and some honorary citations.

In attendance were many city officials and dignitaries, including Mayor Jim Schafer, Porsche Middleton, Bret Daniels, Jayna Karpinski, city manager



Ray Riehle outlined the contributions of the committee.

Ash Feeney, Jeff Slowey, Roberta McGlashen, and Citrus Heights Chamber of Commerce executive director Diane Ebbitt.

Ray Riehle offered a wonderful patriot medley on guitar. Ray was instrumental in getting the process moving to bring The Wall to Citrus Heights.

"I'm very proud of my husband Ray for his involvement in helping to bring the "Wall" to Citrus Heights. A beautiful way for our City to honor our Vietnam soldiers. We are grateful for what they did for our Country" Diane Ebbitt said.

From our previous story on the event, filed by reporter Elise Spleiss; Another component of the Education Center is to show how things have changed in many ways since the 1960's. The creation of the "In Memory Honor Roll invites loved ones of [those] died from war related illnesses after they came

home, to nominate them to be included on the online memorial. Because of the unfair way these men and women were received when they returned home, those returned and are returning do to respect and honor for their service. And Vietnam veterans are hearing "Welcome Home" more often."

Over 20 sponsors helped bring the Wall here including the City of Citrus Heights, Sunrise Marketplace, Stone's Gambling Hall, Rotary of Citrus Heights. Volunteers and helpers from all over gave from a few hours to working every day to help where needed.

The Stones Gambling Hall "21" Award is presented to a member(s) of the community who has shown exemplary commitment and dedication to the advancement of the City of Citrus Heights, a history of leadership, and demonstrated a passion for making a difference. ★

## CHP News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - As we head into the new year, the California Highway Patrol (CHP) is educating the public on traffic safety laws that were passed during this year's legislative session and signed by Governor Gavin Newsom. The laws referenced below take effect on Jan. 1, 2024, unless otherwise noted.

### Vehicles: Registration - AB 256 (Dixon)

Existing law requires current month and year tabs to be displayed on the registered vehicle's rear license plate. Beginning July 1, 2024, and until Jan. 1, 2030, a violation of vehicle registration shall not be the sole basis for any enforcement action before the second month after the month of expiration of a vehicle's registration. However, if a vehicle is stopped for any other Vehicle Code violation, enforcement action for a violation of vehicle registration may be taken before the second month following the month of expiration. Late registration fees from the Department of Motor Vehicles will still apply.

### Vehicle Removal: Expired Registration (AB 925, Ta)

Requires a peace officer or traffic enforcement official to verify the lack of current vehicle registration with the Department of Motor Vehicles before towing a vehicle for expired registration longer than six months and prohibits the vehicle from being towed if the officer or traffic enforcement official does not have immediate access to those records.

### Vehicles: Speed Safety System Pilot Program - AB 645 (Friedman)

The cities of Los Angeles, Oakland, San Jose, Glendale, Long Beach, and the City and County of San Francisco may install a limited number of cameras to enforce speed limits for a five-year pilot period in school zones and designated "safety corridors" – locations that have a high occurrence of fatal and injury crashes – and areas known for illegal street racing. Recorded violations will be subject to a civil penalty.

### Vehicles: Stopping, Standing, and Parking - AB 413 (Lee)

Designed to increase visibility at crosswalks, this law prohibits parking or stopping a vehicle along a curb at least 20 feet from a marked crosswalk or 15 feet of a crosswalk where a curb extension is present. The regulation only applies to the side of the road of the vehicle's approach to the crosswalk. Local jurisdictions may establish different distances through local ordinances by marking areas with signs or paint.

### Cruising - AB 436 (Alvarez)

The law removes city and county authority to regulate cruising via local ordinances. Additionally, the law legalizes "lowrider" vehicles to cruise California's streets, by removing the height restriction on lowered vehicles.

### Automobile Dismantlers: Catalytic Converters - AB 641 (Fong)

This law redefined an automobile dismantler to include individuals in possession of nine or more catalytic converters. Additionally, the law creates penalties for individuals

illegally acting as an automobile dismantler. Individuals and businesses who have a legitimate purpose for having catalytic converters, such as repair shops, will be excluded from penalty.

### Vehicles: Catalytic Converters - AB 1519 (Bains)

This law makes it illegal to remove a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) marking from a catalytic converter. It also makes it illegal to possess three or more catalytic converters that have had their VIN markings removed.

### Vehicles: Catalytic Converters - SB 55 (Umberg)

This law requires a motor vehicle dealer or retailer to have the catalytic converter engraved or etched with the VIN before a new or used truck or car is sold. The law does allow for the purchaser to decline having the VIN etched or engraved on the catalytic converter.

### Emergency Notification: Ebony Alert: Missing Black Young - SB 673 (Bradford)

This legislation establishes the "Ebony Alert," which allows law enforcement agencies to request the CHP to activate an alert for Black youth, including young women and girls between 12 to 25 years of age, who are reported missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances, at risk, developmentally disabled, cognitively impaired, or who have been abducted.

### Emergency Services: Endangered Missing Advisory - AB 946 (Nguyen)

This new law will aid in the recovery of missing persons who do not meet the age restrictions associated with the AMBER and Silver Alerts. The new law authorizes law enforcement agencies to request the CHP activate the "Endangered Missing Advisory" for public distribution of missing person information within appropriate geographical areas when specific criteria is met.

### Vehicle Safety Regulations - SB 68 (McGuire)

This law authorizes the CHP to establish rules and regulations allowing commercial vehicles capable of carrying more than 500 gallons of fuel to exceed the standard 10 hours-of-service limit during Governor-declared State of Emergencies. The exception only applies for the purpose of vehicles transporting fuel for refueling aircraft used in emergency-related activities, including fire suppression.

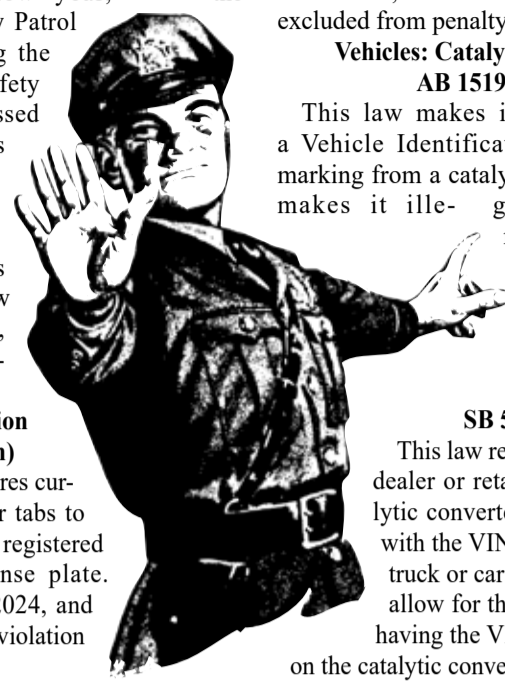
### Pupil Transportation: Driver Qualifications - SB 88 (Skinner)

This law will require drivers and their vehicles which are used by a local educational agency to provide pupil transportation for compensation, to meet certain safety requirements.

### Vehicles: Zero-Emission School Buses: Signage - SB 775 (Padilla)

This law authorizes a school district, county office of education, or charter school using a zero-emission school bus to transport pupils at or below the 12th-grade level to place signage on the rear of the zero-emission school bus that identifies the school bus as a clean air zero-emission bus. It also authorizes the CHP to issue guidelines governing the size and placement of that signage.

The mission of the CHP is to provide the highest level of Safety, Service, and Security. ★



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# Start the New Year by Adopting a Pet

## Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - There's no better way to start the new year than by adopting your new best friend from Bradshaw Animal Shelter. To ring in a new year of adoptions, the shelter celebrated the first adoption of 2024: an 11-year-old dog named Mini. Mini, a Miniature Pinscher mix and senior dog, was exactly what Christena Austin was looking for.

"Old dogs need a good home too," Austin said. She knows a thing or two about adopting older dogs: she met her last pup, Violet, when Violet was 12 1/2 years old. At first, Austin recalls walking away from Violet, thinking she was too old to adopt, but "something made me go back for her," Austin said. The pair spent five memorable years together, but Violet recently passed away at the age of 17 1/2. Austin felt called to give another old dog a new lease on life and is ecstatic to

welcome Mini into her home. "She will be treated like a queen," Austin says.

There are still so many wonderful pets who are looking for forever homes. If one of your resolutions going into 2024 is to live a healthier lifestyle, a pet can help you get there. Studies have shown that pets can have positive effects on our health: pets can increase opportunities to exercise, get outside, and socialize. Regular walking or playing with pets can decrease blood pressure, cholesterol levels, and triglyceride levels, and the companionship that pets provide can help manage feelings of loneliness and anxiety.

Ready to add a new pet to your home? Before visiting Bradshaw Animal Shelter, you can view all of the dogs, cats, and other animals available for adoption, or you can take a walk around in person to see whom you fall in love with. To help match you with your new best friend, the shelter offers adoption

counseling, and if you're looking to adopt a dog and have an existing dog at home, you can bring them to the shelter for a meet and greet to make sure it's a good fit for your four-legged family members as well.

Your new pet's adoption includes their spay/neuter surgery, up-to-date vaccinations and monthly preventatives, a microchip, and a one-year license for Sacramento County residents. Adoption fees are, for example, \$50 for adult dogs one year and older, \$75 for puppies, and \$50 for cats and kittens.

Bradshaw Animal Shelter is located at 3839 Bradshaw Rd. in Sacramento and is open Tuesday through Sunday from 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. with extended hours on Wednesdays from 12 p.m. - 6 p.m. You can also meet adoptable pets at Petco adoption center located at 8840 Madison Ave. in Fair Oaks from 12 p.m. - 5 p.m. on Wednesdays and 1 p.m. - 4:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays. ★

# CAPIAA Welcomes its New Executive Director, Khydeeja Alam



Khydeeja Alam was appointed new executive director of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. Photo courtesy of Speaker's Office, California State Assembly

## CAPIAA News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA) is thrilled to announce the appointment of Khydeeja Alam as its new executive director. Khydeeja Alam was sworn in by the Honorable Robert Rivas, speaker of the California State Assembly, at the State Capitol surrounded by family and friends.

"California's diverse AAPI communities enrich and strengthen our state in countless ways and have a pivotal role in driving our state and nation forward," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "Director Alam brings more than a decade of experience working on a variety of priority issues for the state, and deep ties to nonprofit and philanthropic partners that will help further the Commission's important work. I thank her for her dedicated service to our state, and commitment to elevating the needs and concerns of our dynamic AAPI communities."

Khydeeja brings a wealth of experience and leadership in advocacy, non-profit, and state government to this role, and the commission is confident in her ability to lead CAPIAA in its mission to elevate the political, economic, and social issues of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

"I extend a heartfelt congratulations to Ms. Khydeeja Alam for this exciting appointment. I have had the pleasure of witnessing her career unfold through the years as a former colleague," said Speaker of the California State Assembly Robert Rivas. "She is passionate, determined and a fierce advocate for her community. There is no one better suited to represent the best interests of over 6 million Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who call California home. As speaker, I look forward to working alongside her in this new capacity."

One of the key focus areas for CAPIAA under Alam's leadership will be to educate, raise awareness, and advocate for the rights and safety of AAPI communities. The Commission will work towards an inclusive and supportive environment for all residents of the state.

"The Commission is excited about the fresh



The Honorable Robert Rivas, right, speaker of the California State Assembly, administers the oath of office to Khydeeja Alam. Photo courtesy of Speaker's Office, California State Assembly

perspective and dynamic leadership that Khydeeja Alam brings to the table. Khydeeja will undoubtedly play a crucial role in advancing CAPIAA's mission to ensure the voices and needs of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are at the forefront of discussions and investments by California decision makers," said CAPIAA Chair Serena Kirk.

As executive director, Alam will spearhead efforts to maximize outreach efforts with Asian and Pacific Islander American communities, including informational campaigns about public and private programs that benefit community interests, and addressing issues of access and cultural language sensitivity within state agencies, departments, and other commissions. Most importantly, Alam will bring visibility around the incredible work the commission continues to do on behalf of California's AAPI communities.

"The California Asian American and Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (AAPILC) welcomes Khydeeja Alam as the new executive director for the Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA). The Caucus looks forward to continued partnership with the Commission under the leadership of Khydeeja to ensure that we continue to uplift and mobilize our AAPI community here in California," said Assemblyman Evan Low, chair of the AAPILC.

Alam will also play a pivotal role in providing assistance to policymakers and state agencies by identifying the needs and issues of AAPI communities, developing appropriate responses, and implementing programs to address these concerns effectively.

"I welcome Khydeeja Alam as the new executive

director of CAPIAA. Her lived experiences as an immigrant and her hard work that led her to be where she is today is an incredible benefit to the AAPI community and a celebration of the rich tapestry of perspectives that will guide CAPIAA towards meaningful progress," said State Treasurer Fiona Ma.

The only ethnic commission established by California state law, CAPIAA's mission is to address the diverse and complex needs, issues, and concerns of Asian American and Pacific Islander American communities. The commission plays a crucial role in advising the governor and legislature on the views, needs, and concerns of the state's population of over six million Asian and Pacific Islander Americans.

"Khydeeja Alam's dedication to public service will serve her well as executive director. She's a respected leader in her community and trusted advisor to many lawmakers. I look forward to seeing what she will accomplish in this new role," said Senate President pro Tempore Toni G. Atkins

Khydeeja Alam: "I am honored and grateful for the opportunity to represent the AAPI community. As CAPIAA's new executive director, I look forward to continuing the commission's incredible work, and taking it to the next level, while ensuring that over six million AAPI community members have a strong representation. I believe the stronger the footprint of the commission, the stronger and more resilient the AAPI communities will be. As a first Pakistani American in this role, I wear my identity with pride. This position allows me to pay it forward, uplift, and empower the community and the next generation of AAPI leaders." ★

# How County Meets the Needs of Older Adults

Continued from page 1

that are happening for the first time that older adults are experiencing. I think the increase in housing costs, the increase in food costs, and your income probably going down because you're older, it's like the perfect storm for folks to need a lot of services."

Agency on Aging Area 4 services cover Sacramento, Nevada, Placer, Sierra, Sutter, Yolo and Yuba counties. Celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, Agency on Aging, Area 4 supports older residents by connecting them with programs that can help with housing, food insecurity, caregiver resources, legal services, health care and more. Locally, housing, food insecurity and transportation are top issues, says Miller.

## Planning To Meet Future Needs

In February 2021, Sacramento County joined AARP's Age-Friendly Network of States and Communities. Created by the World Health Organization and implemented by AARP, age-friendly communities identify eight domains that make communities more livable. Those domains include accessible and affordable housing and health care, transportation options, green spaces, as well as opportunities for social and civic participation. Age-friendly communities "help older people thrive and experience connection and joy in their life," Richardson says. "Our goal for older adults — and everyone — is to thrive as residents of Sacramento County." In 2023, Sacramento received a grant from the California Department of Aging to develop

an Action Plan, the next stage of becoming an age-friendly community.

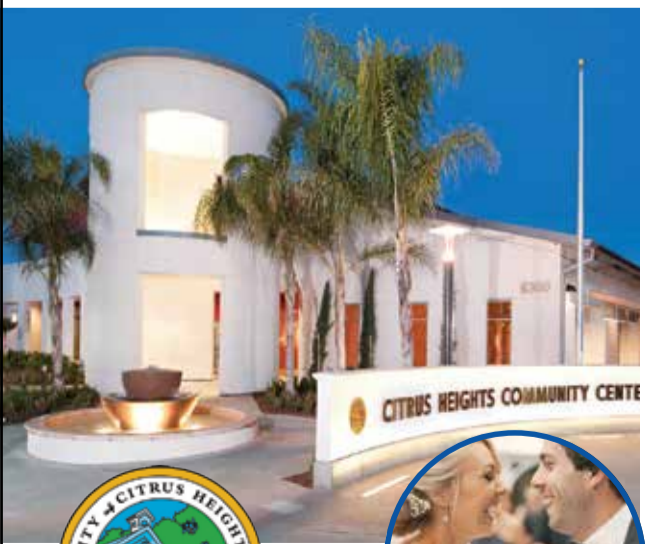
## Ageing And Disability Resource Connection

While Sacramento is working towards an age-friendly future, there are many current resources, programs and supports available. The Aging and Disability Resource Connection helps older adults and people with disabilities stay in the community by providing resources through information and assistance, person-centered case management and other important services. The goal is to keep people out of long-term care. Multiple community agencies and government programs are part of the Aging and Disability Resource Connection and work together to help older adults and people living with disability connect to services that are right for them.

## General Resources for Older Adults

**Senior Resource Guide** - Phone: 2-1-1 or 1-844-546-14642; **Agency on Aging Area 4** - Phone: 916-486-1876; **Aging and Disability Resource Connection** - Phone: 1-800-211-4545; **ACC Senior Services (includes Meals on Wheels)** - Phone: 916-394-6399; **Sacramento County Department of Child, Family and Adult Services** - Adult Protective Services (APS) Phone: 916-874-9377; In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS): Phone: 916-874-9471; **Resources for Independent Living** - Phone: 916-446-3074. ★

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# It's A New Year, But California Will Continue To Struggle With Existential Issues In 2024



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

California enters the new year with its existential issues still unresolved, and a new one – an immense budget deficit – threatens to make dealing with them even more difficult.

California has made very little progress, if any, on narrowing its shortage of housing, its levels of homelessness and poverty remain among the nation's highest, and its population is declining as hundreds of thousands of Californians decamp for other states.

The Legislature's budget analyst has calculated that California faces a \$68 billion gap between revenue and already programmed spending over a three-year period that began in 2022. Annual deficits in the \$30 billion range thereafter.

Next week, Gov. Gavin Newsom will quantify his version of the yawning gap and how he proposes to close it, touching off six months of negotiations with the Legislature on a 2024-25 budget.

It will dominate election-year discourse in California and complicate Newsom's simultaneous efforts to expand his national political image by portraying California as a model of compassionate and effective governance that should be emulated elsewhere.

Newsom and other statewide officials – Democrats all – will not be on the ballot this year, and it's certain that Democrats will continue to enjoy supermajorities in both legislative houses. California's only electoral uncertainties are which of three Democrats will fill the late Dianne Feinstein's seat in the U.S. Senate and outcomes in as many as 10 congressional districts that could determine which party controls the House of Representatives.

The big election year action will be on a spate of high-dollar ballot measures, particularly those that would affect how Californians are taxed. While it's coincidental that tax issues are arising just as the state experiences one of its periodic budget deficits, the juxtaposition does give the campaigns for and against them an added flavor.

The most prominent tax measure, sponsored by the California Business Roundtable and other corporate groups, would make raising state and local taxes more difficult. If passed, it would require voter approval of any state tax increases and increase voting thresholds for local taxes.

Democrats and their allies, especially public employee unions, despise the measure, and the Legislature seeks to undermine it with a constitutional amendment – also on the November ballot – that would increase the required voting margin for measures that increase margins for taxes.

In addition to those dueling propositions, a third measure, also placed on the November ballot by

the Legislature, would lower the voting threshold for local taxes and bonds for infrastructure improvements. Having competing ballot measures on the same issue has become something of a trend in recent elections.

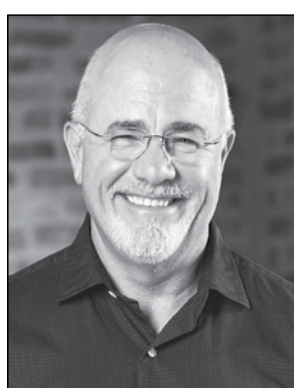
Those, however, are just three of the propositions that will, or could be, placed before voters this year.

Three other biggies are: a business-backed initiative to repeal the Private Attorney General Act, a unique California law that allows private citizens to file class-action lawsuits against corporations; an oil industry referendum that would repeal the Legislature's imposition of a 3,200-foot buffer between oil wells and "sensitive receptors" such as schools and homes; and the latest of many attempts to make it easier to enact rent control laws.

All in all, voters will decide one measure on the March primary ballot – Newsom's mental health bond – and at least a dozen others in November. Competing interests could easily spend a quarter-billion dollars to persuade voters.

Interestingly – and perhaps sadly – none of them will materially affect the aforementioned existential issues that have come to define California in the 21st century. The chances are quite strong that when Californians look back on 2024 a year hence, those issues will be as depressing as ever.

Dan Walters has been a journalist for more than 60 years, spending all but a few of those years working for California newspapers. ★



But Will He Listen?

Dear Dave,

My best friend is having financial problems, and I'm worried about him. He's "between jobs" now and making less than \$600 a month through a part-time job. He says he's holding out for his dream job, which is about ten hours away, but even when he's working full time, he always asks to borrow money or says he's running low. He interviewed for his dream job several months ago, and I haven't got the heart to tell him he was probably passed over for the position. Is there anything I can do to help him?

– Garrett

Dear Garrett,

I assume that since you're good friends, he's willing to listen to what you have to say. There's absolutely nothing wrong with having a dream job. You just have

## Dave Ramsey Says

to be practical and realistic at the same time.

This next part is more observation than insult, so I hope you'll understand. Your friend sounds to me like he might be a little impulsive and unrealistic. When it comes right down to it, maybe a touch immature, too. So, I think what we're talking about here is how to give your friend a gentle, well-intentioned nudge in a more realistic direction. He needs to open his eyes to some positive financial realities of life—like living on a written, monthly budget—and not making a habit of chasing rainbows and making excuses.

If he came to me for advice, the first thing I'd tell him is that the most employable people are ones who aren't broke. When you go into a job interview and you're broke, it's easy to come off as desperate and tense. That doesn't make for a very good interview.

The answer to that, when you're essentially unemployed, is to work any legitimate full-time job. At the very least, two, three or even four part-time jobs. Deliver pizzas, wait tables

and mow yards. It's doesn't matter what you're doing, as long as you're generating a livable income for yourself. Smile and be professional at whatever you're doing, too. You never know when you might come face-to-face with your next real employer. But none of this will happen if you're working three or four hours a day, and spending most of your time at home in front of the television.

I hope this helps. I hope your friend will listen to you and understand you have his best interests at heart. But if he doesn't, all you can do is hope for the best and pray for him.

Best of luck, Garrett. You're a good friend.

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is an eight-time national best-selling author, personal finance expert and host of *The Ramsey Show*. He has appeared on *Good Morning America*, *CBS This Morning*, *Today*, *Fox News*, *CNN*, *Fox Business* and many more. Since 1992, Dave has helped people take control of their money, build wealth and enhance their lives. He also serves as CEO for Ramsey Solutions. ★



## Tour of '24

And so a New Year begins with hopes of better things to come. So I checked in with World-Renowned Psychic/Medium **Mary T. Browne** to give us a glimpse into this New Year with a practical no sugar-coated Pablum, so we can be prepared for just about anything we have to face and make it through. **Mary T** has been on my POPPOFF Radio Show many times and is a real straight shooter. She has authored several books including "**Life After Death**" and "**The Power of Karma**" and "**The 5 Rules of Thought.**" World leaders and celebrities alike turn to **Mary T** for counsel.

1. Americans will become more tired of wars and a majority will be against sending more funds to the Ukraine in 2024.
2. 2024 will see greater instability in the Middle East as the war between Israel and Hamas intensifies.
3. The economy will be bumpy and inflation will begin to rise again but not to the levels seen in 2021.
4. Global shipping interruptions caused by attacks on ships in the Red Sea will create supply chain problems resulting in price increases.
5. People will remain burdened by housing, energy and food prices.
6. Artificial Intelligence will have a much larger impact at a much faster pace than people are prepared for. 2024 will see a huge rise in the use of AI resulting in a greater loss of jobs than anticipated. Jobs will not only be lost in assembly lines,

store checkout aisles and fast-food restaurants, but finance, research, editing, law and sales just to mention a few. Fake influencers generated by AI will become more problematic resulting in confusion and political interference.

7. Governments will begin to work on passing laws to slow down the use of AI, but there is no turning back. We must learn to work with AI and it is time for people to become educated about it. 8) She sees more people turning to meditation as many are seeking ways to find greater harmony in this unbalanced world. She suggests that we use the word Harmony to help us if we find ourselves in turmoil. Take a deep breath and quietly say 'Harmony' and concentrate. This tiny exercise can have a remarkable ability to calm us.

We sure do have a lot to think about in 2024. The world is in turmoil and all we are trying to do is survive the wave of bad that may come to us every day. But I know **Mary T** believes that we can and will survive if we stay strong. I know we can make it through thick and thin if we just hold on to belief, belief in a greater power than we are and know we will be guided with a wisdom that will help us through these rough times. If you want to know more about **Mary T. Browne**, you can check out her website at [www.MaryTBrowne.com](http://www.MaryTBrowne.com). She is one remarkable force for good.

HAPPY NEW YEAR with BLESSINGS to go with it!!!

## David Villanueva Appointed County Executive

Continued from page 1  
excellence within our organization.

"In the spirit of public service, I look forward to collaborating with our dedicated team and community stakeholders to continue to build a County government that is responsive, accountable, and committed to making a positive impact in the lives of our residents."

During his tenure at the County, Villanueva implemented a number of initiatives. Most recently, he led the County's new Leadership Development Academy program, designed to enhance leadership skills, learn global trends impacting

leadership and sustain positive changes in the organization. He also implemented his Agency's departments in the County's Organizational Culture Change Initiative and managed the formation of the Climate Emergency Mobilization Task Force.

Villanueva is a longtime member and the current Chair of the Board of Trustees for Plumas Lake School District. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from California State University, Sacramento, and recently completed the Harvard Kennedy School Executive Education program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. ★



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MEMORIAL

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As Rick's wife, Mary Jane Popp. I can truly say "It's A Wonderful Life" absolutely describes the life of my beloved Rick Sprunger. He was a great son, a dedicated and loving husband for nearly 53 years, a decorated Vietnam Veteran, and so caring that he always had my back for whatever I created from the most serious to the crazy antics I came up with. He was always there for me from being a cameraman for my TV work to helping me make my dreams a reality. He was a one-of-kind in all he did from writing scripts to producing award-winning films for the government. His creative talents always shined. Whatever task Rick took on, you could count on



it being done to perfection. To say he will be missed will never be enough. But we are and always will be soulmates forever. Rick is survived by me Mary Jane, sister-in-law Mary Frances Popp, and our two four-legged kids Ice and Trekker. Rick was so dedicated to animal rescues like "Golden Retriever Homeward Bound." For over ten years, he helped

to retrain and let frightened dogs know they were loved. Rick cared for all creatures big and small. Also left to remember Rick is his great family of cousins in Berne, Indiana.

Funeral services will be held Thursday January 11 at high noon at Sierra View Funeral Home 6201 Fair Oaks Blvd in Carmichael California, beginning with honor guard presentation. For donations, please pick your favorite charity and donate in Rick's name. Of course he would love donations for any animal charities.

A piece of my heart is with you in Heaven my darling Rick. But our love will live on till we meet again in a better place, and share that special bond forever.

# The IRA Kills Incentives for Medical Innovation; Hardly a Win for Americans



Commentary by Sally C. Pipes

The Biden administration recently announced the first 10 drugs that will be subject to price controls under Medicare as part of the Inflation Reduction Act. The president celebrated the occasion, saying, "We took on Big Pharma and special interests... and the American people won." "Won?" The next generation of American patients will not feel like they "won" when they're stuck waiting even longer for effective treatments -- if those treatments ever materialize.

Price controls invariably lead to shortages in the short term -- and warp the financial incentives that underpin drug research and development in the long term.

Historically, drug companies have worked to bring medicines to market as quickly as possible. The sooner patients started taking a drug, the sooner the drugmaker could begin to recoup the more than \$2 billion, on average, it spent developing it.

After a treatment hit the market, firms routinely conducted additional

research to see if it was effective against diseases other than the one it was approved to treat. If that research proved successful, companies applied for approval to treat these additional "indications" and marketed the drug to additional groups of patients.

This strategy helped bring countless new treatments to patients who didn't have any other options. Since 2003, the Food and Drug Administration has approved more than 90 follow-on indications for orphan drugs, which treat rare diseases. The majority of cancer treatments from 2006 to 2012 were approved for at least one follow-on indication -- roughly 40% of which were a different cancer subtype.

Unfortunately, thanks to the IRA, discoveries like these may soon be fewer and farther between.

The law's price controls are dressed up as "negotiations" between Medicare and drugmakers. If a drugmaker declines to accept the government's offer, then it faces an excise tax of up to 95% on the drug in question's sales or must withdraw all its products -- not just the one subject to negotiations -- from Medicare and Medicaid.

These price controls will significantly shorten the period in which pharmaceutical companies can recoup their investments in research and development. That's particularly true for small-molecule drugs -- typically pills

-- which can be hit with price controls under the IRA after just nine years on the market.

Biologics -- usually injections or infusions -- aren't subject to price controls until 13 years after approval.

Roughly half of a medicine's sales are made after year nine, in years 10 to 13. So it's only rational that some drug companies would adjust their research, development, and launch strategies accordingly.

Some may wait to seek approval until they've zeroed in on the largest patient population possible -- even if they're confident they could get approval faster for a smaller group of patients with a different disease.

The IRA is also scrambling drug companies' incentives to do further research into follow-on indications. Devoting time and money to find out if a drug can treat another disease may not make financial sense once the nine-year price-control clock has started.

Patients will be the ones who pay the price for treatments delayed or never developed in the first place. That's not a win for the American people.

Sally C. Pipes is President, CEO, and Thomas W. Smith Fellow in Health Care Policy at the Pacific Research Institute. Her latest book is *False Premise, False Promise: The Disastrous Reality of Medicare for All* (Encounter 2020). Follow her on Twitter @sallypipes. ★



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# A Budget Rollercoaster

By Alexei Koseff, CALMatters.org

With tax revenues in a free fall comparable to the Great Recession and the dot-com bust, California faces a projected \$68 billion budget deficit next year that will require spending cuts and reserve funds to close, state finance officials said today.

The new estimate from the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office, released as Gov. Gavin Newsom finalizes his January budget proposal, reflects a substantially delayed tax-filing period this fall where collections came in far below what lawmakers expected when they adopted a spending plan over the summer.

This projected deficit would be a record for California. But officials noted that it is partly because the budget has grown so much in recent years — the most recent was more than \$300 billion — and that the state has closed similar or worse spending gaps, by percentage, in the past.

Legislative analyst Gabriel Petek cautioned that California is better prepared to respond to the situation than during the economic recession 15 years ago, because it has since built several multibillion-dollar rainy-day funds, though the state is also looking at a structural deficit of about \$30 billion annually going forward.

"I go with the word 'serious.' A serious budget problem," Petek said during a briefing with journalists. "I would stop short of calling it a crisis."

H.D. Palmer, a spokesperson for Newsom's Department of Finance, said the administration will have different numbers when the governor presents his 2024-25 spending plan next month, but Newsom is preparing to address a significant deficit.

"Both the Governor and the



A California Analyst predicts a \$68 billion deficit. Gov. Gavin Newsom unveils his revised budget proposal for 2023-24 during a press briefing at the state Natural Resources Agency in Sacramento on May 12, 2023. Photo by Rahul Lal, CalMatters

Legislature have a substantial challenge before them in closing a very large revenue gap in this budget," Palmer told CalMatters. "The IRS, with the best of intentions, created a situation this year that is entirely new territory."

Severe winter storms prompted the federal government to delay the income tax filing deadline for most Californians from April until November, and the state followed suit, giving an incomplete picture when legislators and the governor crafted the budget this summer.

It already accounted for a \$30 billion deficit, after two years of record surpluses driven by economic recovery and federal aid related to the coronavirus pandemic. But those collections were ultimately another \$26

billion below estimates — a drop of 25% from the prior year — digging a financial hole wbased on money the state committed in its spending plan.

This year looks weak as well, according to finance officials. California has been hit particularly hard by inflation, which pinched the housing market; a stock market downturn, affecting capital gains; and a drop in investments in the tech industry, which has pulled back on initial public offerings. Overall tax revenues are projected to be \$58 billion below assumptions in the multi-year budget window.

Though the Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that tax revenues will begin growing again next year, the recovery is likely to be slow, opening up long-term funding shortfalls that

could affect essential programs in future years.

"There are enough options available to address this immediate problem," Petek said. "Our high-level suggestion to the Legislature is just to be judicious about reserves because there's a lot of uncertainty ahead, so preserving some of that resilience would be helpful."

His office recommended that Newsom declare a fiscal emergency, allowing the state to dip into as much as \$24 billion of its rainy-day funds, and that legislators pull back on one-time spending allocations that have not yet been distributed, potentially saving \$10 billion or more that had previously been set aside for transportation, environmental and education programs.

Petek also suggested that

California could cut the deficit by nearly \$17 billion over the next three years by recalculating its constitutionally-mandated funding obligation to schools and community colleges, known as Proposition 98, based on the lower revenues. Though this would decrease the state's base education funding over the long term, Petek said the immediate effects could be offset with reserves.

That option, in particular, could encounter stiff resistance in the Legislature. Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, a Hollister Democrat, released a statement last week, when it became clear that tax revenues would be substantially below estimates, committing to a budget that "protects classroom funding."

Newsom and lawmakers are also likely to confront months of tremendous pressure from advocates arguing that their priorities should be protected in any budget solutions. Statements started rolling out mere minutes after the Legislative Analyst's Office published its report.

"California leaders have stepped up before to prioritize Californians who are struggling to get by and they must continue this in 2024," said Pete Manzo, president & CEO of United Ways of California.

Republican legislators chastised their Democratic colleagues for continuing to make new spending commitments in recent budget cycles even as it became clear that the economy was increasingly shaky.

"Hopefully, the supermajority will see it is time for a more realistic budget strategy," Senate Republican Leader Brian Jones of San Diego said in a statement, "instead of throwing money at a laundry list of projects that sounds nice on the national television debate stage." ★

## DWR Announces Initial State Water Project Allocation of 10 Percent for 2024

### DWR News Release

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - On December 1, 2023, the Department of Water Resources (DWR) announced an initial State Water Project (SWP) allocation forecast of 10 percent of requested supplies for 2024. The SWP provides water to 29 public water agencies that serve 27 million Californians.

The December 1 initial water supply forecast is the first allocation of the new water year and is based on current reservoir storage and an assumption of very dry conditions. So far in October and November, storms have not brought as much rain and snow.

"California's water year is off to a relatively dry start. While we are hopeful that this El Niño pattern will generate wet weather,

this early in the season we have to plan with drier conditions in mind," said DWR Director Karla Nemeth. "California's water supply continues to benefit from our aggressive efforts last season to capture record rain and snow melt in our reservoirs and groundwater basins."

The initial SWP allocation forecast is looking ahead to 2024 and only applies to water deliveries in the year ahead. The allocation is calculated based on October and November precipitation, dry soils, runoff, and storage in Lake Oroville. It has no bearing on current water supplies or water captured in 2023. Most reservoirs in the state remain above average for this time of year.

### Highlights of California's Water Supply Storage

Last winter, a total of 3.5 million acre-feet of water was captured in SWP reservoirs. The SWP delivered 2.7 million acre-feet in allocated water plus an additional 400,000 acre-feet of supplemental water to SWP contractors in 2023;

To date, Lake Oroville, the SWP's largest reservoir, is at 133 percent of average.

San Luis Reservoir, jointly operated by the SWP and Central Valley Project, remains at 109 percent of average. Water stored in San Luis also includes water from 2023 being stored by water contractors for use in future dry years;

In coordination with the Metropolitan Water District (MWD), DWR provided water to fill up Diamond Valley Reservoir for the first time in three years.

The facility is a critical part of the Southern California water delivery system;

California was also able to redirect excess storm water for groundwater recharge. DWR has estimated more than 3.8 million acre-feet of recharge capacity in 2023, including more than 1.2 million acre-feet of groundwater recharge permitted by State agencies, 390,817 acre-feet of flood water recharged using the Governor's Executive Orders, and millions more acre-feet of managed and naturally occurring recharge.

It is not uncommon for the initial allocation forecast to be low following very wet years. For Water Year 2018, the initial allocation was 15 percent following an 85 percent final allocation in 2017. Water Year 2020 started

with a 10 percent initial allocation following a 75 percent final allocation in 2019. Both 2017 and 2019 were very wet winters. More historical data on SWP allocations is available at [water.ca.gov/programs/state-water-project/management/swp-water-contractors](http://water.ca.gov/programs/state-water-project/management/swp-water-contractors).

As the winter progresses, if California sees an increase in rain and snowfall, the allocation forecast may increase.

Each year, DWR provides the initial SWP allocation by December 1 based on available water storage, projected water supply, and water demands. Allocations are updated monthly as snowpack, rainfall, and runoff information is assessed, with a final allocation typically determined in May or June. ★

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 There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not

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# Social Security Matters

## If My Wife Claims Now, Will It Hurt My Social Security Amount?



**By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor**

**Dear Rusty:** I am 69 years old, and my wife turned 70 early this year. I am still working full time. My wife is not working, but she got a letter from Social Security saying she should take her Social Security as soon as possible.

My question is: since my wife has reached her full retirement age, can she take her SS without it affecting mine when I claim? I plan to work at least another year, depending on how the economy goes (I may have to work longer if it doesn't get better). I have IRAs and a 401k to pull from when I retire. **Signed: Anxious Husband**

**Dear Anxious:** The reason your wife received a letter from Social Security (SS) suggesting she claims now is because her benefit reached maximum some time ago at age 70. Thus, there is no reason for her to wait beyond age 70 to claim. By delaying past age 70 your wife is losing money so she should apply as soon as possible. I suggest your wife call Social Security at 1.800.772.1213 (or your local office) right away to request an appointment to apply for her

benefits and she should be sure to request six months of retroactive payments (SS will pay up to 6 months retroactively). If your wife has a "my Social Security" online account, she can also apply online at [www.ssa.gov/apply](http://www.ssa.gov/apply), but she should be sure to request six months of retroactive benefits in the "Remarks" section of the online application. Because your wife is more than six months past age 70, getting 6 months retroactive benefits will not reduce her age 70 benefit amount. Nor will your wife claiming her benefits now negatively affect your Social Security when you later claim.

Even though you plan to continue working, likely beyond 70 years of age yourself, you should not wait beyond age 70 to claim for the same reason – your benefit will reach maximum when you are 70. You can apply for your benefits up to 4 months in advance, and specify you want benefits to start in the month you turn 70. If you haven't already done so, you may wish to create your own "my Social Security" online account now at [www.ssa.gov/myaccount](http://www.ssa.gov/myaccount), which will make it easier for you to apply online at [www.ssa.gov/apply](http://www.ssa.gov/apply) when the time comes next year. Applying online is, by far, the most efficient way, but you need to have your online account set up first to do so.

Just so you know, there is no need to worry that you won't get credit for work income earned after you have applied for your benefits. Even after you are collecting benefits, Social

Security will automatically review your earnings each year when that info is received from the IRS (after you file your income tax return). If your most recent earnings are higher than those in any of the 35 years of lifetime earnings used to calculate your benefit when you claim, Social Security will automatically increase your monthly payment amount. In other words, you shouldn't delay past age 70 to claim Social Security because you're working – you'll still get credit for those earnings, automatically.

So, I suggest that your wife take fast action to apply for her Social Security benefits to avoid losing any more money, and that you plan to apply for your benefits to start when you turn 70. There is no financial advantage to waiting beyond age 70 to claim, even if you continue working.

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**Copy Editor** – We are seeking a part-time copy editor for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with Editor. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous editing experience is required.

**City Reporter** – We are seeking a part-time City Reporter for our newspaper group. This position will be assigned to work in the Carmichael office or another area office and works directly with the Editor. Work hours are flexible depending on assignments. Previous reporting experience is required.

**Advertising Services Support** – We are seeking a part-time Advertising Services Support person for our newspaper group. This position works in the Carmichael office and works directly with the owner of the company and the advertising/graphics staff. Work hours are flexible between 8:30 to 5:00 Monday through Friday. Previous office experience is required.

**Delivery Driver** – We are seeking a part-time Delivery Driver for our newspaper group. This position would transport newspapers from our Carmichael office to our offices in Marysville and Gridley. Work hours are from 8:30 to 4:00 every Thursday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. Must have your own reliable cargo van. This is an independent contractor position and pays a flat rate for your service.

**Newsstand Delivery Driver** – We are seeking a part-time Newsstand Delivery Driver for our newspaper group. This position works from the Carmichael office and delivers to our locations in the West Sacramento/Sacramento Region. Work hours are from 8:30 to 5:00 Thursday and/or Friday. Must be able to lift and move bundles of newspapers without assistance. You must have a reliable vehicle. This is an independent contractor position.

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# COMICS & PUZZLES

## The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

THIMBLE THEATRE PRESENTS **POPEYE**

## Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps

LET ME GUESS, YOU LEAVE A GIANT BOTTLE OF MILK OUT FOR BABY NEW YEAR FOR GOOD LUCK, TOO?

GIVE ME SUSTENANCE, MORTALS.

I DUNNO 'BOUT GOOD LUCK, BUT I KNOWS WE'LL HAVE BAD LUCK IF WE DONTSK!

## Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas

**HOCUS-FOCUS** BY HENRY BOLTINOFF

Find at least six differences in details between panels.

## TIGER

by BUD BLAKE

**GRIN AND BEAR IT** by Dave T. Phipps

Just Like Cats & Dogs

NEW PLAN... WAIT UNTIL I GET OUT OF THE HOSPITAL TO TAKE DOWN CHRISTMAS LIGHTS.

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### STATEPOINT CROSSWORD • WINTER FUN

**CLUES**

**ACROSS**

- Mulligatawny and gazpacho, e.g.
- Half of NFL
- "Oscar" of sports
- Relating to sight
- Sargasso
- Dugout glider
- Not fresh
- First H in HRH
- Face-to-face exams
- "Ice fishing shelter
- "Polar" activity
- \*Type of Christmas tree
- Diagonal
- Tax return professional, acr.
- Kind of cola
- Diaphragm spasm
- Scepters' partners
- Of two minds
- Jean Baker
- \*Rabbit's winter one is white
- Sheik's bevy?
- Type of dam
- Butcher's refuse
- Etna's emission
- Secret disclosure
- Stellar
- Chap or fella
- Diabetic ketoacidosis, acr.
- A or O, to blood
- Unit of electrical resistance
- \*Finger warmers
- \*Certain sleigh ride
- Courtroom excuse
- Gobbled up
- Train runners
- Land of taekwondo
- "Caroline in the City" Thompson
- Relating to Scandinavia
- Not home
- "Last winter mo.
- Klondike river

**DOWN**

- Acronym in a bottle
- Chooses
- Colorado's neighbor
- a.k.a. pilau
- Like a longer route?
- Grayish
- ATM extra
- Carpus, pl.
- Bring home the bacon
- Unforeseen obstacle
- \*Skier's aid
- Da or oui
- Jenny McCarthy to Melissa McCarthy
- Engagement, archaic
- di-dah
- Onslaught
- \*Warming drink
- Faculty members, for short
- Behind a stern
- \*Frosty's eyes
- Type of hood
- Apollo of "Rocky"
- Inuit skin boat
- \*a.k.a. anorak
- \*Betelgeuse, e.g.
- \*Snow, in Italy
- Lord's estate
- Lithuania's neighbor
- NaOH
- Like a rosebush
- Church song
- Meow, alt. sp.
- in-the-dark
- Milano moolah
- Toe the line
- Product of lacrimation
- Michael Douglas' dad
- "The Sun \_\_\_ Rises"
- \*What clues #4 and #34 Down have in common
- High affair
- Barack Obama, pre-pres.

**CROSSWORD**

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# The Veteran Homeless Crisis



Homeless Veteran on the street. Photo by Larry White from Pixabay

By Shreya Agrawal, CALMatters.org

California has poured billions of dollars into finding homes for unhoused veterans, but the number of former military service members living on the street has held steady for almost a decade. Today, a third of the nation's unhoused veterans are in California.

Gavin Newsom proposes a significant change in the state's strategy for ending veteran homelessness. His plan, included in a \$6.4 billion mental health bond he's sending to voters in the March primary election, would set aside funding specifically for veterans with serious behavioral health conditions.

That's a shift from California's last two major efforts to fund housing for veterans, both of which created units for a general population of former military service members.

The first effort began in the late 1990s, when the state built seven new veterans' homes over a period of 17 years. Today those veterans' homes are underused. They were built to house about 2,400 people, but only 1,575 veterans live in them. The 300-unit veterans home in Barstow was so underutilized in 2020 that Newsom moved to close it as he braced for a pandemic recession, although lawmakers blocked him from shutting the site.

The second push centered on a pair of ballot measures voters approved in 2014 and in 2018 that allocated \$4.6 billion to build housing specifically for former military service members. The money created the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Prevention Program, which has supported the construction of about 3,250 housing units for veterans to date.

Veterans advocates and state officials view the programs — along with federal efforts led by the Department of Veterans Affairs — as successful in reducing homelessness among former military service members. In the last 12 years, veteran homelessness in California has decreased by more than 30%.

But the trend in California mostly accounts for gains made during the Obama administration, when veteran homelessness peaked nationwide and the Department of Veterans Affairs moved aggressively to place former troops in housing. Since 2014, the number of homeless veterans in California has mostly plateaued around 10,000 to 12,000 people, according to annual counts released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Alex Visotzky, senior California policy fellow at the National Alliance to End Homelessness, said the high numbers of veteran homelessness result from the challenges veterans face on returning home in California's competitive housing market.

"When housing markets are unaffordable and incredibly competitive, those with the greatest needs are going to be more likely to fall out," he said.



The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin. Photo courtesy of RDNE Stock Project - Pexels

Newsom's new strategy in the mental health bond, advocates say, should help those most in need. The California Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that half of the state's unhoused veterans suffer from some kind of behavioral health issue.

The money in the bond would go to the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, which would work with CalVet "to focus specifically on housing veterans experiencing behavioral health challenges," said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, the Thousand Oaks Democrat who wrote the bill that ultimately put the bond on the ballot.

Studies have shown veterans are over-represented in the nation's homeless population. They may experience personal challenges, such as post-traumatic stress disorders or other mental health issues as well as disabilities related to their military service.

"Transitioning from that very specific culture and society to civilian life is a lifelong process," said Amy Fairweather, director of policy at the veterans advocacy group Swords to Plowshares. "If you do have any physical or mental disabilities, dealing with those and trying to re-enter civilian life can be very difficult."

California's long history of providing housing to former military service members dates to 1884, when it opened an estate in Napa County as the state's first veterans home. That site is still in operation, housing around 600 veterans on a picturesque property in wine country.

Altogether, the state now has eight veterans homes. The two largest homes are in fairly remote communities — one is in Napa County's Yountville and the second is in Barstow in the Mojave Deserts. Moving to them can mean living at a long distance from a veteran's family. That geography somewhat limits its interest in the homes.

The homes account for the lion's share of CalVet's \$650 million annual budget. Some advocates have called on the state to put money into programs that would

benefit people who don't necessarily want to live in a veterans home.

"The state should keep its promises to the current home residents, but as things change, the program needs to be less structured on just providing room and board for a very limited number of people and more structured on providing skilled nursing facility care for those who need it," said Ethan Rarick, executive director at Little Hoover Commission, which published a report on the veterans homes in 2017.

Outside of the veterans homes, California approved a series of bonds meant to help military service members find housing beginning in 2008. The Veterans Bond Act, passed that year, provided \$900 million to veterans through the CalVet Home Loans Program.

In 2014, California passed an initiative creating the Veterans Housing and Homelessness Program, which put \$600 million toward building multi-family homes for veterans. A second ballot initiative in 2018 gave another \$4 billion to the program.

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs, meanwhile, has kept up steady funding for housing vouchers that can provide a place to live for former troops. The Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing program, commonly known as HUD-VASH, was a centerpiece of the Bush and Obama administration's efforts to curb veterans' homelessness. It provides rental assistance to over 100,000 veterans nationally.

The number of homeless veterans in the U.S. peaked in the Great Recession, when the VA in 2007 reported some 154,000 former troops were homeless.

At that time, Fairweather of Swords to Plowshares said many of those deployed in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars were starting to come back home "to a society that wasn't prepared for it."

On top of that, they and older veterans struggled in the economic downturn, which led to more unemployment and homelessness.

"It all came together in a way that was really disadvantageous to the veterans," she said.

Last year, the VA estimated about 33,000 veterans were homeless nationwide. According to the 2021 annual homelessness assessment report by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, more than half of them are over age 55. The data also shows that Black veterans are more likely to be homeless than veterans belonging to other races.

Advocates say veterans can be reluctant to ask for help.

"When veterans ultimately fall down that hole into homelessness, what is happening along with that is that they're losing connection with friends and family, because they're ashamed that their life is falling apart and it's hard for them to ask for help," said Stephen Peck, president of the veterans support organization U.S. Vets.

Putting the money into the mental health bond comes with a tradeoff.

In advancing Newsom's mental health plan, lawmakers amended an early version of Assemblymember Irwin's veterans' housing bill that would have issued more bonds for the existing veterans' housing program. Without new funding, the program that supports construction of multi-unit veterans' housing is expected to run out of money in 2024.

Still, representatives for Newsom's ballot measure in a written statement said the bond would create more capacity to help former troops.

"Proposition 1 adds new money for California's most vulnerable veterans without any redirection or reprioritization from the current program. Without Proposition 1, there would be zero funding for homeless veteran housing moving forward, which is why the measure is so critically needed," the statement read.

Together, the ballot measure going to voters includes \$6.4 billion to fund projects for behavioral health issues and those at the risk of homelessness. It also includes a proposal to adjust how the state spends money it collects for mental health services from a tax on personal income over \$1 million, aiming to direct more of the money to housing.

The \$1 billion for veterans housing will be distributed in the form of loans and grants by the Department of Housing and Community Development.

Representatives from veterans' groups say the program's success could hinge on getting the word out, and providing services that provide a path out of homelessness.

At U.S. Vets, Peck said the nonprofit strives to create a community where veterans help veterans.

"Building that community is really important," he said. "A federal veteran who's been through the process already is probably more effective than we are as social workers."

Visit [www.chcf.org](http://www.chcf.org) to learn more. ★

# Ag Pass Program to Assist Farmers During Disasters



January flood waters caused millions of dollars in damage to area ag producers. Photo courtesy of Sacramento County

### Sacramento County News Release

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Last winter's floods took a devastating toll on the Sacramento area's agricultural industry. More than \$38 million in losses were reported by area farms. That loss of revenue included damaged crops, dead livestock, and damaged infrastructure.

When the flooding struck, commercial agricultural producers were forced to evacuate. In many cases, animals and equipment that couldn't be loaded onto trailers and moved were left behind, while crops were also left unprotected. Once out of the area, farmers were not allowed back in until the water receded. There wasn't a system in place to show law enforcement who belonged and who didn't during the crisis.

The Sacramento County Department of Agriculture recognized this issue that farmers and ranchers faced by leaving, and with the assistance of the County Office of Emergency Services, have developed a program to assist the local ag industry with a way to allow them back in to protect their farms and livestock during a disaster.

The Board of Supervisors has approved the County's first Ag Pass Program. Ag Pass will be activated during a declared disaster that allows, when safe, the ability for coordinated re-entry of commercial agricultural producers to an evacuated area through collaborative pre-incident planning, coordination, and implementation.

The County held a series of community meetings to discuss how to create the new program to allow qualified agriculture and livestock producers safe passage to their properties. The Ag Pass Program provides guidance and

direction for local governments and non-governmental organizations on how to safely allow accredited agricultural workers back onto their property to assess their businesses. To become part of the Ag Pass Program, commercial agricultural producers will need to register through the Sacramento County Department of Agriculture, Weights, and Measures.

Under the program, County accredited members will be limited to performing only those functions and tasks that have been determined essential for the support of commercial operations to lessen the impacts of economic loss or to provide auxiliary support to peace officers and emergency personnel in locating water sources and access routes.

The Ag Pass coverage is limited to registered commercial agricultural operations under the Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner's Office. An initial application for the Ag Pass will require Primary Pass holders to outline all critical tasks and require an approximate number of personnel.

"This pass does not give any special privileges or authorization to disregard the direction of public safety officials or force any employees, laborers, farmhands, or members of the public, regardless of their immigration status, to disregard the orders of any public safety official," said Chris Flores, Sacramento County Agricultural Commissioner.

Agricultural producers are encouraged to contact the County Department of Agriculture to learn more about this new program. Applicants must take training from the County before an Ag Pass is issued. All passes must be renewed annually.

Training classes are expected to begin in early 2024. ★

# Sacramento River Cats Join GOAL Sustainability Movement

### Sacramento River Cats News Release

**WEST SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento River Cats and Sutter Health Park have joined a collective of major venues in sports and live entertainment across the globe as a member of the industry-wide GOAL sustainability platform to champion social impact, climate action, and responsible change.

GOAL, which was founded in October 2022 by Oak View Group (OVG), the Atlanta Hawks & State Farm Arena, Fenway Sports Group, and green building expert Jason F. McLennan, is a community of sustainability-minded sports and entertainment operators which provides venues at different points in their sustainability journeys with tactical roadmaps, easy-to-use tracking tools, a library of resources and case studies, and access to like-minded, leading operators, vendors, and solution-providers, all committed to operating more sustainably, more urgently.

Sutter Health Park joins a growing list of venues, representing legendary teams and iconic places of mass assembly committed to leading, learning, collaborating and, in all cases, making a positive impact on their communities and for the planet. GOAL supports each venue's sustainability journey through data collection and analysis in addition to providing sustainability strategy, communications support and corporate partner engagement.

The Sacramento River Cats and Sutter Health Park have been an active participant in implementing sustainable best practices which included the installation of stadium solar panels, the use of internal LED lights, and intentional recycling efforts across the organization which include a food waste diversion system. Additionally, in partnership with area businesses, the River Cats created the Sustainability Circle in 2015 to work collaboratively to cultivate sustainable practices and reduce their carbon footprint.

"We look forward to continuing our renewable journey by joining the GOAL sustainability platform," said Chip Maxson, President/COO of the Sacramento River Cats. "This partnership will allow us to enhance our industry-leading efforts and further our commitment to keeping our region beautiful and healthy for generations to come."

The venues within GOAL represent different sports, different geographies, and different building types of varying sizes and

ages, ensuring that the input and feedback is worthy of the diversity of the live entertainment and hospitality industry. Some venues are already leading the way when it comes to climate action, and others are just beginning their respective journeys. But in all cases, these venues are action-oriented, climate-minded, and understand the urgency required to address a changing planet.

Properties within GOAL include: Acrisure Arena (Greater Palm Springs, CA), Budweiser Gardens (London, ON), CFG Bank Arena (Baltimore, MD), Chip Ganassi Racing (Pittsburgh, PA), Citi Field (New York, NY), Climate Pledge Arena (Seattle, WA), Co-op Live (Manchester, UK), Fenway Sports Group (Boston, MA), Footprint Center (Phoenix, AZ), Frost Bank Center (San Antonio, TX), Gainbridge Fieldhouse (Indianapolis, IN), Los Angeles Dodgers (Los Angeles, CA), Levi's® Stadium (Santa Clara, CA), MGM Music Hall (Boston, MA), Miami Heat (Miami, FL), Moda Center (Portland, OR), Moody Center at University of Texas Austin (Austin, TX), Mullett Arena at Arizona State University (Tempe, AZ), PPG Paints Arena (Pittsburgh, PA), Rocket Mortgage Fieldhouse (Cleveland, OH), Sacramento River Cats (Sacramento, CA), Spectrum Center (Charlotte, NC), State Farm Arena (Atlanta, GA), Subaru Park (Chester, PA), Target Center (Minneapolis, MN), UBS Arena (Belmont Park, NY), Wrigley Field (Chicago, IL), Xcel Energy Center (St. Paul, MN)

"Our collection of GOAL venues represents forward-thinking venues across the sports, live entertainment and convention industry," said Chris Granger, OVG360 President. "I applaud Sutter Health Park for their leadership, for their spirit of collaboration, and for their understanding of the urgency demanded by climate change. I look forward to working with Chip Maxson and his team, learning from them, and sharing the very best ideas and best practices with our industry as we race against the clock, together."

OVG's Sustainability Director Kristen Fulmer added, "We designed GOAL to make sure that the data points and thresholds for leadership meet venues anywhere along their sustainability journey, engaging – and without shaming – venues that are just getting started, while also enhancing efforts in venues that already make an impact in a variety of different topics, from waste diversion, to water conservation, to improved indoor air quality." ★

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- Beer Ader Red Ginseng Premium 60x20ml \$5.99/ea

**HOUSEWARES**

- BIJOU SPEEDY HAIR COLOR (REFILL ONLY) \$4.99/ea
- MOGAMODA SHAMPOO 300 g \$2.99/ea
- ELECTRIC RICE COOKER \$4.99/ea
- ELECTRIC RICE COOKER \$5.49/ea
- ELECTRIC RICE COOKER \$5.99/ea

**FROZEN & FISH DEPT**

- Kimchi Pancake 10.58 oz \$3.99/ea

**EUROPEAN DELI**

- Pitted Green Olives \$4.99/ea
- Green Cracked Olives \$3.99/ea