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# Gold River Messenger

VOLUME 13 • ISSUE 7

Serving Gold River and Sacramento County

JULY 2025

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## Let Freedom Reign

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Papa shields Freedom and Dragon from afternoon sun. The eagle parents share all duties of parenthood.

**Story and photos  
by Susan Maxwell Skinner**

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)**  
- Months before the recent 249th anniversary of the United States independence, the American River bald eagles hatched two new eaglets.

Because of their rarity in these parts and because their species is America's most celebrated icon, our local Mama and Papa Bald have a national following. When they built their nest in 2016, it was considered the closest to Sacramento in recorded history. The couple's suburban success has since reflected the recovery of a species from near extinction.

I was photographing "The Balds" even before I saw them stick foundation twigs in a selected pine. Next spring, two eaglets hatched. Local school children named the babies

Peekaboo and Poppy.

Officially, the 2025 babies are recorded as eaglets 20 and 21. Unofficially, and for my own blog, I call them Freedom and Dragon. The names honor Dragon Freedom, the SpaceX capsule that flew to the rescue of stranded NASA astronauts in March.

The eaglets have also achieved magnificent flight. Precocious alpha Freedom beat her projected launch date by days. No fuss, no preamble.

"It's like she woke up, ate breakfast and decided to jump off a branch," said an observer.

More tentative, brother Dragon made a maiden passage more than a week later.

Every day now, river trail hikers see these juveniles in harum-scarum flight. But in contrast to accidental flops, falls and misplaced fledglings of previous

seasons, the 2025 nursery has been almost accident-free, as of press time.

A soap opera drama unfolded when magpies nested in the tree that the Balds claimed nine years ago. As magpie chicks hatched, their aggressive parents dive-bombed the big raptors. Birds that top the food chain can evidently deal with problematic neighbors. One day, there were baby magpies in a nest upstairs. Next day, there were none. Their parents were also evicted.

At nine weeks, Dragon took a tumble into lower nest infrastructure. Encouraged by his sister, he managed to scramble back to safety. The parents did not intervene. Survival lessons begin at home. On one of her first flights, Freedom was pursued by an angry osprey. This time, Mama sped to the fray. Feathers flew and

*Continued on page 3*

## SUN Bucks Returns for Summer 2025

**Sacramento County  
News Release**

**SACRAMENTO COUNTY, CA (MPG)** - Summer break is a season of sunshine and fun but for many Sacramento County families, it also brings a food access challenge.

That's why California Department of Social Services (CDSS) is bringing back SUN Bucks, also called Summer-EBT, this summer. Eligible families receive \$120 per eligible child to help fill the meal gap when schools are closed.

Children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals through a school meal application or an Alternative Income Form, CalFresh, CalWORKs or Medi-Cal, are automatically enrolled. You don't need to do anything to sign up.

SUN Bucks provides \$40 per month for food in June, July and August (\$120 total).

Children will automatically get SUN Bucks if they are 6 to 18 years old and get CalFresh, CalWORKs or Medi-Cal (below 185% Federal Poverty Level).

Anyone from babies to 22 years old, attending schools that are part of National School Lunch and/or School Breakfast Programs and are approved for free or reduced-price meals, will also automatically receive SUN Bucks.

Check with your child's school to make sure your free or reduced-price meal application or Alternative Income Form is on file.

Children who are attending Head Start, experiencing homelessness, living in foster care or part of a migrant family are also automatically eligible.

If your family is eligible, a SUN Bucks S-EBT card will be mailed to your home. You do not need to fill out an application. You will get one new SUN Bucks card for each eligible child. You can use SUN Bucks just like a debit card to buy food such as fruits, vegetables, meat, whole grains and dairy at grocery stores, farmers' markets and other places that accept CalFresh EBT benefits.

The state is issuing SUN Bucks cards by mail in stages by last name. If your child has not received a SUN Bucks card in the mail or you have questions about how to obtain a card, visit the California Department of Social Services SUN Bucks website at [cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks](http://cdss.ca.gov/sun-bucks) or call 1-800-560-0976 for more information.

To learn more about SUN Bucks, other food resources and whether your child is eligible, visit the Sacramento County Department of Human Assistance website at [ha.saccounty.gov](http://ha.saccounty.gov). ★

## District's 50th Park!

*CRPD Celebrates Exploration Park's Grand Opening*

**By Haley Waugh,  
Cordova Recreation  
and Park District**

**RANCHO CORDOVA, CA (MPG)**  
- On June 28, Cordova Recreation & Park District (CRPD) and the community celebrated a significant milestone, the grand opening of Exploration Park, the district's 50th park.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony was a celebratory occasion featuring speeches from Cordova Recreation & Park District Board of Directors and staff, local dignitaries and the support of community members.

Located at 12145 Hetch Hetchy Drive in Rancho Cordova, this six-acre



Cordova Recreation & Park District Board of Directors, staff and community members celebrate the grand opening of Exploration Park. Photo courtesy of Cordova Recreation and Park District

*Continued on page 3*

# Water Commission Tours Agricultural Water Recycling Project



From left are California Water Commission Vice-chair Kim Gallagher, Commissioner Ty Bland, Commission Chair Fern Steiner, Commissioner Jose Solorio, Commissioner Sandi Matsumoto, and Commissioner Alex Makler at the Stones Lake National Wildlife Refuge in Elk Grove. On June 18, the water commissioners toured the Harvest Water agricultural water recycling project. Photo courtesy of the California Water Commission

## California Water Commission News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento Area Sewer District (SacSewer) hosted a public bus tour of the Harvest Water Program as part of the California Water Commission's June 18 meeting.

The commission administers the Water Storage Investment Program (WSIP) to fund the public benefits associated with water storage projects.

One project, the Harvest Water Program, has received final funding and is currently under construction.

The Harvest Water Program is a

conjunctive use project to store and manage groundwater while improving stream flow, enhancing groundwater-dependent ecosystems, sustaining agricultural lands and improving regional water supply reliability.

This project, once constructed, will provide reliable, high quality recycled water to agricultural lands and existing habitats in southern Sacramento County.

The tour included several SacSewer and Water Storage Investment Program-funded Harvest Water Program sites, including the EchoWater Resource Recovery Facility, Harvest Water Pump Station, Bufferlands and active pipeline construction areas. ★



SacSewer hosted the California Water Commission on a public tour of the Harvest Water agricultural water recycling project in Elk Grove on June 18. Photo courtesy of the California Water Commission

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# Let Freedom Reign District's 50th Park!



**Raptor rumble.** A territorial osprey flies to the attack during one of Freedom's first river crossings.

*Continued from page 1*  
the abuser fled.

The siblings grew from hatchlings to adult size and flew by 12 weeks old. Still building muscle, they're now consuming more energy than ever. The parents are run-ragged to feed them. From river shallows, ducks disappear daily. Bluff-dwelling squirrels scamper at their own peril. Snakes, rats and voles ascend in yellow talons. Most juvenile eagle deaths occur from starvation in their first year. To fuel their chances, Bald parents introduce their babies to a vast river smorgasbord.

Last week, when I left the bluff in near-darkness, the white-headed providers were staking out a distant beach for waterfowl.

Yelling food anxiety, the juveniles flew to hurry them. Mama's scold sent them packing. Stealth is impossible with screaming kids. Mewling like kittens, they retreated a half-mile. Through dusk and distance, young eagle eyes monitored the hunters' every move.

In a provisioned utopia, Freedom and Dragon can't yet know their parents will soon urge them from the family pantry and toward independence. Love deals



**Clad in baby down at three weeks old, the hatchlings grow to adult-size by their 10th week and fly at 12 weeks.**



**Words of wisdom.** Mama and younger baby Dragon go beak-to-beak.

harsh lessons. The strong survive.

God bless the offspring of our national bird and God

Bless America.

*To protect the eagle family, the nest location is not revealed in this story.* ★



**Cordova Recreation & Park District Board of Directors and staff pose in front and atop "Galaxy's Grasp" art installation.** Photo courtesy of Cordova Recreation and Park District

*Continued from page 1*

neighborhood park offers a space for the community to play, connect and explore. With its wide range of amenities such as pickleball courts, half-basketball court, multi-use turf and shaded picnic areas, this park offers something for everyone.

At the heart of the park is one of the largest and most imaginative playgrounds that Cordova Recreation and Park District has installed in recent years. This park's space exploration theme is reflected in its play areas, architectural elements and landscaping, immersing visitors in an interactive and inspiring environment.

The playground features a space-inspired structure complete with stars, planets and a slide that orbits through them. Thoughtful shade structures ensure that play can happen comfortably year-round. Adding to the park is an interactive, climbable art installation.

This park and its elements were designed to celebrate the region's rich aerospace history and the community's contributions to rocket technology, including the Saturn V rocket.

"I'm so proud to have the honor of cutting the ribbon for the dedication of Exploration Park. It not only marks the 50th CRPD park but exemplifies the historic role Rancho Cordova played in the American Space Race through the work of the Aerojet General Corporation. This park not only provides residents with recreation but also education," said Cordova Recreation and Park District Board Chairperson Rick Sloan.

Cordova Recreation & Park District extends its heartfelt thanks to Cresleigh Homes, Sac Metro Fire and Tikiz Shaved Ice & Ice Cream for being part of this celebration.

For more information, visit [cordovarpd.gov](http://cordovarpd.gov). ★



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# Senate Bill 54 the So Called Values Act



By John McGinness

Much attention has been directed at immigration enforcement in California this year. Donald Trump made several campaign promises in his 2024 presidential campaign. Chief among those were commitments to improve the economy (reduce inflation) and enforce the existing immigration laws. He even went so far as to suggest the possibility of mass deportations. The result of his clearly expressed promises was a decisive win on November 5, 2024. In fact, to the surprise of many, Donald Trump not only prevailed in the electoral college, he won the popular vote and became the forty-seventh president of the United States. Among the first actions of the new president was the appointment of a no-nonsense border czar, Tom Homan who has been unequivocal in his commitment to relentlessly enforce immigration laws in this country.

The United States of America is often referred to as a democracy, when in fact, it is a constitutional republic. However, the method through which we elect candidates for office is through a democratic process. In the case of President Donald Trump, the

voters spoke clearly through the democratic process and chose the candidate who committed to strict immigration enforcement. That development put the state of California, and other blue states at odds with the new administration and the will of most Americans, as evidenced by the 2024 election outcome.

To develop a better understanding of how California got where it is today, we revisit history. In 2017 the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 54, the so-called Values Act which prohibited the practice of state and local law enforcement officers from interacting with personnel from Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This action by the legislature was taken without voter approval and against vocal opposition from law enforcement executives and rank and file law enforcement practitioners. It was signed into law by Governor Edmond G Brown, Jr and became law on January 1, 2018. Prior to that time, ICE personnel regularly visited, and in many cases were stationed in, major jails throughout the state of California for the purpose of monitoring the immigration status of criminal suspects booked into the facilities. That practice allowed for the peaceful transfer of jurisdiction from California peace officers - to immigration enforcement personnel. Additionally, when ICE had identified a person that was wanted and subject to arrest under their jurisdiction, they would routinely contact local law enforcement agencies for the purpose of ensuring local police were aware of the presence of armed plain clothes personnel engaged in dynamic law enforcement operations. That course of action ensured effective communication

in the spirit of maximum public and officer safety.

Senate Bill 54 outlawed each of those practices, foreseeably increasing the risk to the public, law enforcement personnel and even the suspects themselves. It is impossible to imagine a safer environment in which to effectuate the arrest of a criminal suspect than simply transferring that person from the jurisdiction of one law enforcement agency to another within the confines of a secure jail, a setting in which no one is armed, and escape is virtually impossible. Similarly, the capture of a fugitive with the presence of uniformed law enforcement personnel present in marked patrol cars, with ready communication capabilities with their federal colleagues, facilitated optimum elements for a safe outcome.

Nonetheless, the California legislature and governors, past and present, embraced this extraordinarily ill-conceived law and in so doing, hampered the safety of legitimate, statutorily, and constitutionally sanctioned law enforcement operations.

Effective January 1, 2018. ICE personnel were removed from the jails forthwith. No communication between and among state and local law enforcement personnel could take place. This eliminated the potential of an illegal immigrant with an egregiously violent criminal history, freshly arrested for a violation of state law to be properly referred to ICE.

For those of us who closely watch the actions of the California legislature, there was specific frustration with this course of conduct. Because the US Constitution (Article 1, Section 8, Clause 4) clearly delegates immigration enforcement power to the

Federal Government, preventing individual states from having their own processes for naturalization. Additionally, the US Supreme Court decided in Arizona v United States (2012), that immigration enforcement and naturalization is the sole province of the federal government.

In addition to the Constitutionally enumerated duty of the federal government to enforce immigration law, the U.S. Congress has codified specific laws in statute, i.e.: 8 U.S.C.1325 which makes it a crime for an alien to enter or even attempt to enter the U.S. at a time or place not designated by immigration officials, or to elude inspection. It is a misdemeanor for the first offense, but it can become a felony if the person has been previously deported and re-enters without authorization, or if that person commits other violations of law. Congress has also funded ICE, and the Executive Branch has given clear direction to personnel in ICE to enforce the law. The foregoing represents the law of the land in the United States of America in 2025. A person with a modicum of sixth-grade civics knowledge should understand that if there is dissatisfaction with the law, there are means by which laws can be changed. However, the notion of duly elected members of the legislative and executive branch of any state government simply and overtly defying the law is unconscionable.

The common refrain from Governor Newsom includes an assertion that the actions of the federal government in immigration law enforcement is a denial of democracy. Every Californian should know that federal immigration personnel enforcing the laws created and funded by a duly

elected Congress, and directed by the Executive Branch of the government, in a manner consistent with the language expressed in the U.S. Constitution, is the essence of democracy. Citizens who oppose the law have a right and arguably a duty to endeavor to change the law. Defiance of the law is not the answer.

Apropos of nothing above, but consistent with Governor Newsom's lack of understanding or willful defiance of the fundamentals of democracy is evidenced by another development of last November's election, Proposition 36. Nearly seventy percent of the California electorate passed Proposition 36; it passed in each of the very diverse fifty-eight counties in California. A significant portion of that proposition was the demand for treatment of chronic drug offenders. The people spoke clearly through that democratic act. Yet, Governor Newsom refuses to ensure funding for that critical treatment. It appears Governor Newsom's resistant democracy when he does not like the decisions of the voters.

To be clear, there is room for improvement on both sides of the divide. Constitutional officers should never waiver from their oath to the Constitution, and dignified communication facilitates the optimal outcomes.

Perhaps we heed President Abraham Lincoln and invoke our *Better Angels*.

California and the nation deserve better.

*John McGinness, MS is the retired sheriff of Sacramento County, an adjunct professor of criminal justice and host of the John McGinness Show on KFBK. He can be reached at 916-924-3901 or at john.jpm.solutions@gmail.com.* ★

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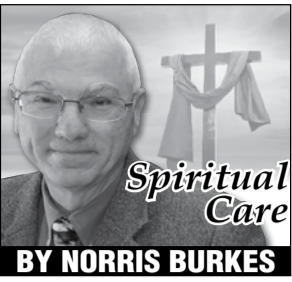
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# Chaplain Offers — Dating Advice?



BY NORRIS BURKES

opening line to avoid confusion: “Hello, this is Sara at Chispa Project, the non-profit in Honduras!”

“Hi, I’m trying to access my account and...”

“Ooh, so sorry!” Sara says in perfect Spanish, “You’ve reached Chispa Project, the non-profit in Honduras.”

“I really need to get on your site ASAP...” insists the caller.

“Sorry, we’re not related to the Chispa dating app. Wrong number.”

They beg her, “Can’t you connect me to the right person?”

Listening to Sara patiently explain – again and again – that she’s not tech support for a dating app reminds me of how often Jesus had to clarify his mission for those who misunderstood him. People sought a political savior or miracle worker, but Jesus kept emphasizing a different purpose.

Despite all the parables, analogies, metaphors, and symbols Jesus used, he was clear and repetitive about one thing in particular—love—the chispa that lights everything else.

When he said to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind,” and to “love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:37-39), he pointed to the fire that kindles true connection, purpose, and transformation. Like a single chispa that can ignite a flame, love sets everything in motion—whether it’s changing a life through a children’s book, finding a life partner, or growing closer to God by following Jesus’ example.

To be clear, this columnist does not endorse the dating app in question. I’m already locked into a lifetime subscription with my wife, Becky.

It’s not the fleeting spark

of romance I’m looking for, but a different kind of spark: one that ignites compassion, healing, and humility. These days, I find myself affirming the love that kindles true connection, purpose, and transformation – like Jesus taught.

How can we all become more fluent in the amor that demonstrates empathy? An amor that humbles us across differences?

In Greek, this type of amor is described as agape—a love that is unconditional, selfless, sacrificial. It’s the choice to love regardless of circumstances or feelings.

In English, it might seem that Chispa, the app, and Chispa Project, the non-profit, offer the same thing—a spark of love. Make no mistake, both are important and necessary, but they are different.

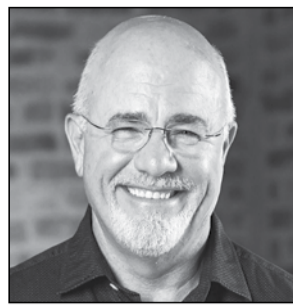
Chispa, the app, offers a chance at romantic love. Chispa Project, the non-profit, encourages the agape love for our neighbors.

I keep telling Sara that she should charge a minimum donation for each of the crisscrossed Chispa calls she gets, but she always mutters something about honesty and goofy dad ideas.

But now the choice is yours—what will you do to spark agape in whatever Chispa you end up calling? What chispa will you ignite in your community?

Sign up to receive this weekly column in your email box at <https://thechaplain.net/newsletter/> or send me your email address to [comment@thechaplain.net](mailto:comment@thechaplain.net).

All of Norris’s books can be ordered on Amazon. Autographed copies can be obtained on his website [www.thechaplain.net](http://www.thechaplain.net) or by sending a check for \$20 for each book to 10566 Combie Rd. Suite 6643 Auburn, CA 95602. ★



Dave Ramsey

# Dave Ramsey Says They Expect Me to Solve Every Problem

Dear Dave,

I have a cleaning and restoration business with 30 employees. Last year, we brought in \$3 million. Things are going very well overall, but considering what we do, I can get calls around the clock, seven days a week. I want to be there for my team as much as possible, but I’m also trying to get them to take on more responsibility and ownership when they’re on job sites. Do you have any suggestions?

– Joe

Dear Joe,

When someone brings me a problem, and drops it on my desk, I tell them to pick it back up. In other words, I want them to look at the problem as theirs—not mine. Then, I ask one question: Based on what you know about our company, what do you think we would do to fix this? Sometimes they’ll be right, and sometimes they’ll

be wrong. If they’re wrong, I’ll tell them to go back to their desk, and just quietly think for a few minutes. After, I want them to call me back with three possible solutions to the problem. I’ll explain which solution is the right one, and why. I’ll also explain why the other two weren’t the best ways to handle things.

Do you see what I’m getting at? They’re not going to grow if you solve every problem for them. Make them think it through. Because by doing this, you’re training them to make decisions. Do you know what else this does? It will eventually relieve you of being jarred awake in the middle of the night by a ringing phone. Joe, you’ve built a \$3 million company. You’ve got a big team working with you and making big things happen. You shouldn’t have to answer phone calls around the clock.

Transferring the fire in your heart, and the knowledge in your head, to your team members sets everyone up to burn brighter and

be more knowledgeable and self-assured. But you’ll need to intentionally shift your mindset from stepping in and doing the work to leading it. Start seeing yourself more as a catalyst, a coach and a consultant, rather than the muscle for all the heavy lifting.

If this sounds hard, it’s because it is. Delegating, at first, is one of the hardest things you’ll ever do in your business. But if you slow down a little to put the best delegation and problem solving processes in place now, you’ll be able to move—and grow—even faster later.

Great question, Joe

– Dave

Dave Ramsey is a nine-time national bestselling 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*. ★



With Mary Jane Popp

# Pet Grief

Loss is never easy. Whether it’s a family member or friend. But what about the loss of a family friend? That title holds true for the loss of a pet, or as I like to say, an animal companion. The loss of a dog can be very deep as they give us unconditional love and never ask for much but love and some vittles, not even fancy vittles. I have lost quite a few dogs, and the loss of my cherished pooches was gut wrenching! **Jean Alfieri** knows. She is a pet loss grief coach. Silly Sally, her rescue dog, taught her a lot about grief and remembering to celebrate our bond. **Jean** wants to help us make that journey in “21 Ways to Weather the Loss of a Pet.” Here’s a sample of what she shares.

1. **TELL YOUR FAVORITE STORIES.** Gather the family or friends and let everyone share their favorite memory of your pet. Take in the many different stories and happy times that beautiful spirit inspired.

2. **CREATE AN ORNAMENT FEATURING YOUR PET’S PICTURE.** Ornaments are a unique way to treasure your pet’s memory. Hang it in a window or set it on a shelf to enjoy it throughout the year.

3. **DESIGN A COLLAGE.** Print pictures, crop, and assemble (ideal if parents are doing this project with kids) or create the collage online.

4. **WRITE A NOTE TO YOUR PET.** Say goodbye in a letter. Capture your feelings of gratitude and loss and set the note in a designated place or on the pet’s favorite resting spot.

5. **DESIGN A JEWELRY ME-**

**MENTO.** Make a bracelet with beads and letters that spell out your pet’s name. Customize a locket necklace with a tiny picture of your pet.

6. **CREATE A VIDEO TRIBUTE.** Collect pictures from all stages of your pet’s life like funny shorts, or record yourself sharing a favorite story.

7. **JOURNAL YOUR FAVORITE STORIES.** Capture some of your best memories in a special notebook.

8. **PLAN A MEMORIAL WALK.** Go for a walk or hike down your pet’s favorite street or trail. Pause where they would pause and tell them how you feel.

9. **PAINT A TILE OR WINE GLASS.** Be as creative as you want. A simple paw print with your pet’s name on it is perfect too. Think of making one as a gift for others who had a special bond with your pet.

10. **HOLD SPACE BY LIGHTING A CANDLE.** Whether you fed them at a certain hour or took them for a daily walk, you can acknowledge their absence by lighting a candle. These helpful tips and so many more are in “21 Ways to Weather the Loss of a Pet.” In **Jean’s** words “Remember the season of grief is incredibly sad, but between the HELLO and the GOODBYE there was an abundance of love.”

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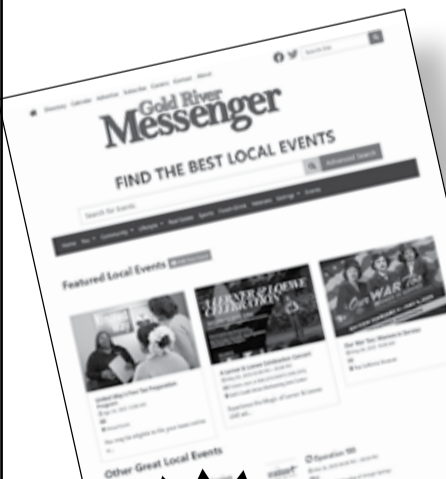
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**MEALS ON WHEELS SACRAMENTO COUNTY**

# Kings Korner

By V.G. Harris



The Milwaukee Bucks won their first NBA title in 1971, and it took 50 years for the Bucks to win a title again. A fellow by the name of Giannis Antetokounmpo helped them accomplish this task, but players of his caliber are in short supply.

The Sacramento Kings have been in Sacramento for 40 years without reaching the finals or winning a championship. But make no mistake, fans in Kingstown still believe an NBA title will eventually come to Sacramento.

Sadly, during the offseason, fans are hearing far too much about mid-level exceptions, aprons first and second, collective bargaining and salary caps. Frankly, the NBA has one of the most complicated systems regarding player compensation, and it takes someone with an advanced degree in economics to comprehend it.

What we know, is that in the aftermath of seeing mega popular DeAaron Fox trot his talents to the San Antonio Spurs midway through the 2025/2026 season, the Kings have navigated the point guard position much like a rudderless ship.

Freshman GM Scott Perry, tasked with replacing DeAaron Fox, last week signed journeyman Dennis Schröder, a former #1 draft choice by the Atlanta Hawks in 2013. Schröder was chosen #17 overall and for the past 12 seasons has seen playing time with Oklahoma City Thunder, Los Angeles Lakers, Boston Celtics, Houston Rockets, Toronto Raptors, Brooklyn Nets, Golden State Warriors and finally the Detroit Pistons.

Originally from Germany, where he played professionally and for the German national team in the Olympics, one could say Schröder has seen America from coast to coast.

Dennis Schröder's career stats are not gaudy, but 13.9 points per game being as traveled as he's been, shows he can contribute when needed. Five assists per game and 3 rebounds aren't eye popping, but it's important to remember why the Kings went out to get him.

Sacramento has a plethora of scoring power in the starting lineup and coming off the bench. What has been lacking since the departure of Fox, is a capable distributor of the basketball.

At 2.2 turnovers per game Schröder has a better control average than DeAaron Fox, so at least in one regard the Kings have made

an upgrade.

Not many players would clammer to be the replacement for a point guard as popular as Fox, but Sacramento fans are a generous crowd, and I expect to see fans give Dennis Schröder an ample opportunity to display his talents.

Do I think Schröder can be a capable replacement? Absolutely! He won't score 24 points per game or go coast to coast with the type of speed that DeAaron does, but neither does anyone else.

Scott Perry was given a thankless job, and if Schröder can come in and give the Kings 14 points per game, and take care of the basketball, there's a good chance that the playoffs of two seasons ago won't be the exception to the rule.

Coming off the bench is last year's first round draft choice Devin Carter, and Sacramento has a rookie guard in Nique Clifford that is going to need playing time, so don't expect to see Schröder get much more than 20-25 minutes per game.

Perry is likely to have more moves coming, so keep your eyes on summer league Kings fans, and don't forget that Sacramento also drafted a 7-footer in Maxime Raynaud. It will be interesting to see how coach Christie uses his new big man.

Sadly, popular Jonas Valanciunas won't be suiting up for the Kings this season, as he was traded last week to the Denver Nuggets for Dario Saric. Saric will be a role player, and spell Sabonis off the bench. At 6' 10" and 225 lbs. this 31-year-old will undoubtedly see playing time.

Players like Isaac Jones and Devin Carter are still trying to open eyes, so this year's summer league will be an opportunity to showcase their talents and allow Doug Christie to see their growth over the season.

NBA pundits have praised the Kings' draft this year, and I concur with their accolades. There's real optimism as this team is deep in talent. It remains to be seen how that talent will come together, and whether the Kings can take the young talent they have to the next level.

Stay tuned Kings fans, because this roster isn't cast in stone just yet!

All the best!

Your thoughts are always welcome at [vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com](mailto:vgharriskingsfan@gmail.com). ★

## Social Security Matters

### Can I Switch to a Taxi Driver Job Without Hurting my Social Security?



By Russell Gloor, AMAC Certified Social Security Advisor

**Dear Rusty:** I opted to draw my Social Security retirement benefit early and work part time. The company I work for has decided to pull me from field work due to my age and health. Although they are great keeping me at 20 hours per week running for parts and doing office work, I'm not sure how much longer it will last. I'm thinking of taking a taxi driving job to keep my income enough to live on. The way it would work, I would lease the cab for some amount of dollars per day, set my own hours to work and collect anywhere from \$1.40 to \$4.00 per mile, depending on what type of fare. My question is: how does Social Security look at that type of employment? Would I be held to the 15 - 45 hours a month standard? I could never come close to making the \$1,200 to \$1,300 a month I need by working so little. Any advice is greatly appreciated. **Signed: Seeking Advice**

**Dear Seeking:** If you go ahead with your plan to lease a taxicab instead of continuing your current employment, you would, in effect, be considered "self-employed" and would submit your income tax return to the IRS accordingly. Social Security would get your earnings information as reported to

the IRS, and it would be your net earnings from self-employment (after deducting all your business expenses) that is reported to SSA by IRS. There is, however, a special rule which would apply to you in your first calendar year of self-employment while collecting early Social Security benefits.

Since, in your first year, some of your earnings would be as a part-time employee paying SS FICA payroll taxes, Social Security would first look at your earnings as an employee to see if you exceeded the annual earnings limit (\$23,400 for 2025). Then, upon starting your self-employment, Social Security would look at the hours you spent performing "substantial gainful activity" (e.g., driving your taxi) each month and, if you spent more than 45 hours per month in that capacity, you would not be considered "retired," and thus, not eligible for Social Security in any month you exceeded that amount of hours. If you earned less than the annual limit in total (both as an employee and while self-employed), you would get benefits for all months of the year. But if you earn more than the annual limit, you will get no benefits for any month you exceeded 45 hours as a self-employed person. Again, this only applies during the first calendar year of self-employment - in the following year only your net earnings from self-employment would count toward the annual earnings limit.

In effect, SSA would use the hours-worked standard to see if you are truly retired or actually working. If the latter, they would withhold

SS monthly benefits for any month you exceed 45 hours working while self-employed (up to and including December of your first calendar year of self-employment), and only if your total income (as an employee and while self-employed) exceeds the annual limit.

So, if your goal is to net \$1,200 - \$1,300 per month as a self-employed taxi driver, that would be well within the limits of the annual earnings test (\$23,400 for 2025 but changes yearly). But there may, or may not, be a reduction in your Social Security benefits during your first year of self-employment, depending on when you start as self-employed. Note that SSA will ask about your work plans when you apply, and if you expect to stay under the annual limit (working part time in both capacities), you should get full SS benefits. Just be careful to stay under the annual earnings limit for those collecting early Social Security benefits. FYI, earnings from before your SS benefits started don't count toward the earning limit.

Note, too, that your monthly Social Security benefit will be actuarially reduced according to how far in advance of your full retirement age you claim SS. Whenever SS benefits are claimed prior to one's full retirement age, those benefits are permanently reduced.

*This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation's staff, trained and accredited by the National Social Security Association (NSSA).* ★



Blow up Washington, D.C.'s Brutalist Buildings, and the Sooner, the Better

There's a reason God created dynamite. The brutalist federal buildings that have blighted Washington, D.C., for decades deserve the same fate as Carthage after the Third Punic War, and the nation's capital is finally beginning to move on from these concrete monstrosities.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development just announced that it is leaving its god-awful headquarters in Washington for a less hideous space in Northern Virginia. HUD Secretary Scott Turner has described the structure as "the ugliest building in D.C.," which is a dubious claim only because there are so many other buildings in Washington that compete for that distinction. He's not the first HUD secretary to hate the building. Jack Kemp called it "10 floors of basement."

Meanwhile, the FBI is also departing its HQ, designated by the U.K. building materials retailer Buildworld as the ugliest building in the United States and the second ugliest in the world.

The moves are in keeping with the spirit of President Trump's executive order stipulating that federal buildings should "respect regional, traditional and classical architectural heritage in order to uplift and beautify public spaces and ennoble the United States and our system of self-government."

That EO should be considered common sense, but has several trigger words for defenders of the architectural status quo, including "traditional," "classical" and, perhaps foremost of all, "beautify." In response, the American Institute of Architects expressed its "strong concerns that mandating architecture styles stifles innovation and harms local communities."

According to The Nation magazine, Trump's initiative is part of an agenda to "make historical architecture on the whole inextricable from Eurocentric white supremacy." In short, it's an unforgivable offense to want a government building to look nice.

Brutalism, with its blocky, minimalist structures made of poured concrete, was a creation of a post-war Europe that wanted to embrace the fresh and new and to economize on rebuilding. Although the name "brutalism" perfectly captures the aesthetic effect, it actually comes from the French for "raw concrete," "beton brut."

To be sure, concrete is extremely important to modern life, but no one has ever said, "Oh, it's so elegant and uplifting." The brutalist buildings in Washington were largely built between the late 1960s and mid-1970s, an era of grievous architectural mistakes, including cookie-cutter multiple-purpose baseball stadiums and modernist Catholic churches. The buildings never had a heyday, but were hated when they were erected and are still hated now.

The seedbed of the trend was a Kennedy administration commission that advocated contemporary

designs and said -- laughably, in retrospect -- that federal architecture should "reflect the dignity, enterprise, vigor and stability of the American national government."

Instead, the brutalist buildings speak of a lumbering bureaucracy with no regard for the sensibilities or priorities of ordinary people. They are about what you'd expect if a DMV were headquartered in a maximum-security prison or in a massive pillbox.

The buildings could easily be used as stage sets for docudramas about East Germany. They are a tribute to soulless monumentality and a gut punch to the human spirit. If they don't eventually get a well-deserved appointment with a wrecking ball, they should be donated to North Korea.

The original justifications of brutalism no longer apply. The buildings aren't new anymore, and aren't cheap. They haven't aged well in any sense, not aesthetically or functionally. The FBI building is literally falling apart, and the expense of maintaining the HUD building has become ruinous.

Defenders of the brutalist buildings say that they are now part of our heritage and should be preserved as such. That's not fair, though, to the people who have to work in them, or who walk or drive by them every day. They are a net subtraction to the D.C. landscape and to human happiness. If one of them has to be kept for historical reasons, it should be made into a Smithsonian museum devoted to idiotic fads that were indulged for much too long.

Rich Lowry is editor of the *National Review*.

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## California Lawmakers Finally Achieve 'Holy Grail' Reform



By Dan Walters, CALMatters.org

Jerry Brown once described reform of the California Environmental Quality Act as "the lord's work" but he, like other recent governors, was not willing to invest enough political capital to change it.

Simply put, significantly altering CEQA, which then-Gov. Ronald Reagan signed more than a half-century ago, would require confronting two powerful interest groups: environmental organizations and labor unions, which have weaponized the law to achieve their goals.

Brown made one stab at compelling the Legislature to alter CEQA in 2016, but otherwise left it to his successor, Gavin Newsom.

For six years, Newsom echoed the attitudes of his predecessors, critical of CEQA's misuse to block housing and other much-needed projects, or compel developers to hire unionized labor or jump through other hoops, but unwilling to confront it head-on.

Instead, he and the Legislature nibbled at the edges of the law and gave specific projects, such as sports arenas, exemptions.

Finally, however, the social and economic costs of leaving CEQA intact became too high. The state's critical shortage of housing continued despite innumerable policy

declarations aimed at spurring investment. It became downright embarrassing that a politically dominant Democratic Party pledged to socioeconomic equity was unable to deliver on promises to make housing more abundant and affordable.

California starred in a New York Times video that chastised blue states for failing to live up to their stated principles and in a recent book, "Abundance," about the nation's chronic inability to deliver much-needed projects due to regulatory overkill, such as CEQA.

This year, with Newsom nearing the end of his governorship and appearing to cast his eyes toward a presidential campaign, the governor decided to confront the CEQA issue squarely. He endorsed two bills that would impose limits on the law's reach and, in the end, threatening to block the entire state budget if they weren't placed on his desk.

On Monday (June 30), the last day of the fiscal year, the Legislature passed Assembly Bill 130 and Senate Bill 131 with last-minute changes to dampen opposition from construction unions. Newsom quickly signed them.

"We needed to go bold and big on this holy grail reform," Newsom said at a hastily staged signing ceremony.

Essentially, the legislation exempts virtually all infill housing projects from CEQA's provisions, making it more difficult for opponents of high-density housing projects, known as NIMBYs, to block approval.

Such projects, particularly those aimed at low- and moderate-income families, have been the most difficult to gain approval, due largely to opposition in upscale communities

dominated by single-family homeowners.

"When you are building housing in an existing community, that is environmentally beneficial, it is climate friendly, that is not something that should be subjected to potentially endless CEQA challenges and lawsuits," Sen. Scott Wiener, a San Francisco Democrat who authored SB 131, told senators before they passed the measure.

Wiener and Assemblywoman Buffy Wicks, an Oakland Democrat who carried AB 130, have been the Capitol's two most aggressive advocates of pro-housing legislation.

The remaining question, of course, is whether the two new laws, which go into effect immediately, will have a discernible impact on the state's housing shortage. CEQA is just one factor of many determining whether proposed projects proceed or die. Those who oppose high-density housing in their neighborhoods will not just roll over.

Ironically, as the Legislature was passing the two new laws on Monday, The Atlantic was publishing a lengthy article entitled "The Whole Country Is Starting to Look Like California," that describes how red tape and local opposition are adversely affecting housing development in red states such as Texas and Florida, which had been viewed as developer paradises.

*Dan Walters is one of the most decorated and widely syndicated columnists in California history, authoring a column four times a week that offers his view and analysis of the state's political, economic, social and demographic trends.* ★

## FBI Says Elder Fraud has Many Forms



The FBI investigates financial scams targeting seniors, including investment scams, technical/customer support schemes, money mules and romance scams. Image by Filmbetrachter from Pixabay

### Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sacramento Field Office News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - The Federal Bureau of Investigation, Sacramento Field Office is reminding elderly Americans and their loved ones about elder fraud.

This type of fraud takes many forms as criminals seek to take advantage of this vulnerable and growing population.

The FBI is committed to educating the public about these scams and investigating financial fraud schemes against seniors. Not only are there devastating financial consequences but these victims and their loved ones can suffer great emotional and mental effects because of these scams.

The FBI investigates financial scams targeting seniors, including investment scams, technical/customer support schemes, money mules and romance scams.

According to the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) data, there was a total of \$4.885 billion in losses from 147,127 complaints in 2024. This is a 46% increase in complaints from 2023, as well as a 43% increase in losses. In California, total losses were \$832,710,048 in 2024. The FBI continues to work with its local and federal partners to tackle elder fraud and stop those who attempt to harm the elderly.

"I urge every senior and their families to have open conversations about these scams and to scrutinize unsolicited mail, calls, emails and text messages. Criminals are actively and aggressively targeting seniors, preying upon their trust to drain their life savings," said FBI Sacramento Special Agent in charge Sid Patel. "If you or someone you care about is a victim, report the crime to law enforcement. There is no shame in seeking help when you have been harmed and your information may prevent someone else from becoming a victim."

Seniors are frequently targeted by criminal actors, as they are often perceived to be more polite and trusting. These actors might also assume that seniors are more financially stable, own real estate, spend a great deal of time alone and are less likely

to report fraud if they feel ashamed or are unfamiliar with reporting channels such as the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3.gov).

Fraud can happen to anyone, and small steps can be taken to protect yourself and your information.

Search online for the contact information (name, phone number, email, addresses) of any unknown source which reaches out to you, as well as the proposed offer. Verify the legitimacy of businesses on websites such as Better Business Bureau. Other individuals have likely posted information online about businesses and individuals attempting to run scams.

Resist the pressure to act quickly. Scammers create a sense of urgency to lure victims into immediate action, typically by instilling trust and inducing empathy, fear, the promise of monetary gains, companionship or employment opportunities.

Be cautious of unsolicited phone calls, mailings and door-to-door service offers.

Never give or send to unverified people or businesses any personally identifiable information, money, checks, gift cards or wire information.

Take precautionary measures to protect your identity in case a criminal gains access to your device or account.

Immediately contact your financial institutions to place protections on your accounts and monitor for suspicious activity.

If you believe you are a victim of fraud or know a senior who might be, regardless of financial loss, immediately report the incident to a local FBI field office or other law enforcement agency.

Crimes can also be reported by calling 1-800-CALL FBI, online at <https://tips.fbi.gov> or at the Internet Crime Complaint Center at [www.ic3.gov](http://www.ic3.gov).

Some resources available to the public are the IC3 2024 Report and Elder Fraud Report, the FBI: Elder Fraud Resource Page and the Department of Justice: Neighborhood Resources.

The FBI Sacramento Field Office proudly serves the 34 California counties that comprise the Eastern District of California. ★

## \$6.5 Million in Stolen Goods Seized, Leads Organized Crime Crackdown



Governor Newsom announced that the state recovered 113,245 stolen items worth nearly \$6.5 million this year. Photo courtesy of Office of Governor Gavin Newsom

### Office of Governor Gavin Newsom New Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - Governor Gavin Newsom on June 17 announced that from January to May, the state's Organized Retail Crime Task Force conducted 331 investigations, 629 arrests and recovered 113,245 stolen items valued at nearly \$6.5 million.

Spearheaded by the California Highway Patrol, the Organized Retail Crime Task Force, through coordination with local law enforcement agencies and other partners, has been involved in more than 3,800 investigations, resulting in the arrest of more than 4,400 suspects and the recovery of nearly 1.4-million stolen goods, valued at more than \$58 million since 2019.

"In California, we value our public safety and back our business community. Organized retail crimes have no place in our society and I'm proud of the work our CHP officers do up and down the state to protect our families and communities," Newsom said.

Using arresting tools made available in part because of the governor's organized retail crime package he passed last year and ongoing commitment to public safety, compared to April, organized retail crime enforcement has gone up in all areas in May, including 120 investigations, up 131%; 246 arrests, up 130%; 72,454 stolen assets recovered, up 66%; and \$2,046,084 in assets recovered, up 49%.

As part of the coordinated national organized retail crime blitz from May 26 to May 30, the CHP conducted high-visibility enforcement operations throughout the state, arresting 90 individuals, recovering nearly \$153,000 worth of stolen merchandise and identifying multiple suspects linked to organized crime rings operating in and beyond California.

The CHP joined more than 100 law enforcement agencies and major retailers for this multi-day effort to investigate and intercept criminal activity in shopping centers, malls and high-traffic retail areas throughout California.

"Retail theft doesn't stop at state lines and neither do we," said CHP Commissioner Sean Duryee. "By working together with our law enforcement partners and retailers nationwide, we are sending a clear message: if you come to California to steal, we will be here to stop you."

The blitz, coordinated out of the Cook County State's Attorney's Office, coordinated an effort across 28 states to seize stolen vehicles, narcotics, weapons and

other goods.

These efforts reinforced the importance of intelligence sharing, real-time coordination and proactive enforcement in deterring retail theft.

According to an analysis of Real Time Crime Index data by the Public Policy Institute of California, violent crime dropped by 4.6% and property crime dropped by 8.5% in 2024, compared to 2023. Overall, the decreases in violent and property crimes in California were similar to those seen by law enforcement agencies in other states, with property crime down by 8.5% in California and 8.4% elsewhere.

California has invested \$1.1 billion since 2019 to fight crime, help local governments hire more police and improve public safety. In 2023, as part of California's Public Safety Plan, the governor announced the largest-ever investment to combat organized retail crime in state history, an annual 310% increase in proactive operations targeting organized retail crime, and special operations across the state to fight crime, improving public safety.

Last August, Governor Newsom signed into law the most significant bipartisan legislation to crack down on property crime in modern California history. Building on the state's robust laws and record public safety funding, these bipartisan bills offer new tools to bolster ongoing efforts to hold criminals accountable for smash-and-grab robberies, property crime, retail theft and auto burglaries. While California's crime rate remains at near historic lows, these laws help California adapt to evolving criminal tactics to ensure perpetrators are effectively held accountable.

As part of the state's largest-ever investment to combat organized retail crime, Governor Newsom announced last year that the state distributed \$267 million to 55 communities to help local communities combat organized retail crime. These funds have enabled cities and counties to hire more police, make more arrests and secure more felony charges against suspects.

Working collaboratively to heighten public safety, the governor tasked the CHP to work with local law enforcement areas in key areas to saturate high-crime areas, aiming to reduce roadway violence and criminal activity in the area, specifically vehicle theft and organized retail crime. Since the inception of this regional initiative, there have been more than 7,300 arrests, more than 5,000 stolen vehicles recovered and more than 350 firearms confiscated across Bakersfield, San Bernardino and Oakland. ★

## Peer-to-Peer Payment is the New Cash



Joe Thompson owns Crisp Catering and the Gold Rush Grille located at the Secretary of State's office. Thompson is also a member of the National Federation of Independent Business' Leadership Council. Courtesy photo

By Joe Thompson

As a small business, we must make it as easy as possible for our customers to pay us. In today's economy, that means embracing the digital tools our customers already use, especially peer-to-peer (P2P) payment platforms like Venmo, Cash App, and Zelle. These apps aren't just a convenience; for many small businesses, they're a lifeline.

In Sacramento County, peer-to-peer payments are transforming how small businesses get paid. At the Elk Grove farmers market, produce vendors can complete sales on the spot with a quick scan of a QR code. In Rancho Cordova, a mobile dog groomer doesn't have to wait on a check. Her customers can pay instantly before she packs up. And during Citrus Heights' annual craft fair,

cashless payments help local artisans make more sales and avoid the hassle of hauling around a card reader or dealing with bills and coins.

These platforms have become as essential to small business operations as cash registers were a generation ago.

Why? Because consumers value convenience and so do we. Peer-to-peer payments are trusted, easy to use and fast. Many customers, especially younger ones, no longer carry cash or even use credit cards regularly. For them, peer-to-peer apps are the new wallet. If we can't accept the way they want to pay, we risk losing their business.

Platforms report that small businesses received about \$465 per transaction in 2024 using peer-to-peer networks, often without paying fees.

For small businesses in places like Galt, where family-run operations run on razor-thin margins, that difference can mean the ability to pay rent, order inventory or hire help. And because many platforms transfer funds in near real time, business owners don't have to wait days for bank processing. That speed means a food truck owner in Fair Oaks can refill supplies between lunch and dinner service or a mobile hairdresser in Ardenpacks up. And during Citrus Heights' annual craft fair, the next client.

Still, some are calling for heavy-handed new regulations on peer-to-peer platforms in the name of stopping fraud. Let's be clear: fraud is a real issue and we need strong solutions, but punishing the tools small businesses depend on won't stop criminals, it'll just hurt local economies.

Instead of targeting the platforms that are helping us grow, we should be cracking down on the bad actors behind the scams. That means funding law enforcement efforts, improving coordination across agencies and supporting smart industry practices. In fact, some peer-to-peer platforms already go above and beyond, using advanced fraud detection tools and offering reimbursements when users are tricked by imposters. Our public policy should build on that, not undercut it.

At a time when small businesses across Sacramento County are still recovering from inflation and pandemic-era disruptions, policymakers must recognize that peer-to-peer platforms aren't the problem, they're part of the solution. Let's keep it simple for customers to pay us and keep growing our local economy in the process.

Peer-to-peer is here to stay and for small businesses like mine, that's a very good thing. ★

## Rep. Kiley Calls on CIF to Comply with Department of Education's Title IX Conditions

### U.S. Rep. Kevin Kiley News Release

**WASHINGTON, D.C. (MPG)** - The U.S. Department of Education has found that the California Interscholastic Federation's (CIF) policy of allowing biological males to participate in sports with girls is in "clear violation" of Title IX.

This comes after Rep. Kevin Kiley (CA-3) wrote a letter to CIF calling for an immediate reversal of the policy allowing biological males in girls' sports.

Rep. Kiley is sending a follow-up letter to the CIF calling for the state to

immediately comply with the Department's conditions to avoid a loss of federal funding.

Those conditions include preventing male athletes from participating with females, restoring awards, records and titles to female athletes that were misappropriated by male athletes and issuing a formal apology to those female athletes.

"As I have repeatedly warned Governor Newsom, California's policy is absurd and illegal," Rep. Kiley said. "The state must immediately reverse the policy, and pursuant to the Department's conditions, restore honors to

female athletes unjustly deprived of them."

The U.S. Department of Education is giving the agencies the option to accept a resolution that would prevent male athletes from participating with females and restore awards, records and titles to female athletes that were misappropriated by male athletes.

For more information from the U.S. Department of Education visit [ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-finds-california-department-of-education-and-california-interscholastic-federation-violation-of-title-ix](http://ed.gov/about/news/press-release/us-department-of-education-finds-california-department-of-education-and-california-interscholastic-federation-violation-of-title-ix). ★

# Academic, Career Outcomes Program for Asian American Students

By Cynthia Hubert  
of California State University,  
Sacramento

**SACRAMENTO, CA (MPG)** - Sacramento State will soon launch a pilot program designed to serve as a model for improving academic and career outcomes for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander students.

The pilot program follows the University's designation by the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs as the state's first Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI)-Serving Institution.

The commission will provide seed funding for the project, which the University will administer beginning this fall.

The pilot program will add to Sac State's already robust student support system, which includes an Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Student Center. The University is also a federally designated Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institution.

"This (program) is a testament to our commitment as an AANHPI institution. It will allow us to expand upon the great work we already are doing and allow Sac State to serve as a model for other institutions," said Chao Vang, the assistant vice president



Sacramento State will launch a pilot program this fall to support Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) students, funded by the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, following the University's designation as the state's first AANHPI-Serving Institution. Photo courtesy of Chao Vang

for Educational Equity Programs and Student Success.

About 7,000 of Sac State's more than 31,000 students identify as Asian American, said Vang. Roughly half of those students are members of groups that traditionally have been underserved in higher education, including Native Hawaiians, Southeast Asians, and Southwest Asian North Africans (SWANA), Vang said.

Sac State is the first university in California to be awarded a pilot program to specifically serve this diverse group of students, administrators said.

"This partnership demonstrates our commitment to foster an ecosystem of academic excellence in

advancing equity, retention and outcomes for Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander, Southeast Asian, and North African students," said Aniesha Mitchell, Sac State's vice president for student affairs.

The pilot project will focus on three areas that Sac State has identified as most pressing for those students: career development, mental health and academic tutoring.

"This (program) is a testament to our commitment as an AANHPI institution," said Vang. "It will allow us to expand upon the great work we already are doing and allow Sac State to serve as a model for other institutions."

For the academic portion of the

program, Sac State will identify courses that have high failure or dropout rates among the targeted student groups, then provide culturally appropriate tutoring to those who are struggling, Vang said.

Student tutors will be trained to teach with cultural differences in mind to make learning more relevant to the lives and experiences of participants, he said.

"In some cultures, letting people know that you need help with your mental health is taboo," Vang said. "We want to offer a culturally affirming approach to mental health awareness," including marketing campaigns that feature Asian Americans, as well as peer counselors to help members of the target groups seek services.

For the mental health part of the project, the campus will launch a yearlong campaign encouraging all students, but especially members of the target groups, to seek help if they are feeling depressed, anxious or overwhelmed.

"We hope that students will then go home and have conversations about mental health with family members," Vang said.

The third portion of the new project aims to help students succeed in the professional world by sharpening skills such as building a resume and interviewing for a job.

"We will give them access to working professionals who have shared cultural experiences and can help guide them," said Vang.

The project's overall goal is to ensure that SWANA, ANHPI and Southeast Asian students earn their college degrees and gain a foothold in the workplace.

"Our pilot initiative supports historically underserved students by providing resources to promote academic success, mental health access and career readiness," said Khydeejia Alam, the executive director of the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. "We are committed to providing tools for AANHPI students to graduate on time and shape California's future as leaders in their communities." ★

## Senator Ashby Unveils Historic District Legislation

Senator Angelique Ashby  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - State Senator Angelique Ashby, through Senate Bill 802, has proposed the establishment of a new regional agency to address the persistent challenges of housing and homelessness throughout Sacramento County.

As proposed, the Sacramento Area Housing and Homelessness Agency will centralize services through a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) designed to coordinate, fund and implement all housing and homelessness programs across Sacramento County.

Senate Bill 802 aims to dismantle the fragmented and siloed system currently impeding regional advancement on the issues of homelessness and affordable housing, by replacing the Sacramento Housing and Redevelopment Agency (SHRA) with a broader, more inclusive regional effort. The new Joint Powers Authority will be governed by elected representatives from the County and City of Sacramento as well as all cities in the county with a population greater than fifty thousand (Folsom, Elk Grove, Citrus Heights and Rancho Cordova). Smaller cities and unincorporated areas will be represented by the County Board of Supervisors.

"SB 802 creates a first-in-the-state model where one entity becomes the lead provider of homelessness and housing services regionally," said Senator Angelique Ashby. "Providing resources for the unhoused population doesn't stop at city or county lines – and our response shouldn't either. SB 802 gives the Sacramento region a structure to act collectively, share resources, and bring real accountability to the issue."

For decades, Sacramento County's homelessness response has been fractured, managed by a patchwork of nonprofit organizations, municipal departments, and independent planning bodies – each working independently with little to no coordination across jurisdictions.

"Until we regionalize our efforts to address homelessness, nothing will change," said Assemblymember Heath Flora. "As elected officials, it is our duty to the public to reevaluate systems that are not working and try something new. That's exactly what SB 802 seeks to do."

The cities in the region are expected to meet state-driven goals and standards, yet the smaller regions have little to no governing authority when decisions are being made. A different approach is needed to wield the results we all so desperately want. The public has been incredibly clear on this issue, they expect broad collaboration and meaningful partnership. That has not happened effectively on any level over the past 15 plus years.

In 2023, the Sacramento Grand Jury issued a report on addressing homelessness in Sacramento County, focusing on the five government funded agencies currently

tasked with varying, and sometimes competing, responsibilities relative to homeless services.

The report outlined: "taking all the organizations together, their sheer number, and the diversity of their make-up, interests and actions in supporting the homeless population - represent significant coordination, management, and oversight challenges. In the absence of a working organizational structure it becomes virtually impossible to make the most effective use of the valuable resources they offer."

The Sacramento Area Housing and Homelessness Agency will serve as the region's premier housing entity, with the legal authority and governance structure to plan and deliver services in a coordinated and efficient manner.

"Senator Ashby's bold move is common sense," said former Mayor of Sacramento and former Senate President pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg. "The cities and County of Sacramento should not only work together on homelessness but they should also govern together. Governing together will lead to better results for everyone in Sacramento County."

Under Senate Bill 802, the new agency will be empowered to apply for and administer state and federal housing funds, align programs, streamlining service delivery to better meet the needs of unsheltered and housing-insecure residents across all jurisdictions.

The bill responds to the growing consensus voiced by area residents that the region's current approach to homelessness, where multiple agencies, cities and the county often compete with one another for funding sources and work at odds through overlapping or disconnected strategies, has failed to produce meaningful progress while utilizing taxpayer dollars.

In the last five years, the State of California has provided more than \$400 million to address homelessness in Sacramento through the City, County and Continuum of Care. Without a true regional approach, those dollars have failed to make a meaningful and lasting impact.

"Homelessness is the most urgent issue facing our community, and people deserve to see us working together," said Sacramento City Councilmember Caity Maple. "SB 802 gives us the chance to finally build a system that's coordinated, compassionate, and focused on real results. I truly believe that if we work together, we can turn the tide."

Senator Ashby and regional partners will continue working with stakeholders, the Legislature and the Administration to move Senate Bill 802 forward. ★

## Sterile Male Mosquito Pilot Program to Launch

Technique Aims to Reduce Invasive Mosquitoes Posing Health Threat

Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District  
News Release

**SACRAMENTO AREA, CA (MPG)** - The Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District announced June 26 that it will officially launch the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) Pilot Program in South Natomas in July.

This innovative, science-based program using sterile male mosquitoes aims to reduce populations of *Aedes aegypti*, the invasive mosquito species. *Aedes aegypti* has been rapidly spreading in our region and poses a public health threat for diseases such as dengue, Zika and chikungunya.

Beginning July 8, Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District staff will conduct weekly releases of non-biting male mosquitoes that carry Wolbachia, a naturally occurring bacteria. When these sterile males mate with wild female mosquitoes, the resulting eggs do not hatch. Over time, this reduces the local mosquito population.



An *Aedes aegypti* adult male mosquito rests on human skin. Photo courtesy of the Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control District

"We're proud to lead this effort and bring new, effective mosquito control strategies to our community," said Gary Goodman, district manager for Sacramento-Yolo Mosquito and Vector Control. "By targeting *Aedes aegypti* at the source, this program helps us reduce the threat of mosquito transmitted diseases and protect residents."

The project will continue through November in a designated 100-acre zone of South Natomas.

Residents in the pilot area might notice an increase in mosquito activity during the release period but no action is required on their part and they can go about their day as usual. District staff will be present in the neighborhood each week to release the sterile males and set

mosquito traps to evaluate the program's effectiveness.

Residents are encouraged to continue protecting themselves by using insect repellent when spending time outdoors and eliminating any standing water around their homes to prevent mosquito breeding.

The sterile insect technique method is being used by other mosquito control districts across California and is gaining attention nationwide as a promising tool to address the growing spread of invasive mosquitoes. Travel-related cases of dengue are detected in our region every year and the presence of *Aedes aegypti* increases the risk for locally acquired infections.

Last year, 18 dengue cases were reported in Southern California. This emphasizes the importance of using innovative approaches such as Sterile Insect Technique to reduce mosquito populations and help prevent the spread of disease.

For more information about the Sterile Insect Technique Pilot Program in South Natomas or to request a free home service inspection, visit [www.fightthebite.net](http://www.fightthebite.net) or call 800-429-1022. ★

## The 'New' K-Zap Turns 10

By J.G. Wirt

**SACRAMENTO REGION, CA (MPG)** - July 8 will mark 10 years since the rebirth of K-ZAP as a low-power broadcaster and internet radio station.

In that time, former listeners have tuned back in and have helped spread the word about the "50 Years of Rock, Blues & More" station.

There's no big first-decade celebration planned, according to K-ZAP's program manager and weekday morning announcer Dennis Newhall.

Rather, K-ZAP's current big effort aims to secure a second low-power signal that would help its radio broadcasts at KZHP 93.3 FM cover an area from Rocklin to Mather and McClellan to El Dorado Hills.

A waiver from the Federal Communications Commission, with help from the area's U.S. representatives, just might make it happen, Newhall said. The petition is at [k-zap.org/zapthegap](http://k-zap.org/zapthegap).

Meanwhile, the all-volunteer crew continues to raise the K-ZAP profile by supporting events and selling T-shirts and hats featuring the smiling K-ZAP cat and shows such as

"Mick Martin's Blues Party" and "Psychedelic Sunday."

The on-air team continues to add context to the K-ZAP music mix in three-hour shifts. And it's all about the music: new songs by old artists and just the right mix of the new stuff. Plus, K-ZAP airs deep tracks and B-sides, along with artists who don't get airplay on the major stations.

"It's a craft. Like you're building something," Newhall said of curating the playlist from the vast K-ZAP music library. "Sometimes, a great artist has something new but it doesn't fit our format."

The on-air volunteers do three-hour shifts, all remote, and support the station because it's convenient, according to Newhall. There's no commute.

"And it's fun. It's a sandbox," Newhall said. "For the most part, they're radio veterans. No one's hiring 60-year-old deejays."

Newhall, who also helps to curate the Sacramento Rock and Radio Museum, said he and the other veteran announcers do this work for mental stimulation and camaraderie.

"And like any hobby, you try to get better at it," Newhall said. ★



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