



# COLAB

San Luis Obispo County

The Coalition of Labor Agriculture and Business

## Weekly Update

### January 12 - 19, 2026

The first San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting of 2026 was mercifully brief. Supervisor Paulding was elected Chair at the start and had a quick agenda to navigate. Because almost all agenda items were on the Consent Calendar, the business portion of the meeting was done in less than an hour.



**San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors Chair Jimmy Paulding**

Then came the Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda. Attendees and the Board were treated to almost 45 minutes of Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) bashing.

A few speakers lectured Board Members about not listening, and many complained about the 3-minute time limit along with the restriction against applauding.

This wasn't exactly a "baptism by fire" for Paulding chairing his first meeting, but it was tense at times. Actually, Paulding held up well and responded appropriately when the ICE haters got out of hand.

The main theme seemed to be a request for the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors to step up and tell the Federal Government how to conduct immigration enforcement. This ranged from enforcement free zones to a citizen oversight committee directing the sheriff in his dealings with the immigrant communities.

Or maybe the theme was simply to ignore the authority of the Federal Government all together. It wasn't quite clear.

Their concerns about due process are well intended, but their anecdotes and emotional stories never seem to include the crimes committed by many of the migrant targets, nor do they acknowledge the victims of those crimes. It appears that they would prefer no ICE activity at all but might tolerate it if ICE made an appointment with anyone, they have a Federal Warrant for, and sat down for a quiet discussion before carrying out an arrest.

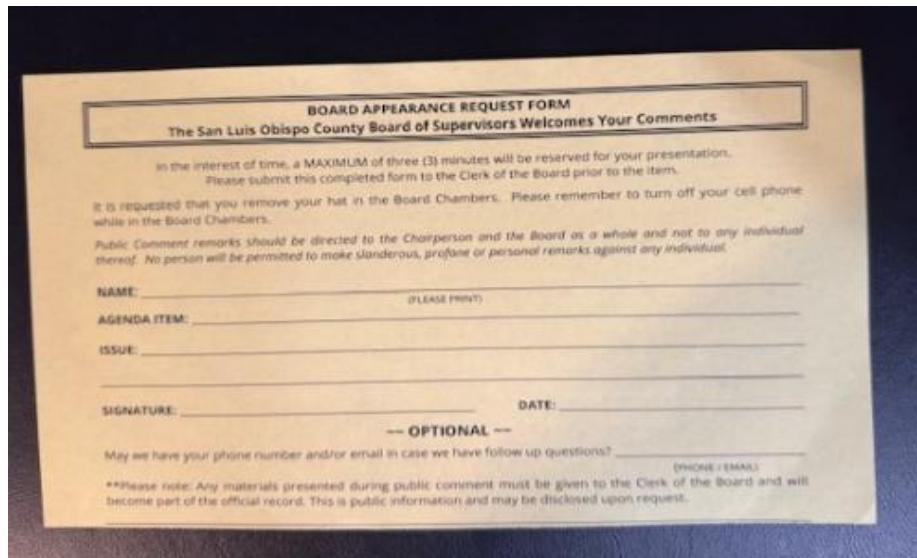
This line of 10 or 15 speakers was a small preview of the presentations that will be made at the January 27 Board of Supervisors meeting. Sheriff Parkinson and his staff will be conducting a "TRUTH" meeting, as required by law, where he will report all interactions with ICE over the last two years. This will take place as an agenda item for the Board of Supervisors meeting.

## Get out and Do Something Important!

If you have an opinion about ICE activity or about our Sheriff's Department, please plan to attend the January 27 San Luis County Board of Supervisors meeting beginning at 9:00 AM in the Board Chambers at the County Building in downtown San Luis Obispo. Bring a friend. It will be a long meeting in a packed room so get there early and be prepared to stay for a while.

A majority of the speakers during Public Comment will be highly critical of the Sheriff and of the Trump Administration. The local media will love it and highlight the negative commentary. It would be important to have a balance from those who appreciate what is going on. A very brief comment from common sense people would be highly appreciated.

To make a comment, find the yellow slip at the back of the chambers, fill it out and submit it in the box near the front of the chambers. When your name is called, you have up to three minutes to express your feelings at the podium. (The time limit may be shortened if the list is too long)



**The yellow Board Appearance Request Form is easy and quick.**

You are free (and welcome) to keep it very short. A simple “I support the Sheriff and have faith that he is doing the best job possible” or “I appreciate the difficult job that law enforcement is tasked with and support the way that they are carrying it out” would be fine. No need to educate anyone on immigration law (or lawlessness) and no reason to pick on any group of people – just keep it positive and supportive. This will drive the liberals nuts. They are hoping to aggravate conservatives into saying something that will appear unreasonable in the press.

## **An ICE Age of Protest**

We don’t usually cover national issues in this publication, but with so much turmoil across our country regarding ICE, it’s worth noting some points never discussed in the general media.

The first is that what we are seeing is largely a result of the Biden Administration’s non-policy regarding immigration. Their essentially open border practices were an invitation for violent and often organized criminals to come from around the world to conduct their activities here.

Such criminals were able to just walk in unchecked, posing as immigrants looking for a better life. But after being welcomed in, they created havoc. Organized gangs flourished and violent crime incidents increased. At the same time, the cadre of George Soros supported District Attorneys who were practicing their get out of jail free approach to prosecution.

Our “Border Czar” couldn’t be bothered to visit the border and the people charged with keeping our borders safe and controlling immigration were told to look the other way. Some were villainized with untrue allegations of mistreatment. People who spoke out on the issue were dismissed as racists. The Woke worked very hard at tampering down any detailed examination of what was really going on. Biden and Harris kept insisting that the border was secure and immigration was under control despite enormous largely ignored evidence to the contrary.

So, frustration among the general public grew. Victims and their families were ignored, treated as statistics – wrong place wrong time - oops, sorry about that now be quiet and go away.

As overbearing as the Woke became, real data was still available. The following statistics track crime numbers over an 8-year period by the US Customs and Border Patrol. The report can be found at:

[Criminal Alien Statistics Fiscal Year 2024 | U.S. Customs and Border Protection](#)

The following are the numbers that they have tracked:



## Arrests of Individuals with Criminal Convictions

The term “criminal aliens” refers to individuals who have been convicted of one or more crimes, whether in the United States or abroad, prior to interdiction by the U.S. Border Patrol; it does not include convictions for conduct that is not deemed criminal by the United States. Arrests of criminal aliens are a subset of total apprehensions by U.S. Border Patrol.

Arrest Type	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24YTD
<b>U.S. Border Patrol Criminal Alien Arrests</b>	8,531	6,698	4,269	2,438	10,763	12,028	15,267	17,048

## Total Criminal Convictions by Type

This table organizes nationwide convictions of criminal aliens by type of criminal conduct. Because some criminal aliens may be convicted of multiple criminal offenses, total convictions listed below exceed the total arrests noted in the table above.

Conviction Type	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24YTD
<b>Assault, Battery, Domestic Violence</b>	692	524	299	208	1,178	1,142	1,254	1,084
<b>Burglary, Robbery, Larceny, Theft, Fraud</b>	595	347	184	143	825	896	864	697
<b>Driving Under the Influence</b>	1,596	1,113	614	364	1,629	1,614	2,493	2,844
<b>Homicide, Manslaughter</b>	3	3	2	3	60	62	29	29
<b>Illegal Drug Possession, Trafficking</b>	1,249	871	449	386	2,138	2,239	2,055	1,566
<b>Illegal Entry, Re-Entry</b>	4,502	3,920	2,663	1,261	6,160	6,797	8,790	10,935
<b>Illegal Weapons Possession, Transport, Trafficking</b>	173	106	66	49	336	309	307	232
<b>Sexual Offenses</b>	137	80	58	156	488	365	284	221
<b>Other<sup>1</sup></b>	1,851	1,364	814	580	2,691	2,891	3,286	3,276

While crime statistics were going up, budgets were becoming a huge challenge. Every governmental agency, from school boards to the Federal Government, struggled to provide services in an atmosphere of high inflation and growing demand. The influx of millions of migrants – many with needs - just seemed to antagonize overburdened budgets and frustrated the public.

While this is an oversimplification of a very complex issue, it illustrates how the Biden-Harris administration created the expectation among the migrant population and sympathizers that illegal immigration had somehow become quasi legal, and no repercussions should be anticipated.

Now we are dealing with mobs of people believing that ICE enforcement is somehow illegal. Worse, many believe that it's noble to break the law while interfering with ICE enforcement activities.

Thank you, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris.

The second factor that is left out of current coverage of immigration issues is that there is an element of our population that enjoys robust protest. In recent times, we can recall national movements such as the 1999 World Trade Organization protests, the 2011 Occupy Movement, the 2013 Black Lives Matter protests. But we have a long history of “unrest” starting with the Boston Tea Party, Women’s Suffrage, Civil Rights, the Vietnam War, etc.

One difference between the more current protests and the historic ones is the use of professional agitators. From professional firms like Crowds on Demand to militant agitators, there is an unorganic element to many contemporary protests. There are organizers that know how to turn up the heat and get people to push the limit. And they know how to get attention.

Our media loves protests, even more so when violence and rioting are included. Nothing makes for better click bait than an act of violence. Does the media’s appetite for extremism drive people to more violence? Does the news cover what is happening or contribute to it?

Whatever the answer, our society is becoming more accustomed to overreaching protest which just adds to the polarization of the issue at hand. Currently, any discussion about common sense solutions to immigration is rudely dismissed. It's either let them all in or ship them all out. Full amnesty or full expulsion.

The last point rarely covered is how our legal immigration program works. The following list of annual new Legal Permanent Residents per fiscal year from 2010 to 2023 is from the Migration Policy Institute (<https://www.migrationpolicy.org>):



2010	1,042,630
2011	1,062,040
2012	1,031,630
2013	990,550
2014	1,016,520
2015	1,051,030
2016	1,183,510
2017	1,127,170
2018	1,096,610
2019	1,031,770
2020	707,360
2021	740,000
2022	1,018,350
2023	1,172,910

The following graph illustrates immigration patterns by presidential administration over the last 25 years using Congressional Budget Office figures:

# U.S. Immigration by Status

NET IMMIGRATION 2001-2024

The Congressional Budget Office categorizes U.S. immigrants into three main categories:

## LPR+

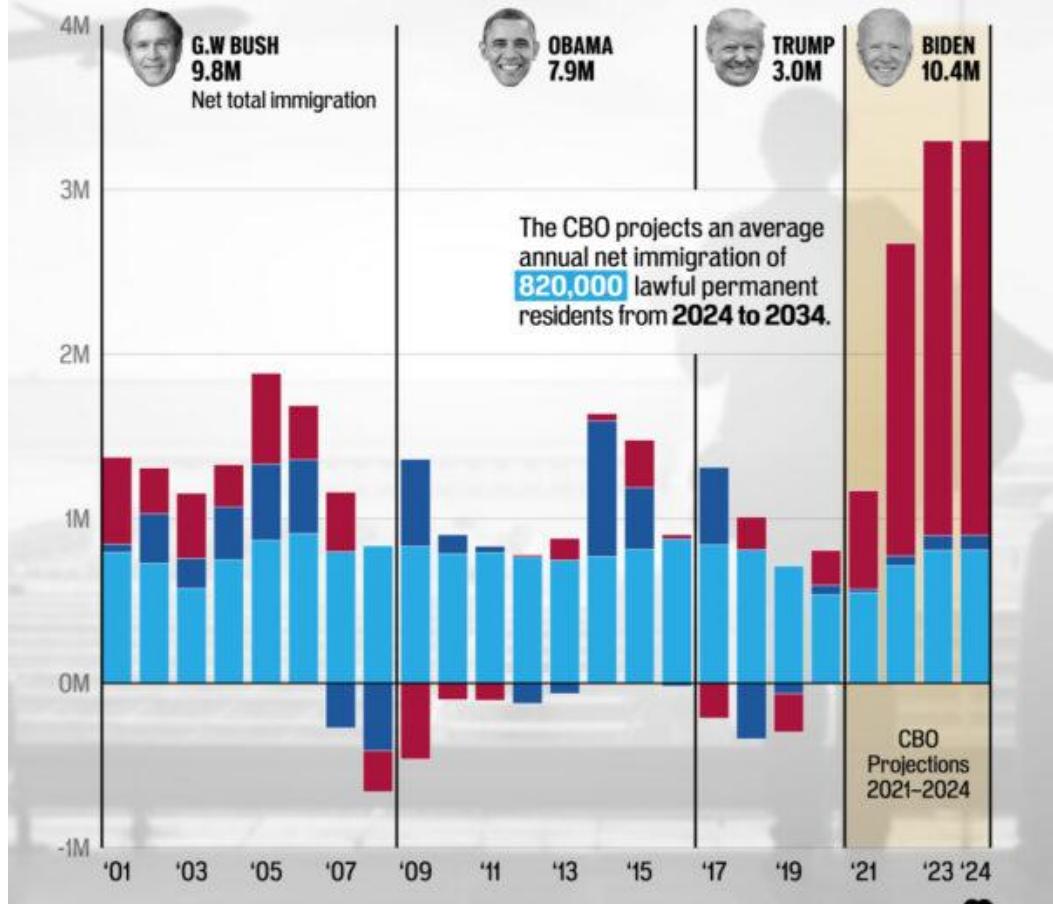
Lawful permanent residents and those eligible to apply for LPR status.

## INA NONIMMIGRANT

Those admitted temporarily for specific purposes, e.g. temporary workers, students, and foreign officials.

## OTHER FOREIGN NATIONAL

Those without legal permanent status, e.g. entered illegally or overstayed temporary visas.



Figures for 2021 to 2024 are projections. Data is in millions.

Source: Congressional Budget Office

COLLABORATORS RESEARCH + WRITING Kayla Zhu, Niccolò Conte | ART DIRECTION + DESIGN Sabrine Lam



What both of these graphics illustrate is that the United States has a fully functioning legal pathway for immigrants to come to this country. Critics will claim that the process is too complicated and lengthy, and that it is biased against poor people. However, the latest figures available from the US Department of Homeland

Security illustrate how our refugee program is functioning. Their figures are as follows:

The United States admitted 100,060 refugees in 2024:

- 37,050 as principal refugees<sup>[3]</sup>
- 63,000 as derivative refugees<sup>[4]</sup>

The leading countries of nationality for refugees admitted during this period were:

- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Afghanistan
- Venezuela
- Syria

One interesting source for data about immigration is the US Citizenship and Immigration Service: [Naturalization Statistics | USCIS](#)



According to their database, 818,500 new citizens were sworn in in 2024. The top five countries of origin for our new citizens sworn in in 2024 are illustrated here:



What does all of this information mean? It's clear that we have a national movement brought on by the outrageously poor management of our immigration system by the Biden Harris administration, yet nobody is holding them accountable.

The issue is exasperated by unrealistic expectations created by such mismanagement and is spinning out of control driven by misinformation. Our media appears to be fanning the flames and ignoring the criminal aspect of some migrants as well as ignoring their victims. The media ignores the fact that we have a legal system for those wishing to be part of our American society using legal methods.

## **Verdin vs. Paulding Forum**

We generally have little interest in the left leaning and embarrassingly biased San Luis Obispo Tribune “newspaper”, but we will be watching on January 15 as their Editorial Board presents a forum with candidates for the 4<sup>th</sup> Supervisorial District – incumbent Jimmy Paulding and challenger Adam Verdin.

This live on-line debate will be the first forum in what is shaping up to be a highly competitive race. We hope that both candidates are treated fairly and are given the opportunity to express themselves thoroughly. We also hope that each candidate is held accountable for nonsensical or insufficient answers.

According to The Tribune, viewers can watch live on Thursday, Jan. 15, at 5 p.m. To RSVP and receive reminders about the event copy the following and paste it in your search window: [Meet the candidates for SLO County District 4 supervisor Tickets, Thu, Jan 15, 2026 at 5:00 PM | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meet-the-candidates-for-slo-county-district-4-supervisor-tickets-tue-jan-15-2026-at-500pm-t09525117111). There is no cost to watch online.

The link can also be found on the Tribune's website. They invite you to submit questions in advance. **PLEASE ENGAGE AND ASK THE IMPORTANT QUESTIONS.** The right questions will draw a clear distinction between the two candidates.

This might be a great excuse to have a few people over for a watch party.

## Meet the candidates for District 4 supervisor

5 p.m. • Jan. 15 • Live at SanLuisObispo.com  
Streaming on Facebook, YouTube and Instagram



**Stephanie Finucane**

Opinion Editor,  
The SLO Tribune



**Joe Tarica**

Editor,  
The SLO Tribune



**Jimmy Paulding**

District 4 Supervisor



**Adam Verdin**

Business owner

Whether you are already an adamant supporter, or if you have never met the candidates, this will be a great kick off to the highest visibility race of the season for SLO County. We urge you to watch.

## The COLAB Annual Dinner will take place on March 26 at the Madonna Inn

We will have an exciting speaker (to be announced shortly), great food, an open bar and an opportunity to mix and mingle with practically all of the movers and shakers in our community. Mark your calendars so that you don't miss one of the biggest events of the year. We hope to see you there.

## Last Week

### **Happy New Year, and Happy 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary to our nation!**

The first SLO County Board of Supervisors meeting of the year occurs on Tuesday, January 6. It looks like it will be a quick meeting, with only 17 agenda items, and all but 2 on the consent calendar. Most of the items are appointments to various boards or recognitions for public service, along with a couple minor construction projects up for approval. The next meeting won't take place until January 27. It is a slow start to what could become a high-pressure year.

## **WHAT TO EXPECT**

The new year brings some changes, some new challenges and a number of old haunts to our San Luis Obispo Board of Supervisors. The first visible change occurs at the January 6 board meeting, where a new Chair of the Board will be selected. If the regular order is followed, it is expected that Supervisor Ortiz-Legg will pass the gavel to Supervisor Paulding.

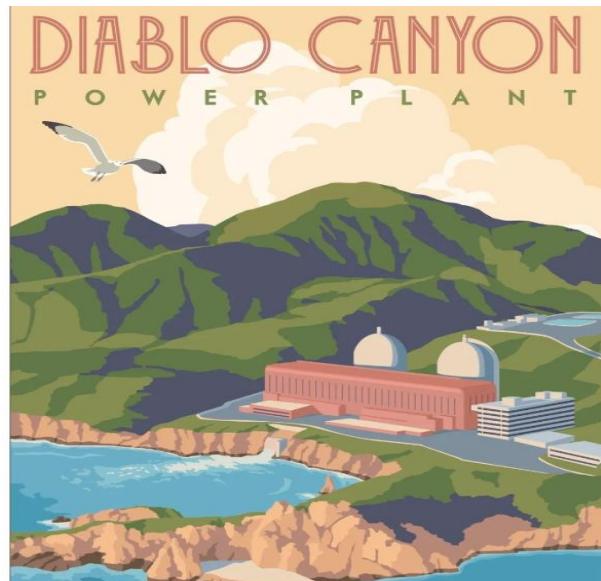
We don't quite know what to expect with Paulding's Chairmanship. Will he be succinct and to the point or will he ramble with acknowledgement and thanks to everybody who appears before the Board? How will his reelection efforts impact his leadership? Will he drift more to the center in an attempt to better appeal to his purplish red district?

Several carryover issues linger and will continue to be a challenge in 2026.

**PASO WATER BASIN** the Paso Robles Area Groundwater Authority (PRAGA) will be attempting to put some sort of funding mechanism in place and develop a plan to achieve sustainability over the next decade or two. Absent a change in leadership and approach, local overlayers will resist and tensions will grow, stymying any real progress.



The **DIABLO CANYON POWER PLANT** achieved a victory with the California Coastal Commission approval of their Coastal Zone Management Act Consistency Certification and Coastal Development Permit for Diablo Canyon. But the approval came at a high transactional cost. PG&E was essentially required to hand over land and commit to establishing a \$10 million endowment for the maintenance of the trails on that land in order to get the permit. This creates a number of headaches for our county government as that land gets dropped from the tax rolls and could end up requiring all sorts of management and liability costs. On top of that, the complicated Unitary Tax structure for the plant is in question, and sorting out the needed modifications may require state legislation. All, of course, on the rate payer's dime. After all that, the 20-year operating permit still needs to be finalized.



The **KPMG AUDITS** established in 2025 have yielded efficiencies with our Department of Health and are now doing so with our Department of Planning and Building. It is anticipated that one or two departments per year will go through an audit. So far, no scandals or outrageous abuses have been uncovered, and none are really expected. What has been a tremendous benefit, however, is a fresh look at the newest best practices, improved customer experience, updated technology and improved communications. The likely next audit is the Department of Social Services.



**HOUSING** will forever be a challenge for San Luis Obispo County. Land and building costs are high, permitted building space is limited, and most communities have mixed feelings about new development. New state regulations designed to encourage low income and multi-family construction can confound local building codes that might otherwise seek to regulate density, height and style of housing in various neighborhoods. Without relief, we are pricing lower and middle income people out of our community. This impacts all sorts of jobs and services.



None of the **new challenges for 2026** come as a great surprise, but they all deserve our attention and a commonsense approach by county leadership. They include:

**SUPERVISOR ELECTIONS** Supervisor Gibson is retiring from his 16+ years of service on the Board, opening District 2 to an election between (so far) Michael Woody and Jim Dantona. It's a liberal district with the biggest standout issue being offshore wind energy production which is still on the minds of the voters despite its doubtful future. Supervisor Paulding in District 4 is up for his first reelection and faces local business leader Adam Verdin. It's a fairly conservative district and Paulding may have a challenge justifying some of his left-leaning votes with the expectations of his constituents. Financial support will likely play a role in the outcome.



**SERVICE PROVIDERS** will be challenged to do more with less. The county budget is unlikely to provide the level of financial support that so many organizations have been relying on. Whether private organizations contracting with the County, or actual county services, operating costs seem to be increasing while county revenues and state funding could be faltering. Some providers may need to consolidate while others will need to find additional support within the community to continue at the same level. This will make the county budget process difficult for county staff and the Board of Supervisors as they interact with providers sharing compelling stories of the help that they provide to the needy.



**PROPERTY RIGHTS** are always of concern, but the pressure is increasing towards some form of rent control and/or restrictions. There are a variety of ways that this issue is developing. In the City of San Luis Obispo, efforts are underway to establish a Rental Registry where landlords are required to list details of their rental property. This is a first step towards rent control and could spread to other communities throughout the county. Vacation rental restrictions are on the minds of policy makers. The County has already implemented a permit charge increase from about \$50 to about \$300 effective at the beginning of this year. Other restrictions, such as limits on the total number of vacation rentals in an area could also be on the table. A vacancy tax is also often discussed. This would charge more for homeowners who are not full-time occupants. There is a notion amongst some that if vacation rental owners were no longer allowed to rent their property on a short-term basis, they would just rent on a long-term basis (thus eliminating Transit Occupancy Tax revenue). We wonder how that would work out for people who invested in property when VRBOs were okay and developed a business and payment schedule accordingly.



**SALES TAX MEASURES** have been discussed for a while, but at least one is about to come to a vote. The “Local Roads First” half-cent sales tax measure will almost certainly appear on the November General Election Ballot. The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) has done a great deal of work to reflect the community’s concerns in the crafting of the measure. Very little “extra stuff” is included, administration fees are capped at 1% and a great deal of oversight has

been built in. Challenging the measure on its merits will be difficult. The biggest impediment to its passage may be the idea that the County Board of Supervisors do not count transportation as a high priority, why should taxpayers need to pay extra for services and roads that they should get in their regular tax payments?

A second sales tax measure has been proposed by the Board of Supervisors that would enhance public safety – primarily in Fire and Sheriff services. The window is closing to do the necessary prep work such as polling, economic forecasting, defining the layout of the measure and drafting the language. Many feel that having two measures on the same ballot would be disastrous and are suggesting that the measure be put off for future consideration.

We will follow both efforts closely and will be fascinated to see how SLO County voters react.



## Sales taxes

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT** may be the new big thing in 2026. SLO County has potential to create revenue producing projects. County revenues are not keeping up with spending. The time has come to establish a plan that gets us moving in the right direction. Nothing can happen overnight, and some projects may take many years, but we need to start somewhere. The good news is that such projects usually involve jobs, investment and potential for local residents. Other counties around the state have made significant investments in projects and have seen strong returns as a

result. They get a boost not only in tax revenue, but in other local economic benefits as well. Can we do the same? Will we do the same? Seems like the tighter our budget restraints become, the more likely such thinking will prevail.



**COUNTY BUDGET** issues are an ongoing challenge. Just a few months after the last budget is finally adopted, work begins on the new one. So, what's new about the budget for 2026? This will be the first full year under the "right sizing and rebalancing" plan adopted last year. Part of that plan was to establish data points for tracking what works, and what needs more work. The 2026 budget will be more fine-tuned, and changes will be made with additional and improved data that has not been available in the past. This is good news for those of us always looking for greater accountability and transparency.



## **Public Safety – Public Service**

Two of our public safety leaders, Sheriff Ian Parkinson and District Attorney Dan Dow, are holding public meetings later this month that will be highly informative and useful.



The Sheriff meeting fulfills a requirement under California law that calls for the department to disclose interactions with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). Parkinson has been very clear in his remarks at several public events that his department complies with state law, but a vocal group of community activists persist in suggesting that ICE is getting improper access to inmates at the county jail. This meeting will hopefully clear up some of the concern, but the fervor of the ICE protesters is so strong that it's doubtful that any information will completely satisfy their frustration. We hope that others from the community will attend in support of the Sheriff.



Fraud has become an industry in our current culture. Online scams, credit card fraud and real estate theft are just a few of the many means of theft that occur every day, and often many times per day in our own county. The main theme is the unsuspecting or unaware victim. Dow's office is working to change that with information about what to watch for, how to recognize a scam and how to protect from becoming a victim.

Below are details of each meeting. We highly encourage attendance and thank both the Sheriff and the District Attorney for offering these helpful events.

# NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## Public Notice of Truth Act Report

Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds (TRUTH) Act California  
Government Code Section 7283.1 (d) Tuesday, January 27, 2026

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San Luis Obispo: NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual TRUTH Act Report and community forum will be heard by the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo on Tuesday, January 27, 2026. The meeting starts at 9:00 a.m. in the Board of Supervisors Chambers at the Katcho Achadjian Government Center, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA, 93408. The TRUTH Act Report will happen in the morning session with more specific timing determined when the agenda for that meeting is finalized.

This hearing is held pursuant to the Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds (TRUTH) Act, which requires public reporting and community input regarding local law enforcement cooperation with federal immigration authorities.

Live in-person Spanish translators will be made available to interpret public comments that may come in in-person.

The TRUTH Act Hearing will be broadcast on the Board of Supervisors live meeting at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/>

Members of the public who wish to address the Board during the meeting must appear in person.

Written public comments may also be submitted by email; however, virtual public comments will not be accepted. All correspondence will be distributed to each member of the Board of Supervisors and will become part of the official record of the meeting. To submit a written public comment, email: [Boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:Boardofsups@co.slo.ca.us)

To determine the specific placement of this item on the Board of Supervisors agenda and to review the TRUTH Act report, visit the County's website at [www.slocounty.ca.gov](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov) on the Wednesday prior to the scheduled hearing date.

**FREE 2-Hour Seminars**  
**Learn How to Identify, Prevent, & Respond to Fraud**

# **FRAUD SCHEMES**

## **Prevention & Awareness Forums**

### **January 30, 2026**

**Katcho Achadjian Government Center**  
Board of Supervisors Chambers  
1055 Monterey Street | San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

## **Three Separate Presentations Offered**

<b>Session #1</b> <u><b>Open to</b></u> <u><b>the Public</b></u>	<b>Session #2</b> <u><b>Real Estate</b></u> <u><b>Professionals</b></u>	<b>Session #3</b> <u><b>Small Business</b></u> <u><b>Owners</b></u>
<b>9:00 am - 11:00 am</b> <i>Exposure to current fraud schemes aimed at local residents</i>	<b>12:00 pm - 2:00 pm</b> <i>Identifying fraud schemes targeting real estate sales professionals</i>	<b>3:00 pm - 5:00 pm</b> <i>Learn how to protect your small business assets</i>

*Hosted by*  
*San Luis Obispo County District Attorney*

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**Emergent Trends  
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## **California Governor Gavin Newsom's Fairytale State of the State**

**California's Higher Gas Prices Are a Policy Choice,  
Not an Accident**

**COLAB In Depth  
Page 32**

## **California Voter ID Initiative Surpasses One Million Signatures, Set to Appear on November 2026 Ballot**

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# California Governor Gavin Newsom's Fairytale State of the State

*Most destructive CA governor ever gives campaign speech in place of State of the State*

By Katy Grimes, January 8, 2026 3:56 pm

"Was that a State of the State address, or the opening act of a campaign speech?" California State Senator Tony Strickland (R-Huntington Beach) asked, following Governor Gavin Newsom's final State of the State address. "Californians want honesty and accountability, not more rhetoric from a governor with a failing record of leadership."

Ditto.

Newsom hasn't delivered a State of the State in person since 2020, so why now? Likely to attempt to rewrite history – his history. Gavin Newsom claims that California leads the nation, as if it's his leadership running the country. Au contraire.

However, California does lead the nation in poverty, gas prices, energy prices, homelessness, housing prices, unemployment, out-migration, failing K-12 students, wildfire damage, and state debt.



Gov. Gavin Newsom's final State of the State address. (Photo: gov.ca.gov)

"Governor Newsom told Californians that homelessness is down, crime is at record lows, schools are improving, and Los Angeles is recovering after the Palisades fires," California Republican Party Chairwoman Corrin Rankin said. "Governor Newsom painted a picture of a California that exists in his imagination."

The Globe characterized Newsom's State of the State speech as a fairytale:

Ignoring that the quality of life in California has significantly degraded in the seven years he has been governor, Gavin Newsom's fairytale California is enjoyed only by the top 1% who can actually afford to live here. With the highest taxes in the country, the most draconian regulations on businesses, highest electricity and gas prices... even billionaires are moving out of California because they've had it, and especially now that the left is pushing an additional 5% billionaire tax on **all of their personal assets**... cars, designer furniture, jewelry, art, collectables...

Let's start with Gavin Newsom's claims about California's public education system, which the Globe has chronicled as the highest spending per pupil, with some of the lowest math and English scores in the country.

Gov. Newsom claimed in his State of the State that "California has seen improved academic achievement in every area in the California public educational system."

The Globe shared Newsom's education claims with Lance Izumi, Senior Education Director of the Pacific Research Institute; it didn't take Lance more than a few minutes to reply:

"NOT TRUE!!! For example, among California high school seniors in 2024, 33% scored at the proficient level on the National Assessment for Educational Progress reading test. That proficiency rate is lower than the pre-pandemic 2019 rate of 36%. On the 2024 NAEP math test, a shockingly low 21% of California twelfth graders scored at the proficient mark versus 24% in 2019. Fourth and eighth-grade scores in 2024 showed similar declines from 2019. The bottom line is that on the most critical education indicator—student performance—California under Gavin Newsom has come up woefully short, despite record-breaking education spending increases."

Then the governor also announced increased educational spending to \$27,000 per student – another gift to the CTA. Izumi continued:

"Increased spending hasn't given California taxpayers bang for their buck. The high math remediation rates we have seen at supposedly top-notch universities like UC San Diego demonstrate that the state's K-12 public schools are not spending their largesse in ways that produce the kind of results that Californians demand and our children deserve.

**It's not how much you spend, it's how you spend it. And how California is spending its education tax dollars is clearly ineffective."**

2025 test scores are still below test performance prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Let that sink in.

Conspicuously absent from Gov. Gavin Newsom's State of the State address today was Insurance Commissioner Ricardo Lara. His name was not called among the Constitutional officers present. Where in the world was Ricardo?

The governor's speech largely ignored the declining quality of life in California. Families are paying about 25 percent more for essentials such as housing, food, and roughly 40 percent more for utilities and gas under his leadership. She also called attention to the state's dwindling economic opportunities and the struggles facing California students.

Strangely, Newsom spoke longingly and deeply about how wonderful China is – "Climate Leadership Is Economic Leadership," and how "China is dominating the space." China sent 800 delegates to the 2025 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Belém, Brazil in November, and the U.S. sent no one, much to Gavin's chagrin. Still, Gavin went. The Governor claimed "climate policy as an economic imperative, not just a moral one." Climate change is another fraudulent issue he continues to foment.

Senate Minority Leader Brian W. Jones (R-San Diego) and Assemblymember James Gallagher (R-East Nicolaus) responded to the governor's final State of the State address, agreeing that it was more of a campaign stump speech than a sharing with the people of California the unvarnished truth of the issues facing them.

California "is the single most expensive place to live in America," said Sen. Jones. "Gas, groceries, utilities, you name it. Working California families just can't keep up."

"Our schools are broken. In English, in math and in science more than half of California students do not meet basic standards," Jones continued. "They aren't ready for college, they aren't ready for the workforce, they're not getting the education they so desperately need and are so definitely entitled to."

Jones pointed out that all these issues are self-inflicted. Under the one-party rule that defines the Newsom era, not only has Newsom ignored the decline in the quality of life in California, but he has also doubled down on the reckless policies amplifying that erosion.

"Take a walk downtown in Gavin Newsom's California and you'll see businesses boarded, homeless defecating and getting high in plain sight, and drug dealers operating with impunity in the heart of once vibrant communities," Jones stated. "He distorts the data and spreads misinformation to have you believe things are better now. Look around your own life. Look at your utility bill, your grocery costs, look at your community, your safety, your opportunity. Look at the cost and quality of your life here in California and ask yourself if they match up."

Newsom tried to claim once again that it's Trump who is holding up rebuilding after the Los Angeles fires in Pacific Palisades, Malibu and Altadena last January 2025. This is wicked deceit. Recent **reports** reveal that the fires raged due to the incompetence of state and local officials. And Gavin Newsom said he plans to go after large investors buying up California's affordable housing, after President Donald Trump announced his plan to do this.

California State Senators and Assembly members **unanimously passed two bills** last January 23, 2025, to provide a total of \$3 billion to help Los Angeles begin recovery and cleanup from the devastating wildfires. But Democrats blocked \$1 billion for wildfire prevention. Pages and pages of notes on Newsom's State of the State are merely pages and pages of lies and grandstanding by the governor.

Here's a small sample:

The Governor's press office pre-released some of Newsom's talking points from the state of the state stump speech. The Globe's responses are in **red**.

- California Leads the Nation — Not Trump **Laughable, preposterous**
- California is a direct counterpoint to Donald Trump's destabilized federal government, which is chaotic, lawless, and captured by wealth. **The federal**

**government hasn't been this stable in years. It's Newsom's California which is chaotic, lawless and captures by wealth. And how did Newsom get his wealth?**

- California is actively governing — offering a blueprint for democratic leadership at a moment when American norms are under assault. **California lacks any leadership, and instead has a boy playing governor.**
- Economic Strength, No Apologies **The only current economic strength is the state's labor unions. The billionaires are leaving, and taking their companies with them.**
- The Governor will reject the California crackup narrative outright and make the case that CA's success is intentional, not accidental. **California crackup is taking place because of Gavin Newsom, and his socialist politics.**
- That growth is paired with fairness — progressive taxation, higher wages, and targeted tax credits — ensuring prosperity is broadly shared, not hoarded at the top." **California's progressive personal income tax system ranges from 1% to 13.3% – the highest in the country.**
- "Homelessness and Mental Health: Results, Not Rhetoric" **Gov. Newsom spent \$37 billion on homelessness and only grew the homeless population through the failed "Housing First" plan.**
- An estimated 9% statewide drop in unsheltered homelessness **see above**
- The Governor's address frames affordability as a stacked crisis, with housing identified as CA's original sin. **Newsom has had 7 years to simplify the building permit process in order to get more housing built, thereby lowering the overall cost of housing.**
- "Education Is the Center of the Budget" **see above**
- CA invests in resilience, clean power, and insurance reform to protect homeowners and maintain global competitiveness. The state is focused on execution — the 'how,' not just the 'why.'" "LA Fires Show Government That Works" "Following the one-year anniversary of the Los Angeles fires, the Governor points to the fastest debris removal in American history, accelerated rebuilding permits, and direct support for survivors. He contrasts decisive state action with Trump's refusal to deliver disaster aid, using the recovery as proof that CA governs effectively when Washington fails."

We have many years of Globe articles covering Gov. Gavin Newsom's real record, detailed, sourced and often linked to state government documents and records.

History will not be kind to Gavin Newsom, despite his fairytale State of the State today.

## **Katy Grimes**

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

# California's Higher Gas Prices Are a Policy Choice, Not an Accident

*California once operated more than 40 refineries... only nine remain...  
two more closures are already underway*

By Hector Barajas, January 7, 2026

Before the end of the year, the California Independent Petroleum Association sent a **blunt message** to the California Energy Commission: California's oil industry is approaching a breaking point, and state inaction risks higher gas prices, supply disruptions, and deeper economic harm for working families and businesses.

The **letter** urges immediate intervention to prevent the dismantling of the Valero Benicia Refinery and the collapse of the San Pablo Bay Pipeline, the last pipeline carrying Kern County crude to Northern California refineries. According to CIPA, losing either would destabilize the system.

California once operated more than 40 refineries. Today, only nine remain. Two more closures are already underway. Refinery capacity has fallen sharply, even as Californians still consume roughly 1.8 million barrels of oil per day. Californians use more oil today than ten years ago.

Electric vehicle adoption has not erased California's oil demand. It has merely shifted the conversation. Gasoline, diesel, jet fuel, and more than 6,000 petroleum-based products, embedded in nearly every sector of the economy, remain essential.

The Valero Benicia facility is not an abstract asset. It produces California-specific fuels that cannot be easily replaced by imports. Once the oil refinery is dismantled, it will be nearly impossible to restart.

Reduced refining capacity means less competition, tighter supply, and greater exposure to price spikes during disruptions.

The pipeline risk compounds the problem. The San Pablo Bay Pipeline is already idle. If it shuts down permanently, crude will have to be moved by truck, rail, or tanker.

According to a **report** by Michael A. Mische of the University of Southern California, James W. Rector of the University of California, Berkeley, and Joseph

B. Silvi of the University of California, Berkeley, “to replace 100% of the SPB pipeline capacity using a large tanker truck would require and add up to 222 more trucks a day to California’s already stressed highway and freeway system.”

That is 222 more trucks a day going up to Northern California and 222 trucks coming back down to carry another load.

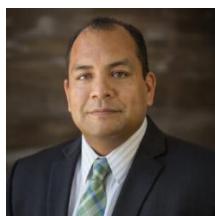
Every additional dollar in transportation costs is paid by consumers. That cost shows up at the pump, in grocery bills, and in the cost of moving goods across the state.

CIPA also highlights policy-driven constraints that are accelerating production declines, including restrictions that prevent routine maintenance of existing wells. Oil producers are having a difficult time upgrading and repairing existing oil wells because of California legislation (SB 1137). The result is predictable: less in-state production, more imports, and higher costs.

For working Californians, high fuel prices hit household budgets immediately. For small businesses, higher transportation and energy costs squeeze margins and drive up prices. For local economies, refinery and pipeline losses mean fewer jobs, less tax revenue, and greater dependence on foreign supply chains that California cannot control.

The letter does not argue against transition. It argues against disorder. An unmanaged collapse of refining and pipeline infrastructure will not reduce demand. It will simply export it, along with jobs and environmental oversight.

The California Energy Commission can act to stabilize the system or accept a future of higher prices and chronic instability for the people who can least afford it.



### **Hector Barajas**

Hector Barajas is a communications strategist who advises companies, associations, and campaigns on public affairs and policy issues. He is the founder of Amplify360 Inc., a strategic communications firm, and a frequent commentator on politics, legislation, and Latino issues in English and Spanish-language media.

# California Voter ID Initiative Surpasses One Million Signatures, Set to Appear on November 2026 Ballot

*The initiative requires Voter ID to cast a ballot and to verify the citizenship of registered voters*

By Megan Barth, January 5, 2026

Today, Reform California, led by California State Assemblyman Carl DeMaio (R-San Diego), announced that they have secured more than one million signatures for a Voter ID initiative to appear on the upcoming November 2026 ballot.

The California Voter ID Initiative, filed in response to Prop. 50 which eliminated the nonpartisan redistricting commission and racially gerrymandered the state, is a state constitutional amendment that requires Voter ID for casting a ballot in each election and holds state election officials accountable to verify the citizenship of registered voters and keep accurate voter rolls.

In a press release, Reform California announced:

California's corrupt political establishment never thought we could get the signatures, but now they better get ready for CA Voter ID to shake up their broken political system by restoring the integrity of our elections.

In a record-breaking haul, the backers of the CA Voter ID Initiative have collected more than 1 million signatures after just 90 days – but they intend to continue to collect signatures until they reach a comfortable 1.2 million haul. 874,641 valid signatures are needed to force the issue on the 2026 statewide ballot – and extra signatures are needed to fully ensure the measure has more than enough valid signatures to qualify.

“We are absolutely thrilled with the overwhelming and broad-based support for the CA Voter ID initiative – and by submitting 1.2 million signatures we are confident this initiative will qualify for the November 2026 midterm ballot” said CA State Assemblymember Carl DeMaio, one of the initiative’s proponents.

DeMaio’s Reform California organization is leading the volunteer signature drive and reports over 18,000 volunteers are trained and activated statewide to collect signatures.

DeMaio has asked his army of volunteer signature collectors to collect roughly 200,000 more signatures and return all signatures by February 6 for submission in mid-February – a month in advance of the initiative’s March submission deadline.

“We are ready with a team of lawyers to force this issue onto the ballot if necessary – and we’re organizing the most aggressive grassroots campaign California has seen in decades to make sure the measure passes in the November 2026 election,” DeMaio said, adding, “the one million signatures will shock California’s corrupt political establishment.” DeMaio expects “dirty tricks from sites and local politicians to derail the initiative.”

“Implementing a Voter ID requirement is critical in securing our elections – and this initiative reinstates trust in our democracy and ensures every legal vote is counted,” said CA State Senator Tony Strickland, one of the initiative’s proponents.

“With strong public backing and a mobilized team ready to collect the signatures needed, our job is simple: make sure voters get their say on this widely popular reform next November,” said Julie Luckey, Chairman of Californians for Voter ID and an organizational proponent of the measure.

In November 2025, the U.S. Department of Justice intervened in a **federal lawsuit** initially filed by the Dhillon Law Group, Assemblyman David Tangipa, California voters, and the CAGOP. The lawsuit alleges Prop. 50 unconstitutionally racially gerrymanders districts in violation of the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments.

Oral arguments were first heard last month. The Globe will continue to provide updates on any new developments.

#### **Megan Barth**

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

###

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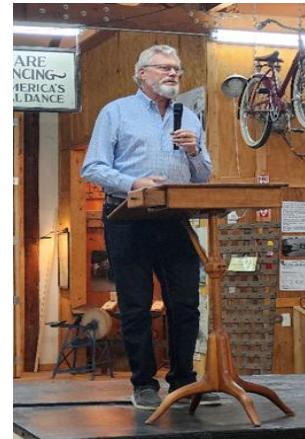
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<https://www.gov.ca.gov/contact/>

Senator Alex Padilla  
202-224-3553 DC  
<https://www.padilla.senate.gov/contact/>

Senator Adam Schiff  
202-224-3841 DC  
<https://www.schiff.senate.gov/contact/>

Representative Salud Carbajal  
202-225-3601 DC  
805-546-6348 District  
<carbajal.house.gov/contact>

Representative Jimmy Panetta  
202-225-2861 DC  
831-424-2229 District  
<panetta.house.gov/contact>

State Senator John Laird  
916-651-4017 Sacramento  
805-549-3784 District  
[senator.laird@senate.ca.gov](mailto:senator.laird@senate.ca.gov)

State Assembly Member Dawn Addis  
916-319-2030 Sacramento  
805-549-3001 District  
[assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov](mailto:assemblymember.addis@assembly.ca.gov)

SLO County Supervisor Bruce Gibson  
805-781-4338 District  
[bgibson@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:bgibson@co.slo.ca.us)

SLO County Supervisor Heather Moreno  
805-781-4339 District  
[hmoreno@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:hmoreno@co.slo.ca.us)

SLO County Supervisor Dawn Ortiz-Legg  
805-781-5450 District  
[dortizlegg@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:dortizlegg@co.slo.ca.us)

SLO County Supervisor Jimmy Paudling  
805-781-4337 District  
[district4@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:district4@co.slo.ca.us)

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Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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