

# A COMMUNITY ALLIANCE

THE VOICE OF THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT SINCE 1996



EN ESPAÑOL  
PÁGINAS 24-28

## “Hated Just for Being Homeless”

BY I. SMILEY G. CALDERON

In the early morning of Aug. 26, while he was sound asleep in front of Cuca’s Mexican Restaurant on Olive Avenue in the Tower District, an unhoused 47-year-old Latino, Fred “Freddy” F. De La Rosa, was viciously attacked and kicked to the head suddenly by a passerby holding a hot dog in each hand.

The video surveillance footage of the attack is brutal and disturbing.

Yet, ultimately, it was this ghastly footage, along with a \$2,000 Valley Crime Stoppers award, that helped a detective, Guadalupe Olague, and his team solve the case. The team is with the Fresno Police Department’s (FPD) Street Violence Bureau. They apprehended 25-year-old Roberto Felipe Olivera, who was arrested in late September and booked on a felony assault charge for his unprovoked vicious attack on De La Rosa.

Olivera evaded authorities for several weeks before his family helped coordinate his peaceful surrender.

What Olivera did to De La Rosa, however, wasn’t so peaceful.

“Waking up in the hospital was the scary part,” De La Rosa recounts. “It’s traumatizing. You see it in the movies all the time, but you don’t expect that to happen to you.

“When I woke up, I woke up to a bed that was drenched in my blood.”

Surprisingly, De La Rosa harbors no ill will for Olivera. “I [would] like to say I’m not mad at the person,” De La Rosa confesses.

“I’m not mad at this person who did this—in any way. I forgave this person when I woke up... But, I just don’t know what would possess someone to do this to somebody—it’s scary.”

Yes, it is scary. Especially in light of a similar story in Redding during the summer where a homeless man was bludgeoned with a baseball bat while he was asleep outside on a sofa. That poor man died.



Fred “Freddy” F. De La Rosa. Photo by Peter Maiden

Fortunately, De La Rosa survived. If his fellow unhoused friends had not called 911 when they did, he might not have. By all accounts, the emergency response was quick and the police and detective work in this case was solid.

FPD Deputy Chief Mark Salazar commended the Street Violence Bureau team on its strategic approach and efficiency.

“Incredible to watch,” said Salazar. “And the help received...from other detectives was incredible to watch from where I sit. Seeing them check businesses, canvass day and night, and do the technical aspect of the job like writing and serving search warrants.”

*Continues on page 2*



The Dixie Fire of 2021, which burned a million acres, including 1,300 homes in Northern California, was caused by power lines operated by PG&E. The company pleaded guilty in 2019 to 84 counts of involuntary manslaughter for a 2018 blaze ignited by its long-neglected electrical grid that nearly destroyed the town of Paradise and became the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century.

*Photo courtesy of Joe Bradshaw/Bureau of Land Management*

## Lights Out!

BY PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

Heat is dwindling, but the cold is coming soon. With PG&E prices, the Central Valley better bundle up.

Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), an investor-owned utility company that powers millions of households across the majority of Northern and Central California, will be raising its prices for the fourth time this year—all while basking in record profits.

On Sept. 12, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) swiftly cleared another rate hike for PG&E with a 4-0 vote on its “consent agenda”—a procedural move that bypassed any discussion or debate. Consent agendas are a collection of items that are grouped together for approval without discussion during a meeting, typically because they are considered noncontroversial or routine; it’s done this way to save time.

Raising prices for the electric bill of three-quarters of the state doesn’t seem like something routine that should be passed quickly in a meeting.

Despite still having the last quarter of the year left, PG&E has already raised its prices four times this year. The first rate increase took place at the beginning of the year. In January, it raised bills by 12%–13%, adding around \$32.50 per month. A second increase in March added \$4–\$5 per month, followed by a \$6 per month rise in September. The October increase, also \$6 per month, was approved on Sept. 12.

PG&E plans to offer a \$55 one-time climate credit for some relief in October, as well as a 9% temporary rate cut

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# “Hated Just for Being Homeless”

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This case involves a violent attack on a resident. But not only that. It is about a privileged, housed man feeling completely justified with brutally stomping the head of another less privileged man experiencing homelessness while sleeping in public. This case is about how the public treats the homeless.

A couple of years ago back in the Tower District, there was another brutal attack. That was deemed a hate crime because it was an attack against a federally protected group of people (in that case, LGBTQ+). Attacks on the unhoused are not considered federally protected. Unless a crime is clearly carried out because of race/ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, gender/sex, gender identity or disability, it is not a hate crime. Housing status is not considered a protected category, unfortunately.

“I went to sleep right outside of Cuca’s because it’s all lit up at night and I felt safe there,” De La Rosa recalls. “Directly across the street, there’s a lot of drug use that goes on. So, I figured I’d stay there [in front of Cuca’s] because my family knows them [the owners of Cuca’s] and I’ve known them for many years. So, I slept there.”

Yet not everyone wants De La Rosa sleeping in front of their businesses or on the street. Both the City and County of Fresno have new legislation that restricts options for the homeless. Sleeping in front of a business or elsewhere in the city can get you cited for \$1,000. You could even be arrested. The county isn’t much better with a fine of \$500.

Bob McCloskey, a local advocate for unhoused residents, explains the significance of the new ordinances. “There will be profiling of the poor, there’ll be profiling of those who are out on the streets. The disabled, the elderly that are out there will be profiled, and they very well could be ticketed with a thousand dollar fine and arrested simply for being in a park.

“We could be profiled and ticketed and even arrested for listening to music on a park bench. But what it really does is give the police discretion on who to identify as poor and homeless.” Laws targeting the unhoused ultimately target everyone.

The path for the city and county updates to homeless legislation was paved by Governor Newsom, who is encouraging municipalities to “clean up” their “homeless

problem.” Newsom recently said about the progress: “So what gives? Time to do your job. Time to address the crisis of encampments on the streets in this state...I’m not going to fund the rhetoric of failure anymore.”

With this impetus and sense of urgency, life is about to get even harder for those experiencing homelessness in the Golden State. Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer says that “regardless of the availability of bed space in this community, we will hold our unsheltered population accountable and that could and will include arresting and taking them to jail if in fact they are in violation of the ordinance.”

Nationally, a recent judicial decision has allowed and empowered states and municipalities to essentially criminalize their unhoused residents.

“The Supreme Court made a ruling on June 28, in a 6-3 decision, that allows cities like Fresno to basically punish people for sleeping...for lying outside, even if there are no alternatives and no shelter space available,” explains McCloskey. “The city of Fresno is one of the first to do this in the country.”

Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, one of the dissenting judges, said of the ruling: “Either stay awake or be arrested.”

If the public stereotypes unhoused residents as criminals for simply existing in public, then housed residents might feel empowered to attack them with impunity, as in what Olivera did to De La Rosa.

“We believe the City Council and the mayor and their decision-making process to criminalize the unhoused folks of Fresno has led to these kinds of violent attacks,” adds McCloskey. “It’s led to basic dehumanization, and in some cases, hatred of those who are unfortunate enough to be unhoused.”

McCloskey wants to be hopeful, but it is hard for the homeless. “The community doesn’t seem to care very much about the suffering that’s going on out there.

“The small businesses and the people of Fresno, they don’t want to look for solutions for the homeless other than ‘make them disappear.’”

De La Rosa mentioned two important community figures who have been especially helpful to him since the attack, Chaplains Don Gable and Shad Sanders, associated with the Fresno Probation Department.

“I met these guys on the street...they come and feed us pizza and pray for us,” De La Rosa recounts.

“Pizza and prayer,” says Sanders. “We’ve been doing this for some 12 years now. And people do show up—about 75 to 80 people every Friday.”

Recently, the City fined their little ministry, saying it is a magnet for the homeless. Gable says that they have been

accused of “bringing the homeless in.” He explains how they ultimately got a citation and how the FPD sent out four police officers with undercovers and code agents. “They made it a really big deal. It didn’t feel good at all.”

“I feel helpless,” De La Rosa says. “I feel hated just for being homeless.”

Gable describes the frustration: “Back in June, we were told that they had a lot of events going on that month [because of Pride] and that they just didn’t want this kind of group of people around Tower at that time. What an interesting key phrase, I thought—tolerance and acceptance. That’s what we’re all marching about and promoting right now. I’m all for it, but it should be all inclusive—even for these people.”

“There’s a lot of hurting people in Fresno, for sure,” notes Sanders.

“Fred’s been clean and sober for a few months now,” Sanders says, “and he’s staying in a local recovery home—the Strong House—and he’s been giving back too, he’s out feeding and working with the homeless. He’s a success story to the homeless.”

“Fred’s a perfect example,” Gable says. “He believes, but he’s in a bad situation. And then he goes through an even more horrific situation, but he comes out of that in a lot of positive ways. And his attitude has been phenomenal.

“You know, you can teach and preach ‘love your enemy’ all day, and then you see somebody actually doing it and it’s like, ‘that’s the deal right there.’”

“Agape love,” De La Rosa utters. “Yes, agape love,” Gable agrees. Unconditional love.

“Fred is showing all of us that it’s a matter of love at the end of the day; it’s still a matter of love,” Gable concludes. “We’ve been told before that we’re just a ‘hand-out,’ but actually, I believe we are a ‘hand-up,’ but more importantly, an ‘arm-around.’”

As of the most recent point-in-time count in 2023, there are about 3,200 homeless residents in the city of Fresno and 1,800 of those are unsheltered.

“I worry about the guy,” De La Rosa says of Olivera, his attacker. “Whatever is hurting this person, snap out of it, dude. You hurt a guy who would have helped you. And I wouldn’t stop at anything, I would keep helping you.

“Violence is temporary. And I’m not the enemy.”

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*I. smiley G. Calderon is a Gen X Southern California Chicano lifelong educator now living in the Central Valley. He believes in building community, which includes developing dynamic individual and collective human capital through the accessible application of education. He also loves world peace and tacos. Contact him at smileycalderon@gmail.com.*

# Lights Out!

Continued from page 1

that kicked in this July. One-time and temporary being the keywords. Its claims to want to help people and lower prices are contradicted by the four price hikes approved this year alone. Moreover, these minuscule price breaks have failed to keep up with PG&E’s total price hikes.

PG&E did have the REACH (Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help) program to assist low-income customers facing financial hardship with overdue bills. It was designed to help cover past-due bills so that customers’ service wouldn’t get cut off.

The REACH program offers a one-time (per year) credit of up to \$1,000 to low-income households struggling with past-due energy bills, while REACH Triple Match expands this assistance. Under Triple Match, moderate-income customers can also qualify, and any payment made is matched threefold—up to \$1,000 in total credits. REACH and REACH Triple Match are funded through donations from PG&E customers, employees and shareholders that the Salvation Army oversees and allocates to low-income individuals struggling with past-due energy bills.

Unfortunately, this financial assistance program is out of funds and stopped taking applications at the end of August. PG&E is confident that it can still help customers who applied before August, but there is no current information on when or if the REACH program will be able to help other customers that need assistance now or down the line.

According to PG&E, it has provided more than \$17.2 million in “financial assistance” to more than 25,000 low-income customers through REACH and REACH Triple Match programs since January. Surprisingly, a large portion of that support has been given to Fresnoans.

“Since January, more than 3,500 applications have been approved in Fresno County, resulting in more than \$2 million in financial assistance, marking the highest amount in PG&E’s service territory,” according to PG&E’s website. If an entire county is already struggling to keep up with basic bills, surely that’s a sign not to increase rates.

Why have there been so many price hikes this year?

PG&E claims that it needs to cover the cost of damages from storms, wildfires and other catastrophic events aside from maintaining and updating its energy grid and systems. It plans to cover 55% of those “damages” costs from you, the ratepayer.

This seems unfair and unnecessary considering PG&E prices are reportedly well above inflation and that the company has seen record profits this last year. In February, PG&E announced a nearly 25% spike in profits for 2023, approximately a \$2.2 billion increase.

PG&E CEO Patti Poppe alone earned nearly \$17 million in total compensation for 2023. This included a \$1.4 million base salary, \$3.45 million in bonuses and \$11.75 million in stock awards. That is a few million more than the \$14.1 million she earned in 2022.

The public reaction to the multiple price increases has been beyond negative, and not without reason. Cost of living across the country is increasingly difficult to cover and price hikes on basic bills only make matters worse.

People are struggling just to make ends meet. The CPUC has received plenty of backlash over its votes in support of the multiple rate raises; its Google review page is littered with angry ratepayers accusing the entity of corruption.

One such comment by Heath Shine stated, “Corruption at its finest. PG&E and the CPUC leadership should be in jail for bleeding Californians dry.”

Many Californians have begun organizing protests against raised prices. One such grassroots movement is called Stop PG&E, which aims “to create a more equitable society where access to essential services is not determined by wealth or privilege.”

Stop PG&E (stoppgenow.com) has held several protests at the Capitol with more planned this month. On Oct. 5, Stop PG&E will protest at the State Capitol at 11 a.m. On Oct. 18, it will hold the Flip the Switch event, asking those who can to turn off their breakers from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. in a symbolic gesture. People are asked to do this only if it is safe and accessible for them to do so.

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*Paulina Deeds Ortiz is a former fellow with the Community Alliance newspaper. She is a Mexican immigrant currently attending Fresno State, working on an anthropology major with a minor in psychology. She spends her free time writing poetry or painting.*

# Thanks to Voters, Fresno Supports the Arts

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

Measure P, the 3/8-cent sales tax approved by Fresno residents a few years back to improve local parks and support the arts, is finally here. Literally. On Sept. 5, the Fresno Arts Council (FAC), led by Lilia Chavez, presented a \$9.4 million check. This is the amount to be distributed among local art organizations, artists and media outlets promoting arts and culture.

In recent years, the FAC called on cultural organizations and culture stakeholders to develop a Cultural Arts Plan on how to use Measure P-generated funds. The plan was finalized last year and will be updated every five years.

“This is a monumental day and [all] thanks to the citizens of Fresno,” said Chavez during a Sept 5. press conference. “It’s our citizens that took up the mantle that decided to include arts in Measure P.” She expressed the importance of this funding in support of the arts in our city.

Fresno is one of the few cities in the state to implement such a plan.

The San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, working with the *Community Alliance* newspaper, is a proud beneficiary of this plan. Readers can view the Arts & Culture Calendar (see page 14) and arts coverage every month.



Arts administrators hold up a check representing the new funding for the arts in Fresno at a press conference. Photo by Peter Maiden

# Community Alliance Receives Journalism Award

We are already in October. When this newspaper hits the streets on Oct. 1, Mexico will have its first female president. Scientist Claudia Sheinbaum, from the same party as Andrés Manuel López Obrador, will rule the destiny of Mexico for the next six years.

Is this a preview of what could happen in our country next month? Are we finally going to have a woman as president? In reality, what is at stake in the United States is much more than that.

The mere possibility that a misogynist, insulting, lying and childish-minded man could reach the White House (again) is chilling. On Nov. 5, the vote is in favor of keeping democratic institutions standing.

Of course, Democrats are far from perfect, but it is up to us, the citizens, to advance and consolidate democracy. Nov. 5 is not just another election; it is our present and our future. Improving our democracy is a daily responsibility, and we need to improve our selection of candidates, and once they are in office, we need to make those elected officials accountable.

Many people are unhappy with our government, but we can change certain things, pressure our elected officials and continue to fight. It is a

completely different ballgame if we have a dictatorship, led by a maniac without moral limits. I can tell you this because I spent many years in a country ruled by a dictatorship.

On a brighter note, I am pleased to share with our readers that the *Community Alliance* received a journalism award in August for two articles that I wrote.

The award, under the "Foreign Affairs" category, was presented by California Black Media and Ethnic Media Services during the Ethnic Media Conference, August 27–28, in Sacramento.

These articles are part of a series titled "The Japanese Incarceration" that we produced from October 2023 to July 2024.

The two award-winning stories, "The Other Incarcerated Japanese" and "The Kidnapping of the Naganuma Family" (both in the November 2023 issue), were printed in English and Spanish.

This award makes us proud and motivates us to continually improve and better serve our community.

Till next month.



Since 1996, the *Community Alliance* has been an independent progressive voice for the Central San Joaquin Valley. The *Community Alliance* advocates for

- Racial, social, environmental and economic justice
  - Equal rights for all, including immigrants, the unhoused and the LGBTQ+ community
  - Access to a free quality public education for all
  - Access to healthcare for all
  - A living wage for all working people
- Our goal is to expose racial, social, environmental, economic and political injustices. We will help to build a powerful progressive movement that will make all our communities safer, healthier, more equitable and more livable.

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**SUBMISSIONS**

**Deadline:**  
15th of the previous month.  
Articles 800–1,200 words.  
E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.

**Peace and Social Justice  
Calendar:**

Please submit all activities to  
calendar@fresnoalliance.com  
by the 15th of the previous month.

**Letters to the Editor:**

E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.  
Up to 200 words.

The *Community Alliance* newspaper, a 501(c)(4) entity, reserves the right to edit all articles for space and clarity. It is printed on recycled paper.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Where Does the Money Go?

Where has all the federal funding gone? Fresno received lots and lots of money, so where may it be hiding? Fresno was supposed to build lots of tiny homes and remodel "old" motels for these homeless people. Why hasn't this funding been spent like that?

It seems to me that Fresno has lots of money stashed somewhere since they always have their hand out for federal money, especially [Fresno Mayor Jerry] Dyer. There should be an audit done on all this funding received so this community can see what's been accomplished.

What does Fresno intend to do with all these people? Put them in jail and make us, the community, pay for them anyway? Or send them to state prison so the whole state can pay for them?

Why give out fines? They can't pay them. This is absolutely ridiculous.

Why does every [City] Council person, mayor or police chief in Fresno become so corrupt as soon as they take office? And it's getting worse with every passing year. And no one makes them accountable for anything, but yet, they'll throw homeless people in jail.

Why don't we put them in jail until they can let us all know where this federal funding they've received in the last 8–10 years has gone. Along with proof of what they tell us. Such blatant corruption!

Patricia Hernandez  
Fresno

### "Jurassic Park of Politics"

Your understanding of the housing problem in Fresno is that too many apartments and small houses are being built without parks? How do you reconcile [that] with the fact that Fresno has one of the worst rental unit shortages in the nation?

Apartments are not "popping up everywhere," and the city has way too much underutilized infill—that's the problem. Why is everyone in Fresno so stubbornly unwilling to read up on this issue?

Keith Foster  
Online feedback

(Editor's note: The following two letters are in response to "Your Vote" in the September issue of the *Community Alliance* newspaper.)

### Will America Get Better?

I've heard it before that this election is the most important, consequential, life-changing one in a long time, etc., and what happens? The Dems get in and whalla! Life in America doesn't get better and voting for the same party over and over again hasn't improved our lives like we want, so why vote for either of the major parties?

Also, I have to say that I believe the billionaire and millionaire classes are very much together and on the same page. They have solidarity, too. What I think we have that they don't is heart and a conscience.

Thank you, though, for the reminders about what the "little people" have done when they came together; came together in solidarity with their beautiful hearts and loving minds. We can't let the oppressors get away with their unjust treatment of the masses of good-hearted people, especially the ones under attack with war, violence and genocide.

God forbid we find ourselves facing nuclear war. I'll consider what you suggest, but I'm seeing the same old playbook. Even so, Trump will never get my vote. Never!

Carol Goiburn  
Online feedback

### Not Progressive but Regressive

A well-written and thoughtful essay. But many of us are harder to convince. We get that the orange man is bad, but we are not sold on the notion that he would be much worse than what we have now.

A government that wholeheartedly embraces genocide? And vigorously attacks and demonizes those who speak out against it? And openly and proudly means to escalate nuclear brinkmanship and antagonize our world neighbors toward wide-scale war? No thank you.

This administration and the one that seeks to follow it are not progressive but regressive, and people of conscience cannot justify a vote for either of the two corrupt "legitimate" parties.

Douglas Bence  
Online feedback

### Really?

Can the Trump/MAGA/Republican cult produce even one U.S. citizen who has lost their job to an undocumented worker?

Saul Ross  
Selma

### No Sitting in Fresno

Hi, I'm a taxpaying citizen in the city of Fresno, and I thought you and your staff might be interested in knowing that our very own local "Nazayahoos" here are now trying to tell people that they cannot do federally protected stuff such as "sitting" (What?) at a public city park such as Salma Layne in northwest Fresno.

Someone apparently posted something to that effect there: that starting Sept. 15, people are not allowed to "sit" on park benches and/or other areas in the park during normal operating hours (??).

It said something about the Mayor's Office and gave a number to call for questions—yeah, I don't think so. Just thought you might like to know.

David Alegre  
Fresno

### Clovis "Community" Hospital

I was a patient at Clovis Community [Medical Center]. I have been there six times this summer, [with] one surgery, four endoscopies, one GI test, [and] one emergency room visit because my GI doctor sent me there. I clearly had three hernias on the CT scan. The emergency room doctor told me to go home, [saying] I was just "constipated." This misdiagnosis caused me months of pain.

As for Fresno Community [Regional Medical Center], last November they overdosed my husband with fentanyl and killed him. I am currently looking for an attorney before the statute of limitations runs out. They are incompetent and caused his death.

Vicki Fassett  
Online feedback

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# Radio Bilingüe: Building a Dream

BY EDUARDO STANLEY

Local community radio station Radio Bilingüe on Sept. 19 announced an ambitious plan to build a plaza, “a beautiful, sustainably designed community space where we can train more Fresno youth and volunteers, host community forums and performances, and celebrate our culture,” as stated on the station’s Facebook page.

Eventually, Radio Bilingüe will relocate to that space, located at 450 E. Belmont Ave.

The announcement was made during a press conference.

Producers Dairy announced its intent to donate the property to Radio Bilingüe and make a monetary contribution toward the station’s proposed new headquarters.

“At Producers Dairy, our commitment to the community goes beyond providing quality products,” said Scott Shehadey, Producers Dairy owner and CEO. “We care deeply about the well-being of residents and the future of the South Tower community.

“We wholeheartedly support Radio Bilingüe’s proposed project, recognizing it as a vital initiative to enrich the community. Working together, we are excited to see this project move forward for the benefit of the community.”



Speakers at a press conference held by Radio Bilingüe and Producers Dairy pose in front of the building Producers Dairy is making available to the radio station. (L to R) Hugo Morales of Radio Bilingüe, María Reina Lemus of Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula’s Office, José Martínez-Saldaña and José Moran of Radio Bilingüe, Producers Dairy CEO Scott Shehadey, Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias and Radio Bilingüe News Director Samuel Orozco.

Photo by Peter Maiden



Radio Bilingüe Director of Broadcasting José Moran speaks at a press conference on Sept. 19 announcing the new Radio Bilingüe building. Behind him are José Martínez-Saldaña, co-director of Radio Bilingüe (left), and Samuel Orozco, news director of Radio Bilingüe (right).

Photo by Peter Maiden

Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias attended the press conference and expressed his support for the station’s project. And in November 2023, Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) presented Radio Bilingüe with a \$2 million check, a grant from the State General Fund that will help with the proposed plaza.

“Radio Bilingüe is deeply grateful to Producers Dairy for this generous offer and innovative opportunity, and to Council Member Arias for bringing us together,” says Hugo Morales, Radio Bilingüe co-founder and co-executive director.

“We will do everything in our power to work with Producers, the Cheese property neighbors and the City of Fresno to position

ourselves to accept this offer—including identifying the funds needed to make this dream a reality.

“Returning to a neighborhood that feels like home, we want to ensure we can be the best neighbor possible, including offering youth and volunteer radio training, cultural programs and community forums.”

Radio Bilingüe was created in 1976 in Fresno, and its programming can currently be heard in California, Arizona, Texas, Colorado and New Mexico.

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Eduardo Stanley is the editor of the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at [editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:editor@fresnoalliance.com).

# Statue of Nelson Mandela Unveiled at Fresno State

BY COMMUNITY ALLIANCE STAFF

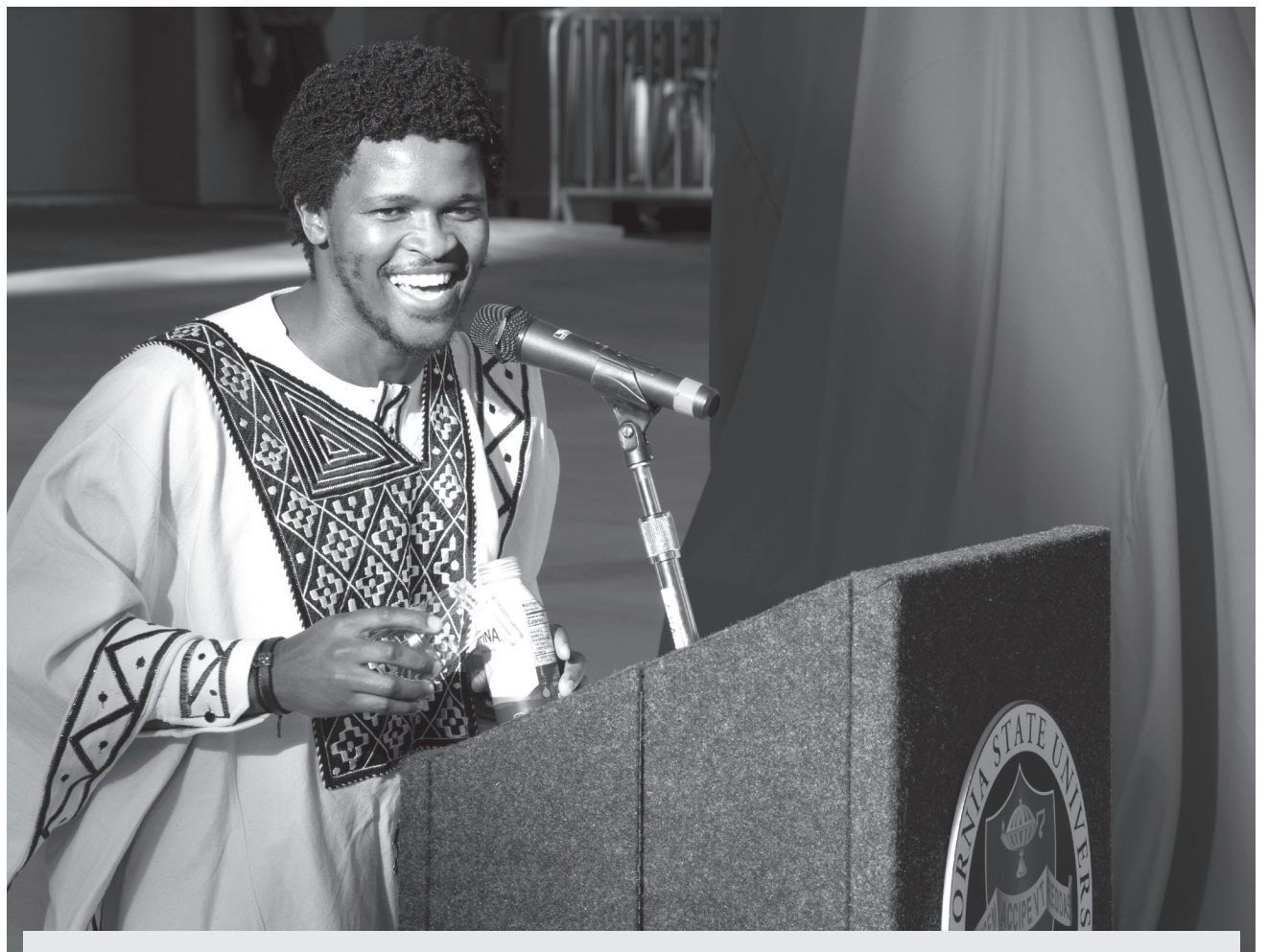
On Sept 12, a statue of Nelson Mandela was unveiled at Fresno State. The Nelson Mandela monument is the newest addition to the Fresno State Peace Garden, which houses monuments dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., César Chávez and Jane Addams.

Nelson Mandela (1918–2013) is renowned for his pivotal role in mobilizing resistance against institutionalized racial segregation and discrimination in South Africa. From the harsh conditions of imprisonment, Mandela emerged as a



The Nelson Mandela statue in Fresno State’s Peace Garden, where it is placed among statues of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Jane Addams and César Chávez.

Photo by Peter Maiden



Dr. Siyabulela Mandela, human rights scholar and great-grandson of Nelson Mandela, at the unveiling of a statue of Nelson Mandela at Fresno State’s Peace Garden. Photo by Peter Maiden



African drummers among those listening to speakers at the program for the unveiling of a Nelson Mandela statue at Fresno State. Photo by Peter Maiden

leader dedicated to racial reconciliation and social justice.

In 1994, Mandela was elected South Africa’s first Black president. He led the African National Congress and successfully negotiated the end of apartheid (as the racist South Africa social system was called) after serving 27 years in prison. Mandela’s relentless efforts to dismantle oppressive laws and create goodwill among all communities show a path forward for uniting our divided societies.

# State Seeks to Rescue What's Left of Valley's Nature

BY VIC BEDOIAN

The San Joaquin Valley has been described as the nation's most transformed landscape. It has been industrialized with agriculture, resource extraction and spreading urbanization. It has been called a sacrifice zone in the service of industry, with indelible impacts on the environment and people who live here. Within that vast matrix of farmland and sprawling cities, nature still abides.

Viewed on a map, the Valley is part of a larger ecoregion that includes the mostly natural Sierra Nevada and Coast Ranges. Looking more closely at the Valley floor, there are remnants of the ancient landscape along river corridors, in wetlands and oak woodlands where indigenous flora and fauna thrive.

Recognizing the urgency brought on by climate change and rapid population growth, the Gavin Newsom administration launched the 30x30 plan to save, restore or enhance 30% of California's terrestrial and coastal landscape by 2030. The California Natural Resources Agency is taking the lead. It is an ambitious goal, but the state has a head start since much of the landscape is already under some form of protection by the federal and state governments.

There are also numerous private lands such as nature preserves owned and operated by nonprofit groups. In fact, state agencies are depending on extensive collaboration with community organizations for success.

Since its inception in 2020, the state has conserved 1.5 million acres of land. That brings the total to a little more

than 25% of the terrestrial landscape and 16% of the coast. With five years left, there are still nearly five million acres of land that must be preserved to reach the state's goal.

Our region plays an important role in reaching the 30x30 target. That is why state Natural Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot convened a get-together at the River House on the San Joaquin River to explain the plan, share information and get feedback from the many thoughtful and expert individuals in attendance.

Crowfoot outlined three priorities for the project: confronting the existential crisis of climate warming and instability, developing outdoors accessibility for all, and protecting nature and restoring biodiversity.

"California is considered by scientists as one of 36 biodiversity hotspots in the world, which means this richness of life that we have of animals, plants and other life forms is globally unique in the Central Valley and in the mountains.

"So those big three priorities lead me to why we're here today. What we're trying to do is build a movement, a movement of entities like your organizations that are actually achieving those conservation wins in your backyard."

Secretary Crowfoot underscored the main reason for the event was to learn from the work of Valley conservationists. "The goal is frankly, for some of us from Sacramento to learn about what's important to you, what are the projects that you're working on that we should be supporting. How do we lift up and support each other and build our network?"

"Remarkable things are happening in the Central Valley." To keep those remarkable things happening will require cooperation and money. While the state allocated more than \$1 billion of the 2023 budget for nature-based projects, funding partnerships with the private sector will be essential to achieve the 30x30 goals in the real world.

One real world example is Dos Rios, California's newest state park. Although they are dammed, constrained and bent to human purposes, rivers still run through the Valley.

Dos Rios sits at the confluence of the San Joaquin River and Tuolumne River several miles west of Modesto. Its location amid the confluence of working farmland and a natural floodplain makes it a unique state park.

Dos Rios is an example of partnership between public, private and nonprofit actors coming together. Both rivers have been tamed, some would say enslaved, and much of the surrounding landscape dedicated to agriculture.

Thanks to River Partners and the Tuolumne River Trust, the land was purchased in 2012. Since then, some 350,000 native trees and vegetation have been planted along an eight-mile stretch of the rivers amounting to 1,600 acres of restored land. It is now a large and vibrant habitat for numerous species of mammals, birds and fish.

That is only one of the conservation projects River Partners has embraced. They were formed by farmers in the Sacramento Valley in 1998 and now have a footprint from Redding to Bakersfield.

Director of Planning Bill Eisenstein pointed out that they have restored 20,000 acres of floodplain habitat throughout the Valley, "We work with willing sellers and we purchase land generally with public money and restore land and then deed those properties over to an entity like a land trust or like a state park system or like the National Wildlife Refuge System. So that that entity then is the long-term steward of those lands."

Eisenstein explains that River Partners is a restoration organization taking land that is in another use, generally irrigated agriculture and converting it back to native habitat, "The core and the backbone of the Central Valley and the San Joaquin Valley in so many ways is the rivers. The Dos Rios restoration project is illustrative of so many of the dynamics that are really important to understand about how land is restored and can be restored in the San Joaquin Valley."

The San Joaquin and the Kings are both working rivers with most of their waters serving humankind. Each has its

Continues on page 19



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Thank you to all who made the Forum on Palestine a huge success! The Fresno Peace Coalition working together makes all the difference so let's continue to work for a Ceasefire and Weapons Embargo.

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Demonstrations: join the peace community Saturdays 6pm Blackstone & Nees  
Wednesdays 11:30-1:30 pm at 2500 Tulare St  
To receive our emails: [camille.russell@att.net](mailto:camille.russell@att.net)  
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# Military Madness

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

"Military madness is killing your country,  
So much sadness, between you and me,  
War, war, war, war, war, war."  
—Graham Nash

## War Abroad and at Home Against the Poor

As empires collapse from overzealous military action abroad, the militarization at home intensifies, as the historical record of empire building shows. The criminalization of our brothers and sisters living on the streets of Fresno is a manifestation of this fact. Effective Sept. 23, when the new "no sit, no lie, no sleep ordinance" takes effect, the Fresno Police Department will begin the process of profiling people and ticketing with fines of \$1,000 and possible arrest with up to one year in jail.

The over-policing by an already militarized police of the poorest of poor people is warfare. Warfare is the City's reaction to the results of the failure to implement rent control and to build affordable housing.

Again, it must be pointed out that empirical evidence shows that poverty and the high cost of housing are the foremost factors that drive homelessness.

The failure to adequately fund and build affordable housing could be solved if the United States did not fund endless war and mass murder abroad. According to the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the United States has provided \$175 billion in funding to Ukraine since February 2022. U.S. taxpayers have also funded the genocide in Gaza since Oct. 7, 2023, with \$12.5 billion in military aid provided to Israel.

Since its inception in 1948, U.S. taxpayers have provided \$310 billion in military aid to Israel (CFR). In 2016, the U.S. and Israeli governments signed a third 10-year Memorandum of Understanding, covering the period from Oct. 1, 2018, to Sept. 30, 2028. The MOU provides a total of \$38 billion in military aid over the 10 years: \$33 billion in grants to buy military equipment and \$5 billion for missile defense systems.

## Military Industrial Complex Raking It In

The Watson Institute report called the *Costs of War* cites Pentagon spending of more than \$14 trillion since 2001 when war was declared on Afghanistan. One-third to one-half of the \$14 trillion went to just five military contractors: Lockheed Martin, Raytheon (RTX), Boeing, General Dynamics and Northrop Grumman.

On June 28, Reuters reported that the Biden administration has sent Israel large numbers of munitions, including more than 10,000 highly destructive 2,000-pound bombs and thousands of Hellfire missiles, since the start of the war in Gaza.

The Reuters article states that "between the war's start last October and recent days, the United States has transferred

at least 14,000 of the MK-84 2,000-pound bombs [made by General Dynamics], 6,500 500-pound bombs [made by General Dynamics], 3,000 Hellfire precision-guided air-to-ground missiles [made by Lockheed], 1,000 bunker-buster bombs [made by Boeing], [and] 2,600 air-dropped small-diameter bombs and other munitions, according to the officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly."

An American Friends Services Committee investigative report states that, in addition, Raytheon/RTX-made GBU-28 5,000-pound "bunker buster bombs, AGM-65 Maverick air-to-ground missiles, AIM 9X missiles, AIM-120 Sidewinder missiles and TOW long-range missiles are being shipped to Israel and are being deployed in Gaza."

Israel is the first international operator of the Lockheed F-35 joint strike fighter, considered the most technologically advanced fighter jet ever made. Israel is in the process of buying 75 F-35s and—as of last year—had taken delivery of 36, paying for them with U.S. assistance.

Citing two examples of war profiteering for defense contractors and their shareholders, in 2023, Lockheed generated net income of \$6.97 billion against revenue of \$67.69 billion—that's about a 10.3% profit/stock price gain. RTX generated \$3.19 billion in net income against revenue of \$67.09 billion.

## Military Madness 2024

Since Oct. 7, 2023, 42,000 people—40,972 Palestinians, more than 14,000 of them children, and 478 Israelis—have been killed in the Israeli-Gaza conflict. These numbers do not include people who have died from disease or starvation. The prestigious *Lancet Medical Journal* predicts deaths upward of 185,000 from more disease, lack of medical treatment and starvation in the near future.

In the United States-funded war in Ukraine, there have been 80,000 military personnel killed on the Ukrainian side. Russia has had more than 43,000 troops killed in action. The *Wall Street Journal* reported on Sept. 17, citing undisclosed sources and Western intelligence estimates, that "roughly one million Ukrainians and Russians have been killed or wounded" since war broke out in February 2022.

It seems madness has become well established in 2024. Madness on the part of politicians and apathy on the part of the public. Majority Congressional support for the mass murder of Palestinians in Gaza is madness.

Continuing financial support for the ongoing catastrophic war in Ukraine is madness. Governor Gavin Newsom "ordering" statewide crackdowns and the jailing of the unhoused residents of California is madness.

The nasty scapegoating and attacks on immigrants by Vice Presidential candidate JD Vance and candidate Donald Trump are madness. It's not just the morally bankrupt politicians who have lost their minds, it's many of the people of America and it might be the culture of America that is a causal factor.

"Cultural and social factors contribute to the causation of mental illness, yet that contribution varies by disorder," reported the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 1999.



Your tax dollars at work. Photo by Rama Alquodsi

"Mental illness is considered the product of a complex interaction among biological, psychological, social and cultural factors. The role of any one of these major factors can be stronger or weaker depending on the disorder."

Renowned physician, author and expert on human illness and behavior, Dr. Gabor Maté, said in the acclaimed book *The Myth of Normal*: "Disconnection in all its guises—alienation, loneliness, loss of meaning and dislocation—is becoming our culture's most plentiful product. No wonder we are more addicted, chronically ill and mentally disordered than ever before, enfeebled as we are by such malnourishment of mind, body and soul."

Certainly, a lack of compassion for the people of Gaza, the lack of empathy for unhoused Californians and the ignorant scapegoating of immigrants are manifestations of mental disorders.

However, there is hope, hope in resistance. Resistance to the collective insanity we are all living in. Resistance to the status quo and the idols of money and war. There is hope in knowledge and the ability to grow as human beings. There is hope in our empathy and compassion for others. There is hope every day the sun rises if we never forget who we are.

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Bob McCloskey is an activist and a Community Alliance newspaper reporter. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

# Statewide Ballot Measures—The Second Five

BY RACHEL YUDELMAN

As noted in last month's issue, your Nov. 5 ballot will include 10 statewide measures ranging from repairs for public school buildings to increasing the minimum wage. Other issues, including rent control, climate action, prisoner labor measures and a proposal for harsher penalties for theft and drug crimes will also be presented to voters for important, consequential decisions.

Last month, we presented Propositions 2–6. As promised, below is the second set of five of November's 10 ballot measures, Propositions 32–36.

These measures will determine how Californians will live their daily lives, so every vote counts. Remember: Not voting is still a vote—for the other side.

## Proposition 32: Raises Minimum Wage

*Nutshell:* A "yes" vote supports increasing the minimum hourly wage to \$18 by 2026 for all employees. The hourly rate would be adjusted annually to account for increases in the cost of living, starting in 2027. This initiative will increase the hourly wage over several years, at a faster rate for businesses with 26 or more employees, and at a slightly slower rate for those with 25 or fewer employees. The current hourly minimum is \$16; a "no" vote will keep it that way.

*Background:* The Yes on the California Living Wage Act effort is being led by the Working Hero Action for the Living Wage Act Committee, a PAC that has been at the helm of this initiative and has raised more than \$10 million. The initiative follows recent successful union efforts to secure a \$25 per hour wage for healthcare workers and a \$20 per hour wage for fast-food employees.

Some individual municipalities have already raised their hourly wage—West Hollywood's is \$19.08, for example. From 1996 to 2022, there were 28 ballot measures for minimum-wage increases presented to U.S. voters, who approved 26 of them. In 2016, passage of California's Senate Bill 3 increased the state minimum wage incrementally until it reached \$15 in 2022, to be adjusted annually for inflation (hence it is now at \$16 per hour).

Businesses with fewer than 25 employees did not have to meet the \$15 per hour minimum wage until 2023. Though the federal minimum hourly wage is \$7.25, state law supersedes when a state's rate is higher. Is the current \$16 per hour enough? That adds up to an annual income of a little more than \$30,000, while the average cost of living is above \$53,000. An \$18 per hour wage would push annual incomes closer to \$35,000 but might still fall short of meeting the cost of living.

*Who supports it:* Working Hero Action for the Living Wage Act PAC, Kevin de León Believing in a Better California Ballot Measure Committee—Yes on Propositions 3, 32 and 33

*Who opposes it:* California Chamber of Commerce, California Restaurant Association, National Federation of Independent Businesses

## Proposition 33: Justice for Renters Act: Rent Control

*Nutshell:* A "yes" vote would allow counties and municipalities the power to control rent on any residential housing, including for first-time tenants. It would support the repeal of the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which has prohibited rent control statewide.

*Background:* The text of the Justice for Renters Act is short: "The state may not limit the right of any city or county to maintain, enact or expand residential rent control." The 1995 Costa-Hawkins Act generally has permitted landlords to set initial rental rates, and though it was enacted with the goal of balancing landlord-tenant interests, California's residential housing picture has changed dramatically since 1995, and the advantage has tipped unfairly to landlords.

Since the enactment of this law, limits have been imposed on how much cities can limit rising rents. Under Costa-Hawkins, no rent control has been permitted on single-

## ELECTION 2024

family houses or apartments built after 1995, and landlords have had no limits on setting their own rental rates whenever new tenants occupy a residence.

Our state's rents are among the highest in the nation. Consequently, the housing shortage is severe, as is the homelessness crisis. Tenants' rights advocates have found that the Costa-Hawkins Act has exacerbated problems of access to housing because of the permission it grants to landlords in raising rents without limits.

Previous ballot measures designed to overturn Costa-Hawkins in 2018 and 2020 were not successful, but Governor Newsom in 2019 signed legislation limiting annual rent increases to 5% plus an allowance for inflation. Still, more than 30% of Californians currently pay more than half of their incomes on rent.

Real estate industry affiliates, including corporate landlords, have mobilized in opposition to this rent-control measure, raising more than \$60 million (the California Association of Realtors alone contributed \$20 million—where'd they get all that money?) compared to rent-control proponents' \$20 million total.

*Who supports it:* AIDS Healthcare Foundation, California Democratic Party, Veterans' Voices, California Nurses Association, California Alliance for Retired Americans, Housing Is a Human Right, Affordable Housing Alliance, Consumer Watchdog, Rep. Maxine Waters (D–Los Angeles), Rep. Barbara Lee (D–Oakland), Dolores Huerta Foundation  
*Who opposes it:* California Association of Realtors, California Small Business Association, California Apartment Association, California Chamber of Commerce, and mega-landlords Equity Residential and The Irvine Co.

## Proposition 34: Limit Major Healthcare Group's Non-Patient Spending

*Nutshell:* Ostensibly, Prop 34 purports to limit the amount of revenue that specific healthcare providers would be permitted to spend on anything other than non-patient

Continues on page 7

# Statewide Ballot Measures—The Second Five

Continued from page 6

care. The language of the initiative is obfuscating and confusing, probably because its sponsors and supporters are disingenuous about its purpose.

The measure does in fact appear to be a “revenge” effort led by the real estate industry—its chief sponsor is the California Apartment Association—to curtail housing-advocacy spending by the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which is the principal sponsor of Prop 33, the “Justice for Renters” rent-control act.

**Background:** The nuts and bolts of the measure sound like mumbo-jumbo: Ballotpedia summarizes the ballot measure text as follows: “Proposition 34 would establish a new category of entities called ‘prescription drug price manipulators.’ If an entity is classified as a ‘prescription drug price manipulator,’ the entity would have to meet the following requirements annually to maintain its tax-exempt status and licensure as health insurance plans, pharmacies and clinics: spend at least 98% of revenues from the federal discount prescription drug program on direct patient care and not engage in unprofessional conduct or conduct contrary to public health, welfare or safety.”

However, the California Legislative Analyst’s Office has noted that, to qualify as a “prescription drug price manipulator,” there are extremely few entities that would meet the measure’s criteria, which further casts suspicion on the motivations of the measure’s sponsors.

**Who supports it:** California Republican Party, California Apartment Association

**Who opposes it:** AIDS Healthcare Foundation, Consumer Watchdog, National Organization for Women

## Proposition 35: Protect Access to Healthcare Act: Taxing Managed Care Organizations

**Nutshell:** Prop 35 imposes a permanent tax on health insurance providers, such as Kaiser or Anthem—managed-care organizations (MCOs) that offer services for a monthly fee. In addition to taxation, the measure would account for how the money collected could be spent.

**Background:** The state legislature recently expanded the range of people who can be covered under Medi-Cal; those who meet the income criteria, without regard to their immigration status, are now eligible. To pay for this expanded Medi-Cal coverage, Prop 35 is designed to increase funding via tax to cover the care it will provide.

MCO taxes are not new. But last year, Governor Newsom and the state legislature made the decision to renew the tax to help fund the expanded coverage. Some of that revenue will go for Medi-Cal reimbursements to healthcare providers, which advocated for increased reimbursement rates to help ensure that treatment shortages or long patient wait-times will be avoided.

**Who supports it:** California Democratic Party, California Republican Party, SEIU California State Council, California Dental Association, California Hospital Association, California Medical Association, California Primary Care Association, Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

**Who opposes it:** No registered opposition

## Proposition 36: Homelessness, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act: Harsher Penalties for Theft and Drug Crimes

**Nutshell:** This measure reflects the movement to reform some aspects of Prop 47, which reduced some crimes from felonies to misdemeanors.

**Background:** Prop 47, passed in 2014, was intended to “ensure that prison spending is focused on violent and serious offenses, to maximize alternatives for non-serious, nonviolent crime, and to invest savings in prevention and support programs in K-12 schools, victim services, and mental health and drug treatment” as well as to ensure “that sentences for people convicted of dangerous crimes like rape, murder and child molestation are not changed.”

Except for those with prior convictions, Prop 47 shifted some crimes, including some thefts and drug crimes, from felonies to misdemeanors. A contingency of opponents of Prop 47 have collected sufficient signatures for a petition to support putting Prop 36, which they see as a corrective measure, on the November 2024 ballot.

A similar initiative was rejected by voters in 2020; it sought to lengthen criminal sentences and reduce the number of parolees.

Why is “homelessness” in the name of this act? Although proponents of Prop 36 appear to generally, perhaps unfairly, connect homelessness with crime and drug use, opponents of Prop 36—and supporters of Prop 47—say that Prop 47-funded behavioral-health programs have reduced both homelessness and recidivism.

The Legislative Analyst’s Office estimates that such funding if lost would figure in the low tens of millions should Prop 47 go away. As passage of Prop 36 would increase incarceration, it could consequently increase homelessness, as formerly incarcerated individuals are about 10 times as likely to experience homelessness as others. How serious a problem is shoplifting now?

Despite a recent uptick, shoplifting crimes remain below pandemic-era levels, and crime in general in California is well below historic peaks. Nevertheless, the perception that crime is on the rise seems to have taken hold. About \$10 million has been raised in support of Prop 36, whereas under \$1 million has been raised by opponents.

**Who supports it:** Walmart, Target, Home Depot, California State Sheriffs’ Association, San José Mayor Matt Mahan, San Francisco Mayor London Breed, California Republican Party, California District Attorneys Association

**Who opposes it:** California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, ACLU of Northern California, Action for Safety and Justice, Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Disability Rights California, Committee to Protect Public Safety, No on Prop 36

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Rachel Youdelman is a former *FresnoLand.org* correspondent who documented Clovis City Council and Fresno County Board of Supervisors meetings. Contact her at [rachel27@berkeley.edu](mailto:rachel27@berkeley.edu).

## 2024 General Election Endorsements

CANDIDATE GRID	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	FCDWC	Stonewall	CVPPAC
President	Harris	Trump	Harris	*	—	—	—
U.S. Senate	Schiff	Garvey	Schiff	*	Schiff	Schiff	—
Congressional District 5	Barkley	McClintock	Barkley	*	Barkley	—	—
Congressional District 13	Gray	Duarte	Gray	*	Gray	—	—
Congressional District 20	—	Fong	—	*	—	—	—
Congressional District 21	Costa	Maher	Costa	*	Costa	—	—
Congressional District 22	Salas	Valadao	Salas	*	Salas	—	—
State Assembly District 8	—	Radanovich	—	Tangipa	—	—	—
State Assembly District 27	Soria	Garcia Rose	Soria	Soria	Soria	—	—
State Assembly District 31	Arambula	Verduzco	Arambula	—	Arambula	—	—
State Assembly District 33	—	Macedo	—	—	—	—	—
Board of Supervisors District 2	—	—	Bredfeld	Brandau	—	—	—
Board of Supervisors District 3	Chavez	—	Chavez	Quintero	Chavez	Chavez	Chavez
Fresno City Council District 6	—	Bonakdar	Bonakdar	Bonakdar	—	—	—
FUSD Trustee Area 2	Jonasson-Rosas	—	Jonasson-Rosas	—	Jonasson-Rosas	Jonasson-Rosas	—
FUSD Trustee Area 5	Martinez	—	Neutral	—	Levine	—	Levine
FUSD Trustee Area 6	Cazares	—	Bordona	—	Cazares	—	Cazares
SCCCD Trustee Area 2	—	—	Villagrana	—	Johnson	Johnson	Johnson

BALLOT MEASURE GRID	DEM	REP	Labor	Chamber	LWV	
Prop 2	Authorizes bonds for public school and community college facilities	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prop 3	Constitutional right to marriage	Yes	—	Yes	Yes	Yes
Prop 4	Authorizes bonds for safe drinking water, wildfire prevention, and protecting communities and natural lands from climate risks	Yes	No	Yes	—	Yes
Prop 5	Allows local bonds for affordable housing and public infrastructure with 55% voter approval	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prop 6	Eliminates constitutional provision allowing involuntary servitude for incarcerated persons	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prop 32	Raises minimum wage	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
Prop 33	Expands local governments’ authority to enact rent control on residential property	Yes	No	—	No	—
Prop 34	Restricts spending of prescription drug revenues by certain healthcare providers	—	Yes	—	Yes	—
Prop 35	Provides permanent funding for Medi-Cal healthcare services	Yes	Yes	—	—	No
Prop 36	Allows felony charges and increases sentences for certain drug and theft crimes	No	Yes	—	Yes	No

**FUSD:** Fresno Unified School District

**DEM:** California Democratic Party & Fresno County Democratic Party

**Labor:** AFL-CIO, California Labor Federation & Fresno-Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council

**Chamber:** California Chamber of Commerce & Fresno Chamber of Commerce

**CVPPAC:** Central Valley Progressive PAC

**SCCCD:** State Center Community College District

**REP:** California Republican Party & Fresno County Republican Party

**FCDWC:** Fresno County Democratic Women’s Club

**Stonewall:** Fresno Stonewall Democrats

**LWV:** League of Women Voters

# Prop 36 a Dangerous Ruse

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

California Proposition 36, the Drug and Theft Crime Penalties and Treatment-Mandated Felonies Initiative, is on the November ballot. If passed by voters, years of successful sentencing reform and funding are in jeopardy. It is a dangerous ruse, and its sponsors are gaslighting the public.

Passed by voters in 2014, Prop 47 reclassified six felony offenses to misdemeanors, including shoplifting and simple drug possession, and funneled costs savings into safety measures such as drug and mental health treatment and victim services centers. Proposed Prop 36 would roll back those reforms and add new criminal penalties and sentencing enhancements.

Prop 36 would also impose severe immigration consequences on immigrants and their families. Prop 36 will make more immigrants deportable and ineligible for lawful status, even if they have lived in the United States for decades. Prop 36 would increase ICE arrests, meaning that more vulnerable immigrants will be funneled into the detention and deportation system.

The longstanding and ongoing criminalization of poor people, people with substance-abuse problems, people suffering from mental health issues and those people who are unhoused would increase.

The unhoused population of California is .05% of the total population (39 million Californians divided by an estimated 180,000–200,000 unhoused Californians). Although a small percentage of the total number, unhoused residents and the poor are often scapegoated and blamed for society's ills by morally bankrupt politicians, "law enforcement" and members of the business community.

The most recent reiteration is the intentionally and initially named "Homelessness, Drug Addiction and Theft Reduction Act" that was changed by Secretary of State Shirley Weber to the "Drug and Theft Crime Penalties and Treatment-Mandated Felonies Initiative."

The proposed measure is sponsored by the Californians for Safer Communities (CFSC) coalition and mostly funded by large retailers such as Walmart, Home Depot and Target. It is a reactionary measure that will only result in more incarceration, criminal prosecutions and increased costs to taxpayers.

If passed by California voters, it would increase penalties for drug dealers and users with a new "treatment-mandated felony" crime for drug possession after two previous convictions. If implemented, the act would also increase penalties for retail theft and shoplifting.

The sponsors claim the measure will provide more "critical mental health, drug treatment services and job training within our justice system for people who are homeless and suffering from mental illness or struggling with substance abuse." In other words, services mandated by the courts.

Local politicians such as Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors and Fresno County District Attorney Lisa Smittcamp have signed on in support. Even liberal politicians such as Governor Gavin Newsom, Assembly Member James Ramos (D-Highland) and former State Senator Gloria Romero are in support, joining the reactionary forces.

Also in support are most law enforcement associations and many district attorneys. Many small businesses across the state support the measure as well as many large corporations and retailers.

The CFSC website claims in large bold print that harkens back to the Nixon and Reagan administrations that "Skyrocketing Theft and Drug Trafficking Make Our Communities More Dangerous" claiming the act "will make our communities safe."

This proposed act is a renewal of the "war on drugs," which has been an abject failure. It is a war on the poor that has proven to be unequal and racist in its application. The website also says "this measure will hold repeat [shoplifting] offenders accountable for the safety of our communities, rather than putting them back on the streets," falsely implying that shoplifting is a violent crime.

It aims to overturn certain aspects of Prop 47, an important referendum on criminal justice passed by California voters in 2014. Prop 47 changed the law so that some low-level nonviolent felonies can only be charged as misdemeanors. This includes most drug possession charges and shoplifting (less than \$950) charges.

Since being implemented in 2015, Californians have saved more than \$800 million in reduced incarceration costs. The state has sent more than \$300 million of these savings to cities and counties for successful rehabilitation and crime prevention efforts. This proposed measure will lead to more felony convictions, costly incarceration measures and more homelessness.

The Brookings Institution, a well-established research institute, released a study on retail theft in the United States titled "Retail Theft in US Cities: Separating fact from fiction" by Thea Sebastian and Hanna Love on March 6.

The study found that "felony convictions often lead to homelessness. Past experience and the record show that punitive measures such as Zero Tolerance Policies increased incarceration rates and homelessness, creating significant financial and social burdens."

A 2023 UC San Francisco comprehensive study on homelessness shows that institutionalization often precedes homelessness. One in five participants in the statewide study became homeless directly from a jail or prison.

The Brookings report researched the issue of retail theft in the United States and found that "existing data on retail theft is highly unreliable and imprecise. First, 'retail theft' is not an independent category reported by most police departments.

"Moreover, the terms increasingly used by industry and government officials—'organized retail crime' or 'organized retail theft'—have no consistent legal definition across states and often encompass broader crimes such as cargo and employee theft (which are already associated with more severe sanctions). Even the California Retailers Association has acknowledged a lack of comprehensive and reliable data on retail theft."

The Brookings researchers found that "shoplifting in major cities did not actually spike in the ways that media has reported." According to the Council on Criminal Justice, only 24 cities consistently reported shoplifting data over the past five years, and of those cities, shoplifting decreased in 17.

Moreover, looking across all 24 cities, the prevalence of shoplifting in 2023 remained below 2018 and 2019 levels. Even San Francisco—which has often been cited as having a "shoplifting epidemic"—saw a 5% decline in shoplifting between 2019 and 2023.

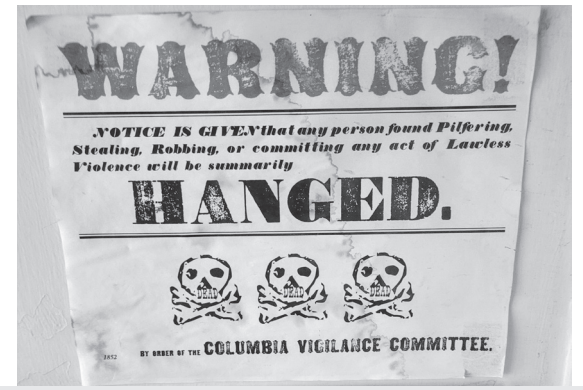
The Brookings research exposed that "corporate claims are not holding up to scrutiny and are being used to close stores that are essential assets for many communities. For instance, the CEO of Walgreens has acknowledged that perhaps retailers 'cried too much last year' and overspent on security measures that failed to reflect real needs.

"And although the National Retail Federation said that 'organized retail crime' drove nearly half of all inventory losses in 2021, the group later retracted its claim; it now no longer attaches a dollar amount to money that is lost due to retail theft.

"And in memorable cases, major retailers have chosen to maintain stores with much higher rates of crime, while closing others."

In addition, shoplifting is a complex issue and cannot be reduced by punitive measures. Online research shows that people could be shoplifting for various reasons including psychological disorders such as depression, obsessive-

## ELECTION 2024



Old sign posted in a bar in Columbia, Calif.

compulsive disorder and kleptomania. Often, financial difficulty could lead to shoplifting.

Research indicates that more than half of Americans are worried about keeping up with the cost of living. Another factor is that shoplifting is low risk. Studies have shown that just one in 48 shoplifters is caught. Sometimes, peer pressure happens when friends or family influence a person to steal. This is especially true for younger people who might suffer from low self-esteem.

Obviously, shoplifting is a deeply complicated issue in a society with skewed values. It can only be addressed by understanding the root causes, not with felony convictions.

Substance abuse, addiction and the trafficking of dangerous drugs such as fentanyl can only be solved by increasing treatment programs, increasing support for economically disadvantaged communities and coordinating law enforcement efforts at the federal, state and local level to target major suppliers.

If passed, this measure would prove costly, and it will be dangerous, as documented in the Brookings report, which states that "the shoplifting [issue] has captured public attention across the United States and California which has fueled momentum to further criminalize retail theft.

"Already, this punitive turn is producing serious consequences for communities. Last April, for instance, a man in San Francisco was shot by a security guard who accused him of stealing from Walgreens. In November, the Albuquerque, N.M., police killed a man accused of shoplifting from Kohl's as part of their increased patrols to combat retail theft. And [recently], police officers killed a Virginia man suspected of stealing sunglasses at a Fairfax County shopping center."

This proposed measure presents a false narrative. If passed, incarceration rates and costs would undoubtedly increase. This measure would not solve the health crisis of drug addiction, would not reduce shoplifting and would do nothing to alleviate the crisis of homelessness.

Prop 36 would further the spread of poverty in communities that are already decimated. It is imperative for all of us to understand this measure and educate voters about the dangers it presents.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bob McCloskey is an activist and reporter for the Community Alliance newspaper. Contact him at bobmccloskey06@gmail.com.

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In memory of our past president, Carol Bequette.



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# SIERRA CLUB

## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

### Understanding the Sierra Club Organization

The Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter covers Fresno, Madera, Merced and Mariposa counties, plus Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks. Founded in 1953, we have approximately 1,700 dues-paying members. Our Native name (tuh-HIP-pit-tee) is based on Tehipite Dome, a magnificent, remote feature in remote Kings Canyon. Local residents organized to prevent a National Forest logging proposal near there. Our chapter is part of the national Sierra Club, founded in 1892, is headquartered in Oakland and an influential non-profit with approximately 600,000 members, 400 staff, and a budget of \$110 million. Hundreds of Club volunteers advocate for one or more Conservation issues of importance to them. What distinguishes the Club from other Big Green NGOs is our volunteer leadership, which is required by the Club's charter.

The national Sierra Club is comprised of: (1) a Board of Directors elected annually by the Club membership; (2) 64 chapters, covering all 50 states, plus DC and Puerto Rico, each managed by an executive committee (Excom) and officers; and (3) national and chapter staff. Each state has one chapter except California, which has thirteen. Chapters each have an appointed delegate to the Council of Club Leaders, a national volunteer body with the mission of advocating for and representing our chapters to the national staff, Board of Directors, and key national policy committees.

Because California has multiple chapters, we also have a statewide body, Sierra Club California, with lobby staff and organizing staff based in Sacramento. Its mission is to manage the state staff and to organize statewide Conservation campaigns. The California Legislative Committee makes decisions about which of the roughly 500 environmental bills introduced into the state legislature each year we will take a position on. The California Conservation Committee (CCC) addresses statewide issues and legislation, and the California Political Committee (CPC) manages endorsements for our two Senators and eight statewide Constitutional offices, and also ballot initiatives. Along with our national Political Committee, the CPC develops the process for chapter political endorsements of local, state legislative officials, and Congressional candidates.

In recent years, our Club have been whipsawed — first by Covid, then by two reorganizations, then by recent budget problems, which have now been resolved. Throughout, there has been an unusual lack of agreement as to the Club's core priorities. Proponents of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) maintain

that attracting younger, racially diverse staff and volunteers is essential for the Club's future and, specifically, for the Club to be effective in organizing Communities of Color targeted by toxic pollution (Environmental Justice). Toward the end of the decade of Executive Director Michael Brune (2010-2020), the Club became divided between traditionalists who focused on environmental protection and climate change, and others, who argued that it was imperative for the Club to recruit Black and Latino members and staff. In a 2012 speech by Brune to California chapter leaders, he opened with a line designed to shake up the audience: "When I look out at this crowd, I see old White people."

In 2022, the Club hired as our new Executive Director famed organizer Ben Jealous, formerly with the NAACP. With the median age of Club members now approaching 75, most Club activists are Boomers who began as hikers around the time of the first Earth Day (1970), and younger activists today are more likely to join newer NGOs such as the Sunrise Movement. Nonetheless, our Chapter has successfully recruited young organizers to our Excom for the past decade. Also, since 2019, our Chapter has supported the efforts of a local tribe, the Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation — the original occupants of Yosemite Valley — with expertise and funding to assist them in submitting a petition for formal federal recognition of their tribe.

**NOTE:** The Tehipite Chapter is now seeking volunteers who wish to engage in one of the following Conservation issues. **No knowledge of the issue** is required, only **a willingness to learn**. We can connect you with others who are eager to share their knowledge.

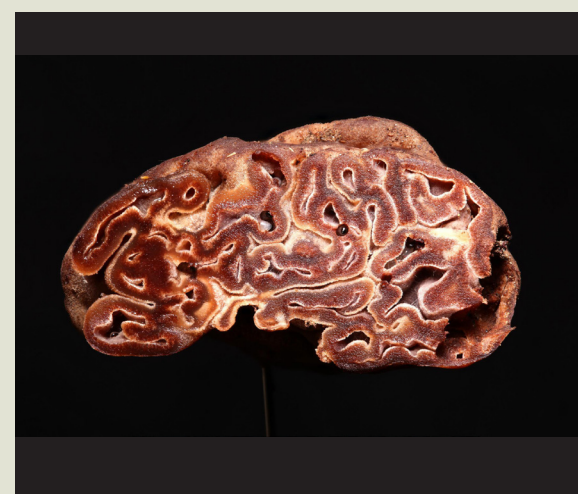
- *Water supplies and agricultural water usage in the San Joaquin Valley.*
  - » *The Sierra National Forest, including Giant Sequoia National Monument.*
  - » *Kings Canyon National Park.*
  - » *Oil and natural gas production and their impacts on human health and the environment*
  - » *Natural gas (methane) leakage from dairies*
  - » *San Joaquin Valley air pollution and air quality regulation.*
- *Separately, we have a need for volunteers to join our Executive Committee, the voting body which makes decisions for the Tehipite Chapter.*

**Contact Gary at 559-790-3495 (cell or text) if you have questions about any of these positions.**

Join us on **Wednesday, Oct. 23 at 7 PM** at the **Woodward Park Library** as mycologist **Christopher Bivins** presents on his work on *Truffle Fungi of the Sierra Nevada Mountains*.

This talk focuses on the incredible biodiversity of truffle species that have been uncovered in the Sierra Nevada foothills as part of a local fungal biodiversity survey project. Truffles are an extremely diverse yet understudied group of organisms. Many fungi spread their spores through the wind by producing mushrooms, which are spore-producing structures that occur above ground. Truffles, on the other hand, are fungi that have evolved to produce their fruiting bodies completely underground. Come and learn more through this presentation and the Q&A afterward.

Christopher Bivins, is a mycologist based in Merced CA. He completed work for his master's degree at Fresno State. He is currently a Ph.D. student at UC Merced where he works on a number of fungal ecology projects in the Sierra Nevada Foothills and gives guided mycology hikes with the Sierra Foothill Conservancy.



# Are the Districts Gerrymandered?

BY JAMES MENDEZ

We are in the final stretch of the election season. Ballots will be mailed out to voters on Oct. 7. Even though Election Day isn't until Nov. 5, once voters receive their ballots they can vote by mailing in their ballots or dropping them off at drop boxes throughout the county or at the Registrar of Voters office at 2221 Kern Street in downtown Fresno.

The general election will have candidates for President/Vice President, the U.S. Senate, the U.S. House of Representatives and the State Assembly, as well as boards of supervisors, city councils, education boards and special districts.

Looking at the shapes of California's electoral districts (e.g., Congress, State Senate, State Assembly), one might get the idea that the districts are gerrymandered. But that is not the case.

California tries to diminish gerrymandering, which is the political manipulation of electoral district boundaries to create an advantage for one party, a specific group or a socioeconomic class. California uses a non-politician, multi-partisan commission (Citizens Redistricting Commission, or CRC) to draw both Congressional and state legislative district lines.

Every 10 years, after the federal Census, California must redraw the boundaries of its Congressional, State Senate, State Assembly and State Board of Equalization districts to reflect new population data. Those lines are drawn by the 14 members of the CRC.

The members come from varied ethnic backgrounds and geographic locations in the state and include five

Democrats, five Republicans and four with any other affiliation.

## Why Do Districts Look the Way They Do?

The criteria for the Commission to follow was laid out in the Voters First Act, which appeared as Proposition 11 on the November 2008 ballot. Since passage of the Act, the CRC has been charged with drawing the new boundaries.

The following criteria must be met for each district (see [wedrawthelines.ca.gov](http://wedrawthelines.ca.gov)).

- Districts must be of equal population to comply with the U.S. Constitution.
- Districts must comply with the Voting Rights Act to ensure that minorities have an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.
- Districts must be contiguous so that all parts of the district are connected to each other.
- Districts must respect the boundaries of cities, counties, neighborhoods and communities of interest, and minimize their division, to the extent possible.
- Districts should be geographically compact, that is, have a fairly regular shape.

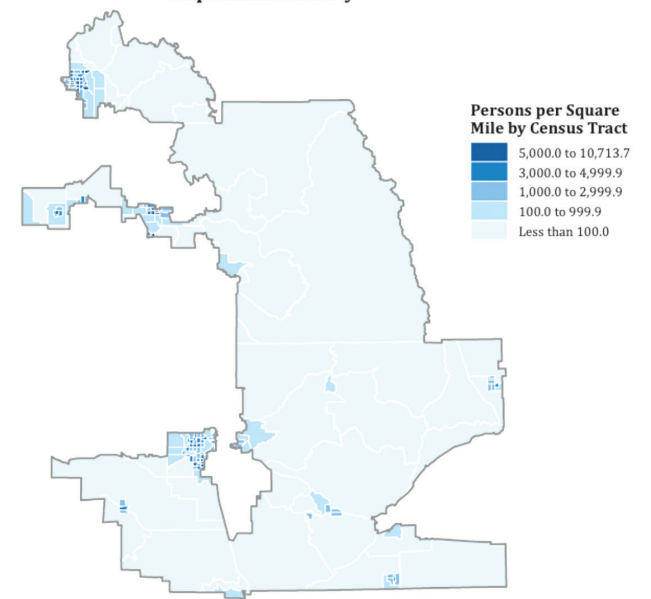
Where practicable, each Senate district should comprise two complete and adjacent Assembly districts and Board of Equalization districts shall be composed of 10 complete and adjacent State Senate districts.

Districts shall not be drawn to favor or discriminate against an incumbent, candidate or political party.

At times, it can be difficult to create competitive districts given all these requirements the CRC has to balance. To comply with all the criteria, the districts sometimes take unusual shapes. As a result, there are misshapen districts and some districts might have more Democrats or Republicans to fulfill such criteria as population, geography and race/ethnicity.

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### Population Density



California Congressional District 20. Image courtesy of the U.S. Census Bureau

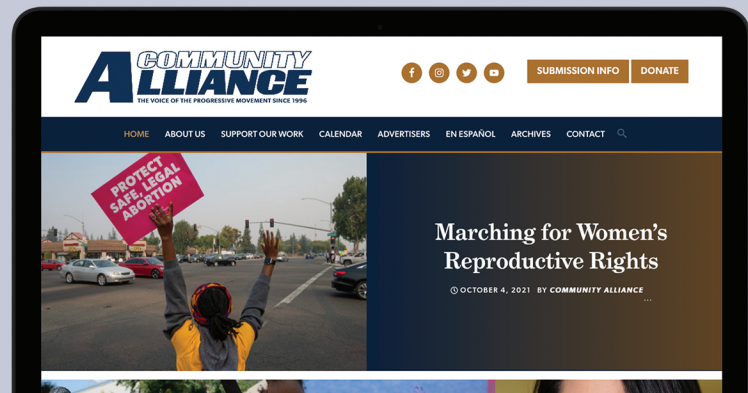
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James Mendez came to Fresno in 1977 for his medical residency training at what was then called the Valley Medical Center. He stayed to practice medicine and raise a family. He is now a retired physician and a community activist. Contact him at [jim\\_mendez@icloud.com](mailto:jim_mendez@icloud.com).

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The Central Valley Progressive PAC has endorsed these candidates in the November 5, 2024 election.

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Fresno County Board of Supervisors, District 3



**Andy Levine**  
Fresno Unified School District, Trustee Area 5



**Claudia Cazares**  
Fresno Unified School District, Trustee Area 6



**Nasreen Johnson**  
State Center Community College District, Trustee Area 2



**Dr. Crystal Jackson**  
West Hills Community College District, Trustee Area 4

The purpose of the CVPPAC is to help progressive candidates get elected in the Central Valley. Learn more at [www.cvppac.org](http://www.cvppac.org)

# Artists Unhappy with City Involvement in ArtHop

BY NOAH DEEDS ORTIZ

On Sept. 5, a protest called “ReHop” (@rehopfresno on Instagram) took place on Kern and Fulton streets in Fresno. The event was carried out by artists unhappy with the City’s recent decision regarding ArtHop, the traditional twice-a-month cultural event that attracts hundreds of residents to art galleries and into the surrounding streets.

City Council members decided to limit the presence of food trucks and vendors around the art galleries arguing the need for more police presence and better control of the food. So it split the event into two separate ones: the traditional ArtHop (to be more limited indoors, at art galleries) and a more open event with food trucks and street vendors. ArtHop will continue to be organized by the Fresno Arts Council, whereas Why Not Wednesday will be held under the guidance of the Downtown Fresno Partnership (DFP).

“The community we know was being completely disregarded” by the City Council and the DFP, said Joseph Rodriguez. He and Crystal Rocha are part of an art group called Goey Stranger (@goeystranger on Instagram).

Both artists, among others, have attended City Council meetings, special meetings and DFP board meetings to voice their concerns regarding the changes to ArtHop.

“In their meeting minutes, they were calling them [ArtHop street vendors] junk vendors and [saying] we have to do something about them,” said Rodriguez, referring to the public minutes of DFP Board meetings.

The artists feel that negotiations with ArtHop vendors were done in bad faith. They intimated that the DFP, the City and the Fresno Police Department were slowly pushing the vendors off the streets and into unaffordable, overbooked venues that many small business artists could not afford. At the same time, the DFP and the City “wanted to own an essential symbol of the Fresno community that they did not have a hand in creating.”

“Artists will be pushed into dilapidated, underserved areas, then revitalize the areas with their art before people with money come in and say ‘love what you did with the place’ and then take it for themselves,” notes Rocha.

Zypher, an artist and member of the Rocky Horror Shadow Cast, confided that ArtHop was an integral part of her community and livelihood. Coming from Florida to a completely new area left Zypher feeling disconnected; that was until meeting the Goey Strangers.

“I think this is one of the few things left in the city where you can just sit and socialize and relax in public,” says Zypher.

The artists also feel that the timing of Fresno’s recent “homelessness ban” and the restructuring of ArtHop was convenient.



Artist and businessperson Crystal Rocha prepares her table at ArtHop. She is one of the organizers of a protest against the new rules for participation in ArtHop. Photo by Peter Maiden

As to the economic impact of ArtHop’s shift, Zypher said, “It’s anywhere from \$15 to \$45 for a spot at an ArtHop venue—that’s gas money!”

Zypher is also a teacher in Hanford and conducts her art business to supplement the low income she receives for teaching. She sees the same financial insecurity affecting the Rocky Horror Shadow Cast’s ability to maintain its rent at the LAByrnth Art Collective. “One missed rent could end it.”

Although social media and public support for ReHop’s mission seems to be growing, the DTP nevertheless premiered Why Not Wednesday on Sept. 18; that is the DTP’s new outdoor, vendor-oriented event to be held the third Wednesday of the month. ArtHop, the original flavor, will continue the first and third Thursdays of the month.

(Author’s note: There will be a community yoga fundraiser for the LAByrnth Art Collective, which experienced a fire in late September, at Dulce UpFront (2026 N. Van Ness Blvd.) on Oct. 5 from 3:45 p.m. to 5 p.m. Donations encouraged.)

\*\*\*\*\*

Noah Deeds Ortiz is a current student at Fresno State majoring in psychology. He coordinates the Community Alliance’s Arts & Culture section along with his wife, Paulina Deeds Ortiz. He hosted the “Queer Goggles” podcast.

# Local Congressional Races

BY JAMES MENDEZ

Since at least October 1805, Americans have heard the phrase, “This election is the most important of our lifetimes.”

This year, it is more true than ever.

There are many electoral races this November.

Some races have no opposition. Some limit the choice to like-minded, right-wing, extremist Republicans such as Steve Brandau and Garry Bredefeld in the Fresno County Supervisor District 2 race or Vince Fong (R-Bakersfield) versus Tulare County Sheriff Mike Boudreaux for Congressional District 20.

Still others appear to be easy wins for one party or the other, for example, incumbent Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) versus Solomon Verduzco, a Republican political strategist and commentator, in Assembly District 31, and Tom McClintock (R-Elk Grove) versus Mike Barkley, a Democrat whose experience includes being a lawyer, an accountant and a computer programmer, in Congressional District 5.

Here, we look at two Congressional races that, on paper, should be easy Democratic wins, yet are considered tight races.

Based on the demographics, Congressional District 13 (CD13) and Congressional District 22 (CD22) should not be close.

CD13 covers parts of Stanislaus, Fresno, Madera and Merced counties. Incumbent John Duarte (R-Modesto) is being challenged by Adam Gray, a former Democratic Assembly member. CD22 includes most of Kings County and parts of Tulare and Kern counties. In CD22, incumbent David Valadao (R-Hanford) is being opposed by Rudy Salas, also a former Democratic Assembly member. Both are rematches of the 2022 election.

Both CD13 and CD22 have majority Latino populations and Democratic majorities of registered voters. Both Republican incumbents are extreme right-wing Republicans who claim to be “moderate.” Both districts would have been won by Biden in 2020. This year, the Cook Political Report designates both districts as a “toss up.” Low Democratic and low Latino voter turnout in 2022, a non-presidential election year, resulted in Democratic losses in both districts.

## Congressional District 13

In 2022, Duarte, owner of a plant nursery business, defeated Gray, a small business owner and educator, by 564 votes. As of July 5, Democrats had a 41% to 29% voter registration



Candidates for Congressional District 22: incumbent David Valadao, a Republican (right), and the Democratic challenger, former Assembly member Rudy Salas. Photo courtesy of Robert Foreman (Valadao) and Rudy Salas for Congress

## ELECTION 2024

edge over Republicans in the district with 22% No Party Preference. Biden would have defeated Trump 54.3%–43.4% in this district.

Duarte claims to be a moderate. On several issues, however, Duarte is anything but moderate.

Duarte often votes with the far-right MAGA extremists of the Republican Party, voting in tandem with Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene (R-Ga.) 79% of the time. Duarte has a 100% rating from anti-choice groups. He has voted against bills promoting gun safety. He initially voted against the expulsion of Rep. George Santos (R-N.Y.; Nov. 1) before he voted for it (Dec. 1).

Duarte voted against waivers and modifications of federal student loans, against environmental regulations such as air pollution controls in new vehicles and heavy-duty engines and against federal efforts to ban gas stoves. He voted for the impeachment of President Biden for high crimes and misdemeanors (Dec. 13, 2023) and for the impeachment of Secretary of Homeland Security Alejandro Mayorkas.

To win, Gray must increase both Latino and Democratic voter turnout and listen to his prospective constituents.

An indication of the impact of not addressing voter concerns is the surprise endorsement of Duarte by the Central Valley Leadership Round Table (CVLRT). The CVLRT is a mainly Latino group representing the interests of the primarily rural communities in the west San Joaquin Valley.

Eliseo Gamino, coordinator of the CVLRT, says that the group held an open forum at Don Pepe’s Restaurant in Firebaugh with both candidates present. There were 60–70 members of the CVLRT present. Members heard presentations from both candidates and voted in secret on an endorsement.

Gamino said the main difference between the two candidates’ presentations was that Gray spoke mainly about water issues, which are important to the Central Valley. Water is important not only to farmers but also to towns with poor water quality and pumps that are going dry.

During the forum, Gray did not address community needs for water and did not address the two other issues important to CVLRT members: immigration and affordable housing.

Duarte addressed both immigration and affordable housing. Moreover, as an Assembly member, Gray supported local law enforcement turning in undocumented immigrants to ICE (U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement) for deportation when being released from jail.

Gray considers himself a “Blue Dog” Democrat and might not have presented as a “true Democrat” in 2022. That could have contributed to his loss.

## Congressional District 22

CD22 is a majority Latino (60%) and Democratic-leaning district: Democrats 41.7%, Republicans 27.2% and No Party Preference 22.8%. Biden would have defeated Trump 55.3%–42.3% in the district in 2020. In 2022, Valadao beat Salas by less than 4,000 votes.

Why is this a close race? One thing Valadao has going for him is that he speaks Spanish. He speaks well enough to have had a debate in Spanish in 2014 with then candidate Amanda Renteria and often speaks to groups in Spanish. However, except for his vote to impeach former president Trump, his voting record has been in step with the Republican Party. He has a 100% rating from anti-choice organizations.

Valadao voted against the \$1.2 trillion Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, against raising the minimum wage and against lowering the price of medications.

To win, Salas needs strong Latino and other Democratic turnout.

Perhaps the Harris/Walz ticket will help Salas and Gray generate enough excitement to increase Latino and Democratic turnout and turn those seats blue.

\*\*\*\*\*

James Mendez came to Fresno in 1977 for his medical residency training at what was then called the Valley Medical Center. He stayed to practice medicine and raise a family. He is now a retired physician and a community activist. Contact him at jim\_mendez@icloud.com.

# Trump: Immigrants Are Eating Pets and Stealing Jobs

BY SUNITA SOHRABJI

Republican Presidential candidate Donald Trump went full throttle on immigrants during the Sept. 10 Presidential debate, vowing to deport at least 15 million migrants immediately after taking office.

"These people coming in...they're eating the dogs. They're eating the cats. They're eating the pets of the people that live there," said the former president, referencing debunked reports of Haitian migrants trapping animals and barbecuing them in Springfield, Ohio.

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-Texas) and X/formerly Twitter owner Elon Musk posted similar claims a day before the debate.

Karen Graves, strategic engagement manager for Springfield, told CBS News there was no evidence to substantiate such claims. "In response to recent rumors alleging criminal activity by the immigrant population in our city, we wish to clarify that there have been no credible reports or specific claims of pets being harmed, injured or abused by individuals within the immigrant community," she said.

## "Violent Criminals"

Immigration was at the center of the evening debate, which took place in Philadelphia, Penn., a key battleground state. "Pennsylvania is the battleground of battlegrounds. It's where everything's going down," Mohan Seshadri, executive director of the Asian Pacific Islander Political Alliance, told reporters at a Sept. 6 Ethnic Media Services news briefing.

Trump kept invoking immigration into almost every question asked by ABC News reporters David Muir and Linsey Davis. He blamed migration for high inflation levels. "We have millions of people pouring into our country from prisons and jails, from mental institutions and insane asylums. And they're coming in and they're taking jobs that are occupied right now by African Americans and Hispanics and also unions."

Trump blamed immigrants for high levels of crime, saying that their home countries, conversely, had seen a drop in crime as more criminals allegedly flood the United States. "They are taking over the towns. They're taking over buildings. They're going in violently. These are the people that Harris and Biden let into our country. And they're destroying our country. They're dangerous."

## Mass Deportation Plan

Muir asked Trump about his plan to deport more than 11 million migrants, asking if border patrol agents would "go door to door." Trump evaded the question, saying the numbers were closer to 21 million people. He has said that

he will use the National Guard, the U.S. military and local law enforcement to carry out the largest mass deportation in U.S. history.

Throughout the debate, which went beyond its 90-minute time schedule, Harris, the daughter of an Indian immigrant mother and a Jamaican immigrant father, did not once defend or champion immigration and migration.

The Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy released a report in August, noting that in 2022 undocumented immigrants paid nearly \$100 billion in federal, state and local tax revenue, an average of roughly \$9,000 per person.

## Undocumented Immigrants Pour Billions into Economy

Undocumented immigrants paid \$25.7 billion in Social Security taxes, \$6.4 billion in Medicare taxes and \$1.8 billion in unemployment insurance taxes in 2022. But they are barred from receiving Social Security, Medicare or unemployment benefits.

If implemented, Trump's draconian mass deportation plan would "create a perfect storm of economic hardship for California and other major agricultural states," said Edward Kissam, in a recent op-ed for Ethnic Media Services. Undocumented immigrants add about \$2 billion annually to California's coffers.

"Given that at least four out of five undocumented farmworkers plan to keep on working in agriculture for five-plus years, why deport them when labor shortages have been a constant challenge for the industry for at least two decades?," questioned Kissam, noting that undocumented immigrants serve not only in the fields but also as supervisors, production managers, packing house workers, technicians, truck drivers and warehouse workers.

## Filipina Nurses

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the United States relied on nurses from the Philippines, who make up about one-third of foreign-born licensed vocational nurses (LVNs). Filipina nurses served on the front line of the pandemic, working directly with patients in hospitals and assisted-living facilities. Conversely, white nurses worked largely in outpatient settings, according to a report from the Berkeley Interdisciplinary Migration Initiative.

In total, immigrants account for 17% of U.S. GDP, amounting to \$3.3 trillion annually.

## Border Czar

As Vice President, Harris has been tasked with getting the U.S. border under control and getting at the root causes of migration from Central America. At the debate, Trump lashed into Harris's failures in controlling the border and claimed that millions of migrants had poured into the country under her watch.

Moderator Muir noted that illegal border crossings had reached an all-time high over the past three years and asked why the Biden administration had waited until six months before the election to enact new policies.

Harris fought back with remarks she has made several times on the campaign trail. "I'm the only person on this stage who has prosecuted transnational criminal



Superstar Taylor Swift, who, in a rebuff to Trump's running mate JD Vance, posted her endorsement of Kamala Harris on Instagram hugging a cat. Photo courtesy of Taylor Swift Instagram page, @taylorswift

organizations for the trafficking of guns, drugs and human beings."

## Trump Killed the Bill

She noted that members of Congress last year came up with a bipartisan bill to secure the border, which she supported. "That bill would have put 1,500 more border agents on the border. It would have allowed us to stem the flow of fentanyl coming into the United States and put more resources to allow us to prosecute transnational criminal organizations for trafficking in guns, drugs and human beings.

"But you know what happened to that bill? Donald Trump got on the phone, called up some folks in Congress, and said, 'kill the bill.' Because he'd prefer to run on a problem instead of fixing a problem.

"The people of our country actually need a leader who engages in solutions, who actually addresses the problems at hand."

Moments after the debate, Harris got a much-anticipated endorsement from mega-star Taylor Swift, who, in a rebuff to Trump's running mate JD Vance, posted her endorsement on Instagram alongside a photo in which she hugged her cat.

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Sunita Sohrabji is an associated editor with Ethnic Media Services.

# Falling Out with Historical Allies

BY JAMES MENDEZ

Recent events on the Fresno electoral scene clearly demonstrate that the goals of elected officials are not always 100% in alignment with the goals of their supporters or groups that have supported them in the past. Although it is unreasonable to expect any group to agree with an individual all the time, we are seeing an unusual falling out of those who had been historical allies this year.

The Fresno Teachers Association (FTA) is not supporting any of the incumbent Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) trustees. The reasons for this rift have not been publicly explained in detail by the union's leadership except to say that certain elected officials were not as supportive or respectful of the union during the 2023 contract negotiations as the union wanted them to be. In two of the three FUSD races, the FTA is financially supporting challengers.

Unions also are not supporting the incumbent in the State Center Community College District (SCCCD) Trustee Area 2 race where building and construction unions have run the head of the iron workers union against the incumbent.

## FUSD Trustee Area 5

The incumbent for Trustee Area 5 is Andy Levine. He is being challenged by Fresno County Board of Education Trustee James Martinez (who has received contributions not only from the FTA but also from Fresno City Council Members Nelson Esparza and Mike Karbassi).

Levine was elected to the position in 2022 after the death of longtime trustee Carol Mills. He won the FTA's endorsement in that race. Shortly after his election, the FUSD and the FTA entered into contract negotiations, which became acrimonious as negotiations proceeded.

Negotiations were going so poorly that at one point the FTA threatened to go on strike with 93% of teachers voting to do so. The two sides eventually agreed to a contract. As a result of having to take a strike vote, the FTA says it was disappointed in the FUSD board's performance and therefore unable to support the reelection of any incumbents.

Before election to the FUSD board, Levine was a community organizer with Faith in the Valley, an interfaith, multiracial, community-based organization with membership from churches, synagogues and mosques in Fresno County. Faith in the Valley addresses issues of immigration; healthcare; criminal justice reform; reducing gun violence; housing and homelessness; the need for clean energy, clean air and clean water; and jobs with livable wages and benefits. He brought those skills and knowledge to the FUSD board.

At Faith in the Valley, Levine worked to help diverse groups come to consensus. He helped address social injustice for the betterment of the less fortunate. He tried to use those skills during the FUSD-FTA negotiations. He says that he is proud of the work he did during the negotiations and throughout his tenure as a trustee.

The FTA was unhappy with Levine's actions and his lack of public support for the FTA during the 2023 contract negotiations. In the hopes of getting someone more publicly supportive of the FTA's positions, Martinez was approached to challenge Levine. Martinez is currently a county Board of Education trustee. Subsequently, Martinez opted not to seek reelection and run instead for the FUSD seat.

The FTA has given significant financial support to Martinez—about \$25,000 as of Sept. 16. Martinez has also received financial contributions and support from City Council members Karbassi, Esparza and Luis Chavez, as well as Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer.

Long before becoming a board member, Levine had been, and still is, a strong supporter of union goals and a union member. He feels he has done a good job in advancing the goals of the teachers' union, improving student performance and at the same time ensuring fiscal stability for the district.

## ELECTION 2024

Levine has said he is proud of the work he has done over the past two years, in particular, the board securing full funding from the state for community schools. Community schools help meet the needs of residents while encouraging "healthy, thriving children with choices for their futures." FUSD went from five community schools in 2023 to 19 in 2024.

They have full-time coordinators to support the students, and encourage families to be actively involved on campus with their children's education. He has worked to break down the barriers that prevent children from attending school and reduce chronic absenteeism. All middle schools are now equipped with washers and dryers to help eliminate the lack of clean clothes as a reason not to attend school.

He helped get 2,500 FUSD students living at the poverty level to be enrolled in the CalKIDS saving accounts program for a future college education. He wants to address the needs of the most vulnerable students living at the highest poverty level. One way he suggests would be to partner with the Food Bank.

Levine is also involved with the Guaranteed Basic Income program in an attempt to alleviate poverty, which is a barrier to students trying to obtain a better education.

He is aware of the difficulty of the contract negotiations but feels the school district and the FTA were able to avoid a strike and arrive at a contract that was ultimately good for students, good for teachers and staff, and good for the district without adverse financial consequences.

In reviewing Martinez's ads and interviews, he has not clearly stated what he would or could do better than what Levine has done. He did not respond to a request to be interviewed for this article. A sampling of statements from his website are rather generic:

Continues on page 21

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# FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

## OCTOBER 2024 CALENDAR

- 01** **Dracula: A Feminist Revenge Fantasy, Really** (through Oct. 5) 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m. Dennis and Cheryl Woods Theatre. Both terrifying and riotous, Kate Hamill's *Dracula* confronts the sexism in Bram Stoker's original work and subjugates it as a smart and disquieting feminist revenge fantasy.
- The Secret Garden** (through Nov. 10) Roger Rocka's. The enchanting, Tony Award-winning musical based on Frances Hodgson Burnett's classic novel is a compelling tale of forgiveness and renewal set to a truly magical score.
- Wendy Maruyama: A Sculptural Survey (craft, material, process)** (through Jan. 5, 2025) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Selections for this solo show include examples of Maruyama's traditional studio craft, and her social commentary explores the themes of feminism, her Japanese American heritage and her personal family history.
- Charles Gaines: The Fresno Years** (through Jan. 5, 2025) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Taken from the museum's permanent collection, these works from early in Gaines' more than 50-year career as an artist were made during his tenure here in Fresno.
- Glorious and Triumphant: Byzantine Icons from the A. & P. Stefanopoulos Collection** (through Jan. 5, 2025) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Celebrating 100 years of St. George Greek Orthodox Church of Fresno, the icons in this exhibition range from the 16th century to the modern day and are an example of an enduring ancient tradition.
- Art of the Word: Once Upon a Book** (through June 29, 2025) Thursday–Sunday, 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Featuring the original illustrations from *Once Upon a Book*, which emphasizes the power of books to help one experience other places outside your own reality.
- International Public Art Exhibit: Wings of the City** (through August 2025) Maple Mall, Fresno State. World-renowned Mexican artist Jorge Marín's bronze mythical creatures have taken perch, silently watching the bustle of campus life.
- Guest Artist: Sérgio Simões Bass Trombone Recital** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Sérgio Rainho Simões joined the Jalisco Philharmonic Orchestra as bass trombone in 2016, was appointed trombone professor at the Universidad de Guadalajara in 2017 and is an active chamber musician in ensembles such as the Lusitanian Brass Trio.
- 03** **Our Town** (through Oct. 6) 2nd Space Theatre. The Good Company Players present this timeless drama, set in the mythical village of Grover's Corner, N.H., that exhibits the complex and beautiful truths of being human.
- ArtHop** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Greater Fresno Metro Area Galleries. Free entry to exhibitions, gallery shows, special performances and unique art experiences for art lovers of all ages. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- Above Board: Creating the Artful Dining Experience** (through Nov. 2) 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Clay Hand Studios. Opening reception. A juried exhibition of artful handmade ceramic and glass wares including functional tabletop settings and serve wares and works pertaining to decorative dining experience.
- Dia de los Muertos Art Exhibition** (through Nov. 2) Opening reception: 5 p.m.–7 p.m. Graduate Art Studios. Gallery hours: Saturdays, noon–4 p.m. Organized by the Fresno State Department of Art, Design and Art History.
- Rhythms of Heritage: Aztec Dance Class** 6 p.m.–7 p.m. Speakers Platform, Fresno State. An outside dance class for the campus community to learn the importance of cultural dance and how to do a small portion of a dance. cynthiavillalobos@mail.fresnostate.edu.
- Molly Tuttle & Golden Highway** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Grammy Award-winning singer, songwriter and musician with her band.
- 04** **Cello Fresno Faculty Concert** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. A gala concert featuring the Fresno State Symphony Orchestra with guest artists as part of an international cello festival.
- Amanda Duran Album Release Show** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. A local original artist who desires to bring back the passion of rock 'n' roll to the "world" backed with driving beats, guitar amps and her red Flying V.
- 05** **Council of 100 Distinguished Woman Artists for 2024** 11 a.m.–2 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Luncheon honoring Wendy Maruyama, a visual artist, furniture maker and educator.
- Let's Make an Art!** 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Root Access Hackerspace. Community art meet-up; bring your favorite materials or use ours.
- Cello Fresno Faculty Concert** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. A gala concert featuring the Fresno State Symphony Orchestra with guest artists as part of an international cello festival.
- Suelta La Lengua Con Itati y Doña Silva** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. TikTok superstar Itati Lopez, with 14 million followers, returns for Season 2 of *Suelta La Lengua* with a new co-host—her mother, Doña Silvia.
- 06** **Mauricio Náter: Philip Lorenz International Keyboard Concerts** 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. "No other Mexican pianist matches Mauricio Náter's busy concert schedule, precise technique and intense passion" (*Houston Chronicle*).
- Cirque Du Bollywood** 6 p.m. Tower Theatre. All the way from India with the Rajasthani Caravan, a night of Bollywood music and dance: Punjabi, Qwalli, Sufi-Hindustani.
- 08** **Symphonic Band Concert** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The on-campus wind band, conducted by Steve McKeithen.
- 10** **Fresno State Wind Orchestra with Special Guest** 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The College of Sequoias Symphonic Band joins the Fresno State Wind Orchestra under the direction of Dr. Gary Gilroy.
- 11** **Queering Mariachi: Mariachi Arcoiris de Los Angeles** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Royce Hall Auditorium, Fresno High School, 1839 N. Echo Ave. The world's first all-openly LGBTQ+ mariachi group presented by the Cross Cultural and Gender Center at Fresno State. cynthiavillalobos@mail.fresnostate.edu.
- Nights in the Plaza** 5 p.m.–9 p.m. Arte Américas. Afro-Peruvian percussion and dance workshop with Gabriela Shiroma and Peta Robles.
- Carlos Ballarta: Tlatoani** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Ballarta, with three Netflix specials, is one of the most recognizable faces in the growing Spanish-speaking stand-up scene. Spanish-language show.
- Alexander String Quartet** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Widely admired for its interpretations of Beethoven, Mozart and Shostakovich, the Quartet has also established itself as an important advocate of new music through more than 25 commissions and numerous premiere performances.
- 12** **LitHop 2024** Noon–5 p.m. Tower District venues. Annual pop-up literary arts festival, created by local writers to uplift the writing community while celebrating Fresno's unique arts districts. lithopfresno.org
- 13** **Guelaguetza Madera 2024** 11 a.m. Sunrise Rotary Sports Complex, 1901 Clinton St., Madera. A Oaxacan indigenous-led celebration featuring delicious traditional food, dance, music and more. 559-481-8084 / comiteguelaguetzamadera@gmail.com
- Steven Ho** 7:30 p.m. Tower Theatre. The hilarious mastermind behind the "Tips from the ER" series has taken his comedic genius on the road offering audiences an unforgettable blend of laughter and insight into the absurdities of healthcare.
- 16** **Why Not Wednesday** 5 p.m.–9 p.m. Fulton St. (Mono to Fresno). A new monthly street fair that transforms Fulton Street into a vibrant pop-up market, featuring a diverse mix of vendors, food trucks, artists and live music. 559-490-9966
- René Vaca** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Winner of the 16th annual Stand Up NBC competition, this stand-up comedian, writer and actor is currently on tour and hosts a monthly show at the Hollywood Laugh Factory.
- 17** **ArtHop** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Greater Fresno Metro Area Galleries. Free entry to exhibitions, gallery shows, special performances and unique art experiences for art lovers of all ages. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- 18** **David Nail** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. His musical candor cuts like a laser through star-making propriety, a ritual of predictable answers to predictable questions, recited by artists averse to the controversy that truth can bring.
- 19** **Los Lobos at 50** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. It's a matter of time—50 years to be exact. And in that time Los Lobos has created an unprecedented body of work, a legacy of greatness.
- 20** **Fall Choral Concert** 2:30 p.m.–4:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The Fresno State Chamber Singers, Concert Choir and Masterworks Chorus under the direction of Dr. Cari Earnhart combine for a special performance.
- Max Amini** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Step into the electric world of a comedy sensation as Max is armed with a fresh array of comedy delights for this extraordinary event that will leave you in stitches and rolling in the aisles.
- 24** **State of the Arts** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. The Grand on 10. The Fresno Arts Council acknowledges the vibrant work being done in the arts community, from the impact artists are making to new arts opportunities in the field. The 2024 Horizon Awards will be presented.
- 25** **Filmmaker Meetup** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. CMAC. It's spooky season, and CMAC is ready to serve up some local films that are sure to give you a fright!
- 26** **Spectrum Art Gallery Benefit Print Auction and Exhibition** 1 p.m.–4 p.m. Dulce UpFront. Generating vital financial support for the Spectrum Art Gallery, now in its 44th year.
- Titus** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. "Amazingly funny" (*Forbes*), "TV's most original comedy voice since Seinfeld" (*Newsday*), "That show was art" (Bruce Springsteen).
- 28** **Big Bands in Concert with the Amina Scott Quartet** 7:30 p.m.–9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. An exceptionally talented bassist and composer, Scott continues to forge her own path as a trailblazing artist.
- 30** **Author Reading: Fresno State MFA Faculty** 6:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Alice Peters Auditorium. An evening with faculty authors Venita Blackburn, Steven Church, Ra Jarrar, Brynn Saito, Mai Der Vang and Brenna Womer. Part of the Fresno Poets' Association series.

Submit arts-related events to [fresnoartscalendar@gmail.com](mailto:fresnoartscalendar@gmail.com) by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

2nd Space Theatre • 928 E. Olive Ave. • 559-266-0660 / [gcplayers.simpletix.com](http://gcplayers.simpletix.com)

CMAC • 1555 Van Ness Ave., Suite 201 • 559-266-2622 / [cmac.tv](http://cmac.tv)

Fresno State Concert Hall • 2380 E. Keats Ave. • 559-278-2654

Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • 559-485-9050 / [fresnotowertheater.com](http://fresnotowertheater.com)

Alice Peters Auditorium • University Business Center, Fresno State • 559-278-1569

Dennis and Cheryl Woods Theatre • Speech Arts Building, Fresno State • 559-278-5803

Graduate Art Studios • 1419 M St. • 559-492-4000

Note: All locations are in the city of Fresno unless otherwise noted.

Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • [arteamericas.org](http://arteamericas.org)

Dulce UpFront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-266-0691 / [spectrumphotogallery.org](http://spectrumphotogallery.org)

Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre • 1226 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-266-9494 / [rogerrockas.com](http://rogerrockas.com)



The San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance is funded in part by the City of Fresno Measure P Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Fund administered by the Fresno Arts Council.

Clay Hand Studios • 660 Van Ness Ave. • [clayhandstudios.net](http://clayhandstudios.net)

Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221 / [fresnoartmuseum.org](http://fresnoartmuseum.org)

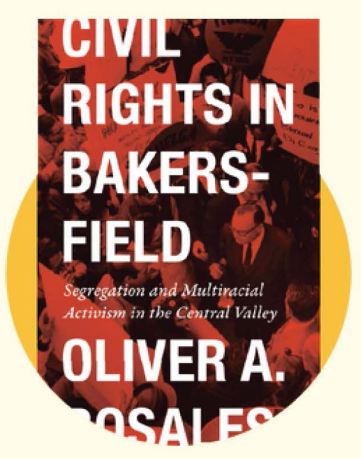
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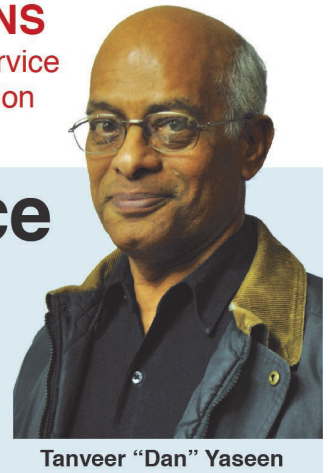
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**CHANGE AGENTS** George & Maia Ballis:  
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I include George's historic photos of civil rights, UFW farm worker unionizing and Brown & Black Power Movements in this history of our art, media and community organizing work with many other change agents on water, land, food, and every local socio-economic-environmental justice and peace issue; plus our work legalizing solar electric power use in Fresno at our SunMt Research Center.

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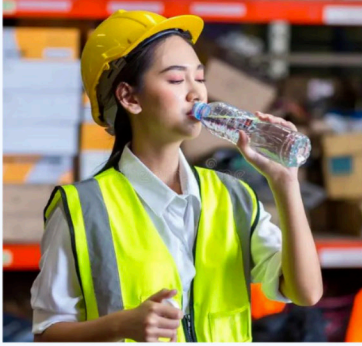


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Graphic by Lincoln Cushing

**"ACTION IS INDEED THE SOLE MEDIUM OF EXPRESSION FOR ETHICS."  
 —JANE ADDAMS**

On Sept. 6, local WILPF members gathered at the Jane Addams monument in the Fresno State Peace Garden to celebrate Jane Addams's 164th birthday, in an event organized by Jean Hays. We shared quotes and stories about Jane Addams, and Jan Slagter presented this overview of her life, work and current relevance:

The person most responsible for making this possible is Claudia Nolan, the artist who studied sculpture here. Her careful review of Jane's life brought us this crowning achievement of the Peace Garden. We see Jane holding aloft a small immigrant girl, who in turn holds up the world. Ms. Nolan believes that "The ability of human beings to discover ways to live together in plural societies based on mutual tolerance and respect" is today's critical issue. And we need public monuments to remind us of those who have done that work.

Jane Addams was a social philosopher who developed the embodied (rather than abstract) philosophy of Sympathetic Knowledge wherein you learn, from the communities where you work and live, what needs to be done for residents to prosper. And so it went in the Hull House complex, the intentional community she built and lived in. She took it all on.

A pioneer in social research, she is considered the mother of the field of social work in the U.S. She and her coworkers devised and published some of the earliest community studies, based on door-to-door research on the social conditions of Chicago's South Side immigrants.

Many of the injustices she worked on a century ago persist despite having been reshaped by contemporary forces. Presently, we are under assault by retrogressive, authoritarian, right-wing, misogynistic, racist, anti-immigrant, homo-



Fresno WILPF at the Jane Addams sculpture. (L to R) Carol Goiburn, Melissa Fry, Teresa Castillo, Jan Slagter, Sandra Iyall (kneeling), Ann Merrill, Rich Rollin, Jean Hays, Kyla Mitchell (kneeling) and Evalee. Photo by LVR



Honoring Jane Addams on her birthday. (L to R) Carol Goiburn, Melissa Fry, Jan Slagter, Teresa Castillo, Leni Villagomez Reeves (kneeling), Ann Merrill, Rich Rollin, Jean Hays, Kyla Mitchell (kneeling) and Evalee. Photo by Sandra Iyall

and trans-phobic, warmongering, greedy, small-minded, confused, nationalist, fascist forces.



Dr. Jan Slagter, professor emerita and former chair of the Fresno State Women's Studies Department, celebrates and discusses Jane Addams. Photo by LVR

What follows are 10 examples of contemporary struggles we are engaging with and how these issues appeared during Jane's life and work for freedom.

1. Who we can be intimate with despite gendered norms. Jane's intimate relationships were all with women—first, Ellen Gates Star, co-founder of Hull House (HH), and after that with Mary Rozet Smith, her companion for 40 years. Her love letters to Mary survive.
2. What books we can read and which ones libraries can contain are under attack. Among the 13 buildings Jane and her sister workers built at HH was a library. Jane was a voracious reader and prolific author of 11 books and 500 articles. She also built a book bindery at HH.
3. Immigrant treatment and rights: Who is allowed to come to this country and how can they live? The HH neighborhood was poor and populated by immigrants. HH had a theater, a concert hall and public meeting spaces used for union organizing and other events. Hull House provided citizenship and literacy classes. Cultural differences and arts were honored through presentation of music concerts and dances from many cultures. Among its 13 buildings, Hull House had an art museum, a gymnasium and a pool.
4. Housing: Many immigrant workers were single women, and HH included a cooperative residence for women workers, complete with resident healthcare.
5. Day care: These workers needed it, and Hull House provided it.
6. Labor reforms for immigrant workers: Hull House activists developed—and got passed—legislation regulating labor conditions in the factories and built a labor history museum in their complex.
7. Attacks on education: Hull House had the first kindergarten in the state. Jane and her coworkers wrote and got passed laws requiring schooling for children and curtaining child labor.
8. Attacks on the ability to vote: Politicians in many states are wiping millions of voters off the rolls. Hull House conducted voter registration on site. And Jane was a leader of the women's suffrage movement, vice president of the National American Women's Suffrage Association. She wrote articles, appeared in public debates, organized a massive parade to disrupt Woodrow Wilson's inauguration and spoke throughout the country.
9. Confronting racism, Jane worked with W.E.B. DuBois and was a founding member of the NAACP. She worked with anti-lynching journalist Ida B. Wells-Barnett. Ida B. educated her on the racist lies whites used to justify lynching Black men. Jane worked closely with Mary Church Terrell, an early Black woman college graduate and teacher of languages. Terrell was the first president of the National Association of Colored Women's Clubs and a founding WILPF member.
10. Stopping endless wars: In 1915, there was a Women's Peace Party in the United States, aimed at keeping the United States out of and stopping WWI. Jane was its chair. A lifelong pacifist, she was leader of the delegation of women from the United States who sailed to Europe in 1915 to meet with other global women leaders to try to stop WWI. These women met with presidents, prime ministers, and kings and lobbied them to stop invading, shelling, killing. Despite the war's persistence, the women met again a few years later in Zurich, and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) was born. Jane was its first president. Today, there are thousands of members of this 105-year-old worldwide organization with sections in 40 countries.

If Jane were here today, you can be assured she'd be campaigning for an end to Israel's war on Palestine; the war between Russia and Ukraine; the wars in South Sudan, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and the Democratic Republic of the Congo; and the rest of our current 114 armed conflicts (see the Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights website). She'd be protesting the genocide of the Palestinian people, which our taxes fund and our war machinery commits.

The takeaway from Jane's era to ours? The many struggles for justice are never over. We must work for peace and everyone's freedom again and again and again.

—Jan Slagter



The Fresno Raging Grannies are still unstoppable! They recently sang for the Service Employees International Union (SEIU 521) luncheon. Brady United has invited the group to sing at their Enough Gun Violence event on Oct. 21 at 6 p.m. at the St. James Episcopal Church. "Union Maids" (L to R) Myrna Stone, Anne Betancourt, Jean Hays, Patty Bennett, Evonne Waldo, Nancy Hatcher, Kathy Adamcik and Nancy Godwin. Photo by Nancy Hatcher

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WILPF-US membership is \$35/year. WILPF-Fresno sponsors a low-income rate of \$20.

For questions and information updates, contact Nancy Hatcher at nhatcher46@gmail.com or Kyla Mitchell at kyla.noelle@gmail.com.

**WILPF MEETING**

Oct. 10 (second Thursday), 7 p.m., via Zoom and usually also at the Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Open to all members. Watch your e-mail for an announcement. For information on the in-person option, contact Teresa at taca\_03@gmail.com.

**STIR IT UP—WILPF  
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Oct. 23 (fourth Wednesday), 3 p.m. Jean Hays highlights people and events important to our WILPF community.

**UNPACKING RACISM**

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# As Relevant as Ever: The BS Factor

BY STEVEN ROESCH

Some authors just have a knack for finding an eye-catching title.

One such writer was Harry G. Frankfurt, a philosophy professor whose pint-sized book *On Bullshit* created something of a furor when it hit the bookstores in 2005.

Frankfurt also had a gift for putting together arresting opening sentences.

Here's how he launched into his subject: "One of the most salient features of our culture is that there is so much bullshit. Everyone knows this. Each of us contributes his share."

He originally published the piece in the journal *Raritan* in 1986, but it only gained widespread attention after Princeton University Press released it as a stand-alone volume.

One thing's for sure: the topic is as relevant now as it was a few decades ago.

So how did Frankfurt examine his subject? In part by locating fairly synonymous words and examining them closely.

His first virtual synonym: humbug.

Piggybacking on Max Black's definition in *The Prevalence of Humbug*, he finds that BS involves deliberate misrepresentation.

But although it leaves its audience with false impressions, the way that lying does, that's hardly its central aim. The speaker wants his audience to regard him in a certain light, to communicate a certain impression of himself—as a stalwart patriot, say, or as a dynamic and original thinker.

"Hot air" is also fairly synonymous with BS, Frankfurt muses. "When we characterize talk as hot air, we mean that what comes out of the speaker's mouth is only that. It is mere vapor. His speech is empty, without substance or content."

Yet another word that Frankfurt considers: bluffing.

He notes that bullshitting is close to bluffing, given that both entail deceiving and misleading one's audience. At the same time, however, neither is exactly the same thing as mere lying. Lying, he writes, is uttering a falsehood. BS, by contrast, involves fakery. "For the essence of bullshit is not that it is false but that it is phony."

Which leads Frankfurt to his central distinction between lies and BS. Liars want to prevent us from perceiving what they themselves recognize to be true. Bullshitters, however, don't care about what's true at all. They simply make whatever statements are needed to attain their aims, regardless of the truth or falsity of those statements.

Frankfurt also opines that we tend to judge liars more harshly than purveyors of BS. Outright lies tend to offend us, and as a consequence we judge liars harshly. We tend to shrug off or discard BS, and

accordingly we react with less severity to its practitioners.

So much for the nature of bullshit. Why is there so much of the stuff?

Toward the end of his tract, Frankfurt offers one reason. Sometimes individuals—especially those in the public eye—are asked questions about topics that they know little about. They could, of course, admit to their ignorance, but the temptation to fake it—to provide an answer that sounds impressive—is great. Others might well expect them to provide an answer, and by fulfilling that expectation they inevitably make use of BS.

Are Frankfurt's observations always on the mark? Well, his claim that we judge liars more harshly than BSers seems dubious.

Nowadays a good number of people tend to be offended by those in the public sphere who regularly spout this sort of material. One thinks of the rhetorical antics of George Santos, or various other prominent public figures.

Also questionable is his sharp and tidy contrast between a lie and BS—as well as the mindsets of those who employ them. His distinction suggests that those seeking to hoodwink their audience make a clear and consistent choice to employ either one approach or the other. In real life, those who seek to mislead others probably don't just stick to one strategy to attain their goal. They most likely feel free to use both to get the results they want.

Several years ago, the author served as the foreperson of a jury here in Fresno. During his opening remarks, the defense

attorney declared that his client couldn't possibly have committed the crime—a robbery at a local mini-mart—because he'd been gambling at Club One at the time.

Never in the course of the trial, however, did he offer evidence to substantiate his claim.

This bit of bluffing, along with others like it that occurred later on during the proceedings, helped to sow doubts among many of my fellow jurors.

It took our group more than two days of deliberations to reach a guilty verdict, in no small part because of this lawyer's adroit shenanigans.

After the judge dismissed us, the attorney dropped by our jury room with an exuberant grin on his face. "I had you guys going, didn't I?" he said, clearly proud of himself.

He certainly showed no compunction about his behavior. For him, it seems, he was merely doing his job and representing his client to the best of his abilities.

His attitude points to another reason why BS remains so ubiquitous. In some areas of our world, it would seem, the capacity to produce effective BS is a valued and admired trait.

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*Steven Roesch is a retired German and English teacher who taught in the Fresno Unified School District for 30 years. Contact him at [stevenroesch12@comcast.net](mailto:stevenroesch12@comcast.net).*

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Don't be fooled. Proposition 36 will lead to **more** crime, not less. It reignites the failed war on drugs, makes simple drug possession a felony, and wastes tens of millions of dollars on jails and prisons, while slashing crucial funding for victims, crime prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation.

**Prop. 36 puts prisons first and guts treatment.**

**PROP 36 IS A WASTEFUL, ONE-SIZE FITS ALL APPROACH THAT WILL LEAVE CALIFORNIA LESS SAFE**

PROP 36 is masquerading as reform. In reality, Prop. 36 is an extreme measure that will waste billions of taxpayer dollars, divert funding from mental health and rehabilitation programs, and do nothing to make us safer.

**PROPOSITION 36 WILL ONLY REIGNITE FAILED DRUG WARS OF THE 80s AND 90s**

While we must continue to make changes to our criminal justice system, and address fentanyl and retail crime, PROP 36 IS THE WRONG ANSWER. It will slash desperately needed mental health services, and spend billions more on prisons.

**PROPOSITION 36 IS A MAGA-REPUBLICAN BAIT AND SWITCH**

Don't be fooled. Prop. 36 is a MAGA-Republican-led bait and switch, plain and simple. Crime victims and law enforcement leaders oppose Prop 36 because it slashes money meant for crime victims, and for mental health and rehabilitation programs that help ensure people getting out of jail or prison are less likely to reoffend. Prop. 36 is a Republican-led effort to bring back to 1980's style drug war tactics that destroy families and communities and pack our state prisons without any benefit to public safety.

**PROP 36 IS TOO EXTREME**

Prop 36 means that stealing a candy bar could be counted as a prior offense that could lead to felony charges. It is a gross overreaction that will create damage to families and communities.

**PROP 36 STRIPS MONEY FROM EDUCATION, CRIME VICTIMS AND MENTAL HEALTH**

Prop. 36 would change how taxpayer dollars are spent, stripping millions of dollars away from victims of violent crime and from mental health programs, and use that money to build and expand state prisons.

**PROP 36 HAS UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES**

The measure is also so poorly drafted that it will simply create confusion in the courts, and not lead to higher penalties in many retail theft cases.

DON'T BE FOOLED BY FALSE SOLUTIONS. VOTE **NO** ON PROP 36.

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# State Seeks to Rescue What's Left of Valley's Nature

Continued from page 5

protectors and habitat restoration enterprises. The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust has been engaged for decades, transforming a stylish but worn farmhouse into a beautiful and useful educational center. Outside, trails and picnic areas adorn the recreation area. A large barn hosts community functions.

It is the result of local women who long ago wanted to save the river bottom from becoming another suburb. A fully restored San Joaquin has been an elusive work in progress for many years facing a variety of challenges, including the ever-present gravel mining quarries.

Likewise, the Kings River has its advocates and protectors working on projects of environmental enhancement on the segment below Pine Flat dam. They recently received an "Outdoors for All" grant for establishing a youth leadership program to encourage young people getting outdoors and learning about nature and science firsthand. Greater public access to natural areas is one of the prime goals of the 30x30 plan.

Other regional conservation projects are due to the efforts of the Sequoia Riverlands Trust. It protects nearly 42,000 acres of land around the Kaweah, Tule, Kern and Kings rivers. It also helps farmers create conservation easements to preserve farmland from development.

Since 2000, it has created and managed seven open space preserves in the Valley. Kaweah Oak Preserve near Visalia is a magical woodland featuring majestic valley oaks in a wildflower-strewn grassland rich with wildlife.

Dry Creek Preserve just east of Woodlake is a unique alluvial Sycamore woodland stretching for miles through the pastoral foothill rangeland. The group also helps preserve vernal pools and Carrizo Plain National Monument, a relic landscape reminiscent of the ancient San Joaquin Valley.

Once upon a time, extensive San Joaquin Valley wetlands hosted millions of migratory birds and indigenous species along with other species in a corridor of biodiversity. Only a small fraction remains, but that vestige is impressive. Just ask Ric Ortega. He is general manager of the Grassland Water District, which oversees a massive wetland habitat in the heart of the Pacific Flyway.

Ortega explained that in the 1930s the farming area became the first major land retirement and repurposing project in the state. "Ever since then our focus has been on preserving that wetland complex and that habitat complex. It's now 240,000 acres, over 300 square miles."

Some of the territory, Ortega points out, is managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service but most is privately held. "It is a mix of managed wetlands and riparian forest and uplands pasture land with beneficial wildlife, and the private landowners there have remained incredibly dedicated to the cause.

"Collaboration amongst agricultural conservationists, state and federal agencies led to the establishment of over a dozen state and federal wildlife refuges there."

Ortega described a bold vision initiated by Merced area groundwater users "partnering with nonprofits and landowners to develop a plan for land retirement that would create a wildlife corridor from the Sierra foothills linking down to the grassland complex and then ultimately to the Coast Range."

There is ample opportunity to advance the goals of 30x30 according to Ortega, but receiving adequate surface water from the federal government is an ongoing challenge. That means more groundwater pumping is needed to supply the wildlife refuges. He adds that groundwater depletion in the



Snow geese at the Merced Wildlife Refuge on the Pacific Flyway, part of a cooperative effort between farmers and government wildlife agencies. Photo by Peter Maiden

region and the state's groundwater management law could put even more stress on wetlands habitat.

Partnerships with Native American tribes is an integral part of the 30x30 plan. So far, the Newsom administration has given back more than 49,345 acres of land to California tribes. The state has also committed more than \$100 million to provide funding for tribal priorities, technical assistance and support to foster tribal partnership and collaboration in California's conservation and climate goals. It includes the establishment of a tribal committee to help the administration implement the program.

This happened on the ground recently at the Tule River Indian Reservation. Beavers were reintroduced to a land where they used to live.

Julie Vance, regional manager of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, emphasizes why this is important. "What beavers do in addition to chewing trees, they make beaver dams and they make ponded areas and water, and it turns out when you have ponded slower water, that actually helps with groundwater recharge, it makes more wetland habitat, it diversifies habitat within streams."

Vance emphasized the significance of working with the Tule River people. "It was a really important partnership with the tribe because tribes and the state government have a not great historic relationship for important and real reasons. And so, it's neat to be able to partner with them on something that they're interested in because of the history of beaver with them and their stories and lore."

Pictographs created hundreds of years ago by Indian ancestors depicting beavers in their ancient home affirm the magnitude of this effort.

Julie Dick Tex also spoke of Indian traditions. She is Western Mono raised in Dunlap. Trained as an anthropologist and a social worker, she observed that the value of access to traditional lands is a cultural imperative.

"I'm very proud to live in the United States. It's not mine anymore. You guys are the stewards. It's still my land in my heart. I want you to be educated so that you can take care of my land because I'm watching.

"So, when we're looking at the San Joaquin River, the Kings River, or any other small creek that is a tributary, we need basket material. We lost our areas to gather. Our elders can't access the rivers. We need good access. We need places to take our youngsters."

Mountain landscapes are largely public lands: national parks, national forests, national monuments and some state parks. One aspect of the 30x30 strategy is to provide greater protection for those public lands. One proposal that has simmered for years under the radar is the Range of Light National Monument. It would cover what is currently Sierra National Forest. Then U.S. Rep. Jackie Speier introduced a bill in Congress to do that in 2022, but it died in committee.

Now a letter authored by Assembly Member Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) is rounding up support for the idea, "I have spent a significant amount of time this year getting almost half of the legislature to sign onto a letter to open up 1.4 million acres between Yosemite and Sequoia national parks. It's the largest contiguous wilderness that we have in the lower 48 states and would move us a tremendous step forward to getting to 30 by 2030."

The letter is aimed at federal action to create the Range of Light Monument by the Interior Department and by Presidential decision to give that critical piece of the Sierra Nevada a higher level of protection.

The Range of Light Monument has been pursued by Unite the Parks, a nonprofit based in Mariposa. It has been working to gain wider support for the project for more than seven years, pointing out that it is endorsed by 153 businesses and organizations, 200 scientists, 20 members of the House, the Democratic National Committee and the California Democratic Party. Earlier this year, President Biden expanded two existing monuments in the state: San Gabriel in the south and Snow Mountain Berryessa in the north.

There are many opportunities to achieve the 30x30 goals and many challenges. Will there be adequate funding? Will there be enough water for habitat restoration because of climate change or government decisions? How will issues around access be resolved in such a large region? Those quandaries will be dealt with in time. For now, the special places to appreciate nature in our region are all over the map for those who have the curiosity to explore.

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VicBedoian is an independent radio and print journalist working on environmental justice and natural resources issues in the San Joaquin Valley. Contact him at vicbedoian@gmail.com.

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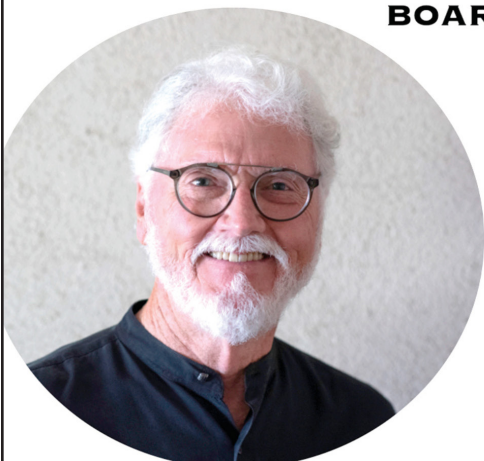
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# Mexico Court Reform

BY LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

Mexico has approved and initiated a process of court reform intended to fight corruption through participatory democracy. In Mexico, all judges will be democratically elected. It is the first country in the world to decide to elect judges at all levels, although there are other countries, including the United States, where some judges are elected rather than appointed.

There was much debate, and there was opposition that, not surprisingly, included many of those in the current judicial system. In the end, though, it wasn't even close: On Sept. 11, the Senate of the Republic approved the reform with 86 yeas and 41 no votes.

The Chamber of Deputies, the lower chamber of the Mexican Legislature, had already approved the measure 359-135. Afterward, Diputado Ricardo Monreal said, "We believe that we will end nepotism, corruption, influence peddling, the conflict of interest, the sale of justice to the highest bidder."

The problems that this reform is trying to resolve are real. The current system does not inspire confidence in the people of Mexico, and judicial experts have pointed out that there are problems with corruption and that Mexico's judicial system suffers from a high level of impunity, which means a low rate of appropriate convictions.

The crimes with the highest level of impunity are serious: intentional homicides, femicides, sexual abuse, disappearances and kidnappings. It is also widely and probably correctly believed that business and tax cases involving the rich and powerful are resolved with a "bag of money."

"It is a very important reform," Mexican President Lopez Obrador said. "It reaffirms that in Mexico there is a true democracy, where the people elect their representatives...not the elites...not the oligarchy. Everyone, every citizen."

Some of the opposition represented the arrogant and bizarre attitude of the United States that there is the right to interfere in or even control the internal affairs of countries in Latin America.

Ken Salazar, U.S. ambassador to Mexico, stepped well outside the bounds of appropriate diplomatic conduct when he said, "The direct election of judges represents a risk for the functioning of Mexico's democracy and the integration of the American, Mexican and Canadian economies."

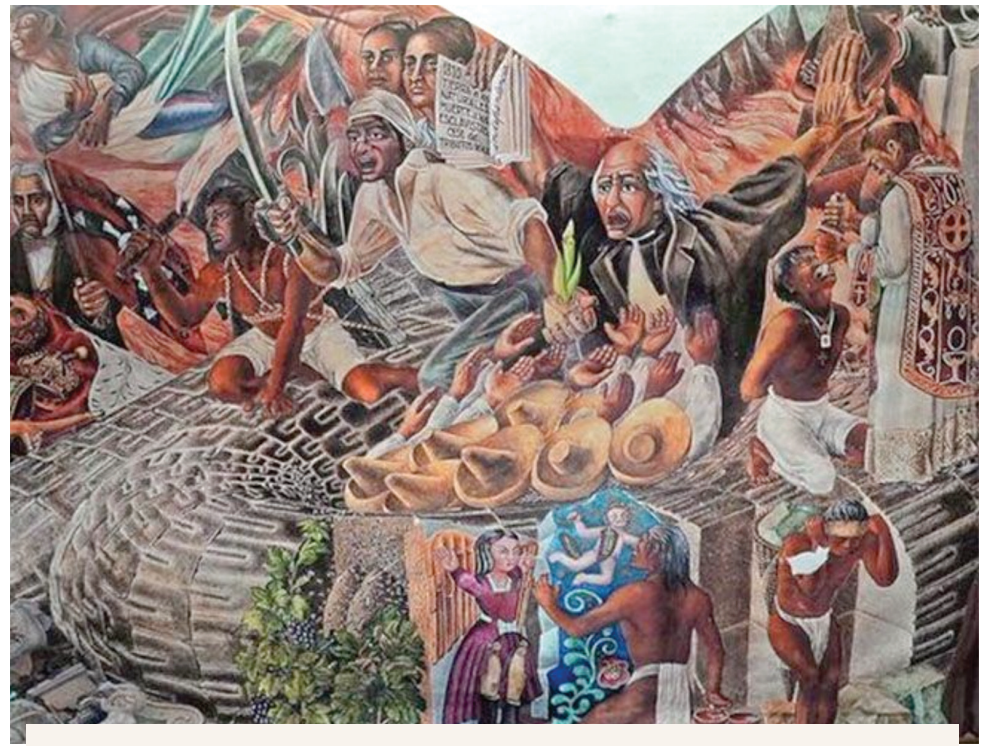
The U.S. court system, as is widely recognized, is highly politicized and openly corrupt even at the highest level of the Supreme Court.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador sent a note of protest to the U.S. Embassy, expressing profound disapproval of this "meddlesome declaration" and stating that the U.S. ambassador's statement was "unfortunate, imprudent," demonstrated a "lack of respect" and was an "unacceptable act of interference" and a violation of Mexican sovereignty.

"We don't accept any representative of foreign governments intervening in matters that are solely up to us to resolve," he said.

How will this work?

The judicial system includes the Supreme Court of Justice, as well as an Electoral Tribunal and a Judicial Discipline Tribunal, all of which will be directly elected by a vote of the people at the national level.



A representation of Mexican independence from Spain. Image courtesy of Aurora Reyes

Regional Plenaries, District Courts and the Collegiate Circuit Courts (Tribunales Colegiados de Circuito) will also be elected by the vote of the people, with elections on a local level.

In addition, there is a five-person Judicial Administration Body that will be appointed: one by the executive branch, one by the Senate and three by the Supreme Court.

There are requirements for eligibility that include a law degree with high grades and at least five years of professional practice of law.

There are time limits within which cases must be resolved, or the reasons for delay explained to the Discipline Tribunal. There are limits on salary.

The first election of judges will take place on June 1, 2025, and the second in 2027.

On Oct. 4, 1824, the United Mexican States (Estados Unidos Mexicanos) was established. (The struggle for independence began formally on Sept. 16, 1810, but after defeating Spain, Mexico still had to reject and defeat an imperial government.) Now, 100 years later, Mexico is maintaining its sovereignty and taking important steps toward the goals of justice and democracy. President-Elect Claudia Sheinbaum will take office on Oct. 1, ready to serve the Mexican people and resist the empire.

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Leni Villagomez Reeves is a local physician and activist. Check out her news and views about Cuba on Facebook ([facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/](https://facebook.com/fresnosolidarity/)).

## Miguel Arias for City Manager?

BY KEVIN HALL

While all eyes are turned to the presidential election, local politicians are focused on their immediate prospects. With three Fresno City Council members due to term out in 2026 and only a couple of options left to climb the political ladder, cracks have already appeared in Fresno's Democratic front.

The first breach is Council Member Luis Chavez's attempt to oust former boss Sal Quintero, a fellow Dem, from the County Board of Supervisors; Council Member Miguel Arias tried, too, but failed to make the runoff. The top two finishers have spent most of their adult lives in or around political office, primarily at City Hall.

Quintero worked there for more than 20 years as an elected official and staffer. Likewise for Chavez, who was Quintero's

chief of staff before the latter became a county supervisor; he then, thanks to Quintero's backing, inherited the District 5 seat.

Chavez, who has already lost one State Senate race, clearly feels it's his destiny to remain an elected official, and he has a bevy of building trade unions and real estate interests that agree. His financial backers are apparently displeased with Quintero's performance. But Chavez will quite likely lose to the incumbent whose roots in southeast Fresno run deep and who's well liked by many in the district.

Chavez's options don't end there. His last opportunity, assuming Rep. Jim Costa's continued good health, is Senate District 14, currently held by Anna Caballero who terms out in 2026. The safe Democratic district includes all of south and central Fresno, runs west to Coalinga and north to Merced. It also includes the residences of Chavez's fellow Council members Nelson Esparza, Arias and Annalisa Perea. The first two term out in 2026.

Esparza has already filed to run for Caballero's seat. It's do-or-die time for his political ambitions. He announced in August, just in time for the Democratic National Convention, and has garnered Rep. Costa's endorsement as well as that of Fresno's MAGA mayor, Jerry Dyer. Arias will have to join the race, too.

Were Perea to run she could not simultaneously seek reelection to the City Council. Rather than risk everything, she'll wait until 2028 and run for Joaquin Arambula's seat in the State Assembly, after she gets reelected to the City Council in 2026. And, yes, Arambula terms out in 2028.

Just to round out the SD14 field, add Assembly Member Esmeralda Soria. Her lack of enthusiasm for campaigning and in-district work has left her vulnerable. Nonetheless, she would enter the Senate race as the strong favorite, given her strong Sacramento lobbyist and state party connections and running in a safe Democratic seat.

Confused yet? Does it matter? Are there any discernible, distinguishing political features that separate any of these pols from

the others? In their minds, yes, but in terms of political values or ethics, they're all cast from the same moldy mold. From following the MAGA Supreme Court's 6-3 decision on criminalizing the homeless to ignoring state laws on everything from housing to health, they're all blue in more ways than one.

I think it plays out like this: Chavez loses to Quintero this year and runs for SD14 against Soria, Esparza and Arias in 2026. Arias loses in the primary. Soria wins the runoff against Chavez or Esparza, Twiddledum and Tweedledee. Arias leaves office in 2027, goes to work for Arambula and begins his campaign to succeed Arambula in the statehouse.

Which takes us to 2028 and the long-anticipated end to Dyer's political career, provided we haven't slipped into a Trump dictatorship by then. Maxwell, in the role of Democrats' Great White Hope, runs for mayor, but so do Arambula and Karbassi. All concerned term out of their current offices that year. Arias runs against Perea for AD31 having thoroughly combed the district ground for two years as a staffer to Arambula. Sacramento backers will determine that race. I predict Tweedledee wins.

As for the mayor's race, it should turn out to be a runoff between Arambula and whatever right-wing crazy north Fresno sends us, the list of which includes Karbassi. Arambula, the most decent human being among the lot of them, wins. Arias, having lost the Assembly race to Perea, goes to work at City Hall as Arambula's city manager, a role he thoroughly prepped for as a staffer—and as the "fixer" (see [mark-arax.com](https://mark-arax.com/))—to Michael Hanson at Fresno Unified School District.

Finally, there are the three open City Council seats in 2026 to consider. Democrats will draw their candidates from current officeholders at the Fresno Unified School District Board, the State Center Community College District Board and the Fresno County Board of Education.

### CLIMATE POLITICS



Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias. Photo courtesy of the City of Fresno

That melee will be preceded by plenty of elbowing and posturing, but on the ideological front, conformity is the password for successful candidates. None of these down-ballot officeholders has offered an original idea or plan of any type. Successfully plugging into the local political system has been their sole ambition. The faces and names might change, but the politics remain the same.

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Kevin Hall hosts Climate Politics on KCFR 88.1 FM every second and fourth Friday, 5 p.m.-6 p.m. He tweets as @airfresno and @sjvalleyclimate, coordinates an informal network of climate activists at [valleyclimate.org](https://valleyclimate.org) and can be contacted at [sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com](mailto:sjvalleyclimate@gmail.com) for presentations and information.

## Democrat vs. Democrat

### Terms Out in 2026

Anna Caballero  
Miguel Arias  
Luis Chavez  
Nelson Esparza

### Terms Out in 2028

Joaquin Arambula  
Jerry Dyer  
Michael Karbassi  
Tyler Maxwell

### Terms Out in 2030

Annalisa Perea

### Terms Out in 2034

Esmeralda Soria



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# Trump's Platform of Fear a Contagion of Violence

BY RAUL PICKETT

Fear is one's anticipation of danger to oneself or the group you identify such as racial, economic, ethnic or religious. Political fear is among the oldest and has extended since the dawn of civilization. In America, it is an innate part of societal experience, where historically we've maintained a distinction between those who are born to be in power and those who are born to be subjugated.

Aristotle wrote in *Rhetoric*, "Fear is caused by whatever we feel has great power of destroying us or of harming us in ways that tend to cause great pain."

Exploiting human fear has been the hallmark of Donald Trump's Presidential campaign. Announcing his 2016 candidacy for President, he raised the alarm that immigrants were invading and threatening our country. Mexico, he stated, was sending criminals and rapists to attack Americans. At an initial campaign rally, he directed his followers to assault an African American protester, assuring them that he would pay for their attorney costs.

Tapping into the deep-rooted fear of foreigners by Americans, Trump has solidified his position with white voters and has even gained increasing support from Latinos and African Americans. His constant fearmongering has triggered a widespread reaction, spreading like a contagion.

The fearmongering continues, posturing white society against people of color, religious minorities and women. During his first year as president, he generated widespread contempt against Muslims, resulting in them becoming the victims of continuous violence and mass killings.

He also directed his hate language against the Chinese, accusing China of starting the pandemic, triggering assaults against the Asian community across the nation.

Throughout his campaign, he's advanced an underlying theme identifying African Americans and Latinos as a threat to the American way of life. He's accused them of attempting to replace white society and of eventually poisoning their blood.

When asked how he would stop the flow of immigrants at the border, he suggested that they should be shot in the leg and has consistently promoted using the National Guard or the nation's military to control the border. Similarly, he's advocated using them to suppress protests but refused to use them to put down an insurrection against our nation.

Despite the violence he's triggered, his campaign rhetoric has worsened, even considering the bombing of suspected cartel sites in Mexico.

The increasing use of visceral divisive rhetoric has triggered a continual escalation of mass murders. During Trump's presidency, the number of mass killings rose significantly.

Robert Reich, economist and former secretary of labor, reports that Trump's presidency has the notoriety of having the single largest increase of murders in one year and that mass killings totaled 1,700. At the same time, the sale of weapons of war broke all records. In his first year, a young man entered a church in South Carolina killing nine people with the purpose of starting a race war.

Mass killing continued unfettered with the killing of children in schools, attacks on religious institutions and ethnic groups and the killing of 57 people at a concert in Las Vegas.

During the trials of numerous mass killers, they raised the defense that they were being patriotic and that Trump had heightened their fear that our country was under attack especially by immigrants and people of color.

Killings of immigrants intensified with the massacre of 27 immigrants at a Walmart in El Paso; the killing of many in south Texas; numerous children in New York, Florida and Texas; and still other incidents in California. In 2024, there were more than 224 such killings. Each of these incidents is preceded by hateful fearmongering by Trump.

Despite the persistent use of violent and hate language, no one has held Trump accountable. The Republican Party has now been called a cult due to the widespread adoption of his visceral hate rhetoric and its consistent Pavlovian response. Edmond Burke wrote, "Fear so effectively robs the mind of all its powers of acting and reasoning as fear."

The Jan. 6 sedition on the Capitol and attack on the legitimate transfer of power resulted in attacks on police officers and the destruction of property. Seven individuals died both directly and indirectly due to the trauma precipitated by the violence. Although some have tried to hold Trump accountable, he has successfully evaded prosecution.

During the current campaign, Trump raised the fear level by repeatedly stating that they are not coming for me, but for you.

This is the age-old jargon of dictators to move the masses and the arena of political conspiracy theories. This has created a contagion of violence and continues to intensify the polarization of society.

Our nation has been so polarized that Trump now states we are in a life-and-death struggle for our nation. During his first year as president, a young follower killed nine African Americans and, most recently, Trump faced an attempted assassination by a young fellow Republican. Both responded to fear baiting, both were driven by a deep-rooted passion to protect their nation.

Even more significant, how was a young Republican youth driven to the point of wanting to assassinate the leader of his party. Perhaps, it's a rational inner voice that drove a young follower to act in what he perceived to be patriotic. Trump has created a state of conduciveness that allows fear to lash out as violence.

At one point, it triggered the violation of the Democratic House Speaker's home and the vicious attack of her husband with a hammer. Again, the perpetrator's defense is that he felt our nation was threatened.

Trump repeatedly feeds that fear, and it continues to be allowed to fester and lash out at will. Again, a 14-year-old boy killed four people at his school and wounded many others. He's being charged as an adult, yet Trump, who has triggered such repeated responses, is allowed to go free, unconstrained.

Perhaps if he was a person of color, it would have been different and he would be charged with a conspiracy. Uncertain? It's reflected in our history. Aristotle stated, "The coward then is a despairing sort of person for he fears everything. The brave man, on the other hand, has the opposite deposition for confidence is the mark of a hopeful disposition."

Republicans have repeatedly stated that our country is on the brink of civil war. Even Trump has stated that if he loses there will be a bloody mess.

A recent director of the Heritage Foundation publicly stated that "we are in the midst of a revolution that can be 'bloodless' if the Democrats accept it."

More disturbing, although our nation's children are killed in schools by mass killers, we diminish its implications for our nation and legitimize the possession of weapons of war by private citizens even though mentally ill or have a history of domestic violence.

Even more unsettling, the leading proponents of such violence are elected officials. Historically, political fear has often been resolved through violence. The current political atmosphere in America has generated a state of conduciveness, where it continues to occur and could again generate civil strife.

The hatred and fear generated by Trump's MAGA movement have resulted in our society becoming immune to widespread carnage as if inanimate or a form of "fake news."

Even when perpetrators are placed on trial, they argue that they were acting "patriotic" and were following Trump's lead. They're convinced that they acted on behalf of the nation as true patriots. Fear has triggered violence, and society has been possessed by what President Lincoln called "our worst angels."

\*\*\*\*\*

*Raul Pickett was born and raised in Fresno. He graduated from Fresno State and retired from the State of California as a staff service manager. He was also the CEO of El Futuro Credit Union.*

## Falling Out with Historical Allies

Continued from page 12

"James has dedicated himself to serving some of Fresno County's most vulnerable schools and student populations."

"With two-thirds of Fresno Unified students underperforming in every category, it is crucial that we return to the basics of educating our students in reading, writing and math, ensuring they are at grade level by first grade. As [a] trustee, I will work closely with the administration to implement and support Universal Transitional Kindergarten programs for children ages 3-4, along with targeted interventions that directly address student needs."

"I pledge to actively listen to our teachers, ensuring they have the necessary tools and resources to engage students effectively, and that they have a seat at the decision-making table."

"As a [Board of Education] trustee, I have been dedicated to ensuring fiscal responsibility across all of Fresno County's schools."

### FUSD Trustee Area 6

The incumbent for Trustee Area 6, the Hoover High area, is Claudia Cazares. However, the FTA is endorsing retired FUSD teacher Daniel Bordona in this race.

The FTA is providing financing for Bordona's run. In addition, Bordona has financial support from the Fresno-

Madera-Tulare-Kings Central Labor Council (CLC). SEIU 521, which represents the classified employees and substitute teachers at FUSD, also supports Bordona.

While Cazares might not have the personal dynamism of Bordona, she has been a thoughtful, if cautious, trustee who seems to understand the role of a trustee. She has advocated for several improvements during her tenure on the board.

This is Bordona's first run for public office. His responses to a questionnaire and in-person questions from the Central Valley Progressive PAC were a bit surprising. He showed a poor understanding of and empathy for the need to protect students who might not have families that accept gender diversity.

His response regarding notifying parents about students' request for use of gender pronouns while in school showed a lack of understanding of the state law. In addition, his response regarding selection of age-appropriate books for school libraries showed a lack of trust in the district's librarians to make proper decisions for their schools.

### Voting for the Imperfect Candidate

Few of the FTA's concerns have been made public. The main issue is that FTA does not feel the trustees stood up for teachers' values in a strong enough fashion to prevent a strike. There were also issues of respect between the negotiators. The FTA felt that the trustees identified more with management than with the teachers or the staff represented by SEIU 521. SEIU 521 was asked to stand with the FTA if the strike went forward.

Other unions have not taken the same approach as the FTA. The CLC is supporting Elizabeth Jonasson Rosas in Trustee Area 2, has taken a "Neutral/No Position" in the Levine-Martinez race and is financially supporting Borona's challenge to Cazares.

In voting for FUSD trustees, or any other office, there will never be a perfect candidate who fits all one's values regarding ethics, integrity and honesty. Nor will there be a candidate who has all the experience, judgment and knowledge one wants. Finally, there are no candidates that voters will agree with on every position they take.

When voting, a holistic approach is needed looking at the whole candidate and not necessarily at one issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

*James Mendez came to Fresno in 1977 for his medical residency training at what was then called the Valley Medical Center. He stayed to practice medicine and raise a family. He is now a retired physician and a community activist. Contact him at jim\_mendez@icloud.com.*

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# Peace & Social Justice Calendar October 2024

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**Share Your Transportation Feedback** (through Oct. 31) The Fresno Council of Governments (COG) wants to hear your transportation suggestions. Tell us what you need—from bike lanes to bus stops, sidewalks to road improvements, and everything in between. Your suggestions will help shape the future of transportation in Fresno County. Take the survey at [publicinput.com/2024RTPsurvey](http://publicinput.com/2024RTPsurvey), e-mail [2026rtp@publicinput.com](mailto:2026rtp@publicinput.com), leave a voicemail at 855-925-2801 (enter code 10291) or text the word Needs to 73224. For more info, visit [planfresno.com](http://planfresno.com).

## WEEKLY

**Raza Against War** Wednesdays, 11 a.m.–1 p.m. 2500 Tulare St. For more info, contact [comworkeradvocate@gmail.com](mailto:comworkeradvocate@gmail.com).

**Stand for Gaza** Saturdays, 6 p.m.–8 p.m. N. Blackstone and E. Nees avenues. Stand for humanity and human rights. Hosted by the Palestine Liberation Group. Limited signs available. Bring a friend. For more info, contact [camille.russell@peacefresno.org](mailto:camille.russell@peacefresno.org).

**Stand Up, Speak Up, Spread the Truth** Sundays, 3 p.m.–5 p.m. Mooney and Walnut avenues, Visalia. Free Palestine. Let Gaza Live! Cease Fire Now. For more info, contact [fida.taha@gmail.com](mailto:fida.taha@gmail.com).

TUE  
01

**Banned and Challenged Books** (through Oct. 18) Fall library hours. 3F, Pete P. Peters Balcony Gallery, Fresno State Library. This exhibition explores the issue of censorship and the freedom to read throughout the United States. The exhibition serves as a reminder of the unifying power of stories and the divisiveness of censorship. For more info, contact 559-278-2174.

**National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC)** 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Speakers: Robin Chiero and Sue Goldman of the League of Women Voters. Topic: Fresno's Nonpartisan Presentation on the Nov. 5 Local Ballot Measures and State Propositions. For more info, contact 559-222-6212 or [joanne@pbyoga.com](mailto:joanne@pbyoga.com).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

WED  
02

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**Clovis Unified School District Candidate Forum** 6 p.m. Unitarian Universalist Church, 2672 E. Alluvial Ave. Candidates for Trustee Areas 2 and 4. Hear directly from the candidates and learn about their platforms. Sponsored by ACLU of Northern California and Faith in the Valley.

**Board of Supervisors Candidate Forum** 6 p.m. 700 N. Van Ness Ave. Candidates for Districts 2 and 3. Sponsored by the *Fresno Bee*.

THU  
03

**Screening: *Where Olive Trees Weep*** 3 p.m. Forum Hall 101, Fresno City College. The film offers a searing window into the struggles and resilience of the Palestinian people under Israeli occupation. It explores themes of loss, trauma and the quest for justice. Sponsored by MEChA and the Social Justice Center.

**Empowerment Institute: Multiracial Organizing** 5 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Arte Américas, 1630 Van Ness Ave. A book talk on multiracial organizing with Dr. Oliver A. Rosales. Explore the multiracial coalitions that fought for civil rights in Bakersfield, a city known for its political conservatism. For more info, contact 559-540-4139 or [empower@myunionworks.com](mailto:empower@myunionworks.com).

FRI  
04

**Gaza Installation** 5 p.m. Broadway Studios, 1416 Broadway St., Studio 22. "1 Year of Genocide." For more info, contact 559-264-7622.

**CineCulture: Armenian Short Films** 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: TBD.

- *Hishé* is a meditation on alienation, confusion, grief and the burden of remembering.
- In *250km*, when a war suddenly breaks out in Artsakh, a 14-year-old boy embarks on a treacherous 250-kilometer journey to safety.
- In *Anahide*, a girl and her father speak about their culture, roots and mother.
- *Levon—A Wondrous Life* showcases a 60-year-old rollerblader living exuberantly in the post-Soviet landscape of Yerevan, Armenia.
- In *Taniel*, set in Constantinople on April 24, 1915, the arrival of police at poet Taniel Varoujan's door shatters his home, destroys his work and his family would never see him again.
- In *From the Border*, an old man is the only one who did not leave the village, so he repairs the door of an abandoned house every day.

Sponsors: Armenian Studies Program, Armenian General Benevolent Union, Greater Fresno Chapter and AGBU Arts' Armenians in Film Series. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

SAT  
05

**Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley** 9 a.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: Dr. Tom Holyoke, Fresno State political science professor. Topic: Election 2024. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**Economic Empowerment Summit** 10 a.m.–4 p.m. Old Administration Building, Fresno City College. Hosted by the Beyond Housing Foundation. Empowering residents. Investing in futures. For more info, visit [beyondhousingfresno.org](http://beyondhousingfresno.org).

MON  
07

**Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)** 5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](mailto:swgamble@aol.com).

**Democratic Women in Action** 5:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. Program: School Board Candidates. For more info, contact 559-681-3140 or [ggaston1234@aol.com](mailto:ggaston1234@aol.com).

TUE  
08

**West Fresno Community Centers Open House Series** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Sunset Community Center, 1345 W. Eden Ave. Your Community. Your Vision. The City of Fresno wants your input on what your dream community center would look like. For more info, visit [imaginewfcc.org](http://imaginewfcc.org).

**Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC)** 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-287-1308 or [bapacfresno@gmail.com](mailto:bapacfresno@gmail.com).

**Stonewall Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave. For more info, contact 559-285-1641 or [info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org](mailto:info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

WED  
09

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**West Fresno Community Centers Open House Series** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Mary Ella Brown Center, 1350 E. Annadale Ave. Your Community. Your Vision. The City of Fresno wants your input on what your dream community center would look like. For more info, visit [imaginewfcc.org](http://imaginewfcc.org).

**Getting Started with CMAC** 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. 1555 Van Ness Ave., Suite 201. Learn how the Community Media Access Collaborative (CMAC) can help you tell the stories that are important to you and your community. Free and open to all. For more info, visit [cmac.tv/workshops](http://cmac.tv/workshops).

**Trans-E-Motion Board Meeting** 7:30 p.m.–8:30 p.m. Fresno EOC LGBTQ+ Resource Center, 1252 Fulton St. For more info, contact [transemotion@gmail.com](mailto:transemotion@gmail.com) or visit [transemotion.com](http://transemotion.com).

THU  
10

**World Homeless Day** This international day serves as a platform to advocate for improved policies and funding that can help prevent and end homelessness. World Homeless Day also aims to raise awareness about the needs of people who currently experience homelessness and promote work in local communities to alleviate suffering and prevent death.

**Every Neighborhood Partnership Fall in Love with Fresno 2024 Banquet** 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Holland Park West, 3855 N. Bryan Ave. Silent auction, mocktail bar, buffet dinner, partner awards, stories of impact, sneak peak of ENP's new building. \$75/person. For more info, contact 559-400-7310 or visit [everyneighborhood.org](http://everyneighborhood.org).

**Queer Choice! Voter Event** 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Splash Video Dance Bar, 644 E. Olive Ave. Meet some local candidates and make the right choice, the Queer Choice. For more info, visit [lgbtqfresno.com](http://lgbtqfresno.com).

**Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF)** 7 p.m. 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. Online/in person. For more info, contact 559-360-8054 or [taca\\_03@yahoo.com](mailto:taca_03@yahoo.com).

FRI  
11

**CineCulture: *Dounia and the Princess of Aleppo (Dounia et la princesse d'Alep)*** 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: TBD. The film centers on Dounia, a six-year-old Syrian girl who lives joyfully with her family in Aleppo until a gradually intensifying conflict brings a growing troop of soldiers to town. Sponsors: French Program and Department of Modern & Classical Languages & Literatures. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

SAT  
12

**Fields of Fresno Ag Tour** 8:15 a.m.–1:15 p.m. Check-in at Kearney Mansion Museum, 7160 W. Kearney Blvd. Flowers and Bees: Visit the Flower Market followed by a trip to the Lavender Fresh Farm where bees are producing real lavender honey. For more info, contact 559-777-4091 or [chill@valleyhistory.org](mailto:chill@valleyhistory.org) for details.

**Central Valley Progressive PAC** 3:30 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-978-4504 or [simone.rhodes@seiu521.org](mailto:simone.rhodes@seiu521.org).

MON  
14

**California Latina Democrats—Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Yosemite Falls Café, 4020 N. Cedar Ave. For more info, contact [chaircalatinadems@gmail.com](mailto:chaircalatinadems@gmail.com).

TUE  
15

**Fresno Community Meeting: Disparity Study** 10 a.m.–noon. The California Department of General Services is conducting a statewide procurement

and contracting disparity study for minority, women, LGBTQ+ and certified small and disabled veteran-owned business enterprises that are ready, willing and able to perform work for the state of California. Register at [cadgdisparitystudy.org](http://cadgdisparitystudy.org) (location then provided). For more info, contact [cadgdisparitystudy@mtaltd.com](mailto:cadgdisparitystudy@mtaltd.com).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

WED  
16

**San Joaquin Valley Town Hall** 10:30 a.m. William Saroyan Theatre, 730 M St. Speaker: Scott Pelley, *60 Minutes* correspondent. Topic: Truth Worth Telling. Pelley is a renowned investigative reporter, news anchor and bestselling author. For more info, contact 559-444-2180 or [valleytownhall@gmail.com](mailto:valleytownhall@gmail.com).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Speaking Truth to Empire*** 3 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club** 6:30 p.m. Denny's Restaurant, 1110 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-312-3925.

THU  
17

**Air Quality and Health Conference** 9 a.m.–7:30 p.m. UC Merced Conference Center, 5200 N. Lake Rd., Merced. Sharing current research, discussing new research directions, and discussing the policies, actions and education needed to improve air quality and public health. Keynote speakers: Martha Guzman Aceves, Region 9 administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and Nayamin Martinez, director of the Central California Environmental Justice Network. Sponsored by the Health Sciences Research Institute and the Department of Public Health at the University of California Merced. For more info, contact [airquality@ucmerced.edu](mailto:airquality@ucmerced.edu).

**Clovis Democratic Club** 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For details, contact 559-322-9740 or [jenikren@gmail.com](mailto:jenikren@gmail.com).

FRI  
18

**Air Quality and Health Conference** 9 a.m.–2 p.m. UC Merced Conference Center, 5200 N. Lake Rd., Merced. Keynote speaker: Liane M. Randolph, CARB Board Chair. For more info, contact [airquality@ucmerced.edu](mailto:airquality@ucmerced.edu).

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *It's a Queer Thang*** 5 p.m.–6 p.m. Covers local and national LGBTQ+ issues and events. Hosted by Chris Jarvis and Kaylia Metcalfe Armstrong. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**CineCulture: *The Elephants and the Grass*** 5:15 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussants: Beau Rosario & Brandon Gulish (co-directors). The film chronicles the perilous journey of 12-year-old Shamira Muhammed and her mother as they escape the civil war in South Sudan. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

SAT  
19

**Annual Eleanor Roosevelt Birthday Celebration Luncheon** 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m. Manhattan Steakhouse & Bar, 1731 W. Bullard Ave. Hosted by the Fresno County Democratic Women's Club. Theme: We Vote—Women Saving Our Democracy. Honorees: Myra Coble, Patty Cappelluti and Venise Curry, M.D. Emcee: Fresno Unified School District Trustee Keshia Thomas. \$75/person. Advance reservations required. For more info, contact 559-289-3989 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

MON  
21

**Enough Gun Violence/Brady Greater Fresno Open Community Meeting** 6:30 p.m. St. James Episcopal Cathedral, 4147 E. Dakota Ave. Help build public awareness regarding gun violence. For more info, visit [facebook.com/fresnobrady](http://facebook.com/fresnobrady).

TUE  
22

**California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)** 10 a.m. SEIU Local 521, 4228 E. Pine Ave. For more info, contact 559-360-5955 or 559-704-8384.

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Nuestro Foro*** (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

WED  
23

**KFCF 88.1 FM: *Stir It Up!*** 3 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**Untold Stories of LGBTQ+ History Showcase** 5 p.m.–6:30 p.m. Fresno High School Warrior Park, 1839 N. Echo Ave. Evening of middle and high school student displays and presentations in honor of LGBTQ+ History Month. For more info, contact 559-457-2780.

**Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter** 7 p.m. Woodward Park Library, 944 E. Perrin Ave. Speaker: Mycologist Christopher Bivins. Topic: Truffle Fungi of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. For more info, visit [sierraclub.org/tehipite](http://sierraclub.org/tehipite).

THU  
24

**9th Annual Latino Conference** 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Visalia Convention Center. Theme: Cultural Strength Heals. Exploring the topics of mental health, substance-use disorder treatment, youth violence and wellness within the Latino community. Keynote speakers: Laura Vargas, University of Colorado Department of Psychiatry, "Mental Health and Trauma Exposure among Newly Arrived Latinx

# Peace & Social Justice Calendar

Continued from page 22

Immigrants," and Refugio "Cuco" Rodriguez, Hope and Heal Fund, "Gun Violence in Our Communities and Beyond—Why it Matters." 25 workshop presenters. For more info, contact the Latino Commission at 559-528-2846.

**Respite by the River** 6 p.m.–8 p.m. River Center, 1605 Old Friant Rd. Hosted by the San Joaquin River Parkway & Conservation Trust. Featuring a reading by Steve Yarbrough and music by Kathy Barwick. For more info, contact 559-248-8480 or visit [riverparkway.org/](http://riverparkway.org/).

**FRI 25** **Peace Fresno** 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave. In person/via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-668-0591.

**9th Annual Latino Conference** 8 a.m.–3:30 p.m. Visalia Convention Center. Theme: Cultural Strength Heals. See Oct. 24 listing. For more info, contact the Latino Commission at 559-528-2846.

**El Concilio de Fresno Noon.** Chicano Youth Center, 1515 E. Divisadero St. For more info, contact 559-360-9797 or [eddiev.elconciliodefresno@gmail.com](mailto:eddiev.elconciliodefresno@gmail.com).

**CineCulture: Floyd Abrams: Speaking Freely** 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Professor Douglas Fraleigh. A biopic of the First Amendment told through Abrams' important cases, this film reveals how this legal giant helped transform the First Amendment from an often ignored principle into a bulwark of American democracy. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](http://cineculture.csufresno.edu/).

**MON 28** **Fresno County Democratic Women's Club** 11 a.m. Marie Callender's Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](mailto:claval@comcast.net).

**TUE 29** **KFCF 88.1 FM: Nuestro Foro** (Spanish) 7 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kfcf.org](http://kfcf.org).

**WED 30** **West Fresno Community Centers Open House Series** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Frank H. Ball Center, 760 Mayor Ave. Your Community. Your Vision. The City of Fresno wants your input on what your dream community center would look like. For more info, visit [imaginewfcc.org](http://imaginewfcc.org).

**An Evening with Maria Hinojosa** 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Tower Theatre, 815 E. Olive Ave. Hinojosa is a renowned journalist and executive producer of NPR's *Latino USA*. With a career spanning three decades, she is a trailblazer in media, amplifying diverse voices and telling stories that matter. Sponsored by the Central Valley Community Foundation and Fresno DRIVE. Register by Oct. 25. For more info, contact [info@centralvalleycf.org](mailto:info@centralvalleycf.org).

**THU 31** **West Fresno Community Centers Open House Series** 3 p.m.–9 p.m. Maxie L. Parks Community Center, 1802 E. California Ave. Your Community. Your Vision. The City of Fresno wants your input on what your dream community center would look like. For more info, visit [imaginewfcc.org](http://imaginewfcc.org).

Submit upcoming community activities to [calendar\[at\]fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar[at]fresnoalliance.com) by the 15th of the month preceding publication.

# Trump Trumps Himself

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

When Donald Trump's Supreme Court erased decades of precedent by overturning *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, evangelicals and conservative Catholics (the "Religious Right") cheered. However, their long fight against abortion was not over.

Republicans immediately leapt to work in "red" states to enact draconian anti-abortion bills. Thanks to these new laws, pregnant women and girls seeking abortions face state surveillance and criminalization.

Those who help women and girls cross state lines to obtain abortions and those who provide abortions can now expect severe punishments, including prison time and even death. (How ironic that the "pro-life" movement has brought the death penalty for doctors who break their new laws.)

Trump proudly boasted when *Roe* fell. He thought installing those radical justices and ending *Roe* was a political winner.

Surprise!

For the past several months, Trump has been trumping himself, backpedaling on his signature accomplishment. Turns out that these new Republican laws are extremely unpopular.

Trump has not just waffled on abortion. He has come out in favor of in vitro fertilization (IVF), a procedure that anti-abortionists believe is tantamount to "murder."

For anti-abortionists, abortion is an evil that trumps every other moral consideration. Trump is an anti-abortion hero. No Trump lie or action is bad enough to diminish him in the eyes of ardent anti-abortionists.

Here's a short list of Trump's words and deeds that the Religious Right has chosen to ignore, to excuse, or to explain away.

- Taking an oath to defend the Constitution and instead attacking it
- Vowing to repeal the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare")
- Profiting from hawking "God Bless the USA" Bibles
- Ghoulishly ripping asylum-seeking families apart at the border
- Comparing himself to Jesus
- Undermining free and fair elections, rule of law and peaceful transfer of power
- Denying he knew anything about Project 2025, the plan to make the United States into a fascist dictatorship—then admitting he'd implement it
- Scapegoating immigrants, minorities and the poor for the problems in the United States
- Promising to round up the homeless and relocate them to concentration camps
- Promising to conduct immediate mass deportations of more than 20 million people

The list could go on and on.

But wait. If nothing Trump does disqualifies him in the view of the Religious Right, what about Trump's flip-flops on abortion and IVF?

Albert Mohler, president of the evangelical Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., is warning Trump that softening on abortion could cause him to lose the upcoming election.

A question for Mohler and other Religious Right Christians: What does Trump's flip-flopping on abortion feel like? Betrayal?

Well, what did you expect? Did you actually think Trump was going to act with anything other than crass self-interest?

Even if Trump tries to keep his options open by refusing to commit to veto a nationwide abortion ban—you've been conned.

Don't feel too badly, though. It's not just you. It's also Cabinet members, military leaders and other insiders who served Trump's administration and who saw—in person and up close—Trump's vile character and unfitness for office.

And it's not just Trump's inner circle. Trump is even losing the confidence of Christian neo-Nazis such as Nick Fuentes. Fuentes pointed to Trump's admission to podcaster Lex Fridman that he lost the 2020 election "by a whisker." Fuentes nailed Trump for pushing for four years the lie that the 2020 election was "rigged" and "stolen."

Fuentes elaborated: Trump lost, and he knew he lost all along. That means Trump abused the trust of his loyal followers. It means Trump is responsible for the failed Jan. 6 coup attempt. It means that people who believed Trump's lie, who attacked the Capitol, who were arrested, convicted and who suffered for their actions—sacrificed themselves for a liar.

The Religious Right can no longer count on Trump regarding abortion, IVF and even his Big Lie. Will Mohler and other Religious Right Christians still stick with Trump? Will they now say of Trump, as they said of Biden, that Trump has "sold his soul to the culture of death"? We all caught a glimpse of Trump's craziness during the debate—will the Religious Right cut loose from the old, decrepit Trump who's getting crazier by the day?

We can hope. But let's face it: The Religious Right was never really about "respect for the sanctity of life." It was about power, "our tribe" (the good guys) versus "the others" (the bad guys). It was a cynical political ploy to

## OPINION & ANALYSIS

get Christians to fear or hate everyone ("murderers!") who didn't follow their playbook. It was a convenient and effective wedge issue that could be weaponized come election time.

We are talking about cultural control. Mohler and the Religious Right have a Christian nationalist agenda for America. Whites in charge, males dominating, "Judeo-Christian values," "God's law" trumping human-made civil law. They are deeply suspicious of genuine diversity, inclusion, pluralism and democracy. Upholding white supremacy and the patriarchy are moral imperatives. That means keeping women and minorities in their place.

LGBTQ+ people, and LGBTQ+ equal rights, are an existential threat to the Religious Right's vision of a "Christian America." If Trump gets elected, expect discriminatory laws and hate crimes against LGBTQ+ people to increase. This is already happening, with Republicans across the country sponsoring 500 anti-gay bills in the past year.

Another existential threat to the Religious Right is demographics. When "America was great," white Protestant Christians dominated the culture. They were both pre-eminent and privileged. However, from 2006 to 2020, white evangelical Protestants declined from 23% to 14% of the U.S. population. Plus, white evangelical Protestants are aging out and the electorate is getting younger. If you're Religious Right, becoming aware of these shifting sands of social position is disorienting and discomfiting.

Enter Kamala Harris. From a Religious Right perspective, she has significant defects. She is not white. She is not male. She is not soft and accommodating to "fine people" racists. She doesn't pal around with dictators. She is not anti-LGBTQ+. She is not anti-abortion. She is not threatening a "bloodbath" if she loses. She's not nearly hardline enough against Palestinians, immigrants and Muslims.

But from the perspective of equality for all, justice for all, decency for all and the common good, her character and platform outshine Trump's by many miles.

Whoever you are, wherever you come from, it's not easy to rise above your cultural conditioning. The programming goes deep. However, for Christians who are trying to follow Jesus, it really isn't such a big stretch to vote for Harris, or at least decide not to vote for Trump. Jesus trumps Trump.

\*\*\*\*\*

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- igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+;
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## México: Profunda

## Reforma Judicial

POR LENI VILLAGOMEZ REEVES

México aprobó e inició un proceso de reforma judicial que busca combatir la corrupción a través de la democracia participativa. En México, todos los jueces serán elegidos democráticamente. Será el primer país del mundo en que se decide elegir a todos los jueces de esta manera, aunque hay otros países, incluyendo los Estados Unidos, donde algunos jueces son elegidos y otros nombrados.

Hubo mucho debate, y también oposición, que incluye a muchos de los que actualmente son parte del sistema judicial actual, asunto que no sorprende a nadie. Al fin y al cabo, la decisión no era nada reñida: el 11 de septiembre el Senado de la República aprobó la reforma con 86 votos a favor y 41 en contra. La Cámara de Diputados, que es la “cámara baja” de la legislación mexicana, ya había aprobado la medida por 359 a favor y 135 en contra.

Después dijo el Diputado Ricardo Montreal, “La Reforma Judicial era indispensable, era necesaria. El déficit de justicia, lo perdido de la Corte en algunos de sus sectores, el tráfico de influencia, la invasión de poderes, la arrogancia con la que se actuó ya no era tolerable para el pueblo de México”.

Los problemas que esta reforma intenta resolver son reales. El sistema actual no inspira confianza en el pueblo mexicano, y los expertos judiciales han citado que existen problemas de corrupción y que el sistema judicial mexicano sufre de un alto nivel de impunidad, que significa que hay bajo nivel de condenas en casos donde hay culpabilidad.

Los crímenes con el nivel más alto de impunidad son serios: homicidio intencional, feminicidio, abuso sexual, desapariciones, y secuestros. También hay fuertes sospechas de que asuntos de negocios e impuestos que involucran a los ricos y poderosos se resuelven con “una bolsa de dinero”.

El Presidente de México, Andres Manuel López Obrador dijo hace una semana: “... es una reforma importantísima. Es reafirmar que en México hay una auténtica democracia. Que el pueblo elige a sus representantes. Esa es una democracia. No las élites. No la llamada clase política. No la oligarquía. Todos, cada ciudadano”.

El Embajador de EEUU en México, Ken Salazar, se metió en el debate criticando la reforma del poder judicial, actitud que se consideró arrogante y grotesca, además de significar una interferencia en asuntos internos. El sistema de las cortes judiciales de los Estados Unidos es ampliamente conocido por ser muy politizado y abiertamente corrupto, aún a su nivel más alto, la Suprema Corte.

Embajada de los Estados Unidos, expresando “su profunda sorpresa por dicha declaración sobre cuestiones internas”.

## Registrando

## Votantes

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El pasado 17 de septiembre se celebró el Día Nacional del Registro de Votantes. Por este motivo, Poder Latinx realizó tareas de registro de votantes y junto a miembros de la Federación Americana de Maestros (AFT, por sus siglas en inglés) convocaron a una conferencia de prensa frente al Ayuntamiento de Fresno para destacar la importancia de la celebración.

“Desde el mes de abril hemos registrado más de 3,000 nuevos votantes”, dijo Olga Loza, de Poder Latinx. “El 17 de septiembre hicimos presentaciones simultáneas en el Colegio de la Ciudad de Fresno y en la Preparatoria Edison sobre la importancia de la participación cívica”. Ese mismo día, registraron 487 nuevos votantes.

Tanto Poder Latinx como AFT buscan motivar a que más ciudadanos se registren. Y en particular, ciudadanos latinos ya que es una comunidad con bajo nivel de votantes registrados. “Es cierto, en California hay un 40% de residentes latinos, pero de estos, solo el 30% está registrado para votar”, asegura Loza. Y explica las posibles razones de este bajo nivel de registro, “en las familias no hablamos de la importancia de votar, que cosas podemos cambiar por medio del voto.”

En consecuencia, las nuevas generaciones

latinos, nacidos aquí o naturalizados, no saben

no se interesan por votar. “Muchos jóvenes

persona que se registra y su voto no es válido

hasta que se procese el registro. Sin embargo,

debe verificar los datos proporcionados por la

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denomina “registro condicional” porque el

el 5 de noviembre de 2024. Esto se

votar incluso el mismo día de las elecciones—

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con los jóvenes a las escuelas. Queremos

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que existe ese proceso de registrarse para



Claudia Sheinbaum frente a medios de comunicación en Ciudad de México el pasado 20 de enero de 2024. Sheinbaum será la primera mujer en ser elegida presidenta de México. Foto cortesía de The Commons

El sistema judicial incluye la Suprema Corte de Justicia de la Nación, el Tribunal Electoral, y el Tribunal de Disciplina Judicial, deberán ser electos de manera directa a través de votación popular, con la elección a nivel nacional.

Los Plenos Regionales, los Tribunales Colegiados de Circuito y los Juzgados de Distrito también serán electos de manera directa a través de votación popular y la elección será a nivel local.

Además hay un Órgano de Administración Judicial que se compondrá por cinco personas, de las cuales una será designada por el Poder Ejecutivo, una por el Senado y tres por el pleno de la Suprema Corte. Existen requisitos que se deben cumplir para ser elegibles: incluyen título de licenciado en Derecho, con altas calificaciones, y contar con práctica profesional de cuando menos cinco años en el ejercicio de la actividad jurídica.

Los asuntos en materia tributaria, deberán resolverse en un plazo máximo de seis meses a partir de que el órgano jurisdiccional conozca del juicio.

Los asuntos penales deben resolverse en un plazo de cuatro meses cuando el delito del que se trate tenga una pena máxima de dos años, si la pena máxima del delito fuera mayor, el juicio deberá resolverse en un plazo no mayor de un año.

En ambos casos, de excederse en los plazos correspondientes, el órgano jurisdiccional deberá dar aviso inmediato al Tribunal de Disciplina Judicial, y justificar las razones de dicha demora.

La primera elección se llevará a cabo en dos etapas; la primera etapa en 2025 y la segunda en 2027.

El día 4 de octubre de 1824 se establecieron los Estados Unidos Mexicanos. La lucha por la independencia de España comenzó formalmente el 16 septiembre de 1810 con El Grito de Dolores, pero México se tuvo que rechazar y derrotar un gobierno imperial. Ahora, después de 100 años, México mantiene su soberanía y se están dando pasos importantes para alcanzar mejor las metas de justicia y democracia.

La presidenta-electa Claudia Sheinbaum asumirá sus funciones el día 1ro de octubre, y se encuentra lista a servir al pueblo mexicano y resistir las agresiones del imperio.

## Latinos

## Votantes

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Octubre 2024

## Central Valley Leadership Round Table



Para todos los funcionarios electos locales, estatales y federales en California y más

allá.

ASUNTO: Reforma migratoria integral, inclusiva y comprensiva de "amnistía"

La Mesa Redonda de Liderazgo del Valle Central (CVALRT, por sus siglas en inglés) cree en que tenemos que ir más lejos de las mismas reformas migratorias rotas y fallidas del pasado. La Mesa Redonda (CVALRT) recomienda correcciones a las debilidades de propuesta "Ley del Sueño y la Promesa Estadounidense (American Dream and Promised Act)". La Reforma migratoria integral, inclusiva y comprensiva de "amnistía" (ICLAR, por sus siglas en inglés) debe abordar los componentes cruciales:

- Arreglar el sistema migratorio roto es algo que se debió haber hecho hace mucho tiempo. Las propuestas fallidas llamadas reformas migratorias de "curta" han incluido trabajadores huéspedes y programas H2A que no han resuelto el estatus "incierto" de los inmigrantes para residentes como (DACA [Acción Diferida para los Llegados en la Infancia], TPS [Condición Protegida] y otras excepciones de visa) que pagan impuestos a través de un número ITIN.
- Una reforma efectiva de inmigración como ICJAR, La Ley del Sueño y la Promesa Estadounidense, debe incluir los términos "Integral" e "Inclusivo" en la "propuesta por los dos partidos políticos principales.
- Las familias y los trabajadores están desesperadamente buscando la oportunidad de ser parte integral de la sociedad estadounidense (Sociedad Americana) y ser permitidos de salir de las sombras. Ellos pagan impuestos a través de un número ITIN.
- Sin una acción del Congreso para arreglar nuestro sistema roto de inmigración, continuará el sufrimiento y miedo a ser separados de sus hijo(a)s.
- Familias de inmigrantes (TPS, DACA) que han trabajado de 3 a 40 años pagan impuestos a través de un número federal ITIN compran casas, son dueños de negocios, y crean empleos para estimular la economía de EE.UU.
- Familias trabajadoras, los trabajadores agrícolas, y los inmigrantes respetuosos de las leyes merecen una "oportunidad" al Sueño Americano.

La Mesa Redonda CVALRT, cree que los funcionarios electos de todos lados deben reconocer que el hecho de no hacer nada, permanecer en silencio, y la falta de voluntad política para arreglar el "sistema roto de inmigración" ha llegado a un punto de límite.

Atentamente, Eliseo Gamino, Presidente, Central Valley Leadership Round Table

# ARTE Y CULTURA DE FRESNO

## CALENDARIO OCTUBRE 2024

### VENUES

2nd Space Theatre • 928 E. Olive Ave. • 559-266-0660 / gcplayers.simplertix.com	CMAAC • 1555 Van Ness Ave., Suite 201 • 559-266-2622 / cmactv	Fresno State Concert Hall • 2380 E. Keats Ave. • 559-278-2654	The Grand on 10 • 1401 Fulton St. • fresnoartsconcil.org
Alice Peters Auditorium • University Business Center, Fresno State • 559-278-1569	Dennis and Cheryl Woods Theatre • Speech Arts Building, Fresno State • 559-278-5803	Graduate Art Studios • 1419 M St. • 559-492-4000	Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • 559-485-9050 / fresnotowtheater.com
Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • arteamericas.org	Dulce Upfront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-266-0691 / spectrumphotogallery.org	Roger Rocka's Dinner Theatre • 1226 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-266-9494	Nota: Todos los locales están en Fresno, salvo que se indique lo contrario.
Clay Hand Studios • 660 Van Ness Ave. • clayhandstudios.net	Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221 / fresnoartmuseum.org	Root Access Hackerspace • 1476 N. Van Ness Ave. • rootaccess.org	San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance recibe fondos del Programa de Acceso Ampliado Arte y la Cultura provenientes de la Medida P de la Ciudad de Fresno y administrados por el Concilio de las Artes de Fresno.

- Dracula: una verdadera fantasía de venganza feminista** (hasta el 5 de octubre) 7:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Dennis and Cheryl Woods Theatre. Aterradora y desenfrenada, la obra de Kate Hamill, Drácula, confronta el sexismo de la obra original de Bram Stoker y lo subyuga como una fantasía de venganza feminista inteligente e inquietante.
- El jardín secreto** (hasta el 10 de noviembre) Roger Rocka's. El encantador musical ganador del premio Tony basado en la novela clásica de Frances Hodgson Burnett es una historia cautivadora de perdón y renovación con una banda sonora verdaderamente mágica.
- Wendy Maruyama: un estudio escultórico (arte, material, proceso)** (hasta el 5 de enero de 2025) Jueves a domingo, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Las selecciones para esta muestra individual incluyen ejemplos de la artesanía tradicional de Maruyama en su estudio, y su comentario social explora los temas del feminismo, su herencia japonesa-estadounidense y su historia familiar personal.
- Charles Gaines: The Fresno Years** (hasta el 5 de enero de 2025) De Jueves a domingo, de 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Estas obras, tomadas de la colección permanente del museo, de los primeros años de la carrera de Gaines como artista, se realizaron durante su permanencia aquí en Fresno.
- Gloriosos y Triunfantes: Iconos Bizantinos de la Colección A. & P. Stefanopoulos** (hasta el 5 de enero de 2025) De Jueves a domingo, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Fresno Art Museum. Las criaturas míticas de bronce del artista mexicano de renombre mundial Jorge Martín se han posado, observando en silencio el bullicio de la vida del campus.
- Artista invitado: Sergio Simões Rectal de trombón bajo** 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m., Fresno State Concert Hall. Sergio Rainho Simões se unió a la Orquesta Filarmónica de Jafisco como trombón bajo en 2016, fue nombrado profesor de trombón en la Universidad de Guadalajara en 2017 y es un músico de cámara activo en conjuntos como el Lustranian Brass Trio.
- Our Town** (hasta el 6 de octubre) 2nd Space Theatre. The Good Company Players presenta este drama atemporal, ambientado en el mítico pueblo de Grover's Corner, N.H., que exhibe las verdades complejas y hermosas del ser humano.
- ArtHop** 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Galerías del área metropolitana de Fresno. Entrada gratuita a exhibiciones, muestras de galerías, presentaciones especiales y experiencias artísticas únicas para amantes del arte de todas las edades. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- Above Board: Creando una experiencia gastronómica artística** (hasta el 2 de noviembre) 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Clay Hand Studios. Recepción de apertura. Una exposición con jurado de artículos de cerámica y vidrio hechos a mano, que incluye vajillas y vajillas funcionales y obras relacionadas con la experiencia de una cena decorativa.
- Exposición de arte del Día de los Muertos** (hasta el 2 de noviembre) Recepción de apertura: 5 p.m.-7 p.m. Graduate Art Studios. Horario de la galería: sábados, de mediodía a 4p. m. Organizado por el Departamento de Arte, Diseño e Historia del Arte de Fresno State.
- Ritmos de la herencia: Clase de danza azteca** 6 p.m.-7 p.m. Speakers Platform, Fresno State. Una clase de danza al aire libre para que la comunidad del campus aprenda la importancia de la danza cultural y cómo hacer
- Concierto de viento de Fresno State con invitado Especial** 7:30 p.m.-10 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. La Banda Sinfónica del College of Sequoias se une a la Orquesta de Viento de la Universidad de Fresno bajo la dirección de Dr. Gary Gilroy.
- Queering Mariachi: Mariachi Arcoris de Los Angeles** 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Royce Hall Auditorium, Fresno High School, 1839 N. Echo Ave. El primer mariachi abiertamente LGBTQ+ presentado por Cross Cultural and Gender Center at Fresno State. cynthiavillalobos@mail.fresnostate.edu
- Noches en la Plaza** 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Arte Américas. Percusión Afro-Ferriana y taller de danzas con Gabriela Shitoma y Peta Robles.
- Carlos Ballarta: Tlatoni!** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Bailata, con tres especiales en Netflix, es una de las caras más reconocibles en la creciente escena del stand-up hispanohablante. Espectáculo en español.
- Cuarteto de Cuerdas Alexander** 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Ampliamente admirado por sus interpretaciones de Beethoven, Mozart y Shostakovich, el Cuarteto también se ha establecido como un importante defensor de la nueva música a través de más de 25 encargos y numerosos estrenos.
- LitHop 2024** Mediodía-5 p.m. Sedes del Tower District. Festival anual de artes literarias emergentes impulsado por la comunidad, creado por escritores locales para enaltecer a la comunidad de escritores, celebrando al mismo tiempo las áreas artísticas únicas de Fresno. lithopfresno.org
- Guelagueza Madera 2024** 11 a.m. Sunrise Rotary Sports Complex, 1901 Clinton St., Madera. Una celebración indígena oaxaqueña con deliciosa comida
- Por Qué no Miercoles** 5 p.m.-9 p.m. Fulton St. (Monon to Fresno). Una nueva feria callejera mensual que transforma Fulton Street en un vibrante mercado emergente, con una mezcla diversa de vendedores, camiones de comida, artistas y música en vivo. 559-490-9966.
- René Vaca** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Ganador de la edición 16 de la comedia NBC, Este comediante, escritor y actor se encuentra actualmente de gira y presenta un espectáculo mensual en el Hollywood Laugh Factory.
- ArtHop** 5 p.m.-8 p.m. Galerías del área metropolitana de Fresno. Entrada gratuita a exposiciones, muestras en galerías, presentaciones especiales y experiencias artísticas únicas para amantes del arte de todas las edades. facebook.com/FACarthop/
- David Nail** 7 p.m. Tower Theatre. Su franqueza musical corta como un láser la propiedad creadora de estrellas, un ritual de respuestas predecibles a preguntas predecibles, recitadas por artistas reacios a la controversia que puede traer la verdad.
- Los Lobos at 50** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Es cuestión de tiempo, 50 años para ser exactos. Y en ese tiempo Los Lobos han creado una obra sin precedentes, un legado de grandeza.
- Concierto Coral de Otoño** 2:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. The Fresno State Chamber Singers, la Dra. Carl Eamhart juntos para una presentación especial.
- Max Amiri** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Entra en el mundo eléctrico de la sensación de la comedia mientras Max está armado con una nueva variedad de delicias cómicas para este evento extraordinario que te dejará riendo a carcajadas y rodando por los pasillos.
- El Estado de las Artes** 6 p.m.-8 p.m. The Grand on 10. El Consejo de las Artes de Fresno reconoce el trabajo dinámico que se lleva a cabo en la comunidad artística, desde el impacto que están generando los artistas hasta las nuevas oportunidades de brillar.
- Encuentro de Cineastas** 6 p.m.-8 p.m. CMAAC. ¡Es temporada de terror y CMAAC está listo para ofrecerle algunas películas locales que seguramente le darán miedo!
- Exhibición y Remate a Beneficio de Spectrum Art Gallery** 1 p.m.-4 p.m. Dulce Upfront. Generando apoyo financiero vital para la Galería de Arte Spectrum en su 44º aniversario.
- Titus** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. "Incrediblemente divertido" (Forbes), "La voz cómica más original de la televisión desde Seinfeld" (Newsday), "Este show es arte" (Bruce Springsteen).
- Concierto de Grandes Bandas con el Cuarteto Amina Scott** 7:30 p.m.-9:30 p.m. Fresno State Concert Hall. Scott, una bajista y compositora excepcionalmente talentosa, continúa forjando su propio camino como artista pionera.
- Lectura de Autores: Profesores de Fresno State MFA** 6:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. Alice Peters Auditorium. Una velada con los profesores Venita Blackburn, Steven Church, Ra Jarrar, Brynn Saito, Mai Der Yang y Brenna Womer. Parte de la serie de la Asociación de Poetas de Fresno.
- Envíe eventos relacionados con las artes a fresnoartscalendar@gmail.com el día 15 del mes anterior a la publicación.

# LLAMAZA

## COMUNITARIA

### LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

## El Estado Busca Rescatar lo que Queda de la Naturaleza del Valle

FOR VIC BEDOIAN

El Valle de San Joaquín ha sido descrito como el paisaje más transformado de la nación. Se ha industrializado con la agricultura, la extracción de recursos y la expansión de la urbanización.

Se lo ha llamado una zona de sacrificio al servicio de la industria, con impactos indeseables en el medio ambiente y en las personas que viven aquí. Dentro de esa vasta matriz de tierras de cultivo y ciudades en expansión, la naturaleza aún perdura.

Visto en un mapa, el Valle es parte de una ecorregión más grande que incluye la Sierra Nevada y la Cordillera Costera, principalmente naturales. Mirando más de cerca el fondo del Valle, hay restos del paisaje antiguo a lo largo de los corredores fluviales, en humedales y bosques de robles donde prosperan la flora y la fauna autóctonas.

Reconociendo la urgencia provocada por el cambio climático y el rápido crecimiento de la población, la administración de Gavin Newsom lanzó el plan 30x30 para salvar, restaurar o mejorar el 30 por ciento del paisaje terrestre y costero de California para 2030. La Agencia de Recursos Naturales de California está tomando la iniciativa.

Es un objetivo ambicioso, pero el estado tiene ventaja, ya que gran parte del paisaje ya está bajo algún tipo de protección por parte de los gobiernos federal y estatal.

También hay numerosas tierras privadas, como reservas naturales, que son propiedad de grupos sin fines de lucro y están a su cargo. De hecho, las agencias estatales dependen de una amplia colaboración con las organizaciones comunitarias para lograr el éxito.

Desde su creación en 2020, el estado ha conservado 1,5 millones de acres de tierra. Eso eleva el total a un poco más del 25 por ciento del paisaje terrestre y el 16 por ciento de la costa. Con cinco años restantes, todavía quedan casi 5 millones de acres de tierra que deben conservarse para alcanzar la meta del estado.

## Apaga la Luz!

FOR PAULINA DEEDS ORTIZ

El calor está disminuyendo, pero el frío

llegará pronto. Con estos precios, al Valle Central más le vale abrigarse bien. Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E), una empresa de servicios públicos de propiedad de inversores que abastece a millones de hogares en la mayor parte del norte y centro de California, subirá sus tarifas por cuarta vez este año, mientras presume de ganancias récord.

El 12 de septiembre, la Comisión de Servicios Públicos de California (CPUC, por sus siglas en inglés) aprobó rápidamente otro aumento de tarifas para PG&E con una votación de 4-0 en su "agenda de consenso", un procedimiento que omitió cualquier discusión o debate.

Las agendas de consenso agrupan varios temas que se aprueban sin discusión porque se consideran rutinarios o no controvertidos, pero subir el precio de la electricidad para tres cuartas partes del estado no parece algo que deba aprobarse en una reunión rápida.

A pesar de que aún queda un trimestre del año, PG&E ha subido los precios cuatro veces en 2023. El primer aumento ocurrió en enero, incrementando las facturas un 12-13%, lo que añadió unos \$32.50 al

mes. En marzo, otro aumento añadió \$4-5 por mes, seguido de un alza de \$6 en septiembre. El aumento de octubre, de \$6, fue aprobado el 12 de septiembre.

PG&E ha anunciado un crédito único por el clima de \$55 para octubre y una reducción temporal del 9% en las tarifas desde julio. Sin embargo, "único" y "temporal" son las palabras clave. Las afirmaciones de la empresa de querer ayudar a los clientes con tarifas bajas para PG&E con ingresos con facturas atrasadas, ofreciendo un crédito anual de hasta \$1,000. El programa también contaba con REACH Triple Match, que ofrecía asistencia a clientes de ingresos moderados, triplicando los subsidios hasta \$1,000.

Lamentablemente, estos fondos se agotaron a finales de agosto y ya no se aceptan nuevas solicitudes. A pesar de haber proporcionado más de \$17.2 millones en asistencia a más de 25,000 clientes de bajos ingresos desde enero, gran parte de esta ayuda fue destinada a Fresno, donde se aprobaron más de 3,500 solicitudes por más de \$2 millones.

Los subsidios totales. PG&E tenía el programa REACH (Asistencia de Energía para la Comunidad), diseñado para ayudar a los clientes de bajos ingresos con facturas atrasadas, ofreciendo un crédito anual de hasta \$1,000. El programa también contaba con REACH Triple Match, que ofrecía asistencia a clientes de ingresos moderados, triplicando los subsidios hasta \$1,000.

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Nuestra región desempeña un papel importante para alcanzar el objetivo 30x30. Es por eso que el Secretario de Recursos Naturales del estado, Wade Crowfoot, convocó una reunión en River House en el río San Joaquín para explicar el plan, compartir información y obtener comentarios de las muchas personas reflexivas y expertas que asistieron.

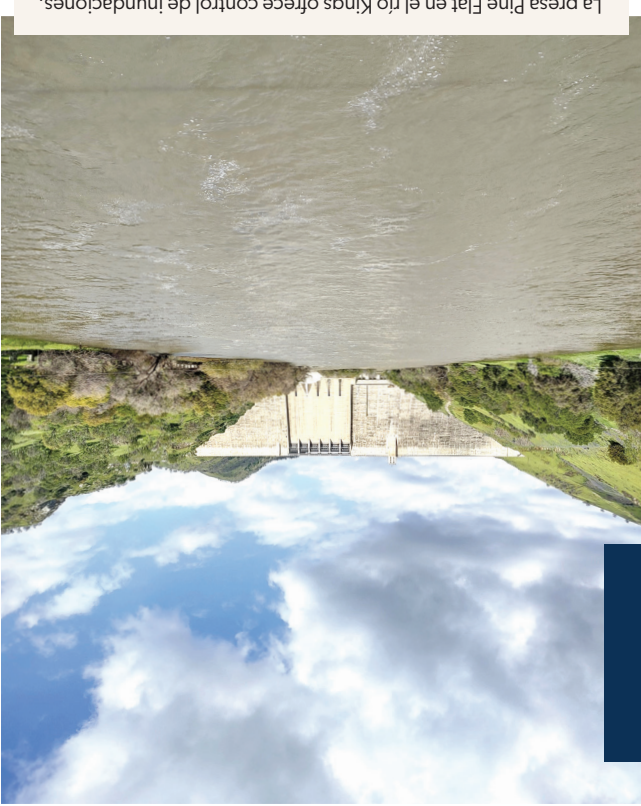
Crowfoot describió tres prioridades para el proyecto: enfrentar la crisis existencial del calentamiento y la inestabilidad climática, desarrollar la accesibilidad al aire libre para todos, proteger la naturaleza y restaurar la biodiversidad.

"Los científicos consideran que California es uno de los 36 puntos críticos de biodiversidad del mundo, lo que significa que esta riqueza de vida que tenemos de animales, plantas y otras formas de vida es única a nivel mundial en el Valle Central y en las montañas.

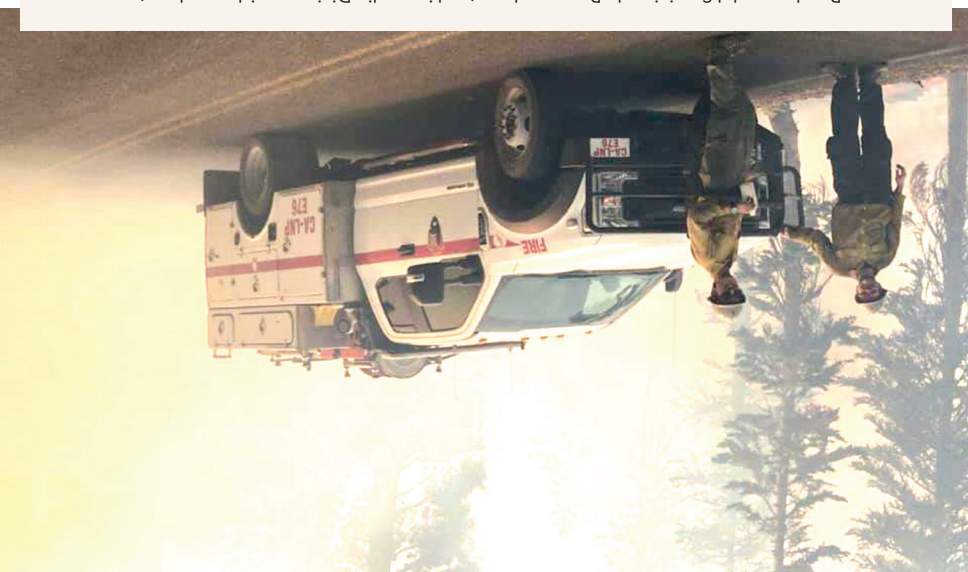
Entonces, esas tres grandes prioridades me llevan a la razón por la que estamos aquí hoy. Lo que estamos tratando de hacer es construir un movimiento, un movimiento de entidades como sus organizaciones que realmente están logrando esos logros de conservación en su patio trasero".

El secretario Crowfoot subrayó que la razón principal del evento era aprender del trabajo de los conservacionistas del Valle. "El objetivo es, francamente, que algunos de nosotros de Sacramento aprendamos sobre lo que es importante para ustedes, cuáles son los proyectos en los que están trabajando y que deberíamos apoyar. ¿Cómo nos levantamos y nos apoyamos mutuamente y construimos nuestra red?"

Están sucediendo cosas notables en el Valle Central". Para que estas cosas extraordinarias sigan sucediendo, se necesitará cooperación y dinero. Si bien el estado asignó más de mil millones de dólares del presupuesto de 2023 a proyectos basados en la naturaleza, las asociaciones de financiación con el sector privado serán esenciales para lograr los objetivos 30x30 en el mundo real.



La presa Pine Flat en el río Kings ofrece control de inundaciones, irrigación y recreación para los residentes del valle. Foto de Vic Bedoian



Bomberos del Servicios de Parques durante el incendio Dixie ocurrido en el norte de California en 2021 que quemó un millón de acres y 1,300 casas. El incendio se originó a causa de cables de electricidad de PG&E. Foto cortesia de The Commons

?Por qué ha habido tantos aumentos de precios este año? PG&E afirma que necesita cubrir los costos de los daños causados por tormentas, incendios forestales y otros eventos catastróficos, además de mantener y actualizar sus sistemas. El 55% de estos costos los cubrirán los usuarios. Esto parece innecesario, ya que los precios de PG&E en compensación total este año.

están muy por encima de la inflación y la empresa reportó ganancias récord este año. En febrero, PG&E anunció un aumento de casi el 25% en sus ganancias para 2023, con una cifra aproximada de \$2.2 mil millones. Solo su directora ejecutiva, Patricia Pope, ganó cerca de \$17 millones en compensación total este año.