

# Fighting for Justice in Fresno

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

## Major Lawsuit Filed Against the City of Fresno

On Dec. 10, civil rights attorney Kevin Little filed a civil complaint lawsuit against the City of Fresno and several police officers on behalf of two unhoused individuals who were previously acquitted of no camping violation charges, Wickey TwoHands and Joseph Quinney.

TwoHands is an employed 65-year-old man unable to afford housing, and Quinney is a disabled 52-year-old. Neither has a substance abuse or mental health disability. Little is representing TwoHands and Quinney pro bono, and the plaintiffs include all other similarly situated individuals.

The class action lawsuit asserts 26 causes of action including, but not limited to, false arrest and malicious prosecution under the Fourth and 14th amendments of the U.S. Constitution, unconstitutional search and seizure of property, violations of the Americans with Disabilities Act, violations of due process/state endangerment, waste of public funds and numerous California civil rights law violations.

The complaint places these individual harms within a broader pattern of systemic abuse.

The latest event in that pattern of abuse is the recent code amendments, passed on Dec. 18, intensifying the City's anti-camping ordinance, which now will criminalize even pedestrian unhoused persons and give the City broad powers to issue restraining orders against unhoused

persons simply based on their status and even if they have never been convicted of any crime.

The addendum to the ordinance would also make possession of a blanket, tent or a sleeping bag illegal.

**Handcuffs, Not Housing**

Little says that "rather than address the homelessness crisis through pro-housing and other humanitarian solutions, the City has doubled down on criminalization. The challenged ordinances are enforced selectively and discriminatorily against unhoused persons while housed individuals engaging in identical conduct face no consequences.

"Enforcement practices also include mass arrests, encampment sweeps, immediate destruction of property without preservation for retrieval, failure to provide ADA accommodations, elder abuse, and empty and coercive offers of typically unavailable substance-abuse programs."

**The Lawsuit and Homelessness in Fresno**

Little addressed several questions regarding the lawsuit and related issues.

*Community Alliance (CA):* To date, there have been more than 1,700 citations and arrests for violations of the no camping ordinance since Sept. 23, 2024. What is the status of these cases?

Little: Only 137 have resulted in court filings, and none of them have been brought to trial. The City Attorney's Office lacks resources to pursue all of the cases.

*CA:* How is the Public Defender's Office responding to these cases?

Little: They originally took a stance not to waive time and to ask for trials. I do not know their current stance.



Attorney Kevin Little, left, with his client Wickey TwoHands. Photo by Peter Maiden

Continued to page 2

# Southeast Development Project Scaled Back

BY VIC BEDOIAN

Community activism is forcing the City of Fresno to rethink its ambitious and controversial Southeast Development Area (SEDA) plan. The proposed development project of massive proportions would convert 9,000 acres of working farms and rural residences into a suburban landscape jammed with 45,000 houses interspersed with commercial malls and industrial parks. Not surprisingly, it has run into vehement organized opposition from many residents.

After simmering for years, the controversial SEDA plan has burst forth as a burning issue in recent months with the time for official decisions approaching. Opposition ramped up, as the City's planning commission and then the City Council pondered the fate of SEDA.

The persistent and informed disapproval of the SEDA plan by community members forced Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer to propose a much smaller project area, at least for now. The City's fallback proposal is called South SEDA. It is a 1,547-acre area between Jensen and North avenues, and between Minnewawa and Temperance avenues. It is designated for research and development.

A second area of about 467 acres would be residential with up to 4,800 housing units.

Realizing that a 9,000-acre mega-sprawl development was not going to be publicly acceptable, the Fresno City Council decided with a 5-2 vote to have their planning staff study the South SEDA plan and come back with a revision that could be approved. Only Council Members Brandon Vang and Miguel Arias were skeptical enough of the project to oppose the proposal.

Planners, when they craft a revised plan, will have to answer nagging questions about the financial and environmental viability of the new plan. Opponents might have breathed a sigh of relief at having beat back the original plan, but some cautioned that South SEDA is a Trojan horse that once approved would inevitably open the door for the full-scale version of SEDA.

It has been a long and winding road for the opposition. In November, dozens of residents in a packed chamber at the Fresno Planning Commission voiced their antagonism to the project and the way it has been rolled out by City leaders.

"We, SEDA residents, want to protect our farmland, maintain our rural lifestyle, and we're facing the potential cost of over a hundred thousand dollars to hook up to City water and sewer," notes Al Cederquist. "How would you like that?"



Young tangerine orchard in the Southeast Development Area. Photo by Vic Bedoian

"The city residents here want Fresno to focus on fixing the problems within the city boundaries. Adding 9,000 acres creates more problems and stretches the budget thin."

Cederquist said the project is not needed because the city already has room for more housing and commerce. Citing the 8,200 acres of infill property within the current city limits and the recently approved West Area Neighborhoods Specific Plan supporting the future development of up to 55,000 housing units and 60 million square feet of nonresidential building, he questioned why the 45,000 housing units in the SEDA plan are needed.

Cederquist was also critical of the planning assumptions contained in the development proposal. "SEDA is risky. There is a risk that the population estimates used for SEDA are wildly wrong.

"The 2024 California Department of Finance population statistics indicate California growth estimates are overstated by a factor of eight. Have you reviewed a risk analysis for California? If the state is right, then the City's 2050 projection is wrong by 400,000 people."

David Ramming lives and farms in the southeast area. He warned that the character of the region would be changed forever and impact the local economy.

"One of the major faults of the SEDA plan is that it results in a loss of over 6,000 acres of prime farmland, some of the most productive farmland in the world," says Ramming.

"This plan will take away the livelihood of many small family farmers and eliminate jobs connected with agriculture. Once the farmland is covered in housing, it will never be brought into production again."

Continued to page 13



# Fresno’s Warming Center Policy Kills

BY BOB MCCLOSKEY

Tragically, two unhoused Fresno community members, identified by the Fresno County Coroner’s office as 50-year-old Ronald Wallace and 52-year-old Denise Celis died in their tent from carbon monoxide poisoning overnight on Dec. 11 while attempting to stay warm in 40-degree temperatures.

According to the California Highway Patrol, Wallace and Celis were found dead by a friend near the Highway 180 on-ramp off Abby Street in downtown Fresno on the morning of Dec. 12.

Last winter, several unhoused people died from hypothermia and exposure. Every winter, someone dies. These deaths could have been avoided if the City of Fresno had opened the warming centers for the winter season.

In 2024, the centers opened for only four nights because of the City’s policy to only open warming centers at 34 degrees or less. This policy is cruel, inhumane and causes immense suffering.

Failing to open the warming centers now will cause more deaths from accidents and hypothermia.

## Act Now!

Contact the City of Fresno’s elected officials and implore them to open warming centers now and keep them open for the duration of winter. Call 559-621-8000 and/or e-mail them.

**Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer**  
jerry.dyer@fresno.gov

**Fresno City Council Members**

Annalisa Perea	annalisa.perea@fresno.gov
Mike Karbassi	mike.karbassi@fresno.gov
Miguel Arias	miguel.arias@fresno.gov
Tyler Maxwell	tyler.maxwell@fresno.gov
Brandon Vang	brandon.vang@fresno.gov
Nick Richardson	nick.richardson@fresno.gov
Nelson Esparza	nelson.esparza@fresno.gov

You can also leave a comment at [fresno.gov/citycouncil](https://fresno.gov/citycouncil) by selecting the respective City Council member.



A client at a warming center speaks to supporters and media on the morning of Jan. 9, 2024. Behind her is activist Dez Martinez. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

The City should open its three warming centers and a fourth center in north Fresno at this time for the duration of winter. The unhoused of Fresno, especially the elderly and disabled, who are the majority using the warming centers, are at risk of suffering exposure and hypothermia. Many of them have no tents, sleeping bags or even blankets; some have no warm jackets.

The most common causes of hypothermia are exposure to cold-weather conditions or cold water. But, prolonged exposure to any environment colder than your body can lead to hypothermia if you aren’t dressed appropriately or can’t control your body temperature.

Older adults are more likely to have a cold injury, especially hypothermia, because their normal body temperature can decrease with age. They can’t regulate their body temperature as well. They do not produce as much heat energy. They also have less body fat.

Their blood vessels do not narrow (constrict) and conserve body heat as easily. They do not shiver as much. Shivering warms the body.

Their mental awareness of changes in temperatures might change. They have medical conditions that increase their risk for hypothermia. There are many medical and health conditions that contribute to cold injury and hypothermia.

Whatever one’s age, sleeping in the damp winter cold of Fresno is a miserable experience. Think about it.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bob McCloskey is an activist and a Community Alliance reporter. Contact him at [bobmccloskey06@gmail.com](mailto:bobmccloskey06@gmail.com).*

# Fighting for Justice

Continued from page 1

CA: Does the enforcement of the ordinance have a disproportionate impact on minorities?

Little: Yes, there is over-representation of Black and Brown individuals among arrestees. The majority of arrestees are not persons of color, but percentages are skewed. The racial breakdown of arrests shows disparity.

CA: What is your message to the business community and residents of Fresno that drive these policies that criminalize unhoused people?

Little: First of all, have a little bit more respect for your fellow man. Also, you have to have a more long-term vision in terms of what’s good for the city. We have been dealing with this so-called crisis for 20 years and addressing the problem with various public measures, funding initiatives, billions statewide and millions locally gone into addressing this issue with law enforcement, and it just doesn’t work. We have proof it doesn’t work.

CA: What is your critique of the City’s homelessness approach?

Little: It’s ineffective and has been an enforcement-focused strategy for over 20 years. There is still a high homeless population despite significant funding and enforcement. There’s a significant lack of shelter beds.

[Fresno has around 4,000 homeless residents and only 1,400–1,500 shelter beds. More than 100 shelter beds recently became unavailable due to federal and state funding cuts.]

CA: City Attorney Andrew Janz said, in response to the lawsuit, that he is prepared to take the case to the Supreme Court, citing the precedent of the *Grants Pass v. Johnson* ruling of 2024 that allows cities to punish unhoused people for sleeping or camping in public spaces even if shelters are unavailable.

Little: The *Grants Pass* decision does not apply to the claims asserted in this lawsuit. [It] does not relate to other constitutional challenges, including the selective enforcement of the ordinance, the equal protection issue, disability discrimination and more. There is strong evidence of equal protection violations and of property destruction.

CA: What is the legal strategy and case strength?

Little: I think it’s a strong case. We have spent the last year putting this case together. We have strong evidence from the months of outreach that we did. We want to get into court, get financial compensation and an injunction against enforcement of these provisions. We,



At a press conference on the porch of Kevin Little’s office. Left to right: Rebecca Rangel, Cindy Piombino, Kevin Little, Wickey TwoHands, Desiree Martinez and Enrique Little. *Photo by Peter Maiden*

as a community supporting the unhoused and the unhoused have nothing to lose. We are working for a preliminary injunction to end the enforcement [of the no camping ordinance]. Our goals include ending discriminatory practices and securing housing accommodations.

The lawsuit will take months to adjudicate and a settlement is possible, but unlikely given the City Attorney’s stance to date. The next steps are applying for an injunction and scheduling hearings for the case. A scheduling conference is scheduled for April 2026.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Bob McCloskey is an activist and a Community Alliance reporter. Contact him at [bobmccloskey06@gmail.com](mailto:bobmccloskey06@gmail.com).*

GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT!

Advertise in the

PUBLISHED AND DISTRIBUTED MONTHLY

All ads need to be camera ready (layout and design are extra)

Submit a black-and-white ad or upgrade to a full-color ad.

Deadline is the 15th of the month preceding publication.

	ONE MONTH	THREE MONTHS	SIX MONTHS	ONE YEAR
<b>Business Card</b> (3.375w x 2h)	\$44	\$99	\$165	\$297
<b>Eighth Page</b> (5.125w x 4.125h)	\$66	\$176	\$330	\$594
<b>Quarter Page</b> (5.125w x 8.25h)	\$132	\$352	\$650	\$1,188
<b>Half Page</b> (10.25w x 8.25h)	\$220	\$589	\$1,100	\$1,980
<b>Full Page</b> (10.25w x 16.5h)	\$440	\$1,177	\$2,200	\$3,960

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

I. smiley G. Calderon | 714-290-6651 | [smileycalderon@gmail.com](mailto:smileycalderon@gmail.com)

Community Alliance | P.O. Box 5077 | Fresno, CA 93755





The annual fundraiser for the *Community Alliance* exceeded our expectations. We raised more than \$20,000. There is a story about it by Mike Rhodes—with photos—in this issue.

The event came at the close of a rough year in America. A fascist regime is dismantling democracy, digging a hole so deep one wonders how we will climb out of it.

Yet in the pages of the *Community Alliance* there is an alternative. Real news about our community’s struggles and thoughtful essays about broader topics.

We see your donations as a statement of support for the quality of our reporting.

We also see support for a print newspaper. Print media here in the Central Valley, as elsewhere, is harder to come by as time goes on. The trend to online news is profitable, to a degree, but it does not mean print is less valuable, useful or enjoyable.

If there is another free monthly progressive newspaper in the country, we don’t know about it!

This month, we lead off with coverage of an important lawsuit originating in Fresno against criminalizing homelessness. We also cover the lack of warming centers in our city, including a way to contact your local representatives about it. Vic Bedoian submitted a piece on the latest iteration of urban sprawl in Fresno, the Southeast Development Area (SEDA).

In the Spanish section, we feature an article about our former editor, now City Council member in Madera, Elsa Mejía, who received the “Distinguished Mexican” award from the Mexican government, which is given to someone of Mexican origin who excels in another country.

If you have not donated recently, remember you can by filling out and sending in the form below, or go to our website, [fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com).

—Peter Maiden, interim editor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Free Zoe

On Dec. 3, convicted felon Zoe Rosenberg was sentenced to 90 days in jail and ordered to pay over \$100,000 in restitution. Her crime was rescuing four dying chickens from a Petaluma Poultry slaughterhouse truck.

Activist prosecution has long been a harsh tool to silence the few willing to risk themselves to save others, but Zoe’s prosecution has amplified her voice. Her actions and, by extension, the conditions chickens endure at Petaluma Poultry factory farms and slaughterhouses, have garnered national attention.

At Zoe’s sentencing hearing, supporters overflowed from the courtroom to the hallway outside. Afterward, activists called for Zoe to be released in demonstrations as far away as the U.S. embassy in London.

Now in jail, Zoe continues to think of the millions of chickens who “need help far more than I do.”

In Fresno, activists protested outside of Trader Joe’s, which sells Petaluma Poultry chicken.

Zoe’s prosecution is a deeply unfair miscarriage of justice. Yet, by creating persistent messaging and gathering steadfast support, Zoe and hundreds of other activists are turning the fearful tactics of the poultry industry, which are meant to instill passivity, into vehicles for activism and change.

Arthur Utecht  
Fresno

What Is the Green Party Doing?

Concerning “Green Party Update” (December 2025 issue), the Green Party basically has a good agenda, certainly much better for America than that of the mainstream political efforts.

However, by all appearances, they have no strategy for implementing that agenda and thus are essentially irrelevant. Yet, the writer, apparently on behalf of the Green Party, is quick to trash others.

Take the current resistance, which is desperately in need of coordination and leadership. This should be a gift to the Green Party. The Democratic Party isn’t going to lead the effort. But where is the Green Party? Advocating for the lost-cause candidacies of folks running statewide.

If you want to be taken seriously, do something to help save democracy. Anything.  
Saul Ross  
Selma

A Pool for Central High

On Dec. 4, the Fresno City Council issued a proclamation recognizing Central High School’s Men’s Water Polo Team Day—honoring an undefeated team that won their league and produced the League MVP and League Goalie of the Year. My son is on that team. Their achievements were exceptional.

Yet Central High School does not have a pool. Instead, students must be transported daily to another school, losing nearly an hour of valuable time each day just to participate in a sport that every other high school in Fresno can host on their own campus.

This inequity traces back to a boundary change that moved students into the most outdated high school in Fresno. Many expressed disagreement with this change.

Central Unified claims to value equity, access and excellence, but their actions say that they don’t care about that for the students on the south side of the district.

The district needs to start the process of building a pool now and as expeditiously as possible. Anything less is unacceptable.

Gabriel Suarez  
Fresno

Obituary: Paul Dunham

BY JOEL EIS

Paul Dunham, a Fresno activist in the 1960s and 1970s, passed away on Oct. 21 of natural causes during medical testing. He went to Bullard High School and Fresno State. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Dunham was active in the antiwar movement and in politics on the Fresno State campus.

In May 1970, Dunham was arrested at a big demonstration on Shaw Avenue near Fresno State after the murders at Kent State and the bombing of Cambodia. He did 10 months in Lompoc federal prison for refusing induction and destroying his draft card.

He was a draft counselor, a public speaker and an activist. His sacrifices and efforts helped to end the Vietnam War and bring home men who otherwise might have died in a needless war.

After his release, he studied welding at Fresno City College and moved to Alaska where he was active in union politics. He then moved to Seattle, where he went to law school and represented workers in arbitration cases.

Returning to Fresno, he worked for the Westlands Water District and represented fellow union employees in grievance proceedings.

\*\*\*\*\*

Joel Eis is a former draft resistance organizer and conscientious objector. He is the author of four books published on theater and politics. Since 2005, he and his wife Toni have run the Rebound Bookstore in San Rafael.

PROVIDE FEEDBACK. E-MAIL [EDITOR@FRESNOALLIANCE.COM](mailto:EDITOR@FRESNOALLIANCE.COM).

I’m joining the fight for truth and justice—choose your level of support:

☐ \$60

**Progressive Movement Builder**

I believe in bold, independent journalism and want to invest in building a stronger movement.

☐ \$40

**Regular Subscription**

I support real news that speaks truth to power.

☐ \$15

**Fixed-/Low-Income Ally**

I need a reduced rate but still want to stay informed and involved.

☐ **Monthly Sustainer**

Charge me \$\_\_\_\_\_ per month to keep this vital work going strong.

☐ **Additional Contribution**

I want to do more. Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ to help grow and expand this essential voice for justice.

Total enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Your support is power!**  
Every dollar helps us resist censorship, amplify community voices and challenge the status quo.

Yes!

I want to stand with independent journalism and support the *Community Alliance* newspaper. I’m joining the fight for truth and justice.



P.O. Box 5077 • Fresno, CA 93755

**COMMUNITY ALLIANCE**



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.

INTERIM EDITOR

Peter Maiden  
[editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:editor@fresnoalliance.com)

NONPROFIT BOARD

Olga Loza  
Norberto Gonzalez  
Michaelynn Lewis  
Bob McCloskey  
James Mendez  
Pam Whalen

LAYOUT DESIGNER

Ashley Harper

DISTRIBUTION MANAGER/  
PHOTOGRAPHY

Peter Maiden  
[maidenfoto1@gmail.com](mailto:maidenfoto1@gmail.com)

ADVERTISING

I. smiley G. Calderon  
714-290-6651 (text)  
[smileycalderon@gmail.com](mailto:smileycalderon@gmail.com)  
*Yo también hablo español*

COPYEDITOR

Michael D. Evans

EDITOR EMERITUS

Mike Rhodes

TO SUBSCRIBE

Send \$60  
(progressive movement builder),  
\$40 (regular) or \$15 (low income) to  
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE  
P.O. Box 5077  
Fresno, CA 93755  
[fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com)

SUBMISSIONS

Deadline:

15th of the previous month.  
Articles 800–1,200 words.  
E-mail [editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:editor@fresnoalliance.com).

Peace & Social Justice and  
Arts & Culture Calendars:

Please submit all activities to [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar@fresnoalliance.com) by the 15th of the previous month, or you can post anytime online at [fresnoliance.com](http://fresnoliance.com) (select Calendar).

Letters to the Editor:

E-mail [editor@fresnoalliance.com](mailto: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.

The *Community Alliance* newspaper is published monthly by the San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, located at 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. The *Community Alliance* newspaper is distributed free of charge, or by subscription. Subscriptions are \$40 per year, \$60 per year for a movement builder subscription or \$15 per year for a low-income subscription.



# California Values Act and the TRUTH Act

BY SCOTT LENOX, MARIA ELENA YOUNG, MARILYN SOBEL AND GLORIA M. SANDOVAL

In a *Merced Sun-Star* interview (Oct. 1, 2025) following his brief presentation (on Sept. 9, 2025) to the Merced County Board of Supervisors, Merced County Sheriff Vern Warnke dismissed the California Values Act and the TRUTH Act as “a waste of taxpayer money.” That is wrong, and as concerned residents, we want the public to be accurately informed as to what these laws are, and why they are important and not a waste.

These laws are intended to protect immigrants, who are valuable and essential members of our community. But these state laws also protect all of us because they guard the relationship of trust between immigrants and state and local agencies while those immigrants seek basic health services, attend school or interact with law enforcement whether as witness or victim.

Immigration laws are complicated and difficult to understand. We sincerely hope that someday the federal government will be able to pass sensible comprehensive immigration reform; until then, our state and our community are fortunate to have these recent laws. Both laws were enacted to ensure that all Californians, regardless of immigration status, can live free from fear of arrest and/or deportation for engaging with public institutions. These laws reflect a simple truth: Safety depends on trust.

The Transparent Review of Unjust Transfers and Holds (TRUTH) Act is about transparency in local law enforcement’s cooperation with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement). Since January 2017, it has required agencies to notify a detained person regarding any ICE holds and provide know-your-rights information.

SB 54, also known as the California Values Act, is a related state law that also went into effect in 2017. While the

TRUTH Act is about transparency among law enforcement, immigrants and their community, SB 54 presents a values-based reasoning for its restrictions preventing state and local law enforcement agencies from using their resources to assist federal enforcement agencies.

During the *Sun-Star* interview, Warnke expressed concern and suggested, without evidence, that these California laws themselves make crime worse and our community less safe. Yet multiple studies, including one from 2020 by the Center for American Progress, have shown no link between sanctuary policies and increased crime rates.

Warnke even suggested that if he could cooperate with ICE, they would not “come into the community [and] start snatching people up.”

The law does allow the sheriff and his agencies to cooperate with ICE for serious or dangerous felons. But if the sheriff starts cooperating with ICE for every contact or detention, he will break the relationship of trust between his staff and the immigrant community.

When families fear calling 911, when parents are afraid to pick up their children from school and when victims hesitate to report abuse, every resident becomes less safe.

The sheriff is entitled to his personal opinion, and our current immigration situation “sits raw with” us also. But unfortunately, the sheriff’s biased and factually incorrect statements during his interview in his capacity as Merced County sheriff will be accepted by some in our community as true because he is the sheriff.

Despite what we have been told nationally, ICE and CBP (Customs and Border Protection) are not removing the worst of the worst. We can see this for ourselves daily on TV and social media.

Instead, people essential to their communities are being stopped based on the color of their skin, targeted based not on crimes but rather on the types of difficult, undesirable jobs they often work, then deported without due process.

How was this ever going to be an operable way of eliminating crime? There is no safe space as hospitals, clinics and places of worship are also targets.

It is not about arresting the worst criminals. It is about a lot of things, but was never really about crime.

Immigrants commit fewer crimes than people born and raised here. Real criminals hide and are hard to catch. But hardworking immigrants are easy to find and snatch while

## OPINION & ANALYSIS

picking up their kids at our local schools, while tending to our crops or while cooking our meals.

If we are not removing the worst criminals—70% of the arrested have been lawful residents and U.S. citizens—why are we traumatizing communities?

When a society scapegoats and persecutes a vulnerable population, the time often comes when there is large-scale regret within that society for the harm caused, not just to the vulnerable population, but regret for the damage to their local communities and the larger society, and the self-harm that being caught up in such madness can cause.

Damage, harm and waste. What is happening to communities across this country is such a shameful waste and morally wrong.

Warnke identified the real burden as being the time required “to devote staff to maintain records, to put together a report,” but this could be one of the least costly elements of our current immigration regime.

How much is it costing nationally to divert federal agents and resources from other law enforcement priorities, and what is the cost of constant raids on workers with no criminal record?

What we are seeing play out across this country is not a coherent immigration policy. This is not how we should be dealing with immigration—not in this great nation filled with so many immigrants and their descendants.

We need a comprehensive national immigration policy that includes funding for enough immigration judges to handle refugee asylum cases, a policy that has a better way for workers to come here to work and a clear pathway to citizenship.

We need a policy that does not require a militarized force snatching people from their workplaces, from schools while picking up their kids or from courthouses where they go to check in as part of their immigration requirements.

Until that day, we are grateful to have the California Values Act and the TRUTH Act.

\*\*\*\*\*

Scott Lenox, Maria Elena Young, Marilyn Sobel and Gloria M. Sandoval are members of Mercedians United for Action.

# Cambodia-Thailand Conflict

BY VANNA NAUK

The inaugural Decolonizing Southeast Asia Studies Conference at Chiang Mai University in Chiang Mai, Thailand, on July 25 concluded with a timely session on the centuries-old border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia, amid renewed tensions across the region, including in the diaspora. The leaders of both governments signed an immediate and unconditional ceasefire on July 28, 2025.

While the July agreement, later enhanced on Oct. 26, aimed for peace, alleged violations led to continued tensions and sporadic military confrontation along the border provinces, and the information battlefield, especially those echoed across social media.

As mainstream international media gradually shifted their narrative toward the middle of the road, Khmer civilians and their diaspora remained steadfast in their position—peace. Although on a much smaller scale, the patchy antiwar protests for peace in Thailand started to follow suit, even in the face of Thailand’s pro-military/war rallies.

Despite overwhelming rallies by Khmer communities around the globe calling for peace, the centrality of political

theater in mainstream media too often overshadows the voices of the masses.

As of Dec. 21, the border conflict had penetrated deeper into Cambodia and escalated in scale, with more than half a million Khmer civilians displaced within Cambodia’s border and nearly half a million civilians displaced within the border of Thailand. Both sides have reported civilian deaths and casualties. In sum, the numbers illuminate the human toll of a political war.

For many Khmer, and arguably more so for the Khmer diaspora who were former refugees in Thailand’s refugee camps, such news opens old, deep wounds. Evidently, for Thai diplomats, the refugee resettlement and repatriation program is hailed as a token of Thailand’s good-neighborly humanitarian efforts; yet, for former Khmer refugees, their experience of the camps encompasses a period of unforgiving conditions.

The Vietnam War, and its spillover into neighboring countries like Laos and Cambodia, is the dominant historical event that the international community recalls when reflecting on U.S. military interventions in mainland Southeast Asia.

If there’s any event linked to the consequences of U.S. imperial sins in the backdrop of the Vietnam War that might come close to securing itself as a household name, it would be the Khmer Rouge genocide.

The Khmer Rouge genocide is often described and even suggested in the name itself, Khmer Rouge genocide, as auto-genocide, as opposed to a consequence of U.S. failed imperial projects in Southeast Asia.

The overriding frame of the Khmer storied 20th century state of affairs limits the timeframe and series of entangled events to the period from 1975 to 1979, namely, the Khmer Rouge regime, and glosses over the start of U.S. bombing in Cambodia from 1965 to 1973, which divided the nation and propelled the Khmer Rouge into power.

By marking 1975 as the start and 1979 as the end of a genocidal epoch, it does not account for the beginning of Operation Menu in 1969 and, more pertinently, the second killing fields experienced by Khmer refugees who sought refuge in Thailand at the start of 1979.

The second killing fields, also known as the Dangrek genocide, occurred in 1979 when the Royal Thai Army forced some 43,000–45,000 Khmer refugees back into Cambodia. Khmer refugees were forced by the Royal Thai Army into buses and driven up the Dangrek mountain ranges. It has been estimated that thousands died there from dehydration and landmines, as noted in the PBS documentary *Ghost Mountain*, “They gathered together about 42,000 of them, took ‘em to this temple on top of a mountain on the border called Preah Vihear, and pushed them down the cliff.”

Amid the precarious fate of Khmer refugees, Thailand benefited economically. To date, the Thai government has not acknowledged the Dangrek genocide. Indeed, as

## OPINION & ANALYSIS

Dr. Khathaleeya Liamdee, an anthropologist of Thailand, mentions in the volume *Care in a Time of Humanitarianism*, “Various forms of silence operate within Thailand regarding its time as a refugee host country during wartime. Standard education avoids and neglects this particular event in Thailand’s national history...It comes out in ghost stories, in intimate memories, and in photographs, but also in some of their refusal to reengage with the violence caused by the Thai State.”

For Khmer refugees who survived the conditions of refugee camps in Thailand, the abuse they experienced by the Royal Thai Army serves as a cautionary tale.

Although outside observers are inclined to suggest that transnational solidarity for peace is blind nationalism; an inside observer would argue that irrespective of the Khmer diaspora’s political position on Cambodia’s domestic politics, the Khmer diaspora is stupendously proactive in calling for peace at a time when the Royal Thai Army has, intentionally or by default, been directly or indirectly in charge of managing the border conflict.

The ever-changing leadership in the Thai government has repeatedly claimed to be acting in self-defense as the rationale for its bombing of sacred religious sites and civilian infrastructure and the subsequent displacement and death of civilians.

For keen observers, the rationale mirrors Israel’s claims for bombing and invading Gaza, which have resulted in the displacement and the death of thousands of Palestinians and the destruction of civilian infrastructure.

Thailand is a U.S. treaty ally with disproportionate political, economic, social and military advantage over Cambodia, such as the capacity to sign deals for Israel’s Barak MX missile systems, therefore one must ask: What responsibility does the United States have as arguably a historical aggressor and contemporary enabler of regional instability in Southeast Asia? And what are Thailand’s long-term goals for coexisting with Cambodia, and how can that be achieved through peaceful and equitable multilateral cooperation when deeply rooted distrust has persisted from centuries old to as recently as 46 years?

\*\*\*\*\*

Vanna Nauk is an assistant professor of ethnic studies at Long Beach City College. He taught at Madera Community College and was the inaugural coordinator of its Ethnic Studies Program. At the same time, he was teaching Asian American studies at Fresno State.



**TACOS**  
**Arquitos**  
*Antojitos Mexicanos*

Javier Rangel (559) 977-4413      Jesus Ibarra (559) 977-5481

1772 E. Barstow Ave. Fresno, CA 93710

**(559) 447-5569**

We are located inside the Bulldog Plaza

32954 Rd. 222  
North Fork, CA

(559) 877-8400

kernfamilyfarm.com  
kernfamilyfarm@netptc.net



Open M-F 8-7  
weekends 10-6



A local, natural,  
seasonally changing  
market



# “I’m Gonna Make Sure This Fails!”

BY RACHEL YODELMAN

On Dec. 9, the last Fresno County Board of Supervisors meeting of 2025, staff presented an update on Measure C renewal negotiations, also covering what would be required to advance a potential alternative, citizen-led initiative, should it come to that. The meeting revealed a bleak contrast: District 2 Supervisor Garry Bredefeld’s intractable refusal to engage respectfully or seek consensus, and everyone else’s cooperative, pragmatic willingness to collaborate.

Measure C, a countywide half-cent sales tax first approved by voters in 1986, funds local transportation projects such as road repairs, public transit, bicycle lanes and the like. It must be reapproved by voters every 20 years (a new proposal would increase the term to 30 years).

The current measure expires in 2027; hence, plans are under way for a renewal to continue the funding of essential transportation infrastructure projects. The revised measure will be on the ballot in November 2026.

Managed by the Fresno County Transportation Authority (FCTA), Measure C has generated billions of dollars to the County for road and highway maintenance and upgrades, as well as for the expansion of public transit.

Current negotiators have focused on how much to allocate to each transportation category; some support funding exclusively for routine road repair, whereas others prefer a balance among road repairs, public transportation and other transportation needs and considerations, with a view to planning over the next three decades.

Community input has been solicited to better determine how the next expenditure plan would best be allocated.

Negotiations have been ongoing over the past year between the Fresno Council of Governments (COG) and the Measure C Steering Committee, which includes a citizens’ advocacy group, Transportation for All (TFA).

TFA’s inclusion reflects an explicit attempt to bring community-based organizations (especially social justice/environmental/equity-oriented groups) into the core planning and decision process to ensure the renewed Measure C addresses broader priorities, such as transit equity, rather than roads-only and car-centric infrastructure, an approach that has delighted many but made others, such as Bredefeld and District 4 Supervisor Buddy Mendes (Bredefeld serves on the FCTA and COG boards, Mendes is chair of the FCTA), furious.

Bredefeld, in particular, has expressed a vitriolic, ideological contempt for anything other than plain pothole repair.

At the Dec. 9 meeting, Mohammad Alimi of the Department of Public Works summarized the negotiating parties’ proposed allocation plan, which was decisively approved on Nov. 20. In a nutshell, it accounts for 65% of the tax revenue to be spent on road repair, 25% on public transportation, 5% for regional connectivity, 4% for innovation and 1% for administration.

A 2022 attempt to renew the measure early had allocated about 70% to road repair, 15% to regional projects and 10% to public transit and was rejected by voters; so, spending formulas that reflect voter preferences are critical and add to the urgency as the clock ticks toward Election Day.

Intensifying the drama, Bredefeld has repeatedly warned that he would not support anything other than 85% for road repair. At the Board’s Nov. 18 meeting, he had complained bitterly that the mayors on the Steering Committee had “punted to unelected radicals” (meaning TFA) who “believe in climate change,” something he regards as beyond the pale.

He derided the steering committee for wanting to “spend on public transit and bike lanes” and railed that “people don’t want it!”

He claimed that no one wanted anything but getting potholes fixed, that 65% spent on roads “is not really roads, it’s bike lanes,” and snarled that “COG abdicated to left-wing radicals! It’s a shit-show, a complete shit-show...left-wing lunatics...I won’t be a part of a shit-show, I’ll make sure it fails!”

Bredefeld persisted in this obdurate, emotionally fixated manner at the Dec. 9 meeting, recycling the same threats, word for word.

A lot is at stake, because if the measure fails in the November 2026 election, there will be no money to fund anything transportation-related. Critically, the final step before the measure can appear on the ballot is approval by the Board of Supervisors, so it is possible that the three MAGA Republicans on the Board will reject the negotiated measure when it reaches them for approval.

Discussion followed Alimi’s presentation. Predictably, Bredefeld ranted about what he was sure was a diabolical “agenda to get people out of their cars.”

He bellowed that “no one rides public transit,” that “no one rides bikes” and repeated that the steering committee “allowed the process to be hijacked by radicals!”

He huffed and puffed that he would “not allow this to be hijacked, the radicals could care less!” and, if anyone



Kay Bertken of the League of Women Voters of Fresno. Screenshot from Livestream

doubted that he had said it before, again threatened, “I’m gonna make sure this fails!”

He angrily reprised his characterization of the steering committee meeting as a “shit-show,” compulsively repeating the phrase multiple times.

Aside from Bredefeld, Chair Mendes is openly hostile to both negotiating-team colleagues and to the current proposal, and District 5 Supervisor Nathan Magsig, though he has expressed willingness to work toward a compromise, is no less against it.

District 3 Supervisor Luis Chavez asked County Clerk/Registrar of Voters James Kus, who was present, to address what it would take for a citizens’ initiative to appear on the ballot. Presumably, if the Board rejects the negotiated measure and replaces it with something aligning with the views of the three MAGA Republican supervisors, the negotiated measure could appear on the ballot as well, as a citizens’ initiative—resulting in two competing measures for voters to choose from.

Kus explained that the timeline for a citizens’ initiative process is tight—a petition must be circulated and at least 22,000 signatures would be required. Those signatures would have to be vetted, and the deadline for all of that would be mid-July. The Board would assume a ministerial role to pass the initiative on to Kus, and if they refused to do it, a court order would be required.

District 1 Supervisor Brian Pacheco said he “hoped we can work it out” to avoid what would be “an ugly mess.”

Magsig’s remarks were made in calm and measured tones, but he appeared to be essentially agreeing with the bullying and intimidating Bredefeld. For example, prefacing his objection to the allocation for public transit by claiming that he has “no issue” with it, Magsig tried to make the case that current ridership doesn’t justify investing in it, but he didn’t account for the reality that, as a member of the public later pointed out, low ridership reflected inadequate service resulting from a lack of investment. Alimi himself noted that there is public demand for expansion of public transit.

Mendes, a foe of public transit, said that the original measure had allocated nothing for transit and that only in the second iteration of Measure C, funding for transit was “taken [sic] off the top.”

Mendes repeated a charge he made previously, that “secret negotiations” had been held, excluding him and others. Later, during public comment, Parlier Mayor Alma Beltran responded to Mendes, reminding him that he had explicitly refused, in writing, to participate in the negotiations in question.

Chavez, summarizing, said he had not observed a “shit-show” but rather saw groups working together to reach a “happy medium.” He emphasized that if agreement could not be reached, it was important to know what was entailed if “mom and dad ended up in divorce court” and two separate measures were proposed.

Nevertheless, he was optimistic and quipped that he hoped the slur “radical” wielded by Bredefeld would be downgraded to “advocate.” This was, after all, an opportunity to create policy to serve the County over the next few decades, he said.

Mendes asked a reasonable question—did any of his colleagues approve of the measure as it was currently written? Chavez liked some of it, didn’t like other bits, but saw a chance to reach consensus. Pacheco agreed with Chavez and nitpicked over cities getting higher allocations than the County; he felt there was time to “work it out a little bit” or “get nothing.”

Chavez emphasized that “the conversation” should continue. Magsig found the reduction in allocation for regional projects a “fatal flaw” but agreed with Pacheco that if the measure failed, the results would be devastating.

Mendes tried to go to the next agenda item without allowing public comment, but there were objections. First, Mendota Mayor and COG Vice Chair Victor Martinez said he was in support of the current proposal, which will help cities like his “catch up” after 20 years of under-investment.

Parlier Mayor Beltran said that it was critical to reach agreement, and when she countered Mendes’ assertion that she and others had met “in secret,” Mendes interrupted and angrily shouted incoherently at her.

Beltran admonished him that “we need to come together instead of arguing,” and that if there are two ballot measures, they will both fail.

Addressing Bredefeld, she said that “calling us ‘radicals,’ is not right.” She continued, “Why would anyone say that this is a ‘shit-show’ and that we are ‘radicals’?”

“We are trying to do what’s right, bring unity, and focus on our [neglected] rural communities,” concluded Beltran.

Bredefeld, clearly agitated, made free to insult Beltran by telling her that he was “not calling you a radical,” he was calling TFA, the group “she allowed to hijack” the process, “radicals.”

Last to speak was Kay Bertken from the League of Women Voters of Fresno: “I’m one of the ‘radicals’ on the steering committee,” she joked, noting that there was broad public support for the proposed plan and a 93% vote of the Steering Committee in support of it.

Regarding the 25% allocation for public transit, that figure represents residents’ polling results, she said. Over a 30-year plan, “people want a community that is not without options to the individual vehicle,” she noted.

The coming weeks will determine whether Bredefeld’s histrionic obstruction will nullify constituent-supported priorities.

\*\*\*\*\*

Rachel Youdelman is a former photography editor and lives in Clovis. She attended UC Berkeley, CalArts and Harvard University. Contact her at [rachel27@berkeley.edu](mailto:rachel27@berkeley.edu).

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
OF FRESNO  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Every Sunday  
9am: Exploration Hour  
10am: Worship  
*Bold. Proud. Progressive.*

[bigredchurch.org](http://bigredchurch.org) 2131 N. Van Ness Blvd.



COMMUNITY  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WE ARE AN **OPEN AND AFFIRMING**  
CHURCH WHERE ALL ARE WELCOME.

5550 N FRESNO ST • FRESNO CA 93710  
559.435.2690 • [communityucc.com](http://communityucc.com)



# COP30 Outcomes

BY DEBAY TADESSE

The United Nations holds an annual Conference of the Parties (COP), where world governments meet to discuss strategies for combating climate change. These conferences promote cooperation by sharing progress, setting new goals and developing global climate policies.

One major outcome of these efforts is the Paris Agreement, adopted by 196 countries in 2015 and effective since 2016. Its goal is to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C (2.7°F) this century. This landmark accord unites all nations under a legally binding commitment to reduce emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

If temperatures exceed this limit, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warns of harsher heat waves, droughts, floods and storms. These changes damage homes, reduce water supplies, destroy crops and threaten the lives of millions worldwide.

## Global Action and Solutions

Tackling climate change demands urgent, united action from governments, businesses and individuals. Nearly 200 nations have joined the Paris Agreement, aiming to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Though progress has been made, more substantial efforts are still needed to meet these goals and prevent severe impacts.

Adaptation measures—such as resilient infrastructure, habitat protection and disaster preparedness—help safeguard vulnerable communities. Investing in education, research and green technologies is also vital for sustainable progress.

Climate COPs play a key role by bringing together countries each year to share progress, strengthen commitments and highlight the importance of global cooperation.

## Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels

At COP28 in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), nations agreed to “transition away from fossil fuels” in a fair and orderly way to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. This marked a major breakthrough under the first Global Stocktake (GST). Governments also pledged to triple renewable energy and double energy efficiency by 2030.

At COP30, a key challenge remains: turning these commitments into action. Brazil, the host, aims to develop a road map for a just and planned transition away from fossil fuels and promote collaboration through its Action Agenda, involving governments, civil society and businesses.

Discussions will continue through initiatives such as the UAE Dialogue, the Just Transition Work Program and potential COP30 decisions to accelerate global progress on the energy transition.

## Outcome of COP30

Held in November 2025 in Belém, Brazil, COP30 marked a key turning point from climate ambition to implementation. Set against the backdrop of the Amazon rainforest, the summit highlighted the balance between economic growth, environmental protection and social justice.

Major outcomes focused on six priorities: adaptation, climate finance, forest and biodiversity protection, transparency and capacity building, local and digital climate action, and a fair transition away from fossil fuels.

## Advancing the Global Goal on Adaptation

A major success of COP30 was advancing the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA), a key part of the Paris Agreement. Delegates adopted a framework of nearly 100 voluntary indicators to track progress across areas such as water, food, health, biodiversity, infrastructure and livelihoods.

This framework provides a clearer way to assess resilience, especially for developing countries lacking data or

resources, and helps target global support more effectively. The inclusion of cultural and social dimensions made the approach more comprehensive, with the voluntary system seen as a practical step forward.

## Mobilizing Climate Finance

At COP30, nations reaffirmed the Baku–Belém Roadmap, aiming to mobilize \$1.3 trillion annually by 2035 for developing countries. The plan seeks stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors to meet global climate needs.

The Loss and Damage Fund, launched at COP27, became fully operational with a \$250 million start-up package—marking real progress from pledges to action.

COP30 also advanced efforts to improve transparency and accountability through a proposed platform to track global climate finance flows and ensure fair distribution.

## Protecting Forests and Biodiversity

At the heart of the Amazon, COP30—dubbed the “Forest COP”—highlighted the urgency of ending deforestation and restoring ecosystems.

Countries pledged to halt and reverse forest loss by 2030, while Brazil’s Belém 4x Initiative linked forest conservation with expanding sustainable bioenergy by 2035.

Nations from the Amazon, Congo/Africa and Southeast Asia agreed to cooperate on land use, financing and monitoring.

COP30 also emphasized that protecting forests supports climate stability, food and water security, and biodiversity worldwide.

## Transparency and Trust

Transparency and trust were key themes at COP30, which hosted the first High-Level Dialogue on Transparency under the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF). Countries shared progress reports to strengthen accountability.

A new Declaration on Information Integrity united governments, media and tech platforms in combating climate misinformation.

COP30 also advanced capacity-building efforts to help small islands and least developed nations improve climate data collection and reporting systems.

## Local Action and Digital Innovation

COP30 emphasized local and subnational climate action, launching the Green Digital Action Hub and AI Climate Institute to use technology and data for climate solutions. These platforms help communities, indigenous groups and local governments improve forest monitoring, early warning systems and climate-smart agriculture.

The summit also promoted sharing best practices among cities, highlighting the critical role of local action in achieving global climate goals.

## Unresolved and Contentious Issues

Despite progress, COP30 exposed ongoing divisions. The fossil fuel phaseout remained contentious, with developing countries seeking support and major emitters favoring a gradual, “orderly transition,” leading to cautious language urging parties to “accelerate the transition” without firm deadlines.

Adaptation finance also lacked binding enforcement, leaving questions about distribution and accountability.

In addition, tensions over indigenous participation and environmental justice highlighted ongoing challenges in achieving equitable and inclusive climate governance.

## Trump and International Climate Diplomacy

Since taking office in January 2025, President Trump has moved to withdraw the United States from the Paris Agreement, cut environmental regulations and roll back climate policies such as the Inflation Reduction Act.

These actions slow U.S. emission reductions, weaken global pressure on other countries to act and reduce climate finance for developing nations. Cuts in U.S. aid, along with

## OPINION & ANALYSIS



Graphic courtesy of The Commons

reductions from other wealthy nations, threaten ambitious climate action and trust in international negotiations.

Despite this, no other country has left the Paris Agreement, leaving the United States isolated in its withdrawal.

## Conclusion

COP30 marked a pivotal moment in global climate governance, signaling a clear shift from ambition to implementation. The conference made significant strides by advancing the Global Goal on Adaptation, operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund and placing forests, biodiversity and local communities at the heart of climate diplomacy.

It strengthened frameworks for transparency, information integrity and digital innovation, highlighting the growing recognition that climate action must be inclusive, data-driven and technologically supported.

Yet, COP30 also exposed enduring challenges. The absence of binding commitments to a fossil fuel phaseout and the lack of concrete mechanisms for distributing climate finance reveal persistent tensions between political feasibility and global climate ambitions.

Differences among nations, uneven capacities and debates over equity and justice underscore the complexities of translating international agreements into tangible outcomes.

Despite these gaps, COP30 will likely be remembered as a turning point, marking the shift from pledges to actionable frameworks. The success of these efforts now depends on effective implementation, including reducing emissions, enhancing resilience and supporting vulnerable communities.

As the world looks toward COP31 and beyond, the ultimate measure of COP30’s impact will be its ability to drive measurable climate progress, safeguard ecosystems and ensure a sustainable and equitable future for generations to come.

\*\*\*\*\*

Debay Tadesse has a Ph.D. in African studies, focusing on public policy and development, from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and an M.A. in African history and a B.A. in world history from Georgia State University in Atlanta. He currently lectures at Fresno State and Fresno City College.



*Chase Flower Shop*  
(559) 233-8631  
1405 N. Van Ness Ave  
Fresno, CA 93728

*World Wide Delivery*  
[www.chaseflowershop.com](http://www.chaseflowershop.com)

*Michael Butler*  
*Floral Design*



# FRESNO CENTER FOR NONVIOLENCE

[centerfornonviolence.org](http://centerfornonviolence.org)

- **Dedicated to Peace and Social Justice since 1992**
- **Catch our radio program, *Stir it Up*, on KFCF 88.1 FM every 2nd Wednesday at 3:00 p.m.**
- **Please consider supporting our work with a DONATION —>**
- **Scan the QR code to contribute today and stand with us for peace**

**1584 N. VAN NESS AVE  
FRESNO, CA 93728**



## FRESNO

National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) is a multi-partisan, multi-racial, prochoice grassroots organization dedicated to increasing women’s participation in the political process and creating a true women’s political power base to achieve equality for all women. Dinner meetings are the 1st Tuesday of each month at 5:30 pm social and dinner at 6:00 pm. For location, please check our website: [nwpcfresno.org](http://nwpcfresno.org).

PO Box 5553  
Fresno, CA 93755-5553  
[nwpcfresno.org](http://nwpcfresno.org)

**Contact: Cathy Brass 559-225-5433 (home) or 559-288-8973 (cell)**

**Women are the largest untapped reservoir of talent in the world.**  
— Hillary Clinton

In memory of our past president, Carol Bequette





# FRESNO WILPF

Womxn's International  
 League for Peace & Freedom

*One of our members recently visited Cuba for a few weeks.  
 Read her first-hand account of what's going on there.*

While I was in Cuba:

The eastern part of the island had just been devastated by a hurricane. No lives were lost due to Cuba's excellent organization for evacuation. While many lost everything, an intensive effort of government and citizens alike have been working to replace necessities. Many volunteers have gathered and donated supplies, even amidst their own US blockade-caused hardships.

Cuba is currently suffering from a serious, widespread outbreak of the mosquito-borne viral disease chikungunya. This is a direct result of the US blockade, which has so damaged the country's economy that the systematic and universal mosquito-abatement programs previously in place are no longer possible. (When I first visited the Biotechnology Institute in Havana, they told us, "We have discovered that there are no 'tropical diseases'; there are only diseases of poverty.") This current epidemic is a disease of induced poverty, deliberately created by the US in order to promote regime change. At least 12 people whom I know well are currently suffering the effects or after-effects of this disease.

Lilia Rielo Rodriguez died on November 11. She was one of the founding members of the Mariana Grajales Platoon, the women's contingent of the armed struggle of the Revolutionary Army. She and her sister Isabel, who became the leader of that platoon, joined the revolutionary struggle in 1957; she was 22 years old at the time.

Alena Douhan, the UN Special Rapporteur on the Negative Impact of Unilateral Coercive Measures on Human Rights, was in Cuba. She said that the US's unilateral sanctions against Cuba have a huge impact on every aspect of life on the island and must be lifted. The UN expert heard testimonies about the consequences of tightening sanctions since 2018, and how these increasing pressures on third countries deepen the fear of doing business with the island. Douhan warned that these measures have "shaped the economic and social landscape of the country," undermining the fundamental rights to life, health, food, and development.

The 50h anniversary of Operación Carlota was celebrated. Operación Carlota was the Cuban military assistance to Angola as they struggled to gain and maintain their independence in the face of an invasion by the army of apartheid South Africa, supported by the US.

Operation Carlota crushed the South African troops who invaded Angola and played an essential role in the liberation of Namibia and the elimination of Apartheid in South Africa. It was named for an enslaved heroine who was believed to have been brought to Cuba from Angola. Carlota was a Black enslaved woman of Lucumí origin who led an uprising on November 5, 1843, together with many other enslaved people in the Triunvirato sugar plantation in Matanzas Province in Cuba. The uprising spread to other sugar plantations throughout Matanzas, as well as to coffee plantations and cattle ranches. After a fierce but unequal battle, Carlota and her fellow rebels were taken prisoner by the Spanish army of colonial occupation. She, while still alive, was then tied to four horses and her body pulled apart, in a cruel effort to frighten others.

-Leni Villagomez Reeves



Desde la izquierda: Teté Puebla, Eloísa Ballester y Lilia Rielo durante la entrada a La Habana, 8 de enero de 1959. / Cortesía de Lilia Rielo.

## Action to take ASAP: Write this letter to your congressfolk!

Find your congressperson & their contact info:  
[www.house.gov/representatives/  
 find-your-representative](http://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)

As a constituent, I urge you to co-sponsor H.Res.876, which would formally recognize Israel's ongoing genocide of Palestinians in Gaza and call on the US to fulfill its legal obligations to prevent and punish genocide.

A virtual legal consensus has emerged that Israel's atrocities over the past two years constitute genocide. In January 2024, the International Court of Justice found it "plausible" that Israel committed genocide. Since then, the International Association of Genocide Scholars, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, ten leading Palestinian human rights organizations, and Israeli NGOs B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights Israel have reached the same conclusion.

H.Res.876 calls on the US to: cease weapons transfers to Israel that have been or could be used to commit genocide; ensure US individuals and corporations are not involved; impose targeted sanctions on those responsible; cooperate with the International Criminal Court and lift sanctions on it; and restore UNRWA funding.

By providing Israel over \$30 billion in weapons, the US has failed its legal obligation to prevent genocide. It's not too late to fulfill our responsibility to punish genocide as legally required.

H.Res.876 is an important first step. Thank you for considering co-sponsoring this resolution. I look forward to your response.

Women in Black protest:  
 Wed, Jan 7 @ 11:30am-1pm  
 2500 Tulare St  
 For more info contact Sue:  
[skern@netptc.net](mailto:skern@netptc.net)  
 559-349-3777

WILPF Monthly Meeting:  
 Thurs, Jan 8 @ 6:30pm  
 Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
 1584 N Van Ness Ave  
 For Zoom link email  
[lenivreeves@gmail.com](mailto:lenivreeves@gmail.com)  
 Open to all! Please join us.

Stir It Up on KCFR:  
 Wed, Jan 28 @ 3pm  
 Tune in to 88.1 FM as Jean Hays  
 highlights people and events  
 important to our WILPF  
 community.

"Valley Voices for Peace"  
 Check out our podcast!  
 Find us on SoundCloud & YouTube  
 thanks to a grant from WILPF US.

Find us on  
 social media!  
[@FresnoWILPF](https://www.instagram.com/FresnoWILPF)  
 Email our  
 president, Cam:  
[FresnoWILPF@pm.me](mailto:FresnoWILPF@pm.me)

## Join or Renew Membership

Membership is \$35/year at the normal rate  
 and \$20/year for those with low income.

For questions/to be added to our email list,  
 please reach out to:  
[kyla.noelle@gmail.com](mailto:kyla.noelle@gmail.com)  
[nhatcher46@gmail.com](mailto:nhatcher46@gmail.com)

Send dues to:  
 WILPF Fresno  
 P.O. Box 5114  
 Fresno, CA 93755



THE CONTENT IN THIS SECTION IS PAID FOR BY FRESNO WILPF.



# Community Alliance Fundraiser a Huge Success

BY MIKE RHODES

The Dec. 6 *Community Alliance* fundraiser filled the room with energy, diversity and optimism—and, best of all, raised enough funds to keep the newspaper in print for the foreseeable future.

The *Community Alliance* has always operated on a shoestring budget, yet we still face the same realities as any small publication: printing costs, payroll and the basic expenses that keep this “monthly miracle” alive. Now entering our 30th year, just a few months ago it was uncertain whether the paper could continue at all.

To stay afloat, we cut salaries, reduced the number of pages and eliminated every expense that wasn’t absolutely necessary. Even then, the financial strain remained severe. We’ve seen lean times before, but the strength of this community never ceases to amaze us.



Amy Arambula (seated at far right) sponsored a full table of eight, helping make the event a success. Photo by Chris Schneider



Anne Merrill at the Peace Fresno table. Photo by Diego Rivera

Each time we’ve faced a financial crisis, our readers have stepped up—and this year they did so more generously than ever. Supporters purchased eight full tables (eight seats each) at \$400 per table. A surprise donation of \$5,000 arrived in the mail from one generous contributor. During the event, a \$2,000 matching challenge was announced and quickly surpassed. By the end of the evening, nearly \$25,000 had been raised—with additional contributions still coming in.

This success is humbling and inspiring. The continued support of our readers keeps the *Community Alliance*—the Valley’s only local, independent and progressive newspaper—in print. Our mission remains unchanged: to deliver honest, reliable journalism; to expose corruption; to give the voiceless a platform; and to build momentum for peace, social justice and economic equality.

¡Sí Se Puede!

\*\*\*\*\*

Mike Rhodes is a founder of the *Community Alliance* newspaper and has served as editor and executive director during the newspaper’s 29-year history. Contact him at [mikerhodes@comcast.net](mailto:mikerhodes@comcast.net).

## The Icemen Cometh

BY BAYARD TAYLOR

In the 1939 play *The Iceman Cometh* by Eugene O’Neill, the “iceman” symbolizes a harsh truth that dispels illusions.

In our time, the ICE branch of the federal government, along with the Border Patrol, are hard at work dispelling illusions that we grew up with, such as the United States is a nation that welcomes immigrants, that it operates by the rule of law and that it respects constitutionally protected civil rights.

Instead, ICE and the Border Patrol are regularly, violently and with impunity trampling those expectations, aspirations and rights. This isn’t happening in far-flung places around the country. It’s happening right here in the Central Valley.

You’ve seen the videos and read the news reports. Let’s recount some of them here.

ICE and Border Patrol agents are using Gestapo-like tactics on suspected immigrants and citizens alike.

Masked ICE and Border Patrol agents in plain clothes are refusing to identify themselves while they arrest people.

They are cruising the streets in unmarked cars, racially profiling people, violently accosting them and “disappearing” their victims to undisclosed locations.

They are shooting peaceful protestors with chemical bullets and even with real bullets, then covering up their crimes.

They are tear-gassing nonviolent crowds that gather to video and record these atrocities.

ICE and Border Patrol have painfully zip-tied children while their parents are ripped away from them. They are beating mothers in front of their children.

They are body-slamming grandfathers and grandmothers to the ground, breaking bones and sending people to the hospital.

Detained people are suffering in miserable conditions and are even dying in custody of ICE private-contractor for-profit prisons.

Asylum seekers who gather to do day labor, who work in meatpacking houses, who are tending or harvesting crops, who are going to their asylum or naturalization hearings or who are trying to buy food or pick up their children from school are being swept up in this hateful, racist mania to deport dark people.

These assaults, which have all the aspects of a mass, indiscriminate, racist-based hate campaign, are nothing other than government-sponsored domestic terrorism.

It’s bad enough that nobody is being held accountable for ICE and Border Patrol criminality. It’s worse that in some parts of the country, local law enforcement is actually “serving and protecting” ICE and Border Patrol agents—rather than serving and protecting the local communities who pay their salaries.



ICE agents in a raid. Photo courtesy of Creative Commons

This situation is an ugly betrayal and a grotesque inversion of priorities. It is an egregious breach of trust. It is unjustifiable, unacceptable and intolerable.

Kidnapping is a felony. Child abuse is a felony. Bashing people’s heads to the pavement under color of law is a wicked abuse of power. Shooting peaceful protesters in the head with pepper balls is lethally dangerous. Spraying people with mace can cause permanent eye damage. Detaining people without a warrant violates civil rights and due process. Using military-style tactics against unarmed civilians is unconstitutional. Having “law” officers violently attacking the public like this threatens the peace of the nation.

Fortunately, there are some places around the country where law enforcement leaders are standing up for their local communities and resisting Trump’s efforts to drag us all into a police state.

For example, the chief of police in New Orleans has said that their police department is going to protect the civil rights of immigrants in that city. Similarly, the Minneapolis police chief has gone on the record to say their police department will not coordinate and cooperate with ICE. And New York City Mayor-Elect Zohran Mamdani has released a three-minute video, in Spanish, informing immigrants of their legal rights.

But words are not enough. Lawless ICEmen are not just “coming,” they are already here. According to reports, the Fresno Police Department actively “partners” with ICE and the Border Patrol.

The Uniform Code of Military Justice declares that a soldier’s duty is not to comply with illegal orders, but to disobey them. Just so, local law enforcement has a duty not to comply with or cooperate with ICE and Border Patrol violations of the law.

The responsibility for protecting civil rights doesn’t fall completely to local police and sheriffs. Courageous citizens around the country have mobilized to form “rapid response teams.” These teams of volunteers alert local communities of impending or active ICE and Border Patrol deportation raids. They videotape and document unlawful and brutal actions. What might have been done in secret is now exposed through social media to the light of day.

By fighting together for the civil rights of our immigrant neighbors, we preserve our democracy against those who want to destroy it. An added bonus: We can become “icemen” to Trump’s desire to crush all dissent and to turn the United States into a white nationalist authoritarian state.

\*\*\*\*\*

Bayard Taylor is an activist and someone who’s trying to unlearn white supremacy. Contact him at [bayardtaylor1@aol.com](mailto:bayardtaylor1@aol.com).





# SIERRA CLUB

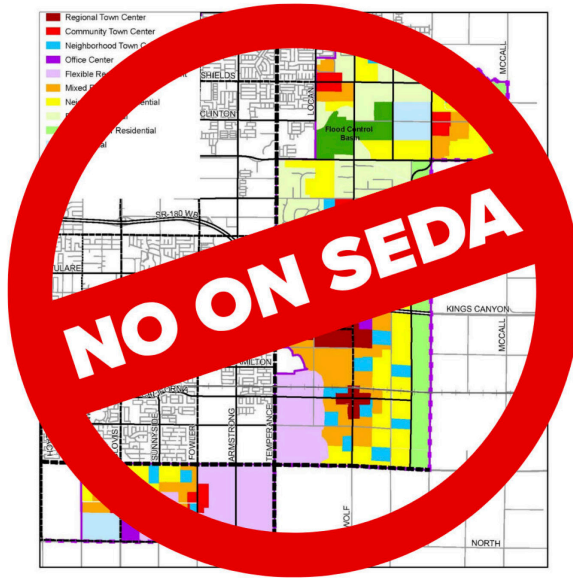
## TEHIPITE CHAPTER

PRO JOBS  
PRO HOUSING  
PRO FARMLAND

NO ON SEDA

More than 330 people crowded into Fresno City Hall for a marathon 7-hour Dec. 18 meeting for the anticipated City Council vote on the Southeast Development Project (SEDA). *But in the end, no Council member except Mike Karbassi expressed their unqualified support, and the project was sent back to the Mayor and city planners for revision.*

The result was a tremendous victory for the **No on SEDA coalition**, twenty organizations and neighborhood associations from across the city. The City of Fresno's population is



forecast to level off over the next four decades, and unless the City invests in our existing residents, even middle-class property values will drop as our neighborhoods slide into disrepair.

If only shiny new developments on the City's periphery receive funding, then more water and sewer lines will break, more streetlights will go dark, and middle-class property values in existing neighborhoods will decline.

We want **SMART GROWTH**, not **DUMB GROWTH**. As our City and County continue to chase quick-buck solutions, developers profit and our existing neighborhoods starve for infrastructure investment.

The proposed Southeast Development Area (SEDA) carries a potential \$3 billion funding gap for its infrastructure costs, which will ultimately be burdened by Fresno taxpayers and lead to the neglect of existing city neighborhoods. **The clock is ticking.**

Even Fresno Mayor Jerry Dyer has acknowledged it: for decades, we've been subsidizing developers. It's past time for Fresno to invest in the needs of our residents and existing neighborhoods: **Just Say No to SEDA!**

**CITY LEADERS WANT  
TO BANKRUPT  
OUR CITY.**

**WE CAN STOP  
THIS, TOGETHER.**

LEARN MORE at [GreenfieldCoalition.org](https://GreenfieldCoalition.org)

SIGN UP to STAY INFORMED  
at [FightFresnoSeda.org](https://FightFresnoSeda.org)



### FREE PUBLIC LECTURE

***Western Flyer: Living Legend, Global Legacy***  
Thursday, Jan. 15 at 7:00 PM, on Zoom

The Tehipite Chapter of the Sierra Club will host Sherry Flumerfelt, Executive Director of the Western Flyer Foundation, who will talk about programs that unite art, science, and education aboard the historic *Western Flyer*, now docked in Monterey Bay. Eighty-five years ago, author John Steinbeck and marine biologist Ed Ricketts set out aboard the fishing vessel *Western Flyer* on the journey that inspired *The Log from the Sea of Cortez*. This presentation will feature archival images, insider stories, and highlights from the remarkable rebirth of this local legend with a global legacy.

To receive the Zoom link and watch the presentation, go to [sierraclub.org/tehipite](https://sierraclub.org/tehipite) and **REGISTER IN ADVANCE**. The Zoom link will be sent the afternoon of January 15 to those who have pre-registered. Questions? Contact [ecuagirl45@yahoo.com](mailto:ecuagirl45@yahoo.com).



Credit: Patrick Webster



# History of the 99 Freeway

BY JULIANNA MORANO

[Editor’s note: This story was originally published by Fresnoland, a nonprofit news organization.]

A new report from the UCLA Institute of Transportation Studies looks at the scale of destruction wrought by Highway 99 when it was built through West Fresno in the 1950s, as well as the alternative routes community leaders pushed for back then.

Kathy Omachi used to wonder why there was no D Street in Fresno’s Chinatown.

The street names otherwise went in order from A to G in the West Fresno neighborhood, then continued through the alphabet in downtown proper.

Omachi later learned that there indeed used to be a D Street—but that was all before State Route 99 came along. The north-south freeway was built over what was once D Street in the 1950s, taking down hundreds of West Fresno homes with it.

“They wiped out two full blocks,” said Omachi, whose grandfather once ran a pool hall in Chinatown. “Where you see the freeway now going through, those were all houses.

“All of those people had to relocate,” she said. “They had to find other places to live.”

The UCLA report helps quantify just how destructive the freeway’s construction was for West Fresno.

Four hundred homes were demolished to make way for the freeway’s construction, touted by state transportation planners at the time as the area’s “first real freeway” that would benefit Fresno’s economy. Those demolitions forced the displacement of roughly 1,000 West Fresno residents, UCLA researchers estimate.

But the report also approximates how much of that destruction could have

been avoided—had state officials instead selected one of the alternative routes that West Fresno community leaders pushed for back then.

“The more destructive route was chosen in Fresno,” said Jacob Wasserman, the project manager for the UCLA study.

“We found evidence of chambers of commerce and a (former) Congressman that was advocating for bypass routes that bypassed downtown Fresno and West Fresno altogether,” he added. “But those voices were not heard.”

This chapter in West Fresno history—from 1949, when state officials announced the selection of the D Street route, to 1957, when construction was complete—is one that fewer and fewer surviving Fresno residents were around to see.

But its impacts can be seen and felt to this day.

“It just created a further geographic isolation of West Fresno,” said Veronica Stumpf, a realtor whose family has roots in West Fresno’s Germantown that once thrived before the 99 cut it in half.

Communities like Germantown virtually vanished from West Fresno as former residents scattered north. West Fresno’s overall population began a decades-long downward spiral.

For the advocates picking up the pieces roughly 70 years later, this historic legacy is always present—but it doesn’t stop them from fighting for West Fresno.

“That freeway is there. How we address its impact today,” said Jan Minami, project manager for the Chinatown Fresno Foundation, “is what’s important.”

### How the 99 Reshaped West Fresno

Before the 99 tore them up, West Fresno was home to extremely diverse neighborhoods. Japanese, Chinese, Italian, German, Mexican and Black communities—to name a few—settled in the area, many because the city’s racist housing policies forced them west of the railroad tracks.



State Route 99 viewed from an overpass in West Fresno’s Chinatown neighborhood on Dec. 3, 2025. Photo courtesy of Julianna Morano/Fresnoland

Stumpf’s family was among them. Her father’s side put down roots in Fresno’s Germantown in 1898 after living on the Volga River in Russia for 150 years.

“Russia was becoming a harder and harder place to live,” she said, as Russian leaders rolled back promises to German immigrants. “So in 1898 they packed things up, moved from Russia to Fresno, and Germantown was their first home.”

Their neighborhood was roughly bounded by Church, Mono, G and Fruit streets, according to City documents.

From her family’s stories, Stumpf said she heard of a tight-knit community of newcomers to the United States. They owned a home in Germantown and went to Lutheran Cross Church.

But when the freeway sliced up Germantown, the Stumpfs and other families scattered into the Fresno High and Tower District neighborhoods.

“They had the privilege and the financial means to move north,” she said.

“I don’t know if they received any relocation assistance,” she added. “I’m not too sure about that. But my understanding was that they were homeowners.”

Among the West Fresno residents that relocated within the city in the wake of the freeway’s construction, the report found that, overall, more white residents left West Fresno while residents of color stayed in the west area.

“Non-Hispanic white immigrants were economically and socially assimilating in that era,” the report continues, “which provided them with more opportunities to leave West Fresno.”

On the other hand, as West Fresno areas like Germantown became more affordable with the economic “devastation” brought on by the 99, more residents of color moved in.

Racially restrictive covenants legally barred people of color in Fresno and other cities from moving north in the ensuing decades before those practices were banned in 1968 under the Fair Housing Act.

### An Alternate Route?

D Street was the route ultimately chosen by state transportation officials, largely due to economic factors, the UCLA report notes.

State engineers’ reasons included cheaper land acquisition costs, as well as

Continued to page 14

# PEACEfresno

## STOP ICE RAIDS!

## No war on Venezuela!

End genocide in Gaza;  
FREE PALESTINE!

Join our protests  
each Saturday:  
3:00-4:30pm  
Blackstone & Nees

Everyone is welcome  
at our meetings!  
Every 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday  
6:30pm Fresno Center for Nonviolence  
1584 N Van Ness Ave @ McKinley  
Our next meeting is January 24<sup>th</sup>

To receive our emails:  
[ken.hudson@peacefresno.org](mailto:ken.hudson@peacefresno.org)  
[www.peacefresno.org](http://www.peacefresno.org)  
559-513-0199

# Got CBD?

100% Effective  
Natural  
0% THC

100% Affordable

Contact: [smiley](mailto:smileycalderon@gmail.com)  
[smileycalderon@gmail.com](mailto:smileycalderon@gmail.com)

## STRATEGY + VISION

# PAUL E. PIERCE

BOARD/STAFF DEVELOPMENT

PRODUCTIVE MEETINGS

STRATEGIC PLANNING

[PAUL@PAULEPIERCE.COM](mailto:PAUL@PAULEPIERCE.COM)

559 246 7236

## Tower Live 2.0

### Live Music Broadcast from the Vista Theatre

Jan. 9 2026  
7-9 PM

# KFCF 88.1 FM

FRESNO ARTS COUNCIL  
MEASURE P  
EXPANDED ACCESS TO  
ARTS & CULTURE

Plus KFCF has great music, and arts too.  
Program guide at [www.kfcf.org](http://www.kfcf.org)





## Programa de Certificación de Trabajadores de Salud Comunitaria

Programa de Avance de los Trabajadores Agrícolas

*¿Estás listo(a) para poner en práctica tu experiencia de vida y fortalecer tus capacidades para apoyar a tu comunidad?*

### ¡Conviértete en un Trabajador de Salud Comunitario!

#### Obtén una Certificación y:

- Crea tu currículum de trabajo
- Mejora tus habilidades de comunicación
- Aprende a brindar educación para la salud
- Conéctate con nuevas oportunidades de trabajo

Recibe un incentivo de

**\$1,100**

al completar el programa

#### Requisitos Necesarios Para Participar:

- Trabajador del campo, lecherías o emparadoras o eres dependiente de alguien que trabaja o trabajó en una de estas industrias (actualmente o en los últimos 12 meses)
- Tener permiso para trabajar en los Estados Unidos (ciudadano/a, residente permanente, etc.)
- 18 años de edad o más
- Vivir en el condado de Fresno o Madera

Para obtener más información:



**Julianna Bejar**

jbejar@fresnobhc.org  
559.256.8722 ext. 121

*This Farmworker Advancement Program is funded by grant awards totaling \$985,200 (83%) from the U.S. Department of Labor, with \$199,572 (17%) financed from non-federal sources.*



## Community Health Worker Certification Program

Farmworker Advancement Program

*Are you ready to use your lived experience and strengthen your skills to help your community?*

### Become a Community Health Worker!

#### Earn Certification and:

- Build your resume
- Strengthen your communication skills
- Learn how to provide health education
- Connect to new job opportunities

Receive

**\$1,100**

Incentive at Completion

#### Eligibility Requirements to Participate:

- Work in dairy, farmwork, or packing industries, or be a dependent of someone who works or worked in one of these industries (now or within the last 12 months)
- Have authorization to work in the U.S. (US Citizen, Green Card holder, etc.)
- At least 18 years of age
- Live in Fresno or Madera County

For more information:



**Julianna Bejar**

jbejar@fresnobhc.org  
559.256.8722 ext. 121

*This Farmworker Advancement Program is funded by grant awards totaling \$985,200 (83%) from the U.S. Department of Labor, with \$199,572 (17%) financed from non-federal sources.*



## Reset, Refuel, and Re-Energize for 2026 with West Fresno Family Resource Center(WFFRC)!

Happy New Year! With the new year comes new beginnings! It is time to reset and achieve your new year's resolution!

WFFRC offers essential services for the community including:

- Workforce development and Job Support
- Health and Wellness Services
- Family Matters Support Group
- Housing Assistance
- Immigration Support
- And More!



WFFRC is launching the **Intergenerational Arts Healing Project** to assist underserved youth and adults impacted by mental health challenges to express themselves through the arts! This program is funded in part by the City of Fresno Measure P Expanded Access to Arts and Culture Fund through Fresno Arts Council! Scan the QR Code for program information!



<https://www.wfresnofrc.org>



559-374-5750



700 Van Ness  
Avenue Suite 201,  
Fresno, CA 93721

### Upcoming Events:

1/7/2026- Savings and Budgeting Workshop at 700 Van Ness Avenue Fresno, CA 93721 10-11am

Weekly Food Distribution  
Every Thursday  
1/8/26, 1/15/26, 1/22/26,  
1/29/26 1-3pm at 1825 S  
Delno Avenue Fresno CA  
93706

1/13/2026- Family Reading  
Night at Kirk Elementary  
School at 5:30-7:30pm

Wellness Wednesday at 1515  
E Annadale Avenue Fresno,  
CA 93706 10AM-12PM  
1/7/2026- Arts and Mental  
Health  
1/21/2026- Health Matters :  
Key Benefits for your Body  
and Mind!



# SCRUBCAN INC

CLEANING SOLUTIONS

## PROFESSIONAL CLEANING SERVICES FOR YOUR HOME

### Our Services

- ✓ Trash Can Cleaning
- ✓ Solar Panel Cleaning
- ✓ Pressure Washing



SCAN HERE

**BOOK YOUR SERVICE NOW!**



@scrubcan\_inc  
info@scrubcan.com  
559.375.5252



## WWW.SCRUBCAN.COM

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO DISCOVER OUR RESIDENTIAL CLEANING SERVICES!**

- ✓ EXPERTISE AND RELIABILITY
- ✓ PROFESSIONAL CLEANING SERVICES
- ✓ TRUSTED AND GUARANTEED



# Southeast Development Area

Continued from page 1

Dee Barnes, who worked for the Fresno Police Department, predicted that developer fees would not cover basic City services in the developed area.

“What the developer fees are not going to cover is the additional cost of the police officers’ cars and gasoline and the driving and the fire department, and the streetlights and the sidewalks and the streets.

“Count the number of vacant lots, empty boarded-up buildings. Look at the shopping centers where there’s nothing there. The stores that are closing.

“We need to fix Fresno. We need to fix the infill. We cannot afford to keep expanding.”

Danny Vartan was one of only two people at the Planning Commission meeting who spoke in favor of the project. His family owns land in the SEDA area, and he said the project would improve Fresno by stimulating population growth.

“This is probably the best plan that Fresno has ever developed. I think it would be a benefit for the whole city and a draw from other parts of the state to move to Fresno. And it’s only 12 minutes from downtown.”

Patience Milrod, a local attorney representing the Fresno-Madera-Kings-Tulare Central Labor Council, questioned the financial transparency and accountability of the SEDA plan.

“Where is the fiscal impact analysis? You are asking us to believe a whole lot of stuff that is by no means clear from any of the material that has been generated so far, including the financing options report, which shows that this is not a sustainable project.

“So where is the fiscal impact report that would give us some idea of what the real numbers actually are?”

The SEDA project is estimated to cost somewhere in the range of \$3 billion–\$4 billion that will have to be financed with bond measures. In other words, Fresno would borrow money to pay for the massive expansion with the city’s current residents footing the bill.

Matthew Jendian, a Fresno State sociology professor, focused on the winners and losers, saying that sprawl development

would come at the expense of current city residents.

“Development doesn’t just happen. It follows public investment that provides infrastructure to allow that development to be feasible.

“Just because land speculators purchased land in this particular Southeast Development Area doesn’t mean that our city needs to cater to them and invest millions of public dollars to extend city infrastructure and services so these developers can cash in on those land bets they made eight years ago or 20 years ago.”

Despite the facts and widespread public antagonism toward SEDA, the Planning Commission narrowly voted 4-3 to approve the immense 9,000-acre project. That set the stage for the City Council’s consideration.

Again, people from all walks of life and all over town packed the City Council chamber. After some comments and questions for planning staff from Council members, the mayor outlined the SEDA proposal.

Cognizant of the many problems that the public has with the South SEDA plan, Dyer presented some guardrails of accountability that would make it more palatable.

“In order to alleviate those concerns about urban sprawl, leapfrog development or developing outside of this initial phase, I am recommending to this Council that ironclad safeguards be put in place to address those concerns.

“Safeguards such as No. 1, 70% of the residential land must be developed before any future phases would be permitted in that sphere.

“No. 2, that we would require a supplemental environmental impact report for any future phases in the sphere.

“And No. 3, to require a voter referendum prior to any future phases being developed.

“In short, let the voters decide if there is a desire to go beyond the initial South SEDA area.”

People in the overflow crowd were mostly skeptical of the City’s planning process and wanted to see an accurate financial analysis and proof that the City’s analysis of water use and air quality impacts were factual.

Michael Matthew, a current resident in the SEDA region, was critical of the representations by City staff.

“I’m being told by City staff that traffic and vehicle miles traveled is being mitigated and the claims of Caltrans are unfounded. Yet, I could stand on the north border of my lot and see traffic on McKinley Avenue back up to its standstill every day, one-half mile from De Wolf Avenue to Leonard Avenue, as



Winter Orchard in the Southeast Development Area. Photo by Vic Bedoian

parents pick up their kids from the Bradley Center.

“I’m also told that [the] California Air Resources Board has no reason to worry about any air pollution planning. Staff says [that] we have plenty of water, yet I watched three neighbors within one-third of a mile of my place [have] wells go dry within the last three years.”

Matthew also brought up issues that resonated with other critics of SEDA. “The budget started at \$800 million and now the estimate is \$4.3 billion. How can anyone suggest that this project pays for itself with a \$3 billion shortfall?

“After 20 years, no one seems to be able to tell me the size or exactly where the trail will be located that splits my property in half. I just can’t accept any plan that at its core would compromise the food and water supply to the community that I’ve lived in for 77 years.

“The substance, fit and timing is wrong, and there’s nothing worth salvaging here. Scrap this plan today. Concentrate on infill and ample space that has already been set aside for development.”

Dan O’Connell, an expert on Valley agriculture, enumerated a series of environmental concerns that City planners have not addressed: “farmland preservation, greenhouse gas emissions, human health effects, water supply concerns, environmental justice exclusions, lack of affordable housing assurances and insufficient analysis of vehicle miles traveled, General Plan inconsistencies and procedural violations.”

Fresno schools would also be profoundly impacted according to Veva Islas, Board president of the Fresno Unified School District. “If SEDA is allowed to go forward, numerous negative impacts will arise for Fresno Unified schools and neighborhoods within Fresno Unified boundaries.

“So, whether the impact is 11 schools in the future or five schools today, the results are the same. There is a detriment to our schools, our students and our teachers.”

Manuel Bonilla, speaking as a parent of three Fresno students and president of the Fresno Teachers Association, backed up the risk the development plan poses for the city’s schools.

“SEDA would effectively subsidize growth primarily that would benefit Clovis Unified and Sanger Unified and [be] an indirect expense to Fresno Unified students.

“That’s not theoretical. That is the structural consequence of decisions like this.”

Dillon Savory, executive director of the Central Labor Council, called into question the information City Council members are using to justify SEDA. “I really want you all to question where you’re getting your facts from on this particular issue.

“We met with your City staff, and while the mayor wanted to agree to a lot of things, the city manager and the planning director continued to correct him that that was not legal or he couldn’t really do that. You can get more facts outside of your City staff.

“Please do your independent research, and note that the information you’re getting from inside the building is often jaded.”

Now the City’s planning staff has the task of coming up with a proposal for the scaled-back version of SEDA. That is expected to take about six months. Their analysis and due diligence will be sorely tested by a well-informed and questioning community.

\*\*\*\*\*

Vic Bedoian is the Central Valley correspondent for KPFA News and a Community Alliance reporter specializing in natural history and environmental justice issues.

PATIENCE MILROD

LAWYER/LICENCIADA EN LEYES

985 NORTH VAN NESS AVENUE FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93728

559.246.7239 PM@PATIENCEMILROD.COM

Parents, Families & Friends  
Allied with the LGBTQ+ Community

Meetings the 2nd Sunday  
of the month @2PM

At Wesley UMC  
1343 E. Barstow Ave  
Fresno CA 93710

www.PFLAGFresno.org  
(559) 434-6540  
pflagfresno@gmail.com

PFLAG  
FRESNO  
You Are Welcome!

MEDITATION FOR INNER  
PEACE & HAPPINESS

Raja Yoga is the most ancient form of meditation. You can learn to maintain stability of mind in stressful situations and gain more control over your life. Both individual and group instructions are available. No charge.

Monthly events:  
Women of Spirit & World Meditation Day.  
Call Veena Kapoor: (559) 435-2212  
Website: www.bkwsu.com

THE LAW OFFICE OF KEVIN G. LITTLE

30+ Years Fighting for the Underdog!

Civil Rights

Employment

Personal Injury

Medical Malpractice

Criminal Defense

Juvenile

Dependency

Family Law

1225 East Divisadero Street, Fresno, CA 93721  
Tel. (559) 342-5800, E-Mail: kevin@kevinglitttle.com  
www.kevinglitttle.com

With a record of success over more than two decades, the Law Office of Kevin G. Little is one of the preeminent small firms in Fresno and surrounding areas. We represent our clients in a variety of matters, including civil rights, employment, personal injury, general civil litigation, family law, bankruptcy, and criminal cases. Our firm also offers excellent mediation services in civil and family law matters. We approach each case with dedication, aiming to protect you and exceed your expectations. Call us today for a consultation and let us help.

JAN California 2013

GR8 R8

AUTO • HOME • BUSINESS

Worker's Comp  
Life Insurance  
LICENSE #0608912 / 0C13433

Good driver?  
GREAT RATE!

RMI

RioMesaInsurance.COM

292-2490

3134 Willow Ave., Suite 102 • Clovis, CA 93612



# Standing Together for Healthier Communities

BY CRISTINA GUTIERREZ

In 2025, families faced uncertainty, organizers felt exhaustion and frontline communities continued to live with the daily reality of pesticide exposure. Yet even amid struggle, the year reminded us of something powerful: When communities come together, change is possible.

In March, we saw firsthand what collective action looks like with the launch of the state’s SprayDays system, an effort rooted in transparency and community right-to-know.

We also witnessed the first Environmental Justice Advisory Committee (EJAC) meeting, which serves as a space for voices that have too often been excluded from pesticide regulatory decision-making. In conjunction with this meeting, residents in Lindsay gathered to host a watch party that brought together neighbors in reflection, learning and solidarity.

Another meaningful moment from last year was Californians for Pesticide Reform (CPR) leading a statewide press conference focused on 1,3-D, a cancer-causing pesticide still used in California. This was not just a press event—it was a moment where farmworker families, parents, advocates, union partners and community leaders from places like Lindsay and Mendota stood together to say that our health should never be the cost of agricultural production.

For too long, our Central Valley communities have carried the burden of environmental harm while being left out of the conversations that shape policy.

Children breathe air contaminated by pesticide drift. Farmworkers labor in conditions that put their health at risk. Parents worry about not only today but also what these



Community members gathered recently against the misuse of pesticides. Photo by Chris Schneider

exposures mean for their children’s futures. These are not abstract concerns—they are lived realities.

Despite the challenges, hope lives in these communities. It lives in the organizations that continue to show up, in the unions that stand in solidarity and in the residents who speak out even when their voices tremble. None of the progress made last year would have been possible without the commitment, trust and courage of the people behind this movement.

For 2026, we must continue to build stronger, broader coalitions. If voices are missing, we must invite them in. If communities are being overlooked, we must amplify them.

The fight for healthy communities continues, and we are stronger when we stand together. Our communities deserve nothing less.

Get involved, learn more or take action in the coming year. If you are part of a community group, organization, union, school or faith-based group and would like a presentation or conversation about environmental justice, pesticide reform or community health, contact [cristina@pesticidereform.org](mailto:cristina@pesticidereform.org). Join the coalition to collaborate and discuss ideas on how to advance environmental justice in California.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Cristina Gutierrez was a farmworker and is a mother of four. She advocates for voter rights here and in Mexico. Currently, she is the San Joaquin Valley regional environmental justice coordinator of Californians for Pesticide Reform.*

## History of the 99

Continued from page 10

“the potential for business development in West Fresno that they believed the freeway could bring,” the report says.

But before that, an alternative route was also considered along G Street, closer to the railroad tracks.

That route would have displaced “less than half” the number of households as the D Street route, according to the report.

As many as 2,000 West Fresno community members spoke out against the D Street route and urged leaders to consider alternatives, researchers found through newspaper articles and other archives.

That included former Rep. Bertrand Gearhardt, who called the D Street route a “sentence of death on West Fresno’s community life.”

The West Fresno Chamber of Commerce, which the report says was formed in 1949 “as a direct response” to the D Street route and claimed more than 200 members, staged some of the most well-documented opposition.

West Fresno religious leaders were also some of the “earliest and most vocal opponents,” the report adds, as many of their houses of worship were in the path of the D Street route.

These opposition efforts came at a time when state agencies largely weren’t yet “forced” to undertake robust community engagement processes, said Paul Ong, one of the report’s authors and director of the UCLA Center for Neighborhood Knowledge.

“There’s no question in early freeway development, planning, building—that state agencies were not held responsible for lots of things,” he said.

Even with the few opportunities that existed for the public to weigh in, some forces held more weight with state planners than others.

That included “powerful economic agents” like the railroad industry, Ong said, which held more influence at the time. The report also notes that the central Fresno Chamber of Commerce and Merchants Association supported the D Street route, unlike the West Fresno merchants.

These outcomes don’t surprise Omachi, looking back.

“It was in the community with really no political representation, no political power, no economic muscle,” she said, “and it was the easiest route for them to go through.”

**West Fresno Today**

The highway’s construction and the housing destroyed in its wake helps explain the beginning of a “downward population spiral” for West Fresno, the report says.

Within two decades of when the route was selected, “West Fresno’s population decreased by 42 percent compared to two decades earlier.”

“By 1980,” the report continues, “it had dropped to less than half of the 1950 population.”

This set the stage for some of the biggest obstacles to revitalization efforts for areas like Chinatown.

“It’s difficult to build (and) revitalize a commercial neighborhood without a residential population,” said Minami, whose organization works to support both commercial and housing development in Chinatown.

Stumpf, whose family now has a real estate business, said she sees the difference in her work, too.

“In Chinatown,” she said, “a property might be worth \$50 per square foot, max. But then if you cross the train tracks into another part of downtown, the central business district, that same building is probably worth \$100 per square foot—maybe \$125 per square foot.”

“You can clearly see how the train tracks and the freeway 99 definitely create a barrier when it comes to real estate values.”

Some critics also hear echoes of this in more contemporary state infrastructure projects like the embattled high-speed rail. The controversial bullet train—which has both supporters and detractors in Chinatown—is supposed to have a station in Fresno with entrances from both downtown to the east and Chinatown to the west.

Omachi, a vocal critic of the project, is worried to see the state acquiring properties in Chinatown again and displacing businesses that give a window back into the neighborhood’s past.

“Someone brought up with me the issue of (how) all these other countries have high-speed rail, like Japan. I said, yes, but they also acknowledge...what they’ve lost to do that,” she said.

“They also went through many historic areas or low-income (communities).”

But advocates also see hopeful paths forward for neighborhoods like Chinatown.

Minami said it’s her dream to get a freeway cap built over the 99 in Chinatown to help restore walkability in the neighborhood.

Other cities like San Diego and Denver have built so-called caps or lids over freeways and built parks overtop them in efforts to reconnect communities that were severed by major roadways.

Despite her fears for its future, a love of the neighborhood also fuels Omachi’s fierce efforts to preserve Chinatown history, even after the state literally paved over some of it.

Omachi didn’t get to see much of the Chinatown her own father, or his father before him, spent time in. Her family relocated to become sharecroppers, and then the highway came in.

But she cherishes the stories her father told of her grandfather’s participation in a sumo ring in Chinatown, or his days studying at the old Fresno Buddhist Temple—even if as a kid, the stories went in one ear and out the other.

Her preservation efforts now, she said, are “in honor of him.”

\*\*\*\*\*

*Julianna Morano joined Fresnoland in 2023 as a labor and economy reporter, covering everything from unions, to small business concerns, economic development initiatives and the arts economy. Prior to joining Fresnoland, Morano held reporting roles at the Fresno Bee, the Virginian-Pilot and the Dallas Morning News. Morano is originally from the Midwest and is a graduate of the University of Michigan.*



**root access**  
Community Hackerspace  
and Makerspace

3D Printing • Laser Cutting • Electronics • Technology  
Sewing & Fiber Arts • Workshop • ...and more!

Proudly located in the Tower District at 1476 N. Van Ness Ave.  
Check us out online at [rootaccess.org](http://rootaccess.org)






Affordable Eastern style yoga  
for all levels of experience  
6 classes per week  
both online and at  
Community United  
Church of Christ  
5550 N Fresno Street

[www.yogacenteroffresno.com](http://www.yogacenteroffresno.com) current schedules available on  
California non-profit our website & our Facebook page

Join us for a quiet time in a busy day.

**KENNEDY CLUB OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY**  
Founder: Lawrence J. Kelly

The Kennedy Club  
of the San Joaquin Valley

Meeting and Discussing  
Democratic Ideas Since 1997

*Kennedy Club meets 1st Saturday of each month.  
9:00am to 11:00am. Please Join Us!*

More Information: [fresnocountydemocrats.org](http://fresnocountydemocrats.org)

**Helping to Preserve  
Fresno’s Pictorial History**

**HOWARD K. WATKINS**  
Fresno’s Photo Laureate  
[www.watkinsphotoarchive.com](http://www.watkinsphotoarchive.com)

**(559) 355-7040**  
[howardkwatkins@gmail.com](mailto:howardkwatkins@gmail.com)



FRESNO ARTS & CULTURE

JANUARY 2026 CALENDAR

WEEKLY

**Fort Washington Farmers Market** (Sundays) 10 a.m.–2 p.m. Fort Washington Shopping Center. Local products.

**Sunday Jams** (Sundays) 4 p.m.–7 p.m. California Catering. Live music.

**Acoustic Honkey Tonk Jam** (Mondays) 4 p.m.–6 p.m. Santa Fe Basque. Hosted by E.Z. Marc.

**River Park Farmers Market** (Tuesdays) 5 p.m.–9 p.m. River Park. California certified-fresh market.

**Open Mic Night** (Tuesdays) 7:30 p.m.–2 a.m. Strummer’s. Open mic 7:30 p.m., karaoke 9:30 p.m. Free

**Kenny Hall’s Friends** (Wednesdays) 5 p.m.–7 p.m. Santa Fe Basque. Old-time music song circle.

**Pass the Aux** (Wednesdays) 8:30 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Strummer’s. Open-format DJ night.

**Arte, Pero Later** (Thursdays) 6 p.m.–8 p.m. Arte Américas. From live music to bilingual book club.

**01** **Linda Lomahaftewa** (~Jan. 11) Fresno Art Museum. The Hopi/Choctaw artist’s works are featured.

**Stone Sculpture of Zimbabwe** (~Jan. 11) Fresno Art Museum. Stone carvings from Zimbabwe.

**The Fruit of Life** (~Jan. 11) Fresno Art Museum. New works by local painter Eliana Saucedo.

**Something Rotten** (~Jan. 18) Roger Rocka’s. Set in 1595 England, struggling playwrights want to unseat Shakespeare. \$45+

**Renaissance** (~Feb. 1) Fig Tree Gallery. Featuring member artists.

**02** **Sherlock Holmes and the Adventure of the Elusive Ear** (~Feb. 22) 2nd Space Theatre. \$29.49

**K-Pop Night!** 8 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Strummer’s. DJ theme party. \$15

**03** **Bilingual Story Time** 10 a.m. Arte Américas. Free  
**Nate Butler at the Silent Movies** 7 p.m. Vista Theater. Classic silent movies with live piano music.

**I Love R&B: Violin on Fire** 9 p.m. The Rosé. Featuring Patrick Contreras (“see Arts Profile”). \$17.85+

**07** **Close Enemies** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. With Tom Hamilton of Aerosmith. \$32+

**09** **15-Year Anniversary Kickoff Party** 7:30 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Fulton 55. With Let’s Go Bowling. \$27+

**10** **A Pen of Your Heritage** 10:30 a.m. Dulce UpFront. Pareu creation and painting workshop. Registration required.

**Old Time Fiddlers & Music Jam** 2 p.m.–4 p.m. Santa Fe Basque. Free

**Bobby Lee** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Comedian. \$32+

**Irish & Breton Session** 1 p.m.–3 p.m. La Boulangerie. Open session of Irish and Breton tunes. Free

**11** **The Special Consensus** 4 p.m. Tower Theatre. With Ripe for Pickin’. \$32+

**13** **Silent Book Club** 6:30 p.m. Dulce UpFront. Bring a book, your reading list and a friend.

**15** **ArtHop** 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Fresno Metro Area. Exhibitions, gallery shows, special performances and unique art experiences. Free

**16** **Candlelight: Vivaldi’s Four Seasons** 6:15 p.m. The Grand 1401. Performed by the Listeso String Quartet. \$32+

**Inner Ear Beat Down Slams** 7 p.m.–9 p.m. River Park Art Groove. 7 p.m. open mic, 7:30 p.m. slam.

**LSD & the Search for God** 7 p.m.–11 p.m. Strummer’s. Underground psychedelic shoegaze band. \$32+

**Metalachi** 8 p.m.–11 p.m. Fulton 55. Heavy metal mariachi band. \$32+

**Candlelight: Tribute to Fleetwood Mac** 8:30 p.m. The Grand 1401. Performed by the Listeso String Quartet. \$33.60+

**17** **Volunteer Day** 8:30 a.m.–noon. Shinzen Friendship Garden. Contribute to the care of this beautiful space.

**Bilingual Story Time** 10 a.m. Arte Américas. Free

**Seasons of Stories Book Club** 1 p.m.–3 p.m. Shinzen Friendship Garden. Literature inspired by Japanese culture. Free

**Jazz Jam Session** 4 p.m.–7 p.m. Vibez Lounge. Rick Heller’s Trio Expression. Free

**Motley Crue Tribute** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. \$24+

**18** **Sunday Night Blues Jam** 6 p.m.–9 p.m. Club One Casino. Featuring the Richie Blue Band. Free

**Jamie Lissov: Better Off Dad** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Actor and comedian. \$24+

**20** **Jazz at the Library** 6:30 p.m.–8 p.m. Woodward Park Library. Live jazz performance.

**21** **Why Not Wednesday?** 5 p.m.–9 p.m. Fulton St. (Mono to Fresno). Vendors, food trucks, artists and live music.

**Art Grooves Got Jokes** 7 p.m.–9 p.m. River Park Art Groove. 7 p.m. open mic, 7:30 p.m. comedian talent contest.

**22** **Trevor Wallace** 7:30 p.m. Warnors Theatre. The Alpha Beta Male Tour. \$52.55+

**Gary Owen** 8 p.m. Saroyan Theatre. No Hard Feelings Tour. \$45+

**23** **Mary Poppins** (~March 22) Roger Rocka’s. This family favorite is “supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.” \$45+

**24** **An Evening with Black Flag** 8 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Strummer’s. \$34+

**Rob Schneider** 8 p.m. Tower Theatre. Rescue Husband Tour. \$65+

**28** **Martin Amini** 7:30 p.m. Tower Theatre. I’m Not Toxic, I’m Healing Tour. \$46+

**29** **Disney on Ice: Let’s Dance** (~Feb. 1) Selland Arena. DJ remix of favorite Disney tunes. \$32+

**30** **Ailey II from New York City** 7:30 p.m. Tower Theatre. Forging a new path for contemporary dance.

**Katt Williams** 8 p.m. Save Mart Center. The Golden Age Tour. \$85+

**Rian’s Riot Fest 2** 7 p.m.–11:30 p.m. Strummer’s. \$21+

**31** **Nick Hexum** 8 p.m. Fulton 55. With Water Tower. \$43+

Submit arts-related events to [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](mailto:calendar@fresnoalliance.com) by the 15th of the month preceding publication, or you can post anytime online at [fresnoalliance.com](http://fresnoalliance.com) (select Calendar).

ARTS PROFILE

Violin on Fire

Patrick Contreras has never been interested in playing it safe. Known widely as Violin on Fire, the Fresno-born electric violinist has built a reputation for transforming any space—walkways, clubs, theaters, festival grounds—into an electrifying mini-concert.

His strolling performances stop crowds mid-stride, blending fiery Latin rhythms, pop favorites and jaw-dropping violin solos into a high-energy experience that feels both intimate and explosive. With his signature up-close style, Contreras connects instantly with audiences of all ages, turning every corner into a stage and every moment into a show.

Raised in Fresno, Contreras forged his own musical identity by fusing genres that rarely share the same stage. His sound draws from hip hop, mariachi, rock, soul, jazz, electronic, classical, blues and EDM—an eclectic mix that has made him one of the violin’s most distinctive rising stars.

Whether performing his original music or reimagining icons like Jimi Hendrix, Led Zeppelin and Carlos Santana, Contreras delivers performances that are as technically dazzling as they are emotionally charged. One local musician summed it up well after hearing him at a B.B. King tribute: “He’s truly amazing. He can make an acoustic violin sound like an electric guitar.”

Contreras’ artistic evolution has only accelerated in recent years. His expansion into EDM and hip hop earned him a feature on World Star Hip Hop and opened doors to collaborations across genres. He has shared stages with artists as varied as Johnny Mathis, Datsik, The Wailers, Porter Robinson and Salvador Santana.

His acoustic blues interpretations of Hendrix have been recognized among select Hendrix recordings, and his international reach grew after he was invited to create a video supporting an African nonprofit following a visit to West Africa.

His influences reflect the breadth of his sound: Hendrix, Carlos Santana, Astor Piazzolla, Rachmaninov, Itzhak Perlman, Miles Davis, Lila Downs, Ravi Shankar, Stephane Grappelli, Eazy-E, Amy Winehouse, Daft Punk, Buena Vista Social Club, Eminem, Beethoven, Jacqueline du Pré, Buika, Paco de Lucia, Vicente Amigo, Nero and Deadmau5. This wide-ranging palette fueled projects like *El Violin*, which blends mariachi, rock, soul and hip-hop into a bold new musical language.

KVPR captured his genre-defying artistry well: some call him a rock violinist, others a jazz musician, still others a blues or Latin artist. In truth, Contreras is all of these at once—and something entirely his own.

The future continues to burn bright for Violin on Fire. Wherever he goes, Contreras brings a sound that is unmistakable, uncontrollable and unforgettable.

Catch Contreras/Violin on Fire on Jan. 3 at The Rosé (see listing in the arts calendar).



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.

VENUES

2nd Space Theatre • 928 E. Olive Ave. • 559-266-0660	Fig Tree Gallery • 644 Van Ness Ave. • 559-485-0460 / figtreegallery.us	River Park’s Art Groove Event Center • 80 E. Via Del Oro • 559-840-8886	Selland Arena • 700 M St. • 559-621-8789	Tower Theatre • 815 E. Olive Ave. • 559-485-9050
Arte Américas • 1630 Van Ness Ave. • arteamericas.org	Fort Washington Shopping Center • 447 Fort Washington Rd. • 559-490-3600	Roger Rocka’s Dinner Theatre • 1226 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-266-9494	Shinzen Friendship Garden • 114 W. Audubon Dr. • 559-478-4848	Vibez Lounge • 724 E. Olive Ave. • vibezlounge.com/
California Catering • 1603 E St. • 559-222-4202	Fresno Art Museum • 2233 N. First St. • 559-441-4221	Santa Fe Basque Restaurant • 3110 N. Maroa Ave. • 559-226-7499	Strummer’s Bar & Grill • 833 E. Fern Ave. • 559-485-5356	Vista Theater • 1298 N. Wishon Ave. • 559-222-7464
Club One Casino • 3950 N. Cedar Ave. • clubonecasino.com	Fulton 55 • 875 Divisadero St. • info@fulton55.com / fulton55.com	Saroyan Theatre • 700 M St. • 559-445-8100	The Grand 1401 • 1401 Fulton St. • thegrand1401.com	Warnors Theatre • 1400 Fulton St. • 559-264-2848
Dulce UpFront • 2026 N. Van Ness Blvd. • 559-202-3099	La Boulangerie • 730 W. Shaw Ave. • 559-222-0555	Save Mart Center • 2650 E. Shaw Ave. • savemartcenter.com	The Rosé • 820 Van Ness Ave. • 559-801-1393	Woodward Park Library • 944 E. Perrin Ave. • 559-600-3135

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



# Trump’s Attack on Black History

BY MALIK SIMBA

During his first term in office, Donald Trump took a tour of the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture and was guided by Lonnie Bunch. Bunch is the first Black American to head the entire Smithsonian Institution.

On completing the tour, Trump praised the museum and its exhibits, which, by and large, emphasize the contributions of African Americans to the American saga. One recent contribution would be that of Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett-Helaire, lead scientist for Operation Warp Speed. But now, Trump and his “munchkins” would likely call her a DEI hire.

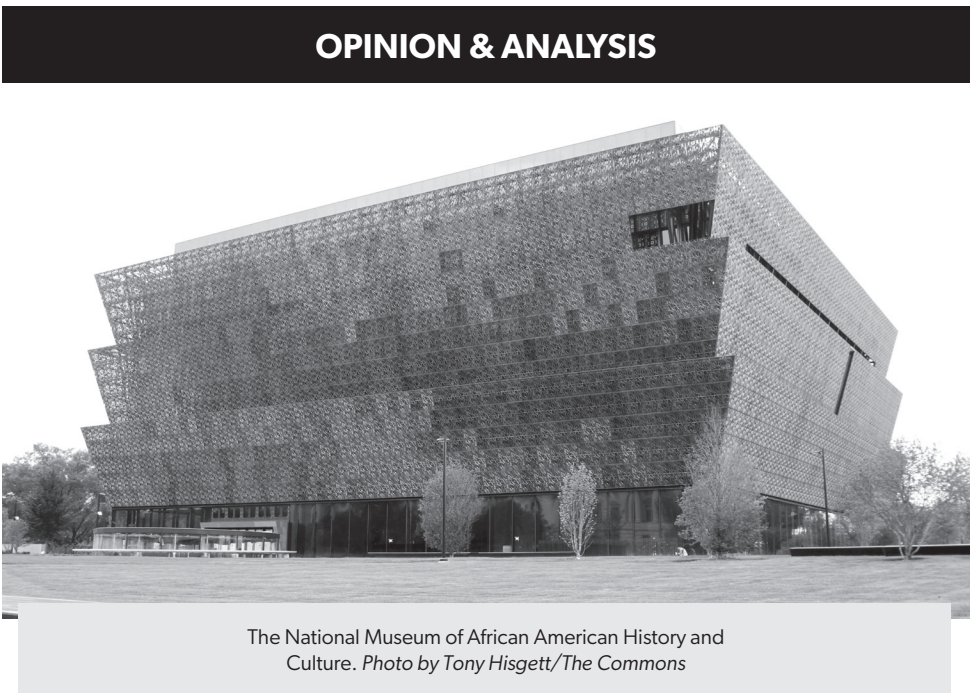
Since regaining the presidential office, Trump has denigrated the exhibits at the same museum as being “woke.” This term in reference to the museum means that its exhibits have too many stories about slavery and slavery’s birth-child, Jim Crow. It is obvious that as an old white guy he and his supporters do not want to see what their ancestors did in perpetrating crimes against humanity.

This is why in the 1960s, the GOP, in tight ranks with southern Dixiecrats, voted against every piece of civil rights legislation proposed by Democrats. As many Americans know, it was the national trauma of the 1960s that ushered in a new, great America sans the hideous Jim Crow laws.

Affirmative action and its stepchild, diversity, equity and inclusion, made America great for the first time in a different sort of way. It is obvious that the movements of Black workers, Black families, Black churches and Black professionals led to the Trump administration’s reactionary attempts to roll back the inclusionary achievements of DEI. Former President Barack Obama is iconic in symbolizing the importance of DEI in enabling the success of highly qualified people.

To satisfy his MAGA base, Trump’s administration fired Black federal workers, mostly Black women, under Elon Musk’s DOGE. Also, Trump has replaced highly qualified Black people, for example, Lloyd Austin, a four-star general and a former secretary of Defense, with Pete Hegseth, who was a low-ranking officer in the Minnesota National Guard.

Ironically, Hegseth served under General Austin at an administrative desk job during the Afghan war. Hegseth, like so many white individuals, men and women, hired by Trump can be defined by the term WPU, which stands for White, Privileged and Unqualified.



The National Museum of African American History and Culture. Photo by Tony Hisgett/The Commons

Trump’s attack on diversity and his deportation of immigrants is an ahistorical misunderstanding of the fact that America is a nation of immigrants. As Abraham Lincoln said, “Immigrants are our gift from God.”

One should reflect on the many American Marines whose lives were saved by the Navajo code talkers who used their language, which the Japanese could not decipher, for secret communications.

If Trump remains in office, the attack on the positivity of America’s diverse people will not end. In fact, last month it was revealed that the 250th anniversary of U.S. Mint coins will see a replacement of images and terms such as “Black Abolitionism,” “Women’s Suffrage” and “Civil Rights” with “Mayflower Compact,” “Revolutionary War” and “Gettysburg Address.” Have Trump, Hegseth and their minions even read that Address?

\*\*\*\*\*

Malik Simba is professor emeritus of African American studies and history at Fresno State. Contact him at 559-273-0800.

# Theft from the People

BY STEVEN ROESCH

*A House of Dynamite*, the latest film directed by Kathryn Bigelow, expertly dramatizes a nuclear attack. The well-researched script depicts just how quickly Armageddon could break out.

Early on, military personnel at an outpost in Alaska detect an ICBM heading for the continental United States. They’re not sure who launched it, and—though they can’t yet figure out which area is specifically being targeted—they already know when the missile will hit its target.

In 19 minutes.

Toward the end of the movie, the American president is asked to decide how to respond to this assault. He’s given a binder that shows him various attack options, and he’s pressured to make his decision without delay.

It doesn’t help that he needs to make this determination on the basis of limited information. For one thing, it’s still not clear who launched the weapon in the first place.

More than thrilling entertainment, *A House of Dynamite* encourages reflection about military threats that the United States might face at some time.

And, given the movie’s nightmarish vision, it’s unsettling to see how our political representatives in Washington often approach such an important national security issue.

In their 2025 book, *The Trillion Dollar War Machine*, William D. Hartung and Ben Freeman show how a group of U.S. senators dealt with the matter of nuclear weapons two years earlier.

The occasion: a public hearing of the Senate Armed Services Committee.

The committee heard the findings of a Congressional commission that had examined America’s nuclear armaments and the current protocols for deploying them.

The commission’s central recommendation: to comprehensively expand U.S. nuclear firepower, something that many independent observers fear could prompt a dangerous arms race among the United States, China and Russia.

At the time the session was held, the Pentagon was already envisioning a massive \$2 trillion program to develop an improved lineup of nuclear-armed missiles, submarines and bombers.

The commission’s co-chairs were now urging that a separate program be initiated in addition to the one that the Pentagon had put forward.

The senators in attendance were given the opportunity to address the topic.

Most of them used their allotted time to praise the military hardware located in or being manufactured in their own states.

For example, Senator Mark Kelly (D–Ariz.) emphasized the importance of the SM-6 missiles being produced in his state. Many of his colleagues on the panel, including Senators Jackie Rosen (D–Nev.) and Tommy Tuberville (R–Ala.), took a similar tack in their remarks.

When Senator Elizabeth Warren (D–Mass.) spoke, she struck a decidedly different tone.

After admonishing the commission for failing to consider “the serious costs and dangers” of their proposal, Warren asked about its price tag.

As she put it, “I’m willing to spend what it takes to keep America safe, but I’m certainly not comfortable with a blank check for programs that already have a history of gross mismanagement.”

Marilyn Creedon, one of the commission’s co-chairs, told Warren that the group hadn’t established what the cost would be. Despite Warren’s prodding, she couldn’t even offer a ballpark figure.

Hartung and Freeman recount how, just before his presidency ended, Dwight D. Eisenhower warned the nation about the dangers of the military-industrial complex. A powerful lobby that included members of the military as well as arms manufacturers, it focused primarily, in Eisenhower’s view, on increasing its own profits rather than addressing the nation’s security challenges.

Some historians have written that Eisenhower first intended to call this group the “military-industrial-Congressional complex,” given the part that Congressional figures have played in facilitating its aims.

Hartung and Freeman take pains to show how this network has acquired far more clout since Eisenhower’s day. They illustrate how it now deeply influences such sectors of society as higher education, think tanks, the entertainment industry and gaming.

They also delve into the cost overruns and faulty weapons systems that Senator Warren referenced in her remarks in 2023.

One prime example is the F-35 combat aircraft, which the government has funded for more than two decades and which has received \$12 billion–\$13 billion of annual support.

To put it mildly, the program has been bedeviled by numerous setbacks.

Even three years ago, the plane still had more than 800 unresolved flaws, six of which could endanger the lives of the pilots flying them. The Project of Government Oversight contends that the aircraft might never be completely ready for use in battle.

Another example of a costly procurement problem is the Bell-Boeing V-22 Osprey, which is supposed to combine features of a helicopter and a plane. Though it was first commissioned in 1986, the Osprey has yet to realize this vision successfully.

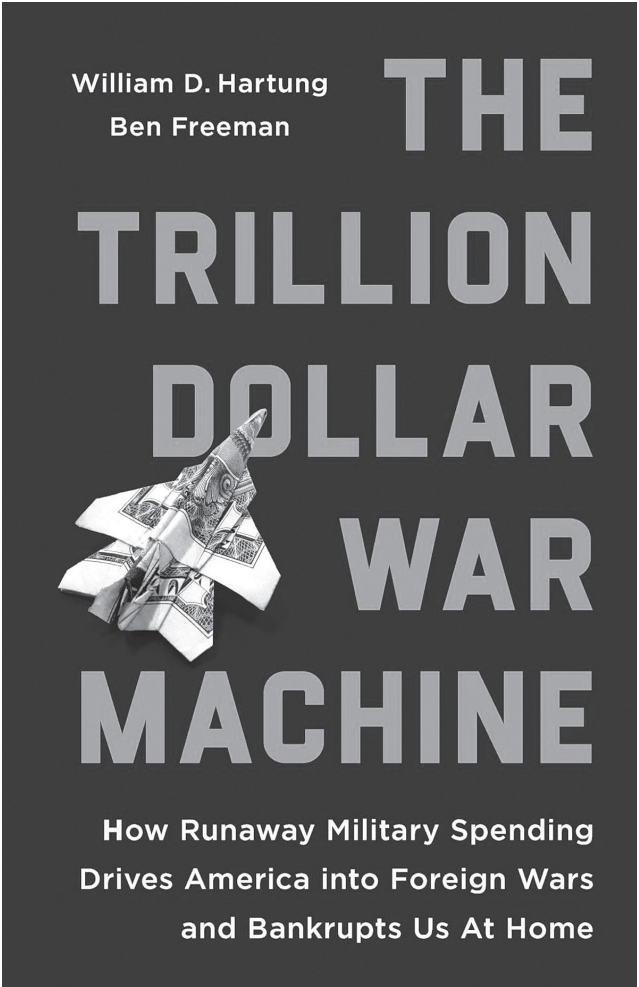
To date, in fact, it’s been involved in 10 fatal crashes and caused the death of 64 people.

Such instances of profligate spending become even more disturbing in the light of recent *New York Times* articles that examine our country’s military readiness.

Its authors argue that “[n]early four decades after victory in the Cold War, the U.S. military is ill prepared for today’s global threats and revolutionary technologies.”

And the government’s spendthrift habits seem to be continuing.

The defense budget that’s been advanced for 2026 contains funding for many unneeded programs, they point out. For example, it sets aside \$240 million for the Gray Eagle drone, something that the Army has called “obsolete.”



In fact, members of Congress attached \$52 million for items that the Pentagon hadn’t even requested.

The *Times* writers urge that fundamental reforms be made in the way that military programs are funded.

In addition to such reforms, it might well be high time to look at more fruitful ways to spend money that, for many years, has in effect been frittered away.

Devoting part of the national budget to defense is needed, but it comes at a price, as Eisenhower seemed to grasp.

Early in his presidency, he delivered his so-called Cross of Iron speech. In it, he said that an immoderate emphasis on military expenditures weakens the government’s capacity to tackle important domestic needs.

The wording in his speech reveals the areas that, in his view, the government should truly prioritize in its budget deliberations.

As he put it, “Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.”

\*\*\*\*\*

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.



Peace & Social Justice Calendar

January 2026

Sponsored by the Fresno Center for Nonviolence

WEEKLY

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Nuestro Foro** (Tuesdays; Spanish) 7 p.m.–8 p.m. News, commentaries and music with a Latino touch hosted by Eduardo Stanley. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

Raza Against War/Women in Black (Wednesdays) 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Federal Courthouse, 2500 Tulare St., Fresno. For more info, contact [comworkeradvocate@gmail.com](#).

Kings County Bridge Brigade (Fridays) 7:15 a.m.–8:30 a.m. 19th Avenue interchange over Highway 198, Hanford/Lemoore. For more info, contact [karlacialbear@gmail.com](#).

Stop Trump’s Wars, End Genocide (Saturdays) 6 p.m.–7:30 p.m. Blackstone and Nees avenues, Fresno. Yokuts’ Land. Connect, build community and stand for all oppressed and occupied people.

SAT 03

Reedley Peace Center Protest/Visibility Event 9 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Corner of Buttonwillow and Manning Aves., Reedley. Bring your signs with whatever is on your mind this week. For more info, contact [reedleypeacecenter.com](#).

Kennedy Club of the San Joaquin Valley 9 a.m.–11 a.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact 559-435-4043 or [claval@comcast.net](#).

TUE 06

California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA) 1 p.m. Via Zoom. Regional meeting. Link: [us06web.zoom.us/j/2284684729](#).

LGBTQ+ ALLY Committee Monthly Meeting 1 p.m.–2 p.m. Partner with the Fresno Chamber of Commerce. For more info, contact [robin.mcgehee@fresno.gov](#).

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Stir It Up!** 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. *Community Alliance* radio show hosted by Daren Miller. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

National Women’s Political Caucus (NWPC) 5:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact [joanne@pbyoga.com](#).

THU 08

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Valley Rising** 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Hosted by Daren Miller and Daniel O’Connell. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF) 7 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Online/in person. For more info, contact [taca\\_03@ymail.com](#).

SAT 10

Central Valley Progressive PAC 3:30 p.m.–5 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [swhalen79@gmail.com](#).

SUN 11

PFLAG Fresno 2 p.m. Fireside Room, Wesley United Methodist Church, 1343 E. Barstow Ave., Fresno. Supporting, educating and advocating for LGBTQ+ people and their families. For more info, contact [pflagfresno@gmail.com](#).

MON 12

Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA) 5 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 1033 U St., Fresno. For more info, contact [swgamble@aol.com](#).

Tulare County Stonewall Democrats 6 p.m. Me-n-Ed’s Pizza, 1331 W. Henderson Ave., Porterville. For more info, contact [tcstonewalldems@gmail.com](#).

TUE 13

Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) 6 p.m. Via Zoom. For more info, contact [bapacfresno@gmail.com](#).

Kings County Democratic Central Committee 6 p.m. Democratic Party HQ, 621-A N. Irwin St., Hanford. For more info, contact 559-858-0852.

Porterville Democratic Club 6 p.m. Pizza Factory, 879 W. Henderson Ave., Porterville. For more info, contact [contactportervilledems@yahoo.com](#).

Fresno Stonewall Democrats 6:30 p.m. Los Amigos Restaurant, 5088 N. Blackstone Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact [info@fresnostonewalldemocrats.org](#).

WED 14

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Stir It Up!** 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence radio show hosted by Josh Shurley. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

Rural Ignite Business Accelerator (~April 1) Hosted by the Fresno Pacific University Center for Community Transformation, this 12-week workshop equips small business and nonprofit leaders to strengthen operations, build financial clarity and implement growth systems. Located in Reedley. Free, RSVP needed. Sign up at [cct.fresno.org/business-accelerator-tracks](#).

THU 15

Clovis Democratic Club 6 p.m. Seven Bar & Grill, 25 Shaw Ave., Clovis. For more info, contact [clovisdemocraticclub@gmail.com](#).

Peace Fresno 6:30 p.m. Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Monthly meeting to plan antiwar strategies. For more info, contact [president@peacefresno.org](#).

Tulare County Democratic Central Committee 7 p.m. In Tulare and via Zoom. For more info, contact [tcdccsecretary@gmail.com](#).

Sierra Club Tehipite Chapter 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Speaker: Sherry Flumerfelt, executive director of the Western Flyer Foundation. Topic: Programs that unite art, science and education aboard the historic *Western Flyer*, now docked in the Monterey Bay. To register, visit [sierraclub.org/tehipite](#). For more info, contact [ecuagirl45@yahoo.com](#).

FRI 16

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

SAT 17

Reedley Peace Center Protest/Visibility Event 9 a.m.–9:30 a.m. Corner of Buttonwillow and Manning Aves., Reedley. Bring your signs with whatever is on your mind this week. For more info, contact [reedleypeacecenter.com](#).

TUE 20

Free America Walk Out! 2 p.m. 50 States, 50 Protests, 1 Day. Check with the local resistance group for details in your community.

Central Valley Partnership 5:30 p.m. OAB 251, Fresno City College. For more info, contact [admin@centralvalleypartnership.org](#).

Kings County Jimmy Carter Club 6 p.m. Lemoore. For more info, contact [kcjimmycarterclub@gmail.com](#).

WED 21

San Joaquin Valley Town Hall 10:30 a.m. Saroyan Theatre, 700 M St., Fresno. Dr. Steve Boyes, South African conservationist and *National Geographic* Explorer who has dedicated his career to studying and protecting Africa’s river ecosystems and wilderness areas. \$60/person. For more info, visit [valleytownhall.com/](#).

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Speaking Truth to Empire** 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. Hosted by Dan Yaseen. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

People’s Policy Workshop on Energy Justice 5 p.m.–8 p.m. Social Science 208, Fresno City College. Discuss the harms of PG&E and envision solutions for a new regenerative utility that puts people and planet above profit. Register at [bit.ly/rop-fresno](#). For more info, contact [info@reclaimourpower.org](#).

San Joaquin Valley Democratic Club 6:30 p.m. Round Table Pizza, 3710 W. Shields Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact [sjvdemclub@gmail.com](#).

FRI 23

CineCulture: **Beate** 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Andrea Polegato. Partially inspired by several true stories, this comedy is a modern social fairy tale set in northeast Italy. When the employees of the Veronica lingerie factory discover they’re about to be fired, they take

matters into their own hands and “borrow” equipment to produce their own garment line. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](#) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](#).

MON 26

Fresno County Democratic Women’s Club 11 a.m.–1 p.m. Marie Callender’s Restaurant Garden Room, 1781 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact [claval@comcast.net](#).

WED 28

Speaker/Luncheon 10:50 a.m. Special Events Center, 1717 S. Chestnut Ave., Fresno Pacific University. Speaker: Johann Matthies, European leader of Multiply (formerly MB Mission). Matthies will share stories and insights from a life dedicated to mobilizing people and agencies who seek to summon all to radical discipleship. Luncheon follows at noon; register at [fpu.edu/heritage2026](#).

Too Poor to Die 2 p.m.–3:30 p.m. OAB 251, Fresno City College. Join author Amy Shea for an inside look at her new book, *Too Poor to Die: The Hidden Realities of Dying in the Margins*, followed by a Q&A session.

KFCF 88.1 FM: **Stir It Up!** 3 p.m.–3:30 p.m. WILPF radio show hosted by Jean Hays. For more info, visit [kcf.org](#).

Visalia Democratic Club 5:30 p.m. Amigos Restaurant, 5113 W. Walnut Ave., Visalia. For more info, contact [coljiafeliz@gmail.com](#).

League of Women Voters of Fresno 5:30 p.m. Stone Soup, 1345 E. Bulldog Lane, Fresno. Speakers: Brenda Solórzano, CEO, California Endowment, and Dr Katherine Flores, chair of the Board of the California Endowment. For more info, contact 559-226-8683.

Central Valley Indivisible 6 p.m. The Big Red Church, 2131 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact [pattycapp@gmail.com](#).

John Robert Lewis Democratic Club 7 p.m. Via Zoom. Be part of the impending change planned by this newly formed club. For more info, contact [ibedam@gmail.com](#).

FRI 30

CineCulture: **Boy and the World** 5:30 p.m. Peters Education Center Auditorium, Fresno State. Discussant: Adán Ávalos. Brazilian artist Alê Abreu’s Academy Award–nominated masterpiece is a riotous explosion of music and color, a breathtakingly original and vibrant cinematic experience that depicts the wonders and struggles of the modern world as seen through the eyes of a young boy. Free and open to the public. For more info, contact [mhusain@mail.fresnostate.edu](#) or visit [cineculture.csufresno.edu/](#).

Screening: **No Other Land** 6:30 p.m. Reedley Peace Center. Fellowship Hall, First Mennonite Church, 1208 L St., Reedley. An unflinching account of a community’s mass expulsion and revealing a creative resistance to apartheid and a search for a path toward equality and justice. For more info, contact [reedleypeacecenter.com](#).

Submit upcoming community activities to [calendar@fresnoalliance.com](#) by the 15th of the month preceding publication, or you can post anytime online at [fresnoalliance.com](#) (select Calendar).

HAIKU

Killing of Charlie Kirk  
Hate’s White on White Crime  
Summer’s Guns Killing People  
Chickens Have Returned

Mamdani’s Democratic Goal  
Mamdani’s Vision  
Creates Spring Hopeful Future  
Lower Rents for All

Mass Killings  
Another Summer  
Mass Killings of Innocents  
We All Can Stop This!!!

—Homer Gee Greene

42nd Annual Commemoration  
Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.  
Celebration

FRI 16

Garlanding Ceremony 11:45 a.m.–12:45 p.m. Courthouse Park,1100 Van Ness Ave., Fresno. Welcome presented by Fresno City Council Member Miguel Arias and Fresno County Supervisor Luis Chavez.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Michele Cantwell-Copher, Fresno County superintendent of schools. Also featuring the King Elementary School Dancers. For more info, contact 559-435-2212.

SAT 17

Clovis Police Department Community Breakfast 9 a.m.–10:30 a.m. Clovis Veterans Memorial District, 808 4th St., Clovis. Keynote speaker: Dr. Saúl Jiménez-Sandoval, Fresno State president. \$5/person (pre-payment required). For more info, contact [erinf@clovisca.gov](#).

SUN 18

MLK Peace Vigil 2 p.m. Impact Church, 1461 N. Chestnut Ave., Fresno. For more info, contact 559-473-5493.

MON 19

MLK Community March 9:30 a.m.–10:45 a.m. St. John’s Cathedral, 2814 Mariposa St., Fresno. Marchers assemble at 9:30 a.m. March begins at 10 a.m., stops at Fresno City Hall, then proceeds to Veterans Memorial Auditorium (2425 Fresno St.), where the program will conclude. Parade marshall: Mona Tatum and the King Elementary School Dancers. For more info, contact 559-284-6420.

MLK Commemoration Program and Community Awards 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Veterans Memorial Auditorium, 2425 Fresno St., Fresno. Celebrate the legacy of MLK and his contributions to community diversity and our enriched culture. The program will include the presentation of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Awardees (Education Award: Dr. Lisa Mitchell; Civil

Service Award: Dr. Peter Robertson; Kimber Community Service Award: Black Women Organized for Political Action (BWOPA)), music and a fireside chat with the Central Unified School District superintendent, Dr. Mark Marshall. Host: ABC 30’s Jessica Harrington. For more info, contact 559-908-0639.

Other Fresno Area MLK Commemoration Events

FRI 09

Jazz Tribute to the Legacy of Dr. King 9 a.m.–noon. On KFSR 90.7 FM (or stream at [kfsr.org](#)). Dr. Robert Mikell pays tribute to the legacy of Dr. King through commentary and music composed and recorded by jazz artists who supported the civil rights movement. Dr. King’s “I Have a Dream” speech will be played in its entirety.

Fresno Metro Black Chamber of Commerce 2026 Business Salute to MLK Luncheon 11:30 a.m.–1 p.m. DoubleTree

by Hilton Hotel, 2233 Cesar Chavez Blvd., Fresno. \$40/person. Register at [BIT.LY/2026MLK](#).

THU 15

West Fresno Ministerial Alliance Prayer Breakfast 7 a.m. Cornerstone Conference Center, 1525 Fulton St., Fresno. Keynote speaker: Bishop Kenneth Ulmer. For more info, contact [paulbinion@wscog.org](#).

Fresno County Superintendent of Schools MLK Art, Essay and Speech Reception 5 p.m. Clovis Veterans Memorial District, 808 4th St., Clovis. For more info, contact [jhunt@fcoe.org](#).

SUN 18

Countdown to King Rally 1 p.m. Impact Church, 1461 N. Chestnut Ave., Fresno. Spirit-filled worship service includes music and an encouraging message of peace, unity, equality and love. For more info, contact [edwardthomas858@icloud.com](#).

17

COMMUNITY ALLIANCE JANUARY 2026



El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se publica mensualmente por San Joaquin Valley Media Alliance, ubicada en 1584 N. Van Ness Ave., Fresno, CA 93728. El periódico *Community Alliance* (*Alianza Comunitaria*) se distribuye gratis o por suscripción. Las suscripciones son de \$40 por año; \$60 por año para activistas; y \$15 para personas de bajos ingresos.

Desde 1996, *Alianza Comunitaria* ha sido una voz progresista independiente para el Valle Central de San Joaquín. *Alianza Comunitaria* aboga por

- la justicia racial, social, ambiental y económica;
- Igualdad de derechos para todos, incluidos los inmigrantes, las personas sin hogar y la comunidad LGBTQ+;
- Acceso a una educación pública gratuita y de calidad para todos;
- Acceso a la atención sanitaria para todos;
- Un salario digno para todos los trabajadores.

Nuestro objetivo es exponer los problemas raciales, sociales, medio-ambientales y económicos e injusticias políticas. Ayudaremos a construir un poderoso movimiento progresista que hará que todas nuestras comunidades sean más seguras, más sanas, más equitativas y más habitables.

EDITOR INTERINO

Peter Maiden  
editor@fresnoalliance.com

MESA DIRECTIVA,  
SECCIÓN NO LUCRATIVA

Olga Loza  
Norberto Gonzalez  
Michaelynn Lewis  
Bob McCloskey  
James Mendez  
Pam Whalen

COMPAGINADORA

Ashley Harper

DISTRIBUCIÓN/  
FOTOGRAFÍA

Peter Maiden  
maidenfoto1@gmail.com

PUBLICIDAD

I. smiley G. Calderón  
714-290-6651 (texto)  
smileycalderon@gmail.com  
(También hablo español)

CORRECTOR DE PRUEBAS

Michael D. Evans

EDITOR EMÉRITO

Mike Rhodes

SUSCRIPCIÓN

Envíe \$60  
(constructor del movimiento pro-  
gresista), \$40 (regular) or \$15 (bajo  
ingreso) a:  
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE  
P.O. Box 5077  
Fresno, CA 93755  
fresnoalliance.com

ENVÍO DE ARTÍCULOS  
PARA PUBLICACIÓN

**Fecha límite:**  
El 15 de mes previo.  
Artículos 800–1,200 palabras.  
E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.

Calendarios de Paz y Justicia  
Social y de Arte y Cultura:

Por favor envíe sus eventos  
para anunciarlos a:  
calendar@fresnoalliance.com  
el 15 de mes previo.

Cartas al Editor:

E-mail editor@fresnoalliance.com.  
Hasta 200 palabras.

El periódico Alianza Comunitaria se reserva el derecho de editar los artículos por razones de espacio y claridad. Alianza Comunitaria se imprime en papel reciclado. Alianza Comunitaria es una entidad 501(c)(4).

# Progresos en la Prevención de la Violencia de Género en México

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El pasado 25 de noviembre se celebró el “Día Naranja”, un día dedicado a reflexionar y actuar respecto a la violencia contra las mujeres en nuestra sociedad. Este día fue establecido por la Naciones Unidas. Y durante los siguientes 16 días, o sea hasta el 10 de diciembre, se llevó a cabo una campaña para la prevención de la violencia de género en México.

Allí, la presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum ha puesto énfasis precisamente en el tema del empoderamiento de las mujeres y ha tomado acciones directas al respecto.

En este sentido, la Encuesta Nacional sobre la Dinámica de las Relaciones en los Hogares, administrada por el INEGI (Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas y Geografía), que se realiza cada 5 años, permite conocer con bastante precisión el estatus de la violencia contra las mujeres en México. La última encuesta se realizó en el año 2021—la anterior fue en 2016.

“La última encuesta nos dice que 7 de 10 mujeres mayores de 15 años reportan haber sufrido violencia de género en algún momento. Es alarmante, pero hay que aclarar que esta encuesta abarca el periodo de la pandemia, momento en que se registró un aumento en los conflictos familiares”, dice la Maestra Metzeri Martínez, Directora del Fortalecimiento de Modelos de Atención Integral de la Violencia de la Secretaría de las Mujeres del Gobierno de México. “En 2016, el 66.1 % de las mujeres reportaron algún tipo de violencia, mientras que en 2021, ese porcentaje subió al 70%”.

Según Martínez, el tipo más común de violencia es la psicológica (insultos, menosprecio, etc), “Un tipo de violencia que no se ve y que por lo tanto es más difícil identificar y que está muy normalizada por el sistema patriarcal”. Le siguen la violencia sexual, física y económica.

Con la llegada de la Dra. Claudia Sheinbaum a la presidencia—la primera mujer presidenta, decididamente en favor de establecer una

## Para Reportar Casos de Violencia Doméstica

En casos de violencia doméstica o de género que una mexicana residente en el Valle de San Joaquín quiera reportar al Consulado de México en busca de asesoría o protección, comunicarse con el CIAM (Centro Integral Atención a Mexicanas/os en el Exterior), teléfonos (520) 623-7874 y (559) 269-3026.

Para actualizar sus documentos, pueden solicitar una cita al teléfono 1-424-309-009.

O visite el Consulado, ubicado en 7435 N. Ingram Ave., Fresno, en la esquina de las calles Ingram y Alluvial.



La presidenta de México está implementando políticas en favor del bienestar de las mujeres y de protección ante casos de violencia de género. En la imagen, Sheinbaum al ser declarada presidenta de México en agosto de 2024. Foto cortesía de The Commons

clara política de género y de empoderamiento de las mexicanas, se empezó a notar una clara tendencia en este sentido con modificaciones a ciertas leyes, creación de nueva legislación y, más importante aún, hacer cumplir las leyes existentes.

Por ejemplo, a poco de asumir su puesto, la presidenta elevó el estatus del Instituto Nacional de las Mujeres al rango de Secretaría—similar a la secretaria de Salud o de Educación.

“Esta Secretaría está desplegando una serie de políticas en favor del bienestar de las mujeres, que tienen que ver principalmente con dos aspectos: uno, la atención a la violencia y dos, el logro de la igualdad sustantiva”, aclara Martínez. “Para esto se están creando centros para mujeres que llamamos LIBRE (Libertad, Igualdad, Bienestar, Redes y Emancipación), con la participación de un equipo integrado por una psicóloga, una abogada y una trabajadora social para atender los casos de violencia de manera integral”.

En este año 2025, primer año de gobierno de la Dra. Sheinbaum, se abrieron 678 centros LIBRE en el país. El objetivo es que para el fin del sexenio exista un centro por cada municipio de México, o sea más de 2.000 centros. Además, aclara Martínez, en estos centros se realizan actividades de interés como entrenamientos, reuniones específicas, con énfasis en los derechos de las mujeres y en talleres de oficios que las mujeres de cada región o municipio identifiquen como de importancia para ellas.

En México existe una línea telefónica de atención a casos de violencia: 079, opción #1, donde atiende personal especializado.

Como parte de las políticas de apoyo al bienestar de las mujeres, la actual administración ha implementado una pensión para todas las mexicanas a partir de sus 60 años de edad.

Si bien estos importantes cambios ocurren dentro del territorio mexicano, también abarcan a las mexicanas que residen en el extranjero.

En Fresno, el consulado de ese país busca implementar esas políticas e informar a la comunidad mexicana en el Valle de San Joaquín.

“Desde que asumí la Dra. Sheinbaum a la presidencia del país, se han reformado unas 20 leyes orientadas al bienestar e igualdad de las mujeres”, afirmó la nueva cónsul de México en Fresno, Irma Pimentel Portilla. “Estos cambios buscan garantizar una vida libre de violencia contra las mujeres e igualdad social en todos los niveles”.

En este contexto, el Consulado de México quiere hacer llegar esta información a todas las mexicanas residentes en el Valle y garantizarles que cuentan con los mismos derechos.

“En el Consulado aplicamos la Política de Atención y Vinculación Integral para la Mujer que consiste en otorgar una asistencia integral a las mexicanas que residen en el exterior, pero especialmente a aquellas que fueron o son víctimas de violencia de género”, dice la cónsul de Protección y Asuntos legales del Consulado de México en Fresno, Patricia Valeria Solorio Sepúlveda.

Implementar esta política incluye pasos básicos como obtener una identificación—necesaria para abrir una cuenta de banco, firmar un contrato de alquiler o renta de una vivienda, acceder a servicios de salud o educación sin depender de nadie, y hasta acceder al sistema de justicia—muy importante en caso de haber presentado cargos por violencia doméstica.

Cuando una víctima de violencia de género se reporta al Consulado, éste ofrece protección y asesoría legal gratuita—incluso otorga documentación de emergencia si la víctima quiere regresar a México. También dispone de una red de organizaciones locales que brindan apoyos, que incluyen acompañamiento a la corte—en caso de una demanda legal—y hasta refugios y asistencia psicológica.

\*\*\*\*\*

Eduardo Stanley es un periodista independiente de Fresno.

## VISITE NUESTRO SITIO WEB

Todo nuestro contenido está disponible en línea para que lo lea

<https://fresnoalliance.com/>





# Aumenta el Costo de la Vida

Continúa de página 20

También anunció esta semana algunas ideas que se le habían ocurrido: enviar a los estadounidenses cheques de 2.000 dólares financiados por los aranceles (de prosperar esa aventura el precio sería astronómico) dandole una nueva interpretación a la idea de comprar votos. Otra es investigar a las empacadoras de carne por conspiración para aumentar precios – él ya ejerció de fiscal, juez y verdugo. Además, ordenó públicamente que las farmacéuticas bajen el precio de medicamentos para bajar de peso y más.

Mientras tanto, en septiembre los precios de restaurantes subieron anualmente 3.9%, los alquileres 3.6%, la gasolina 4.1%, la atención médica 3.6%. Los alimentos subieron 3.1%, y en ellos, los huevos 24.4%, la carne de res 9.9%, el azúcar 4.7%.

Pero ni bien los importadores traspasen el costo de los aranceles a los consumidores, a comienzos de 2026

subirán también productos básicos importados como el azúcar y el café, de Brasil y Guatemala; tomates, chiles, mangos, frescas, aguacates y cerveza de México; aceite de oliva de España e Italia; ropa y zapatos de China, Vietnam y Bangladesh. Subirán en general las frutas, verduras, lácteos y electrodomésticos procedentes de China, México y Canadá.

### Los salarios no alcanzan

Ante estos cambios, la capacidad económica de los trabajadores se estanca. Según la Oficina de Estadísticas Laborales de Estados Unidos, una agencia federal, “de agosto de 2024 a agosto de 2025, los ingresos reales promedio por hora aumentaron un 0,7%”.

Y los salarios mínimos, que pueden ser determinados por los estados, siguen en un absurdo \$7.25 federal por hora de trabajo en Alabama, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Dakota del Norte, e incluso donde son de \$16,50 como en el Distrito de Columbia, Washington, California, Connecticut y Nueva York son insuficientes.

Un salario digno real fluctúa alrededor de \$28 por hora de trabajo. Y si el salario mínimo hubiera seguido la inflación debería ser de \$24 dólares la hora.

Todo esto significa que en tan solo un año, Donald Trump ha “logrado” empeorar la situación de los asalariados, los pobres y las minorías y que a partir de 2026 la situación empeorará.

La reacción del presidente muestra una desconexión de la realidad, una incapacidad de tomar responsabilidad, ignorancia a la hora de hacer planes.

La voz de un presidente de Estados Unidos tiene una resonancia única y decisiva en la percepción de muchos millones de residentes. Y tratándose de Trump, promotor del culto a su propia «personalidad», mucho más. Es menester, entonces, refutar, también en esta página, sus falsas aseveraciones, para que en el futuro cercano los estadounidenses tengan elementos de juicio a la hora de tomar decisiones.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Fundador y co-editor de Hispanicla.com. Editor en jefe del diario La Opinión en Los Ángeles hasta enero de 2021 y su actual Editor Emérito. Nació en Buenos Aires, Argentina, vivió en Israel y reside en Los Ángeles, California. Es periodista, bloguero, poeta, novelista y cuentista. Fue director editorial de Huffington Post Voces entre 2011 y 2014 y editor de noticias, también para La Opinión. Anteriormente, fue corresponsal de radio.*

# Interés por la Educación Bilingüe

POR ESTHER QUINTANILLA

(Nota del Editor: se reproduce este artículo con el permiso de Central Valley Journalism Collaborative)

Padres y familias latinas de estudiantes de inglés de K-12 en California participaron recientemente en un importante estudio para conocer mejor a quiénes sirven los programas de “doble idioma”.

Un grupo de expertos de la fundación independiente Century—especializada en salud, educación e investigación económica—realizó la encuesta, preguntando a los participantes qué esperan de los programas de inmersión dual para estudiantes que aprenden un segundo idioma.

Históricamente, los estudiantes de inglés en todo el país han sido excluidos de estos estudios debido a la falta de divulgación, según el investigador principal, Conor Williams.

“La pieza clave que faltaba en este tema era un recuento serio de quiénes asistían realmente a programas bilingües o de doble idioma en todo el país”, afirmó. “Básicamente, nadie tenía datos”.

Los investigadores encuestaron a mil padres en toda California, con participantes de tres comunidades: Los Ángeles, Sunnyvale y el Valle Central, para comprender mejor a diversas comunidades con diferentes niveles económicos.



Un aula de primer grado en el Distrito Escolar Unificado de Fresno. Foto de Esther Quintanilla/Central Valley Journalism Collaborative

Distrito Escolar Unificado Central de Fresno y el Distrito Escolar de la Ciudad de Merced también aumentarán su oferta de idiomas en los próximos años.

Sin embargo, si bien algunos programas están creciendo, algunos padres encuestados dijeron que la principal barrera para ellos era la falta de programas de lenguaje dual cerca de ellos. El Distrito Escolar Unificado de Clovis, considerado uno de los mejores del estado, no ofrece programas bilingües, a pesar de que los padres de la zona presionan para que se implementen.

“Sé que depende de la zona donde se viva y de la escuela a la que se elija”, dijo un encuestado. “Vivo en la zona de Clovis, así que me veré obligado a enviarlo a una escuela del Distrito Escolar Unificado de Clovis, y sé que no ofrecen aprendizaje dual, así que por eso siento que, en cierto modo, no hay otra opción”.

Otro tema común que surgió durante la encuesta fue que los encuestados dijeron haber oído hablar de padres que matriculan a sus hijos en escuelas fuera de sus barrios, utilizando diferentes direcciones para que asistan a clases de inmersión dual.

“Alguien diría: ‘Bueno... puedes simplemente no vivir en un lugar y decir que sí’”, dijo Williams. Lo que solo ocurrió unas pocas veces fue que alguien dijera que definitivamente lo había hecho. Mucha gente decía que era algo que podían hacer, sin dudarlo. No hubo tanta gente que admitiera haberlo hecho.

**¿Ayudaría a mi hijo o hija a conseguir un mejor trabajo?**

El hallazgo más importante que consolidó el estudio fue un interés abrumador en los programas bilingües y de lenguaje dual entre las familias californianas de diferentes niveles educativos y situaciones económicas.

El 94 % de los encuestados con hijos multilingües de las tres comunidades coincidió en que el bilingüismo es una ventaja que puede utilizarse para ayudar a sus hijos en futuras oportunidades educativas y profesionales, así como en la preservación cultural, lo que desmiente la creencia común de que las familias latinas se oponen al aprendizaje bilingüe.

Un padre en un grupo de discusión en inglés dijo que no quiere que sus hijos sean "no sabo", es decir, que parezcan latinos pero no hablan ni entienden su idioma.

Mientras tanto, el 55% de los encuestados con hijos monolingües angloparlantes también coincidieron en que era "extremadamente" o "muy" importante que sus hijos se volvieran bilingües. Sin embargo, según los datos, su razonamiento se inclinaba más a favor de los beneficios económicos que a la conservación cultural de su lengua.

Por ejemplo, un encuestado de Fresno afirmó que sus padres hablaban español en casa durante su infancia, pero no se lo enseñaron. El encuestado se describió a sí mismo como un “mexicano de piel clara” que quería aprender más sobre su herencia.

“Pero, al mismo tiempo, ¿cuál es el beneficio?”, preguntó. Sé que mucha gente cree que aprender un idioma beneficia la cultura. En mi caso, me pregunto más: “¿Ayudará a mi hijo a conseguir un mejor trabajo en el futuro?”.

Las investigaciones existentes apuntan al bilingüismo como un beneficio importante para la resolución de problemas, la mejora de la memoria y el aumento de la agilidad mental.

Según este estudio, los padres latinos son muy conscientes de las oportunidades que el dominio de varios idiomas puede traer a sus hijos en el futuro.

\*\*\*\*\*

*Esther Quintanilla es una periodista bilingüe galardonada que informa sobre educación multilingüe para CVJC, con especial atención a los estudiantes de inglés. Su cobertura ha aparecido en KQED, NPR y Radio Bilingüe.*

ENVÍE SUS COMENTARIOS. CORREO ELECTRÓNICO: EDITOR@FRESNOALLIANCE.COM.



# ALIANZA

## COMUNITARIA

LA VOZ DEL MOVIMIENTO PROGRESISTA DESDE 1996

### Elsa Mejía, Reconocida por el Gobierno Mexicano

POR EDUARDO STANLEY

El pasado 3 de diciembre, la Concejal de la Ciudad de Madera, Elsa Mejía, recibió el premio “Mexicanos Distinguidos” que otorga anualmente el gobierno de México a aquellas personas de origen mexicano residentes en el extranjero que cuentan con una trayectoria destacada. El premio fue entregado momentos antes de la reunión semanal del ayuntamiento de Madera.

“Elsa se convirtió en la primera mujer de origen indígena electa para el Concejo de Madera, desde donde impulsa causas fundamentales como la vivienda digna, la representación de comunidades indígenas, los derechos de las y los trabajadores del campo y el acceso equitativo a las oportunidades”, dijo la Cónsul titular de México en Fresno, Irma Pimentel, al entregar el reconocimiento a Mejía.

Mejía representa el distrito 5 de Madera desde el año 2021. Ella es de origen Mixteco, una de las 16 etnias

indígenas del estado de Oaxaca, al sur de México. Nació en Fresno pero vivió toda su vida en Madera. Estudió periodismo en la Universidad Estatal de Fresno, ejerció esa profesión varios años y actualmente trabaja para el sindicato SEIU-local 521 de Fresno.

Mejía ha estado profundamente dedicada a su comunidad y durante su campaña electoral destacó con orgullo su origen y su deseo de contribuir al mejoramiento de las condiciones de vida de esta comunidad.

Madera es el principal destino de miles de oaxaqueños que llegan al Valle de San Joaquín y constituyen la principal fuerza laboral en los campos de cultivo de la zona. Estos inmigrantes también aportan a la riqueza cultural de Madera con sus tradiciones, celebraciones y su deliciosa cocina.

Al recibir la distinción ante un repleto auditorio del Ayuntamiento de la Ciudad, Mejía reconoció emocionadamente a su familia, especialmente a sus padres, y también recordó a su abuelo quien llegó a EE.UU. como parte del movimiento Bracero.

Para el gobierno mexicano, distinguir a una mujer es particularmente de interés ya que “el Gobierno de la Presidenta Claudia Sheinbaum prioriza la política feminista y la reivindicación de los pueblos indígenas de México y la comunidad afromexicana”, según explicó la Cónsul de México, Irma Pimentel. Y agregó, “si bien este reconocimiento se entrega a Elsa de manera personal, también busca honrar a más mujeres, a más personas



Elsa Mejía agradeciendo el premio “Mexicanos Distinguidos” que le otorgó el gobierno de México el 3 de diciembre. Foto de Eduardo Stanley

trabajadoras, a más migrantes y a más integrantes de los pueblos originarios de México que hoy son parte del desarrollo del Valle Central de California”.

\*\*\*\*\*

Eduardo Stanley es un periodista independiente de Fresno.

### Qué es el Premio “Mexicanos Distinguidos”

Es un galardón anual otorgado por el gobierno de México a ciudadanos originarios del país que residen en el extranjero (por al menos los últimos cinco años consecutivos) y que cuentan con una trayectoria destacada en cualquier ámbito profesional o personal, incluyendo actividades científicas, académicas, tecnológicas, empresariales, creativas o innovadoras, de responsabilidad social, entre otras. Los galardonados también deben demostrar que su trabajo contribuye al prestigio y a la imagen positiva de México.

### Con Trump, Aumenta el Costo de la Vida

POR GABRIEL LERNER

(Nota del Editor: se reproduce este artículo con la correspondiente autorización de Hispanicla.com)

En las encuestas a boca de urna en las elecciones que la semana pasada dieron la victoria a los demócratas los votantes dijeron que su decisión por su disgusto con Trump y su preocupación por el aumento en el costo de la vida.

#### La mentira como forma de vida

Aquella misma noche, Trump publicó en su medio social privado un reconocimiento de la derrota, la que atribuyó, en cambio a que él mismo no estaba en la boleta electoral y al prolongado cierre de gobierno. Acusó tanto a demócratas como a republicanos.

Pero evidentemente, Trump conoce la verdad. No de otra manera se puede explicar la andanada de declaraciones en la que la semana pasada negó lo que todo el mundo sabe: que los estadounidenses estamos pagando cada vez más por los productos de primera necesidad: comestibles, gasolina, medicamentos recetados, la vivienda.

Y que a partir de 2026 pagaremos aún más.

En lugar de trabajar para revertir esta grave tendencia, el mandatario se ha dedicado públicamente a desmentir la realidad, a atacar a quien lo contradiga, y a multiplicar sus eventos públicos para repetir las mismas necesidades.

“Todos los precios han bajado”, dijo el 6 de noviembre en una reunión de gabinete.. “Todo está mucho más barato”, afirmó hablando con líderes de países asiáticos, y “Estamos reduciendo los precios de los medicamentos



La inflación continua para los compradores de comestibles. Foto de Peter Maiden

a niveles que nadie creía posibles, recortes tremendos: 200%, 300%, 500%, 700%”. “Los precios han bajado con la administración Trump, y mucho”, declaró al día siguiente en una reunión con el primer ministro de Hungría. Y también: “Todo el mundo sabe que es mucho más barato con Trump que con el dormilón de Joe Biden”.

#### Mentira, mentira

El tema del aumento de precios es “una mentira de los demócratas”, dijo en una entrevista amistosa en Fox News en la que indicó que las encuestas que muestran que los estadounidenses sufren por la economía son falsas y que “la gasolina llegará a los 2 dólares muy pronto” (es en realidad \$3.07 término medio).