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## ARMC opens new family health center in San Bernardino

Jul 26, 2018 Updated 3 hrs ago



A grand opening ceremony was held for Arrowhead Family Health Center - McKee in San Bernardino.

Arrowhead Regional Medical Center officially opened a new family health center in San Bernardino on July 12.

The Arrowhead Family Health Center - McKee is located at 1499 East Highland Avenue, and the phone number is (855) 422-8029.


The 33,000-square-foot clinic includes 44 exam rooms and two procedure rooms, and as a family practice clinic, it will treat patients from birth through geriatrics.


The care team is comprised of experienced family medicine physicians, nurse practitioners, residents from ARMC's Family Medicine Residency Training Program, and other health care staff.

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Available services at the clinic include wellness and preventive care, well-child physicals and immunizations, acute or chronic adult care, geriatrics, diagnostic and minor surgery procedures, and OB/GYN services, as well as education services on diabetes, hypertension, and heart failure.

“We continue to expand our family health clinics to further meet the demands of communities in San Bernardino County,” said ARMC Hospital Director William Gilbert. “This revamped clinic enables us to better meet the needs of patients considering it is more geographically convenient.”

Hours of operation are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with evening appointments offered on Tuesday and Wednesday until 8:30 p.m.

## **DA: Deputy justified in shooting attempted murder suspect in Apple Valley**

**By Staff reports**

Posted Jul 26, 2018 at 10:02 AM

Updated Jul 26, 2018 at 10:02 AM

APPLE VALLEY — A San Bernardino County Sheriff's deputy was justified in non-fatally shooting multiple times an attempted murder suspect who, hiding in a closet, pointed a handgun at the deputy, prosecutors said Thursday.

Dearld Wicker, Jr., 42, was suspected of shooting a man in the head after a verbal argument on May 29, 2017, in the Super Target parking lot on Highway 18. The following day, Wicker, a felon, was involved in an altercation with Deputy Scott Abernathy who had gone to a home in a secluded area of town in search of Wicker.

Abernathy entered a residence on Flathead Road, a known address for Wicker, and encountered Wicker after opening a closed closet door, authorities said.

"As the door was opened, Deputy Abernathy saw the barrel of a handgun pointed directly at him," according to an interoffice memo by the District Attorney's office justifying the shooting. "Deputy Abernathy seeing the danger of the handgun pointed at him began to retreat and as he did so, he began to fire his weapon."

Abernathy fired 11 shots in total and authorities determined Wicker, who admitted to having earlier smoked methamphetamine and later apologized to law enforcement officials, fired one shot in return.

Wicker was taken to Loma Linda University Medical Center for treatment where he recovered.

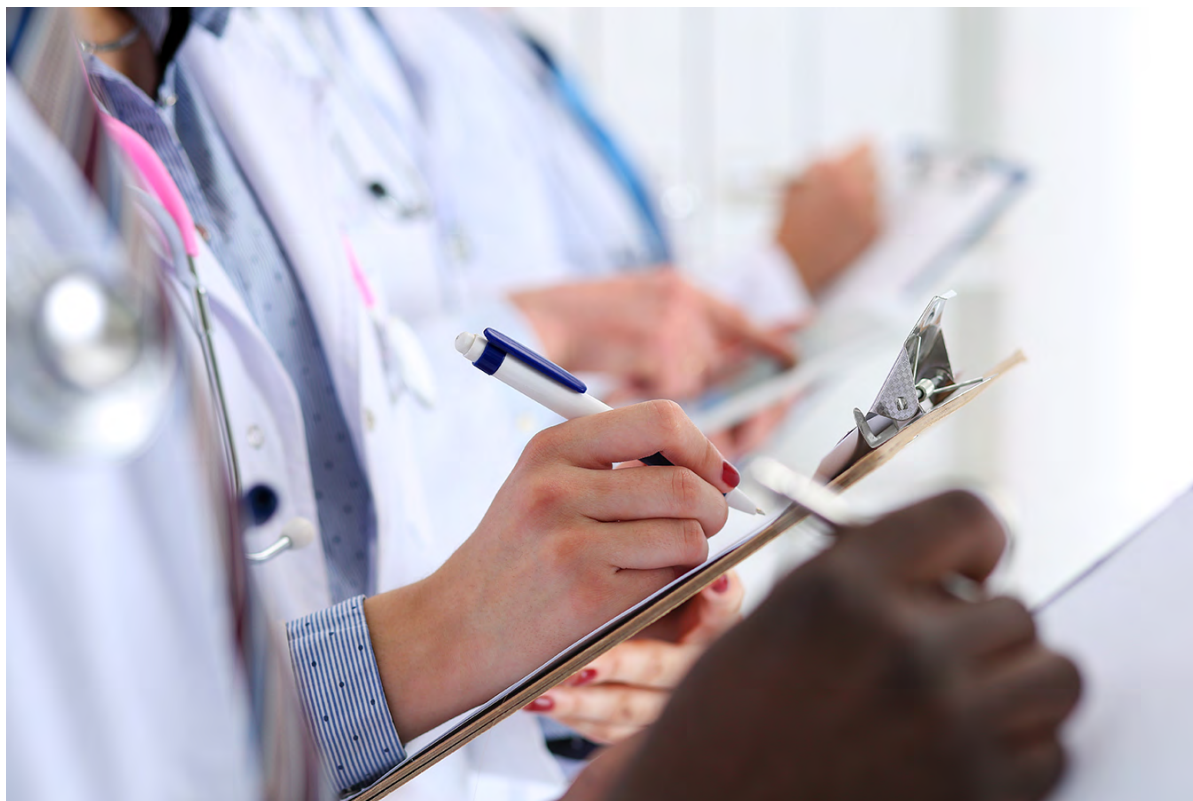
On April 18, he was sentenced to 10 years in state prison for the two incidents after pleading guilty to assault with a firearm and assault with a firearm on a peace officer.

Authorities did not offer much about the shooting at Super Target, only to say that Wicker shot the victim in the head following a verbal argument involving several people. The victim survived the shooting.

# New Southern California Medical School To Tackle Doctor Shortages

By Anna Gorman (<https://californiahealthline.org/news/author/anna-gorman/>)

July 27, 2018



(iStock/Getty Images)

CLAREMONT, Calif. — The Claremont Colleges plans to open a medical school, the fourth new campus designed to produce physicians for parts of Southern California struggling with shortages.

The Keck Graduate Institute School of Medicine will focus on primary care and treating the growing Latino population in California, institute officials announced this week. The school hopes to hire its founding dean by next summer, and open a few years after that.

Administrators hope many of the graduates will stay to practice medicine in eastern Los Angeles County or the Inland Empire, an ethnically diverse region that encompasses Riverside and San Bernardino counties and is home to about 4 million people.

“Our goal is to recruit them from here, train them here and keep them here,” said Sheldon Schuster, president of the Keck Graduate Institute (<http://www.kgi.edu/>). The institute is part of the Claremont Colleges (<http://www.claremont.edu/>), a consortium of five undergraduate and two graduate institutions about 35 miles east of Los Angeles. The institute already has a pharmacy school.

“There is such an incredible demand for people who ... understand the community and who speak the language,” Schuster said.

The campus joins a wave of new medical schools across the nation that began opening in the early 2000s. “There has been a huge increase in the last 15 years,” said Atul Grover, executive vice president of the Association of American Medical Colleges (<https://www.aamc.org/>).

Historically, however, California had not been part of that wave. Now, he said, “the state has been trying to play catch-up.”

The California University of Science and Medicine (<https://www.calmedu.org/>), funded by the Prime Healthcare Foundation (<https://www.primehealthcare.com/Foundations/Prime-Healthcare-Foundation.aspx>), is debuting this summer in Colton, in San Bernardino County, with a class of 60. The University of California-Riverside (<https://medschool.ucr.edu/>) School of Medicine, which opened in 2013, recently graduated its second class, made up of 49 medical students.

Kaiser Permanente’s medical school (<https://schoolofmedicine.kaiserpermanente.org/about/>) in Pasadena is under construction and expected to welcome its first class next year

[\(https://californiahealthline.org/news/kaiser-permanente-names-dean-of-new-california-medical-school/\)](https://californiahealthline.org/news/kaiser-permanente-names-dean-of-new-california-medical-school/). (Kaiser Health News, which produces California Healthline, is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.)

The new schools in California and around the nation not only can expand the workforce, but also increase its diversity, said Holly Humphrey, president of the [Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation](http://macyfoundation.org/) (<http://macyfoundation.org/>), which focuses on medical education.

Only about 5 percent of [physicians in California are Latino](https://californiahealthline.org/news/in-a-diverse-state-californias-latino-doctors-push-for-more-of-their-own/) (<https://californiahealthline.org/news/in-a-diverse-state-californias-latino-doctors-push-for-more-of-their-own/>), though Latinos make up about 38 percent of the population, according to a recent [report](https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CAPhysicianSupply2018.pdf) (<https://www.chcf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CAPhysicianSupply2018.pdf>) by University of California researchers and funded by the California Health Care Foundation. (California Healthline is an editorially independent publication of the California Health Care Foundation.)

The new medical schools, though smaller than established Southern California institutions such as [Loma Linda University School of Medicine](https://medicine.llu.edu/) (<https://medicine.llu.edu/>) and [Keck School of Medicine of USC](https://keck.usc.edu/) (<https://keck.usc.edu/>), could help change that and expand the limited supply of doctors in the Inland Empire. The ratio of both primary care doctors and specialists per 100,000 residents in the area is roughly half that in the greater Bay Area, according to the [University of California-San Francisco Healthforce Center](https://healthforce.ucsf.edu/). (<https://healthforce.ucsf.edu/>)

San Bernardino and Riverside counties also have a higher proportion of Latinos than the state as a whole, according to the U.S. Census.

Douglas Grover, 32, grew up in Moreno Valley and graduated from UC-Riverside's first medical school class last year. He stayed on at the university for his residency in psychiatry, a specialty whose rates in the

Inland Empire are far below those statewide.

Grover said he wants to practice in the area so he can give back to his community.

“If we open more opportunities here for college students to enter medical school, it will provide more physicians over the long run and hopefully help with the disparities in these areas,” he said.

Dr. Raj Sindher, a primary care physician and president of the Riverside County Medical Association (<http://www.rcmanet.org/>), said he sees the need for more physicians every day. “We have so many patients that we cannot handle,” he said.

At the same time, he said, recruiting new doctors is “extremely difficult” because they are often drawn to bigger practices in more urban areas — or they stay where they completed their residencies, the on-the-job training they require to become doctors.

New medical schools will have to make a concerted effort to find the students who want to remain in the area in which they train, said Janet Coffman, UCSF professor of health policy and co-author of the report on physician shortages. There also need to be more local opportunities for recent graduates to complete their residencies, she said.

“Just having a new medical school and more folks graduating medical school is no guarantee that those new physicians are going to practice in the parts of the state where they are most needed,” she said.

The Claremont medical school plans to work closely with community health centers and hospitals in the area, including Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center (<https://www.pvhmc.org/>). Students will be trained to work in teams alongside other providers and to understand the latest on genetics, artificial intelligence and data, Schuster said.



“Medicine is going to change very dramatically in the next decade,” he said.  
“We want the school to have a real emphasis on both community and on science.”

*This story was produced by Kaiser Health News (<http://khn.org/>), an editorially independent program of the Kaiser Family Foundation (<http://kff.org/>).*

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## San Bernardino County Water Conference will be held Aug. 10 in Ontario

5 hrs ago

The Building Industry Association (BIA) Baldy View Chapter announced that Jack Simes, acting area manager for the Bureau of Reclamation's Southern California Area Office, is this year's special guest speaker at the 12th annual San Bernardino County Water Conference.

The event will take place Friday, Aug. 10 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the DoubleTree Hotel in Ontario.

"Continued planning for the future water supply for the Southwest is critical to the economic welfare of the region," said Simes. "I am pleased to speak at such a prestigious event and engage with the top leaders on a constructive solutions-oriented dialogue."

Reclamation's Southern California Area Office (SCAO) is located in Temecula and encompasses all of southern California within the Lower Colorado Region with the exception of the Imperial, Coachella and Colorado River valleys. SCAO is responsible for administering programs to develop or enhance water conservation, reclamation and reuse projects throughout southern California.



“The BIA Baldy View Chapter is honored to have a guest speaker with this depth of knowledge of water issues,” said Carlos Rodriguez, BIA Baldy View Chapter CEO. “Mr. Simes will provide attendees with the latest information about the Department’s plans to address the tremendous water demands of our region.”

To purchase tickets or inquire about sponsorship, call (866) 737-4880. Tickets are \$150 and include breakfast, lunch and participation in the event program. For more information, visit [www.biabuild.com/water-conference](http://www.biabuild.com/water-conference).

[https://www.highlandnews.net/opinion/letters\\_to\\_editor/putting-trash-fees-on-tax-bills-is-not-yet-a/article\\_a069dd5a-90f7-11e8-b3c7-1f9280700bcc.html](https://www.highlandnews.net/opinion/letters_to_editor/putting-trash-fees-on-tax-bills-is-not-yet-a/article_a069dd5a-90f7-11e8-b3c7-1f9280700bcc.html)

## Putting trash fees on tax bills is not yet a done deal

Norma Richards, Highland 22 hrs ago

I was blown away when I received the notice from Burrtec Waste Co. with regards to the public hearing that will be held by the Highland City Council at 6 p.m. on Aug. 14. Why? Because I was at the initial meeting on June 26, which addressed and approved the motion to give Burrtec a straight 10-year contract and annual 10-year renewal exclusive contract amounting to a 20-year monopoly and the relief of billing administrative costs to Burrtec by placing residential trash fees on each homeowner's property taxes!

The recent notice from Burrtec stated that the Aug. 14 hearing will address trash rate increases and collection of trash charges for residential customers on their property tax. However, at the initial council meeting on June 26 besides myself and other residents opposing, specifically, the trash charges to the property tax (San Bernardino County tax roll), the council members never responded that the proposition was NOT a done deal.

Council members sat and heard opposition concerns that Highland residents will be financially impacted by the property tax proposal.

They should be given an opportunity to respond; the concern of having a private for-profit business use of a government entity to collect trash service fees, what next? Landlords will have to pay their tenants trash fee up front, even if the rental is vacated after being prepaid on

their property taxes; the concern that once collected by the county assessor's office, their office does not process refunds.

Council members could not and did not address if the extra services required from Burrtec would eventually be passed on, financially, to each homeowner.

The only council member who seemed to have an open mind and actually considered opposition concerns was Jesse Chavez. Mayor Pro Tem Chavez expressed concern of the 20-year contract to Burrtec, and specifically asked Councilman John Timmerman if he should recuse his vote considering the \$1,000 each campaign donation by Burrtec's CEO and vice president. Chavez's motion to oppose the Burrtec agreement was ignored.

Councilman Timmerman painted a picture of how homeowners get away with not paying their trash fees, (property liens do not go away until paid) and Councilwoman Penny Lilburn's only heartfelt concern was who would address homeowners' trash complaints.

They turned a tone deaf ear to the oppositions expressed at the meeting, passed the motion and gave no indication that what they actually approved was a 20-year contract with Burrtec and that the Highland homeowners still have a voice for not only a trash rate increase but also residential trash charges on their property taxes pursuant to state Resolution mandates.

Highland homeowners can submit their opposition by written letter to the Highland city clerk's office, 27215 Base Line, Highland, CA., 92346: 1. State your objection. 2. Identify the affected parcel. 3. Owner's name. 4. Signature of owner.

Deadline is 5:30 p.m. Aug.14. A majority protest invalidates the property tax proposal.

Norma Richards, Highland

[https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/update-additional-candidates-pull-papers-for-november-election-in-fontana/article\\_beb762fc-90eb-11e8-91e9-1b343b946653.html](https://www.fontanaheraldnews.com/news/update-additional-candidates-pull-papers-for-november-election-in-fontana/article_beb762fc-90eb-11e8-91e9-1b343b946653.html)

## UPDATE: Additional candidates pull papers for November election in Fontana

Jul 26, 2018 Updated Jul 26, 2018

Additional candidates have pulled papers to announce their intention to participate in the November election in Fontana.

This past week, two more candidates have pulled papers in the mayor's race -- Lorena Corona (a former member of the Fontana Unified School District Board of Education) and Hafsa Sharafat.

Acquanetta Warren is seeking her third term as mayor and is also being challenged by Jesse Sandoval, a member of the City Council.

Other candidates who have pulled papers for various city positions include:

City Council District 4 -- John Roberts (incumbent) and Glenda Barillas (challenger)

City Council District 1 -- Shannon O'Brien and Phillip Cothran Jr.

City clerk -- Tonia Lewis (incumbent) and Germaine McClellan Key (challenger)

City treasurer -- Janet Koehler-Brooks (incumbent)



To run for any of these city positions, a person must be a United States citizen, 18 years of age or older, and a resident and registered voter of the City of Fontana at the time nomination papers are issued. Persons interested in taking out nomination papers must make an appointment by calling the City Clerk's Office at (909) 350-7602. The deadline for filing is Friday, Aug. 10.

----- IN ADDITION, three positions are being contested on the FUSD Board this fall.

As of July 24, one of the incumbents, Matt Slowik, had pulled papers to seek reelection.

For more information, call the San Bernardino County Elections Office at (909) 387-8300 or visit [www.sbcountyelections.com](http://www.sbcountyelections.com).

# Mountain communities flee amid scorched earth 'It's all heat, toxins and smoke'

## Raging fire cuts path of destruction in serene Idyllwild



THE CRANSTON FIRE, believed to have been started by an arsonist, burned multiple structures along Deer Foot Lane in Idyllwild. (Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times)

BY JACLYN COSGROVE, LAURA NEWBERRY, CORINA KNOLL AND JOSEPH SERNA

It was little more than a grave of scorched remains.



Appliances burned beyond recognition, a charred bathtub, twists of metal pipe. Slabs of concrete that once served as walls stood next to a chimney of blackened stone.

Signs of a caring owner — a filled birdbath, potted plants — were suddenly stark symbols of the past, before the Idyllwild home had been consumed by the Cranston fire.

The massive blaze that has sent thousands fleeing as it continues to rage through the San Jacinto Mountains is believed to have been sparked Wednesday by an arsonist, a troubling detail in a battle that has enlisted nearly 700 firefighters and threatened hundreds of homes.

“It’s the scariest feeling you can have because you’re helpless,” said resident Tamara Friemoth, 56, about the moment she watched the fire curl around the mountains in front of the gas station and auto shop she owns with her husband.

Friemoth has lived in the area for four decades and although she ran home to grab clothes and family heirlooms, she kept her business open for firefighters seeking drinks and snacks.

By Thursday afternoon, the fire was 7,500 acres and 5% contained, easily spotted by the billowy plumes of smoke expanding into the sky.

A dusting of crimson retardant atop a ridge marked where the flames had retreated from Idyllwild, an enclave of artists and musicians and a tourist draw. But officials worried the triple-digit weather coupled with a shift in wind could build momentum and undo any progress, even sending the blaze back on top of firefighters and into the beloved town.

Chief Patrick Reitz of the Idyllwild Fire Protection District said his biggest concern was whether the fire might push past a fire line or fuel break.

Over the last several years, staff from local, state and federal agencies have actively worked to build and maintain fuel breaks in the area. Those, mixed with an aggressive air assault team and firefighters on the ground, have helped slow down the Cranston fire and save most of Idyllwild, where five structures were destroyed.

“It was a lot of work yesterday and tremendous effort, and it paid off,” Reitz said.

But the mushroom-like cloud that formed nearby has added another element to the usual volatility of fighting fires. Pyrocumulus clouds form from fire and collapse onto themselves, causing the weather conditions to change.

“It’s all heat, toxins and smoke,” said Capt. Scott Visyak of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

Fed by dry fuel on steep slopes, the fire headed into Apple Canyon and Bonita Vista, and new evacuations were announced for McCall Park, south of Pine Wood, Cedar Glen, Pine Cove and Fern Valley.

Steve and Suzanne Coffey were on their way to San Diego to hit the casinos when approaching flames made them return home to hurriedly pack up their belongings. They

spent the night in their car with their cat, parked near a church.

When they saw their house again, it was coated in retardant. The mess was no matter for Steve Coffey, who had moved to Idyllwild 40 years ago, yearning for a place far from the city.

The elation at finding his home still standing was difficult for him to express.

“I can’t put it into words.”

Many residents were without power, including Ruth Kleefisch, 52, who drove from her home in Pine Cove to Idyllwild in an attempt to charge her cellphone and try to get reception.

Kleefisch’s husband has liver cancer and has been unable to eat for the last four days. She was desperate to reach his doctor to ask what she could do to help her husband’s nausea.

She said she was less concerned about the fire, which hadn’t reached Pine Cove, and more concerned about being without power, especially if it lasted more than a few days.

“The neighborhood’s quiet, everything is quiet. There’s nobody here. Once all the tourists leave, there’s not that many left of us, really.”

Fires have also struck Northern California, where firefighters work in brutal 110-degree temperatures on the northern edge of the Sacramento Valley. Crews scrambled when a shift in the winds pushed the Carr fire three miles east in four hours, catching residents in Whiskeytown on their heels.

The blaze reached the edge of Whiskeytown Lake, where local news outlets reported that 40 boats were burned along with a number of homes.

Authorities placed 192 homes under mandatory evacuation orders, most of those in Whiskeytown and the community of French Gulch, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said.

The blaze was 20,000 acres and 10% contained Thursday morning. But most of that containment was on the fire’s west and northwestern edge, not on its southern face where the residents are, said spokesman Chad Carroll. The blaze has been running along the north side of Highway 299 since a vehicle malfunction sparked it Monday afternoon, he said.

While the Carr fire has been fueled by wind and topography, the Ferguson fire outside Yosemite National Park has been decidedly different, said U.S. Forest Service spokesman Jacob Welsh.

Crews in the rugged forests in Mariposa County have been dealing with an inversion layer that has put the Ferguson fire’s smoke right on top of Yosemite Valley and other low-lying areas. Poor air quality and visibility have limited the ability for planes and helicopters to help fight the fire, Welsh said. At the same time, that smoky blanket keeps the fire from “getting a breath of fresh air” and growing, Welsh said.

One of the biggest obstacles to containing the fire continues to be the terrain, a mix of steep cliffs with deep, inaccessible canyons loaded with vegetation and slopes of standing dead trees — victims of a bark beetle infestation that's killed 129 million trees since 2010.

The Ferguson fire was 43,299 acres and 27% contained, officials said.

The strategy with the Cranston fire is to hack away at flammable vegetation along its perimeter to cut off the fuel supply, said Kate Kramer, a spokeswoman with the San Bernardino National Forest.

Farther out from the fire line, she said, firefighters are clearing flammable brush to prevent it from spreading.

The blaze is being directly attacked in areas covered in extremely dry grass, where the fire burns quickly and stays low enough to be extinguished safely.

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Cosgrove reported from Mountain Center, Newberry from Banning, and Knoll and Serna from Los Angeles.

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# Sonoma County supervisors call for closer review of October wildfire cleanup complaints

J.D. MORRIS

THE PRESS DEMOCRAT | July 24, 2018, 6:23PM



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Sonoma County supervisors Tuesday pressed the state government to do a better job resolving complaints from October fire survivors who say contractors removed too much soil from their burned homesites or encountered other issues with the public debris removal.

About 240 Northern California property owners who participated in the government-sponsored fire cleanup were sent letters telling them an issue they'd raised with the work couldn't be resolved through the public program, prompting broad frustration on Sonoma County's Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Shirlee Zane said she felt county officials promised more from the government when they urged people who lost homes to join the massive cleanup led by the federal Army Corps of Engineers.

"We are not satisfied, because we feel like we've been made liars," Zane said Tuesday. "The Corps of Engineers did not properly vet these contractors, and as a result, they are putting our fire survivors through hell on this. And some of them have said to us this has been worse than the fire."

Zane said she's working with the office of state Sen. Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, to set up a meeting with state and federal officials to discuss the issue.

The state Office of Emergency Services has taken the "unprecedented step" of hiring another contractor to resolve complaints about over-excavation, said Eric Lamoureux, a

regional administrator for the agency. The state is working to restore soil or make “other repairs” to about 280 properties in Sonoma County through that effort, Lamoureux said.

Still, supervisors urged the state to take a closer look at the first group of people who received what Zane described as a “too bad, so sad” letter.

Lamoureux said anyone who received the letters can continue to seek resolution of their complaints by contacting his agency at the phone number or email listed in that message. But he acknowledged the public cleanup effort wasn’t flawless. It was overseen by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and removed about 1.9 million tons of debris in Sonoma County alone.

“What we saw following the catastrophic October wildfires was a debris operation unprecedented in California history — probably the largest debris operation we’ve undertaken as a state government and federal government since the 1906 earthquake,” Lamoureux told supervisors. “With any operation of this scale ... there’s a tremendous challenge with doing that with any level of surgical precision, obviously.”

Karen Erickson, who lost her home on Bent Tree Place in the Fountaingrove area, told supervisors that when she signed up for the public cleanup program, she included “detailed instructions” and an accompanying site plan that weren’t followed.

“There was a significant disconnect between what was represented to the public in the debris removal forums and the directions actually given in the task orders to the contractors,” Erickson said. “Before the debris removal on my property, I expected about a 90 to 95 percent chance of being able to rebuild. ... I now feel that my chance of rebuilding has reduced to about 5 percent.”

Sonoma County lost about 5,300 homes in the wildfires. About 3,700 properties in the county participated in the government-sponsored cleanup.

Supervisor Lynda Hopkins pushed back on Lamoureux’s characterization of the public program as a “tremendous success” in finishing nearly all of Sonoma County’s major debris cleanup work in about half a year.

"I disagree with that assessment," Hopkins said. "Yes, we got the properties cleaned up, but at what cost?"

The price tag for the public cleanup across Sonoma, Napa, Mendocino and Lake counties came out to \$1.3 billion.

Hopkins said the program created a "race to the bottom" among contractors trying to collect as much debris as possible and haul it to the dump as fast as they could, twin forces that did not work to the best interests of homeowners or workers, in her view.

No one from the Army Corps presented to supervisors Tuesday, but spokeswoman Nancy Allen said in a statement to The Press Democrat that "the scope and scale of this historic debris removal mission was unlike any other cleanup effort" the corps has led. Corps officials haven't seen any evidence of contract breaches by the three prime contractors and the "great majority" of subcontractors "operated with high professional standards," she said in an email.

"When our quality assurance personnel in the field discovered exceptions, we worked with the prime contractors to ensure appropriate corrective measures were taken," Allen said in the email. "The Corps treats public safety, the safety of the agency's field personnel and the safety of its contractors and their subcontractors as a paramount duty."

Hopkins and Supervisor David Rabbitt, the board's vice chairman, also criticized the cost of the cleanup program, which amounted to an average \$280,000 per property, according to KQED. Cleanup of Lake County's 2015 Valley fire cost an average \$77,000 per parcel, KQED reported last week.

"I'm in construction: You can knock down an entire building — a three-story building — for about half that," said Rabbitt, an architect. "I just don't understand that."

Supervisors James Gore and Susan Gorin were absent Tuesday.

Lamoureux said state and federal officials are in the process of internally reviewing the cleanup program and will pay close attention to worker safety and quality assurance.

Even if the state ultimately narrows the list of fire survivors with debris cleanup complaints it can't resolve, county officials will still want to examine the data used to support rejection

of residents' complaints, said County Administrator Sheryl Bratton.

State officials hope to have problems at properties deemed eligible for its current program resolved within a month or two, according to Lamoureux.

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On Twitter @thejdmorris.

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# PG&E posts \$1 billion loss in shadow of wildfire claims

BY DALE KASLER [dkasler@sacbee.com](mailto:dkasler@sacbee.com)

PG&E Corp. announced a loss of nearly \$1 billion due to wildfire claims Thursday – and repeated its demands that the Legislature take steps to reduce the utility’s liability for future fires.

One day after Gov. Jerry Brown released a proposal that would ease California utilities’ wildfire losses, the parent of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. reported that it lost \$984 million during the second quarter as it anticipates an avalanche of claims from last fall’s deadly wine country fires.

The utility’s chief executive, Geisha Williams, immediately pounced on the huge loss as evidence that the Legislature must act. Current law “is unsustainable and is already having very real consequences,” she said on a conference call with investment analysts.

She added that the governor’s proposal, while welcome, “is insufficient” and she wants the Legislature to do more to shield PG&E and other utilities from wildfire claims. “A lot more work is necessary,” she said. “It doesn’t go far enough.”

Current law says a utility can be held liable for fire damages caused by its poles, wires and other equipment, even if the company followed state safety rules. Brown’s plan would require courts “to determine whether the utility acted reasonably.” Brown’s plan wouldn’t cover any losses from 2017.

Williams, though, complained that Brown’s plan falls short by not “addressing the 2017 wildfire costs in the most cost-effective manner possible.” She didn’t provide detail on how she wants the costs of last year’s fire handled.

The wine country fires have loomed as a financial disaster for PG&E. State insurance officials have said the costs could exceed \$10 billion, and Williams has previously hinted that the company could be forced into bankruptcy. Cal Fire has determined that PG&E equipment was responsible for at least 12 of last fall’s fires and hasn’t yet issued a report on the Tubbs Fire, the deadliest of the blazes.

PG&E has been lobbying the Legislature and Brown’s office for months on the issue, arguing that climate change makes massive wildfires almost inevitable in the years to come. Although the utility has embarked on a more aggressive wildfire-preparedness plan, Williams said the fires currently raging in California are proof that “we’re experiencing that new normal now.”

The loss PG&E announced Thursday was predictable. In June PG&E announced it was taking a \$2.5 billion pre-tax “reserve” to account for anticipated losses from last October’s wine country fires, which were the deadliest and costliest in California history. After taxes were factored in, the utility wound up with a \$984 million loss for the quarter.

PG&E critics, including some legislators and the insurance industry, have vowed to fight major changes to the liability laws. A coalition of insurance companies issued a statement Wednesday calling Brown’s proposal “nothing more than a utility bailout” that shifts utilities’ liabilities “onto the backs of wildfire survivors, homeowners, communities and businesses.”



# As homeless people swelter, city offers tips for hot days but won't yet open cooling centers

BY CYNTHIA HUBERT [chubert@sacbee.com](mailto:chubert@sacbee.com)



PAUL KITAGAKI JR. [pkitagaki@sacbee.com](mailto:pkitagaki@sacbee.com)

George Kohrummel, assistant director of Friendship Park, distributes free water to Loaves and Fishes clients at Friendship Park on Thursday in Sacramento. The temperature reached 106 after Wednesday's high of 104, and triple digits are again forecast for today and Saturday.

Along the road that led into Sacramento's Loaves & Fishes homeless services complex Thursday afternoon, hundreds of men and women huddled in dome tents, seeking escape from the searing heat.

But the flimsy tents offered little relief as temperatures climbed into triple digits. So they headed for the agency's Friendship Park area, which offered canopies, misters and ice. For a few hours, they found some measure of comfort.

When the park closed at 3, many began walking, searching for a spot to spend another sizzling summer afternoon.

"I've got to go find a shady spot, wherever I can sit and not get into trouble," said Arthur Benik, as sweat glistened on his brow and soaked his green shirt.

Benik, 44, walks on crutches and lives with a colostomy bag, the result of a recent medical crisis that he said led to his homelessness. "I hate the situation I'm in," he said. "It's not easy getting out of this heat."

Accuweather was forecasting a high Thursday of 106 in Sacramento, on the heels of a 104 reading on Wednesday. High temperatures are forecast to be in the triple digits on Friday and Saturday as well. The weather agency issued a "heat advisory," warning that the prolonged hot temperatures could result in heat illnesses.

The city offered residents various tips for keeping cool in the coming days, including taking cold showers, limiting exposure to the sun, fleeing to malls or other indoor places or grabbing a bite to eat in "many of our farm-to-fork restaurants."

Those choices are pipe dreams for many who frequent Loaves & Fishes, which provides daytime meals and other services to as many as 800 people every day.

Shelters are full, including a "triage" facility that the city operates on Railroad Drive in North Sacramento, officials said. That building, which offers "wraparound" services for as many as 200 homeless people at a time, plans to close in August. After that, the city hopes to erect three large tent-like structures to provide shelter and services to homeless men and women.

Joan Burke, advocacy director for Loaves & Fishes, urged the city to immediately open "cooling centers" for people who live outside or are without air conditioning. But the recent heat wave likely will not meet the countywide criteria for opening the centers, said Mary Lynne Vellinga, spokeswoman for Mayor Darrell Steinberg.

The criteria, she said, include daytime highs of 105 degrees for three consecutive days, with nighttime temperatures of 75 degrees or higher.

"We're not expected to meet those thresholds in the next few days, so there are currently no plans to open cooling centers," Vellinga said.

At Loaves & Fishes, on North C Street near downtown Sacramento, volunteers and staffers on Thursday were "giving out ice and water as fast as we can," said Burke. Each "guest" received two bottles of cold water as they left the park in the afternoon. The agency is requesting donations of bottled water, which can be dropped off at the facility.

Staffers urged Friendship Park visitors to head to the downtown public library, or any other building that offered relief from the sun, once they departed.

As the park was preparing to close Thursday afternoon, the misery was almost palpable, said director Hannah Ozarian.

"Everybody is so lethargic," she said. "No one has any energy."

Steve Watters of First Step Communities, another agency that serves homeless people, said some churches this summer have periodically opened their doors to people without shelter. "But I would like to see more effort put into something more permanent," Watters said.

The dozens of tents that line Ahern Street, leading into Loaves & Fishes, are proof that Sacramento's homeless crisis is real and growing, said Burke.

“I’ve never seen it so sad, and I’ve been doing this for a lot of years,” she said. “Especially in this heat, we’ve got to get people into shelters, but there’s no capacity. What I’m seeing is just shocking. I don’t think the situation has ever been worse.”

# No shelter from cost overruns

The first bridge housing for L.A.'s homeless has doubled in price. That's not a sustainable course.

When Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti proposed in April to build transitional shelters for homeless people, the idea was to give them a place to live that served as a bridge between the streets and a permanent home. These trailers would not be the typical overnight shelters. They would be safe shared places where someone could live for several months, having a bed of his or her own along with secure storage space and the freedom to bring pets and human partners. Service providers onsite would offer case management, counseling and, most important, help obtaining an apartment.

Garcetti set aside \$20 million in his 2018-19 budget for shelters, with each of the 15 council districts slated to receive about \$1.3 million to provide 100 shelter beds. With the right services, homeless people would need the beds for only a few months before graduating into permanent housing. If the average stay in a bed was three months, as Garcetti estimated, his \$20-million plan would bring temporary housing to 6,000 homeless people a year.

But when the first bridge shelter opens in September in a city-owned parking lot near the Olvera Street marketplace, it will have cost the city \$2.7 million — twice what the mayor allocated per council district. It will have only 45 beds, and the service provider running the shelter estimates the average stay will be six months, not three.

What happened here? Some of the overrun was caused by the sloping lot and the need for a \$200,000 sewer line. But most of the extra costs came from outfitting the shelter more elaborately to make it more appealing to homeless people.

That's not a preposterous idea. Homeless people, inured to life on the streets, may not be eager to trade it for an overcrowded warehouse of a shelter. The more inviting the shelter, the more homeless people will be willing to live there.

The El Pueblo project initially consisted of just a collection of three large trailers for bedrooms and one for a bathroom and laundry facility. When the service providers from the People Concern, which was hired to run the site, saw that there was no common gathering spot, they suggested building a deck outside the trailers — a courtyard of sorts that would function as a dining and recreational area while leveling out the sloping land for disabled residents. Another trailer was added for the service providers working onsite.

It's reasonable for service providers to want the most efficacious facilities they can get. But the city should not be blowing its budget on shelters. And the cost overrun at El Pueblo isn't a one-time miscalculation; Garcetti's office now expects every shelter to be as well-appointed as the El Pueblo one and cost something north of \$2 million.

Granted, the City Council had already boosted the shelters' budget by \$10 million. And city officials are hoping to earmark for shelters \$45 million of the \$85 million they are getting from the state for homeless programs. Spending that \$45 million on shelters, however, means it won't be available for other vital homeless housing efforts.

Officials in the mayor's office say they could have done the shelter program at the original budget — but they didn't have to. And at the higher price, they say, they have a better shot at getting homeless people into the shelters.

So, let's make this clear: The city should keep building shelters. We need them. But let's make this clear too: The city can't afford to overspend on temporary housing when what we desperately need is permanent housing for homeless people — and lots of it.

Mayor Garcetti's homelessness proposals are appropriately ambitious, but they're also fueled by a fantasy math that's exasperating. As it turns out, we will not be able to temporarily house 6,000 people in \$20 million worth of shelters. And, no, at the rate we're going, we will not build 10,000 units of homeless housing with \$1.2 billion of Proposition HHH money, as he and other city officials said we would. (The city can steer the construction back to that initial estimate — Garcetti said that too.)

The El Pueblo shelter will soon be completed. Let's see how it works. But the city also needs to build future shelters at something closer to the original budget. The city should keep its focus — and spend its money — on the permanent housing that can truly transform homeless people's existences and improve the quality of life for everyone in Los Angeles.

## VIEWPOINTS

# To end opioid crisis, lawmakers must take the lead

BY PETE NIELSEN Special to The Sacramento Bee



PATRICK SISON AP

In the national opioid crisis, an advocate says the Legislature must show leadership and help end addiction.

Addressing the growing opioid epidemic in California will require our state elected officials to do more than author bills in Sacramento.

While legislation is important, we need leaders to be the voices that draw those suffering with addiction out of darkness and despair and into the light of needed, quality treatment. My organization fights for

better treatment and more access, but faces a state Capitol that lacks leadership on the issue and a comprehensive approach to solving it.

We need legislators to become knowledgeable on addiction and its human impact. They need to instinctively consider the role of addiction in mental health issues. Elected officials must hold press conferences and town halls and get out in front of the issue instead of just reacting.

Who is going to step up and make opioid addiction their signature issue?

A small handful of legislators have authored or backed legislation, with limited success. Sen. Jim Beall, D-San Jose, a voice in the wilderness on addiction issues for more than a decade, can be counted on to push bills that work on the fringes to make the system better. Sen. Steven Bradford, D-Gardena, introduced legislation we sponsored to end patient brokering, and Sen. Ricardo Lara, D-Bell Gardens, introduced a bill for licensed and certified treatment programs. Assembly members Melissa Melendez, R-Lake Elsinore, and Freddie Rodriguez, D-Pomona, jointly introduced legislation to certify quality sober living programs.

But Californians, and people struggling with addiction in particular, need more from their politicians. Patients who seek treatment are vulnerable physically and mentally, and these problems are getting worse.

“Enough opioids were prescribed in 2015 in California for every man, woman, and child to medicate themselves around the clock for a month,” Kelly Pfeifer, a director with the California Health Care Foundation, said at an Assembly hearing in February.

At the same hearing, Karen Smith, the state's public health officer, said that about 70 percent of the nearly 2,000 Californians who lost their lives to opioids in 2016 died from prescription opioids.

For California to have a chance to combat the growing opioid epidemic, we need elected officials with the desire and vision to get the state clean and sober. The blind eye to "death by denial" of treatment for addiction patients is a blight, but there is time for California to become a shining example by becoming the first state to end untreated addiction.

*Pete Nielsen is CEO of the California Consortium of Addiction Programs and Professionals. He can be contacted at [pete@ccapp.us](mailto:pete@ccapp.us).*

## EDITORIAL NOTEBOOK

# Backers of gas tax are missing the point: How will money be spent?

BY ERIKA D. SMITH [esmith@sacbee.com](mailto:esmith@sacbee.com)



JULIE WATSON AP

Republican gubernatorial candidate John Cox, left, and organizer Carl DeMaio display thousands of petitions to put Proposition 6 on the ballot to repeal the gas tax.

By now, it's clear that the backers of Gov. Jerry Brown's gas tax have a problem. It's just not the problem they think it is.

Sure, the latest polls show that a majority of California voters plan to support Proposition 6, the Republican ploy of a ballot measure that would repeal the increase of 12 cents per gallon on gasoline and 20 cents per gallon on diesel. If left intact, that tax increase,

along with a new fee on vehicle registration, would raise more than \$5 billion a year for long-delayed repairs of crumbling roads and bridges, and to improve mass transit.

That's a revenue stream that construction companies and unions don't want to give up. California's broader business community doesn't want to forfeit it either, because safer roads and bridges make it easier for people to drive to work and for goods to be easily trucked around the state.

And so, they've come up with a multi-million-dollar campaign, wrapped around the slogan "Stop the Attack on Bridge & Road Safety!"

But *this* is their problem: They're missing the point.

As much as voters on both sides of the political aisle object to the gas tax because of the need to fork over additional money, their bigger objection is about how that money will be spent. Why would anyone agree to raise his or her own taxes for road construction when so many of the projects that are already underway seem to be the very picture of waste, inefficiency, sloppiness and laziness?

These were my thoughts while sitting in standstill traffic last Sunday afternoon in the shadow of Mount Shasta. For miles and what seemed like hours, cars and trucks inched along one lane of I-5 in bumper-to-bumper traffic because the other lanes had been shut down for construction.



That was bad. What was worse was that workers had also blocked off most of the entrance and exit ramps. And even though I managed to get off the highway at one point, I quickly realized that many of the side streets were closed off, too, rendering the posted detours absolutely useless.

Why would anyone want to pay more just to be stuck, unnecessarily, in this kind of traffic?

And why would anyone want their tax dollars to go toward hiring more of the workers who drop construction barrels in a zig-zag pattern on I-80 instead of in a straight line? Or the workers who force traffic to merge into one lane in a matter of feet with little to no sign to yield?

Maybe I'm just a snob. I grew up in the Midwest, where "summer" was synonymous with "road construction." There's not much California can learn from Ohio, Indiana and Michigan, but those states could teach a master's level course on how to set up orange barrels properly and how to close lanes without confusing drivers.

California voters are rightfully upset that previous taxes meant for road repairs have gone toward other uses and so, going forward, want to know that their money is being spent wisely. And that includes seeing that construction projects are being done efficiently.

Talking about an "attack on bridge and road safety" isn't the way to do any of that.

*Erika D. Smith: 916-321-1185, Erika\_D\_Smith.*

# Brown proposes phone line fee to pay for 911 upgrade

BY TARYN LUNA [tluna@sacbee.com](mailto:tluna@sacbee.com)

After raising prices at the gas pump last year, Gov. Jerry Brown wants to increase taxes on Californians again to overhaul the 911 emergency services system.

The Brown administration is asking the state Legislature to erase an existing tax on in-state phone calls in exchange for a flat fee on cellphone lines, landlines and other connected devices capable of contacting 911. The tax, estimated to start at a monthly rate of 34 cents per line, is expected to generate \$175.4 million in the first calendar year – more than double the current tax – with the possibility of ballooning to over \$400 million based on need in later years.

“It is an increase in an existing surcharge to modernize an antiquated system that is critical to be able to provide timely emergency information to Californians,” said H.D. Palmer, a spokesman for the California Department of Finance. “This falls into a fundamental purpose of government, which is protecting public safety.”

There’s little disagreement that 911 technology desperately needs an upgrade in California. The system dates back to the 1960s and the state admits it’s failed in times of crisis. Five years ago, the California Technology Agency reported that many of the network’s radio parts had been discontinued by the manufacturer.

The new digital system would allow 911 dispatchers to accept calls, texts and video. The Brown administration says it would be more reliable than the existing network, deliver calls faster and allow dispatchers to more accurately pinpoint the location of wireless callers, among other safety benefits.

But Brown’s proposal, wrapped up in Senate Bill 870 and Assembly Bill 1836, would require the support of two-thirds of the members of the state Legislature. Some lawmakers are hesitant to support even modest tax increases in an election year, fearing negative campaign attacks.

The recall of former Sen. Josh Newman, who GOP operatives tied to the gas tax, is fresh in the minds of Republicans and Democrats.

“Someone just got recalled for raising a tax,” said Sen. John Moorlach, R-Costa Mesa. “I will tell you that we’re getting pressure as Republicans to not vote for the tax increase. That’s legitimate.”

Moorlach, like some other Republican lawmakers, questions why the state refuses to dip into its existing treasury to fund a system that Brown argues is critical to public safety. The administration expects a \$9 billion budget surplus in the fiscal year that began July 1, and anticipates total reserves to hit \$16 billion next year.

“911 services are in jeopardy because their funding hasn’t been made a priority in the budget,” said Sen. Joel Anderson, R-Alpine, in a letter opposing the tax to constituents. “With a \$9 billion surplus, I believe the state has plenty of money to fund these important services. The Legislature doesn’t need to take even more money out of our pockets.”

The Brown administration said a fee on lines provides a permanent and more reliable funding stream than the budget, which is susceptible to ups and downs in the economy.

“The 911 system needs to continue operating flawlessly,” said Patrick Mallon, assistant director of public safety communications at the Governor’s Office of Emergency Services. “There is a significant danger in tying the future of the 911 system to a budget surplus we have in 2018-19. This legislation will last for another 25 years. What if we’re flush this year and not next year?”

Mallon and other supporters say both the 911 system and the model to fund it are outdated.

Several 911 dispatch centers were evacuated last year after the main spillway cracked at the Oroville Dam and high water threatened to flood Butte, Sutter and Yuba counties. Under the existing 911 system, there was no way to automatically reroute emergency calls to other centers.

“For 24 hours, if you lived in that area, you were held incommunicado,” Mallon said. “If you needed to evacuate and needed some help, you called somewhere where there was nobody there.”

A new Next Gen 911 system would be able to automatically send calls to the nearest operable center. The changes would include transitioning the California Public Safety Microwave Network from analog to digital and offer more paths for calls to reach 911 operators if cables are damaged by fires or earthquakes. The new system would also enable live monitoring of outages.

The State Emergency Telephone Number Account, the funding pool for the 911 system, currently relies on a less than 1 percent tax on the cost of in-state phone calls.

As more cellphone users opt to text instead of call, revenue has dropped an average of 6 percent a year since 2011. The existing tax generated about \$80.6 million in revenue for the 911 system last year. Now consumers pay about 14 cents per month, according to OES.

The new tax rate would be determined every October and range from 20 to 80 cents per line per month. The change would not kick in until Jan. 1.

The money would be used to continue the existing 911 system, cover administrative charges and begin the multi-year development of Next Gen 911 call system and the analog-to-digital conversion of the California Public Safety Microwave Network. With half of the current fiscal year funded from the new tax, the state expects to receive \$133.5 million in revenue for the 911 system in 2018-19 and cover an additional \$10.3 million in expenditures with leftover money from last year.

Senate President Pro Tem Toni Atkins, D-San Diego, said upgrading and modernizing “California’s 911 system is an urgent public-safety priority” and long overdue. Legislative leaders and Brown are actively discussing the proposal with their GOP colleagues and may need several of their votes to pass the bill after lawmakers return to the Capitol next month.

Rob Stutzman, a Sacramento-based Republican consultant, said of all the two-thirds bills in the current legislative session, the 911 tax “is the most defensible for what it provides.”

Despite targeting Newman over a tax increase last year, he said some Republicans could get away with voting for this one. Opposing it could pose a problem, he said.

“I could see some Republicans feeling the pressure to vote for it because they could be vulnerable to an attack that they didn’t update the 911 system,” Stutzman said. “ ‘Assemblyman so-and-so voted to let your

kids sit on the side of the road without the cops being able to find them’ – that’s how it would manifest itself in a campaign.”

Mallon and others said OES has been working on the proposal for some time, but it wasn’t a legislative priority until this year. The California State Sheriffs’ Association, California Fire Chiefs Association, California Chapter of the National Emergency Number Association and others support Brown’s plan.

“This bill is about saving lives,” said Brian Ferguson, a spokesman for Brown in an email. “Enacting this legislation now is critical to sustaining and modernizing our 911 system which Californians expect to work without fail during emergencies. “

Monterey County Herald (<http://www.montereyherald.com>)

## County welfare payments to be limited for able-bodied adults

### Social services budget shortfall prompts first-ever time limit

*By Jim Johnson, Monterey Herald*

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

Salinas >> For the first time, Monterey County will set a time limit on welfare payments to able-bodied adults.

Facing a \$200,000 shortfall, a split Board of Supervisors on Tuesday agreed by a 3-2 vote to set a six-month time limit in any 12-month period on general assistance payments to non-disabled, employable residents. The time limit, set to go into effect Sept. 1, can only be applied to welfare recipients who have been offered an opportunity to attend job skills or training sessions. It is expected to mainly affect those who have formerly been incarcerated and face employment challenges as a result, and those with substance abuse issues but who have not yet experienced resulting health challenges that would preclude them from working.

County Department of Social Services director Elliott Robinson, who is set to retire early next month, told the board that he personally opposed time limits and worried about the larger community impacts associated with restricting relatively small cash support, including on families of welfare recipients and the non-profit organizations who benefit from the recipients' work through a county program. But Robinson said as an administrator he was required to recommend the change for program budget integrity.

Originally set at three months, the precedent-setting time limit on welfare payments was shifted to six months on a substitute motion by Supervisor Simon Salinas, who noted other counties also have such time limits. County staff indicated about 25 other California counties have time limits ranging from six to nine months.

Robinson acknowledged the six-month time limit would not likely close the \$200,000 funding gap, and estimated current fiscal year savings at \$50,000-\$60,000. Board chairman Luis Alejo said the board would likely consider switching to a three-month limit for next fiscal year and perhaps beyond.

Supervisor Jane Parker said she was also concerned about the community impact, including on hospital emergency rooms and the criminal justice system, of the welfare time limits. She called for Robinson to work with county budget staff to find some level of funding to sustain the payments. Supervisor Mary Adams also expressed support for Parker's motion, and joined her in voting against the six-month time limit.

Currently, welfare recipients who are not disabled are enrolled in the county's general assistance work experience program, which currently has 81 active cases at an annual cost of \$330,480. Enrollees are assigned to complete work hours at local organizations such as the Food Bank for Monterey County and Dorothy's Place.

Also Tuesday, the supervisors honored Robinson for his 17 years of service as the county's social services director and 27-year public service career, and county Emergency Communications director William Harry on his retirement after a 44-year public service career, including five years with the county.

The board also honored Salinas boxer Ruben "Dracula" Villa IV, the reigning WBO Youth Featherweight champion, by declaring Tuesday "Ruben Villa Day."

*Jim Johnson can be reached at 831-726-4348.*

**CAMPAIGN FINANCE**

# County Won't Name Everyone Who Broke Campaign Money Laws



*KASSIDY DILLON, Voice of OC*

Longtime campaign finance watchdog Shirley Grindle (right) points while speaking to the county's Campaign Finance and Ethics Commission at their quarterly meeting on Monday, July 23, 2018. From left: the three commissioners who attended the meeting (Tam Nomoto Schumann, George Saadeh, and Sterling Winchell), and the commission's executive director, Denah Hoard.

By **NICK GERDA** ([HTTPS://VOICEFOC.ORG/AUTHOR/NGERDA/](https://voiceofoc.org/author/ngerda/))  ([HTTPS://TWITTER.COM/NICHOLASGERDA](https://twitter.com/nicholasgerda)) July 25, 2018

 **92**  
SHARES

 **81**

 **12**



Orange County enforcement officials declined this week to make public the names of all candidates and donors caught violating the county's campaign money laws, while similar enforcement offices elsewhere in California post such information online.

The county's campaign money law limits candidates to receiving \$2,000 per donor each election cycle and requires disclosure of each donor's occupation and employer. Intentional violations are a misdemeanor ([https://library.municode.com/ca/orange\\_county/codes/code\\_of\\_ordinances?nodeId=TIT1GOAD\\_DIV6CARE\\_ART1GEPR\\_S1-6-15CRMIAC](https://library.municode.com/ca/orange_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodeId=TIT1GOAD_DIV6CARE_ART1GEPR_S1-6-15CRMIAC)).

County officials, who report to the Orange County Board of Supervisors, took on the non-criminal enforcement duties in April 2017, after voters approved an ethics enforcement measure.

But supervisors structured the county enforcement so that when violators are caught by the county enforcement officials, they can return the illegal money and the matter can go away quietly.

"My belief is it's been working the way it's supposed to work, which is Ms. [Denah] Hoard's been resolving conflict, and it's confidential and people have been correcting things," said Supervisor Todd Spitzer, who was closely involved in structuring the enforcement approach, during the supervisors' June 12 meeting.

"It's worked...exactly the way I think it's supposed to work."

Hoard, who is the county's chief enforcement official, this week declined to say how many campaign violations have been discovered since she took office 15 months ago, citing her policy against news media interviews. She referred all questions to the county CEO's office.

In response to follow-up questions from Voice of OC, a county spokeswoman disclosed letters regarding two cases of alleged violations, which center on two of Spitzer's opponents in his run for county district attorney: incumbent DA Tony Rackauckas and DA candidate Brett Murdock, the latter of whom lost in

the June primary. In both cases, Rackauckas and Murdock's campaigns were allowed to fix the issues and no fines or other penalties were levied.

But Hoard and the county's chief spokeswoman, Molly Nichelson, have declined to disclose any of the other cases in which officials have allowed candidates to correct actions that may have violated the law without issuing a letter finding a violation.

"Two cases have resulted in findings of violations. In some instances informal communications with candidates and elected officials have been sent out to determine if excessive contributions could have been received. This is in cases where insufficient evidence could be found to make a finding or it is unclear of a relationship between individuals and business entities," Nichelson wrote in a Tuesday statement responding to Voice of OC's questions to her and Hoard.

"The contacted individuals have voluntarily refunded potential excessive contributions without the need for further intervention."

Nichelson and Hoard declined to say which candidates and donors were involved in these cases, nor how many times candidates have been allowed to return money in excess of the limit without a formal violation finding.

They also declined to disclose to the county's campaign finance commissioners the substance of several complaints that have not resulted in resolution letters. In declining, Hoard and county attorney Jacqueline Guzman cited due process for accused candidates, confidentiality, and a need to protect the independence of the commission that would hear appeals of enforcement decisions. There have been no appeals so far.

In one case, a violation was found but no letter was sent because Hoard determined the contribution was sent by mistake, she said Monday at the quarterly meeting of the county's Campaign Finance and Ethics Commission. Hoard did not identify the individuals involved.

In another case, a person has submitted seven or eight separate complaints about alleged violations, roughly one per month, and Hoard said she grouped all of the complaints together into a single number so they don't "pad" the complaint numbers. She didn't identify the person.

In her letters announcing closure of inquiries into campaign money violations, Hoard wrote, "This matter is now concluded and deemed confidential to the extent permitted by applicable law, including the California Public Records Act."

Terry Francke, an expert in California public records law, said he's not aware of any exemptions that would allow the county to keep the campaign money complaints and findings secret.

"It sounds kind of dubious to me," said Francke, who serves as general counsel of the transparency group Californians Aware and is Voice of OC's public records consultant, adding he'd be interested in seeing their full legal justification for it.

County officials didn't have an answer Tuesday when asked what their legal justification is for keeping the information secret.

"Just for perspective, if you or I get caught shoplifting, it's not gonna be kept a secret. Or if somebody even suspects that we shoplifted something, we are subject to arrest, and that's not going to be kept a secret," Francke said.

"So whether there's a special level of protection for people with political reputations is another question."

This week, the Orange County commissioners who are supposed to monitor campaign finance enforcement questioned why they weren't provided information about the substance of complaints and how they were resolved.

When voters approved the June 2016 ballot measure, they directed supervisors to create a Campaign Finance and Ethics Commission to monitor enforcement and hear appeals of enforcement decisions.

At the panel's quarterly meeting Monday, commissioner George Saadeh asked Hoard about "the right to have a little bit more information, you know, about each of the complaints, so that at least we understand where they're coming from."

"One of my suggestions is perhaps we can get a brief summary of each one so that we can have a little – a little bit more information regarding each one of 'em. And that way it doesn't feel as though all we do we just sit here and say, 'Okay, this looks good,' " said Saadeh, a former Santa Ana police executive.

Guzman, the county attorney, said it would be improper to let the commissioners know the substance of the closed complaints because their role is to decide on appeals of enforcement action.

"Allowing the commissioners to review the background or more specific facts relating to the violations that have been alleged raises serious questions of due process," Guzman said in response to Saadeh's request.

"It's our understanding and our opinion that in order to maintain the integrity of the process – of the enforcement process – the commission has to remain an impartial decision-maker."

Guzman said the commissioners might be able to get information about the type of violations that have been sustained, but not the facts of the violations or who violated the law.

"There may be the possibility of stating the violation, without stating the facts," Guzman told the commissioners. She suggested they could find out "what type of violation occurred."

"I think that that would be...fact-neutral enough that that could give you more information without divulging the alleged violator of the code, [or] the facts underlying that allegation."

Shirley Grindle, a campaign finance watchdog who pushed the county to take over enforcement, said the enforcement process was set up to be handled mostly in secret so violations wouldn't be used in political campaigns.

"The whole thing was set up so that most of the violations would be handled by the executive director [Denah Hoard], kept out of the public eye, not used for political purposes in a campaign," Grindle told the ethics commissioners at Monday's meeting.

"The unforeseen consequence of that is you guys don't feel like you're doing anything."

At the same time, Grindle said the commissioners should be getting more information.

"I support very much giving you a little more information, in a summary form," Grindle said. "If I were a commissioner, I really would want to know more. I would not want to be kept totally in the dark. So I sympathize with your position."

Other campaign finance offices in California handle disclosure differently from the way Orange County supervisors set up the local system.

California's state-level campaign finance enforcement agency – the Fair Political Practices Commission – provides the public with copies of complaints, confirms investigations, and publicly posts its findings and enforcement decisions online (<http://www.fppc.ca.gov/enforcement/EnfDivCaseResults.html>).

And the Los Angeles City Ethics Commission – which enforces campaign finance laws in LA – says it posts all of its enforcement orders (<https://ethics.lacity.org/enforcement/>), since 1993, which can be accessed through its website ([https://ethics.lacity.org/data/?search\\_type\\_id=12](https://ethics.lacity.org/data/?search_type_id=12)).

In Orange County, the supervisors structured the county campaign finance enforcement so they are the direct bosses of the chief enforcement official, and can fire and replace her at any time without needing to provide a reason. It's unclear to what extent supervisors receive information that is not readily available to the public.



Hoard started as the top enforcement official in April 2017, and the ethics commission held its first meeting in October 2017.

County officials developed custom software to search existing campaign finance data when complaints arise, though they have not set the software up to automatically flag violations.

Such a feature would involve simply having the computer add together the amount each donor has given to each campaign and flag the amounts that went over the limit. That ability is available in low-cost software like Microsoft Excel, as well as free software like Google Sheets.

“We have not started that yet,” Hoard said when asked by Saadeh, the ethics commissioner, if the county database automatically flags when a candidate or contributor exceeds the limit.

“It’s baby steps. And remember, everything costs,” Hoard said.

Asked how much the automatic flagging feature would cost, county officials said they have not yet estimated the cost.

“Costs have not been estimated as we have not had sufficient time to use the program and link contributors,” Nicholson, the county spokeswoman, wrote Tuesday in her emailed response to questions.

“Flagging violations is extremely complicated because of our [campaign finance laws]. We have a unique definition of ‘election cycle’ that can change for each candidate in each election depending on the facts such as whether you win or lose or if there is a run off,” Nicholson wrote.

“Moreover, in most instances the ‘over the limit’ issue involves entities and individuals that we have not yet ‘linked’ and do not have the same name or similar addresses. We are in the beginning stage of using this investigatory tool that we hope to manipulated [sic] in the future for freer public access.”

At the request of the commissioners, Hoard said Monday she would add automatic flagging to her list of things to do. Hoard did not say when the automatic flagging feature would be available. The county software programmer who has been developing the county system was present at the meeting and answered other questions Hoard and commissioners had about the system.

Automatic flagging of violations is something Grindle, who is 83 years old, has done for decades by hand with paper cards. One of the reasons Grindle pushed supervisors to put the ethics enforcement on the ballot was so someone else can take up her unofficial job (<https://voiceofoc.org/2013/07/campaign-watchdog-response-times-key-to-enforcement/>) of monitoring campaign finance laws.

County officials also have so far declined to let the public access their searchable campaign finance database, which mostly uses publicly-available campaign finance information but makes it easier to search.

“It is not yet available to the public as the database shows addresses that are not publicly available online and contains investigatory notes,” Nicholson, the county spokeswoman, wrote in her emailed response to questions.

“If the public seeks information on campaign filings it can still use the [county Registrar of Voters] website and find the same information. Moreover, the public can submit requests to [Hoard’s] office and properly redacted documents will be provided.”

☒ e Registrar of Voters does post raw campaign finance data online, though it is more time-consuming to search. Each year of campaign finance data is in a separate spreadsheet, requiring searches through five separate spreadsheets to find all contributions for a single four-year primary election cycle.

☒ e Registrar of Voters data also is in a raw format with hundreds of thousands of data cells, which often runs slowly or crashes when opened on a personal computer. Hoard’s internal system appears to use a server to handle the raw data processing, which typically speeds up the time it takes to conduct data searches.

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Local News

# District attorney demands more funding for Public Integrity Unit

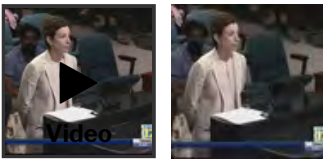
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Updated: Jul 24, 2018 06:50 PM PDT

**(Interactive Media Not Supported by Print)**



BAKERSFIELD, Calif. - Kern County District Attorney Lisa Green demanded more funding for the Public Integrity Unit Tuesday morning during the county supervisors meeting. The same unit spearheaded the investigation that ultimately led to charges against County Supervisor Leticia Perez.

Green said funding for the Public Integrity Unit is more important than ever as the number of complaints is increasing..

"Due to the lack of investigators we are experiencing a severe backlog. We've had referrals from the grand jury and the public regarding theft and fraud which have waited almost 18 months to begin the

investigations," Green said.

Green said complaints include cases of potential misappropriation of hundreds of thousands of dollars in public and private funds.

"Most recently, we received complaints from the elections division of Kern County. 117 are waiting to be acted on by my office," she said.

Green and D.A.-elect Cynthia Zimmer asked the board not to cut 2.5-percent from their budget. That's \$420,000 to fund two additional investigators to deal with the increased caseload.

Supervisor Mick Gleason agreed to discuss a resolution with the County Administrative Office.

Gleason said, "Public integrity strikes the core of who we are, what we are. If we can't maintain that in a strong profile, so that everybody knows that the decision we make up here are at least legitimate and have strength of integrity, then we can't act."

Supervisor David Couch also said he would like to further discuss Green's concerns.

Green said in the last six years, the unit has handled 87 cases.

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# L.A. County sheriff opens inquiry into skull tattoos Inquiry to study secret societies

Allegations surfaced that as many as 20 deputies with logo joined secret society at Compton station.



SHERIFF Jim McDonnell says the inquiry will study why such groups form and whether they act badly. (Gary Coronado Los Angeles Times)

BY MAYA LAU

Los Angeles County Sheriff Jim McDonnell has launched a comprehensive inquiry into secret deputy cliques and is looking into whether gangs that condone illicit behavior are operating within his ranks, he said Thursday.

McDonnell's announcement at a meeting of the Sheriff Civilian Oversight Commission comes two weeks after allegations surfaced that as many as 20 deputies at the Compton station have matching tattoos featuring a skeleton holding a rifle.

A Compton deputy [recently admitted under oath](#) that he was inked with the skull logo in June 2016, about two months before he was involved in a fatal shooting, The Times reported.

Watchdogs [said the revelations were alarming](#) given the department's history of secret societies that promoted excessive force and enforced a code of silence.

McDonnell, who was elected in 2014 on a promise to reform a corrupt agency, said he is partnering with the sheriff's inspector general and county counsel to study why the groups form, whether they are exclusive, whether members are required to act a certain way and whether they endorse bad behavior.

"Renegade cliques erode public confidence as well as internal morale, and they will not be tolerated within the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department," McDonnell said.

He said he wanted the deputy unions to join in the examination. He stopped short of calling his effort an investigation, but he added that a separate administrative probe into the 2016 shooting is still underway.

In August 2016, Compton station Deputy Samuel Aldama and another deputy shot at a man they said was holding a gun. An autopsy showed the man, Donta Taylor, was shot six times.

Investigators didn't find a weapon on or near Taylor's body, but said gunshot residue on his shorts suggested he'd had a gun there at some point. The district attorney's office said the deputies acted lawfully.

As part of a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Taylor's family, Aldama admitted in a deposition in May that he is one of 10 to 20 of his colleagues who have the tattoo featuring the skeleton with the letters "C P T" for Compton.

Aldama said the ink represented "working hard" and was not associated with an exclusive club or with using force.

Priscilla Ocen, a Loyola Law School professor and member of the oversight commission, said McDonnell's effort was "a good first step."

"But the question is, if we investigate and find that there is a rampant culture of cliques or gangs in the Sheriff's Department, then what will be done about it?" she asked.

At the meeting, Ocen asked McDonnell whether his inquiry would extend to his top-level executives and whether they have clique tattoos. McDonnell replied that it would, but he said he's confident that members of his command staff are people of integrity.

Sean Kennedy, who also serves on the commission and is the executive director of Loyola Law School's Center for Juvenile Law and Policy, said it would be statistically likely that

some Sheriff's Department executives have the tattoos.

"I think the public has a right to know if high-level police managers are members of a gang," Kennedy said.

Department spokeswoman Nicole Nishida declined to say whether any sheriff's executives have clique tattoos, saying the question "makes assumptions that are unwarranted." She said while all deputies have the right to free speech, the department will not tolerate offensive behavior.

Secret societies in the department date at least as far back as the 1970s and have had names like the Regulators, Grim Reapers and Jump Out Boys. Some of the cliques have been accused of endorsing highly aggressive policing. Nearly 30 years ago, a federal judge said the Vikings club was a "neo-Nazi, white supremacist gang."

The topic is divisive, with some deputies defending the groups as a way to honor hardworking, law-abiding officers.

The discussion of deputy tattoos made for an especially contentious meeting. At one point, Robert Bonner, a commissioner and former federal judge, got up and walked out of the room after sparring with a member of the public who made disparaging comments toward him and McDonnell.

Kim McGill, an organizer with the Youth Justice Coalition, also spoke, saying the deputy cliques should be called "gangs" if they fit the statutory definition of a gang as a group of three or more people who commit crimes and adopt a common symbol or name.

Nishida said the tattoo study's findings will be issued in a public report.

McDonnell said he expects to be able to give a report on the review in about three months.

"At the end of the day, everyone, most importantly our public, should be confident that there are no 'gangs' of deputies operating subversively anywhere within the department," McDonnell said.

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# Massive award for girl who was sexually abused County social workers blamed

Jurors partly blame social workers, require L.A. County agency to pay nearly half of a \$45-million verdict.

BY RICHARD WINTON

Jurors awarded \$45.4 million Thursday to a girl who suffered two years of sexual abuse in an El Monte home where county social workers left her despite evidence showing that an accused molester lived in the house.

The Department of Children and Family Services, jurors found, ignored warning signs of potential abuse and failed to tell police what they knew, leaving the then-7-year-old to be molested by at least four men whom her mother invited into the home.

Jurors deliberated 4 1/2 hours before deciding on the massive award. They attributed 45% of the blame for the girl's ordeal to the department, a finding that requires the county to pay more than \$20 million of the verdict.

"She endured two years of sex abuse you cannot imagine," said David Ring, an attorney for the girl's father, who sued the agency and the perpetrators on behalf of his daughter. "The Department of Children and Family Services is the last line of defense for defenseless children, and they walked away here and let her be abused."

The girl's mother and four men were previously convicted of sexual abuse in connection with the girl's case.

DCFS Director Bobby Cagle said in a brief statement that the jury "reached the wrong conclusion" and that "the county remains steadfast in its efforts to protect the lives of children as we explore all our legal options. Nothing will shake our commitment to our mission of keeping kids safe."

At the heart of the lawsuit was whether two DCFS social workers had reasonable suspicion the girl was being abused.

Social workers started providing services to the child in December 2009 after her mother reported that a man she had a relationship with had physically abused her and her

children.

The lawsuit said the workers discovered that a different man living at the home, Louis Fluet, had been arrested on suspicion of child annoyance and molestation involving another child. He hadn't been charged in that case, but the social workers concluded that Fluet's presence in the home placed the girl at a high risk of being sexually abused, according to court documents.

The social workers did not refer the girl to see a forensic child abuse expert, who might have been able to discover that Fluet already had begun molesting her, Ring said.

Social workers demanded Fluet leave the home after the child told them she was sharing a room with him. Despite claims by the girl's mother that Fluet had left, the workers later learned from the girl's teacher and grandmother that he was still at the home, but they took no action, the lawsuit alleged.

The workers discovered that Fluet was taking the child to school and was sometimes alone with her, according to court documents.

The lawsuit said the girl's mother abused drugs and allowed sex offenders and other criminals to live in the home. The child estimated that from 2010 to 2012, about 15 men raped or sexually abused her in other ways, according to the suit.

"She had no idea how to act as a 9- or 10-year-old," Ring said. "She will need a lifetime of therapy."

In court, Ring said, he argued that Elbis Severo, one of the main social workers handling the case, rushed to close it.

"They were mandatory reporters and they never reported it to law enforcement," Ring said.

During the trial, county attorneys argued that the abuse occurred after DCFS closed its case. The lawyers contended that DCFS workers did all they could and did not know enough about what was going on in the home to remove the girl from her mother until 2012, when she told her father's girlfriend about the abuse.

Ring acknowledged that the county did not know that the other three men eventually convicted of abuse sometimes stayed at the home.

In addition to finding the county legally liable for 45% of the award, jurors attributed another 45% to the girl's mother and 10% to the four men convicted of sexually abusing her.

Ring said he doubted the mother or the men would be able to pay the full amount.

The entire award consisted of \$30 million for future emotional suffering, \$15 million for past emotional suffering and \$400,000 for the child's future therapy.

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## BIZ &amp; TECH // BUSINESS

# Proposed SF law could force tech workers to actually go out for lunch

**Trisha Thadani**

July 24, 2018 | Updated: July 24, 2018 8:22 p.m.



Bartender Jason Beudrow mixes drinks at Alta CA on Thursday, December 5, 2013 in San Francisco, Calif.

Photo: Lea Suzuki / The Chronicle

It's lunchtime in San Francisco's Mid-Market neighborhood, and only a few people are trickling in and out of the local food joints. A bar and restaurant on Ninth Street has rows of empty tables, while only about six people sit inside the Perennial, where a renowned San Francisco chef was recently hired to oversee lunch.

But inside the surrounding office buildings that house tech companies Twitter, Uber and Square, there are thousands of employees sequestered in private company cafeterias, where the food is free.

1 ARTICLE  
REMAINING

“And you can’t compete with free,” said Gwyneth Borden, executive director of the Golden Gate Restaurant Association.

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In an attempt to attract employees to local restaurants and businesses, Supervisors Ahsha Safaí and Aaron Peskin are co-sponsoring an ordinance that would ban “employee cafeterias” from new office buildings in the city. This comes as local retailers, particularly those downtown, complain of a drop in business as more companies offer their workers meals in private corporate cafeterias, Safaí said.

“This is another way to help support small businesses,” he said.

An “employee cafeteria” is defined in the San Francisco health code as a space inside an office where employees are provided or sold tax-free food on a regular basis. These facilities are either operated by company employees or contractors. There are currently 51 such cafeterias around the city, Safaí said.

The supervisors’ proposal would put the city at odds with the tech industry, which largely views free food as an essential perk to lure talent.

Companies like Google, Facebook and Square have full-blown cafeterias, where employees are provided everything from fresh-made omelets to hand-rolled sushi. While some make it a point to source their food from local companies, Safaí said that wouldn’t matter under this proposal.

“This is also about a cultural shift,” he said. “We don’t want employees biking or driving into their office, staying there all day long and going home. This is about getting people out of their office, interacting with the community and adding to the vibrancy of the community.”

Square and Uber declined to comment, while Twitter could not be reached Tuesday afternoon.

When Square, a p  
cafeteria every o

1 ARTICLE  
REMAINING

uptick in business that it sometimes has to increase its staffing, said Ryan Cole, partner and CEO of Hi Neighbor Restaurant Group, which manages Corridor. But other days, he said, the restaurant sees very little foot traffic.

Anthony Myint, co-owner of the Perennial, said he was drawn to opening a restaurant in the neighborhood because of the number of companies — and, potentially, customers — that he thought would flood the streets at lunchtime. While he knew about the private cafeterias, he said he didn't think they would impact his business this much. On an average day, he said, he sees only a handful of people during lunch.

“We misunderstood the pervasiveness of the company’s cafeterias inside,” he said, adding that he likely would have chosen another neighborhood had he known the extent of the problem.

Companies and startups would be able to get around the ordinance by using catering companies to deliver to their offices at lunchtime. Some of those catering companies, including Zesty, ZeroCater and Eat Club, source from local restaurants and deliver individual or family-style meals.

Eat Club, for example, serves “hundreds” of companies in San Francisco, from public tech companies to small startups, said founder Rodrigo Santibáñez. Many of his clients choose Eat Club, which buys from local suppliers, because it improves productivity and collaboration when employees eat together.

“Food in the workplace plays an important role,” Santibáñez said. “All of that helps company culture, and it also helps companies create an attractive environment.”

The ordinance wouldn't apply retroactively to companies that now have cafeterias, but instead to new construction — such as the roughly 7 million square feet of new office space proposed under the Central SoMa Plan that will soon go before the Board of Supervisors.

In a similar effort, Mountain View barred companies from providing employees with fully subsidized meals inside a new office development.

Given how ingrained employee cafeterias have become in modern tech company culture, Peskin said he is aware that this proposal may be controversial. But, he said, this is a “groundbreaking” piece of legislation that will benefit the restaurant industry and city overall.

1 ARTICLE  
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“The historic model is that people would go to work, and then flow outside during lunch. And in recent times it has been much more inward facing, where companies don’t want their workers to leave,” he said. “The idea here is to bolster, not only the restaurant business, but other ground-floor retail businesses that are suffering.”

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## Reporter Details Story Of Foster Home Abuse Lawsuit Against San Diego County

Tuesday, July 24, 2018

By [Maureen Cavanaugh](#), [Pat Finn](#)



Photo by [Alison St John](#)

Above: The San Diego County Administration Building downtown is shown in this undated photo.

A lawsuit filed by twin brothers, identified by their initials "AG" and "MG," against San Diego County alleges years of molestation while in foster care with no action taken by the county to remove the boys from the home despite more than a dozen instances of suspected sexual abuse reported by teachers as well as a doctor and other professionals, [The San Diego Union-Tribune reports](#).

AG and MG are suing the county and 14 of its social workers, alleging that they were returned again and again to Michael Hayes, their foster father.

In 2013, more than seven years after the first complaint, Hayes reported to police that one of the boys ran away. Hayes was eventually arrested, and the abuse finally stopped. He is now in prison for multiple counts of child sexual abuse, sentenced to more than 20 years.

Investigative reporter Morgan Cook found that county social workers allegedly ignored some reports altogether and simply discounted the others.

How did this happen? Why were both the children and adults ignored? What is it about the foster care system that allows this kind of thing to happen?

The reaction to the story from readers and local politicians, especially [candidates for the Board of Supervisors](#), has been intense.

“One of government’s most critical responsibilities is to protect the weakest among us – and the county appears to have failed miserably in this case,” former District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis, who’s running for county supervisor in district 4 in November, told The Union-Tribune Monday.

The U-T reports Nathan Fletcher, who is also running to represent district 4, said in a statement county officials “owe the public answers as to how their system allowed a sexual predator to serve as a foster parent for seven years and missed repeated reports of his abuse. It is time for a full and transparent investigation into the failures that led to this tragedy followed by concrete actions to ensure accountability and structural changes moving forward.”

Morgan Cook joins Midday Edition to talk about this story and its ramifications

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# Sacramento Drops Plan To Ban Demonstrators Who Disrupt Council Meetings Or Threaten Officials

by [Nick Miller](#)Tuesday, July 24, 2018 | Sacramento, CA | [Permalink](#)

Ste'vante Clark at a City Hall open-forum discussion over the shooting of Stephon Clark.

*Andrew Nixon / Capital Public Radio*

Sacramento has dropped a contentious plan to ban repeatedly disruptive or threatening individuals from city council meetings.

On Tuesday, council members were set to approve new “rules of procedure,” which stated that if a person had been ejected from a public meeting at least two times in a six-month period, they would be excluded from attending city council for 30 days.

The policy change comes after months of demonstrations and community engagement at meetings over the police killing of Stephon Clark.

Sacramento’s National Lawyers Guild and Black Lives Matter chapters were set to protest the proposed changes on Tuesday evening.

“The proposed regulations allowing for removal of an individual from a meeting — and even banning them from attending future meetings — in order to preserve ‘order’ or ‘decorum’ are an unlawful mechanism,” local NLG chapter president Elizabeth Kim wrote in a statement.

Officials originally had the item on council’s “consent calendar” — the section of its agenda that includes multiple items that are approved in bulk and without individual discussion. But as of Tuesday morning, the mayor’s office said the plan to ban people from meetings would not be considered.

The proposed change also would prohibit individuals who are ejected from meetings at least three times within a year, or who threaten anyone at a meeting, from attending for 90 days.

Kim says preventing individuals from attending meetings is a violation of California’s open government laws, including the Brown Act. The city’s proposed new rules, however, stated that anyone removed or expelled from council would still be allowed to submit public comment for agenda items.

*Bob Moffitt contributed reporting to this story.*



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**Nick Miller**

Senior Editor, News & Features



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