

# THE FRIDAY WRAP-UP

A Weekly Review of Legislative Activity and Information



**Orange County Executive Office  
Legislative Affairs**



February 24, 2023

Volume 9 Issue 8

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## Board Actions

The Board of Supervisors will meet on February 28<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am. Notable actions include the following:

### Discussion Items

County Executive Office

38. [Approve recommended positions on introduced or](#) amended legislation and/or consider other legislative subject matters - All Districts

40. [Approve grant applications/awards submitted in 2/28/23 grant report and other actions as](#) recommended - All Districts

The next Board of Supervisors meeting is scheduled for March 14<sup>th</sup> at 9:30am.

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## County Legislation Position

The table below list the active bills the Board of Supervisors has taken positions on in the 2023-24 legislative session.

State Legislation

As of Thursday, February 23, 2023

Bill No.	Author	Subject	Position	Date of Board Action	Status
<b>SB 44</b>	<b>Umberg</b>	Controlled substances	<b>Support</b>	1.24.23	Senate Public Safety

 Highlighted sections symbolize a status change.

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## Sacramento Update

**Prepared By: Precision Advocacy**

Friday, February 17 marked the deadline for bill introductions in 2023. Legislators, in particular new legislators, introduced a windfall of bills, surpassing introduction numbers for the last ten years. In total, 2,632 bills were introduced – 1,751 in the Assembly, 881 in the Senate, and six special session bills. About 40% of the legislation introduced are spot bills – placeholders that will be amended with substantive language prior to being referred to policy committees.

In the Senate, amendments are must be drafted by legislative counsel and submitted to the Senate Rules Committee on or by March 22 at 3:00 p.m. In the Assembly, amendments must be provided to legislative counsel on or by February 27 at 5:00 p.m. This is to say that a flood of substantive amendments is anticipated the third week in March, which will further define policy discussions this year.

Currently, themes, as expected, include behavioral health, homelessness, housing, fentanyl, and climate. In the coming weeks, we will outline a number of new bill introductions. Below is a quick snapshot of some of the substantive bills impacting the Mental Health Services Act and behavioral health.

**AB 283 (Patterson, Jim) Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission**, would urge the governor, in making appointments to the Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission, to consider ensuring geographic representation among the ten regions of California defined by the 2020 census.

**AB 289 (Holden) Mental health services: youth representation**, would require youths or youth mental health organizations be included as a specified local stakeholder for purposes of a county developing a 3-year plan mental health plan and annual updates.

**AB 512 (Waldron) Mental health and substance use disorders: database of facilities**, would require the California Health and Human Services Agency, to create an ad hoc committee to study how to develop a real-time, internet-based system, usable by hospitals, clinics, law enforcement, paramedics and emergency medical technicians, and other health

care providers as deemed appropriate, to display information about available beds in inpatient psychiatric facilities, crisis stabilization units, residential community mental health facilities, and residential alcoholism or substance abuse treatment facilities in order to facilitate the identification and designation of available facilities for the transfer to, and temporary treatment of, individuals in mental health or substance use disorder crisis.

**AB 845 (Alvarez) Behavioral health: older adults**, would establish within the State Department of Health Care Services an Older Adult Behavioral Health Services Administrator to oversee behavioral health services for older adults.

**AB 1001 (Haney) Health facilities: behavioral health emergency services**, would require a general acute care hospital to adopt policies to respond to a patient requiring behavioral health emergency services, that these protocols meet standards established by the Department of Health Care Services, and consist of various parameters such as minimum staffing requirements for behavioral health emergency services, procedures for response by behavioral health emergency services personnel in a timely manner, and annual training.

**AB 1055 (Bains) Alcohol drug counselors**, would create, upon appropriation by the legislature, the Allied Behavioral Health Board within the Department of Consumer Affairs to establish regulations and standards for the licensure of alcohol drug counselors.

**AB 1360 (McCarty) Hope California: Secured Residential Treatment Pilot Program**, would, until January 1, 2026, authorize the counties of Sacramento, San Joaquin, Santa Clara, and Yolo to offer secured residential treatment pilot programs, known as Hope California, for individuals suffering from substance use disorders who have been convicted of qualifying drug-motivated felony crimes.

**AB 1451 (Jackson) Behavioral health crisis treatment**, would require a health care service plan contract or health insurance policy issued, amended, renewed, or delivered on or after January 1, 2024, to provide coverage for treatment of a behavioral health crisis that is identified during an appointment at a contracted facility where an enrollee or insured is receiving treatment from a contracted provider for a medical condition. The bill would authorize treatment for the behavioral health crisis to be provided at the contracted facility, if the facility has the appropriate staff to provide that care. The bill would require the treatment to be provided without preauthorization, and would authorize the provider or facility to use same-day billing to obtain reimbursement for both the medical and behavioral health services provided to the enrollee or insured.

**SB 65 (Ochoa Bogh) Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program**, would authorize the State Department of Health Care Services, in awarding Behavioral Health Continuum Infrastructure Program grants, to give preference to qualified entities that are intending to place their projects in specified facilities or properties.

**SB 363 (Eggman) Facilities for inpatient and residential mental health and substance use disorder: database**, would require, by January 1, 2025, the State Department of Health Care Services, to develop a real-time, internet-based database to collect, aggregate, and display information about beds in specified types of facilities, such as chemical dependency recovery hospitals, acute psychiatric hospitals, and mental health rehabilitation centers, among others, to identify the availability of inpatient and residential mental health or substance use disorder treatment.

**SB 509 (Portantino) School employee and pupil training: youth mental and behavioral health: mental health education**, would require the State Department of Education to recommend best practices and find training programs to help school staff recognize the signs and symptoms of youth mental health disorders, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, major clinical depression, and anxiety disorders. It also requires that these programs include instruction on how school staff can best refer individuals to mental health services or other support. Finally, the bill would also require that all schools provide mental health education programs for all pupils from first grade to twelfth grade.

**SB 551 (Portantino) Mental Health Services Act: prevention and early intervention**, would amend the Mental Health Services Act by requiring each county to use at least 20% of the prevention and early intervention funds to provide direct services on school campuses in collaboration with local educational agencies.

**SB 717 (Stern) County mental health services**, would require a county behavioral health department to maintain contact for 180 days with, and offer mental health services to, an individual charged with a misdemeanor who has been found incompetent to stand trial and who is not receiving court directed services.

## Upcoming Hearings

To view hearings after they take place, you may access them in the [Assembly](#) or [Senate](#) media archives where they are generally available within a few hours of committee adjournment.

**Monday, February 27, 2023, 9:30 a.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Senate Joint Hearing Public Safety and Health](#)**

Informational Hearing: Fentanyl and the Ongoing Opioid Crisis: Public Safety and Public Health Perspectives

**Monday, February 27, 2023, 11:00 a.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Senate Budget and Fiscal Review](#)**

Informational Hearing: Review of Housing and Homelessness Programs in California

**Monday, February 27, 2023, 2:30 p.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 5 On Public Safety](#)**

Judicial Branch, Commission on Judicial Performance, Board of State and Community Corrections, Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, Division of Juvenile Justice Realignment Update, State Public Defender, and California Victim Compensation Board

**Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Senate Energy, Utilities, and Communications](#)**

Oversight Hearing: The California Public Utilities Commission and the Public Advocates Office Annual Update to the Legislature: A Focus on Utility Bill Affordability

**Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 9:00 a.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Senate Natural Resources and Water](#)**

Oversight Hearing: 30x30: What is Next on the Pathway to Conserving 30 Percent of California's Lands and Coastal Waters by 2030

**Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 9:30 a.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife](#)**

Informational Hearing: Adapting Water Rights to our 21st Century Climate

**Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 1:30 p.m. – [livestream](#)**

### **[Assembly Joint Hearing Assembly Housing and Community Development and Senate Housing](#)**

Oversight Hearing: Housing Production: Recent Legislative Actions and Outcomes

**Tuesday, February 28, 2023, 1:30 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. – [livestream](#)**

***Assembly Joint Hearing [Health and Budget Subcommittee No. 1 on Health And Human Services](#)***

Joint Informational Hearing: Status Hearing on California Mental Health Initiatives

***Wednesday, March 01, 2023, 9:30 a.m. – [livestream](#)***

***Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation***

Natural Resources Agency, Department of Conservation, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, State Lands Commission, Department of Fish and Wildlife, Native American Heritage Commission, Wildlife Conservation Board, and California Coastal Commission

***Wednesday, March 01, 2023, 10:00 a.m. – [livestream](#)***

***Assembly Joint Hearing [Joint Legislative Committee on Climate Change Policies and Assembly Natural Resources and Senate Environmental Quality](#)***

Oversight Hearing: Assessing the 2022 Scoping Plan Update's Strategies and Our Progress Towards Statewide Climate Goals: Does the Roadmap Get Us There

***Thursday, March 02, 2023, 9:30 a.m. or upon adjournment of Session - [livestream](#)***

***Senate Budget And Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 2 On Resources, Environmental Protection, and Energy***

Oversight: Climate-Energy Packages of 2021 and 2022, Natural Resources Agency, Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Planning and Research, Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission, Department of Conservation, Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, Wildlife Conservation Board, State Coastal Conservancy, Department of Water Resources, California Air Resources Board, State Water Resources Control Board, Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery, Department of Food and Agriculture, and California Public Utilities Commission

***Thursday, March 02, 2023, 9:30 a.m. or upon adjournment of Session - [livestream](#)***

***Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Subcommittee No. 3 on Health and Human Services***

California Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Health Care Access and Information, Department of Managed Health Care, and California Health Benefit Exchange

**Governor's Press Releases**

Below is a list of the governor's press releases beginning February 15.

**February 22:** [Governor Newsom Welcomes New Tesla Global Engineering and AI HQ in California](#)

**February 22:** [ICYMI: "Groups lobby California legislature to pass bill on fuel 'price gouging'"](#)

**February 22:** [California Joins White House Partnership on Offshore Wind Energy](#)

**February 22:** [Nearly \\$1 Billion in Grants For Homeless Housing Behavioral Health Needs](#)

**February 21:** [Governor Newsom Announces Appointments 2.21.23](#)

- Assistant Director and Chief Counsel for the California Employment Training Panel, Deputy Commander of Intel/Analysis for the State Threat Assessment Center at the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services, Assistant Deputy Secretary of Climate at the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, Deputy Secretary of Legislation for the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, California Public Employment Relations Board, and California Independent Systems Operator

**February 21:** [Governor Newsom Statement on Challenge to California's Child Online Privacy Law](#)

**February 21:** [Twenty States Announce Historic Governor-Led Reproductive Freedom Alliance](#)

**February 19:** [Governor Newsom Proclaims A Day of Remembrance: Japanese American Evacuation 2.19.23](#)

**February 17:** [Governor Newsom Announces Appointments 2.17.23](#) - Deputy Secretary of External Affairs at the California Natural Resources Agency; Deputy Secretary for Equity and Environmental Justice at the California Natural Resources Agency; Deputy Secretary for Environmental Justice, Tribal Affairs, and Border Relations at the California Environmental Protection Agency; Chief Counsel at the California Department of Pesticide Regulation; Director of the Division of Facility Planning, Construction, and Management at the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; California Water Commission; and Mount San Jacinto Winter Park Authority

**February 17:** [Governor Newsom Announces Judicial Appointments 2.17.23](#)

**February 16:** [California is Transforming Education Through Community Schools](#)

**February 15:** [TOMORROW: In Sacramento County, Governor Newsom and First Partner Siebel Newsom to Highlight Investments in Education Transformation](#)

**February 15:** [Governor Newsom Joins Council on Holocaust and Genocide Education for Inaugural Convening](#)

**February 15:** [Governor Newsom Doubles Down on Clean California Projects With \\$100 Million in New Grants](#)

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## Washington D.C. Update

*Prepared By: Van Scoyoc Associates*

### LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

The Senate and House of Representatives were not in session in commemoration of President's Day.

### EXECUTIVE BRANCH ACTIVITY

#### **EPA Releases Initial Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Guidance**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced initial guidance on the design of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) program, created by last year's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). EPA published two Federal Assistance Listings outlining key parameters of the grant competitions that will ultimately award nearly \$27 billion to leverage private capital for clean energy and clean air investments across the country. Federal Assistance Listings are the first public notice requirement to implement a federal grant program. The listings for two GGRF programs can be found at the following links: the [General and Low-Income Assistance Competition](#), and the [Zero-Emissions Technology Fund Competition](#).

EPA will hold two competitions to distribute grant funding: a \$20 billion competition for the General and Low-Income Assistance program and a \$7 billion competition Zero-Emissions Technology Fund. EPA will implement these programs in alignment with the Administration's Justice40 Initiative, which directs that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities, including those facing disproportionately high and adverse health and environmental impacts. EPA expects to open competitions for funding under the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund by summer 2023.

The agency also announced a national Community Roundtable series to promote a robust and inclusive engagement effort, focused on introducing the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund to communities across the country and learning about community-level solutions that the Fund can support.

The General and Low-Income Assistance Competition will award competitive grants to eligible nonprofit entities that collaborate with community financing institutions like green banks, community development financial institutions, credit unions, housing finance agencies and others. Together, these entities will leverage public dollars with private capital to invest in projects that reduce pollution and lower energy costs for families, particularly those in the low-income and disadvantaged communities. Awardees will also facilitate technical assistance and capacity building to strengthen the community-based organizations, small businesses, workers, and suppliers required to accelerate the transition to an equitable net-zero economy and catalyze the jobs of the future. EPA expects to make between 2 and 15 grants under this competition.

Under the \$7 billion Zero-Emissions Technology Fund Competition, EPA will award competitive grants to states, Tribes, municipalities, and eligible nonprofit entities to enable the deployment of residential rooftop solar, community solar and

associated storage and upgrades in low-income and disadvantaged communities. EPA expects to award up to 60 grants under this competition.

EPA expects to publish both notices of funding opportunity this summer.

### **HUD Opens Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Portal**

The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) this week opened the portal for local governments to request technical assistance for its Thriving Communities technical assistance program. This funding is intended to help local governments ensure housing needs are considered as part of their larger infrastructure investment plans, with a focus on disadvantaged communities.

The technical assistance from this program will:

- Help local governments identify land for housing development near transportation projects;
- Develop preservation and anti-displacement strategies;
- Identify and implement reforms to reduce barriers to location-efficient housing; and
- Improve intergovernmental coordination and support a holistic approach to housing and transportation.

The [Thriving Communities Network](#) is an interagency initiative between HUD and the Departments of Transportation, Energy, Commerce, and Agriculture, as well as the General Services Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. HUD will provide priority to jurisdictions with populations of less than 250,000 people, as well as to those receiving certain Department of Transportation competitive funds. The technical assistance portion of the program is funded at \$5 million for FY 2022.

Requests will be reviewed on a rolling basis, with technical assistance engagements to begin in spring 2023. More information on the program, eligibility criteria, and the request form, can be found [here](#).

### **Transportation Department Publishes Final Minimum Standards for EV Charging Infrastructure**

DOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the White House announced a series of actions to implement electric vehicle (EV) charging programs created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA). In addition to publishing minimum standards for federally funded EV infrastructure, the Administration finalized the Build America, Buy America implementation plan for EV charging equipment, and announced that cities, towns, Tribes, and states will soon be able to apply for the first round of \$2.5B in competitive grants to build EV charging stations.

The final minimum standards for federally funded EV charging infrastructure projects, and the implementation plan for the Build America, Buy America requirements provide states with the tools they need to build EV charging stations pursuant to their approved state charging plans developed under the [National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure \(NEVI\) Formula Program](#).

These standards are meant to ensure that chargers operated by different networks will operate similarly and provide the traveling public with a predictable EV charging experience. These standards will also require that chargers have consistent plug types and charging speeds, common payment systems, and accessible pricing information, locations, and availability. In addition, they establish strong workforce training provisions.

Additionally, the new [Charging and Fueling Infrastructure \(CFI\) Discretionary Grant Program](#) established by the BIL will provide \$2.5 billion over five years to a full range of applicants, including cities, counties, local governments, and Tribes. This round of funding will open soon, making \$700 million from Fiscal Years 2022 and 2023 funding available to strategically deploy EV charging infrastructure and other fueling infrastructure projects in urban and rural communities in publicly accessible locations, including downtown areas and local neighborhoods, particularly in underserved and disadvantaged communities.

The Build America, Buy America implementation plan for EV charging incentivizes companies to invest in domestic production of EV charging components, while also providing a transition period for companies to onshore their supply chains.

FHWA, in coordination with the Joint Office of Energy and Transportation, plans to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance via multiple webinars throughout February and March and will continue to provide direct technical assistance to support states and communities as they build EV charging infrastructure.

The minimum standards and the Build America, Buy America implementation plan can both be found and downloaded in PDF format [here](#).

### **Transportation Department Webinar on Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts**

As part of the Biden Administration's Justice40 Initiative and ahead of an upcoming Request for Information (RFI), the Department of Transportation (DOT) next week will hold a webinar on proposed updates to and rebranding of its Transportation Disadvantaged Census Tracts tool.

The webinar will provide an overview of the proposed updates and what information the RFI will solicit. Through the RFI, DOT is seeking input and recommendations on the tool and index methodology. DOT leadership will provide opening remarks followed by a presentation that will outline the tool and index.

DOT encourages all interested to [register here](#), especially those from Regional Planning Organizations, all sizes of cities and counties, state and local departments of transportation, transit authorities, and ports.

### Legislation Introduced by Orange County Delegation

Senator Dianne Feinstein

- Introduced legislation to create a [Space Force National Guard](#) which "would ensure talented active-duty Space Force personnel who leave active duty are able to continue serving their country as well as their states. It would also eliminate the need to route funding between the Air Force and Space Force and allow better implementation of the mobilization processes, inspection systems, policies and culture of the Space Force."
- Introduced the [Orbital Sustainability \(ORBITS\) Act](#), which would "establish a first-of-its-kind demonstration program that would reduce the nearly 1 million pieces of space junk in orbit."

Senator Alex Padilla:

- Introduced the [Big Oil Windfall Profits Tax Act](#) which would "require large oil companies that produce or import at least 300,000 barrels of oil per day to pay a per-barrel tax equal to 50 percent of the difference between the current price of a barrel of oil and the average price per barrel between 2015-2019, a period when big oil companies were already earning large profits."

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## Weekly Clips

Friday (02/24)

**New California pay-to-play law taken to court** -- For a bill described by its author as "the most significant political reform of the last 50 years," Senate Bill 1439 sure didn't get much attention when it was working its way through the Legislature last year. **Ben Christopher** [CalMatters](#) **Theresa Clift** in the [Sacramento Bee](#) -- 2/24/23

**Bill to expand coverage to migrants may test Newsom's pledge on universal health care** -- While many Californians who earn too much to be eligible for Medi-Cal can get subsidized coverage through Covered California, an estimated 460,000 residents aren't allowed to buy insurance through state-run insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act because they lack legal status. **Rachel Bluth** Kaiser Health News in the [Sacramento Bee](#) -- 2/24/23

**Addressing homeless crisis, LA Metro will offer its surplus land for housing** -- In a departure from its main task of building and operating rail and bus lines, LA Metro will be scouring its property holdings for surplus, vacant and underused land that could be transformed into housing for the homeless. **Steve Scauzillo** in the [Los Angeles Daily News](#) -- 2/24/23

**Lawsuit targets new law forcing elected officials to recuse on matters involving campaign donors** -- Plaintiffs say the anti-pay-to-play law is unconstitutional, though supporters call it the most significant conflict-of-interest reform in 50 years. **Jason Henry** in the [Orange County Register](#) -- 2/24/23

Thursday (02/23)

**School districts can't require COVID vaccines, California Supreme Court affirms** -- The state Supreme Court rejected a challenge Wednesday to a ruling that said school districts in California cannot require their students to be vaccinated against COVID-19 because only the state government can issue such a mandate. **Bob Egelko** in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) -- 2/22/23



**Gavin Newsom moved to close 4 California prisons. How many more can he shut?** -- California spends more than \$15 billion a year on its prison system. Now, with the number of people behind bars plummeting, the Newsom administration is moving to shut down more institutions. **Nigel Duara** [CalMatters](#) -- 2/23/23

**California dangles bonuses for nursing homes that add staff** -- To ensure an acceptable level of care, the state will sanction facilities that fail to meet certain standards for patients. **Samantha Young** | Kaiser Health News in the [San Jose Mercury](#) -- 2/23/23

**California bill would pull state business from banks that work with gun makers** -- A California bill would pull state business from Wall Street banks who work with gun makers, in another sign of the growing politicization of the \$4 trillion municipal-bond market. **Danielle Moran** | Bloomberg in the [San Jose Mercury](#) -- 2/22/23

Wednesday (02/22)

**Time to talk details on California oil profit penalty** -- Today, four months after Gov. Gavin Newsom called upon the Legislature to tax the excess profits of oil producers in California, we may finally get some details about the proposal. Or we might not. **Ben Christopher** [CalMatters](#) -- 2/22/23

**The growing push for major action on mental health and homelessness** -- The “community care” touted to replace the hospitals in landmark 1967 “reform” legislation never materialized, and seriously mentally ill patients suddenly discharged after decades in state hospitals, ended up on the streets in a rapidly spiraling homelessness crisis. **Sigrid Bathen** [Capitol Weekly](#) -- 2/22/23

**California bill would reform ‘failing’ system serving adults and kids with disabilities** -- The measure follows a series of recent reports, a state audit and public hearings that revealed racial disparities, inadequate oversight and limited accountability at California’s regional centers — a network of 21 nonprofits that coordinate services for about 400,000 children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. **Maggie Angst** in the [Sacramento Bee](#) -- 2/22/23

Tuesday (02/21)

**Taxing guns, pushing housing and penalizing Big Oil. Here are California bills to watch** -- The Legislature’s deadline for introducing bills was Friday, meaning senators and assemblymembers now turn to the real business of the session — pushing their measures through the Capitol and hammering out a state budget. **Lindsey Holden** in the [Sacramento Bee](#) -- 2/21/23

**Police launch efforts to combat fentanyl crisis in San Diego, including search dogs and overdose maps** -- In an effort to combat the opioid overdose crisis, the San Diego Police Department is rolling out two new initiatives: police dogs trained to detect the drug fentanyl and software used to map where overdoses have occurred in the city. **David Hernandez** in the [San Diego Union-Tribune](#) -- 2/21/23

**L.A. promised to stop wasting so much stormwater. But progress has been painfully slow** -- Only 30 acres of L.A. County’s 3 million acres have seen new green space added under the Safe Clean Water Program, a new report found. **Hayley Smith** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/21/23

**Democratic governors form alliance on abortion rights** -- Organizers, led by California Gov. Gavin Newsom, described the Reproductive Freedom Alliance as a way for governors and their staffs to share best practices and affirm abortion rights for the approximately 170 million Americans who live in the consortium’s footprint — and even ensuring services for the remainder of U.S. residents who live in states with more restrictive laws. **Bill Barrow, Geoff Mulvihill** [Associated Press](#) -- 2/21/23

Monday (02/20)

**Supreme Court for first time casts doubt on Section 230, the legal shield for Big Tech** -- Internet giants like Google, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter owe much of their success to a legal shield erected by Congress in 1996. **David G. Savage** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) **John D. McKinnon** in the [Wall Street Journal](#) **David McCabe** in the [New York Times](#) -- 2/20/23

**Walters: California’s budget deficit may be even larger than predicted** -- Last year, California’s state budget assumed a \$97.5 billion surplus, but the state now faces a hefty budget deficit and the Legislature’s budget analyst says it’s likely even larger than predicted. **Dan Walters** [CalMatters](#) -- 2/20/23

**There aren’t enough veterinarians in some California communities. Can student debt relief help?** -- The bill would offer up to \$150,000 in student debt relief to licensed California veterinarians who agree to work for a California animal shelter or in underserved communities for at least five years. **Emily Alvarenga** San Diego Union-tribune in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/20/23

Weekend (02/18–02/19).

**California will try to enshrine right to same-sex marriage** -- California, a U.S. trendsetter for progressive policies and a state where the current governor once made news issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples in San Francisco before it was legal, will attempt to enshrine marriage equality in the state constitution. **Sophie Austin** [Associated Press](#) - 2/19/23

**Amid an overdose crisis, a California grant that helped syringe programs is drying up** -- The California Harm Reduction Initiative, which helped dozens of syringe programs hire staff and pay for operational expenses, dries up later this year. **Emily Alpert Reyes** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/19/23

**Mandatory evictions for arrested tenants would be banned under new state bill** -- California tenants and their families would no longer face mandatory eviction or exclusion based on their criminal histories or brushes with law enforcement under new legislation introduced Friday. **Liam Dillon** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/19/23

**As the Colorado River shrinks, federal officials consider overhauling Glen Canyon Dam** -- The Colorado River's decline threatens hydropower at Glen Canyon Dam. Now, officials are looking at retooling the dam to deal with low water levels. **Ian James** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/18/23

**New street drug is surfacing, threatening to make California's overdose crisis worse** -- The rapid spread across the country of xylazine, also known as "tranq," has local health officials worried it will exacerbate an already alarming overdose crisis. **Salvador Hernandez** in the [Los Angeles Times](#) -- 2/18/23

**EDD won't require repayment of unemployment benefits issued in error** -- Many Californians who were overpaid unemployment benefits during the pandemic will not have to refund the money as long as they did not commit fraud, under a settlement between EDD and a nonprofit. **Carolyn Said** in the [San Francisco Chronicle](#) -- 2/18/23

**Could California be the latest state to restore voting rights to people with felony convictions?** -- Proposal would allow prisoners to vote in what advocates see as a matter of racial justice – but challenges lie ahead. **Kira Lerner** [The Guardian](#) -- 2/18/23

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**For more information regarding County of Orange Legislative Affairs, please email at [LegAffairs@ocgov.com](mailto:LegAffairs@ocgov.com).**

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