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*Santa Barbara County*



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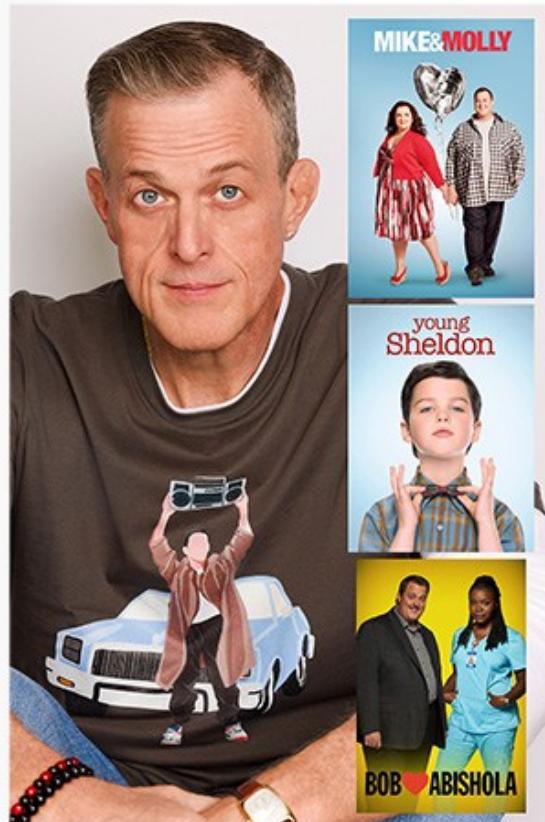
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## Christians, Children, And Cults, Oh My!

By Andy Caldwell

**A**s reported by the *Gateway Pundit*, an anti-Christian judge, who happened to be a former ACLU president, issued an order preventing a mother from taking her 12-year-old daughter, **Ava**, to church. The order also prevents the daughter from associating with her church friends, attending church or religious events, and – get this – it even prevents Ava from reading the bible and discussing her faith with her own mother. Ava is also prohibited from participating in Christian holiday events such as Christmas and Easter, or associating with anybody from her church, including at weddings and funerals!

How did this come about?

Well, Ava's mother, **Emily Bickford**, was never married to Ava's father, **Matt Bradeen**. Emily has primary custody of Ava, while the father has visitation rights. Nevertheless, the father – who admittedly hates Christianity – engaged the leftist judge and a California Marxist former sociology professor who served as an “expert witness” testifying that the church Emily and Ava went to, Calvary Chapel, Portland, was a cult that causes psychological harm to children. The judge determined that Emily was a fit parent *except* for the fact that she is a Christian!

The case has now been appealed to the Maine Supreme Court.

First, Calvary Chapel is *not* a cult. It spawned the Jesus Movement in Southern California in the 1960s and now the Harvest Crusades by Pastor **Greg Laurie**. Calvary Chapel is considered a very respectable association of churches.

Second, I guess this judge has never heard of the First Amendment.

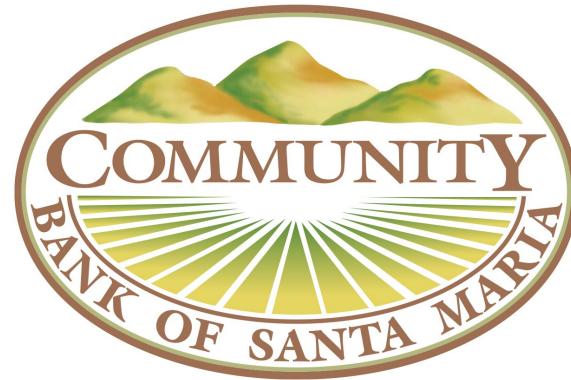
Third, the father and his expert witness didn't even have to prove harm, only assert the same.

### Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men

This is the perfect time in America to think about how something this outrageous and offensive to our very identity as Americans could come about.

I learned something in college about the meaning of holidays having to do with what is called “shrinking the collective conscience.” The purpose is to have every member of society to singularly focus on the meaning of the occasion for the purpose of societal cohesion and bonding.

Many of our holidays are meant to inspire patriotism, such as July 4<sup>th</sup>, along with reverence and honor for



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the people who served in our military: Veteran's Day, and remembrance of those who lost their lives doing so, Memorial Day. A third category is our remembrance of great leaders including **George Washington**, **Abraham Lincoln**, and **Martin Luther King**. Then, we have three major religious holidays, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter Sunday.

Unfortunately, our schools rarely promote any of these holidays any longer or the sentiments surrounding the same. In fact, by teaching such things as multi-culturalism and its twin grandchildren, DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion), and CRT (Critical Race Theory), not to mention the granddaddy of them all, Secular Humanism, they have obliterated most of our holidays while engaging in character assassination for the subject of many others by claiming America is a racist construct. This is one fundamental explanation as to why America is more divided than it has been in decades.

Speaking of a time of division, President **Ulysses S. Grant** was the first President to declare Christmas Day as a national holiday. It was said that while Grant wanted a “hard war” – referring to the Civil War –, he wanted a “soft peace” thereafter. He hoped this holi-

(Continued on page 20)

# California's Stupid, Ridiculous, Abusive, Nanny State, And Absurd New Laws For 2026

By Katy Grimes

***Because the cost of living in California is so high, Democrat lawmakers think increasing the minimum wage to \$16.90 per hour will help hourly workers afford a median-priced \$900,000 home***

California residents will be impacted by more than 900 new laws effective January 1, 2026. Because we need 900 new laws in the leading regulatory hell state in the nation.

## Minimum Wage

Because the cost of living in California is so high, Democrat lawmakers think increasing the minimum wage to \$16.90 per hour will help hourly workers afford a \$900,000 home – the median home price in the Golden State. Even if that hourly worker put in a full-time year, they will only make \$35,152, which is less than \$3,000 monthly, which barely covers the median cost for a studio apartment. Currently, the average rent in California is \$2,155 for Studio, \$2,284 for 1 Bedroom, \$3,240 for 2 Bedroom, \$4,147 for 3 Bedroom, and \$5,103 for 4+ Bedroom, according to Rentometer. California's absurdly high cost of living will not be offset by a \$16.90 minimum wage. It just makes Democrats feel better about themselves.

## Plastic Bag Ban

Because plastic bags are killing the environment, California Democrats are finally putting the plastic bag out of its misery with a Plastic Bag Ban. The authors of SB 1053, Democrats Assemblywoman Bauer-Kahan and Senator Blakespear, claimed studies found that most Californians were either not recycling those bags or were still using the thicker bags as one time only bags, despite being designed to be used multiple times. Their supposed studies (which there are no links for) claimed volunteers have collected over 300,000 plastic grocery bags in the last three decades. Everyone I know uses the plastic bags many times.

I have been covering the "Paper or Plastic" game since George W. Bush was President. And it's only gotten more ridiculous.

First California lawmakers banned paper bags be-

cause they "killed" trees, which are the ultimate renewable resource. They replaced paper with plastic bags, and promoted that the bags were made out of recycled plastics... which they are now banning to go back to tree-killing paper bags. Or, you can reuse your own filthy multi-use cloth bags. Banning plastic grocery bags does not reduce disposal and recycling costs, studies over the years have shown. Yet, California is banning plastic grocery bags entirely. And stupidly.

Enforcing litter laws would go much further to helping the environment.

## Parking Ticket forgiveness for Homeless Vagrants

If Downtown Sacramento is any measurement, parking in California cities is a b\*tch...and expensive. Parking meter maids are ruthless. Effective January 1st, Democrats, in their infinite wisdom, will reduce or waive parking fines if the vehicle owner can prove they are unable to pay for the ticket in full due to homelessness or financial hardship. This is largely to address the myriad RVs and beater cars lining city streets which are makeshift crack houses and homes to the 200,000 homeless, drug-addicted vagrants in California.

According to the author of AB 1299, Assemblyman

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# That Man No More May Die!

By Andy Caldwell

## That Man No More May Die

*Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the new born King,  
peace on earth, and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled!”  
  
Joyful, all ye nations rise,  
join the triumph of the skies;  
with the angelic host proclaim,  
“Christ is born in Bethlehem!”  
  
Hark! Th’ herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”  
  
Christ, by highest heaven adored;  
Christ, the everlasting Lord;  
late in time behold him come,  
offspring of a virgin’s womb.  
  
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;  
hail th’ incarnate Deity,  
pleased as man with man to dwell,  
Jesus, our Emmanuel.  
  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”  
  
Hail the heaven-born Prince of Peace!  
Hail the Sun of Righteousness!  
  
Light and life to all he brings,  
risen with healing in his wings.  
  
Mild he lays his glory by,  
born that man no more may die,  
born to raise the sons of earth,  
born to give us second birth.  
  
Hark! the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King!”  
  
**Tidings of Good Cheer***

This Christmas carol originally written by **John**

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**Wesley**, and further refined by **George Whitefield**, explains the true meaning of Christmas in one sentence: “Born that man no more may die, born to raise the sons of Earth, born to give us second birth.”

What did all mankind get for Christmas? A savior and eternal life if they chose to believe.

A wonderful scripture that speaks of the reason for the season is: “And there were shepherds residing in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks by night. Just then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified.

“But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid! For behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people: Today in the city of David a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord! And this will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

These scriptures speak of God sending his son Jesus

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# The Affordability Crisis, California Style

By Andy Caldwell

**I** have to laugh at New Yorkers, among others, whose concern over the “affordability crisis” prompted them to elect a socialist as their new mayor. The point here is that government is nearly entirely responsible for the affordability crises, and the only promise a socialist like Mamdani will deliver on is more government.

Speaking of affordability, the average price of a home in California is now \$900,000, nearly *double* the national average of \$462,000. Gasoline and utilities are also inordinately high. Why is that? It is not that the cost of any of these things differs from one state to another, it is CA government that is so expensive. Specifically, government rules, fees, and regulations vs what used to be called “progress.”

Along with the obfuscation and outright confiscations (Coastal Commission anyone?), of private property and development rights via our *purposefully* convoluted land use process, it is nearly impossible to build so-called affordable housing except that which has been subsidized, typically by way of costly exactions on other homes via so-called inclusionary housing schemes.

So, most people in CA, instead of being able to build generational wealth by owning property, are instead one paycheck away from being homeless. This is a direct consequence of California-Democrat-Party-led government writ large because they have been in total control of our state for decades.

## Lack of Balance

Having said that, Democrats and bureaucrats are now vainly attempting to override two precepts at play regarding the affordability of housing, the law of supply and demand, along with the maxim that time is money.

Unfortunately, our state legislature and Gov. Newsom, have created a cure that is worse than the disease, as it affects affordability, for they are sacrificing *livability* for faux affordability. The state’s efforts to achieve affordable housing has included streamlining permits for high-density housing that is only partially affordable because, among other things, the developer won’t have to spend money to set aside land for parking.

Who needs a place to park, right?

Or a space to charge their mandated EV?



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Then we have the notorious *builder’s remedy* that created a loophole for developers to break a few of the meaningful rules the south county has had in place for over 100 years, thanks to one **Pearl Chase**. The so-called remedy is triggered if a jurisdiction submitted its plans to the state to facilitate building more houses past the deadline to do so. The two most egregious examples of this? The 8-story building that could serve as a backdrop to the Santa Barbara Mission, or worse, the 18-story monstrosity slated for Carpinteria. You can blame **Monique Limon** and **Greg Hart**, among other Dems, for not having any semblance of *balance* between *livable* and *affordable* communities as it pertains to these excesses.

## The Death of “Affordability”

Another huge problem? Whereas, our local progressives are loath to build along the Gaviota Coast, the same impediments that give *them* that control are also hampering both Santa Maria and Lompoc from being able to expand their city boundaries in a sensible manner. That is, there is an obfuscatory governmental entity known as LAFCO, the Local Agency Formation Commission, that governs the ability to expand the boundaries of jurisdictions, a la incorporation, or growth by annexing more land. The rules in place are supposed to foment something called “revenue neutrality,” but instead the rules are an affordability killers.

# Will California Farmers Get Their Fair Share Of Federal Bailout Money?

By Brian Reisinger

As the Trump administration rolls out a \$12 billion aid package mostly for farmers in Midwestern states hurt by rising costs, trade disputes and weak prices, California farmers are hoping they won't get left out in the cold, again. The USDA did set aside \$1 billion of the package that could go for "specialty crops," such as wine grapes, that California farmers grow, said Daniel Sumner, a professor of agricultural economics at UC Davis.

"This round it appears pretty clear that the funds will go mostly to the corn, soybean and wheat guys, the standard program crops," he said.

President Donald J. Trump along with Brooke Rollins, the U.S. Department of Agriculture secretary, recently announced a bailout package aimed at providing broad relief to Midwestern growers farming "program crops," including soybeans, corn, barley, wheat and cotton.

Many farmers in those regions were forced to file for bankruptcy, in part, because of rising costs and the loss of access to international markets triggered by Trump's trade war.

In a news release, Rollins emphasized that a one-time payment, known as Farm Bridge Assistance, is designed to shore up farmer's finances until payments from the Farm Bill hit in February. Under the farm bill, certain crops, like soybeans, receive federal help in the form of safety net protections and price support.

To qualify for the program, farmers with adjusted gross income under \$900,000 must apply by Dec. 19. Approved payments of up to \$155,000 per producer would be paid in February.

California's farmers, including those in Fresno County and the rest of the San Joaquin Central Valley, also benefit from government programs, including the purchase of surplus crops, but they have not generally reaped the same amount of financial support as their midwestern counterparts.

The apparent disparity in announced aid has not gone unnoticed by California farmers, industry groups and elected officials.

"I am very concerned that the Farm Bridge Assistance Program once again shortchanges California's specialty crop producers. Our state grows more than 400 commodities and produces half of the nation's fruits



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and vegetable, yet the Trump Administration has set aside only a vague, non-guaranteed \$1 billion. These essential high-nutrition crops are put on America's table every night," said Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, in a statement.

Costa added that as a co-chair of the bipartisan Specialty Crop Caucus he plans to push the USDA "for clarity and ensure our specialty crop growers receive their fair share of relief."

California Sen. Adam Schiff that while the Trump administration is "finally acting to deliver much needed relief to farmers" it should have never been made necessary.

"I've been ringing the alarm about how damaging these tariffs are to the industry for months now. We still need details on how USDA will distribute funding to California's farmers and specialty crop growers. I know our farmers would rather export their crops than

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# The Steep Price Of Tolerance

By Andy Caldwell

I truly feel sorry that **Rob Reiner** and his wife were murdered in cold blood by their own son. It doesn't matter to me that I did not agree with Reiner's politics.

Besides being a severe drug addict, Reiner's son had been in drug rehab some 18 times in his life. It makes one wonder if the therapy protocols were any good or if he was, in fact, incorrigible. I was surprised that Reiner and his wife practiced tough love to some extent as they allowed their son to be homeless at some point in his life because of his poor choices and coping skills. I have spoken to several recovered drug addicts; they believe that hitting rock bottom was what saved them.

However, instead of hitting rock bottom, things got worse; it has been reported that Reiner's son had also been diagnosed with schizophrenia. This mental disease is extremely difficult to treat. Supposedly, his doctors were adjusting his meds, and it made him worse. A significant number of the drugs used to treat mentally ill people can make them violent including inflicting self-harm on themselves and harming others. Obviously, not all people diagnosed as mentally ill are violent. But some are and their arrest records prove it. In fact, a significant number of school shooters and other mass murderers were on such drugs.

This brings up a stunning failure in our society as it relates to the mentally ill with long arrest records and little to no time served. That is, we don't know how to deal with these ticking time bombs. Rob Reiner is reported to have told several friends that he was afraid his son would harm him and his wife.

Yet, what could he do about his fear?

We have seen one murder after another in our society, often in broad daylight and in public places, wherein somebody with a very long history of mental illness and criminal acts has been allowed to roam free on our streets creating one victim after another. **Iryna Zarutska** comes to mind. She was the Ukrainian refugee murdered on a light rail line in North Carolina by a suspect who had been arrested some 14 times in his life and who had served time in prison. According to his mother, around the time he was in prison he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. His parents tried to get him some help, but our system, except for some temporary holds, won't force anybody into treatment until *after* they have committed a heinous crime. This is a nightmare for the families of the mentally ill, not to mention the victims of their crimes.

## Drug Abuse as a Public Health and Safety Issue

It has been reported that the night before Reiner and his wife were murdered, they were at a Hollywood party. It was obvious to several of the guests that Reiner's son was out of control. These guests wanted to call in cops and mental health professionals and have him temporarily committed but supposedly the host – former late-night TV comic **Conan O'Brien** – refused. Reiner is dead because of the recalcitrance of the partygoers to call the authorities. Reiner is also dead because we don't have the will to deal with the mentally ill unless and until they commit such crimes. We need to revisit institutionalizing these people before more victims are hurt, or worse, murdered.

Another issue we need to deal with is how is it that our society is producing so many people that have mental health issues. As it turns out, just as we don't force any type of institutionalization on people dealing with severe mental health problems, neither do we treat drug users as criminals. Yet, drug use is surely a public health and safety issue.

The following charts are taken from this website

### The incidence of mental illness is higher among adults who have a methamphetamine substance use disorder.

Share of people with substance use disorder who also experienced mental illness in the last year, by substance (2021)



Data on heroin, hallucinogens, and inhalants is not shown due to low precision in the estimates.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • [Download image](#) • [Download SVG](#)

USA Facts

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# New HHS Report on Transgender ‘Care’ For Minors Reveals Why Activists Try To ‘Silence Critics,’ Contributor Says

By Tyler O’Neil

**A**dvocates of transgender medical interventions euphemistically referred to as “gender-affirming care” often seek to silence critics, rather than engaging in a debate on the science—and one of the authors of the Department of Health and Human Services’ report on the issue says he thinks he knows why.

HHS published a review of the evidence regarding medical transition for minors in May, finding “extremely weak evidence” for any benefits from “gender-affirming care.” HHS sought peer review, submitting its report to medical professionals and pro-transgender health associations. Yet two of the three pro-transgender groups HHS approached refused to engage, and the remaining organization appeared not to have read the full report.

The back-and-forth appears in a supplement to the final review, published Tuesday.

“HHS offered the leading organizations advocating for these treatments an opportunity to have their experts participate in a rigorous peer-review process and point out whether the review might have made errors or omissions,” Leor Sapir, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute and one of the review’s nine contributors, told The Daily Signal. “As the supplement clearly shows, no such errors or omissions could be identified.”

“Perhaps that’s why advocates of these controversial drugs and surgeries prefer to silence critics and engage in smear campaigns,” he added.

## The HHS Review

The HHS review, which President Donald Trump ordered in January, found that most children will grow out of gender dysphoria, the persistent and

painful sense of identifying with the gender opposite one’s biological sex.

The review notes that transgender medical interventions “carry risk of significant harms,” including sterility, lower bone density, brain impacts, diseases, and more. It laments a lack of research into whether therapy, rather than drugs or surgeries, can manage gender dysphoria.

The review does not present itself as a clinical practice guideline, but it makes the case that experimental “gender-affirming care” likely does more harm than good for minors.

## The APA Questions Methodology

HHS reached out to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Psychiatric Association, and the Endocrine Society—three organizations that support “gender-affirming care” and had publicly criticized the May review.

The AAP and the Endocrine Society refused to participate, and while the reviewers thanked the APA for submitting a response, they thoroughly dismantled its arguments against the review.

The APA faulted the review’s methodology, but the HHS reviewers noted that APA’s concerns had been addressed in Appendix 4 of the review, which laid out the methodology in great detail. Two non-HHS academics who specialize in methodology also found the HHS review’s practices sound and rigorous.

The reviewers note that APA’s “unfounded criticism may have resulted from a failure to read core parts of the review.”

The APA feedback also listed 16 studies “for review

(Continued on page 11)

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# Segregation, Quotas And Gender Ideology: Minnesota's Schools Are Going backward

By Kendall Tietz

**F**rom segregated classes in Minneapolis, to race-based licensure standards, to grant programs that explicitly prefer or exclude people based on skin color, state officials are normalizing what the Supreme Court rejected decades ago.

We expect it in California and New York, but Minnesota has become one of the most aggressive states in reshaping education. Defending Education has documented the statewide leftward shift, and it is a civil-rights crisis.

In October, Defending Ed filed a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Education over Minneapolis Public Schools' racially segregated classes, which appeared to be available only to black students, in violation of Title VI and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment.

We settled this question in 1954. In *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court made it clear that segregating students by race in public schools is unconstitutional.

In that same Minnesota district, students in a required Ethnic Studies class conduct a "structural analysis of racism and colonialism," viewing everything through a race-based, anti-capitalist and Marxist lens.

The course cites Critical Race Theory, promotes the ideas of Karl Marx and peddles the notion that capitalism and Western culture are to blame for slavery, genocide, colonialism and white supremacy. Teachers then ask students to "challenge the 'white savior' narrative" and complete a Youth Led Participatory Action Research project that pushes them into activism.

In 2023, lawmakers required that by 2026 every high school add an ethnic studies course that can count toward graduation along with history, geography, economics and civics.

Ethnic studies is touted as a curriculum to promote tolerance and cultural understanding, but we've documented how it is a trojan horse for activism in the classroom, framing society as divided between oppressors and the oppressed.



Minnesota is also fighting the Trump administration's "Gender Ideology" and "Sports Ban" orders as unlawful rewrites of Title IX. At the same time, under the banner of a group called Gender Justice, school board candidates published a joint initiative supporting "the full inclusion of transgender and nonbinary students in school athletics," which they claim Title IX protects.

While school board candidates in the state are technically nonpartisan, their priorities are not in improving abysmal test scores, but in transgender activism on an issue where roughly eight in ten voters disagree with them.

At the state level, the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) funds a litany of race-based programs, including a law passed in 2025 requiring MDE to award grants "to increase the number of teacher candidates who are of color or who are American Indian."

An MDE grant competition, worth a total of \$9.4 million, is open to universities and is explicitly focused on "increasing licensed school psychologists, school nurses, school counselors, and school social workers of Color and Indigenous." This effectively excludes people who are not "Black, Indigenous or People of Color" and appears to violate Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin.

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## Segregation, Quotas And Gender Ideology: Minnesota's Schools Are Going backward *Cont.*

*(Continued from page 9)*

In Minnesota, an administrative rule sets out the “Standards of Effective Practice” teachers must meet to be licensed. The standard on “racial consciousness and reflection” requires teachers to understand “how ethnocentrism, eurocentrism, deficit-based teaching, and white supremacy undermine pedagogical equity.”

Minnesota also has a statewide “Grow Your Own” program that provides grants to help district employees become licensed teachers. But the program requires any district applying to have at least 30% students of color, and any school that doesn’t reach that 30% threshold is not eligible for the grant.

According to Minnesota statute, the program imposes multiple race-based stipulations, including how grant money is allocated and who can participate.

For example, if a district gets a Grow Your Own grant, it must spend at least 80% of the money on scholarships or stipends for people of color or American Indians who want to get their teaching license. Then, “the remaining funds may be used in a variety of ways, including but not limited to scholarships/stipends for White candidates or providing programmatic supports for all candidates.”

The majority of funds are restricted to people in certain racial and ethnic categories, eligibility for most of the aid is race-based and it requires racial proportionality among student participants relative to district demographics.

Students at secondary schools can apply for the grants, “especially students of color and American Indian students, to pursue teaching,” but to be eligible,

the percentage of students of color in the program can’t be lower than their percentage in the district’s total student population. The state also prioritizes applicants with the largest number or highest percentage of students who are of color or American Indian.

It’s clear that these programs aren’t based on merit or need, but instead an explicit effort to change the racial and ethnic composition of teachers.

Minnesota should serve as a warning for the rest of the country: it is teaching children and training teachers in an ideology that reverts back to the pre-civil rights era, treating Americans as members of competing racial groups instead of individuals with equal rights under the law.

From segregated classes in Minneapolis, to race-based licensure standards, to grant programs that explicitly prefer or exclude people based on skin color, state officials are normalizing what the Supreme Court rejected decades ago.

*Kendall Tietz is an investigative reporter for Defending Education*

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## New HHS Report on Transgender ‘Care’ For Minors Reveals Why Activists Try To ‘Silence Critics,’ Contributor Says *Cont.*

and consideration,” suggesting that the HHS review failed to consider them.

On the contrary, HHS reviewers responded that 12 of the 16 studies had indeed been discussed in the review. Three of the remaining four studies do not pertain to youth outcomes or gender medicine, and the final study had not been published until after the review.

### Mistaken Assumptions

APA faulted the HHS review for supposedly failing to examine “potential harms” to minors who do not undergo transgender medical interventions.

The reviewers responded that the research showed “no credible evidence of benefits” from interventions compared with no interventions, and therefore “no credible evidence of harms from not providing” interventions.

Furthermore, the reviewers noted that APA’s claim suggests there’s something inherently wrong with the normal process of puberty, an assumption reviewers reject.

### The Cass Review

APA also claimed the HHS review failed to consider certain conclusions of the research published by Dr. Hilary Cass, a pediatrician and former president of Britain’s Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health, who conducted an extensive 2020 review.

APA quoted a section of the Cass Review stating, “For some, the best outcome will be transition.”

The HHS reviewers said APA had mischaracterized the Cass Review: “When properly understood in context, … the quote is best understood as one consideration in a more nuanced line of clinical reasoning.”

The Cass Review found “weak” evidence for benefits from interventions, and that doctors are unable to determine which minors will persist in a transgender

identity.

“Any reasonable interpretation of the Cass Review’s statement that ‘for some, the best outcome will be transition,’ must grapple with its findings about lack of evidence for benefit and deep uncertainties about diagnosis,” the reviewers added.

### The State of Transgender ‘Medicine’

A St. Louis University professor, Johan C. Bester, lamented the state of gender medicine in his comment on the HHS review.

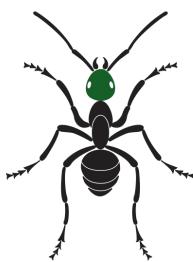
He said doctors in the field “appear to have an a priori commitment” to medical interventions. “What came first was certainty that these treatments are beneficial and medically necessary. What came second was seeking for evidence that would justify this proposition after the fact. When no evidence was forthcoming, shifting justifications for treatment emerged.”

Bester lamented that commitment to the interventions became a “litmus test” and a “matter of politics and activism.”

Recent news underscores his observations. The final HHS report comes less than a month after transgender activist pressure led to the revocation of accreditation for a peer-reviewed course on the harms of “gender-affirming care.” Those activists cited the Southern Poverty Law Center, which compares groups of doctors who question “gender-affirming care” to chapters of the Ku Klux Klan.

Transgender advocates will likely demonize the HHS’ final report, but this time they will do so after HHS gave pro-transgender critics the opportunity to respond—and after they largely failed to engage with the material.

*Tyler O’Neil, senior editor at The Daily Signal and the author “The Woketopus: The Dark Money Cabal Manipulating the Federal Government*



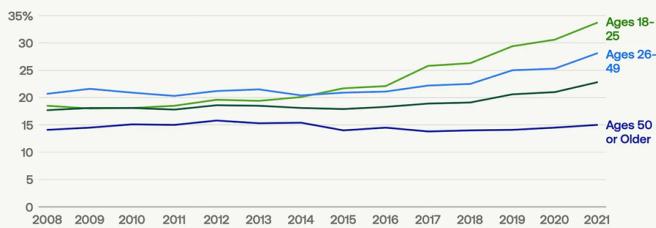
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## The Steep Price Of Tolerance *Cont.*

(Continued from page 7)

**Adults ages 18–25 are most likely to have mental illness compared to other age groups.**

Percent of adults who had mental illness in the past year by age group, 2008–2021



Survey methodology changed in 2020 and 2021. Data from 2020 should be compared to previous years with caution and data from 2021 should not be compared to previous years.

Source: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration • [Get the data](#) • [Embed](#) • [Download image](#) • [Download SVG](#)

USA Facts

This chart demonstrates that a significant source of mental illness has to do with drug use. Furthermore, the prevalence of mental illness is also a function of age, including an age rife with experimentation and fraught with obvious lifelong consequences:

It is painfully obvious that people who are experimenting with, or routinely taking drugs, are playing a game of Russian roulette with their lives and their loved ones, along with members of the public who end up having to deal with the ramifications and consequences of their actions and choices. Our society is paying a steep price for its pursuit of tolerance.

Will we ever learn?

*Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB*

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## Will California Farmers Get Their Fair Share Of Federal Bailout Money? *Cont.*

(Continued from page 6)

have to rely on funding like this from the government, but now that this relief is necessary, I want to make sure that our farmers get their fair share of support," Schiff said in a statement.

As the president of the California Farm Bureau, Shannon Douglass, said that California's dominance as a leading agriculture producer should not be overlooked. "California fruit, vegetable, tree-nut and nursery growers face the same sharp cost increases and market instability as the rest of American agriculture. This underscores the ongoing need for federal programs that serve all American agriculture. The California Farm Bureau will continue advocating for fair and timely support for all California farmers," Douglass said in a statement.

In 2018, during Trump's first term as president, the U.S. waged a trade war with China that slashed exports of numerous crops including those grown primarily in the central San Joaquin Valley.

To help U.S. farmers cope, the USDA distributed over \$14.5 billion in payments, but the lion's share went to growers of soybeans, sorghum and corn. Specialty crops — a significant segment of California production — received less than 2.3% of those funds. In 2024, rebounding crop prices and an adequate water supply helped pushed Fresno County's agriculture industry into the number one spot in California with a record-setting production value of \$9 billion in 2024. The county's total production value rose 5.7% from 2023, putting it ahead of Tulare County at a total value of \$8.3 billion and Kern County at \$7.9 billion.

According to the California Department of Food and Agriculture, the state's top 10 crops in 2024 by dollar value were: Dairy Products, Milk — \$8.61 billion; Almonds — \$5.66 billion; Grapes — \$5.64 billion; Cattle and Calves — \$4.98 billion; Lettuce — \$3.67 billion; Strawberries — \$3.46 billion; Pistachios — \$2.05 billion; Tomatoes — \$1.64 billion; Carrots — \$1.57 billion; Broilers — \$1.37 billion.

### Grapes continue to be battered

This year, California wine grape growers have been battered by an oversupply, reduced demand and a loss of exports, Sumner said.

Angered by Trump's tariffs, Canada, once a top mar-



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ket for wine, has reduced its wine imports from California by more than 80%.

"It's kind of hard to piss off a Canadian, but somehow the U.S. has done it," Sumner said.

Madera County grape grower Steve Schafer said that while he is not familiar with the details of the new funding program, he can attest to the financial struggles of state's grape industry.

"The grape business is as bad as I have ever seen in my lifetime," he said. "It is a struggle for everybody right now."

Aside from shrinking export markets, California's wine grape growers have been hit with a shift in drinking habits from consumers. People are drinking less, or opting for different types of adult beverages such as the cocktail-in-a-can trend.

The result is a glut of wine grapes. Schafer said wine grape growers are being told by the wineries, don't bother harvesting, we have nowhere to store the juice.

Grape vines are also being removed throughout the state, with more expected to come out next year.

Schafer recently saw a grape harvester moving through the vineyard in what would seem like a normal harvest. But instead of dumping the grapes in a bin, they were being left in the row to decompose.

"That is a tough one," Schafer said.

*Brian Reisinger, columnist, consultant and author of "Land Rich, Cash Poor: My Family's Hope and the Untold History of the Disappearing American Farmer*

## The Affordability Crisis, California Style *cont.*

(Continued from page 5)

In our case, greedy and bloated Santa Barbara County provides some services to all residents of the county, including those who live in incorporated cities, so the county wants to get as much money as it can anytime a boundary adjustment could shift revenue away from its coffers. This is one of the things crippling our ability to grow in a reasonable and affordable manner.

For instance, in 2001, members of the "Goleta NOW!" organization negotiated an agreement with the County of Santa Barbara that allocated 50% of Goleta's property taxes and 30% of Goleta's sales taxes to the county *in perpetuity*. An additional 20% of Goleta's sales taxes and 40% of Goleta's Transient Occupancy Tax ("Bed Taxes") would be allocated to the county for ten years. This amount of *extortion* would bury most communities' ability to incorporate or expand.

### Time is Money

In Santa Maria, for instance, the county is in negotiations with LAFCO over two annexations. The first is annexing a land on the east side of the freeway just south of Main Street for new development. The second is the Richard's Ranch project in Orcutt slated for infill development. In both cases, the city is forced to negotiate with the county via LAFCO for revenue neutrality agreements which is proving to be financially detrimental to the purpose of creating more housing, including presumably, more affordable housing. Because, again, *time is money* for developers, and cities can only afford to give so much money to the county.

Because it takes years to get through the regularly tortuous land use process, not to mention having to add LAFCO to the mix, most developers will take a pass on building more housing or any other type of development here.

### The Law of Supply and Demand

Unfortunately, Supervisor **Bob Nelson**, otherwise a reliable conservative, who sits on the LAFCO board, is holding Santa Maria's feet over a fire as it relates to these annexations. That's because he doesn't want Richard's Ranch annexed to the city. Accordingly, he is making life difficult for Santa Maria as it affects its ability to negotiate for revenue neutrality for the project near Main Street. Nelson is under a delusion that Richard's Ranch and other such projects could enable Orcutt to eventually incorporate, but he has forgotten what happened to Goleta, as he himself tightens the thumbscrews on Santa Maria, which is part of his supervisorial district by the way.

Go figure.

In addition to the law of supply and demand, and the principle that time is money, there is also the timeless maxim that "what goes around comes around." And, unfortunately, in CA, what goes around comes around, like clockwork, is more government than we can afford. There is no other explanation as to why homes here are nearly twice the nation's average price.

*Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB*

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The COLAB Foundation is a public charity formed to procure funding for the Santa Barbara County Coalition of Labor, Agriculture and Business (COLAB) and other select non-profit entities to advance education and science, combat community deterioration and lessen the burden of government.

Of course, the donations to the COLAB Foundation can only be used to educate the public about the work that COLAB and others are doing in our community, but we have been educating people all along!

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## That Man No More May Die! *Cont.*

*(Continued from page 4)*

so that humanity can be saved. Saved from what you might ask yourselves? From all that displeases a holy God.

The Christmas story posits that none of us are worthy by our own merits to receive the gift of eternal life to be lived out in the presence of a holy God in heaven. A heavenly life with no more tears, fears, and death, no cancer, no hatred, and no violence, the better place people speak of after the death of a loved one. Earth was to be just such a paradise, but it was marred, and is still marred, by what the bible refers to as sin, which is easily understood as missing the mark of all that God intended for our lives.

As the saying goes, paradise appeared to be lost, but God made a way. How so? From the gospel of John, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." That is, Jesus was born to die for you, so that you could live with and for God in eternity.

Moreover, as another scripture puts it, "Salvation exists in no one else, for there is no other name, except the name of Jesus, under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." Or, as Jesus himself said, "I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to God but through me".

**Merry Christmas!**

*Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB*

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## California's Stupid, Ridiculous, Abusive, Nanny State, And Absurd New Laws For 2026 *Cont.*

*(Continued from page 3)*

Bryan: "Unpaid parking tickets can pose a significant burden for low-income individuals. For people living in poverty, parking tickets pose a severe financial burden that can quickly spiral from a \$52 fine to a vehicle registration hold. This bill gives local agencies the ability to look at a person's whole circumstance when deciding an action on a parking ticket. For situations where a parking ticket can push an individual from poverty to financial crisis, local jurisdictions should have the ability to do what is best for their constituent."

The state government flips the bird at starving students, struggling single moms, and other low wage workers who get parking tickets. You're on your own while the homeless drug addicts get special consideration.

### Food Delivery Services

Assemblywoman Rebecca Bauer-Kahn, the author of AB 578, says "The rise of food delivery platforms has led to increased consumer complaints about undelivered orders, lack of refunds, and unreliable customer service." She claims Grubhub, DoorDash, and Uber Eats dominate the food delivery market, yet none of these platforms have a clear refund policy. Therefore she wrote the bill requiring food delivery services to provide a full refund to a customer if an order is not delivered or if the wrong order was delivered. And, food delivery companies must provide customer service by humans if their automated systems do not resolve the customer's concern.

The free market used to sort out crappy service. But never fear, Assemblywoman Bauer-Kahn is here to

save you from capitalism and free markets. How about consumers stop using food delivery services if they suck or are unreliable. They will get the message and improve or go broke.

### Nanny State: Adding Folic Acid to Corn Tortillas in CA only, forever changing the taste

Because a lack of folic acid puts Latina women at higher risk of giving birth to babies with birth defects like spina bifida and anencephaly, according to the State of California, the California Legislature passed AB 1830 by Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) in 2024 requiring tortillas and corn masa products sold in the state to contain folic acid beginning January 1st.

But the taste of folic acid does not enhance the tortilla. At all.

"Los Angeles Times columnist Gustavo Arellano put it to the test last year — and the results weren't pretty," the NY Post reported. "In a blind taste test between a regular tortilla and one loaded with the B vitamin, he and tortilla factory owners could immediately spot the difference."

Reminiscent of government ordering fluoride in water, how about we just make sure Latina mothers get folic acid supplements instead?

This bill, as with the others above, demonstrate just how useless California lawmakers really are. They spend their days looking for issues to legislate.

### Expanded coverage for in vitro fertilization for queer couples

SB 729 by Senator Caroline Menjivar (she/her/Ella) (D-Burbank) mandates expanded coverage for in vitro



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## California's Stupid, Ridiculous, Abusive, Nanny State, And Absurd New Laws For 2026 *Cont.*

*(Continued from page 17)*

fertilization by large employer health plans “for all individuals regardless of marital status, sexual orientation or gender identity and single parents by choice.”

According to the author, this bill “will ensure that queer couples no longer have to pay more out of pocket to start families than non-queer families. This bill is critical to achieving full-lived equality for LGBTQ+ people.”

“The California Association of Health Plans, the Association of California Life and Health Insurance Companies, and America’s Health Insurance Plans write in opposition to this along with other health insurance mandate bills, that state mandates increase costs of coverage, especially for families who buy coverage without subsidies, small business owners who cannot or do not wish to self-insure, and California taxpayers who foot the bill for the state’s share of those mandates. The California Chamber of Commerce and others write that employer-based health care coverage is usually one of the most formidable expenses a business experiences and, while this bill is well-intentioned, it will unintentionally exacerbate health care affordability issues. Their concern stems from the massive premium increase associated with the new coverage that California’s employers and employees will have to pay for.”

No comment.

**Get your Claws Out of me: No Declawed Cats Al-**

### lowed

In 2026, California cat owners won’t be able to declaw their cats after passage of AB 867 by Assemblyman Alex Lee (D-Palo Alto). Most veterinarians won’t declaw cats anyway.

Interestingly, the California Veterinary Medical Association opposed the bill, writing: “While this bill is aimed at prohibiting veterinarians from performing a surgical declawing procedure on cats under certain circumstances, it would—if passed—have a far-reaching and precedential impact on a veterinarian’s ability to practice veterinary medicine.” CVMA states that it is “deeply concerned that the veterinary profession is being singled out among our fellow healing arts professionals with legislation proposing to ban specific medical and surgical procedures in statute, which is a dangerous precedent.”

No words.

### K-12 Schools Gender Neutral Bathrooms

SB 760 by Senator Josh Newsom (D-San Bernardino), passed by the California Legislature in 2023, now requires on January 1st that all K-12 public schools and charter schools have at least one gender neutral restroom at each school site.

According to Sen. Newman, “SB 760 is a measure that aims to create a safe and inclusive environment not only for non-binary students but to all students by requiring each public school to establish at least one

*(Continued on page 19)*



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## California's Stupid, Ridiculous, Abusive, Nanny State, And Absurd New Laws For 2026 Cont.

(Continued from page 18)

all-gender restroom."

Because while California public schools are secretly transitioning your son from a boy to a girl without your knowledge or consent, they will need a gender-neutral restroom to use while at school – but notably, cannot be forced to use it.

Newman says, "This issue originated in 2021 when a member of the Chino Valley Unified School District introduced a measure that would have banned non-binary and transgender students from using restrooms corresponding with their gender identity. During the midst of this proposal, California State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond warned that the Chino Valley Unified School District's proposed resolution to exclude non-binary students from sex-segregated restrooms would violate state law. Although the proposed measure failed, the Superintendent and I believed there was an opportunity to create an inclusive environment for all students. In response to Chino Valley Unified School District's proposed resolution, the Superintendent launched the Safe School Bathrooms Ad Hoc Committee."

It's lawsuit time, and well past time to get back to California public schools teaching the classical liberal arts education which has turned into an afterthought, and not allowing gender distractions. This is being fomented by crazed and mentally-ill educators and lawmakers who need psychotherapy, not surgeons to resolve their gender dysphoria.

There are 893 more bills to cover besides the seven I noted in this article. In the next few weeks, the California Globe will cover the bills we know will impact California taxpayers, parents, employees, workers, and school kids.

*Katy Grimes, the Editor in Chief of the California Globe, is a long-time Investigative Journalist covering the California State Capitol, and the co-author of California's War Against Donald Trump: Who Wins? Who Loses?*

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## Christians, Children, And Cults, Oh My! *Cont.*

(Continued from page 2)

day would foster unity in a country that was still reeling from the deep and bitter divisions of the Civil War. Perhaps, this Christmas, we could use this season to remind ourselves of our common blessings, faith, and heritage?

From ***"I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day"*** by **Henry Wadsworth Longfellow:**

*And in despair I bowed my head;  
"There is no peace on earth," I said;  
"For hate is strong,  
And mocks the song  
Of peace on earth, good-will to men!"  
Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:  
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;  
The Wrong shall fail,  
The Right prevail,  
With peace on earth, good-will to men."*

*Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB*



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