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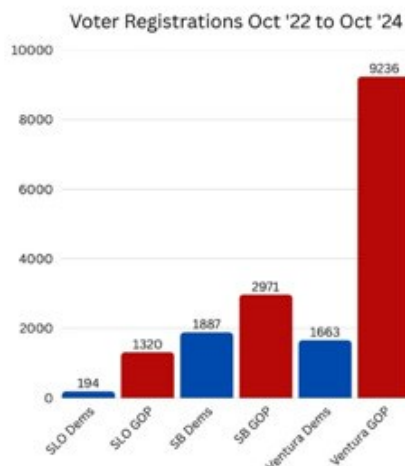
Is The Central Coast Still Blue?

By Kimberly Caldwell

On August 20th, 2025, *The New York Times* published a noteworthy report entitled "The Democratic Party Faces a Voter Registration Crisis." The opening paragraph quickly gained attention in numerous media outlets:

"Of the 30 states that track voter registration by political party, Democrats lost ground to Republicans in every single one between the 2020 and 2024 elections — and often by a lot. That four-year swing toward the Republicans adds up to 4.5 million voters, a deep political hole that could take years for Democrats to climb out from."

Many of my friends were astonished to learn that even deep blue states such as New York and our own California were among the 30 states included in the report. I was curious to determine whether this national and state-level trend was true in our local Tri-Counties.



What I discovered will likely surprise you.

My research, using publicly available data, showed that the coastal counties of San Luis Obispo (SLO), Santa Barbara, and Ventura, which have been considered Democrat strongholds for more than a decade, are no longer as blue as some people think. In fact, the Democrat Party has less than 50% of the registered voters in each county, and their share of voters has even dropped below 40% in SLO County.

Between October 2022 and October 2024, Republicans in SLO and Ventura Counties registered five times more new voters than their Democrat opponents and Santa Barbara

registered more than one-and-a-half times more voters than the Democrats.

The above figures highlight a dramatic shift-in-the-making for local politics and caught the eye of California Assemblyman **Carl DeMaio**, who is also the chairman of Reform California. DeMaio published an article on his blog on January 8th, 2025, entitled "Reform California Releases '26 for 2026' List of Target Seats." Within the article, he points out several U.S. Congressional, State Senate, and State Assembly seats to defend or flip to maintain the Republican majority in D.C., and break up the Democrat Supermajority in Sacramento. DeMaio also highlights a "watch list" to add to the list of targeted seats if current trends hold.

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The Origins Of The Assassination Culture

By Andy Caldwell

I recently wrote about a phenomenon among the youth in America known as the “assassination culture.” In addition to Tyler Robinson, the 22-year-old who allegedly killed Charlie Kirk, we have Luigi Mangione, a 26-year-old Ivy League graduate accused of killing **Brian Thompson**, the CEO of United Healthcare, and finally, Thomas Matthew Crooks, the 20-year-old who attempted to assassinate **Donald Trump** in Butler, Pennsylvania. Then, of course, there is the plethora of school shootings by teens and young adults, along with attacks on houses of worship.

According to the Colson Center, “Assassination culture is characterized by a shift in societal attitudes towards political violence, where acts of violence against political figures or symbols are seen as acceptable or even justified by certain segments of the population. This phenomenon has been linked to broader trends in political discourse, particularly in the wake of significant political events and social movements. It represents a ‘level-up’ from cancel culture, which sought to silence voices through social pressure, to a more violent approach aimed at eradicating adversaries physically.”

How has our culture become so rotten as to produce a generation of young people who participate in or at least support the shift towards an assassination culture? Not only were people elated when **Charlie Kirk** was murdered while doing nothing but speaking in the public square, some 35,000 people have contributed to Mangione’s defense fund.

Well, you can’t say we weren’t warned.

Here are a couple of excerpts from a piece about **Alexander Solzhenitsyn** when he visited Harvard in 1978, titled “Solzhenitsyn’s Prophecy,” written by Princeton Law Professor **Robert George**, who was a Harvard graduate student at the time.

(See the full piece here: <https://robertpgeorge.com/articles/solzhenitsyns-prophecy/>)

Solzhenitsyn, who spent many a year in the Soviet gulag, came to America to rebuke it. He viewed the West’s weakness...as the fruit of the materialism, consumerism, self-indulgent individualism, emotivism, and narcissism—in a word, the immorality—into which we had allowed ourselves to sink.

Solzhenitsyn, the (by then) legendary human rights activist, warned America and the West that we had



become too focused on rights and needed to refocus on obligations. We had come to embrace a false idea of liberty, conceiving of it as doing as one pleases, rather than as the freedom to fulfill one’s human potential and honor one’s conscientious duties (thou shalt not kill?) to God and neighbor.

George adds that in another speech some five years later, Solzhenitsyn rightly observed that the moral decline of the West has behind it the same factor that produced the *horrors* of communism, namely this: “Men have forgotten God. People worship themselves, deify their own desires, fall into an idolatry of the self, because they have forgotten that there is something—indeed someone higher.” (Someone whom they will someday have to answer to.)

Think about where we are today, some 45 years later. If you were to describe the characteristics of too many young Americans today, could you do it without the following terms?

Nihilism- defined as a viewpoint that traditional

(Continued on page 18)

Gov. Newsom Condescends To Media Over Questions About Capitol Renovation Secrecy

By Katy Grimes

Newsom conflates Trump's privately-funded ballroom with \$1.5 billion publicly-funded Capitol renovations

In September 2020, while California was still suffering under Governor Gavin Newsom's oppressive COVID restrictions of lockdowns of business and school closures, the Joint Legislative Committee on Rules held a hearing on the plans for the \$543.2 million renovation of the State Capitol while ignoring actual state business urgencies. Notably, the project has ballooned to \$1.5 billion – that we know of.

The entire state budget is about \$321.1 billion in total state spending.

Then-Assemblyman Kevin Kiley (R-Granite Bay) told the Globe, "The issues we should be holding hearings on aren't happening. But the Legislature can spruce up its own digs."

The State Capitol Annex Project entails a great deal, and it should for \$1.5 Billion. According to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the project demolished and is reconstructing the existing 325,000 square foot existing Capitol Annex building with a new approximately 525,000 square foot building. A new underground visitors/welcome center will be located between 10th Street and the west steps of the Capitol. Existing basement parking under the Annex will be abandoned and replaced with new underground parking (approx. 200 spaces) on the south side of the Capitol.

In a 2022 Globe interview, according to Paula Peper, a now-retired Urban Ecologist for the U.S. Forest Service, and then-appointed member of the Historic State Capitol Commission, the underground parking for the new annex sacrificed 150 to 180 trees surrounding the Capitol, including two huge Southern Magnolia trees with circumferences of 61" and 31" each. Peper said trees of that size and maturity cannot be transplanted. And the cost to even try is at \$100,000 each. "People from the Capitol who came to our public meetings were all under non-disclosure agreements." She said as the process kept going, the commission was statutorily unable to talk to the public about the destruction the Capitol Annex project would cause the grounds.

Ah, the non-disclosure agreements. There are 2,093 people who signed the Capitol Annex non-disclosure

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agreements, Ashley Zavala with KCRA reported a few years ago.

But the investigations by most media outlets into the Capitol Annex project costs and NDAs have gone nowhere. California Public Records requests have gone nowhere – most were denied for "security" reasons.

The real story is that the governor and elected Democrats responsible for the project don't want the public to know about their squandering taxpayer funds on a vanity project. Lawmakers just wanted fancier digs, with no concern about the taxpayers who are footing the bill.

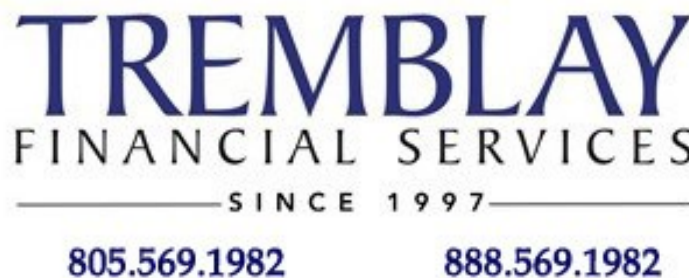
Tuesday, Zavala asked Gov. Newsom and California Attorney General Rob Bonta about the Capitol construction project at a news conference. "Both Bonta and Newsom mentioned or criticized Trump's White House ballroom construction in their remarks," Zavala reported.

"Trump has made clear he's more focused on tearing down a historic building to build himself a gold laden ballroom for lavish parties and ensuring American families can put dinner on the table," Bonta said.

(Continued on page 17)

Weaponizing Ticks: Academics Propose Meat Allergy To Fight Climate Change

By Bonner R. Cohen



Unnerved by the Trump administration's systematic rollback of regulations curtailing greenhouse-gas emissions from automobiles, power plants, and household appliances, two enterprising academics have hit on a novel idea to save the planet from manmade climate change: deliberately infect people with a tick-borne, potentially life-threatening allergy to red meat.

Climate activists and Biden administration regulators targeted the agricultural sector for decarbonization by, for example, pushing to replace diesel-fueled farm equipment like tractors and combines with electric-powered models. But enlisting genetically engineered ticks to curb the consumption of steaks, hamburgers, and pork loins would take the fight to an entirely new level.

Two researchers from Western Michigan University have proposed just that in a paper ominously titled "Beneficial Bloodsucking." Published by the journal *Bioethics* in July, the paper argues that intentionally spreading alpha-gal syndrome (AGS) could be ethically defensible, and perhaps even necessary, because it reduces animal suffering and combats climate change. As the authors, Parker Crutchfield and Blake Hereth, put it:

"Because promoting tickborne AGS prevents something bad from happening, doesn't violate anyone's rights, and promotes virtuous action or character, it follows that promoting tickborne AGS is strongly *pro tanto* ('to that extent') morally obligatory."

Really? According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), AGS "is a serious, potentially life-threatening allergy," affecting "as many as 450,000 people."

"Whatever excuse they may concoct to justify it," notes Cameron English, director of biosciences at the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH), "deliberately releasing ticks into the environment with the intention of making people sick is unethical because it interferes with the proper functioning of their bodies." English adds that "Crutchfield and Hereth want to infect millions of people with AGS precisely because 'it is extremely difficult for most human beings to ... forego acting on their desire to eat meat.'"

Forcing people to become vegans—not by regulations, but by spreading a potentially deadly disease—introduces a new level of coercion into the climate de-

bate, one with serious public-health implications. Bites from ticks, specifically blacklegged deer ticks, were identified in 1975 as the cause of Lyme disease. While AGS is primarily caused by bites from lone star ticks, "a few cases of AGS have been reported following bites from blacklegged and western blacklegged ticks," the CDC points out. In other words, using ticks to combat manmade climate change also runs the risk of spreading Lyme disease, whose symptoms include "fever, rash, facial paralysis, an irregular heartbeat, and arthritis," according to the CDC.

Furthermore, removing red meat from people's diets via insect infestation would eliminate an abundant source of essential nutrients that plants and other proteins often cannot provide. "Red meat is a rich source of high-biological-value protein, heme iron (which is more absorbable than plant-based iron), vitamin B12, zinc, and selenium – nutrients critical for preventing anemia, supporting immune function, and maintaining cognitive health," ACSH's Cameron English points out. "These benefits are especially important for children and pregnant women."

Hostile online reactions to the bizarre proposal prompted one of the co-authors, Parker Crutchfield, to describe the paper as "just a thought experiment and not an endorsement of spreading the allergy-causing ailment." This backpedaling comes too late. In an age where social media can disseminate bad ideas instantaneously — particularly when they originate in a serious-sounding journal like *Bioethics* —their mere publication can confer a degree of legitimacy.

It is high time that academic journals start taking responsibility for the content of the articles they select for publication. Public discourse is not served when academic journals abandon even the pretense of seriousness to embrace the fleeting whims of political fashion.

Bonner R. Cohen, senior policy adviser with the Committee for a Constructive Tomorrow CFACT

Fuel For Thought: Laura Capps Is Running On Empty

By Andy Caldwell

County Supervisor **Laura Capps** is leading taxpayers and consumers off a financial cliff by way of her effort to eliminate oil and gas operations in our county. The first part of her proposal would consist of forbidding new oil and gas drilling. The second would amortize existing oil operations. Amortization is a process by which the county government would tell oil companies that they have already realized their investment-backed expectations and therefore the county can shut down their operations without getting involved in a takings claim. That sort of wishful thinking on Capps' part is fraught with peril for the industry and its workforce, not to mention consumers and taxpayers.

For a fuller explanation of the legal and technical arguments against this action, I recommend you read the comment letters from both the California Independent Petroleum Association (see [here](#)) and the Santa Barbara County Taxpayer Advocacy Center (see [here](#))

These public comment letters clearly spell out the fact that the amortization effort is clearly illegal with respect to the takings of mineral rights/assets and several other legal concerns. That is, the proposed amortization ordinance amounts to nothing less than malfeasance on the part of Capps and her colleagues. In short order, the county will get sued and they will lose, meaning taxpayers (they will pay for the cost of the lawsuit and damages) and consumers (they will pay higher prices at the pump) will suffer the consequences. The three supervisors (Capps, Lee, and Hartmann) who support this effort are merely virtue signaling in an echo chamber and everybody knows it. Nevertheless, with this amortization ordinance hanging over the oil industry's head, it and the many other companies that service it, will have to think twice about continuing to invest in their operations here.

These kinds of actions explain why we are on the verge of \$8 per gallon gasoline. More refineries are closing because they don't have enough oil and gas to process that is produced in this state and the actions by this board will only accentuate and accelerate their predicament. Yet, that doesn't mean we can do without the fuels we need every day. What it does mean is that we will be importing gasoline by tanker to CA from half-way around the world, India, and South Korea, to be specific, and Capps will consider *that* an environmental victory of sorts.



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Moreover, it is incredulous that Capps and company continue to ignore the reality that oil is more than just a fuel stock. Upwards of one-half of every barrel of oil can be used to produce thousands of byproducts and derivatives that our society and economy can't do without.

For instance, I have challenged this board time and again, that if they eliminate oil production, how and where are they going to get the asphalt to pave our roads? They won't allow our local oil producers to truck their production out of the county, but they are okay with shipping and trucking the same products to us here?

Of course, the supes are hoping that the elimination of oil and gas operations in CA will force people to switch to renewable energy to power our vehicles and homes. Yet, it is impossible to manufacture any vehicle, including an electric vehicle, without oil byproducts and derivatives, such as plastic, which is ubiquitous and omnipresent.

What follows is a very short list of *a few* of the byproducts of the oil and gas industry. Please review it and share it. It demonstrates that oil and gas have been a godsend, which is more than I can say for Laura Capps and company.

Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB

Trump Moves To Break US Dependence On Communist China

By Steve Milloy

It's great news that the Trump administration agreed this week with Australia to take steps toward breaking Communist China's chokehold on rare earth minerals. In addition to a July announcement of a project to extract rare earths from coal mined in Wyoming, President Donald Trump is moving us in a desperately needed direction. But our vulnerabilities to China go much deeper, and much more and faster action is needed.

Rare earth minerals are essential for modern technology. The good news is that they are available virtually everywhere. The bad news is that they generally require strip mining to produce ore, and then the ore must be processed and refined.

Because environmentalists oppose both mining and processing, neither activity has been undertaken on a meaningful scale in the U.S. for decades. And while a few western nations allow rare earth strip mining, about 90 percent of rare earth processing occurs in China, where there is no green activism or bureaucracy to obstruct operations.

This means that virtually all our technology is dependent on China, even military technology like the advanced F-35 fighter jet. Imagine not being able to build war planes without China's cooperation. Even if China were neutral toward the U.S., this situation would be unacceptable.

China's plan is to become the lone global superpower by 2049, if not sooner. Toward that goal, China is quietly but certainly preparing itself for confrontation, if not war. This is evidenced, in part, by China's focus on electrifying its economy to reduce dependency on the global oil and natural gas market dominated by the U.S.

China has also cleverly worked to avoid war against a superior foe by simply checkmating the U.S. and western nations through economic and energy dependence, and even sabotage. After being mildly criticized by Australia during COVID, China announced that it would use trade as a weapon and then promptly stopped trading with Australia. More recently, in response to U.S. and European efforts to build EV batteries domestically, China announced export limits on the rare earths and processed graphite needed to make batteries.



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The Trump administration moved to stymie this part of the Chinese plan through the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) enacted last July.

Our China-dependent technology includes all the wind turbines, solar panels, grid batteries and EVs that greens have induced us to buy over the past two decades. Worse than just the \$250 billion in solar subsidies China expected to reap from U.S. taxpayers through the Green New Scam is the fact that electricity prices and equipment availability in the U.S. would be almost entirely dependent on the goodwill of China. The OBBBA reduced Green New Scam spending by about \$500 billion, but there is still another \$500 billion or so left over from its passage that can be spent on technology from China.

Further, there are genuine concerns that our electricity grid may already be contaminated with pre-sabotaged Chinese technology. In 2024, Duke Energy removed Chinese-made batteries from the U.S. Marine Corps base at Camp Lejeune over concerns that China could communicate remotely with the batteries. In the U.K., there is concern that China can remotely control EVs.

At this point, we don't even know how vulnerable to China we really are. It's almost too scary to think about. But we must find out. Here is how to start:

In the wake of the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine by Russia, the U.S. Securities and Exchange (SEC) Commission notified publicly-traded companies that,

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Let's Not Revisit Lois Capps' Ribbon Of Shame

By Andy Caldwell

Please vote **No on Proposition 50** to stop **Gavin Newsom** from rigging elections in California for the next several years. Your ballot is being mailed to you any day now.

What is this all about? Well, even the ACLU understands that "Redistricting is the process of drawing the lines of districts from which public officials are elected. When it's conducted fairly, it accurately reflects population changes and racial diversity and is used by legislators to equitably allocate representation in Congress and state legislatures. When politicians use redistricting to manipulate the outcome of elections, however, it's called gerrymandering — a practice that undermines democracy and stifles the voice of voters. Voters should be picking their politicians, not the other way around."

Every ten years, after the US Census, the boundaries of districts that comprise the geographical areas from which representatives are elected to legislative bodies, such as the U.S. House of Representatives, are adjusted. Redistricting ensures that all representatives represent the same number of people.

In California, these lines are drawn by a voter-initiated independent citizens redistricting commission which Gavin Newsom is trying to sideline. Gavin Newsom doesn't want to wait for the next census, so he is trying to sabotage the independent work of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission that voters established. He and his fellow Democrats are trying to justify this effort to eliminate as many Republican congressional seats in the CA delegation as pay-back for Texas redistricting mid-census. However, what Texas did was fix a map that was not in compliance with how districts can legally be drawn.

By **voting No on Prop 50**, you will be preserving the current California law that voters approved and that took redistricting away from politicians and placed this authority with a citizen's commission that has been doing a reasonable job of creating fair districts.

The principle here? Most people believe that when they vote, they are choosing their representatives. But when politicians are drawing the boundaries of their own districts, it is they who are choosing their voters!

One of the worst examples of this phenomenon



known as gerrymandering happened right here on the Central Coast, courtesy of former Congresswoman **Lois Capps**. Her district has been used as an example of gerrymandering nationwide as her district lines were accurately referred to as "the ribbon of shame." The district ran up the coast some 200 miles from Oxnard to the Monterey County line. The boundaries of the district ran along the shoreline until they went in to capture a Democrat majority community and then the line returned to the shore. The lines for Capps' district disappeared during high tide.

Vote NO on Prop 50!

The Ribbon of Shame violated every single principle of what a district is supposed to look like, including being compact, binding together communities of interest, and using established boundaries, such as city limits, as a dividing line between one district and another. The purposes of these principles, among others, is to keep communities intact so they can rally together as a political force as it relates to electing someone who will truly represent them. Divided communities can't do that.

And guess what? No surprise here. Gavin's new maps for CA bring back several versions of that

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The fiction Of Citizens' Tax Initiatives In California

By Jon Coupal

Most Californians, especially homeowners, know that Proposition 13 imposes limits on property taxes. But many are unfamiliar with other rights granted by Prop. 13, including the right to approve or reject other types of local taxes.

Before 1978, most local taxes and fees were simply imposed by the taxing authority. They decided how much of your money they needed, and you got the bill. But Howard Jarvis knew giving voters the right to vote on new and increased taxes was not enough. While everyone votes, not everyone pays the tax. That's especially true of taxes on property. He was also worried about special interests hijacking the process. That's why he required special taxes to not only go to a vote of the people but require a two-thirds vote of the electorate in order to pass.

That's the way it was for almost 40 years. Then came the Supreme Court's infamous decision in *California Cannabis Coalition v. City of Upland* that said the two-thirds vote requirement doesn't apply to citizen initiatives.

Ever since, we've seen the abuse you would expect. Special interests, pretending to be citizens groups, are writing themselves tax increases, putting them on the ballot and getting them passed with a simple majority. Measure ULA in Los Angeles is one of the most notorious examples of this. It put a massive tax on the sale of properties in the city valued over \$5 million. The money is supposed to go to homeless services. Services that just happen to be provided by groups that put Measure ULA on the ballot in the first place.

But perhaps even more offensive is the rampant abuse of the Upland decision by local governments. There are numerous examples of local governments collaborating with their special interests allies to place citizen initiatives on the ballot. In some cases, local governments will go to all the effort of crafting the measure and then conveniently decide not to go forward, only for a special interest group to then take the measure to the ballot and qualify it at the lower voter threshold.

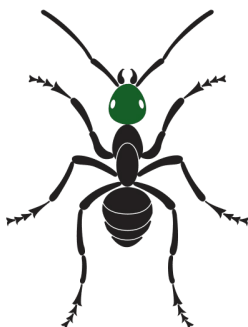
In one case, they went as far as to have a member of the city council file the initiative in their supposedly private capacity. If that sort of thing is allowed, when does a "citizen" initiative become a government initiative? Assembly Bill 1223 may give us an answer.

The Sacramento Transportation Authority was created in 1988 when Sacramento County voters approved Measure A, a half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements. In 2022, "citizens" placed another half-cent sales tax on the ballot. It failed by 55 percent.

It looks like STA is poised to try again but this time with help from the legislature. AB 1223 would allow, among other things, for STA to impose a tax on a geographic area of its choosing in Sacramento County, avoiding areas where voters would oppose the tax. It would also specify a lot of government involvement in a potential citizens initiative.

Even the Senate Committee on Revenue and Taxation consultant thought this might be a bridge too far: "Should a tax be proposed by initiative, AB 1223 stretches this distinction by first having STA's board approve an ordinance and expenditure plan, then re-

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‘CULTURE OF DEMONIZATION’: Shareholders Demand Companies Drop SPLC After FBI Move Against It

By Tyler O'Neil

FIRST ON THE DAILY SIGNAL—Conservative shareholders at eight major corporations have filed resolutions urging those companies to stop using politicized tools like the Southern Poverty Law Center's "hate map," which added Turning Point USA a few months before the assassination of Charlie Kirk.

The Heritage Foundation and portfolio manager David Bahnsen, which have held thousands of dollars in shares at each of the companies, filed the proposals last week.

"The Southern Poverty Law Center has designated October as Hate Crimes Awareness Month—but few organizations have sown more hatred against fellow Americans than the SPLC itself," Heritage Chief Advancement Officer Andrew Olivastro told The Daily Signal in a statement Friday. "It doesn't fight hate—it manufactures it, embedding division into every press release they issue and every word they post; their business model is defamation, and America is finally waking up."

"Companies are now rightly distancing themselves from the SPLC, recognizing that its model is not only flawed but dangerous," Olivastro added.

"As someone who lives in Alabama, right in the SPLC's backyard, I've seen its nefariousness up close," Allen Mendenhall, senior advisor for Heritage's Capital Markets Initiative, told The Daily Signal. "The assassination of Charlie Kirk has made tragically clear what conservatives have warned for years: When groups like the SPLC equate mainstream conservative beliefs with hatred, they help create a culture of dehumanization with deadly consequences."

"No company that truly wants to combat hate should rely on the SPLC, which absurdly lumps groups like Turning Point USA and Alliance Defending Freedom with the Ku Klux Klan," Mendenhall added.

The Heritage Foundation filed resolutions with Alphabet (Google's parent company), Amazon, Mastercard, Meta (Facebook's parent company), PayPal, Salesforce, and Starbucks. Bahnsen filed a resolution with Texas Instruments.

Each of the proposals calls on the companies to launch investigations into "the benefits, costs, and



legal, reputational, competitive, and other relevant risks of the use of diagnostic tools created by politicized corporate partners."

The SPLC

The Southern Poverty Law Center gained its reputation by suing Ku Klux Klan groups into bankruptcy, and now it publishes a "hate map" that plots mainstream conservative and Christian groups alongside Klan chapters. A terrorist used the "hate map" to target the Family Research Council in Washington, D.C., for an attempted mass shooting in 2012, and while the SPLC condemned the attack, it kept the council on the map.

The SPLC added Turning Point USA to the "hate map" this summer, a few months before the assassination of Kirk, Turning Point's founder. The SPLC condemned the assassination, but has yet to remove Turning Point from its map.

In recent years, the SPLC has added parental rights groups like Moms for Liberty to the "hate map," along with groups of doctors who oppose "gender-affirming care," conservative Christian nonprofits including Focus on the Family, and even the nonprofit PragerU, best known for producing 5-minute educational videos.

(Continued on page 12)

Investigating Biden's Afghanistan Debacle

By Frank V. Vernuccio

The U.S. Department of Defense has honored the 13 U.S. service members who lost their lives during the Biden Administration's debacle in Afghanistan. The servicemembers lost their lives in a suicide bombing that also claimed approximately 170 Afghan civilians.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said he anticipates that a Defense Department special review panel looking into the circumstances surrounding the Aug. 26, 2021, suicide bombing attack in Kabul, Afghanistan, should be ready to present its findings by sometime in mid-2026.

The attack, carried out by a bomber affiliated with ISIS-Khorasan and wearing an improvised explosive device, killed 13 U.S. service members and roughly 170 Afghan civilians at Hamid Karzai International Airport's Abbey Gate.

Hegseth spoke of the investigation in the White House's Oval Office, shortly after President Donald J. Trump signed a proclamation commemorating the fourth anniversary of the attack while surrounded by Gold Star family members of the victims.

"On behalf of this beautiful group, on behalf of these families [and] on behalf of your loved ones who fought for our nation, America deserves answers as far as what happened in Afghanistan; the military needs to answer for what happened in Afghanistan," Hegseth told the group.

The secretary went on to say that Chief Pentagon Spokesman and Senior Advisor Sean Parnell — himself a veteran of the war in Afghanistan — is leading the Trump and Hegseth-ordered special review panel and that the review is taking place "on behalf of the

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Investigating Biden's Afghanistan Debacle *Cont.*

(Continued from page 10)

American people.”

“The special review panel at the department continues its vital work to investigate the botched withdrawal, ensuring that the pursuit of accountability and transparency does not waver,” reads a DOD statement released today on honoring fallen heroes during the fourth anniversary of the attack.

“While the review is ongoing, the effort to uncover the full truth behind the decisions made during this period has not stopped and will not stop until every aspect is examined and those responsible are held to account,” the statement continues.

The work of the current special review panel follows a multi-month supplemental review of the original Abbey Gate investigation that began almost two years ago. Ordered by U.S. Central Command in September 2023, the supplemental review reaffirmed the military’s finding of the initial investigation that the Abbey Gate attack could not have been preventable at the tactical level.

“Justice for the families of the 13 fallen service members is an essential priority,” Hegseth said via the aforementioned DOD statement, adding that the victims’ sacrifice is “the driving force” behind the special review panel.

“We owe it to them, to the American people, and to all who wear the uniform to comb through every detail of what happened, delivering full accountability and restoring trust,” he concluded.

Under the leadership of Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, the Special Review Panel at the Department continues its vital work to investigate the botched withdrawal, ensuring that the pursuit of accountability and transparency does not waver. While the review is ongoing, the effort to uncover the full truth behind the decisions made during this period has not stopped and will not stop until every aspect is examined and those responsible are held to account.

The panel, convened at the direction of Secretary Hegseth and President Trump, pledged full transparency regarding the Biden administration’s handling of the withdrawal, described as “...a debacle that resulted in billions of dollars in lost equipment, needless casualties, and one of America’s darkest moments in



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the region.”

Led by Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and Senior Advisor Sean Parnell, the panel includes former Lt. Col. Stuart Scheller, who demanded accountability during the Afghanistan withdrawal and faced reprisals under the previous administration, and other experts dedicated to this cause. The group pledged that updates will be provided as findings emerge.

Frank V. Vernuccio, Jr., J.D., editor-in-chief, New York Analysis of Policy & Government and, co-host of the popular WVOX weekly radio show, “The Vernuccio/Novak Report”

‘CULTURE OF DEMONIZATION’: Shareholders Demand Companies Drop SPLC After FBI Move Against It *Cont.*

(Continued from page 9)

Liberals like former ACLU President Nadine Strossen have joined conservatives in criticizing the SPLC “hate map,” yet major companies have adopted the map as a screening tool, refusing to do business with organizations the SPLC brands “hateful” or “extremist.” Earlier this month, FBI Director Kash Patel announced that the bureau had stopped relying on the SPLC, calling the group a “partisan smear machine.”

“The SPLC’s use of persistently undefined terms like ‘hate’ to vet nonprofits is of deep concern to shareholders, as rhetoric around ‘hate’ generates real-world consequences, including the 2012 Family Research Council shooting and, more recently, the assassination of Charlie Kirk, whose organization, Turning Point USA, the SPLC had recently described as hateful,” the shareholder proposals note.

The proposals also encourage companies to shift to “internal vetting systems to better ensure political neutrality.”

1. Alphabet

Heritage’s shareholder proposal for Alphabet cited reports that Google’s YouTube had included the SPLC in its “Trusted Flagger” program, which helps police YouTube for extremist content, ranging from so-called hate speech to terrorist recruiting videos.

“A recent House Judiciary report indicated Alphabet’s participation in political censorship under the previous administration, along with its use of ‘fact-checking partners ... to support [content] moderation,’” the

shareholder proposal also notes. “Continued support for the SPLC may be perceived as endorsement of its controversial practices, potentially harming Alphabet’s brand and market value.”

“The reputational brand risk associated with such partnerships is a significant concern for shareholders,” the proposal notes.

2. Amazon

The Heritage Foundation’s shareholder proposal to Amazon notes that the online retail giant had “relied on SPLC data to vet charities in its former AmazonSmile program.”

“This practice raises concerns among shareholders regarding whether Amazon continues to use SPLC data in other facets of its corporate practice, and the potential reputational risks of doing so,” the proposal notes. “Continued support for the SPLC may be perceived as endorsement of its controversial practices, potentially harming Amazon’s brand value and, by extension, its market value.”

3. Mastercard

The Heritage shareholder proposal for Mastercard notes that the credit card company “has reportedly used the SPLC’s guidance in its policies, including restricting conservative organizations like the David Horowitz Freedom Center.”

The proposal notes that the SPLC bragged in congressional testimony that David Horowitz said, “The reason Mastercard and Visa gave us for cutting us off

(Continued on page 14)

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‘CULTURE OF DEMONIZATION’: Shareholders Demand Companies Drop SPLC After FBI Move Against It *Cont.*

(Continued from page 12)

and thus sabotaging our online fund-raising operation is that the SPLC told them that we were a hate group.”

“Mastercard recently committed to political neutrality in advertising policies—shareholders deserve to know that Mastercard’s account moderation policies are also in keeping with political neutrality,” the proposal adds.

4. Meta

Facebook, whose parent company is Meta, consulted with the SPLC in policing the platform for “hate speech” and “hate groups,” according to a Daily Caller report from 2018. The SPLC appeared on a list of “external experts and organizations” that Facebook works with “to inform our hate speech policies.”

In 2019, Facebook spokeswoman Ruchika Budhraj told PJ Media, however, that the social media platform did not consider Alliance Defending Freedom, one of the SPLC’s targets, a “hate group.” Budhraj also clarified that Facebook did not consider ACT for America or the Center for Immigration Studies to be hate groups. Budhraj did not explicitly disavow the SPLC, however, and the platform did not follow suit when Twitter disavowed the leftist group in 2019.

5. PayPal

The Heritage shareholder proposal for PayPal notes that the payment platform used the SPLC’s “hate group” list “to vet users and organizations for account bans and payment processing restrictions.” PayPal’s then-CEO Dan Schulman told The Wall Street Journal in 2019 that it had consulted with the SPLC.

6. Salesforce

The Heritage proposal for Salesforce notes that the

company “relied on SPLC’s ‘hate group’ list for technology policy enforcement and account moderation,” that it had “cancelled or restricted accounts of organizations and individuals based on SPLC designations (including cancellations on its subsidiary Slack).”

In a 2022 blog post, Salesforce stated that it uses the SPLC list “to identify hate groups and keep hateful material off our platform.”

Also in 2022, Fox News reported that Slack had banned the Federation on American Immigration Reform, which the SPLC calls an “anti-immigrant hate group” from the platform.

7. Starbucks

The coffee giant “uses the SPLC to vet charities for its Partner Matching Gifts program.” Starbucks flatly states that “organizations listed on the Southern Poverty Law Center Hate List” are not eligible for the program.

8. Texas Instruments

“Texas Instruments has been publicly identified as working with the SPLC, including in its employee gift match policies, where the company explicitly bars ‘organizations included on the Southern Poverty Law Center list of hate groups’ from eligibility,” Bahnsen’s shareholder proposal notes.

Indeed, a 2020 document outlining Texas Instruments’ matching gift program states that “organizations included on the Southern Poverty Law Center list of hate groups” are ineligible for matching gifts.

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



Howard Jarvis
Taxpayers Association
established in 1978

Let's Not Revisit Lois Capps' Ribbon Of Shame *Cont.*

(Continued from page 7)

ribbon of shame. As **Tom Del Beccaro** reports, if Proposition 50 is approved, CA's Modoc County on the Oregon Border, which has two people per square mile living on its ranches and farms, will be joined together in the same district as densely urban San Francisco some 6 hours away! What does that mean in practical reality? The needs and wants of the people in Modoc will never be considered by their representative who will spend all his/her efforts on SF. The residents of Modoc and the communities in between there and SF are simply redistricting cannon fodder.

Please put a stop to Newsom's raw power grab.

Preserve the California Citizens Redistricting Commission by **voting NO! on Prop 50**. And please do *share* this column with the many people who are not paying attention to much of anything happening in this state.

Thank you.

Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB

The fiction Of Citizens' Tax Initiatives In California *Cont.*

(Continued from page 8)

quiring the county board of supervisors and city council of each subject to the tax approves the expenditure plan, all before electors come forward and propose a tax by initiative. While voters ultimately must approve any tax, is it truly a voter initiative when several local agency governing boards approved its contents before voters decide?"

It's a good question and one that the courts may end up deciding.

Meanwhile, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association is collecting signatures for an initiative that would entirely close the statewide loophole that allows special taxes to evade the two-thirds vote requirement. Voters can get the petition at SaveProp13.com.

Jon Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

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Trump Moves To Break US Dependence On Communist China *Cont.*

(Continued from page 6)

given the war, they might have to disclose their dependence on, or involvement with, Russia. Because our economy relies to a much greater extent on China than Russia, I subsequently petitioned the SEC to require that publicly traded companies report to their shareholders on their dependency to China. I didn't expect the Biden administration to do anything, and it lived up to my expectations. But the Trump administration should follow up.

Over the past few decades, our political and business leaders have allowed and/or made us completely vulnerable to our chief geopolitical rival, if not enemy, China. We don't actually know how vulnerable we are and can't possibly even develop a plan to do something about it. We need to find out before it's too late.

Some may think that if we are vulnerable to China then they must somehow be vulnerable to us, and the vulnerabilities would be offsetting. But Communist China is a ruthless totalitarian state that is willing to do unspeakable things and impose conditions on its own population that westerners can't imagine or don't appreciate. If economic and societal pain comes from war or confrontation, China's zero tolerance for internal dissent will be a key advantage.

To be prepared to defend ourselves, we must understand our vulnerabilities as soon as possible. Communist China already knows them and may be ready to exploit them at any time.

Steve Milloy is a biostatistician and lawyer who posts on X at @JunkScience.

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Gov. Newsom Condescends To Media Over Questions About Capitol Renovation Secrecy *Cont.*

(Continued from page 3)

So naturally, Zavala asked about the excessive cost and secrecy of California's Capitol Annex renovation.

Trump Ballroom Syndrome

Newsom and Bonta have been pontificating their outrage over President Donald Trump's privately funded White House ballroom construction, but they have been notably silent about California's Capitol Annex construction, while lawmakers have kept the cost hidden from the public.

Gov. Newsom was characteristically condescending to Zavala:

"For you to conflate or compare or contrast, with all due respect, that I would separate from the ballroom and the desecration and the process that evolved, and the fact that he secured \$300 million under curious circumstances from the annex and what the Legislature is trying to do," Newsom said.

"I'm not trying to defend those actions," Newsom said, about the annex.

"I didn't know they were not talking to you, that members of the Legislature were not talking to you," Newsom said.

As Ashley Zavala reported, "The governor's office did not respond to a request for comment in KCRA 3's story earlier this month with similar questions asked in Tuesday's press conference."

She posted to X: "Spokespeople for the following CALeg leaders have ignored my request for comment

on this: California Senate Pro Tem Mike McGuire, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, Joint Rules Chair Assemblymember Blanca Pacheco, Senate Chief Admin Officer Erika Contreras, and Assembly's CAO Lia Lopez."

It's Governor Newsom's project. He can't run from it. He's the governor. He approved it. It's way over budget. And it is massive, begun under the cover of his Covid lockdowns.

Why wouldn't any member of the media question Newsom comparing the two projects? Trump's ballroom versus Newsom's office building. Newsom's is publicly funded, and therefore deserves greater scrutiny.

The Joint Rules Committee led by then-Assemblyman Ken Cooley ignored the Environmental Impact Report, and bypassed California's Environmental Quality Act in the process. The project began under Governor Newsom, during the Covid lockdowns, so he can't feign ignorance of the Capitol construction project.

What a maroon.

Ironically, Peper told the Globe "you can sign up for the newsletter on the Capitol Annex website, but there aren't any newsletters."

The Globe signed up long ago to the Capitol Annex newsletter subscription, but to date, has not received any.

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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The Origins Of The Assassination Culture *Cont.*

(Continued from page 2)

values and beliefs are unfounded...a doctrine that denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths.

Materialism- defined as the preoccupation with material things rather than intellectual or spiritual things.

Narcissism- commonly understood as an excessive focus on oneself, an overblown sense of self-importance, entitlement, and a constant need for admiration. The term deals extensively with the attitude of pride, selfishness, and arrogance that underpins narcissistic traits.

Hedonism- seeking one's own desires above all else- living for pleasure without regard for God's will or moral boundaries.

Of course, none of this should come as a surprise. You have certainly heard of the number of young adults who think they prefer communism (they have never been taught about the *horrors* thereof) over capitalism? Well, **Karl Marx** prescribed how to undermine countries like ours by way of the following: "Take away the heritage of a people and they are easily persuaded," and "Keep people from their history and they are easily controlled," and finally, to tie all this up together in a nice little bundle, Marx also wrote "My object in life is to dethrone God and destroy capitalism." Control and destroy by way of attacking and undermining heritage, history, capitalism, and faith in God. Sound familiar?

It is the full-time job of academics and progressives to

be thus engaged.

Solzhenitsyn's prescription for what ails us? Live not by lies, as communism is an ideology of lies. And, more importantly, what has been forgotten, can be remembered: namely God.

And, as **Ronald Reagan** rightly warned, "If we ever forget that we are One Nation Under God, then we will be a nation gone under." That is, our nation's spiritual and moral foundations are critical for our survival and prosperity. That begs the question these many years later after both Solzhenitsyn and Reagan's warnings, to what degree can the foundations, cornerstones, and pillars of America be rebuilt, restored, and revived?

One thing is for sure, the so-called enlightenment (which is still embraced by progressives today), a movement of the 18th century that stressed the belief that science and logic give people more knowledge and understanding than tradition and religion, has plunged many a culture, society, and empire into darkness. Is America not in the throes of its own version of the bloody French Revolution which sought to secularize society and establish a new order that is not bound by tradition and the restraining effect of religion? We see the fruits of it, and the fruit is certainly not only rotten, it is also deadly to a society that once held the truth that our rights, including the right to life, were divinely inspired.

Consider yourselves warned again!

Andy Caldwell, Executive Director, COLAB



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Is The Central Coast Still Blue? *Cont.*

(Continued from page 1)

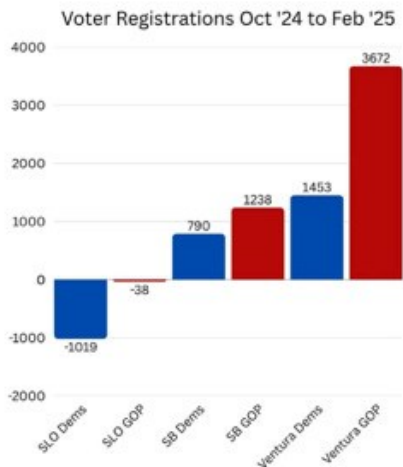
Two districts from the Central Coast made the watch list, namely, U.S. Congressional District 26 ("CD-26") and CA Assembly District 42 ("AD-42") which are both located within Ventura County.

A month later, on February 10th, the CA Secretary of State released updated voter registration statistics to capture changes made after the October 2024 report was published. Local Republicans continued to gain significant ground. In SLO County, the Democrat party lost an astonishing 25x more voters than Republicans, who lost just 38 people. Meanwhile, Ventura Republicans registered twice as many new voters as the Dems, pushing their total of new conservative voters since October 2022 to more than 10,000. Santa Barbara Republicans continued their pace of 1.5x more

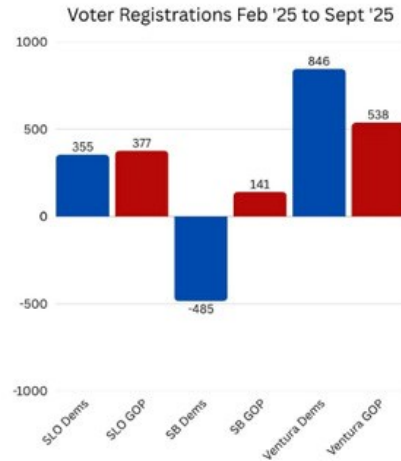
new voters than Dems.

Between February 10th and Sept 5th, when the Secretary of State published her latest update, California Republicans registered a net gain of 48,104 voters, while the net gain for Democrats statewide was a mere 190 voters. Locally, the Dem-

ocrats continued to lose percentage points, albeit at a slower pace in the last six months.



In SLO County, Democrats now hold 38.09% of the county's registered voters, compared to Republican's 35.17% and the No Party Preference's 18.23%.



The congressional and assembly districts that encompass portions of both SLO and Santa Barbara counties, CD-24 and AD-37, are just 1-2

percentage points from looking as competitive on paper as the districts that flipped red in the 2024 election. CD-24 is currently represented by Rep. **Salud Carbajal** (D), who will be challenged by **Bob Smith** (R) in the 2026 election. AD-37 will be a race between incumbent **Gregg Hart** (D) and **Sari Domingues** (R).

Democrats in Ventura now have 42.39% of the county's voters, compared to 29.29% Republican and 20.46% No Party Preference. The districts CD-26 and AD-42 in Ventura County now look as good as or even better on paper than districts that were successfully defended or flipped by Republicans in 2024, such as CD-22 and AD-36. CD-26 will feature Rep. **Julia Brownley** defending her seat against several challengers heading into the primary contest in June. AD-42 had been represented by Assemblywoman **Jacqui**

(Continued on page 20)

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Is The Central Coast Still Blue? *Cont.*

(Continued from page 19)

Irwin who is term-limited and cannot run for reelection in 2026, so this will be a wide-open contest for **Ted Nordblum** (R) and **Deborah Klein Lopez** (D).

In summary, there will be a couple of exciting races to watch here on the Central Coast in the 2026 and 2028 elections. These statistics aren't abstract numbers. California is trending towards the right and won a number of races statewide in the last two election cycles, as recapped in this energetic video montage:

Don't forget: register your friends to vote and encourage them to vote No on Prop 50 so the voter-approved independent Citizens Commission's efforts in making our districts reflect local communities will not be canceled!

See you at the polls on November 4th, 2025!

Kimberly Caldwell was born and raised on the Central Coast. She has a B.A. in History from Judson College and is passionate about California politics.



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