

Mayors and Council Members Academy

January 21, 2026



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

Effective Advocacy and Key City Issues

Advocacy and Public Affairs
League of California Cities

Moderator

Jason Rhine

Director of Legislative Affairs,
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Jrhine@calcities.org



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Transportation, Communications, and
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Agenda

- Cal Cities Advocacy Overview
- Your Cal Cities: Advocacy in Action
- 2026 Advocacy Priorities and Key Issues

Cal Cities Advocacy: How Policy is Developed

Cal Cities Advocacy

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE TO FILE AMICUS BRIEF
TO THE HONORABLE CHIEF JUSTICE:
Pursuant to California Rules of Court, Rule 8.520(f), the amicus curiae identified below respectfully requests permission to file the attached brief in support of State of California. This application is filed within 30 days after the filing of the reply brief on the merits and is therefore timely pursuant to Rule 8.520(f)(2).

THE INTEREST OF AMICUS CURIAE
The League of California Cities
The League of California Cities (the "League") is an association of California cities dedicated to protecting and restoring local control to the public health, safety, and welfare of their residents, and to the quality of life for all Californians. The League is advised by its Policy Committee, comprised of 24 city attorneys. The Committee monitors litigation in those cases...



**Stop the Attack on
Bridge & Road Safety!**

YES ON 22

PROTECT LOCAL SERVICES. STOP STATE RAIDS!

and Education

f @calcities

t @calcities



Legislative advocacy

- Protect the common interests of cities statewide
- Protect and promote local decision-making
- Seek and protect state and federal funding to support cities
- Implement grassroots activities in conjunction with specific advocacy campaigns in partnership with the Regional Public Affairs Managers

Legal advocacy

- Represent the interests of California cities in federal and state courts
- File friend-of-the-court briefs and letters in appellate courts and with state Attorney General for cases affecting local authority

Cal Cities policy influencers

11

Lobbyists and Policy
Analysts

10

Municipal
Departments

5

Diversity
Caucuses

57

Board
Members

16

Regional
Divisions

16

Regional Public Affairs
Managers

400+

Policy Committee
Members

75

Cal Cities
Partners

Cal Cities policy arenas

- General Assembly
- Division Meetings
- Policy Committees Meetings
- Board of Directors Meetings



Policy committees

- Community Services
- Environmental Quality
- Governance, Transparency, and Labor Relations
- Housing, Community, and Economic Development
- Public Safety
- Revenue and Taxation
- Transportation, Communications, and Public Works



Cal Cities Advocacy in Action

Kristine Guerrero

Director of Public Affairs

Kguerrero@calcities.org



The Secret to Effective Cal Cities Advocacy



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YOU!

Why Should You be a Cal Cities Advocate?

- **Influence legislation** and policy impacting your city
- **Increase your knowledge** of the state/local dynamic
- Expand your **network**
- **Be a resource** to your legislator

Divisions and Public Affairs Managers



Sara Sanders
Redwood Empire



Charles Anderson
Sacramento Valley



Nancy Hall Bennett
North Bay



Sam Caygill
East Bay



Montana Cruz
Peninsula



Deanna Sessums
Monterey Bay



Marla Livengood
Central Valley



Rajveer Rakkar
South San Joaquin Valley



David Mullinax
Channel Counties



Jeff Kiernan
Los Angeles County



Jennifer Quan
Los Angeles County



Nicholas Cabeza
Los Angeles County



Connor Medina
Orange County



Jesse Ramirez
Riverside County



Laura Morales
Desert Mountain
Inland Empire



Catherine Hill
San Diego County
Imperial County



Jazmin Aguirre
Public Affairs
Administrative Specialist



Kristine Guerrero
Director of Public Affairs

How Cal Cities Amplifies the Voice of Cities

- Member Mobilization
- Coalition Building/Partnerships
- Statewide Ballot Campaigns
- Political Engagement
- Fundraising
- Division Management
- California Civic Leadership Institute

Cal Cities Advocacy Tools

- Your Regional Public Affairs Manager
 - § Text, Call, Email
- Action Alerts: Calls to Action
 - § Contacting your legislator via calls, texts, social media
- Testimonials
- Background Documents and Messaging
- Cal Cities Advocate Newsletter
- Media Engagement Strategies
 - § Press Conferences/Media Releases
 - § Social Media Toolkits/ Sample Posts/Reposts



Grassroots Advocacy At Work

3rd Party Stakeholder



Coalition Building



Media



Legislative Advocacy

Regional Division Networking



Ballot Measure Advocacy



Ballot measure advocacy

Prop. 6

*Protect
Transportation Funds*



2018

Prop. 22

*Protect
Transportation and
Local Funds*



2010

Prop. 98/99

*Protect City Rent
Control and
Land Use*



2008

Prop. 90

*Protect City Land Use
Authority*



2006

Prop. 1A

*Protect Local
Revenues from State
Raids*



2004

Fundraising: CitiPAC and Division Affiliates



Los Angeles County
Division – Magic Castle



LEAGUE OF
CALIFORNIA
CITIES
Orange County Division

Partners

The League of California Cities, Orange County Division Affiliate Program is designed to both enhance existing partnership opportunities with the Division, as well as to broaden the avenues for communication and collaboration between the Division, its members and the public and private sectors.

Division Affiliates experience expanded visibility and interaction with Division members. Affiliates support all events throughout the year starting the date that payment is received.

About the Orange County Division

The Orange County Division is comprised of 33 cities in Orange County. The Division is a key resource for local elected officials and city staff on issues facing local government.

Through quarterly meetings and member-driven events, the Division strives to connect local officials with the people and information they need to best serve their residents.

For questions on the Affiliates Program, please contact Connor Medina, Regional Public Affairs Manager, at cmcdina@calcities.org or (949) 421-8898.

Affiliate Levels

PLATINUM – \$6000

- Recognition at Division meetings with special recognition at the Q4 meeting
- Opportunity to welcome Division's incoming President and honor Outgoing President at Annual Conference Division Reception
- Opportunity for site visit/tour of your company with Division Membership
- Logo displayed prominently on Division website
- Introduce program at one Division meeting
- Up to a 10-minute presentation at one Division meeting
- Three complimentary registrations at all Division Meetings and Annual Conference Division Reception

GOLD – \$4000

- Recognition at Division meetings with special recognition at the Q4 meeting
- Logo displayed prominently on Division website
- Introduce program at one Division meeting
- Up to a 10-minute presentation at one Division meeting
- Two complimentary registrations at all Division meetings and Annual Conference Division Reception

SILVER – \$2500

- Recognition at Division meetings with special recognition at the Q4 meeting
- Logo displayed prominently on Division website
- Up to a 5-minute presentation at one Division meeting
- Two complimentary registrations at all Division meetings and Annual Conference Division Reception

BRONZE – \$1000

- Recognition at Division meetings with special recognition at the Q4 meeting
- One complimentary registration at all Division meetings

Orange County Division-
Affiliate Partners Program



South San Joaquin Valley
Division – Golf Tournament

Developing the Bench: California Civic Leadership Institute



Take Action Right Now

CONNECT WITH US
Cal Cities is now on
Bluesky and **Threads**!

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2026 Advocacy Priorities

2026 Cal Cities Advocacy Priorities



1. Protect and enhance local revenues and expand economic development tools



2. Strengthen partnerships with the state to improve public safety



3. Secure investments to prevent and reduce homelessness and increase the supply of affordable housing

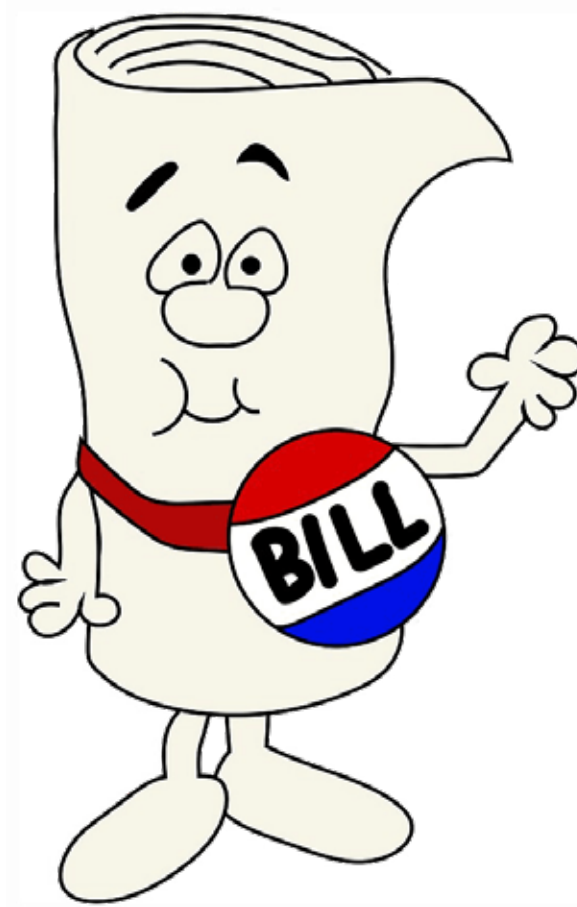


4. Strengthen climate change resiliency and disaster preparedness

2026 Key Issues

Advocacy Team
League of California Cities

The Legislative Process



The Legislative Process

State Legislature runs on a 2-year cycle:

- Currently 2025-26 session
- Have two years to advance a bill to the Governor for signature or veto (with time exceptions)
- ~2,600+ bills introduced/year (including budget bills)

Important Figures

- Legislators
- Governor Newsom and Administration
- Committee Chairs
- Committee Consultants
- Caucus Leaders
- “Third House” Lobbyists
- General Public

State Legislature

§ Introduce and Vote on:

- § Bills
- § Resolutions
- § Constitutional Amendments

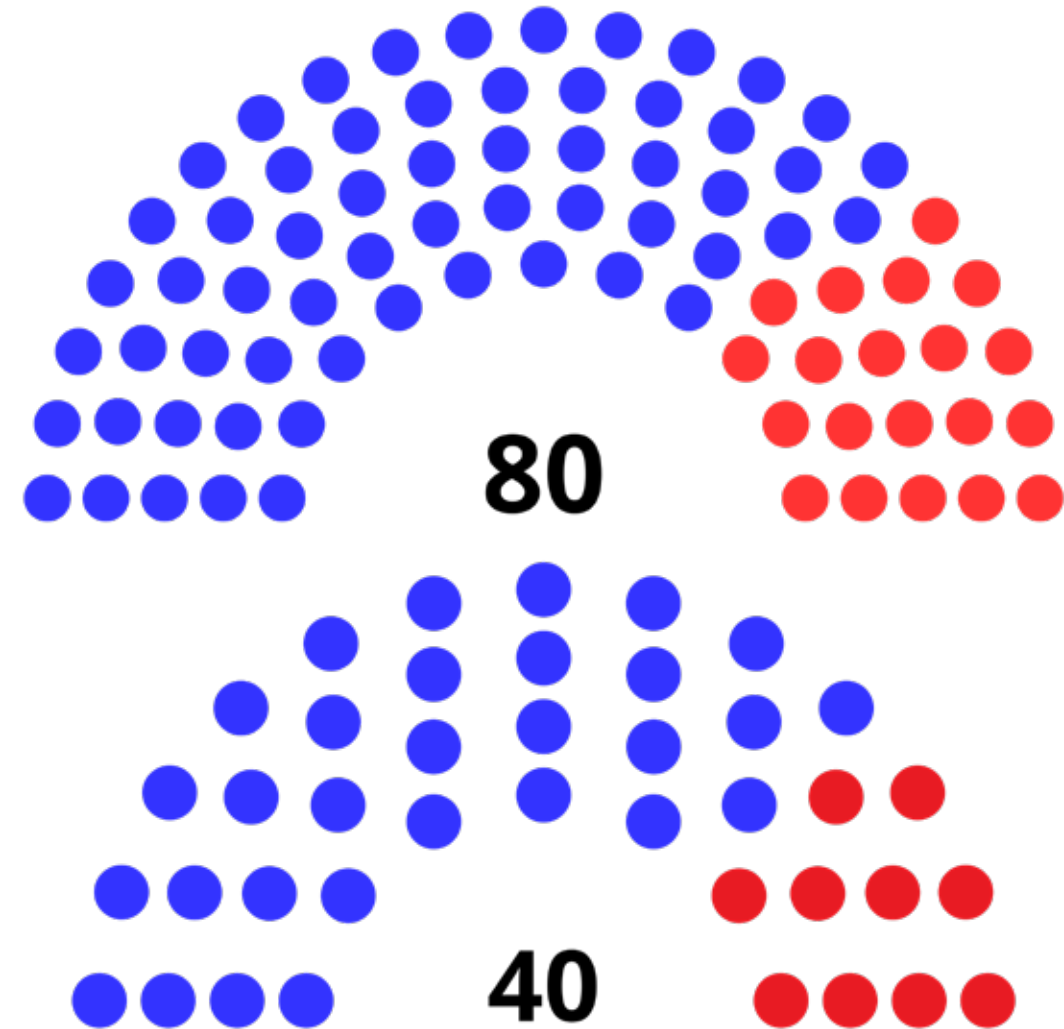
§ Hold Hearings

- § Informational
- § Oversight
- § Budgetary

§ Pass the State Budget

§ Provide Oversight

- § Audits
- § Reports



State Legislature

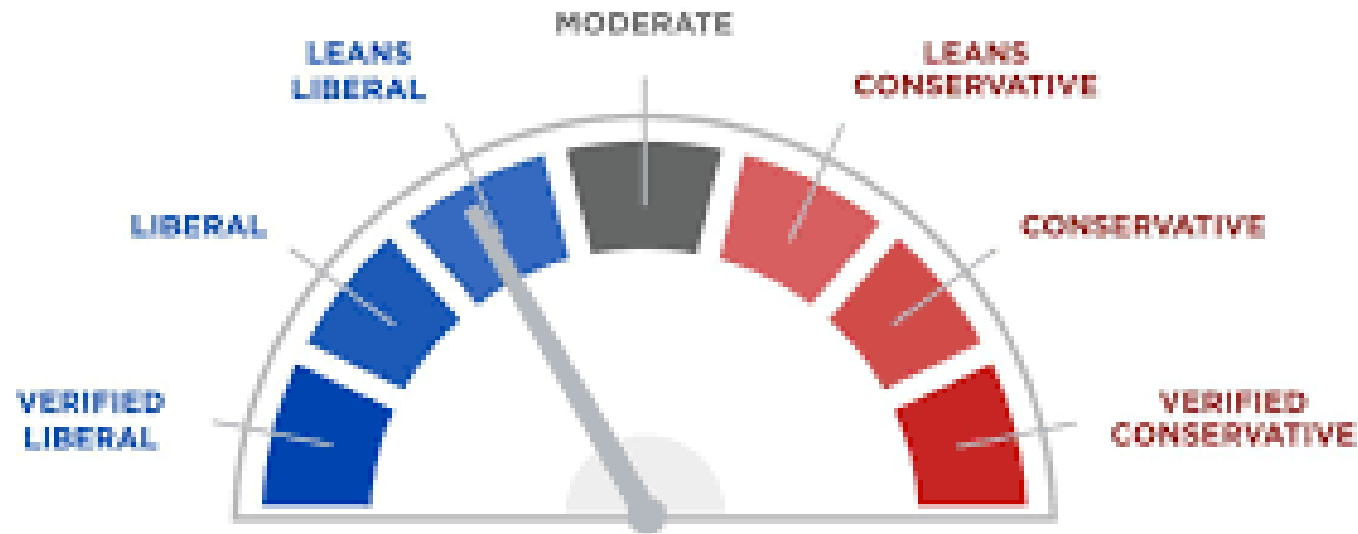
SENATE

- “The Upper House” with 40 members
- President Pro Tem
- Four Year Terms
- Term Limits: 3 terms (12 years)
- Party Demographics
 - § Dems 30
 - § Reps 10

ASSEMBLY

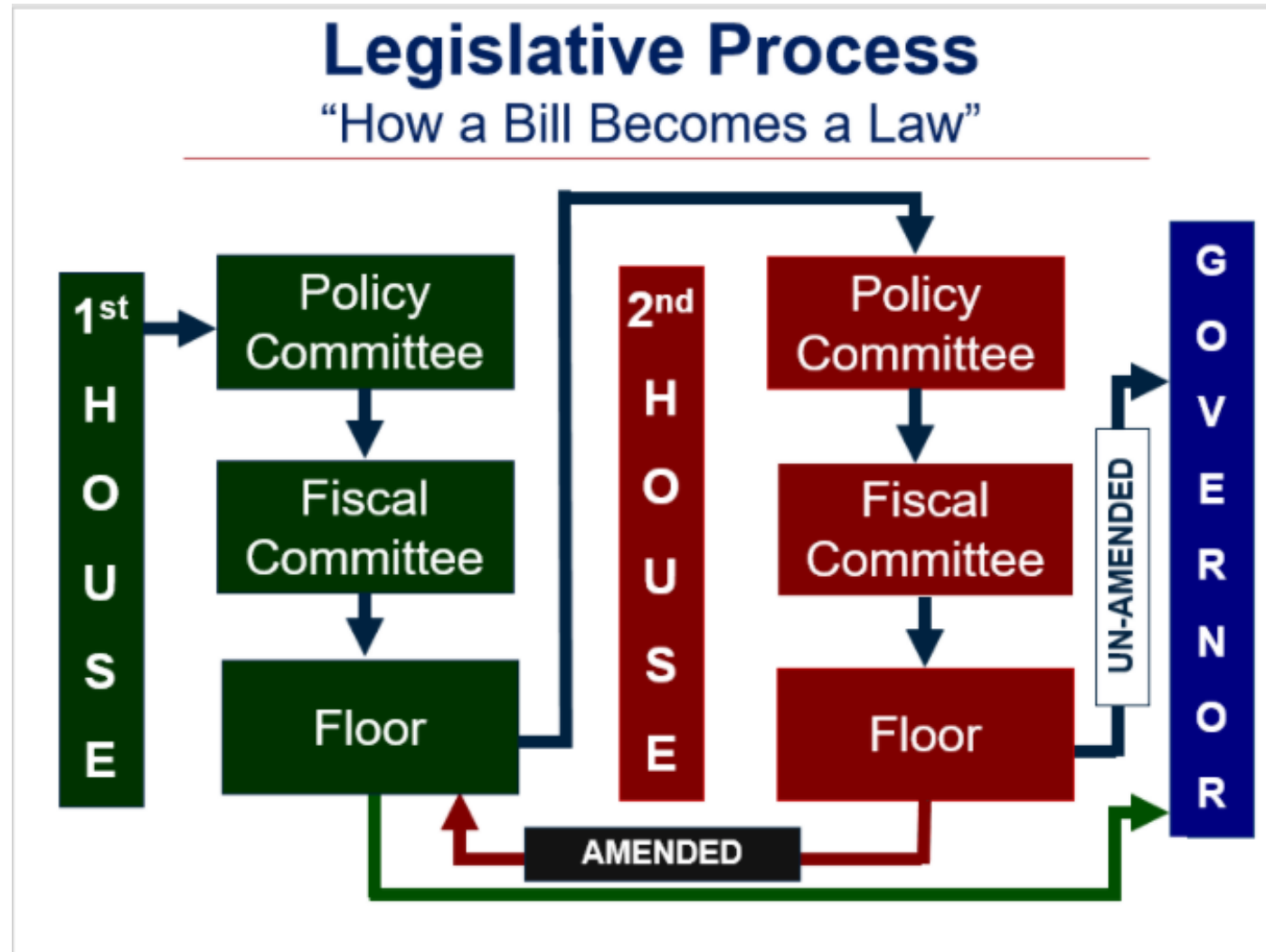
- “Lower House” with 80 members
- Speaker
- Two-year terms
- Term Limits: 6 terms (12 years)
- Party Demographics
 - § Dems 60
 - § Reps 20

POLITICAL SPECTRUM



Political Spectrum

The Legislative Process

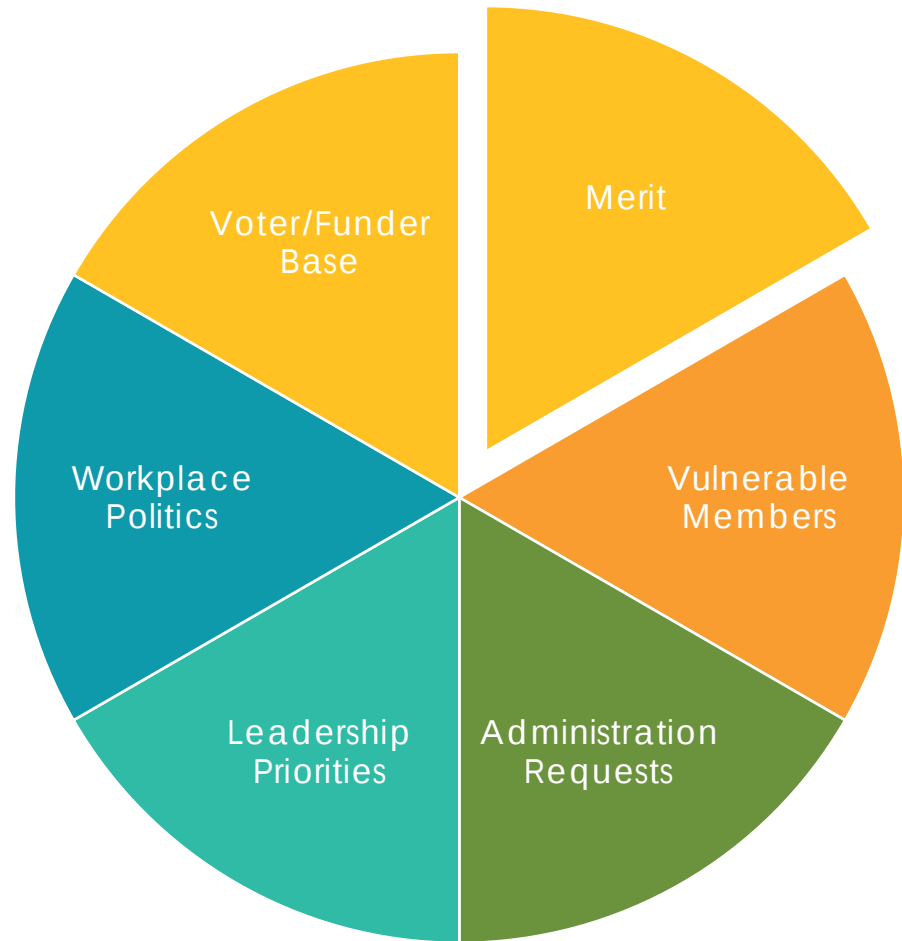


The Legislative Process



Why do bills die?

The Legislative Process



Why do bills live?

FY 2026-27 State Budget

A trip down memory lane...

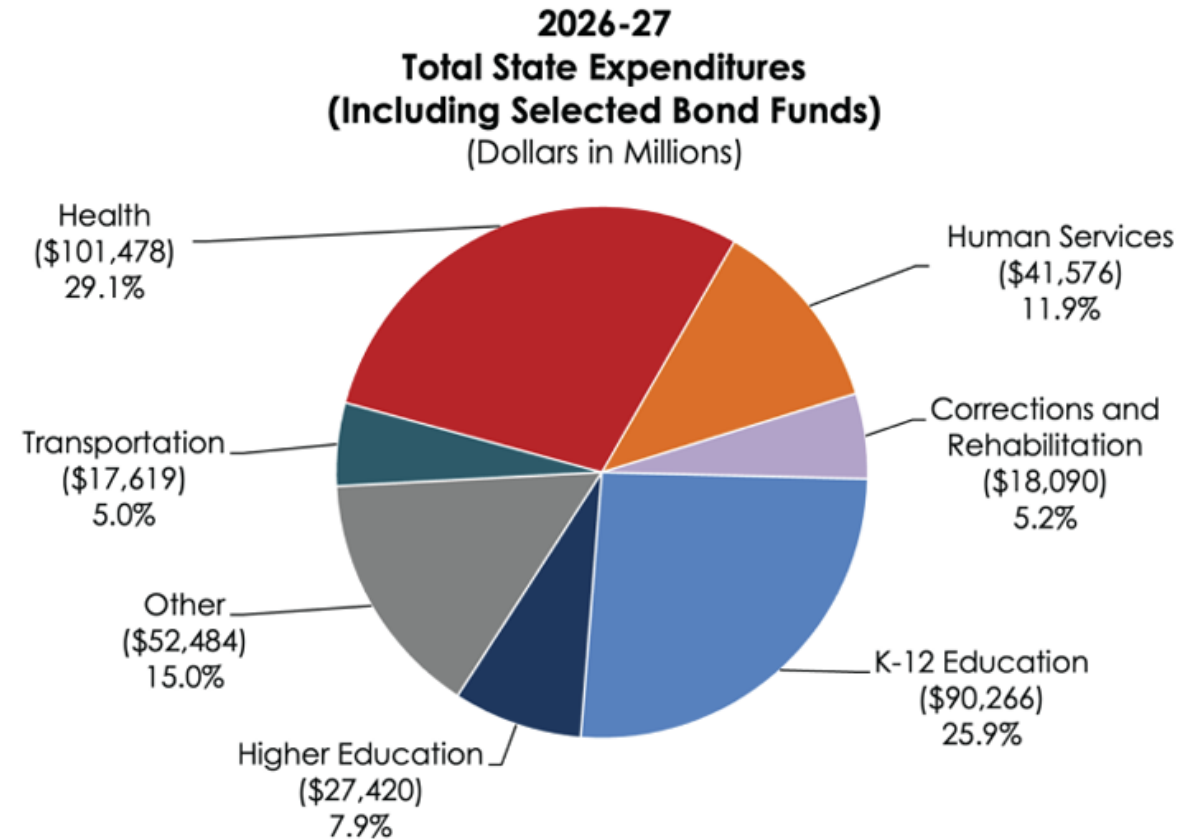
The last few years have been a rollercoaster:

- 2022 – \$90 billion surplus.
- 2023 – \$31 billion deficit.
- 2024 – \$47 billion deficit.
- 2025 - \$18 billion deficit

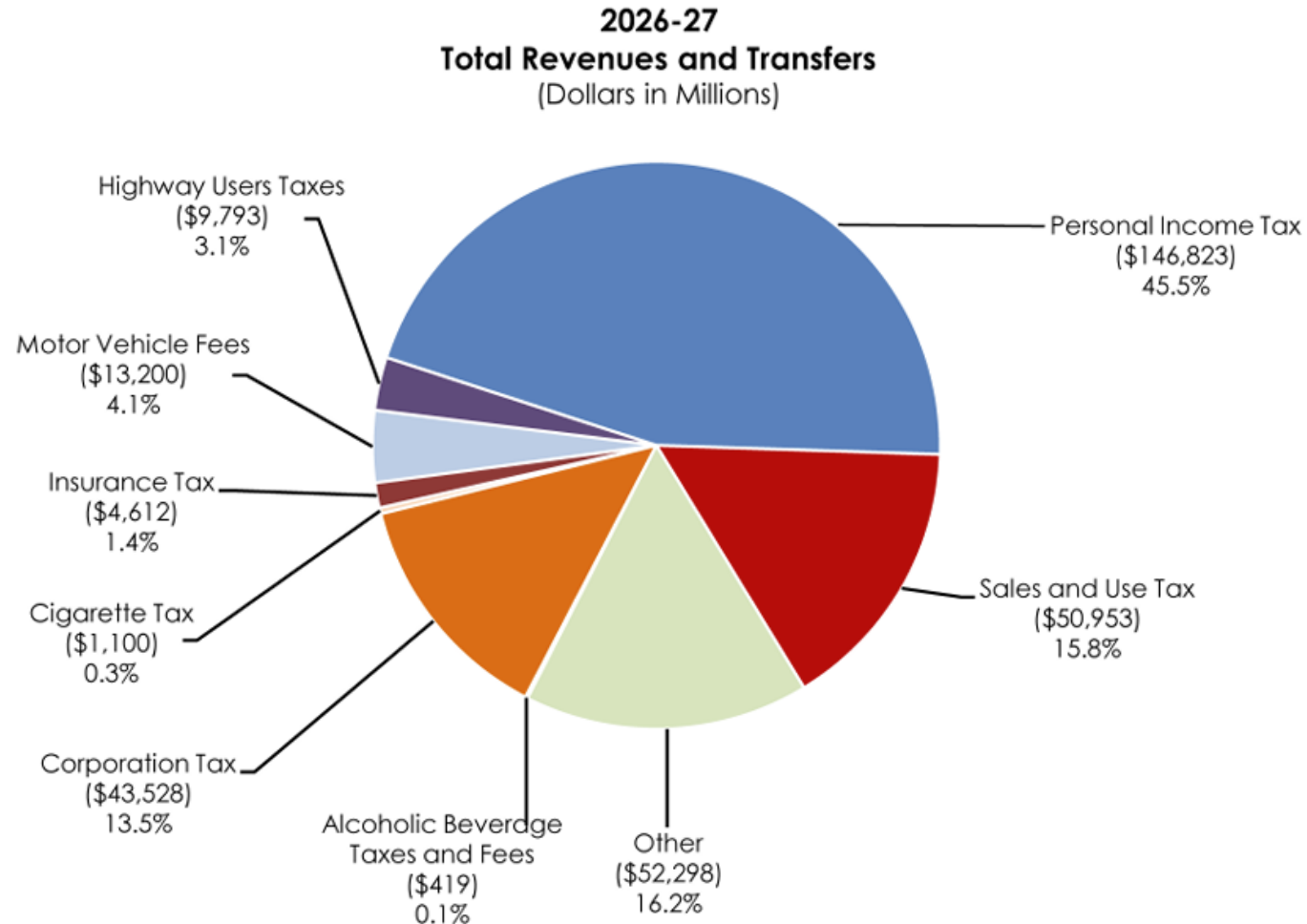


Hot off the press!

- Governor Newsom unveils his FY 2026-27 spending plan.
- \$348.9 billion balanced budget.
- \$23 billion in reserves.
- \$2.9 billion deficit.
- Outyear deficits north of \$20 billion.

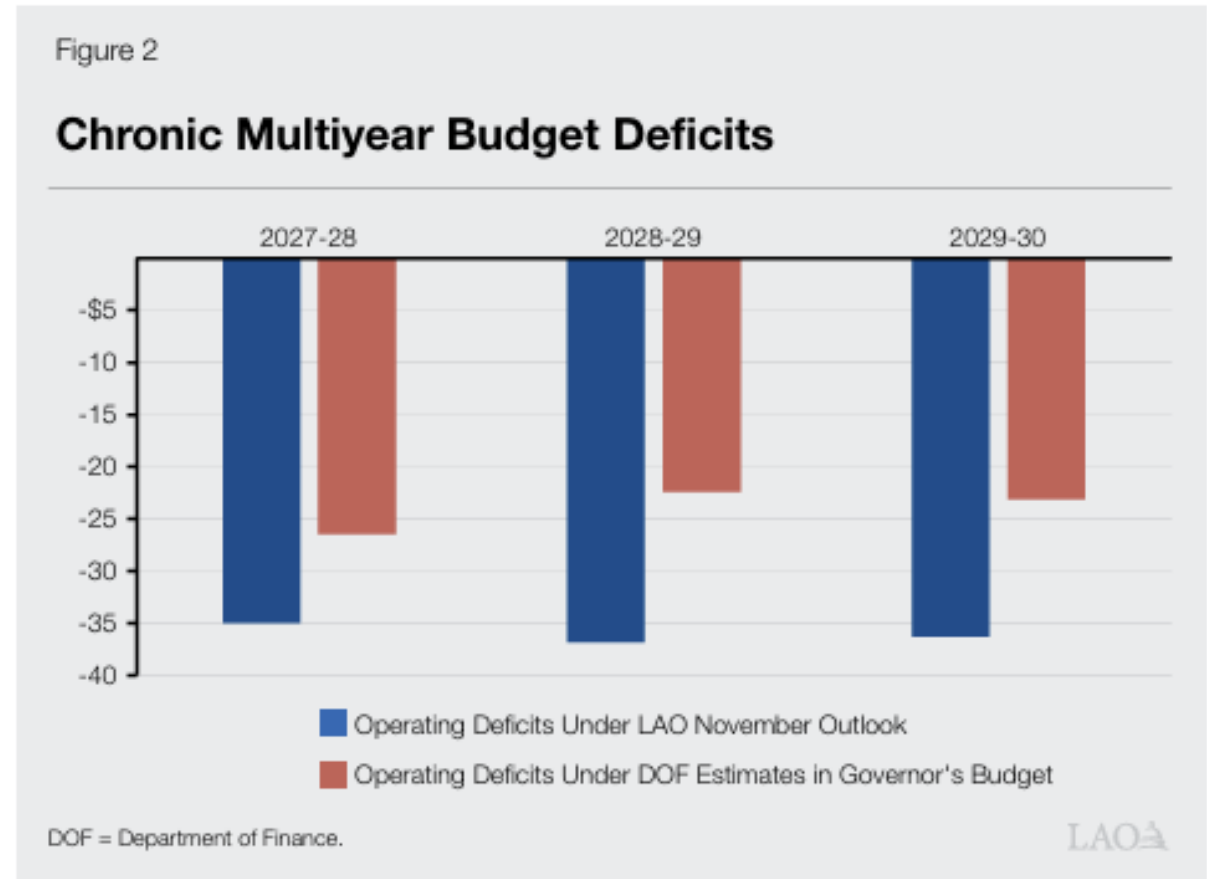


How are we paying for this?



But what does the LAO say?

- The LAO forecasts a \$18 billion deficit for FY 2026-27.
- Outyear deficits north of \$35 billion.
- Notes economic headwinds.
- Newsom Administration acknowledges challenges but doesn't address them.



What's on the horizon?

- Budget subcommittees.
- Uncertain federal economic policy.
- Impacts of “The One Big Beautiful Bill”.
- Election year dynamics.



What's on Deck for 2026?

- New Tax Exemptions (always)
- Property Transfer Tax Reform
- Transactions and Use Tax Reform
- *Rogers v. City of Redlands* Fix
- Ballot Initiatives

Environmental Quality

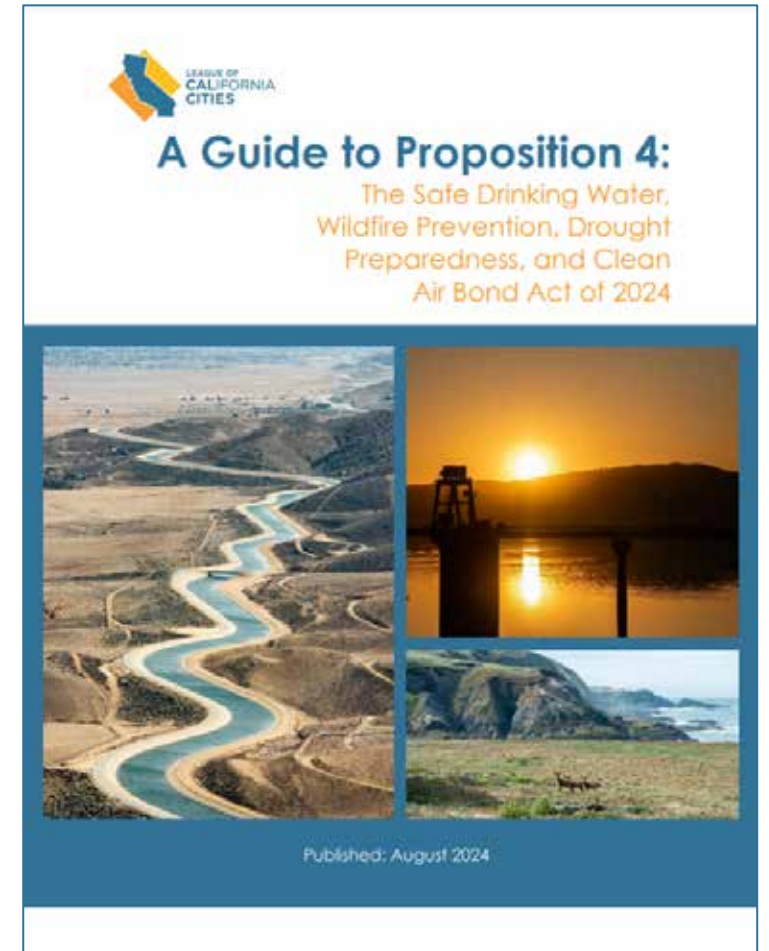
Melissa Sparks-Kranz

Legislative Affairs, Lobbyist

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Environmental Quality in the Budget

- 26-27 budget proposes \$2.1B for the second year of a multi-year expenditure plan to implement a \$10B [climate bond](#) ([Prop. 4](#))
- Proposed Budget includes:
 - § Safe drinking water, drought, and flood resilience
 - § Coastal resilience
 - § Clean energy
 - § Wildfire resilience
 - § Extreme heat mitigation



Environmental Quality in the Budget

- 26-27 budget proposes \$3.77 billion from the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund \(GGRF\)](#) as part of the new framework for the Cap-and Invest Program
- Cap-and-Invest Program proposed budget includes:
 - § **Tier 1 Funding:** manufacturing tax credit/state operations (\$370 million)
 - § **Tier 2 Funding:** \$1 billion high speed rail and \$1 billion discretionary funds, mostly earmarked for CalFire
 - § **Tier 3 Funding:** Program Funding Framework (\$1.4 billion, funded at 70%)
 - § Affordable housing and sustainable communities (\$560 million)
 - § Transit and intercity rail capitol (\$283 million)
 - § Community air protection (\$177 million)
 - § Healthy and resilient forests (\$141 million)
 - § Safe and affordable drinking water (\$92 million)

Environmental Quality

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Natural disaster preparedness
- Fire hazard severity zone maps
- Wildfire liability
- Clean energy and grid reliability/affordability
- Clean-up to the CEQA reform
- Water management
- Coastal issues
- Funding for climate resilience (Prop. 4 & GGRF)

Transportation, Communications, and Public Works

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Transportation, Communications, and Public Works in the Budget

The Governor's budget *appears* to maintain previous commitments to statewide transportation projects.

Significant Changes

- § Cap and Invest funding for Transit: up to \$600 million new funding
- § Cap and Invest funding for High-Speed Rail: \$1 billion
- § Active Transportation: \$200 million to connect communities
- § Caltrans to receive \$225 million to comply with ACF

Broadband

- § The budget continues to delay investments to fund network infrastructure projects

Transportation, Communications, and Public Works

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Infrastructure Investment and Modernization
- Advanced Clean Fleet Regulation Compliancy
- Clean Energy Permitting
- Protecting SB 1 Revenues/Exploring Sustainable Alternative Funding Sources
- Enhanced E-bike safety requirements

Community Services

Caroline Grinder

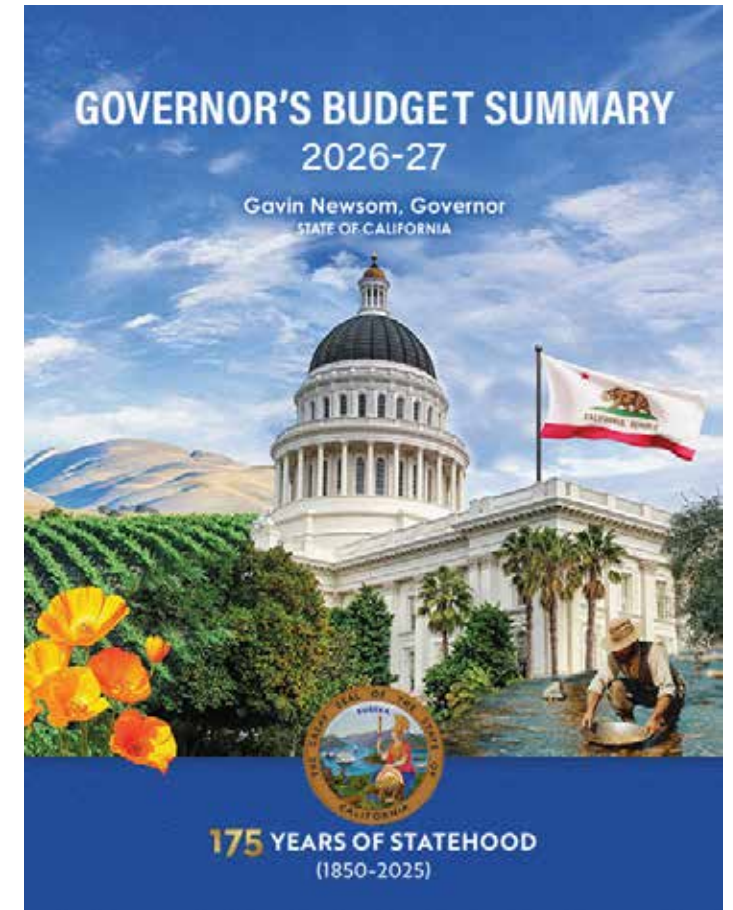
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Community Services in the Budget

Homelessness:

- Includes \$500 million for round seven of the Homeless Housing, Assistance, and Prevention (HHAP) grant program promised in last year's budget.
- Funding is contingent on new accountability metrics that will be finalized this year.



Community Services

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Accountability and transparency for state homelessness funding
- Homelessness funding for “small” cities
- Addressing encampments
- Increased focus on interim housing
- Sober living homes and recovery housing
- Impacts of federal policy on vulnerable populations
- Access and affordability of child care



Governance, Transparency, and Labor Relations

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Governance, Transparency, and Labor Relations

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Brown Act and Public Meeting Modernization
- Artificial Intelligence/Technology
- Public Records Act Requests
- Pension Sustainability and Divestment
- California Voting Rights Act and Redistricting
- Labor Relations



Housing, Community, and Economic Development

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Housing, Community, and Economic Development in the Budget

- No new funding for some of the most effective programs local governments have historically used to help promote affordable housing.
- Up to \$560 million available in the Cap-and-Invest program to support affordable housing and sustainable communities.
- The Governor released 5 priorities for the year: coordinate financing, prioritize efficiency, modernize the Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, preservation and sustainability, and rebuilding after the Los Angeles fires.
- Cal Cities continues to advocate for ongoing funding for affordable housing as budget negotiations continue this spring

Housing, Community, and Economic Development

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Development Impact Fees
- Housing Element Audit Legislative Fixes: Report released [this year](#)
- SB 79 (2025) Clean-Up
- Housing Bond
- Reducing the costs to build
- Renter protections
- Promoting innovative construction: Factory-Built homes and modular construction

Public Safety

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Public Safety in the Budget

The 2026-27 budget proposal includes significant wildfire mitigation and preparedness funding from the climate bond, including:

- **Local Fire Prevention Grants:** \$58 million from Proposition 4 to fund wildfire prevention and hazardous fuels reduction projects near wildfire-threatened communities.
- **Defensible Space (Zone Zero):** \$19.6 million from Proposition 4 for technical and financial assistance to help homeowners in wildfire-vulnerable areas implement defensible space mitigations, including Zone Zero.
- **Defensible Space Inspections:** \$6.2 million General Fund and 31 positions ongoing for Cal Fire to conduct annual parcel inspections within the State Responsibility Areas.

Public Safety in the Budget

- **Proposition 36 Implementation.** The Governor's proposed budget does not provide any additional funding for the implementation of Proposition 36. However, the budget does note that Proposition 36 has had a significantly lower impact on the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation than expected, with only 562 inmates projected, down from 1,878 in the 2025-26 Budget.

The only major new investment for reducing crime is \$30 million to expand drug interdiction efforts specifically related to fentanyl.

Public Safety Issues

Potential Issues in 2026:

- Proposition 36 Implementation and Funding
- Juvenile Crime
- Nitrous Oxide and other controlled substances
- Wildfire Mitigation, Defensible Space, Zone 0
- Fire Insurance/Home Insurance
- EMS Regulations and implementation

Questions?



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

**Registration Now
Open!**

2026 CITY LEADERS SUMMIT

April 22-24 | Sacramento



Mark your calendars!



April 19-25, 2026

This annual week-long celebration recognizes the work cities do for all Californians.

There will be opportunities to boost awareness about the value of cities, as well as honor the people — city officials like YOU — who work tirelessly to deliver essential services.

Keep an eye on the weekly *Cal Cities Advocate* newsletter for more information!



THANK YOU!



Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

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