



# California State Legislature

## Joint Republican Caucus



January 6, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom:

As the Assembly and Senate Republican Leaders and the respective Budget Vice Chairs, we look forward to working with you, the Assembly Speaker, the Senate President pro Tempore, and the Budget Committee chairs in the Assembly and the Senate in the coming weeks and months on the 2020-21 state budget.

California is a state of great promise and opportunity, but the challenges facing the people of our state are substantial. Profound income inequality, a skyrocketing cost of living, crumbling infrastructure, rising crime, and the constant threat of natural disasters combine to make life in our state a struggle for far too many people.

That can change with smart investments in California's future in the 2020-21 state budget. With that in mind, we'd like to share with you our budget priorities:

### **1. Improving Californians' Quality of Life**

Our state's astronomical housing costs, rising energy costs, high gas prices and worst-in-the-nation commute times are driving families apart. Too many people have been forced to leave their loved ones in California for better opportunities and a higher quality of life in other states. We can no longer ignore the negative effects the high costs of living are having on the people. To ease the burden on lower income and middle-class Californians, the budget must address these quality of life concerns.

### **2. Real Solutions to the Homelessness Crisis**

As you are well aware, California has a homeless population of 130,000. Any budget passed by the Legislature must include adequate funding and oversight that, in the most cost-effective way, lifts people out of homelessness by providing access to both permanent and temporary shelter and wrap-around services that include mental health care and substance abuse treatment. Additionally, the budget must support local law enforcement's efforts to clean up the streets.

### **3. Meaningful Disaster Preparedness and Response**

As California recovers from some of the most devastating wildfires in our state's history, much work remains to be done. Homeowners are losing their insurance or seeing their rates skyrocket, communities are forced to go without power for days at a time and large swaths of the state continue to be at risk of wildfires due to faulty utility equipment, poor forest management and changing weather patterns. The 2020-21 budget must contain funding to help the state, local governments and private citizens prepare for wildfires and other natural disasters. It is also vital to develop solutions to the high cost of insurance in areas at risk of wildfires so that residents can keep their homes.

**4. Access to Safe Schools and Affordable Higher Education**

Funding education remains one of legislative Republicans’ top priorities. Every child has the right to a quality education and access to safe schools. We share parents’ concerns regarding the threat of mass shootings and other types of school violence, and are committed to ensuring California’s traditional and public charter schools have the tools to provide a safe learning environment. In addition, we must ensure that California high school graduates have access to the state’s public higher education institutions that are funded with their families’ tax dollars.

**5. Investing in Public Safety**

California can no longer tolerate the state’s high crime rates that drive away tourism, harm businesses and make our communities less safe. Crime, particularly low-level offenses such as shoplifting, car theft and other property crimes, is affecting the day-to-day lives of Californians. While we must ensure that law enforcement treats all people fairly, we need strong policing to keep our communities safe. The budget should provide adequate funding to the courts and local law enforcement agencies.

**6. Increasing Budget Reserves & Accountability**

Winter is coming. The Legislative Analyst’s Office has warned of a coming recession, a view shared by many economists. For this reason, we must be prudent and prepare for a recession by continuing to increase our reserves and limiting ongoing spending.

We look forward to your budget proposal due January 10. We are committed to working with you and our colleagues in the Legislature to draft a budget that strengthens our state’s economy, fosters innovation, provides needed safety nets and benefits all of California. Legislative Republicans believe addressing the priorities outlined above are strong steps in those directions.

Sincerely,

Marie Waldron  
Assembly Member, 75<sup>th</sup> District  
Assembly Republican Leader

Shannon Grove  
Senator, 16<sup>th</sup> District  
Senate Republican Leader

Jay Obernolte  
Assembly Member, 33<sup>rd</sup> District  
Vice Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget

Jim Nielsen  
Senator, 4<sup>th</sup> District  
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Budget

Cc: The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly  
The Honorable Phil Ting, Assembly Budget Chair  
The Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President pro Tempore  
The Honorable Holly Mitchell, Senate Budget Chair