



CALIFORNIA SENATE REPUBLICAN

2023 PRIORITIES TO FIX CALIFORNIA

**CUT COSTS – TACKLE CRIME – ACT ON HOMELESSNESS –
INVEST IN STUDENTS – BUILD WATER STORAGE –
PREVENT WILDFIRES**

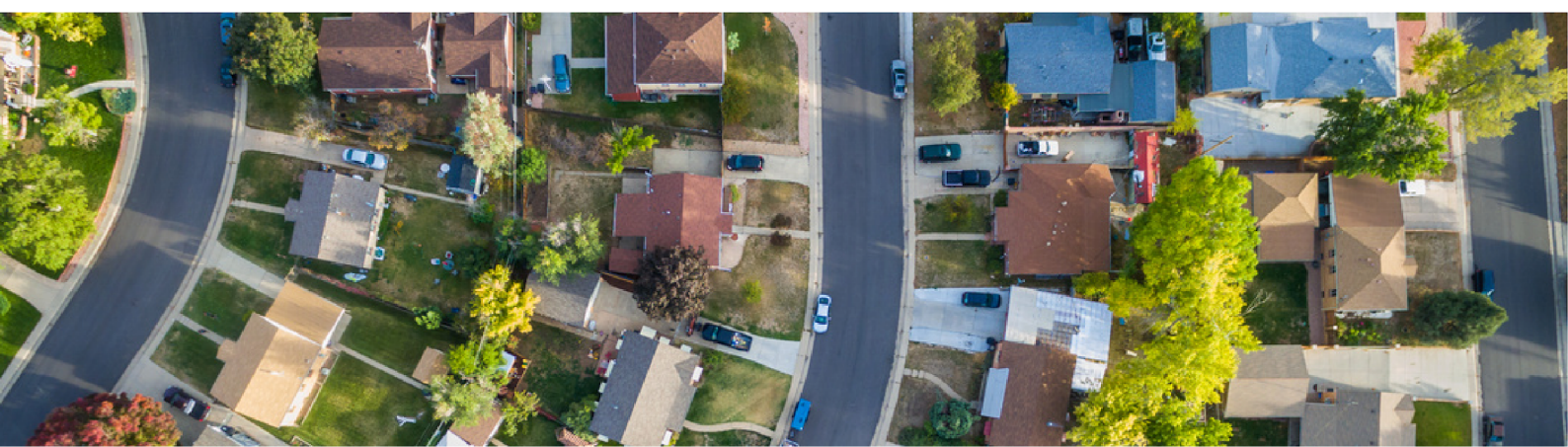
CUT COSTS

Increase the Renter's Tax Credit. California's renter's tax credit isn't providing adequate relief to individuals and families struggling to afford the state's high rental prices. Created in 1972, the credit has been updated only once, in 1979. Senate Republicans are supporting an effort to modernize the credit to the reality of 2023. **This budget request would increase the current renter's tax credit for the first time in 44 years to \$500 for individuals and \$1,000 for couples and individuals with dependents.** Currently, the credit provides only \$60 for individuals and \$120 for married couples. This proposal would increase the credit to a level that more accurately reflects the state's high cost of living.

Streamline Housing Builds. Senate Bill 239 by Senator Brian Dahle. In recent years, high housing costs have negatively affected Californians and the state's economy. CEQA's regulatory process is used – abused – to delay, stall or kill affordable housing projects. **This reform would address unresolved CEQA issues holistically by narrowing the periods for litigation and review, prioritizing low- and middle-income communities and promoting transparency.** This measure will ultimately expand housing opportunities for families across the state.

Combat the Housing Shortage. Senate Bill 240 by Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. High housing prices are not new to California, but the increasingly dire housing shortage has exacerbated the problem. Further, inflation and rising interest rates have made qualifying for a home loan nearly impossible for many Californians. Under current law, surplus state property is offered to local entities for low-income housing and other community projects. **This proposed legislation would encourage the state to provide additional surplus property to local governments and nonprofit affordable housing entities and ensure its use is exclusively for housing projects.**

Suspend the Gas Tax. Senate Bill 32/SB 1x by Senator Brian Jones. Californians pay extraordinarily high gas prices and last summer faced \$7 per gallon fill-ups. Drivers here face these extremely high gas prices partially because of required additional state gas taxes and fees of just over \$1 (made up of a state tax of 53.9 cents per gallon, a cap-and-trade fee of about 25 cents per gallon, and a Low Carbon Fuel Standard fee of about 22 cents per gallon). These taxes and fees are on top of the 18 cents per gallon federal tax. **SB 32/SB 1x would suspend over \$1 per gallon of the state's gas taxes and fees for one year.**



Place a Cap on the Annual Gas Tax Increase. Senate Bill 5 by Senator Janet Nguyen.

Under current law, the state adjusts its fuel excise tax rates on July 1 every year to account for inflation. Despite outrageously high prices and a proposal from the governor to halt the annual increase last year, drivers were still hit with a gas tax increase and faced more pain at the pump. **This measure would cap the annual July 1 inflationary gas tax increase at no more than 2% to limit future gas tax increases that are imposed on consumers.**

TACKLE CRIME

End Human Trafficking. Senate Bill 14 by Senator Shannon Grove. Human trafficking, known as modern-day slavery, is a multi-billion dollar criminal enterprise that preys on innocent victims. California's soft-on-crime policies have made it nearly impossible to prosecute perpetrators of human trafficking. **This measure would ensure those who commit this horrific crime are held accountable by expanding the definition of a serious felony to include human trafficking, making it a strike under the Three Strikes Law.** By holding human traffickers accountable, we can protect the victims of this horrible crime.

Protect Human Trafficking Survivors in Court. Senate Bill 236 by Senator Brian Jones. Victims of human trafficking have experienced extreme violence and trauma. For survivors, the prosecutorial process can create additional trauma. The ability for prosecutors to use "vertical prosecution," which allows the same district attorney to be assigned to all stages of a human trafficking case, can help reduce this trauma. **This proposed measure would provide grants to local prosecutors to allow them to employ vertical prosecution in human trafficking cases.**

Hold Fentanyl Dealers Accountable. Senate Bill 13 by Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. Fentanyl poisoning is now the leading cause of death for adults aged 18-45 in the United States, surpassing suicides, gun violence and car accidents. More must be done to deter the sale of fentanyl. Last year, Senate Republicans, working with families who lost loved ones to fentanyl poisoning, drafted legislation to advise fentanyl dealers of the dangers their actions pose to human life in an effort to make them more accountable. Senate Democrats in the Public Safety Committee voted the measure down. Senate Republicans are once again fighting to protect families and combat this crisis. **Modeled on the existing warning given to people convicted of DUIs, this measure would require the courts to advise individuals convicted of fentanyl sales and manufacturing-related offenses that subsequent offenses could result in a charge of voluntary manslaughter or murder.** This measure would ensure fentanyl dealers are fully aware they will be held accountable for selling this lethal drug.

Stop the Transportation of Fentanyl. Senate Bill 237 by Senator Shannon Grove. Drug cartels and sellers now use fentanyl to increase the potency of heroin and enhance user addiction, often with deadly results. Fentanyl has become the leading cause of death for adults aged 18-45 in the United States. In 2022, 28,765 pounds of fentanyl was seized in California – enough to kill the entire population of North America, twice. **To create a greater deterrent for drug traffickers, this proposal would increase penalties for the sale, possession for sale, transportation, and importation of fentanyl, or attempting or offering to commit any of those acts with regard to fentanyl.**

Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force. Senate Bill 19 by Senator Kelly Seyarto. In 2020, California experienced just shy of 4,000 deaths related to fentanyl overdoses, which is over two-thirds of all opioid overdoses in the state. The fentanyl crisis, which is sweeping across our state and nation, requires holistic and creative approaches between state and local agencies to reduce deaths and overdoses. **This proposal would create the Anti-Fentanyl Abuse Task Force to collect and organize data on the nature and extent of fentanyl abuse in California and evaluate the best practices in combatting fentanyl abuse.** Current approaches to responding to fentanyl abuse have been ineffective and this task force seeks to improve efforts to end the fentanyl epidemic.

Domestic Violence Housing. Senate Bill 221 by Senator Kelly Seyarto. According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, 34.9 percent of women in California will experience physical violence, sexual assault, or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime. There are not enough safe places to house survivors who are seeking to leave violent situations. **This proposal would provide a tax credit to property owners who agree to lease their property at submarket rates to individuals who are helping domestic violence survivors obtain housing.** Ensuring a safe place to go is a critical start in helping those escape violent and toxic relationships.

Good Cause for Court Deadline Extensions. Senate Bill 453 by Senator Kelly Seyarto. In recent years, many court cases have been dismissed because of an unclear policy for illness extensions and how they may affect the guaranteed right to a speedy trial. This led to the release of defendants charged with violent and dangerous crimes with zero accountability. Over the course of 10 weeks in 2022, judges of the Riverside County Superior Court alone dismissed more than 1,000 criminal matters in this regard. Of these, 83 were felony cases including charges of attempted murder, assault with a deadly weapon, sex crimes, child abuse, and domestic violence. Our legal system guarantees the right to a fair and speedy trial. However, unforeseen circumstances such as illness or quarantine that delay the trial should not be grounds for dismissal. While extensions are granted, the legal definition as to when that is appropriate has not been clarified by law. **This proposal would provide clearer guidelines as to what constitutes “good cause” for extending certain court deadlines to ensure there is a balance between justice and flexibility in trials.**

Prevent Serial Theft. Senate Bill 316 by Senator Roger Niello and Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. The rise in porch piracy, catalytic converter theft, smash-and-grab thefts, and organized retail theft has made our communities less safe and increased costs to business owners, small ones in particular. **This proposal would charge a serial thief with a felony if they have three or more prior theft-related convictions and are convicted again of petty theft. This approach would properly punish and deter serial theft crimes.** According to a 2019 Chamber of Commerce survey, 74% of respondents stated they supported “adding a felony for serial theft.”

Create Accountability for Prison Early Release Policies. Senate Bill 288 by Senator Janet Nguyen. There have been numerous reports about the early release of violent felons who then go on to commit additional violent crimes. Recent inquiries into how these violent criminals accrued enough credit to justify an early release have been rebuffed by the state, undermining transparency and trust in the system. **This proposal would require that upon request the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) shall provide to the public the calculations of a prison inmate’s early release date and what the inmate did to earn any early release credits.** This measure will increase transparency and accountability, and ultimately help ensure only those who have earned the credit to be released early are provided such.

ACT ON HOMELESSNESS

ACCOUNTABILITY

Audit Broken Homelessness Programs. Letter by Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. California has budgeted approximately \$20 billion in the last five years to address the state’s homelessness crisis with little to no success. The state’s bureaucratic and fragmented homelessness programs are spread between various state agencies and local governments which lack accountability and transparency. An audit of the state’s homelessness programs would create an opportunity to evaluate programs and provide a potential blueprint to improve the tracking and understanding of the homeless population. **This letter would ask the State Auditor to review state homeless programs since 2019 and request how the different programs report the following:**

- 1) How many homeless people died in California?**
- 2) How many were provided permanent housing in California?**
- 3) How many were provided temporary shelter in California?**
- 4) How many were detained or arrested for committing a violent crime against another person in California?**



COMPASSION

Clear Encampments Compassionately. Senate Bill 31 by Senator Brian Jones.

Allowing people to live in parks and libraries or in front of schools and day care centers is inhumane and unhealthy for homeless individuals, but is also unfair and often dangerous for the neighbors, families, and children in these sensitive areas. **This measure would help end public camping in these areas while also compassionately assisting the homeless to get treatment for their physical and mental health needs and find a more suitable place to stay.** By prohibiting encampments near the sensitive community areas of schools, parks, libraries, and day care centers, this measure would help protect our most vulnerable population: our children.

Catch Them Before They Fall. County Grant Programs for Collaborative Courts and Re-Entry. Senate Bill 63 by Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh.

Nearly 1 in 7 California adults experience a mental illness and 42 percent of people experiencing homelessness in the state report suffering from a disabling condition. Similar to those struggling with mental health disorders, the formerly incarcerated are a population at high risk of becoming homeless. **This proposal would create two grant programs: one to help counties establish or expand collaborative mental health and homeless courts and another for counties to institute re-entry services for jail inmates at risk of becoming homeless upon release.** These programs aim to help those experiencing a mental illness and facing homelessness receive the care and support they need while also promoting rehabilitation and housing stability.

Veterans Hiring Preference Clarification. Senate Bill 73 by Senator Kelly Seyarto. Too many California veterans have difficulty finding employment. As a result, many end up homeless and on the streets, without a place to go. Sadly, California is home to the highest population of homeless in the country including the highest homeless veteran population. **This proposal clarifies in state law that if a private business establishes a policy granting preference to veterans applying for work, that policy would not be in violation of California's Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA).** We must ensure that any hiring preference provided to our brave veterans is not undermined by recent lawsuits.



TREATMENT

Help Those Who Need It. Senate Bill 232 by Senator Roger Niello. The Lanterman–Petris–Short (LPS) Act sought to end the inappropriate commitment of persons with serious mental illness. While an LPS conservatorship must be invoked only as a last resort, it must be a viable option when all else has failed. Unfortunately, the current definition of “gravely disabled” makes it unnecessarily difficult – if not impossible – to conserve someone who is clearly unable to care for themselves. As a result, too many homeless individuals who are battling serious mental illness or drug abuse disorders are not receiving the care they need. **This measure would reform the definition of “gravely disabled” to allow homeless individuals who are unable to care for themselves to be able to receive the services they need.** This measure streamlines the current conservatorship process so it can be effectively utilized to get those struggling the help they need in the rare instances where no other intervention – including CARE Court – has worked.

Invest in Mental Health Bed Capacity. Senate Bill 65 by Senator Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh. California faces a behavioral health infrastructure deficit. A 2021 study found that California has an inadequate amount of inpatient psychiatric beds with significant variations between regions and levels of care. **This proposal would appropriate \$1 billion from the General Fund annually for the next three years to help counties build out their mental health bed capacity.** By helping counties increase mental health bed capacity, we can ensure those experiencing severe mental illness receive the help and services they need.

BUDGET PRIORITIES

Tackle Crime. Too many cities are seeing crime trends move in the wrong direction. California’s most recent crime report shows homicides in the state increased from 2020 to 2021, as did violent crimes and property crimes. Public safety should not be sacrificed for savings. **The state needs to ensure that law enforcement has enough resources to battle the epidemic of fentanyl and concerning increases in retail theft and other crimes.** Capitol Democrats’ plan to close prisons is misguided and should not be used to balance the budget.

Improve Mental Health and Homelessness Spending. To continue efforts to combat homelessness during the state’s budget deficit, **the state should expand options for local governments to use their Mental Health Services Fund resources in more flexible ways, at their discretion, including treating those struggling with mental health disorders and funding mental health bed capacity.**

Commit to Kids, Cut Failing Projects. While the state faces a deficit, California students may have their funding put at risk. Children are already suffering in this state. In fact, the most recent release of test scores shows 53% of students didn't meet English standards, 67% didn't meet math standards, and 71% didn't meet science standards. **Senate Republicans are calling for any proposed state budget cuts to education to be reversed and instead focus on cutting failed programs such as the High-Speed Rail. Don't cut our kids, cut high-speed rail.**

Choose School Choice. Public school enrollment has declined each of the last five years, and student academic performance has been steadily declining for years in California. The Golden State even has the lowest literacy rate in the country. Educational choice is one of the best options to improve academic outcomes. **Senate Republicans are calling for parity in state funding and for state funds to follow a student to a charter school if their family chooses to educate their child there.**

Build Water Storage. Over the past 40 years, California has had more than enough snowpack and rainfall to meet our state's needs. However, in those 40 years, the state has not built any new water storage. 68% of Californians see water supply as a "big problem," and an equal percentage feel that state and local governments are not doing enough in response to the drought. To ensure California has enough water to provide for all families, and particularly farmworkers and farmers, **Senate Republicans are calling for investments in water storage that include building Sites Reservoir and restoring and repairing conveyance canals in the Central Valley.**

Senate Bill 861 by Senator Brian Dahle. This measure adds water storage and conveyance to the type of projects that qualify for expedited judicial CEQA review under SB 7 (Atkins, 2021). **This would streamline the approval process for certain water projects.**

Prevent Wildfires. In 2020, 8,648 wildfires in California burned a total of 4,304,379 acres. In that same year, studies show those wildfire emissions negated 18 years of reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from other sectors in California. This makes ongoing funding commitments critical for the safety of lives and property, as well as for the environment. **Senate Republicans are calling for the state to direct funds to forest management activities that prevent catastrophic wildfires and save lives.**

