

San Diego Newsline

Downtown San Diego news — the budget, public safety, business, and the civic life of America's Finest City

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COUNTY

Probation Youth Get a Say in Influencing Positive Changes



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This week 10 young women from the Youth Transition Campus sat down with local law enforcement officers to expand their understanding and learn from each other’s experiences and perspectives, all with the goal of improving how officers do their jobs.

Through thoughtful discussion with local law enforcement, the Probation youth shared opinions and helped shape solutions on serious topics such as racial profiling, abuse of power, lack of trust, not knowing one’s rights, and the challenges of completing probation.

The goal of the dialogue was to change perceptions and behaviors of both law enforcement and detained youth with the goal of achieving more positive outcomes. The three-hour interactive training was put on by Game Changers , a community organization that uses a national “pre-de-escalation” training model rooted in behavioral psychology. The program creates opportunities for empathy and understanding between officers and the youth currently involved in the justice system.

Game Changers partnered with the Point Loma Nazarene University’s criminal justice program and the event was hosted Wednesday at San Diego County’s Youth Transition Campus for the first time.

The discussion took place between five San Diego probation officers, a San Diego Sheriff’s captain, and two La Mesa police officers with 10 detained juvenile girls and five Point Loma Nazarene

University criminal justice majors.

California law enforcement officers who participate can earn continuing education units from the state for their involvement in the discussions.

County of San Diego news release · Mar 21, 2025



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COUNTY

Register to Vote by March 24 for District One Special Primary Election

If you live in the County of San Diego’s First Supervisorial District and want to vote in the April 8 special primary election , you must register by Monday, March 24, to receive a ballot in the mail.

Otherwise, you will need to make a trip in person to a vote center in the district starting Saturday, March 29 to conditionally register and vote provisionally through April 8.

The person elected will fill the district’s vacant seat for the remainder of the current term that ends in January 2029. If no candidate receives a majority vote at the April 8 election, the top two vote-getters will move on to the special general election on July 1. Only those who live in the district can vote in the election.

District 1 runs from the Pacific Ocean to the Otay and San Miguel mountains in the east, and from Barrio Logan in the north to the U.S./Mexico international border on the south. The district includes the cities of Chula Vista,

Imperial Beach, National City, and some communities within the City of San Diego, including Barrio Logan, East Village, Golden Hill and more. It also includes the unincorporated areas of Bonita, East Otay Mesa, Lincoln Acres, Sunnyside and La Presa.

If you’re not sure if you reside in District 1, you can look it up at sdvote.com .

Registering to vote is quick and easy and can be done online at sdvote.com. You will need to register to vote if you:

If your signature is confirmed through records at the California Department of Motor Vehicles, your registration will automatically be sent to the Registrar’s office. If your signature is not confirmed, you can print the form, sign it and return it to the Registrar’s office by 5 p.m. on March 24.

Registration forms must be post-marked or delivered to the Registrar’s office by March 24. Voters may also register online until midnight.

If you don’t have access to a computer, you may request a registration form by calling (800) 696-0136 or emailing rovmail@sdcounty.ca.gov .

Not sure if you’re registered to vote? Check your registration status online at sdvote.com.

For voters who need language assistance, election materials are also available in Spanish, Filipino, Vietnamese and Chinese.

Early voting is already underway at the Registrar’s office from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The Registrar’s office will be closed on Monday, March 31, in observance of Cesar Chavez Day.

Additional options to vote in person will begin Saturday, March 29, with the opening of seven vote centers . They will be open daily from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. until the final day of voting, Tuesday, April 8, when 13 vote centers and the Registrar’s office will be open 7 a.m. to

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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Register to Vote by March 24 for District One Special Primary Election

8 p.m. You can find a vote center or an official ballot drop box near you inside your voter information pamphlet, or you can look up your pamphlet online with the View Voter Information Pamphlet (Sample Ballot) tool at sdvote.com.

Learn more about voting in the District 1 special primary election at sdvote.com, or call (858) 565-5800 or toll free at (800) 696-0136.

County of San Diego news release · Mar 21, 2025

COUNTY County Makes Speaking at Board Meetings Easier Than Ever

Have you ever wanted to speak about an issue at a San Diego County Board of Supervisors meeting? Well, the County is introducing changes to make it easier to do than ever before. Until now, anyone who wanted to speak at a Board meeting had to fill out a speaker slip before the meeting started—either a written slip in person at the Board

meeting, or electronically online if they wanted to talk by phone. Starting April 2, no more paper slips, no more waiting in line and no more waiting until the day of the meeting to request to speak. Anyone can submit a simplified speakers’ slip online using their phone, laptop or other device, at any time before the Board starts taking public comment on the item during the meeting. If you’re speaking by phone, the new system will even call you when the meeting starts and give you real-time notifications about where you are in line to talk on the item or items you’ve selected to speak about. To make the new changes even easier for the public to use, the County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors will be hosting three informational webinars on Zoom to demonstrate how the system works and to take any questions people may have. Saturday, April 5 at 10 a.m. (Zoom registration link) Monday, April 7 at noon (Zoom registration link) Monday, April 7 at 7 p.m. (Zoom registration link) And of course, County staff will also be available at Board meetings to provide on-site assistance and help people if

they need it to sign-up to speak. Go Online to “San Diego County, CA Meetings” webpage : The new speaker-request system is easy to use. Use your smartphone, computer, laptop, or other device to go to the webpage at: https://PublicComment.SanDiegoCounty.gov . Click on the Meeting You Want to Speak At: Click on the meeting date for the meeting you want to comment at. That will provide information about the meeting. Click “Register”: Click on the blue “Register” box at the bottom of the page. Fill out the Form: Clicking the “Register” button will bring up a set of instructions, the online submittal form, and the list of agenda items for you to select one or more items that you want to speak to. The submittal form can be translated into multiple languages. Simply fill out your information, mark the item or items you wish to speak to, and whether you’re attending “In Person” or “Virtually” by phone. Scroll to request Interpreter if Needed: Scroll to the bottom of the submission form to request an interpreter if English is not your first language. Check the box to ask to be

called when the Board meeting starts: You can also check a box to subscribe to updates on the Board of Supervisors. Click “Register” again at the bottom: And you’re all set. You’ll receive an email confirming your request to speak. Improved Customer Service; Take Part in County Government Making it easier for people to engage with County government is of the utmost importance to us. This new public comment system is designed to do just that. We know that government of the people and for the people works best with the people’s input. So, take part by sharing your thoughts at County Board of Supervisors’ meetings. It’s easier than ever. For detailed instructions about using the new system, more information about County Supervisors’ Board meetings, how to find Board agendas or more general information, go to the County Clerk of the Board’s website . Here’s an additional video to help you learn more about the speaking at the Board of Supervisors meetings and about the new speaker online slip process.

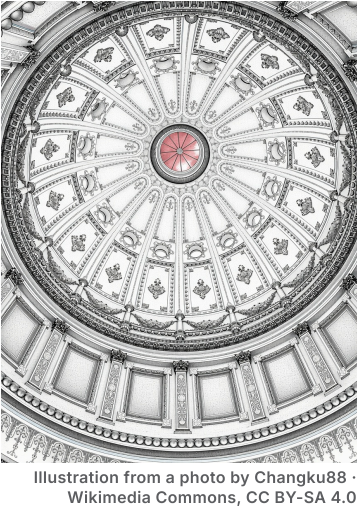
County of San Diego news release · Mar 25, 2025

Courts · Transit · Public safety

COUNTY County Offices to Close for Cesar Chavez Day San Diego County public offices, family resource centers, library branches and animal shelters will be closed Monday, March 31 in observance of Cesar Chavez Day. Essential services including law enforcement and emergency animal control response will continue through the holiday. County parks, campgrounds and neighborhood day-use parks remain open 365 days a year. However, the following locations will be closed: 4S Ranch Recreation Office only (all parks will be open) Valley Center Community Hall and Adams Park Pool Camping reservations can always be made online at the County’s Online Camping Reservations web page , but the Department of Parks and Recreation’s reservation phone line will not be staffed during the holiday. All County public health clinics will also be closed March 31. All County offices will resume normal business hours Tuesday, April 1.

County of San Diego news release · Mar 20, 2025

BUSINESS



BUSINESS Double the Governors, Double the Impact

This week, Governor Gavin Newsom signed a MOU with Sonora Governor Alfonso Durazo. The agreement highlighted collaboration to promote the energy sector and increase business and economic ties to facilitate a transition towards clean energy. The Chamber joined the signing ceremony on behalf of our region’s business community and continues to engage in conversations with state authorities and stakeholders on both sides of the border to ensure a smooth transition that considers required infrastructure investment and of economic feasibility for the business sector.

Governor Newsom applauded the Chamber for ongoing advocacy efforts elevating our region’s priorities in D.C., including important follow up on key infrastructure projects to facilitate trade with California’s top export market, Mexico, such as the Otay Mesa East land port of entry. South of the border, the Chamber also had the opportunity to connect with Governor Marina del Pilar Avila and extend our appreciation for state efforts to address transboundary pollution impacting our region including the near completion of the San Antonio de los Buenos wastewater treatment plant in Tijuana.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Mar 25, 2025

BUSINESS City of San Diego Minimum Wage Update The Chamber has joined a coalition of business groups and leaders from the tourism industry to oppose the \$25 minimum wage increase proposal brought forward by Councilmember Elo-Rivera. The Councilmember is proposing a \$25 minimum wage increase for the tourism

industry, specifically aimed at hotel, event center, and janitorial service workers in the tourism sector in the City of San Diego. The proposed minimum wage increase will negatively affect our entire economy. Businesses are already facing growing challenges in successfully operating in San Diego, and this increase will only exacerbate this problem. Councilmember Elo-Rivera brought this proposal to the City’s Select Committee on Addressing the Cost of Living on February 27 th , where a motion was approved 3-0 to draft ordinance language to return to the committee in early June. The Chamber issued a statement early on about the economic impact to businesses and San Diego’s competitiveness and VP of IPA Kenia Zamarripa spoke at City Council to raise business concerns about the proposal and offer support in advancing alternatives that directly address the cost of living such as increasing affordable housing. Chamber staff recently met with a coalition to discuss our strategy moving forward, The Chamber will continue to work with our partners and stakeholders to strongly

oppose this effort. San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Mar 25, 2025 BUSINESS SDRCC IPA Team in Action at the Local Level The Chamber IPA team has been busy advocating for San Diego’s business community across our region this past month. Justine Murray, Executive Director of Public Affairs, spoke in support of the appointment of Coronado Mayor John Duncan to the Air Pollution Control District Governing Board of Directors at San Diego’s City Selection Committee, alongside partners from IEA and the Working Waterfront. Mayor Duncan also had support from Congressman Peters, demonstrating his ability to work with partners across the region to provide meaningful resources for the County. Mayor Duncan was approved by vote to be the District 3 representative on the board. Lauren Cazares, Policy Advisor, spoke in opposition of a County resolution to support AB 303 (Addis), “The Battery Energy Storage and Safety Act”. Despite its name,

the bill is detrimental to public safety and our region’s, and further the state’s, safe and clean power supply. The bill is a de facto ban on any new BESS, and the Chamber encourages legislatures to work with industry to promote safety standards and new BESS technology designed to keep communities safe while supplying essential power and energy, instead of banning this critical piece of our sustainable infrastructure. The resolution did not pass, and the Chamber will continue to work with County leaders to educate decision makers and the public regarding BESS and ensure bans on BESS do not come to fruition. The County of San Diego voted unanimously to update their Unsafe Camping Ordinance to address growing public safety concerns, specifically wildfires created by encampments. Lauren Cazares spoke in support of proposed enhancements to the updated ordinance, including the prohibition of combustible materials and ignition sources that contribute to wildfire risk. The Board of Supervisors voted 4-0 to move the item forward, and the

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BUSINESS (CONTINUED)

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

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SDRCC IPA Team in Action at the Local Level

updated ordinance will come back to the Board of Supervisors in 60 days.

The San Diego City Council recently voted to explore rolling back some of the provisions of the ADU program, notably removing the potential of building ADUs in some of the lower density areas of the City. Chamber staff worked diligently with Council Offices to advocate

against a full repeal of the program, and Policy Advisor Evan Strawn spoke in opposition of the potential repeal at City Council . While rolling back some pillars of the program is not ideal, the Chamber and our partners are encouraged that the program was not completely repealed. Now, the Planning Department will work on bringing proposed changes to the program through the annual Land Development Code Update process.

Chamber Policy Analyst Jimena Villaseñor, alongside

industry leaders, spoke out in opposition of a proposed Cannabis Business Tax increase , from 8% to 10%, for retail outlets. While we recognize the City’s need to address its budget deficit, we raised concerns about the process, as this item was placed on the agenda via direct docketing rather than the standard committee review. In addition, Jimena voiced concerns over higher cannabis taxes in the city compared to neighboring cities in the county, questions on whether the increased tax

would actually bring more revenue to the City’s budget and calls for future cannabis-related proposals to go through the proper committee process rather than direct docketing.

Justine Murray spoke in support of the City of San Diego’s resolution in support of Senator Catherine Blakespear’s SB 569 , which aims to streamline encampment abatement near CalTrans roads and properties. The Council voted unanimously to support Senate Bill 569, which will also create

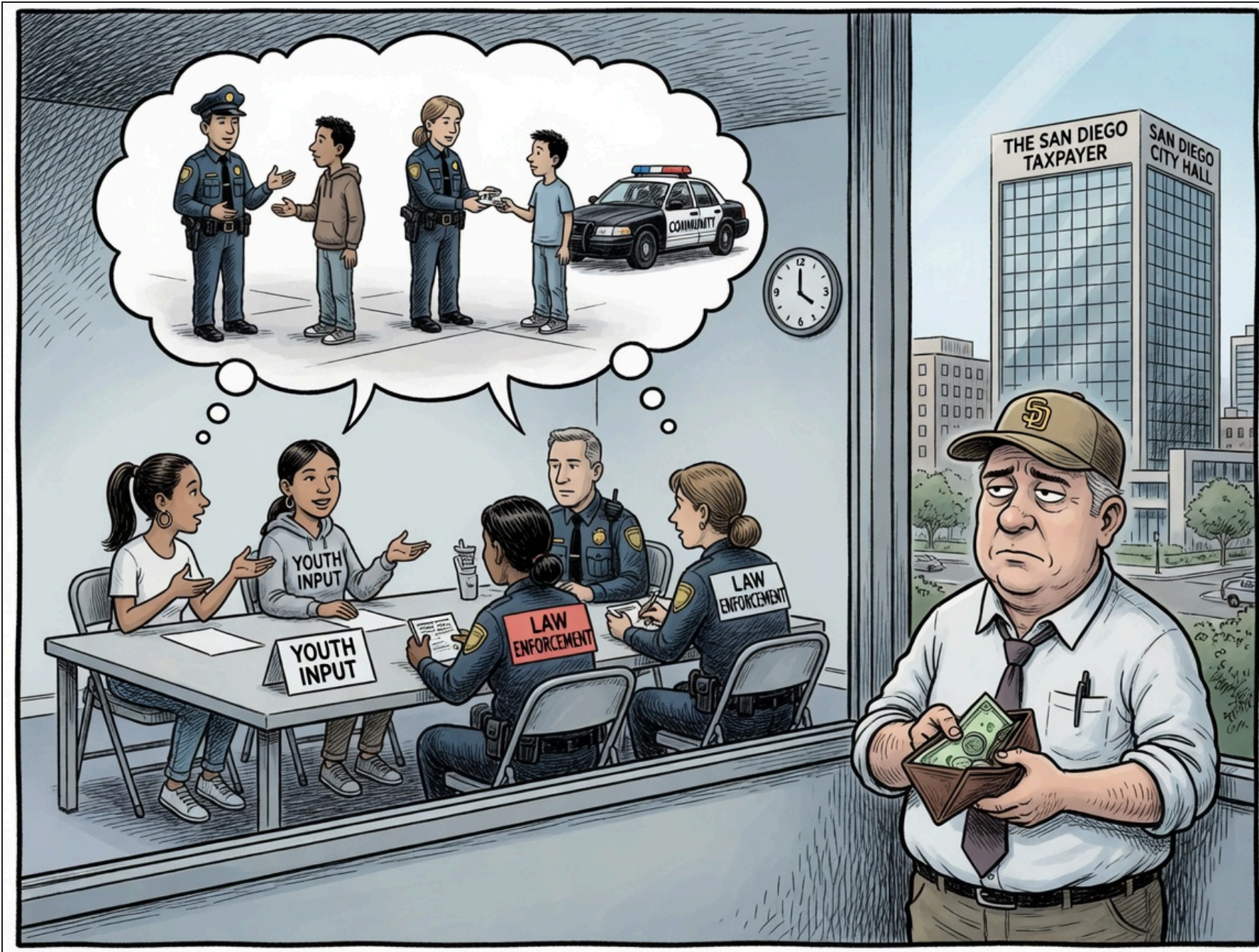
better collaboration across agencies and the region to address this growing crisis.

From unsafe encampment ordinances at the County to proposed tax increases at the City of San Diego, the Chamber remains engaged with our partners and with elected officials and their staff on all of these issues to ensure San Diego’s business community has a voice at the table.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Mar 25, 2025

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

Opinion



Listening for better results

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

COMMENTARY

Trump’s Move to Eliminate the Department of Education Shifts Power Back to States, Argues Lance Christensen

The California Policy Center senior fellow praises the executive order as a long-overdue rejection of federal overreach in local schools.

Politicians routinely promise bold reforms only to retreat behind familiar excuses once in office, writes Lance Christensen, senior fellow at

the California Policy Center.

But President Trump has followed through on a major campaign pledge by issuing an executive order on March 20, 2025, to axe the federal Department of Education, according to Christensen.

While critics predicted the idea would fade into irrelevance, Trump acted on the pledge, the education policy expert notes. Democrats have reacted with alarm, yet Christensen questions why supporters of expansive government programs would prefer distant bureaucrats in

Washington to handle education matters that affect local communities.

Concerns about programs such as Title I funding, FERPA, special education, civil rights enforcement and student loans are overstated, Christensen argues. These initiatives existed before the department was created and can be administered by other federal agencies including the Department of Health and Human Services and the Department of Justice.

If Congress chooses to convert federal education dollars

into block grants, state legislatures, governors and local governments can allocate those resources according to their own priorities, the California Policy Center fellow writes.

One of the clearest benefits, Christensen contends, is the elimination of a convenient scapegoat for failing schools. For decades, local districts have blamed Washington when student performance declines, but that excuse will no longer be available once authority returns to the states.

The Department of Education’s 45-year reign has been a flop with academic outcomes sliding, according to Christensen, who quotes the repeated observation that allowing “Caesar” to run schools leads to students behaving like “Romans.”

Education is fundamentally a local responsibility, he asserts. Federal involvement functions like an intrusive neighbor constantly rearranging furniture—perhaps with good intentions but ultimately disruptive.

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COMMENTARY (CONTINUED)

Opinion — the views of the writers named, not news reporting

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Trump’s Move to Eliminate the Department of Education Shifts Power Back to States, Argues Lance Christensen

Parents, teachers and school boards possess far better knowledge of their children’s needs than any official in a distant marble building, Christensen writes. Returning both funding and

decision-making power to communities represents common sense.

Drawing on his earlier CalMatters commentary from January, Christensen points out that California’s own struggles with bureaucratic bloat and poor results mirror problems at the federal level. Removing the Washington layer would allow states to pursue tailored solutions without constant resistance to top-down mandates.

Trump’s order represents more than administrative change, according to the California Policy Center senior fellow. It directly challenges the assumption that federal officials know best.

Rather than a uniform policy knitted by bureaucrats, education should resemble a patchwork quilt created by the people who experience it daily, Christensen argues.

Congress now faces the

task of working out implementation details, but the central directive is unmistakable: remove federal interference from local classrooms.

Christensen concludes that education decisions belong where the buses roll, the bells ring and the chalk dust flies—at the local level. “We’ve got this,” he writes, urging an end to outsourcing children’s futures to distant red tape.

San Diego Newsline · Based on commentary published by the California Policy Center · Mar 21, 2025

ABOUT THIS PAPER

San Diego Newsline covers downtown San Diego first — City Hall, the Gaslamp Quarter, East Village, Little Italy, Barrio Logan and the waterfront — and the county around it. Every item names its source; read the originals and our standards at sandiegonewsline.com.

MORE NEWS

Downtown, City & County

COUNTY

County to Hold Week of Action to Promote Workers’ Rights and Foster Business Empowerment

The County of San Diego’s Labor Standards and Enforcement is holding its third annual César Chávez Week of Action from March 25-29.

This weeklong series honors labor rights activist César Chávez by educating workers, employers and community members about labor rights and fair workplace practices. The theme of this year’s week of action is “Building Stronger Workplaces Together.”

The series is a collaborative effort between the County and the Employee Rights Center to:

Bridge gaps between workers, employers, and community resources.

Inspire action and collaboration for healthier and more just workplaces.

Acknowledge businesses and individuals committed to upholding equitable employment practices.

March 25, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m., Southeastern Live Well Center, 5101 Market St., San Diego, CA 92114.

Learn about your rights during the Fair Chance Hiring Workshop (10 a.m. – 2 p.m.).

Meet employers and participate in on-site job interviews (1p.m – 4 p.m.).

Community Breakfast: Honoring Our Workforce

March 26, 9 a.m. – 11:30 a.m., Employee Rights Center, 4161 Home Ave., San Diego, CA 92105.

Public officials and community advocates will honor local workers and their families over a complimentary breakfast and community connection.

Virtual Small Business Compliance Workshop

Shaw Law Group will teach employers ten ways to stay out of court and answer questions about labor standards.

Throughout the day, OLSE will spotlight businesses from each County Supervisorial District who take the “high road to profitability” by going above and beyond for their workers.

Follow along on Facebook , Instagram or LinkedIn .

OLSE and local partners will visit businesses throughout Vista to share resources and answer employers’ questions about labor standards and best practices.

For more information, email michael.knab@sdcounty.ca.gov.

March 29, 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., Employee Rights Center, 4161 Home Ave., San Diego, CA 92105.

Attendees can receive legal information, immigration support, workers’ rights training, pet microchipping and more.

Employers and workers who want more information about workers’ rights or wage

theft can contact Labor Standards and Enforcement at olse@sdcounty.ca.gov or 619-531-5129.

For more information about the Week of Action events, email stephanie.hernandez@sdcounty.ca.gov

County of San Diego news release · Mar 21, 2025

COUNTY

County, State, Labor Leaders Celebrate Workers, Give Wage Theft Progress Report

More wage theft victims in San Diego County are getting the pay they’ve earned.

County, state and labor leaders delivered that message as they gathered to celebrate workers, and report advances on addressing wage theft.

Wednesday’s breakfast event took place at the Employee Rights Center as part of a Week of Action honoring labor rights activist César Chávez.

Workers in the region lose nearly \$6 million every year to unscrupulous employers.

County Supervisor Terra Lawson-Remer told attendees too many workers are paid poverty wages, see their tips skimmed, are denied overtime or their pay. Justice-impacted workers who have paid their debt and want self-sufficiency aren’t given a fair chance at employment.

“It’s not just unfair and it’s not just indecent,” said Lawson-Remer. “It makes it harder for workers to take

care of their families, it makes it harder for honest employees to compete, and it’s illegal.”

One of the newest efforts to hold employers accountable is the Workers’ Rights Enforcement Program . It gives the County the authority to prosecute employers who are engaging in unlawful labor practices.

“Since August, the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement has handled over more than 400 inquiries related to wage theft and workplace violations,” said County Ethics, Compliance and Labor Standards Director Branden Butler. “Our office is currently investigating 40 cases with the goal of recovering unpaid wages.”

And that is just one County program designed to help people who have lost their pay.

The Good Faith Restaurant Program recovered more than \$106,000 in lost wages for restaurant workers.

The Workplace Justice Fund helped 34 applicants receive financial relief totaling \$100,000 last year. This year, the County expects to help another 80 people. The fund helps workers who won legal judgments for lost wages but are still waiting for the money from their employers.

The DA’s Workplace Justice Unit was one of the first in California to investigate and prosecute criminal wage theft cases.

“We continue to file case after case. I think we’re up to about 16 cases now and

they’re growing, of felony wage theft cases, recovering thousands of dollars to employees who need that money to put bigger shoes on their kids, to put food on the table,” said District Attorney Summer Stephan.

“In California, we have some of the strongest laws. These laws have not changed,” said State Labor Commissioner Lilia García-Brower. “A person labors, and they are to labor under certain conditions. And if they are not laboring under those conditions, then we have an obligation to hold them accountable.”

The County regularly works with both the State Department of Industrial Relations and the Employee Rights Center, and together they get results.

“It’s the most important thing that we can do, is come together as a group rather than think you’re facing this by yourself or that there is no one out there who is aware or wants to help people confront those issues,” said Employee Rights Center Director Alor Calderón. “So, community and the legacy of César Chávez is our main message this week.”

Employers and workers who want more information about workers’ rights, wage theft or how to file a complaint, can visit the Office of Ethics, Compliance and Labor Standards website or call the office at 619-531-5129.

County of San Diego news release · Mar 26, 2025

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