

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

County Transforms Section of Important North County Corridor



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The County is committed to maintaining safe, reliable infrastructure for everyone in the unincorporated area. This includes improving roads and intersections — or sometimes simply providing a refresh through repaving — to ensure communities stay connected and safe.

One example of this work comes from our public works team, which transformed a one-mile stretch of Bear Valley Parkway, an important regional link in North County near Escondido. Using TransNet sales tax dollars, crews delivered improvements that enhance safety, mobility, and the overall look and feel of the roadway.

What we provided: • A divided median to reduce congestion and collisions and allow safer access to driveways and cross streets • ADA-accessible pedestrian ramps and sidewalks • Bike lanes and the undergrounding of overhead utilities • Water-filtration basins to capture and filter runoff entering the storm drain

County of San Diego news release · Apr 14, 2026



Illustration

COUNTY

County Employees Give Back: CECO Grants Nearly \$109K to Local Causes

The County Employees' Charitable Organization (CECO) awarded \$108,940

to 87 community programs and the CECO Employee Crisis Fund during its annual awards ceremony Friday at the North Inland Live Well Center in Escondido.

This year's grant recipients represent a wide range of local nonprofits, including health clinics, homeless service providers, youth and after-school programs, and other organizations serving San Diego County residents.

A full list of grantees is available here .

"This year we are proud to celebrate CECO's 70th anniversary," said CECO President Maria Molina, an administrative analyst with County Behavioral Health Services. "This work is possible due to the generosity of County employees and retirees."

Community members can also get involved by visiting sdceco.org and signing up to become a monthly contributor.

Formed in 1956, CECO serves as the charitable arm of the County of San Diego. One hundred percent of employee donations are returned to the community through grants and assistance to employees and retirees facing hardship. More than 80 organizations were on hand to accept their grant checks during the event.

County of San Diego news release · Apr 14, 2026

COUNTY

County Celebrates Local Leaders and 25 Years of Public Health Champions Awards

The County Health and Human Services Agency honored thirteen individuals and organizations for their commitment to improving community health, advancing wellness and helping communities thrive. The Live Well San Diego Public Health Champions awards ceremony , held April 10, marked a major milestone: 25 years of recognizing outstanding public health leadership.

The annual ceremony takes place

during National Public Health Week , when communities across the country highlight the importance of building the foundation for healthier lives. Since the event began, the County has recognized 507 Public Health Champions whose work has helped shape a stronger, healthier region.

Dr. Sayone Thihalolipaven, the County's Public Health Officer and Elizabeth Hernandez, PH.D., Deputy Chief Administrative Officer of the Health and Human Services Agency, led this year's program.

The 2026 theme "Ready. Set. Action!" reflects the Live Well San Diego vision for a region that is healthy, safe and thriving . This year's four areas of focus are:

Government Partners and their critical role in making communities ready for better health

Scientific Advancement that helps public health tackle today's challenges and tomorrow's unknowns

Community Leadership because public health is strongest when it is rooted in community

You Partner with Public Health and you help create it. Public health doesn't just happen in clinics or government offices — it's the everyday action that serves as the building blocks of healthier communities.

The Public Health Champions award categories included Director's Awards; Public Health Services Awards for individuals and organizations; and Aging and Independence Services, Medical Care Services and Regional Awards.

The ceremony was designed to showcase the strength of local public/private partnerships in achieving the best health and wellness outcomes for everyone.

Dr. Ciriza has spent more than 30 years serving students across San Diego County and is now making history as the first woman and first Latina to serve

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY

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County Celebrates Local Leaders and 25 Years of Public Health Champions Awards

as County Superintendent of Schools. Dr. Ciriza champions educational equity, leading efforts to reduce poverty through public education and expanding Community Schools where students can access food, healthcare, and mental health services on campus.

IWC Primary Care delivers whole person care for patients to help them get well and stay well. Each month, Medical Director Dr. Suzanne Afflalo and the IWC team provide care to underserved communities by offering free health screenings, resources and education at the Jackie Robinson YMCA—meeting people where they are, regardless of income or insurance, and redefining what grassroots public health can achieve.

For over 20 years, Encuentros Leadership has uplifted thousands of Latino boys and young men in San Diego through mentorship, academic guidance, and leadership development. Its programs reduce equity gaps and inspire students to pursue college and community leadership.

Individual: Dr. Stefan A. Willging, M.D.

For more than 20 years, Dr. Willging has delivered relationship-based primary care in Hillcrest, ensuring patients receive care regardless of financial barriers. A seven-time San Diego Top Doctor, he is recognized for advancing accessible, preventive medicine and achieving long-term patient partnerships.

For nearly a decade, Oli LaFuentes has advanced community wellness at the YMCA along with culturally responsive health promotion. As intervention coordinator for the Fe en Acción project, she recruits, trains, and supports promotoras who lead exercise and health programs at 27 sites across San Diego County.

Organization – Foundation for the Children of the Californias

For more than 30 years, the Foundation for the Children of the Californias has expanded access to pediatric care for underserved families across the San Diego Tijuana region. By supporting Hospital Infantil de las Californias and programs like P.A.P.I. and Puentes de Bienestar, the foundation helps families cover medical costs and provides free, culturally responsive mental health support to teens.

Pualani Vazquez leads trauma injury prevention and community outreach at Scripps Mercy Hospital, partnering with organizations across San Diego to reduce unintentional injuries through evidence based, trauma informed programs. She advances safety and independence for older adults through initiatives like A Matter of Balance and long-standing collaborations with Aging & Independence Services.

Jovita Arrellano drives collaboration and community impact across the South Region through her leadership with the Chula Vista Community Collaborative and the Chula Vista Elementary School District. She leads initiatives like the annual Day of the Child event to expand school-based services, strengthen partnerships, and uplift families.

Grandma LuLu’s Kitchen brings plant-based meals directly to communities across San Diego, serving thousands through its mobile breakfast program and free support for local schools and organizations. The nonprofit teaches families how to prepare affordable, healthy recipes at home as part of its promotion of long-term health, economic relief and sustainable eating.

East Region – Majdal: Arab Community Center of San Diego

The Majdal Arab Center of San Diego, founded in 2016 by a group of Arab and Arab American youth, serves as a cultural, educational, and community hub for refugees and immigrants. Its mission is symbolized by the name “Majdal” (watch tower) as it works to protect, serve, and empower Arab, Middle Eastern, and North African communities.

Promises2Kids supports more than 2,000 current and former foster youth each year, providing stability, mentoring, and resilience building programs across San Diego County. In 2024, youth from its Guardian Scholars program shared their lived experiences at the East Region Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Symposium, elevating kinship family voices and inspiring caregivers with their honesty and strength.

Nature Unplugged empowers communities to build healthier relationships with technology by promoting mindfulness, outdoor connection, and mental wellbeing. Its annual Hike-AThon, hosted with Live Well San Diego and County Parks, inspires thousands each year to swap screen time for green

time through community hikes, activity challenges and a growing digital campaign.

North Inland – Fallbrook Union High School District

Fallbrook Union High School District supports nearly 2,000 students across three high schools, serving as a trusted community hub that connects families with vital resources and services. Through strong partnerships, annual community events and dedicated staff the district is focused on reducing chronic absenteeism and helping students overcome barriers and stay engaged in school.

County of San Diego news release · Apr 14, 2026

COUNTY

Artemis II Crew Reminds Us What We’re Protecting This Earth Month

NASA’s Artemis II expedition and its close-up images of our planet are a vivid reminder of the beauty and fragility of the world we all call home. Here at the County of San Diego, sustainability isn’t just an Earth Month theme—it’s a year-round commitment to protecting the planet and improving quality of life for everyone who lives in our small corner of it.

Throughout Earth Month, and beyond, our County team works toward ambitious sustainable goals. For example, we:

Support the regional transition to a green, carbon-free economy, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting clean-energy industries.

Check and treat plants for invasive pests to protect local agriculture.

Support certified farmers markets that increase community access to fresh, healthy food.

Provide electric vehicle charging stations for public and employee use at County sites.

Divert waste from landfills through recycling, reusing and conserving materials.

Offer a rain barrel rebate program to residents in the unincorporated area.

Filter stormwater runoff through green street infrastructure.

Promote environmentally preferable purchasing across County operations.

Conserve land via acquisition, MSCP areas, parks and trails.

Maintain land management policies and practices that protect ecosystems, habitats, biodiversity, and soil health while ensuring opportunities for all residents to enjoy the

outdoors.

Throughout April, the County is hosting a series of events where the public can explore parks , learn how to reduce greenhouse gasses through our climate action plan , and discover more about recycling , water quality, stormwater protection , rain barrels , farmers markets and many other sustainability topics.

Learn more about our climate and sustainability efforts through the Climate Action Plan , Regional Decarbonization Framework and www.sandiegocounty.gov/earthday .

County of San Diego news release · Apr 9, 2026

COUNTY

Raising Awareness to Help Prevent Child Abuse

April is Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time for the community to reinforce its shared responsibility to protect children and strengthen families.

Child abuse is not inevitable, it is preventable. Protecting children requires families, caregivers, and communities working together to educate others, raise awareness and support efforts to keep children safe.

Early intervention and access to resources can help families thrive and children grow up safe and healthy.

“Our goal is to partner with parents to provide the guidance and services they need to be successful before there is a problem or crisis,” said Alfredo Guardado, Director of County Child and Family Well Being. “We are here to help keep families together and safe so that foster care is not a needed intervention.”

Strengthen economic supports: Providing families with financial stability reduces stress, a major contributor to neglect and abuse.

Enhance parenting skills: Training and education, including parenting classes and home visiting programs, help caregivers build strong, positive relationships with children.

Improve childcare quality: Access to high-quality early childhood education provides safe environments and supports early development.

Increase mentoring programs: Volunteer mentoring programs give youth positive role models and reliable support systems.

Child abuse is not always easy to recognize. Understanding common signs of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect can help ensure a child gets help

Courts · Transit · Public safety

quickly. These indicators do not always mean a child is being harmed, but ongoing patterns may signal a concern.

Behavioral Changes: Sudden withdrawal, aggression or increased fearfulness

Unexplained injuries: Bruises or marks that don’t match the child’s explanation or activities

Age-inappropriate sexual knowledge or behavior

Neglect indicators: Poor hygiene, chronic absences from school or lack of supervision

School performance changes: Decline in grades or attendance

If you believe a child may be experiencing abuse or neglect, call the County of San Diego Child Abuse Hotline at (858) 560--2191 or (800-) 344--6000 24 hours a day, seven days a week. You can also dial 2-1-1 San Diego for support and resources.

Every child deserves to grow up in a safe, stable and loving environment.

County of San Diego news release · Apr 10, 2026

COUNTY

Care Continues for Dogs Rescued from Bonsall Property

County Animal Services is providing an update on a group of golden retrievers recently rescued from a property in Bonsall.

On March 24, County Animal Services rescued seven abandoned and malnourished dogs from a Bonsall property. The animals were impounded under exigent circumstances, which allowed officers to act immediately due to urgent concerns for their health and safety.

In the days that followed, officers safely impounded two additional dogs, bringing the total number of rescued golden retrievers to nine.

They were immediately brought into the care of Animal Services’ veterinary and animal care teams at the County’s Bonita shelter, who have been working around the clock to support their recovery.

The dogs arrived underweight and suffered from severe flea infestations, dehydration and anemia. Each dog is receiving individualized treatment, which includes fluids, supportive medications, parasite care and specialized feeding plans to help them recover from starvation.

Two of the dogs are senior males, while the others are approximately one year old, though their weights—ranging from 12 to 25 pounds—indicate that their growth was

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DOWNTOWN, CITY & COUNTY (CONTINUED)

Courts · Transit · Public safety

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Care Continues for Dogs Rescued from Bonsall Property

likely stunted due to the conditions they endured.

One younger dog was being treated for pneumonia; however, despite close monitoring and intensive care, the dog did not survive.

Despite their challenging experiences, the dogs have

shown friendly, social and gentle temperaments, though many remain understandably shy. Our teams are committed to helping them build confidence as they continue to heal.

Their rescue and care have required extensive support from veterinary, animal control and shelter staff. Six team members assisted on-site during the initial response, and the Bonita medical team

has dedicated several days to conducting thorough examinations of all recovered animals.

Animal control officers also made extensive efforts to locate two additional dogs seen near the property. Staff set humane traps, spoke with neighbors and spent many hours searching the surrounding area, including hiking through nearby canyon terrain. Although the dogs

have not yet been found, local residents have been asked to contact Animal Services immediately with any sightings, and we remain hopeful for their safe recovery.

County Animal Services promotes the humane and responsible care of pets by providing the unincorporated areas of San Diego County with 24-hour animal rescues; helping those who can no longer care for their pets;

investigating and stopping animal cruelty or neglect; enforcing state and local laws related to animals as needed; and educating the public about responsible care which includes animal welfare, restraint, and licensing benefits.

County of San Diego news release · Apr 9, 2026

BUSINESS

San Diego commerce & the regional economy

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight – 24 Hour Caregivers

San Diego Home Care Provider Supporting Veterans & Seniors Aging in Place

At 24 Hour Caregivers , providing compassionate care is more than a service—it’s a calling. As a family-owned San Diego home care agency , we help seniors and individuals with disabilities live safely, comfortably, and independently in their own homes.

With nearly two decades of experience in the home care industry, our team understands the growing demand for reliable in-home care services in San Diego and across Southern California. Our mission is to support families with dependable, high-quality care that allows loved ones to age in place with dignity.

Supporting San Diego Veterans with In-Home Care

One group that holds a special place in our hearts is the men and women who have served our country. Veterans across San Diego County often face challenges related to aging, mobility, and daily living—and many families are unaware of the care options available to them.

To give back, we proudly offer 15% off home care services for veterans , helping make professional in-home senior care in San Diego more accessible to those who served.

Our trained caregivers provide a wide range of non-medical services, including:

Transportation to appointments and errands

Personalized Care for Seniors in San Diego

At 24 Hour Caregivers, we go beyond basic care. We

carefully match each client with a caregiver who aligns with their needs, personality, and preferences—ensuring comfort, trust, and consistency.

Whether a senior needs a few hours of help per day or full-time support, our goal is to improve quality of life while giving families peace of mind.

Families searching for home care in San Diego , caregivers near me , or senior care services in Southern California can learn more by visiting our website: https://www.24hourcaregiver.com

24 Hour Caregivers is a trusted provider of in-home care services in San Diego and throughout Southern California , specializing in personalized care for seniors, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. Our experienced caregivers are

committed to helping clients remain safe, independent, and comfortable at home.

Name: Allen Tahir Title: Founder & CEO Company: 24 Hour Caregivers – San Diego Home Care Website: https://www.24hourcaregiver.com Contact: (866) 681-7778 | info@24hourcaregivers.com

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 14, 2026

BUSINESS

Member Spotlight – Navy Region Southwest

Unlock the Navy Market: Your Next Growth Channel in San Diego

Your business is looking for a competitive edge. We provide it. Navy MWR offers direct marketing access to the highly sought-after military consumer—a loyal demographic with steady purchasing power that is traditionally insulated from conventional advertising. Discover how a

strategic partnership with us gives your brand an inside track.

Drive Brand Preference and a Measurable Return on Investment

This is a performance-based marketing opportunity. Your investment enables direct brand integration and consumer engagement through our diverse portfolio of programs, facilities, and high-visibility events. By aligning with the trusted Navy MWR brand, you build powerful connections that translate directly into market share and tangible business results.

Connect with our San Diego business development team to review partnership tiers and build your custom marketing plan.

San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce news release · Apr 8, 2026

AROUND CALIFORNIA

Statewide news

CALIFORNIA

8 Proposed California Tax Hikes Pending in the 2026 Election

With Tax Day approaching, California politicians are proposing eight new tax increases that critics say would cost the average homeowner \$6,500–\$9,000 more in property taxes, drivers roughly \$900 in a mileage tax, households \$16,000 for government-run health care, and impose other levies on savings, utilities, sales and an exit tax.

California already imposes the highest taxes in the nation, yet state and local politicians are still proposing eight new tax hikes for the November 2026 ballot, according to a Tax Day notice.

The proposals include a full repeal of Proposition 13 via

the Split-Roll Initiative that would raise property taxes on the average home to current assessed values, a new tax on personal savings and investments, a 6-cents-per-mile driving tax, higher sales taxes, a tax to fund government-run health care, flat charges on utility bills, an automatic gas-tax increase, and an exit tax on those who leave the state.

If the Split-Roll Initiative passes, the average homeowner would pay an additional \$6,500 to \$9,000 in property taxes each year, the notice states.

Politicians also want a new tax on the value of personal savings accounts, investments, retirement accounts and other assets.

One proposal would impose a 6-cents-per-mile tax on driving that would cost the

average motorist about \$900 per year. The gas tax is scheduled to rise automatically on July 1; Californians already pay \$1,200 a year in combined car and gas taxes.

More than 250 local sales-tax increases are being tracked, and state politicians are considering a further statewide sales-tax hike that could push combined rates in many cities to 10–11 percent.

A proposed health-care tax would double current state taxes to pay for government-run health care and would cost the average household \$16,000 per year. Politicians also want to add large flat-rate charges to all utility bills regardless of usage.

An exit tax would require departing residents to keep paying for up to 10 years after they leave California.

Unite Here Local 11, the union behind the \$30 Los Angeles minimum wage, is pushing an “overpaid CEO” tax, the billionaire tax and the \$30 minimum wage. Its signs state the goal is “Taxing greed to pay for what we need.”

Assemblyman Carl DeMaio (R-San Diego) has prepared three ballot measures to counter the hikes. The Save Prop 13 Initiative would restore the two-thirds voter approval requirement for local tax increases and eliminate new “property transfer tax” schemes.

The Stop the Savings Tax Initiative would prohibit taxes on the value of assets such as property, savings, retirement accounts and investments, and would bar retroactive tax hikes.

The Audit Special Taxes

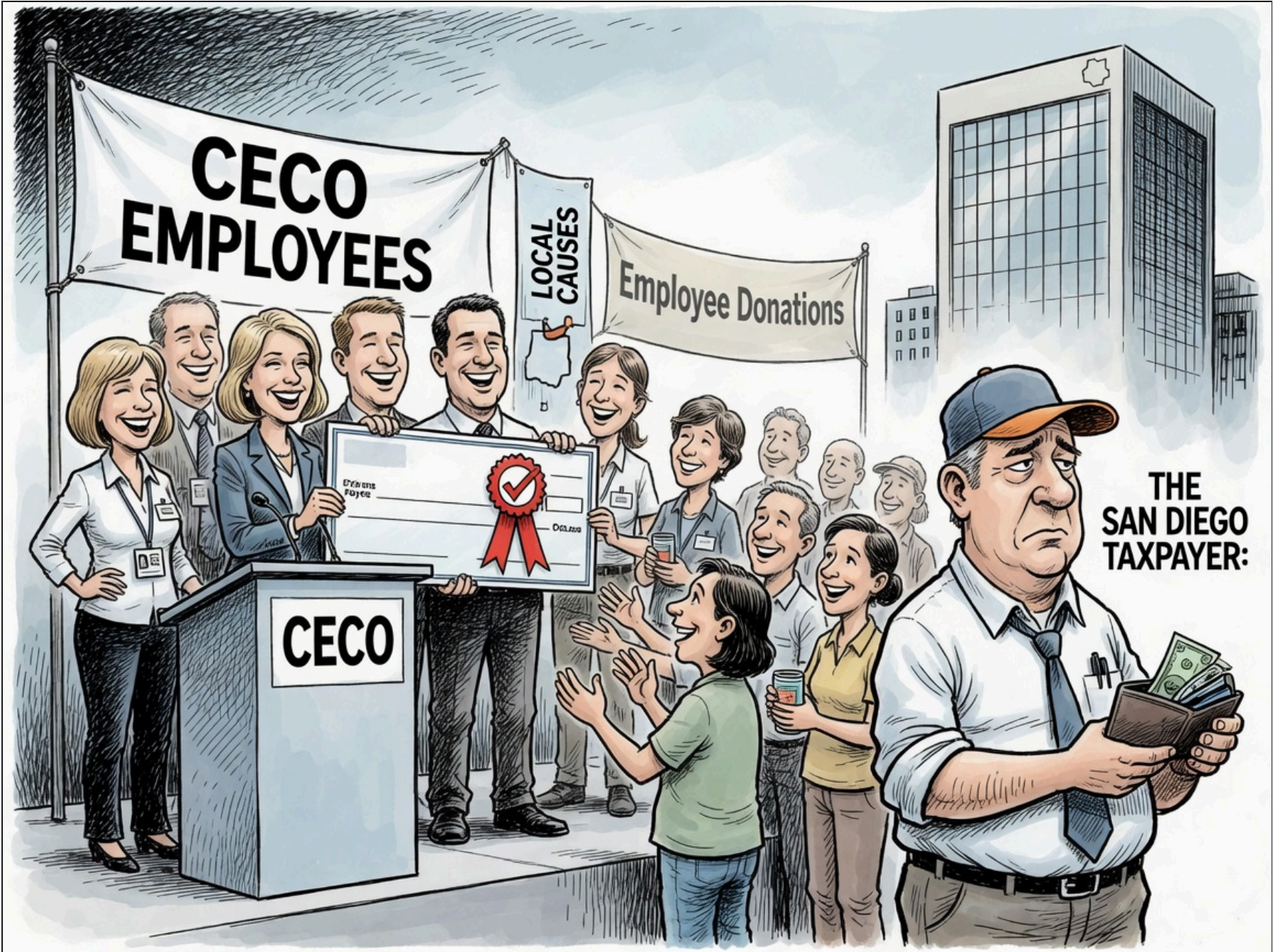
Initiative would make it harder to impose new special tax assessments and would require audits of programs that receive special-tax revenue.

DeMaio said that even though Californians already pay the highest taxes in the nation, politicians are still proposing billions in new tax hikes despite record revenues and a refusal to cut spending.

The notice serves as both a reminder of the measures that will appear on the November 2026 ballot and a warning that the Democratic supermajority in the Legislature will continue to raise taxes rather than reduce spending.

San Diego Newsline · Based on reporting by California Globe · Apr 14, 2026

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County employees giving back with their own donations

THE NEWSLINE CARTOON

COMMENTARY

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

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 sandiegonewslne.com.
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MORE NEWS

Downtown, City & County

COUNTY
Multi-Drug Resistant TB Exposure Reported at Southwestern Community College
The County's Tuberculosis Program is notifying Southwestern Community College students and staff who were potentially exposed to multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.
The tuberculosis (TB) exposure happened between Oct. 27 and Dec. 14, 2025, at Southwestern Community College's main campus on Otay Lakes Road in Chula Vista.
Tuberculosis can be difficult to diagnose. People may be sick for months before receiving a diagnosis, which can lengthen exposure periods.

The potential exposures at Southwestern Community College involve multidrug resistant-TB, a type of infection that does not respond to standard medications. This case is not related to a different multidrug resistant TB case at a Miramar church reported last month.
Southwestern Community College students and staff who believe they may have been exposed to TB based on this information, or health-care providers caring for those with known exposures, should call the County Tuberculosis Control Program at (619) 692-8621 for guidance. This is especially important if they test positive for TB following the exposure.
Standard medications used to treat latent TB are not

effective when treating multidrug resistant TB. People infected with this type of TB will receive alternate treatment.
Tuberculosis is an airborne disease that is transmitted from person-to-person when someone who is sick with the illness coughs, speaks, sings or breathes.
Those with symptoms or weakened immune systems should seek medical care promptly to rule out active disease and discuss treatment.
“Multi-drug-resistant tuberculosis can be more complicated and lengthier to treat since it is a form of infection that does not respond to the usual medicines,” said Sayone Thihalolipavan, M.D., M.P.H., County Public Health Officer.

“The good news is that TB, including MDR-TB, is treatable and curable with the right medication. If you believe you may have been exposed, contact the County Tuberculosis Department right away. Early screening and treatment is important to help protect your health and the health of our community.”
Active TB disease can be prevented through the diagnosis and treatment of a latent TB infection. People who test positive without symptoms should get a chest x-ray to rule out an active case and talk to a medical provider as they most likely have latent TB infection.
People with latent TB are not yet sick and can keep themselves from getting the disease in the future by

taking a short course of medication.
Of the estimated 175,000 people in San Diego County who have latent TB, between 5 and 10 percent will develop active TB disease without treatment.
Since 2020, the number of people diagnosed with active TB disease in San Diego County has been steadily rising. In 2020, there were 193 TB cases, growing to 201 in 2021, 208 in 2022, 242 in 2023, 247 in 2024, and 265 in 2025.
Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis is less common, with three people diagnosed with MDR-TB in San Diego County in 2024 and two diagnosed in 2025.
County of San Diego news release · Apr 9, 2026