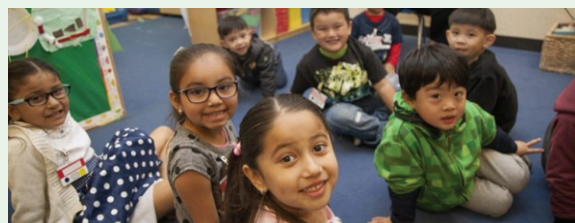


Construction of  
\$8.7M wild animal  
'Safe Passage' across  
Highway 101 set for 2028  
**SEE PAGE 4**



Santa Clara County  
prioritizes children's  
programs amid  
budget issues  
**SEE PAGE 8**



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# Evergreen Times

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## Major changes coming to schools

*Priorities include gender-neutral bathrooms, healthier food, protections from immigration raids and less smartphone use*

**By Sean Eastwood**

*Times Media staff reporter*

California schools are implementing new education laws this year affecting 5.8 million K-12 students, introducing cell phone restrictions, protections for immigrant families, gender-neutral bathrooms, and healthier meal options.

New education law changes  
*See SCHOOLS, page 10*

## San Jose mayor opposes billionaire tax proposal

**By Keith Menconi**

*San José Spotlight*

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan has come out against a controversial proposal to create a "billionaire tax" in California. Backers see it as a means of filling a massive deficit facing the state's health care system.

In a nearly 300-word thread posted to X Monday, Mahan warned if passed by voters, the pending statewide ballot measure would drive wealthy entrepreneurs out of California, sapping the state's tax base and undermining its economic dynamism.

"We need a rising economic tide to lift all boats, not a political plan that will sink California's innovation economy," Mahan wrote.

The post is just the latest example of Mahan chiming in on a hot-button statewide policy issue, amid speculation that he is considering a run for governor this November. The mayor's office has consistently downplayed such



San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan has spoken out on social media against a proposed ballot measure to tax billionaires in California. File photo.

rumors.

The proposed measure would impose a one-time, 5% wealth tax on about 200 Californians who hold more than \$1 billion in assets, backers said.

The October announcement of the ballot measure campaign has set off a political firestorm that has only intensified with time. In recent weeks, a number of wealthy Californians have responded with threats to move their homes and assets to other states. Mean-

while, prominent California Democrats have staked out opposing positions on both sides of the issue.

"We believe billionaires can pay a modest wealth tax so working class Californians have the Medicaid your party cut," Khanna wrote in an X post responding to criticism from Republican Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas.

Khanna is referencing pending cuts that stem from President Donald Trump's One Big  
*See BILLIONAIRES, page 5*

## Eastridge to BART Regional Connector tree planting

VTA has formed a partnership with Our City Forest (OCF) who has been actively planting trees in neighborhoods near the BART Regional Connector at Eastridge Center project site. These tree plantings reflect EBRC's ongoing commitment to reforesting East San José.

Tree plantings have been conducted at the Eastridge to BART Regional Connector Project (EBRC) which extends light rail from the existing Alum Rock Light Rail Station to the Eastridge Transit Center. The connector has an elevated guideway design primarily in the center of Capitol Expressway.

The Eastridge extension will include an elevated light rail station at Story Road and an at-grade station located at the Eastridge Transit Center.

This project (formerly Capitol Expressway Light Rail Project) has been delivered in phases. The first phase was delivered in two parts. In Phase 1A, VTA addressed pedestrian access and improved safety measures along the expressway between Quimby Road and Capitol Avenue.

Phase 1A was completed in Fall 2012 and included new sidewalks, street lighting, and a landscaping buffer. Phase 1B was the reconstruction of the Eastridge Transit Center. The improvements to the transit



center included new shelters and amenities, and support bus rapid transit (BRT). This was completed in 2015.

The light rail extension is Phase 2, and the final phase of the larger Capitol Expressway Transit Improvement Project that transforms the Capitol Expressway into a multi-modal expressway offering BRT, light rail transit, and safe connections to the regional transit system.

### Project Status

Construction has started and is anticipated to be completed in 2028. Construction activities will increase traffic and drive time from permanent and temporary lane closures on Capitol Expressway. Construction activities are noisy. There will be large equipment that causes vibrations that will be felt by people who live or work along the corridor.

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## Times Local News

## Construction of \$8.7M wild animal 'Safe Passage' across Highway 101 set for 2028

By Sean Eastwood

Times Media staff reporter

A design contract has been approved for a new wildlife crossing in Coyote Valley.

Conservationists and transportation planners expect that construction on the project could begin by 2028, which if approved will provide infrastructure for safe passage for animals across Highway 101, Monterey Road and Union Pacific rail lines in southern Santa Clara County.

On Jan. 8, the board of the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority approved an \$8.7 million contract with HDR

Engineering to begin the initial stages of design and planning for the passage, known as the U.S. 101/Monterey Road Wildlife Crossings Project.

The crossing will be located where Fisher Creek intersects Monterey Road.

"As Santa Clara County's congestion management agency, VTA works to keep our transportation network safe and efficient," Carolyn Gonot, VTA's general manager and CEO, said in a statement. "Investing in wildlife crossings



A new wildlife crossing to help mountain lions, American badger, California ground squirrels, black-tailed deer, northwestern pond turtles, California tiger salamanders, California red-legged frogs and bobcats cross Coyote Valley via Monterey Rd. to avoid traffic collisions. Photo courtesy of Peninsula Open Space Trust.

helps reduce collisions and ensures our roadways better coexist with the region's natural habitats for the long-term health and safety of all."

## Celebrating an incredible year in District 8

By Domingo Candelas

As we kick off 2026, I want to take a moment to reflect on what an incredible year 2025 was for District 8.

Last year, my office and I were working hard delivering results that strengthened our neighborhoods and brought our community together. From hosting exciting, free events across the district to advancing meaningful legislation at City Hall, our focus was to improve the quality of life for residents.

In 2025, my team supported, organized, and attended more than 167 community events, including the City's first-ever drone show, free concerts at the Evergreen Village Square, and a Fall Family Festival that brought hundreds of families to Lake Cunningham.

At City Hall, I authored or coauthored 19 memorandums that were approved by the City Council! Addi-

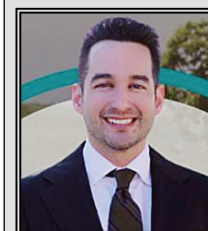
tionally, my office addressed nearly 1,000 neighborhood cases addressing everyday concerns like illegal dumping, overgrown weeds, and streetlight outages.

Together with our neighbors, we made meaningful progress—from cleanups and youth programming to 3 new neighborhood associations, pedestrian safety improvements, and securing over \$570,000 to support District 8 projects and events.

None of this work would be possible without the dedication and involvement of our residents. Thank you for being active, engaged, and invested in your community. I'm excited to build on this momentum as we move forward in 2026.

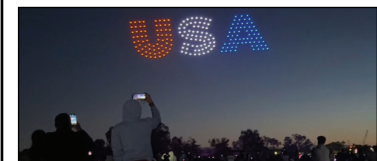
P.S. Save the date for my annual Budget Breakfast: Saturday, February 21st at Grace Church!

It is my pleasure and privilege to serve as your City Councilmember.



### Council Report

Domingo Candelas,  
District 8 Councilmember



District 8 hosted the City's first-ever drone show.

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Times **Local News**

## Much has changed, yet much has remained the same

By Matt Mahan

We've been planning, talking and fundraising for the last three years. As I was reflecting on all that's gone into this event, I looked back at our newsletter from May of 2023.

I had just taken office as your mayor, and in that newsletter, we first announced and discussed the fact that San José would help the region host two of the largest sporting events in the world: Super Bowl and World Cup.

It's funny — so much has changed since then, but our goals remain the same. Our plan is close to execution, and our city is ready to activate.

Back then, I shared that the last time Levi's Stadium hosted the Super Bowl, the event generated over \$240 million in economic impact, but San José only captured 12% of the total. I told you all that we can and would do better. That we would capitalize on this experience for our small businesses, for our residents, and for the many people visiting

San José for the very first time. That we would bring the action directly to our Downtown.

Three years later, we are a month away from that vision becoming a reality. And I have no doubt that 2026 will blow 2016 out of the water.

Our goal all along has been to ensure that this year isn't just fun for visitors and a strain on our communities. We want to make sure that even if you don't have a ticket to the big game, you can be a part of the action. That you can feel the energy in your city and be proud of the place you call home.

To that end, we have national headliners choosing to play right outside City Hall. We have a massive block party circling San Pedro Square that will show off the innovation of our region with holograms and flying cars. We have a sports initiative launching next week that will bring our biggest teams together to coach our youngest residents.

We'll have drone shows, projection art and wayfinding via a mobile app.

For us, none of this just happens. The leagues and their big sponsors are putting most of their official programming in SF, as they always do, but we decided three years ago to take control of our own destiny. The only official event we have next month is the NFL's Open-

ing Night the Monday before the big game. But what we do have is an incredible community — people with creativity, vision and hard work who believe in what San José can be.

Part of that team is the funders who made these events possible. Devcon, Adobe, eBay, Cisco, Google and so many other local and global business leaders came together to bet big on our city.

I'm grateful to the private sector partners who are making San José's fan experience possible. These are community leaders who see what our region is and can become. People who know we're the safest big city in the nation. People who know we're reducing unsheltered homelessness faster than any other big city in California. People who know that what is holding us back is at least partly perception.

Perception that San José is a bedroom community, or a suburb of SF. I like to tease my colleagues around the Bay that one day we'll be known as the San José Bay Area. And I'm only half joking. We have the scale, the land, the pragmatism, the creativity, the sense of community, and the will to power this region into the future. To define what the Bay Area becomes in the Twenty-First Century.

At our State of the City It May, I said that San José was a city on the cusp. And it's years like this that will take us over the edge. It's our job to make sure that progress lasts beyond 2026.



**From the Mayor**

**Matt Mahan**  
Mayor, San Jose

## Assemblymember Chris Ward launches new push to protect Californians' data privacy

Assemblymember Ward (inset) held a press conference on January 6 to announce the reintroduction of legislation to ban the sale of geolocation data, the introduction of new legislation to strengthen protection for sensitive personal data, and continued efforts to advance AB 1337, currently a two-year bill in the Senate Judiciary Committee.



The event brought together consumer advocates, civil rights organizations, and privacy experts to highlight the growing risks posed by the unchecked collection, sale, and misuse of Californians' personal information.

The press conference included statements from privacy experts to underscore the urgency of protecting Californians' personal information from misuse, exploitation, and sale without consent.

## Billionaires

*Continued from page 1*

Beautiful Bill. In California, the state stands to lose \$30 billion each year from the measure, resulting in 3.4 million people losing Medi-Cal coverage, according to estimates from The California Budget & Policy Center. The campaign behind the wealth tax — led by Service Employees International Union-United Healthcare Workers West (SEIU-UHW), a major statewide health care union — said the \$100 billion in projected revenue from the measure would provide a crucial buffer against those looming cuts.

Supporters must collect nearly 850,000 signatures by June 24 for the wealth tax to qualify for the November ballot.

Khanna's outspoken support for the billionaire tax has earned him fierce rebukes from a number of tech industry leaders, a constituency the Silicon Valley representative has generally counted among his reliable supporters. Mahan's series of X posts does not refer to Khanna.

Khanna's office did not respond to a request for comment. A representative for Mahan declined to provide further comment beyond the mayor's X posts.

Mahan's posts warned an exodus of wealthy entrepreneurs would devastate California's tax base — which is heavily reliant on high-income earners — leaving middle-class working households to "pick up the tab."

"I realize no one has sympathy for billionaires. But the truth is — they don't

have to, and many won't, stay here if this tax is implemented," Mahan wrote. "The people who lose in the long run are California families who will be asked to foot more of the bill for government services and infrastructure."

Responding to Mahan's comments, a spokesperson for SEIU-UHW accused the mayor of misunderstanding the underlying funding problem the proposed tax is intended to solve.

"He must be misinformed — because the goal of this measure is to save hospitals and keep ERs open, prevent higher health care costs, and protect health care for all Californians, including children, seniors and people with disabilities," Suzanne Jimenez, the labor organization's chief of staff, told San José Spotlight. "Without this measure, higher health care costs will be shifted onto millions of Californians, many of whom are already struggling with skyrocketing health care and prescription costs."

In his posts, Mahan — who recently launched a statewide Back to Basics initiative focused on promoting "common sense" policy fixes to the state's problems — also questioned the efficacy of imposing a new tax. He argued that before taking this step, California should first do more to crack down on "waste, fraud and abuse" in the health care system and state government.

"Income inequality is a very real issue and we need to address it with real solutions — like closing the massive loopholes nationally that allow the wealthiest among us to essentially never pay taxes on many capital gains," he said. "But for California to go it alone will be a disaster."



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# Mahan mulling gubernatorial run

By William Bellou  
*Publisher*

Can San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan win the governorship of California?

San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan, who has become increasingly involved in statewide matters in recent years, is currently reassessing his political ambitions and may be considering entering California’s gubernatorial race—a contest that presently lacks a definitive front-runner.

Mahan, 43, commented that none of the declared candidates have presented a “clear and compelling” vision for the state. In an interview with the San Jose Mercury News, Mahan emphasized the need for “bold and independent leadership,” particularly to address homelessness. “Business as usual prevails in Sacramento,” remarked Mahan, who was at the Capitol to advocate for housing reforms intended to improve affordability. “There is an absence of crisis-level responses.”

These remarks coincided with Attorney General Rob Bonta’s announcement that he

will not pursue the governor’s office and instead seek reelection, following a year in which he filed more than fifty lawsuits against the Trump administration. Bonta had received increasing encouragement from supporters to join the race, especially after former Vice President Kamala Harris and Senator Alex Padilla decided not to run to succeed term-limited Governor Gavin Newsom.

In a statement, Bonta—previously an Alameda city council member and state assembly member—expressed gratitude for the support, noting it has “sharpened my focus,” but maintained, “My resolve is firm: our fight against corporate greed and attacks from Washington requires battle-tested experience in the courtroom.”

Mahan refrained from specifying a timeline for his decision regarding candidacy, indicating he must first consult family members. Should he enter the race, he would join a field where a considerable portion of voters remain undecided.

David McCuan, Professor of Political Sci-

ence at Sonoma State University, observed that although numerous candidates have entered this open-seat contest, few have generated sustained momentum, with many polling in single digits. McCuan characterized Mahan as an “unconventional Democrat,” suggesting that his early successes in San Jose may signal a propitious moment for further advancement. “Much of politics is about timing,” he stated. “And conditions appear favorable for his next career move.”

Nonetheless, McCuan remarked that while Mahan enjoys recognition in Silicon Valley and the Bay Area, he is less familiar with voters in Southern California, which comprises a substantial share of the state’s electorate.

Mahan’s political ascent began in 2020 with his election to the City Council, followed by his mayoral victory in 2022. Known as a moderate Democrat, he has occasionally found himself at odds with party leadership, particularly in criticizing Governor Newsom’s refusal to fund Proposition 36—the crime-focused measure approved in 2024 amid rising property offenses and drug use. Mahan has also challenged the governor’s administration over allegations of waste, fraud, and abuse within state programs, advocating for bipartisan scrutiny of these issues.

As mayor, Mahan has prioritized a “Back to Basics” approach, focusing on homelessness, urban renewal, and crime reduc-

tion. Last year, he established a coalition to promote these strategies on a statewide scale. “We are implementing bold initiatives crafted for measurable change,” he said in reference to San Jose’s achievements. “Current candidates do not seem to be addressing these critical topics in a substantive way.”

Last month, Mahan hosted several gubernatorial candidates in San Jose for a tour of one of the city’s interim housing facilities, advocating for the restoration of essential state homelessness funding. None of the Democratic attendees, including investor Tom Steyer; former Representative Katie Porter, former State Controller Betty Yee, Superintendent Tony Thurmond, and former Assembly Majority Leader Ian Calderon—provided the visionary leadership Mahan seeks.

Additional Democratic contenders comprise former U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary and California Attorney General Xavier Becerra, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and U.S. Representative Eric Swalwell. Republican candidates include former Fox News commentator Steve Hilton and Riverside County Sheriff Chad Bianco.

A recent poll by Emerson College indicates that approximately one-third of voters remain undecided, with Bianco leading at 13%, closely followed by Swalwell and Hilton at 12% each.

## State Highways account for the largest share of fatal crashes in the U.S., new analysis shows

A new analysis of 129,825 fatal crashes shows that state highways, not interstates, have more accidents, accounting for 42% of all fatal crashes nationwide.

Over the past five years, California has recorded 19,241 crashes.

**The most dangerous roads are:**

Rank	California Roads	Crashes
1	I-5	536
2	US-101	409
3	SR-99	368
4	I-15	290
5	I-10	252
6	I-80	211
7	SR-1	154
8	SR-91	121
9	SR-4	110
10	I-215	98

**Where Fatal Crashes Happen in California:**

- State highways: 49%
- U.S. highways: 8%
- Interstates: 29%
- Local streets: 15%

A new nationwide analysis of crash data reveals that state highways - not interstates - account for the largest proportion of deadly road crashes in the United States.

The study by iSelect examined 129,825 fatal crashes across all 50 states and Washington, D.C., breaking them down by road type: interstates, U.S. highways, state highways, and local streets. The findings show that 42% of fatal crashes nationwide occur on state highways, compared with 23% on U.S. highways, 18% on interstates, and 17% on local streets.

**Where Fatal Crashes Happen Nationwide**

- State highways: 42%
- U.S. highways: 23%
- Interstates: 18%
- Local streets: 17%

State highways often combine higher speed limits with frequent intersections, mixed traffic, and limited separation between vehicles, creating a particularly high-risk environment.

States Where Risk Is Concentrated on State Highways	
Several states show an especially high proportion of fatal crashes occurring on state highways:	
State	Highway
Hawaii	87%
Alaska	76%
Pennsylvania	65%
New Hampshire	60%
South Carolina	60%
In these states, state highways often function as primary commuter and freight routes, increasing exposure to high-speed collisions.	
States Where Interstates Pose the Greatest Risk	
In contrast, some states see a much larger share of fatal crashes on interstates, reflecting long-distance travel, higher speeds, and rural highway exposure:	
State	Interstate
Wyoming	35%
Massachusetts	31%
California	29%
New Mexico	27%
Idaho	24%
Local Streets: An Urban Safety Challenge	
Local streets account for nearly half of fatal crashes in some urban-heavy areas:	
State	Local Street - Municipality
District of Columbia	84%
Arizona	47%
Kansas	30%
Indiana	28%
Michigan	27%

Top 5 Most Dangerous States to Drive				
State	Crash Risk Score	Weather Risk Score	Road Infrastructure Risk Score	Total Danger Score
Mississippi	87.55	35.17	45.53	56.08
Texas	41.98	38.80	84.93	55.24
Tennessee	61.92	32.60	64.54	53.02
Wyoming	78.69	38.98	37.29	51.66

The U.S. has the highest average national crash risk score among the countries examined, scoring 39.48. The riskiest roads are concentrated in Mississippi, Texas, Tennessee, Wyoming, and Louisiana.

More information on state level can be found onsite: <https://www.iselect.com.au/car-insurance/insights/the-most-dangerous-places-to-drive>

**Methodology**

This analysis of the most dangerous states to drive in the U.S. uses data derived from the Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), the federal government’s most comprehensive database on fatal motor vehicle crashes. This data was analyzed by state, city and by road to reveal where crashes have taken place in each state.





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Please note: I have not and will not be verifying or investigating any information supplied by others.



# Santa Clara County prioritizes children amid budget issues

By Lorraine Gabbert  
*San José Spotlight*

Santa Clara County is working to provide safety net programs to children and their families despite budget issues stemming from federal funding cuts. The county's children's budget for fiscal year 2025-26 includes \$1.3 billion to support the welfare of children and youth, up 2.8% from the previous fiscal year. The budget is targeted at



Santa Clara County children in the Head Start program. Photo courtesy of Santa Clara County Office of Education.

foster care and adoption, detention and rehabilitation facilities and CalWORKS, which provides financial assistance, childcare and health care to families in need. The majority of funding comes from the federal and state government, property tax and hospital revenues.

But with massive cuts to federal funding looming under H.R. 1, also known as President Donald Trump's One Big Beautiful Bill, the county has been tasked with making tough decisions.

The bill, approved by Congress on July 4, approved unprecedented cuts to federal health care and food assistance programs. About 38,400 children are at risk of losing access to health care and food assistance services, according to the county's Social Services Agency.

While the county is committed to supporting vulnerable children and families, the loss of federal funding makes this mission challenging, District 4 Supervisor Susan Ellenberg said.

"We are being very thoughtful in looking at where our dollars are having the most impact, where there are opportunities to shift funding sources rather than eliminate programs altogether and where we need to look for other revenue opportunities," she told San José Spotlight. "I would like to not see those cuts be made in programs that serve vulnerable children, because that sets us up for another generation of people experiencing poverty, trauma and poor health outcomes."

Heidi Emberling, director of the Santa Clara County Office of

Children and Families Policy, said H.R. 1 threatens the county's entire social safety net. She said nearly one in three children in the county rely on Medi-Cal or CalFresh to access health care and food assistance.

"That will threaten family stability," Emberling told San José Spotlight. "Without access to health care, families are going to have to flood ERs, as opposed to having access to primary care doctors."

Emberling said to address federal cuts, the county will work to ensure families have access to food, housing, health care and childcare.

In addition to navigating these cuts, county leaders are also concerned about a federal funding freeze impacting child day care centers statewide. The freeze is directed toward five states — California, Minnesota, New York, Colorado and Illinois — where the federal administration is claiming it has concerns about widespread fraud.

The feds are withholding billions of dollars from the Child Care and Development Fund, which provides low-income families with child care subsidies. The total freeze is more than \$10 billion across all five states. California accounts for about \$5 billion of those funds. A federal judge on Friday temporarily blocked the Trump administration from freezing funds. The order will last for 14 days unless it's extended.

Santa Clara County receives more than \$63 million for CalWORKS, which provides cash assistance to support employment goals, child care services and other pathways to sufficiency for 6,100 families, according to county data.

H.R. 1 will take about \$1 billion of the \$2.3 billion the county receives from the federal government, Emberling said. Some of this loss will be mitigated by Measure A, a five-eighths-cent sales tax increase approved by voters in November, which will raise about \$330 million a year to protect hospitals, health care and public safety. But that's a drop in the bucket compared to expected annual losses, and county officials have previously said cuts will be necessary. The county is also asking the state for aid.

"We're going to do the best we can with the resources we have to serve those most vulnerable in our community," Emberling said.

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## Schools

Continued from page 1

follow recent challenges such as declining enrollment and federal scrutiny over diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Senate Bill 760 requires all schools to offer at least one gender-neutral bathroom which was signed by Governor Newsom in 2023.

The law requires the bathroom to be open to students of all genders, unlocked and readily accessible. It does not apply to campuses that have only one boys' and one girls' bathroom, nor does it include kindergarten and transitional kindergarten students. Schools can redesign any existing bathroom to meet the requirement.

The mandate comes amid years of debate across the Bay Area and beyond over gender-neutral bathrooms and locker rooms.

### Protections from immigration enforcement activity

In September, Newsom signed a first-of-its-kind law prohibiting federal law enforcement and immigration officers from concealing their identities and barring their access to schools and health care facilities without a warrant or court order.

Two additional measures — Assembly Bill 49 and Senate Bill 98 — further expanded those protections.

AB 49, also known as the California Safe Haven Schools Act, prohibits school employees from allowing immigration officers onto campuses or sharing student information without a warrant or court order. When officers are permitted on campus, the law restricts them to areas where students are not present. The Santa Clara County Office of Education and the Santa Clara County Board of Education co-sponsored the bill.

Another law, Assembly Bill 495 — the Family Preparedness Plan Act — expands who can make decisions for children if their parents are detained or deported. As of this past Thursday, adults related to a child by blood or adoption within five generations can be authorized to enroll a child in school or make medical decisions about their care on campus.

### Ultra-processed food ban

Under a first-in-the-nation law, Assembly Bill 1264, California schools will begin phasing out "particularly harmful" ultra-processed foods from student meals. The state has until July 1 to define which foods fall under that category. Schools will then have until 2029 to begin removing restricted items from meals

and beverages, with a full prohibition taking effect by 2035.

### Cellphone restrictions

Schools must limit or ban smartphone use on school campuses by July 1 under Assembly Bill 3216 — also known as the Phone-Free School Act. Newsom signed the legislation in 2024, making California the sixth state to restrict cellphone use in schools. The law allows districts to craft their own policies, leaving decisions about enforcement and exemptions — such as for medical needs or emergencies — to local leaders.

### Easier college admissions

Eligible California high school seniors will be automatically admitted to participating California State University campuses through a new direct-admission program created under Senate Bill 640. The program will notify students who have completed required coursework and met GPA thresholds, offering admission to one of 16 participating campuses, but not necessarily a student's campus of choice.

The law also directs the California Community Colleges system to develop programs that streamline transfers to four-year universities.

### Expanded mental health resources for LGBTQ+ students

Beginning July 1, student ID cards for grades 7 through 12 and public universities must include a 24/7 crisis hotline operated by the Trevor Project, which provides suicide prevention and mental health support to LGBTQ+ youth.

Student ID cards are already required to list suicide prevention and domestic violence hotlines. The change comes after the Trump administration cut funding for specialized national crisis hotline services for LGBTQ+ youth over the summer.

### Efforts to address antisemitism and discrimination

One of the most contentious laws taking effect this year, Assembly Bill 715, creates a new Office of Civil Rights and establishes a first-in-the-nation statewide Antisemitism Prevention Coordinator, who will track and report incidents of antisemitism in schools and advise districts on prevention and response strategies.

Faculty and teacher unions strongly opposed the bill, warning it could chill free speech and academic inquiry. Supporters argue the measure provides long-overdue oversight and consistency in how schools address antisemitism.



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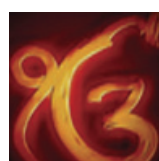


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