

# GWIRE



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WEIGH IN ON HOMELESS,  
POLICE, POTHOLES »**

**CALIFORNIA  
LAWMAKERS REVIVE A BIG  
PIECE OF OBAMACARE »**

**HEALTH CARE, IMMIGRATION  
TOP ISSUES AT DEMOCRATS'  
1ST DEBATE »**

WEEKLY DIGEST  
JUNE 28, 2019



GV Wire/Jahz Tejo

# LOCAL

## DISTRICT 2 CANDIDATES WEIGH IN ON HOMELESS,

June 26, 2019 | GV Wire

Three candidates vying in a special election to fill the open District 2 seat on the Fresno City Council gathered Wednesday in a forum presented by GV Wire and CMAC to give their opinions about police, homelessness, and reaching out to residents.

The forum served as an introduction for many northwest Fresno constituents to candidates running to replace Steve Brandau, the District 2 councilman who was elected to the Fresno County Board of Supervisors. Candidates Jared Gordon, Mike Karbassi, and Oscar Sandoval answered questions from GV Wire reporter David Taub. Two candidates, Lawrence Garcia and George Herman, chose not to participate.

### District 2's Most Pressing Problems

When asked what residents are telling them in terms of the district's most pressing problems, Gordon said homelessness was the top issue "both in the district and, I think, across the entire city."

Karbassi said public safety was the No. 1 concern, followed by homelessness and a dangerous traffic issue near Starr Elementary School. Sandoval noted that residents in the Pinedale area felt their voices are unheard in City Hall, while district residents nearer to Highway 99 are comparatively content. "My big goal is to bridge that divide," Sandoval said.

### Differing Ideas About Public Safety

Asked about public safety, Gordon said it was important to make the existing police force more effective with training and by placing officers in the city where they can be the most effective. Karbassi

repeated a campaign pledge to not support a Fresno city budget unless it had money for more officers; he said the current ratio of officers to residents is dangerously low. Sandoval said the city and police department need to build more trust with residents, and that one solution could be to hire officers from the neighborhoods they serve.

The candidates all said they would be responsive to residents reaching out for help about anything from potholes to trash-can replacement, and all said they would respond to a resident within 24 hours, though the solution might take more time. Karbassi gave out his phone number.

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[Click here to see the forum in its entirety.](#)

**Candidates Jared Gordon, Mike Karbassi, and Oscar Sandoval answered questions from GV Wire reporter David Taub. Two candidates, Lawrence Garcia and George Herman, chose not to participate.**



# WATER RETURNS TO FRESNO SPLASH PADS, FOR NOW

June 25, 2019 | GV Wire

The sounds of summer finally returned to two broken splash pads in Fresno. Kids giggled and screamed as a giant bucket dumped cool, refreshing water on them. Water cannons quelled the heat as the temperature climbed into the high 90s. Despite signs nearby that said it was closed, the splash pad was working at Inspiration Park in west Fresno. Carol Spencer lives in the neighborhood and took her younger cousin to the park. She said the water returned Saturday. It had been off for at least three weeks. “I didn’t like it,” Spencer said of the splash pad’s closure. “I think the city should have fixed it a little quicker because there are so many little kids out here and it’s really hot.” However, there is some confusion at City Hall about whether the past few days reflect a permanent fix or just a test of the system.

## Temporary or Permanent Fix?

Inspiration Park is located in councilwoman Esmeralda Soria’s district. She sent an email Monday to Mayor Lee Brand

that asked for an update about the splash pad. T.J. Miller, the city’s interim parks director, wrote back Tuesday. “Regarding Inspiration splash pad, it’s still in the monitoring mode, the water should be flowing and kids can use it, our technicians are watching to make sure it doesn’t shut off,” Miller wrote in an email. The ongoing problem has frustrated Soria’s office. “There is a communication issue between our office and city administration,” said Terry Cox, Soria’s chief of staff.

## Trash Clogs Splash Pad at Dickey

Meanwhile, city crews worked Monday to fix the broken splash pad at Dickey Playground downtown. It had been down for at least a week, according the parks department’s Twitter account. City spokesman Mark Standriff blamed a broken pump. As the water sprayed out of the ground, a maintenance worker pointed out another problem — people putting trash into the drain grates. The trash then was sucked into the pumps, causing the stoppage. “It messes it up for the rest of...

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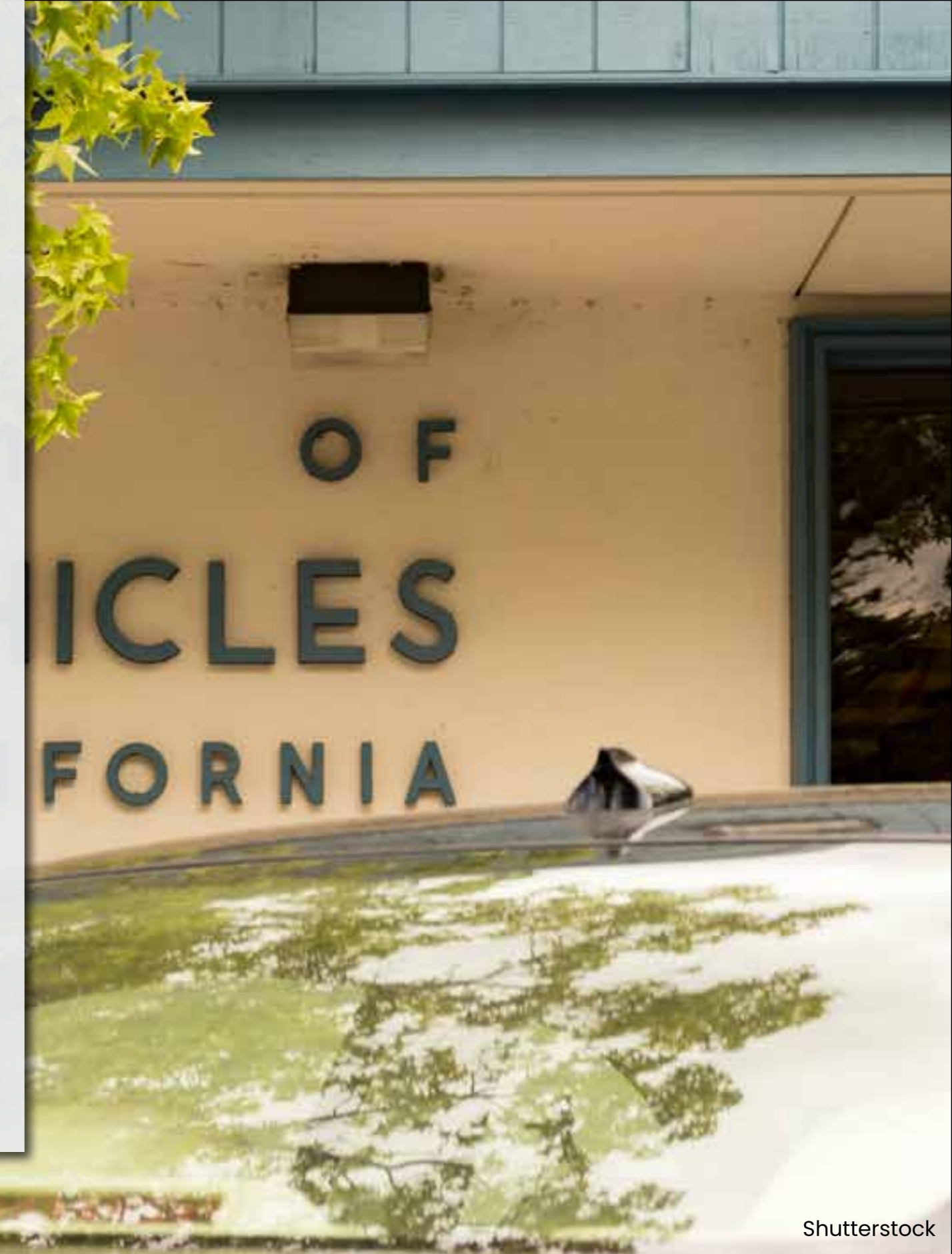
# ALL DMVS TO CLOSE 1 DAY FOR TRAINING. WILL THAT FIX LONG LINES?

June 24, 2019 | Jody Murray

California’s Department of Motor Vehicles, slammed in a state audit for slipshod customer service and being poorly prepared for the rollout of federally approved driver’s licenses, will close its offices statewide for a half-day to train staff on doing a better job. The closure will happen Wednesday, July 24, so plan accordingly. Every field office, including the three in Fresno and Clovis, will be closed until 1 p.m.

In a news release, the DMV says the training will better prepare employees for processing driver’s licenses that meet the Real ID standard — airport security checkpoints won’t accept cards without special markings after Oct. 1, 2020. California residents must apply in person at DMV offices to get the federally mandated cards. An audit released in March by the state Department of Finance said the DMV suffered from “significant deficiencies in planning and implementation” of the processing of **Real ID cards**. People sometimes waited for hours...

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# MODESTO HELLS ANGELS PRESIDENT ARRESTED ON METH CHARGES

June 25, 2019 | GV Wire

The president of the Modesto Hells Angels Motorcycle Club, his wife, and two others will appear in federal court on Wednesday in Fresno, where they’ll face methamphetamine trafficking charges. Charged in a criminal complaint unsealed Tuesday were Modesto residents Randy Picchi, 61, president of the club; his wife Tina Picchi, 51; Michael Mize, 61; and Michael Pack, 32, a prospect with the club.

Randy Picchi, Tina Picci, and Mize were arrested Tuesday and placed into custody, according to a news release from the Department of Justice. Officers executed search warrants at seven locations Tuesday in Stanislaus County, including the Hells Angeles clubhouse in Modesto. Court documents allege that Randy Picchi led a drug conspiracy and directed his wife to regularly deliver drugs to Mize and others in Ceres. Randy Pichi also enlisted Pack to help obtain methamphetamine on at least one occasion. Pack was stopped by law enforcement officers and...

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AP File

# STATE

## CALIFORNIA LAWMAKERS REVIVE A BIG PIECE OF OBAMACARE

June 25, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — The California Legislature voted Monday to tax people who refuse to buy health insurance, bringing back a key part of former President Barack Obama's health care law in the country's most populous state after it was eliminated by Republicans in Congress. The tax now heads to Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom, who proposed a similar plan in January — an indication he will likely approve it.

The federal Affordable Care Act required everyone to buy health insurance or pay a penalty. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the law, ruling the penalty was a tax. In 2017, Republicans in Congress eliminated the penalty — beginning this year — as part of an overhaul of the federal tax code.

### Democrats' Goal is for Everyone to Have Insurance

The bill passed by Democrats in California would reinstate the tax, effective Jan. 1. No Republicans voted for it.

**The Affordable Care Act required everyone to buy health insurance or pay a penalty. In 2017, Republicans in Congress eliminated the penalty — beginning this year — as part of an overhaul of the tax code.**

One Democrat in the state Assembly — Rudy Salas Jr. — voted against it. The penalty won't apply to everyone, including people living in the country illegally. Lawmakers on Monday also approved a bill that would expand government-funded

health insurance to low-income young adults living in the U.S. illegally. People in prison and those who are members of an American Indian tribe are also exempt, mirroring what had been in the federal law. Democrats say the plan is part of their efforts to make sure everyone in California has health insurance.

### Three States and D.C. Have the Penalty Now

If the bill becomes law, California would join Massachusetts, New Jersey, Vermont and Washington, D.C., next

year as the only governments in the U.S. to penalize people who don't buy health insurance. It would also make California the only state to use money it gets from the penalty to help people who earn as much as six times the federal poverty limit pay their monthly health insurance premiums.

**If the bill becomes law, California would join Massachusetts, New Jersey, Vermont and Washington, D.C., next year as the only governments in the U.S. to penalize people who don't buy health insurance.**

That means a family of four earning up to \$150,000 a year would be eligible.

"These new subsidies will impact almost 1 million Californians and help them get the health care access that they deserve," said Democratic Assemblyman Phil Ting of San Francisco. Republican state Sen. John Moorlach said in 2014 that 82% of Californians who paid the penalty for not having health insurance had taxable incomes of \$50,000 or less. "This trailer bill will take money away from people making \$30,000 to \$50,000 a year and give it to people making between \$75,000 and \$130,000 a year," GOP Assemblyman Jay Obernolte said. "That makes no sense."

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June 26, 2019 | AP News

SACRAMENTO — California has among the most stringent gun laws in the country and on Monday a far-reaching new initiative to curb violence will require background checks for every ammunition purchase. Gov. Gavin Newsom and other proponents said it will save lives but opponents are suing in hopes of eventually undoing a law they said will mostly harm millions of law-abiding gun owners.

Voters approved the checks in 2016 and set an effective date of July 1. Ammunition dealers are seeing a surge in sales as customers stock up before the requirement takes effect. “In the last two weeks I’ve been up about 300%” with peo-

ple “bulking up because of these stupid new laws,” said Chris Puehse, who owns Foothill Ammo east of Sacramento.

**Consumers Will Pay \$1 Fee to Buy Shells, Bullets**  
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence spokeswoman Amanda Wilcox appeared with Newsom at a news conference Tuesday and said the checks are “the kind of thing that could have prevented” last week’s fatal shooting of rookie Sacramento police Officer Tara O’Sullivan. Prosecutors charge that Adel Sambrano Ramos fatally shot the 26-year-old officer using one of two rifles assembled from parts to create assault weapons that are illegal in California. Wilcox...

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## RARE GOLDEN EAGLE NEST FOUND IN CALIFORNIA MOUNTAINS

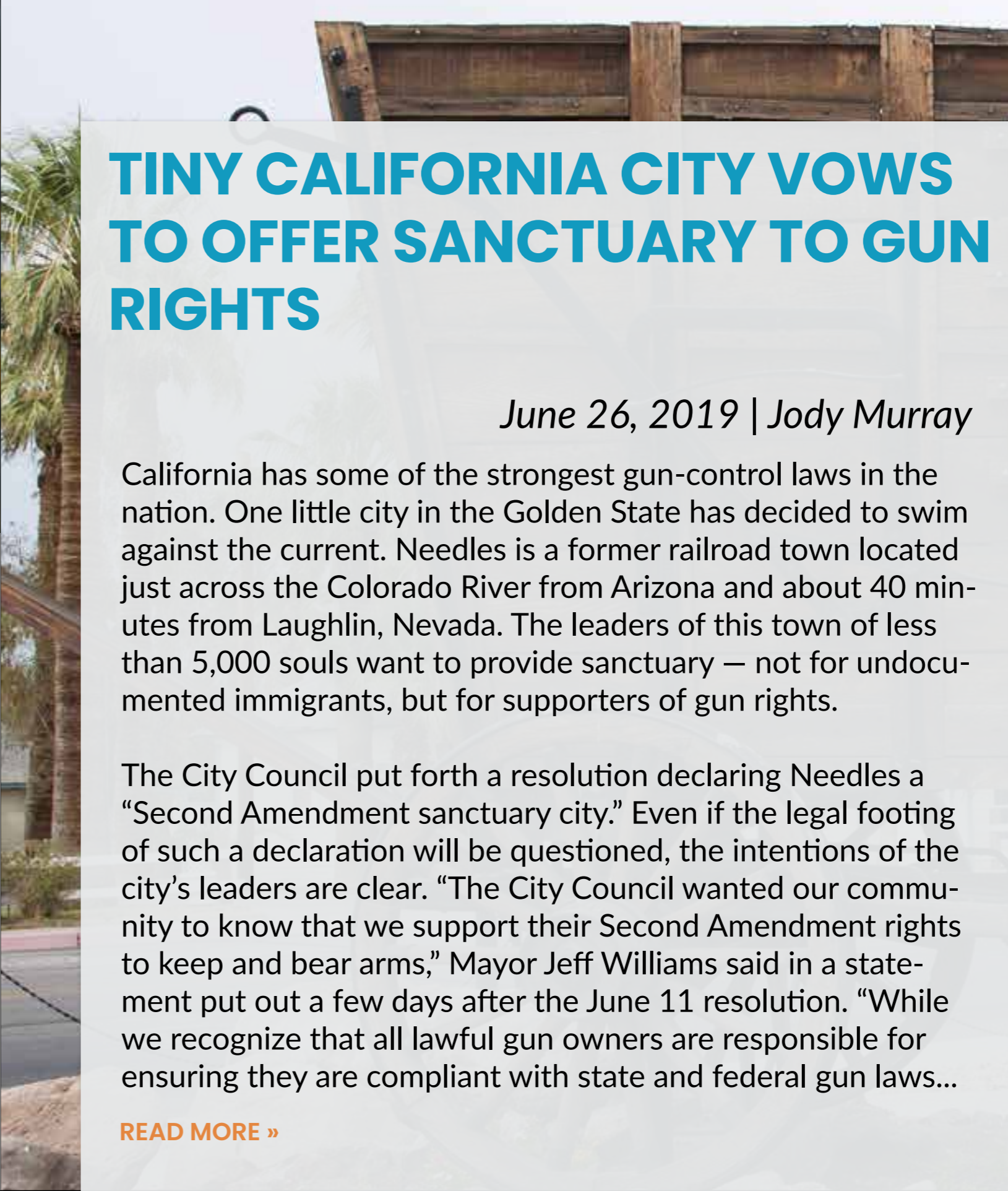
June 27, 2019 | AP News

THOUSAND OAKS — Biologists at a national park in Southern California have found a pair of golden eagle chicks — the first seen there in decades.

The National Park Service announced Wednesday that a nest containing the pair of 12-week-old chicks was found in March in a cave in the Santa Monica Mountains. It’s the first golden eagle nest confirmed in the mountains since the late 1980s. Sightings of adult birds also have been vanishingly rare. The chicks, a male and a female, were given ankle bands to help scientists monitor them.

Although the golden eagle is protected under the law, experts believe the population may be declining in the United States, especially in California. Researchers say the loss of habitat is a major threat.

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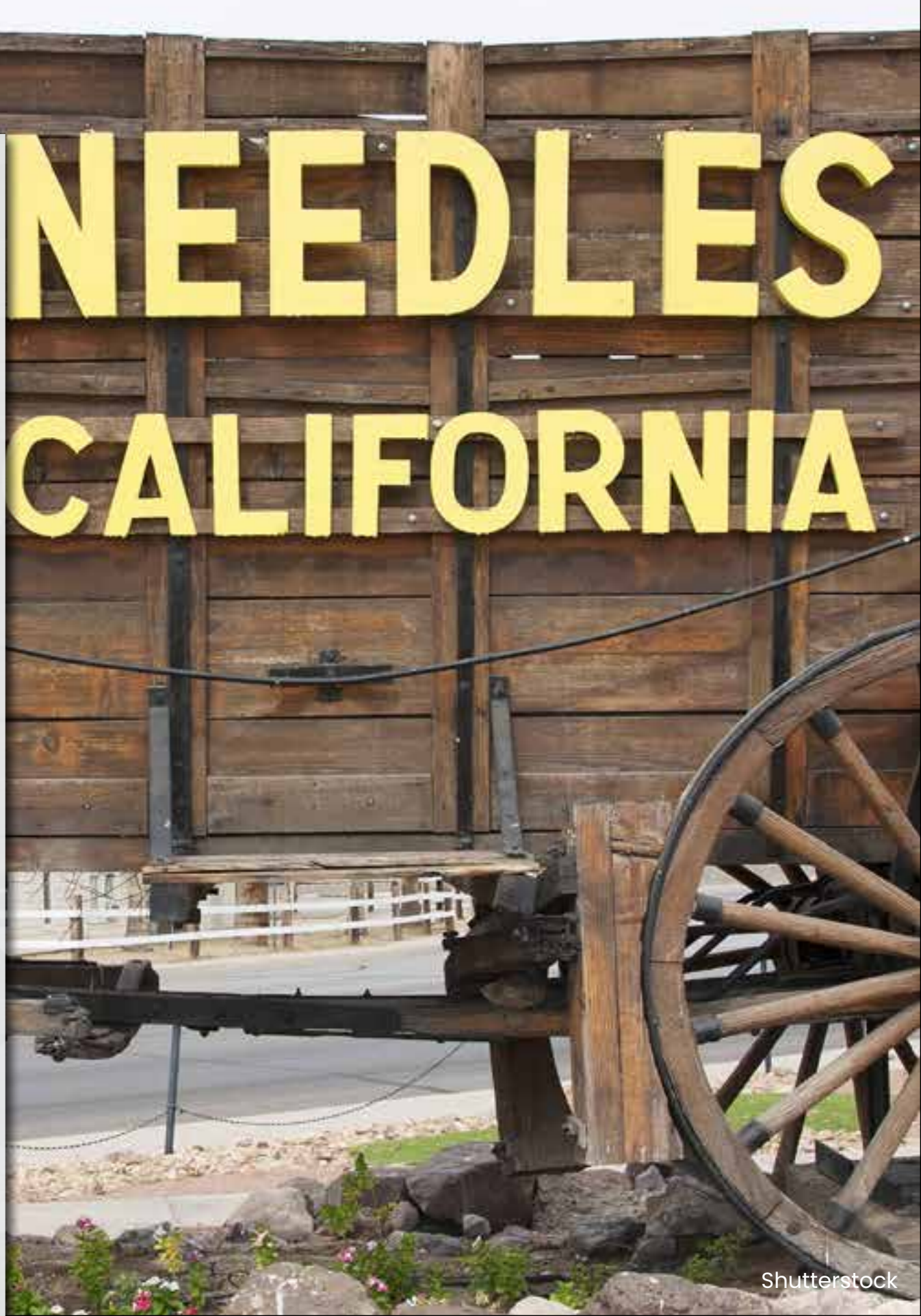
## TINY CALIFORNIA CITY VOWS TO OFFER SANCTUARY TO GUN RIGHTS

June 26, 2019 | Jody Murray

California has some of the strongest gun-control laws in the nation. One little city in the Golden State has decided to swim against the current. Needles is a former railroad town located just across the Colorado River from Arizona and about 40 minutes from Laughlin, Nevada. The leaders of this town of less than 5,000 souls want to provide sanctuary — not for undocumented immigrants, but for supporters of gun rights.

The City Council put forth a resolution declaring Needles a “Second Amendment sanctuary city.” Even if the legal footing of such a declaration will be questioned, the intentions of the city’s leaders are clear. “The City Council wanted our community to know that we support their Second Amendment rights to keep and bear arms,” Mayor Jeff Williams said in a statement put out a few days after the June 11 resolution. “While we recognize that all lawful gun owners are responsible for ensuring they are compliant with state and federal gun laws...

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# U.S. HEALTH CARE, IMMIGRATION TOP ISSUES AT DEMOCRATS' DEBATE

June 27, 2019 | AP News

MIAMI — Ten Democrats railed against a national economy and a Republican administration they argued exist only for the rich as presidential candidates debated on-stage for the first time in the young 2020 season, embracing inequality as a defining theme in their fight to deny President Donald Trump a second term in office.

Health care and immigration, more than any other issues, led the first of two debates on Wednesday, with

**"I think of it this way. Who is this economy really working for? It's doing great for a thinner and thinner slice at the top. Health care is a basic human right, and I will fight for basic human rights."**  
— Sen. Elizabeth Warren

another to follow Thursday night. And Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, more than anyone else, stood out — on her own at times — in calling for "fundamental change" across the nation's economy and government to address a widening gap between the rich and the middle class. "I think of it this way. Who is this economy really working for? It's doing great for a thinner and thinner slice at the top," Warren declared shortly before raising her hand as one of the only Democrats on stage willing to abolish her own private health insurance in favor of a government-run plan. "Health care is a basic human right, and I will fight for basic human rights." The debate marked a major step forward in the 2020 presidential campaign as Democrats fight to break out from a crowded field that has been consumed by one question above all: Who's best positioned to de-feat Trump? The candidates will spend the next eight months before primary voting scrapping over that question and the broader fight for the direction of their political party. Among the 10 Democratic candidates set to debate Thursday is early front-runner Joe Biden.

**Health Care**  
While Trump is the ultimate target of many Democratic

voters, the president wasn't a major feature for most of Wednesday night. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee was one of the few to go hard after Trump, declaring, "The biggest threat to the security of the United States is Donald Trump." Instead of Trump, Democrats leaned into the issue that helped deliver the party the House majority last year: Health care. All supported the concept of providing universal health care, but they differed on how they would reach that goal.

**Related Story: Poll: Democratic Voters Not Fully Tuned in to 2020**

Warren and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio backed abolishing private health insurance. Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke and Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota favored preserving the private insurance market. O'Rourke said people who like their health care plans should be able to keep them: "We preserve choice," he said. The exchange is almost certain to be revived on Thursday when Bernie Sanders is among the candidates who will be on stage. The Vermont senator has proposed a "Medicare for All" system without private insurance while Biden, who will also be debating, hasn't gone that far.

**Immigration**  
Immigration was also on the candidates' minds as they pointed to the searing photos of a drowned Salvadoran father and his toddler daughter at the Rio Grande and blamed Trump and his policies concerning migrants crossing into America illegally. "Watching that image of Oscar and his daughter Valeria was heartbreaking," said former Obama administration housing chief Julián Castro. "It should also piss us all off." He also assailed O'Rourke for not calling for fully decriminalizing crossing the U.S.-Mexico border...

**"Watching that image of Oscar and his daughter Valeria was heartbreaking. It should also piss us all off."** — Julián Castro

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# COURT BLOCKS CENSUS CITIZENSHIP QUESTION. IS TRUMP OUT OF TIME?

June 27, 2019 | AP News & GV Wire

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court on Thursday maintained a hold on the Trump administration's effort to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census, and the question's opponents say there's no time to revisit the issue before next week's scheduled start to the printing of census forms.

There was no word on whether the administration would continue pressing to add the question. The Census Bureau said in a brief statement only that the decision is "currently being reviewed." The American Civil Liberties Union's Dale Ho, who argued against the citizenship question's addition

before the Supreme Court said "there really, really is not time" for the administration to revisit including the question. The Census Bureau's own experts predict that millions of Hispanics and immigrants would go uncounted if the census asked everyone if he or she is an American citizen.

And immigrant advocacy organizations and Democratic-led states, cities and counties argue the citizenship question is intended to discourage the participation of minorities, primarily Hispanics, who tend to support Democrats, from filling out census forms. They argued to the Supreme Court...

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AP File

## ANALYSIS: TRUMP MOVES SHOW HIM TO BE UNRELIABLE PARTNER

June 25, 2019 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's abrupt decision against military strikes may have prevented open military conflict with Iran, but it also showed him anew to be an unpredictable, unreliable, partner at home and abroad. Trump won his job partly on his claims to be a great dealmaker. But the celebrity businessman-turned-president's negotiating style — repeatedly pushing toward a brink only to pull back at the moment of action — leaves the U.S. lurching from crisis to crisis.

On trade tariffs, immigration raids and now the standoff with Iran, his course reversals confound allies as well as adversaries, and his own party in Congress. As fallout from Trump's actions reverberated around the globe on Monday, and **Secretary of State Mike Pompeo** jetted to the Middle East in search of a coalition of allies against Iran, the president...

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## SUPREME COURT GIVES LAND OWNERS FREEDOM TO SUE ON FEDERAL LEVEL

June 25, 2019 | AP News

A little family cemetery in rural Pennsylvania triggered a legal earthquake that might be felt in land disputes and coastal-access battles up and down California. Last week, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that property owners can go straight to federal court to fight claims that local or state government prevented them from using their land as they see fit. The decision overturned a long-held precedent that trapped property owners in what Chief Justice John Roberts described as a Catch-22.

The vote was tight — 5-4 — with the conservative faction of the court on the winning side and the liberal justices filing dissenting opinions. In essence, under existing law property owners couldn't go to federal court until all legal options on the state level had been exhausted. Now those owners can take their claims straight to the federal court system, which is considered friendly than the state courts for such claims...

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# WORLD

## DOCTORS, LAWYERS PORTRAY DIRE CONDITIONS FOR CHILD MIGRANTS

June 27, 2019 | AP News

CLINT, Texas — Immigrant advocates are asking a federal judge to immediately require inspections and let doctors into border detention facilities where they say sleep-deprived, flu-stricken children are languishing in filthy conditions. Doctors and lawyers who visited the facilities in recent weeks outlined several damning examples in a court filing late Wednesday that puts more pressure on the Trump administration to improve conditions for immigrant children. Lawyers are also asking for the prompt release of children to parents and close relatives and for the government to be found in contempt of court. In one account, the court filing describes how five infants were admitted to a neonatal intensive care unit at a local hospital after a doctor visited a Customs

**A 16-year-old girl from Honduras recounted how she and her 8-month old daughter were placed in a facility where they couldn't shower for eight days.**

and Border Protection facility in McAllen, Texas.

Dr. Dolly Lucio Sevier, a pediatrician who met nearly 40 immigrant children at the facility on June 15, said in a declaration

filed to the court that the conditions there were dire, describing "extreme cold temperatures, lights on 24 hours a day, no adequate access to medical care, basic sanitation, water, or adequate food." She said there are several teen mothers at the facility. "It is obvious that the dignity and well-being of children is not even an afterthought in the design of the center," she wrote.

### Handling a Surge in Immigrant Families at Border

In another declaration, a 16-year-old girl from Honduras recounted how she and her 8-month old daughter were placed in a facility where they couldn't shower for eight days. The girl said her daughter ran a high fever and was given medicine but began vomiting and had diarrhea the next day. She said she asked to see a doctor, but wasn't taken. "The guard said, 'She doesn't have the face of a sick baby,'" the girl recalled, adding that

her daughter has since lost so much weight her pants are loose. The Trump administration is facing growing backlash over its handling of a surge in immigrant families and children at the border. Five children have died since late last year after being detained by the government, and lawyers who visited a Border Patrol station near El Paso last week described kids living in squalid conditions with little care and inadequate food, water and sanitation.

**"It is obvious that the dignity and well-being of children is not even an afterthought in the design of the center." — Dr. Dolly Lucio Sevier**

They met one sick 2-year-old boy without a diaper who had wet his pants, his shirt smeared in mucus. In another Texas border facility this month, a 17-year-old Guatemalan girl was seen in a wheelchair with a premature baby who advocates said should have been in the hospital. The mother had been at the facility for nine days when advocates found her. Customs and Border Protection officials insist that children at the facility in Clint, Texas, are receiving good care, and they provided a rare tour of the station to journalists on Wednesday.

### Children Housed in an Industrial Garage

Migrant children being housed there were being watched by hallway monitors. Children appeared to be wearing clean clothes, and at least a half dozen hallway monitors were brought in to help watch the 117 children being kept there — less than half the number of young migrants who were crammed into the facility last week. The children were housed in an industrial garage filled with bunk beds, or in cells with bunk beds and cots that included a bathroom area separated by a cinder block partition. The doors were left unlocked and the kids were free to move around. "Not ideal, but what we had to do," Matt Harris, the Border Patrol agent in charge of the facility, said about adapting the space...

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## SUPREME LEADER SAYS IRANIANS WON'T BUDGE OVER US SANCTIONS

June 26, 2019 | AP News

TEHRAN, Iran — Iran's supreme leader said Wednesday that Iranians will not budge or change their stand following new U.S. sanctions targeting Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and his associates, the latest in a torrent of sharp verbal responses from Tehran in the wake of the measures.

President Donald Trump enacted the new sanctions against Khamenei and others on Monday and U.S. officials also said they plan sanctions against Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif. The sanctions followed Iran's downing last week of a U.S. surveillance drone, worth over \$100 million, over the Strait of Hormuz, sharply escalating the crisis. The

top Iranian cleric's website quoted Khamenei as calling the Trump administration "the most sinister" U.S. government, adding that Washington's calls for negotiation with Iran are deceitful and amount to "obvious cruelty."

"The most hated figures of such an administration accuse and insult the Iranian nation," Khamenei said. "The Iranian nation will not budge and will not withdraw because of the insults." The crisis gripping the Middle East stems from Trump's withdrawal of the United States a year ago from the nuclear deal between Iran and other world powers and then imposing crippling new sanctions on Tehran. Recently, Iran...

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## FIANCÉE OF SLAIN JOURNALIST KHASHOGGI URGES UN TO TAKE ACTION

June 25, 2019 | AP News

GENEVA — The fiancée of slain journalist Jamal Khashoggi took her campaign for justice in his killing to the United Nations' top human rights body Tuesday and urged the U.N. to take "the next step" following a key investigator's finding that Saudi Arabia bears responsibility. Hatice Cengiz, a Turkish citizen, told a Human Rights Council event in Geneva about her grief over Khashoggi's Oct. 2 slaying at the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul when he went there to pick up a document for their marriage.

Cengiz said the possibility her fiancée might not really be dead haunts her because his body hasn't been found, compounding her loss with "an unbelievably different kind of trauma." She appeared at a 90-minute council "side event" organized by Canada and hosted by advocacy group No Peace Without Justice. Cengiz provided one of several testimonials on the theme "Silencing Dissent." Most of the speakers criticized alleged rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and the...

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## ISRAEL LOBBY TO TAKE FROSH CONGRESSIONAL DEMS TO ISRAEL. SOME REFUSE TO TRIP

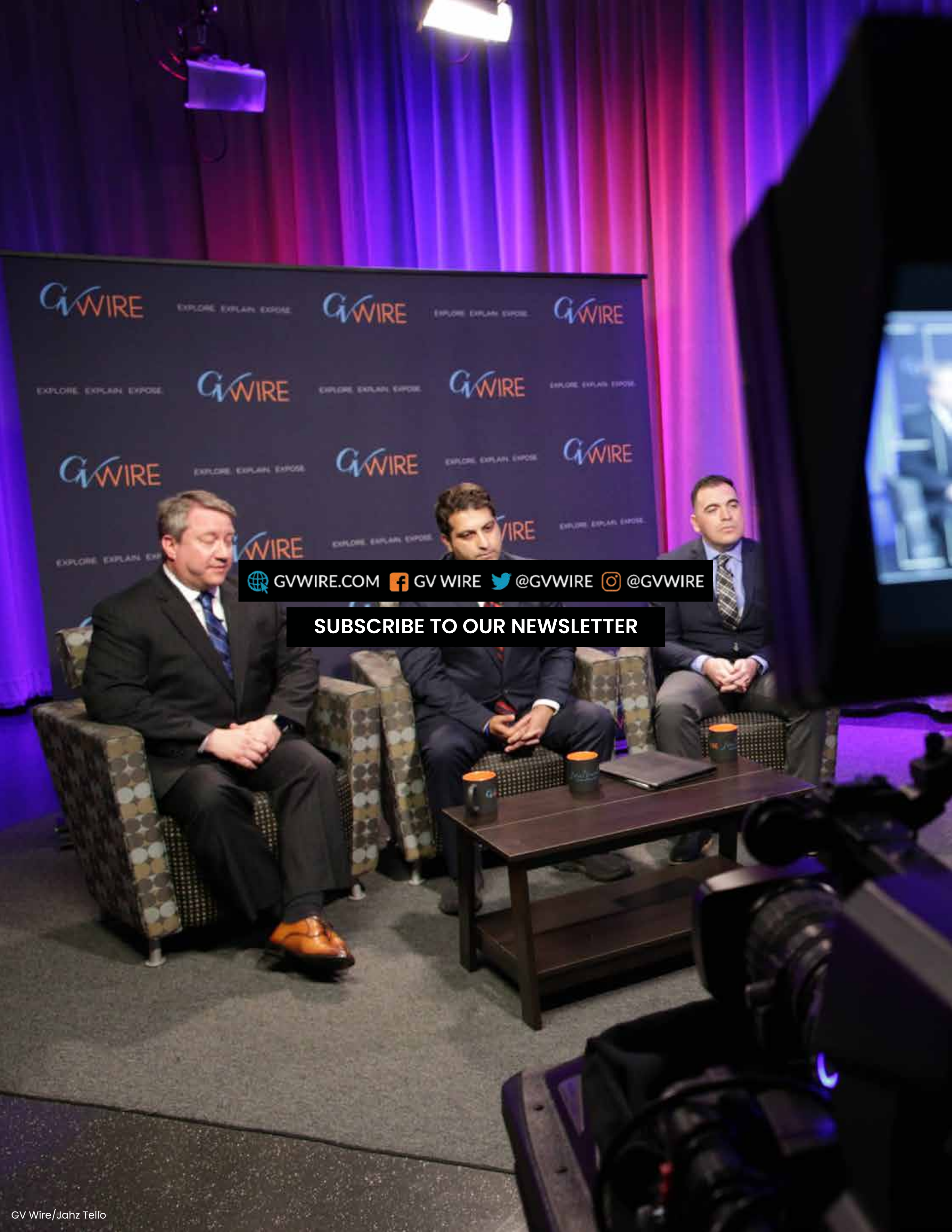
June 25, 2019 | News

*At least 23 out of 59 freshmen Democrats in the House will be traveling on an all-expenses-paid trip to Israel in August. But 14 won't be attending the Israel lobby funded trip, 2 are 'checking their schedules,' and the rest have not divulged their plans. See list below:*

As is common practice during the summer after the election of a new House of Representatives, a group of freshman Congress members will take an all-expenses-paid trip to Israel in August. The list of Democrats currently stands at twenty-three, with two more indicating that they are trying to fit the trip into their schedules. The trips will be sponsored by the American Israel Education Foundation (AIEF), the non-profit arm of the powerful lobbying organization, American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The goal of the trips is to promote American support for Israel despite Israel's violations of human rights, international law, U.S. law, and...

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