

# GWIRE

WEEKLY DIGEST  
SEPTEMBER 25, 2020

**“WE’RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CRIME WAVE.” FRESNO LEADERS VOICE CONCERNS. »**

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# LOCAL

## “WE’RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CRIME WAVE.” FRESNO LEADERS VOICE CONCERNS.

September 24, 2020 | David Taub

Fresno City Council Member Luiz Chavez says 600 criminals have been released back into the city since April. “We’re in the middle of

**“We’re in the middle of a crime wave, and that is not a term that I use loosely because that’s how it’s being described here in our city.” – Fresno City Council Member Luiz Chavez**

a crime wave, and that is not a term that I use loosely because that’s how it’s being described here in our city. And we need

to really step up and prioritize public safety,” said Chavez during Thursday’s city council meeting. Chavez says many merchants on the Kings Canyon/Ventura corridor have been targeted. Chavez blames the state for criminal justice reform promises he says haven’t been kept. Council Member Garry Bredefeld also blamed the state by pointing to \$0 bail releases during COVID-19. The discussion was sparked after Fresno Police Chief Andy Hall posted a social media message Wednesday night after two Louisville, Kentucky police officers were shot during a protest over the killing of Breonna Taylor. The state’s attorney general announced Wednesday that the actions of police that led to the shooting death of Taylor during a raid on her apartment were justified. “We will respond to calls for help and will risk our very lives regardless of race or income. I’m not sure how police officers became the bad guys and gals but I can tell you my heart is heavy,” wrote Hall.

### Kings Canyon/Ventura Corridor

Chavez said Thursday that many Latino-owned business along the Kings Canyon/

Ventura corridor have been hit by burglaries over the last several months. Chavez says at least 45% of the break ins were not reported, based on what his staff learned from the merchants. He said merchants he’s talked with have also been dealing with the COVID-19-related health regulations and had to lay off employees and cut back on hours. “Now we have criminals taking advantage of the situation,” said Chavez. “Part of this problem has been the false promise of Prop. 47,” explained Chavez. “The rehabilitation part of this conversation never happened, and that’s a failure on the state’s part.”

He says locally the city has to come up with solutions as to what law enforcement will look like moving forward. “The conversation that we’re going to have is what do we expect from our police officers?,” asked Chavez. “Do we want them to be proactive and go out there or do we want them to wait for calls for service?” Fresno police say their records do not reflect a significant increase in break-ins in the area, but said some may go unreported. “We investigated the reports of an increase of burglaries along Kings Canyon and didn’t find a major spike,” said Southeast District Commander Capt. Anthony Martinez. “But, what we found were a couple of businesses not reporting burglaries done by homeless people.” He said his officers are encouraging the businesses to report all burglaries. Bredefeld said a recent increase in...

**“I understand there’s been an 80 percent increase in shootings since April, and a 70 percent increase in stabbings.” – Fresno City Council Member Garry Bredefeld**

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## VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO WALK DOGS AND TAKE CARE OF CATS EVACUATED FROM THE CREEK FIRE

September 21, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

Do you like taking dogs for a nice long walk? If you are more of a cat person, the Fresno Humane Animal Services team needs your help too. Nearly 130 dogs and 175 cats, evacuated from the Creek Fire, are currently being housed at the Fresno Fairgrounds' Commerce Building.

The non-profit organization managing the temporary shelter is in need of volunteers to exercise and interact with the animals at different times throughout the day. Brenda Mitchell, board president of Fresno Humane Animal Services, says the 7 a.m.- 10 a.m. shift is the busiest time. "That's the morning potty and break-

fast," she said. Mitchell said about 20 dog walking volunteers and 10 cat volunteers are needed during the morning hours. She says there's another shift in the afternoon that's a little slower. Dog walkers are encouraged to spend quality time with the dogs. Cats go to bed after the 3 p.m. shift.

The evening shift is 6-8 p.m. and is the last potty walk before bed. About 20 dog walking volunteers are needed for that shift also, Mitchell said. Volunteers must be over 18 years of age and previous experience with a rescue agency or a shelter is a plus. Text "VOLUNTEER" to (559) 600-7387 to add your number...

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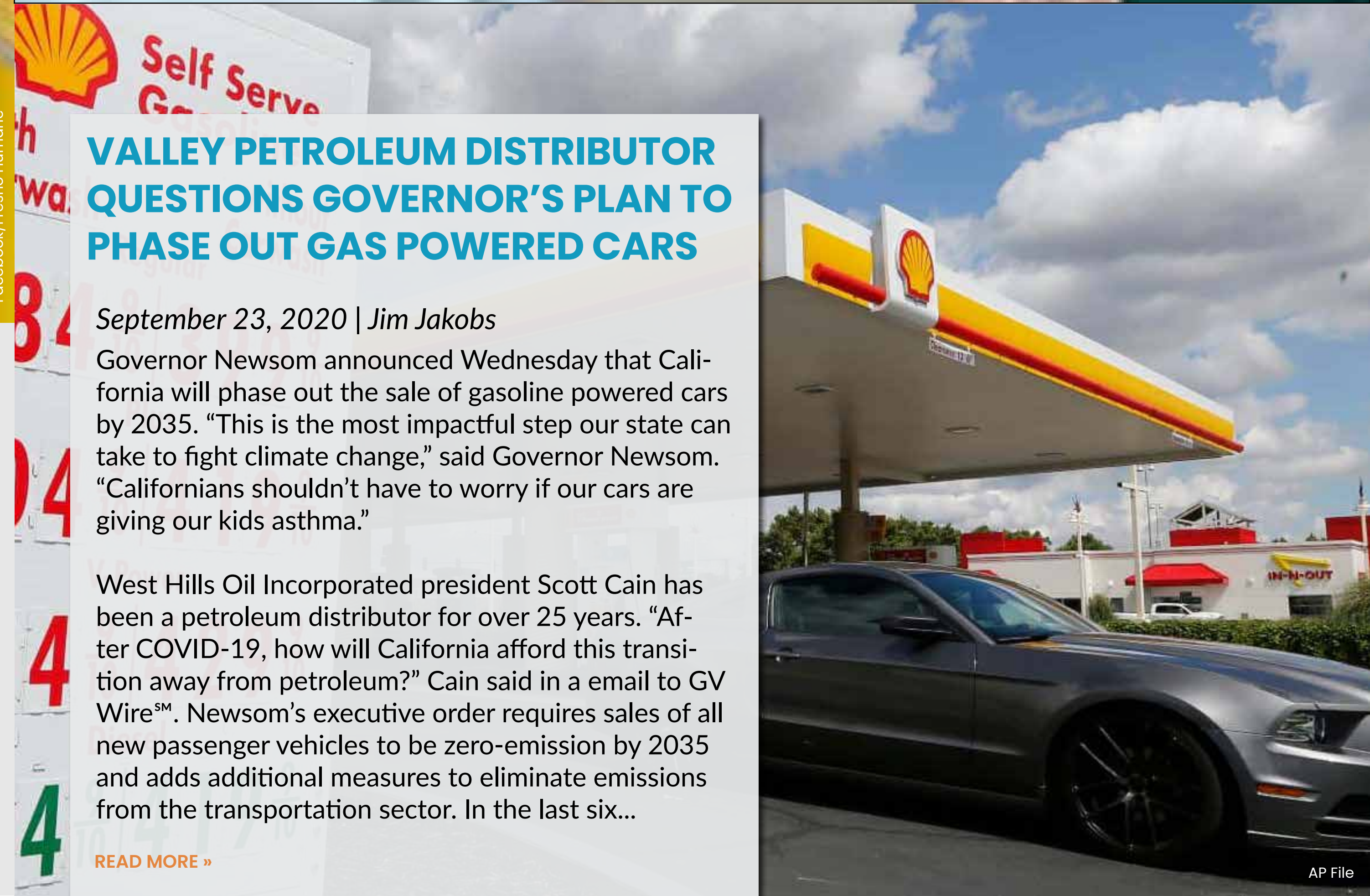
## MAKING CARE MORE WELCOMING TO LGBTQ BY TRAINING CLINICIANS, DOCTORS

September 20, 2020 | Sponsored by Community Medical Centers

Zoyer Zyndel. said transitioning from female to male was difficult enough without having to explain over and over to his insurance provider or convince a doctor why a hysterectomy was needed for a healthy 24-year-old. "It makes you feel invalidated emotionally and intellectually," he said.

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CRMC



## VALLEY PETROLEUM DISTRIBUTOR QUESTIONS GOVERNOR'S PLAN TO PHASE OUT GAS POWERED CARS

September 23, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

Governor Newsom announced Wednesday that California will phase out the sale of gasoline powered cars by 2035. "This is the most impactful step our state can take to fight climate change," said Governor Newsom. "Californians shouldn't have to worry if our cars are giving our kids asthma."

West Hills Oil Incorporated president Scott Cain has been a petroleum distributor for over 25 years. "After COVID-19, how will California afford this transition away from petroleum?" Cain said in a email to GV Wire<sup>SM</sup>. Newsom's executive order requires sales of all new passenger vehicles to be zero-emission by 2035 and adds additional measures to eliminate emissions from the transportation sector. In the last six...

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# BAY AREA PLANNERS APPROVE 60% WORK FROM HOME MANDATE AFTER TENSE DEBATE

September 23, 2020 | David Taub

After a nearly 4-hour back and forth debate, the Bay Area's Metropolitan Transportation Commission voted 12 to 1 to mandate large employers have at least 60 percent of their employees telecommute on any given work day. Staff will now do more analysis on the plan and report

**"I'm not willing to not have a telecommute option in this proposal."  
— Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf**

back on forecasted outcomes by the end of the year before final adoption. At least two commissioners were concerned the mandate was too broad, while members of the public said it would drive people away from the already expensive Bay Area. One caller stated, "What's to stop someone from using the Bay Area for their job, but being able to reside in another state, or India for that matter?" Member Nick Josefowitz was concerned the new mandate would hurt downtown San Francisco. "Downtown relies on workers coming in to spur the economy," Josefowitz said during the meeting. "This will also disincentivize companies from coming here." Despite the opposition, a majority of the board said enough time had been put into the plan that any changes could adversely delay what's been dubbed the PlanBayArea Blueprint. It's part of a 9-county bay area plan to combat greenhouse gases over the next 30 years.

## Support From Oakland Mayor

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf, the city's MTC representative, joined the meeting to say beating back climate change with the telework man-

date was more important than any possible business profits it could hurt. "I'm not willing to not have a telecommute option in this proposal," said Schaaf.

## Concerned About Roommate Situation

Josefowitz was also concerned about the amount of people that have to live in many of the apartments in the city and how they'd navigate the 60% telework mandate. "Many people live with multiple roommates and it's just not possible for everyone to have enough space to do their work," said Josefowitz. He also brought up an example of someone in San Francisco who may walk to work and doesn't even own a car. "Wouldn't it be better to instead impose caps on trips taken by car to get the greenhouse gas reductions we're talking about?" asked Josefowitz. At the end of the meeting, commission members did agree to try to address some of Josefowitz' concerns before their next meeting in December.

**According to the Plan Bay Area website, the goal is a blueprint "towards the adopted Vision of a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and vibrant Bay Area for all."**

## Plan Bay Area 2050

According to the Plan Bay Area website, the goal is a blueprint "towards the adopted Vision of a more affordable, connected, diverse, healthy and vibrant Bay Area for all." Highlights of the plan include: Improving Affordability for All: The Draft Blueprint reduces the cost...

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# STANFORD REPORT: SMOKE FROM WILDFIRES KILLED 1,200 PEOPLE, LIKELY MANY MORE

September 23, 2020 | Jim Jakobs

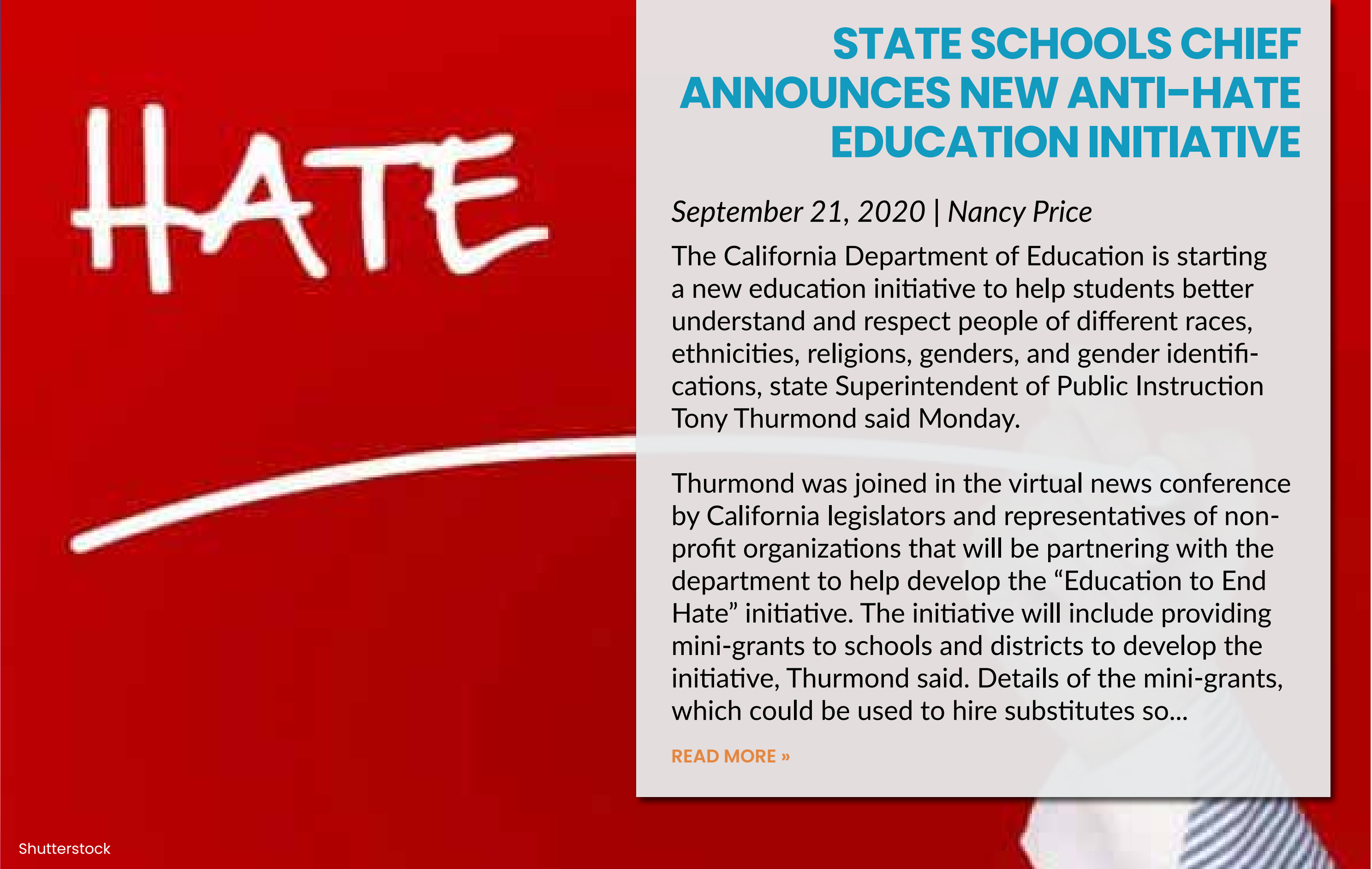
Stanford researchers say smoke from the recent California wildfires led to 1,200 excess deaths and 4,800 additional ER visits among the elderly – and that’s just for people ages 65 and over.

Multiple communities in the paths of the fires have been entirely destroyed, and wildfire smoke has blanketed huge swaths of the West Coast for weeks. Smoke fire warnings from the Creek Fire have been triggered as far away as Reno, Nevada. “The total costs in terms of human lives and health is likely far

larger, due to the immense amount of smoke that has been inhaled over the last 3 weeks by the very large number of people living on the West Coast,” writes Stanford researcher Sam Heft-Neal. Recent wildfire activity led to a massive increase in PM2.5 above normal levels according to the research.

The study included a chart showing differences in daily PM2.5 levels in 2020 from the previous 5 year average, beginning Aug. 1 and going through Sept. 10, 2020. Researchers based their information on...

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## STATE SCHOOLS CHIEF ANNOUNCES NEW ANTI-HATE EDUCATION INITIATIVE

September 21, 2020 | Nancy Price

The California Department of Education is starting a new education initiative to help students better understand and respect people of different races, ethnicities, religions, genders, and gender identifications, state Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond said Monday.

Thurmond was joined in the virtual news conference by California legislators and representatives of non-profit organizations that will be partnering with the department to help develop the “Education to End Hate” initiative. The initiative will include providing mini-grants to schools and districts to develop the initiative, Thurmond said. Details of the mini-grants, which could be used to hire substitutes so...

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## FIREFIGHTER WHO DIED IN BLAZE WAS ON ELITE HOTSHOT CREW

September 22, 2020 | AP News

A California firefighter killed while battling a blaze in the mountains east of Los Angeles was identified Tuesday as a member of an elite Hotshot crew dedicated to fighting wildfires. Charles Morton, 39, a San Diego native, was a 14-year veteran of the U.S. Forest Service and a squad boss for the Big Bear Interagency Hotshots in San Bernardino National Forest, officials said. He was married and had a daughter.

Forest Service Chief Vicki Christiansen said Morton was a well-respected leader who was always there for his squad and his crew at the toughest times. “Our hearts go out to Charlie’s loved ones, coworkers, friends and the Big Bear Hotshots,” she said. “We will keep them in our thoughts and prayers.” On Tuesday...

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# U.S. TRUMP WON'T COMMIT TO PEACEFUL TRANSFER OF POWER IF HE LOSES

September 23, 2020 | AP News

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump on Wednesday declined to commit to a peaceful transfer of power if he loses the Nov. 3 presidential election. “We’re going to have to see what happens,” Trump said at a news conference, responding to a question about whether he’d commit to a peaceful transfer of power.

“You know that I’ve been complaining very strongly about the ballots, and the ballots are a disaster.” Trump has been pressing a months long campaign against mail-in voting this November by tweeting and speaking out critically about the practice. More states are encouraging mail-in voting to keep voters safe amid the coronavirus pandemic. Baseless

Trump has been pressing a months long campaign against mail-in voting this November by tweeting and speaking out critically about the practice. More states are encouraging mail-in voting to keep voters safe amid the coronavirus pandemic.

### Claims of Massive Fraud

The president, who uses mail-in voting himself, has tried to distinguish between states that automatically send mail ballots

to all registered voters and those, like Florida, that send them only to voters who request a mail ballot. Trump has baselessly claimed widespread mail voting will lead to massive fraud. The five states that routinely send mail ballots to all voters have seen no significant fraud. Trump on Wednesday appeared to suggest that if states got “rid of” the unsolicited mailing of ballots there would be no concern about fraud

or peaceful transfers of power. “You’ll have a very peaceful — there won’t be a transfer frankly,” Trump said. “There’ll be a continuation. The ballots are out of control, you know it, and you know, who knows it better than anybody else? The Democrats know it better than anybody else.” It’s unlikely that any chaos in states with universal mail-in voting will cause the election result to be inaccurately tabulated, as Trump has suggested.

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The five states that already have such balloting have had time to ramp up their systems, while four states newly adopting it — California, New Jersey, Nevada and Vermont — have not. Washington, D.C., is also newly adopting it. Of those nine states, only Nevada is a battleground, worth six electoral votes and likely to be pivotal only in a national presidential deadlock. California, New Jersey, Vermont and D.C. are overwhelmingly Democratic and likely to be won by that party’s nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden.

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## AP-NORC POLL: SUPPORT FOR RACIAL INJUSTICE PROTESTS DECLINES

AP/John Manchillo

September 24, 2020 | AP News

NEW YORK — As the decision in Kentucky to bring charges against only one of three police officers involved in a raid that killed Breonna Taylor sparks renewed protests nationwide, a new survey finds support has fallen for demonstrations against systemic racism.

The poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research finds that 44% of Americans disapprove of protests in response to police vi-

olence against Black Americans, while 39% approve. In June, 54% approved. The new survey was conducted Sept. 11-14, before Wednesday's announcement that a lone Louisville police officer would be charged in the Taylor case, but not for her actual death.

Overnight, demonstrators in cities from New York to Las Vegas marched through streets and chanted Taylor's name. Two officers were wounded by gunfire...

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AP File

## TESLA CEO ELON MUSK'S NEXT BIG BET RIDES ON BETTER BATTERIES

September 23, 2020 | AP News

SAN RAMON — Tesla is working on new battery technology that CEO Elon Musk says will enable the company within the next three years to make sleeker, more affordable cars that can travel dramatically longer distances on a single charge. But the battery breakthroughs that Musk unveiled Tuesday at a highly anticipated event didn't impress investors.

They were hoping Tesla's technology would mark an even bigger leap forward and propel the company's soaring stock to even greater heights. Tesla's shares shed more than 6% in extended trading after Musk's presentation. That deepened a downturn that began during Tuesday's regular trading session as investors began to brace for a potential letdown. Musk...

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## LATE-STAGE STUDY OF FIRST SINGLE-SHOT VACCINE BEGINS IN US

September 23, 2020 | AP News

Johnson & Johnson is beginning a huge final study to try to prove if a single-dose COVID-19 vaccine can protect against the virus. The study starting Wednesday will be one of the world's largest coronavirus vaccine studies so far, testing the shot in 60,000 volunteers in the U.S., South Africa, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Peru.

A handful of other vaccines in the U.S. — including shots made by Moderna Inc. and Pfizer Inc. — and others in other countries are already in final-stage testing. Hopes are high that answers about at least one candidate being tested in the U.S. could come by year's end, maybe sooner. U.S. health officials insist the race for a vaccine isn't cutting corners...

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AP File





AP/Matt Dunham

# WORLD

## UK LEADER ORDERS NEW VIRUS RESTRICTIONS, COULD LAST 6 MONTHS

September 17, 2020 | AP News

LONDON — Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned Britons on Tuesday that they should not expect to return to a normal social or work life for at least six months, as he ordered new restrictions that his government hopes will sup-

**"We will spare no effort in developing vaccines, treatments and new forms of mass testing, but unless we palpably make progress, we should assume that the restrictions I have announced will remain in place for perhaps six months." — Prime Minister Boris Johnson**

press a dramatic surge in confirmed coronavirus cases. Saying Britain must act now or face a huge second wave of COVID-19, Johnson announced a package of new restrictions that includes requiring pubs, restaurants and other entertainment venues in England to close down between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. and urging people to work from home where possible. Johnson had encouraged workers just weeks ago to go back into offices to keep city centers from becoming ghost towns, and he expressed hope that society could return to normal by Christmas. In a stark change of tone, he said Tuesday that "for the time being, this virus is a fact of our lives."

"We will spare no effort in developing vaccines, treatments and new forms of mass testing, but unless we palpably make progress, we should assume that the restrictions I have announced will remain in place for perhaps six months," Johnson told lawmakers in the House of Commons. The announcement came a day after the government's top scientific and medical advisers

said new coronavirus infections were doubling every seven days and could rise to 49,000 a day by mid-October if nothing was done to stem the tide. On Monday, the government reported 4,300 new confirmed cases, the highest number since May and four times the number seen a month ago. Chief medical officers have raised the U.K.'s virus alert level from three to four, the second-highest rung, saying cases of COVID-19 were rising "rapidly and probably exponentially." The new restrictions require face masks to be worn in taxis as well as on public transport. The size of some gatherings is being curtailed, with weddings limited to 15 people instead of 30, and a plan to bring spectators back into sports stadiums starting in October is being put on hold.

### The Measures Apply Only to England

Johnson did not reduce the number of people who can gather indoors or out, which remains at six. The British government is also increasing the penalties for breaking the rules. People who breach orders to quarantine face fines of up to 10,000 pounds (\$12,800) and businesses that breach "COVID-secure" rules can be shut down. The measures apply only to England. Other parts of the U.K. introduced...

**Polls suggest a majority of people in Britain support lockdown measures to contain the virus. But they also show that trust in the Conservative government's handling of the pandemic has declined after troubles with testing, mixed messages on re-opening and the U.K.'s high death toll.**

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## NEARLY 500 PILOT WHALES STRANDED IN AUSTRALIA; 380 DEAD

Australian Broadcasting Corporation via AP

September 23, 2020 | AP News

HOBART, Australia — More pilot whales were found stranded in Australia on Wednesday, raising the estimated total to nearly 500, including 380 that have died, in the largest mass stranding ever recorded in the country.

Authorities had already been working to rescue survivors among an estimated 270 whales found Monday on a beach and two sand bars near the remote coastal town of Strahan on the southern island state of Tasmania. Another 200 stranded whales were

spotted from a helicopter on Wednesday less than 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the south, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service Manager Nic Deka said. All 200 had been confirmed dead by late afternoon.

They were among 380 whales that had died overall, 30 that were alive but stranded and 50 that had been rescued since Tuesday, Deka said. “We’ll continue to work to free as many of the animals as we can,” he said. “We’ll continue working for as long as there are live animals.” About 30 whales in the...

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UNTV via AP

## IRAN STRIKES DEFIANT TONE AT UN UNDER CRUSHING US SANCTIONS

September 22, 2020 | AP News

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iranian President Hassan Rouhani delivered a defiant and fiery speech Tuesday to the U.N. General Assembly as his nation grapples with the Middle East’s worst coronavirus outbreak and a weakened economy, but he insisted that it is the U.S. that will surrender to the resilience of Iran.

He spoke in a pre-recorded speech to the virtual summit just days after Iran’s currency plunged to its lowest levels ever to the U.S. dollar due to crippling U.S. sanctions imposed by President Donald Trump, who pulled the U.S. out of Iran’s nuclear deal with world powers in 2018. The accord had been signed by the Obama administration. The sanctions...

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## POWERFUL BLAST ROCKS HEZBOLLAH STRONGHOLD IN SOUTH LEBANON

September 22, 2020 | AP News

BEIRUT — A powerful explosion shook a Hezbollah stronghold in southern Lebanon on Tuesday, sending thick grey smoke billowing over the village, but the cause was not clear. Lebanon’s official news agency, NNA, said the explosion in the southern village of Ain Qana, above the port city of Sidon, coincided with intense Israeli overflights “that did not leave the skies” over the area since Tuesday morning.

It said the cause of the explosion, which damaged buildings, shattered windows and caused panic among residents, was not known. The Israeli military said it had no comment. Hezbollah and Israel fought a month-long war in 2006. Since then, the militant group is believed to have expanded its...

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AP File





**CRIME SCENE**

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