

InlandAction

Advocacy Through Action Since 1962



**Sacramento
Advocacy Trip**
April 20-21, 2026



A non-profit, non-partisan corporation of public spirited leaders who have joined together to be catalysts for the economic well-being of the Inland Empire region of California since 1962.

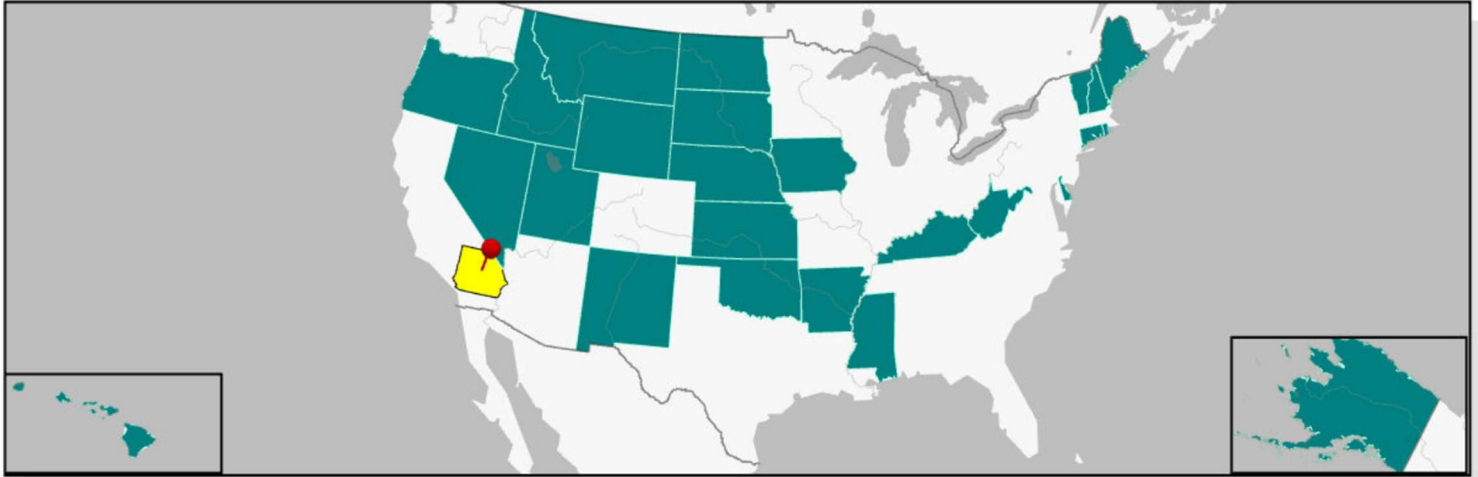
2026 Inland Action Sacramento Delegation Roster

- Brian Bearie – Chief Executive Officer and Physician, SoCal Emergency Medicine
- Julie Bearie – Vice President, RN, BSN, SoCal Emergency Medicine
- Bill Blankenship – Director of Governmental Affairs, NAIOP Inland Empire
- Mike Burrows – Chief Executive Officer, San Bernardino International Airport
- Carina Cabrera – Government Relations Manager, Southern California Edison
- Ken Coate – Vice President, Inland Surety/HUB International
- Daniel Enz – Government and Community Relations Manager, Kaiser Permanente
- Louis Goodwin – Senior Vice President & Regional Executive, Fifth Third Bank
- Otis Greer – Deputy Executive Director, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
- Jay Jimenez – Chief Business Officer, REAL Journey Academies
- Greg McNiff – CEO/President, Stater Bros. Markets
- Dan Murphy – Vice President of Philanthropy, Dignity Health/Common Spirit Health
- Victoria Ostermann – Vice President of Government Affairs, Inland Empire Health Plan
- Catherine Pritchett – Director of Administration, Inland Valley Development Agency
- Thomas Rice – Partner, Best Best & Krieger, LLP
- Michael Rivera – *Inland Action Chair*, Partner, Harvest, LLP
- Elizabeth Romero – University of California, Riverside, Assistant Vice Chancellor for Govt & Community Relations
- Dan Schenkel – Chief Executive Officer, California Housing Foundation
- Carrie Schindler – Executive Director, San Bernardino County Transportation Authority
- Kristine Scott – Regional Public Affairs Manager, SoCalGas
- Eric Ustation – Director of Local Intergovernmental Affairs, Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation
- Taylor Varner – Director of External Affairs, National CORE
- Julie Michaels – Executive Director, Inland Action

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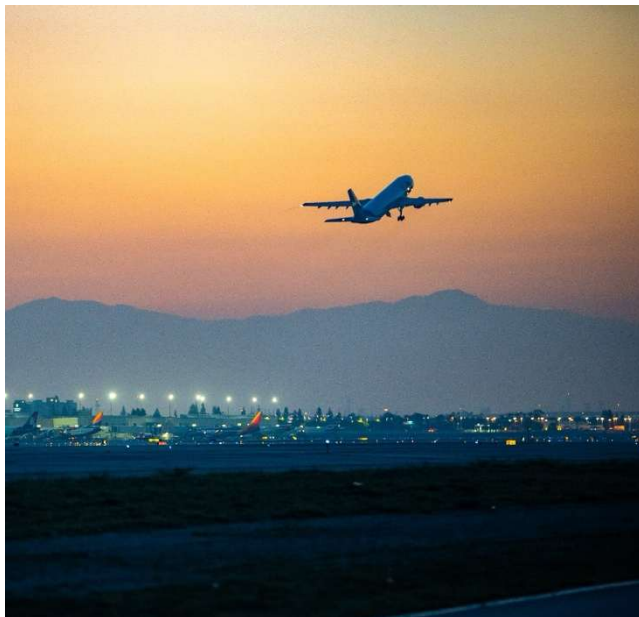
The Inland Empire Region – Exploding in Growth & Opportunity

IE = Inland Empire / IE = Innovation Expertise



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

- Is larger geographically than 10 states. On its own, the Inland Empire would be the 41st largest state in size and the 25th most populated.
- Is home to more people than 26 states as depicted above. As of December 2025, 4.7 million people live in the Inland Empire, making us the 12th largest metropolitan area in the U.S.
- The Inland Empire is projected to add another 1 million people in the next 30 years, outpacing the rest of California.



Key Successes & Industries

- Home to the international leader in geographical information system software (GIS) – Esri.
- Three growing international airports – San Bernardino, Ontario, and Palm Springs airports.
- Two medical schools to address physician shortage needs – Loma Linda and University of California Riverside.
- One of the top Cybersecurity Centers in the country – Cal State University San Bernardino (CSUSB).
- Innovation in transportation under the leadership of the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA), including North America's first self-powered hydrogen passenger train and the West Valley Connector, a 19-mile zero-emission Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service connecting San Bernardino and LA Counties. Future home of the Brightline West high-speed rail system.

2026 Sacramento Priority Summaries

TRANSPORTATION

- A Line – Claremontclair Authority – Oppose **AB 1678** (Harabedian) as the bill raises significant legal, financial, and governance concerns and sets a troubling precedent for the State to mandate that local agencies build, fund and operate specific projects regardless of locally adopted priorities or funding capacity.
- VMT – AB 2059 (Wilson) represents a needed modernization of SB 743 to better reflect the realities of fast-growing regions like the Inland Empire and expands VMT mitigation caps beyond rural areas to include urban and suburban counties.

ENVIRONMENT

- Wildfire – Support funding for CAL FIRE to address wildfire mitigation throughout the region. Support a series of bills related to wildfire mitigation and increased technology. Inland Action also encourages State action, where necessary, to ensure SITES Reservoir and Delta Conveyance Project are delivered as effective firefighting requires reliable water supplies. Finally, Inland Action looks forward to engaging in the policy development process as a result of the **SB 254** Natural Catastrophe Resilience Study.
- Joshua Tree – Fix the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act via a series of bills that could be adopted as a package: **SB 1061** (Bogh), **SB 1062** (Bogh), **SB 1063** (Bogh), **AB 1663** (Wallis), and **AB 1808** (Carrillo). In addition, address the development fee structure that disproportionately affects low-income residents and single-family homeowners due to act requirements.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Housing – Fund the housing pipeline by funding shovel ready projects in the 26-27 budget, advancing a 2026 housing bond, and direct funding to the San Bernardino Housing Trust. Inland Action also supports legislation around insurance that will advance insurance market stabilization strategies, explore risk-sharing and state-supported solutions, and align insurance policy with housing production and affordability goals.
- Business – Specific asks surrounding business needs include affordability, cost-of-living, insurance costs, and ensuring that businesses can hire new employees, and our residents have the resources to prepare them for the jobs that are available.

HEALTHCARE

- Regional Impact of H. R. 1 – With approximately 41% of all Inland Empire residents enrolled in Medi-Cal, State legislation intervention is required to protect access and stabilize healthcare in the region. Impacts include loss of coverage for more than 500,000 residents and hospital revenue loss of \$500 - \$900 million.

JUDICIARY

- Judgeships – Request that the top 16 judge positions on the State priority list are immediately funded.
- High Desert Justice Center – Identify creative funding and/or formula alternative ways to fund a new High Desert Justice Center as this region is in crisis for equal access to justice.

EDUCATION

- State Funding – Invest in higher education by stabilizing core funding across all systems; investing in workforce, research, and student success; and expand infrastructure, housing, and capacity.

Inland Action 2026 priority details and member organizations are available on our website.



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Oppose AB 1678: A Troubling Precedent with High Risk

SBCTA has long supported expanding high-quality transit service in San Bernardino County. However, **AB 1678 (A Line – Claremontclair Authority)** raises significant legal, financial and governance concerns and sets a troubling precedent for the State to mandate that local agencies build, fund and operate specific projects regardless of locally adopted priorities or funding capacity.

Inland Action opposes this bill, which exposes SBCTA to significant and ongoing financial risk and limits the agency's ability to protect the interests of the communities and taxpayers it serves.

Notably, after more than a decade of support for the Gold Line/A Line project, SBCTA's Board of Directors recently determined that **ongoing cost escalation, repeated delays and unresolved risks** called the project's viability into question and redirected funding to a more reliable alternative. SBCTA is now advancing an enhanced Metrolink service strategy that will provide a more frequent connection using smaller, multiple-unit trains on the San Bernardino Line.

The more frequent service will serve the stations between Pomona-North, the current terminus of the A Line, and Rancho Cucamonga, the future terminus of the Brightline West high-speed rail. This approach delivers a **more integrated, practical, and cost-effective mobility solution without duplicating service in the corridor.**

AB 1678 would override this locally adopted direction and raise broader concerns about accountability and stewardship of local transportation revenues.

Support SB 1019: Cargo Theft Task Force



SB 1019 (Grove) addresses a critical issue impacting the nation's supply chain. Theft on the rail through California and in particular San Bernardino County **skyrocketed 300% since last year**. The cartels are lighting our trains on fire in an effort to stop trains impacting communities and passenger rail throughout California.

Support AB 2059: VMT Mitigation

AB 2059 (Wilson) represents a needed modernization of SB 743 to better reflect the realities of fast-growing regions like the Inland Empire. Expanding VMT mitigation caps beyond rural areas to include urban and suburban counties will provide greater flexibility to deliver essential transportation projects while still advancing environmental goals.



Other Bills of Significance

- **Support: AB 2267** (Garcia) – Bridge Suicide Prevention Standards
- **Oppose: SB 667** – RR Wayside Protector
- **Support: AB 2002** (Solache) – REAP codification

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Continued Investment in Wildfire Solutions is Critical

1. Request appropriate funding for wildfire mitigation and fuel management efforts.
 - Request a **revised funding formula for Prop 4** funding as new CAL FIRE maps show that 55 – 60% of San Bernardino County is now designated as High or Very High wildfire hazard and receives zero Prop 4 dollars.
 - Support a budget request from SB County Supervisor Rowe to be included in the FY 26-27 state budget in the amount of **\$7 million for San Bernardino County Fire Fuel Mitigation Project**.
 - Ensure that both San Bernardino and Riverside Counties receive their **fair share of Cap & Invest dollars for wildfire mitigation**.
2. Support for the following bills:
 - **SB 894** (Allen) - Expands financing for home hardening and defensible space.
 - **SB 973** (Becker) – Strengthens county-level wildfire coordination and planning.
 - **SB 1079** (Stern) – Advances wildfire technology through CAL FIRE.
3. In addition, the **SB 254 Natural Catastrophe Resilience Study** offers an important, data-driven assessment of California's wildfire risk by examining statewide gaps in prevention, mitigation, and preparedness efforts. **Inland Action looks forward to engaging in the policy development process** informed by this study to help shape practical, regionally responsive outcomes that strengthen wildfire resilience across the Inland Empire.

Wildfires impose a major economic burden in California, causing hundreds of billions of dollars in losses across property, business activity, insurance, and public recovery costs. FEMA ranks both San Bernardino and Riverside counties at the highest risk scores for wildfires with the maximum score of 100%.



In January 2025, the Palisades Fire and Eaton Fire in LA County destroyed thousands of structures and caused \$28-\$54 billion in property damage, with broader losses projected into the billions more due to business disruptions, lost jobs, and reduced tax revenue.

Effective Firefighting Requires Reliable Water Supplies



Inland Action continues to advocate for strong State support for major water production, transmission, and storage projects. Two critical, and generational projects, that are critical to California's water future are:

- SITES Reservoir.
- Delta Conveyance Project.

Inland Action encourages State action, where necessary, to ensure these projects are delivered.

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Fix the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act



Inland Action supports the following proposed bills individually, but recommends adoption as a package:

1. **SB 1061** (Bogh) - Clarifies “take” and allows relocation on the same parcel or a contiguous parcel under common ownership.
2. **SB 1062** (Bogh) - Clarifies project-wide permitting and fee-reduction authority for multi-parcel, multi-tree projects.
3. **SB 1063** (Bogh) - Creates expedited, no-fee permits for life-sustaining utility connections and related wildfire-hardening work.
4. **AB 1663** (Wallis) - Exempts qualifying projects or activities on parcels containing, or planned to contain, a single-family residence.
5. **AB 1808** (Carrillo) - Expands city delegation for some business projects and provides targeted no-fee relief for homeowners and public works.

Background

The Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act was enacted in July 2023 to conserve the western Joshua tree. Rather than wait for the species to be listed through vetted channels (i.e., CDFW), the legislature protected the species with special legislation contrary to scientific recommendations at both the federal and state levels.

The Act subjects development to layered permitting and mitigation, and drives up costs, delays and uncertainty for home, utilities, public works, and private investment in the High Desert.

CDFW has noted that its fee structure disproportionately affects low-income residents and single-family homeowners.

Additional Solutions

If CDFW does not, Inland Action encourages the legislature to take action to:

- Reduce costly monitoring on relocation (i.e., treat as minimization not mitigation).
- Leave the decision to relocate to local experts.
- Expand exemptions (i.e., remove the 10-acre cap and raise the tree threshold to 300).
- Limit discretion to tie projects together.
- Tightly define "good-faith search" for private relocation sites.
- Set firm review timelines and transparent, pre-vetted qualifications for biologists and monitors.
- Establish a 5% post-permit census contingency for newly discovered trees without stopping work.

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An Environment that Attracts, Retains Businesses

Affordability

Consider the compliance costs of regulatory legislation as well as the down-stream costs to residents.

1. **Support: AB 2366** (Ávila Farías) – Consider the cost-of-living impact of new legislation.
2. **Support: SB 981** (Niello) – Consider cost-of-living impacts of CARB regulations.
3. **Support: AB 2353** (Pacheco) – Analysis of costs of regulation on hospitals.

Regulatory Environment

PAGA: Thank you for recognizing that the system was broken and acting. We are waiting to see if there is more fixing needed, but we appreciate that the legislature is working to make sure mistakes made in good faith are not punished severely.

CEQA: We appreciate that there was action taken last year to introduce reforms, especially around infill housing. However further action is required to ensure that CEQA is something that leads to sustainable business practices rather than an impediment to a thriving economy. We would like to see the legislature enact the rest of the recommendations made by the Little Hoover Commission in their report, #279, published in May 2024.

Insurance

Costs of business insurance continue to increase. We hope business reforms will start to bring business liability insurance costs under control. See also our property insurance concerns, as these apply to many businesses.

Employment

We need to ensure that businesses can safely and simply hire new employees and our residents have the resources to ensure they are prepared for the jobs that are available.

1. **Oppose: AB 2095** (Lee) **AB 2064** (Sharp-Collins) – This legislation would make it difficult for employers who work with and around vulnerable populations to ensure the safety of those individuals. It would also make hiring more difficult for companies filling financially sensitive positions.
2. **Support: SB 845** (Perez) – High School Youth Apprenticeships. This bill creates or scaling earn-and-learn models tied to high school coursework, strengthens partnerships between K-12, community colleges, and employers, establishes standards, funding streams, or incentives for apprenticeship programs, and expands access to paid, work-based learning opportunities before graduation.



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Addressing the Housing Crisis

California has made significant progress streamlining housing approvals, but housing production is now constrained by cost and feasibility.

Across the Inland Empire, rising housing costs are driven by two immediate challenges:

- Thousands of approved housing units remain stalled due to funding gaps.
- Rising insurance costs are increasing housing costs and undermining project feasibility.

Without action, these pressures will continue to limit housing production and worsen affordability across all income levels.

Background

- Nearly 40,000 affordable homes are approved and ready to build but lack final funding to begin construction
- These projects have already:
 - Completed local approvals
 - Undergone community engagement.
 - Secured partial financing .
- At the same time, insurance costs are rising sharply across California:
 - Increasing costs for homeowners and renters.
 - Raising operating expenses for housing providers .
 - Adding new constraints to development feasibility.
- Insurance is now a material and growing component of housing costs.
- These challenges compound:
 - Higher costs → larger funding gaps .
 - Larger funding gaps → fewer projects moving forward.



Proposed Solutions

1. Fund the Housing Pipeline

- Provide immediate funding in the 2026–27 budget to unlock shovel-ready projects.
- **Support: AB 736** (Wicks/Haney/Quirk-Silva) **SB 417 (Cabaldon)** – Advance a 2026 housing bond and long-term funding strategy
- Provide direct, reliable funding to the San Bernardino Regional Housing Trust, the first housing trust established under SB 20, to deliver and preserve affordable housing across San Bernardino County.
- Support housing and food access solutions that help students stay enrolled, complete training, and enter the workforce prepared.

2. Stabilize Housing Costs by Addressing Insurance

Support legislation around insurance that will advance insurance market stabilization strategies, explore risk-sharing and state-supported solutions, and align insurance policy with housing production and affordability goals.

- **AB 2038** (Harabedian/Zbur) – Extends cancellation moratorium after loss due to a disaster.
- **AB 1554** (Calderon) – Require CEA to report annually to the Senate and Assembly Insurance Committees
- **AB 1559** (Calderon/Rivas) – Regulate the use of aerial images by insurance companies for policy decisions.

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Protecting Access & Stabilizing Healthcare in the IE



The Inland Empire – home to 4.7 million residents – is one of California’s fastest-growing regions, yet it continues to receive disproportionately low healthcare funding. With approximately **41% of residents enrolled in Medi-Cal**, rising uninsured rates, provider shortages, and increasing strain on emergency departments, our healthcare system is under significant pressure.

These challenges are compounded by longstanding funding inequities that leave local hospitals – often the largest employers in their communities – financially vulnerable.

Legislative Priorities

Protect core healthcare funding and avoid compounding federal cuts.

Stabilize Medi-Cal financing with ongoing General Fund support.

Advance funding equity for under-resourced regions.

Modernize outdated funding formulas to reflect current population, utilization and need.

Invest in behavioral health infrastructure and capacity.

Support independent, nonpartisan, transparent oversight to evaluate and address systemic funding challenges.

Regional Impact of H.R. 1

Without state legislative intervention, H.R. 1 will have severe consequences for the Inland Empire:

- **Loss of Coverage:** More than 500,000 residents could lose health insurance.
- **Reduced Hospital Funding:** An estimated \$500M–\$900M reduction in Medi-Cal revenue.
- **Increased County Burden:** Significant financial and operational pressure shifted to counties.
- **Emergency Department Strain:** Increased utilization and overcrowding.
- **Hospital Instability:** Heightened risk of financial distress and service reductions.
- **Reduced Access to Care:** Impacting all residents, regardless of insurance status.
- **Higher Costs:** Increased insurance premiums for individuals and employers.

We Urge the State’s Support To:

- Avoid delays or redirection of critical Medi-Cal funding tied to access and capacity.
- Protect and fully allocate MCO tax funding for its intended purpose – supporting provider payments and rate increases.
- Sustain key funding mechanisms, including Supplemental Directed Payments (SDP) and the Hospital Quality Assurance Fee (HQAF).

Bottom Line

H.R. 1 creates a significant coverage cliff and fiscal crisis in the Inland Empire. Without state legislative and budgetary action, hundreds of thousands of residents lose coverage, while hospitals and counties absorb unsustainable costs. The result: a strained healthcare system and reduced access to care for all. State action is essential to stabilize the safety net and protect healthcare access for Inland Empire communities.

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Inland Empire Residents Deserve Equal Access to Justice

- The Inland Empire is the fastest growing region in California, outpacing the rest of the state.
- As of December 2025, the Inland Empire has 4.7 million residents with infrastructure growth needs also increasing including those in judiciary.
- San Bernardino County is currently short 26 judges based on caseload and Riverside County is short 22 judges.
- The High Desert courthouses (Barstow and Victorville) currently have zero available courtrooms to hear criminal cases.
- The High Desert region has a higher poverty rate than the national average with many residents relying on public transportation. Limited or unavailable public transit to an alternative courthouse if needed and long travel distances create a significant barrier.



Proposed Solutions

1. **Fund and fill 16 judgeships based on the priority list.** This will include judge positions in San Bernardino County, Riverside County, and a few others outside our region that are in crisis.
2. **Identify creative funding and/or formula alternative ways to fund a new High Desert Justice Center.** This could include county donated land plus all entitlements.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Recognizing that the state does not have the financial resources for all needed judges this year, **fully funding 16 judge positions based on the priority listing begins to address the critical needs.**
2. A new High Desert Justice Center:
 - Provides residents with access to basic court services.
 - Eliminates need to travel to distant courthouses.
 - Provides a safe space for these judiciary needs.
 - Adds new courtrooms for more judges to serve the region.
 - Provides for the secure transport of in-custody defendants.

Future Needs

1. Due to the lack of courtroom space and judges, **we are advocating that remote proceedings be extended once more beyond the January 1, 2027, sunset date.**
2. The use of remote technology for both civil and criminal cases was established in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 state of emergency.
3. The use of remote proceedings continues in California courts.
4. Authority for this was extended in 2024 to expire January 1, 2027, with annual reporting compliance required per AB 170.

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Investing in Higher Ed

1. Funding instability and rising costs threaten access, affordability, and student success across UC, CSU, CCC, and private universities.
2. Workforce gaps are widening, particularly in healthcare, STEM, education, and technical fields, especially in the Inland Empire.
3. Aging infrastructure and limited capacity, including deferred maintenance and insufficient student housing, constrain growth and innovation.
4. Threats to research and innovation leadership due to federal funding uncertainty risk California's economic competitiveness.



- California's higher education system (UC, CSU, CCC) is the largest in the nation and the primary driver of workforce development, social mobility, and economic growth.
- Several independent colleges and universities, such as the University of Redlands, California Baptist University and La Sierra University collaborate to expand access, uplift underserved communities, and strengthen the region's economic vitality.
- Inland Southern California serves over 4.6 million residents and continues to grow rapidly, increasing demand for higher education, workforce training, and healthcare services.
- Strategic investment in higher education yields long-term returns through increased tax revenue, job creation, and economic competitiveness.

Proposed Solutions

1. **Stabilize Core Funding Across All Systems**
 - Fully fund the UC Compact and CSU commitments.
 - **Honor Proposition 98** for Community Colleges.
 - Restore prior reductions and address mandatory cost increases.
2. **Invest in Workforce, Research, and Student Success**
 - Fund enrollment growth (including CCC 3% growth target).
 - **Support SB 895** to sustain research and innovation.
 - Fund student support programs (mental health, basic needs, retention).
3. **Expand Infrastructure, Housing, and Capacity**
 - Dedicate funding for student housing.
 - Address deferred maintenance backlogs across all systems.
 - Invest in modern facilities for workforce-aligned education and research.

Anticipated Outcomes

1. Increased access to affordable higher education and improved student success outcomes.
2. Stronger workforce pipeline aligned with California's economic needs.
3. Economic growth driven by research, innovation, and job creation.
4. Greater regional equity, particularly in underserved areas like Inland Southern California.

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Support the 2026 State Budget Proposal to Increase



San Bernardino Valley College



Cal State San Bernardino



UC Riverside

- 1. California Community Colleges (CCC):** \$15.4 billion total (combining General Fund and property taxes).
 - Includes a **2.41% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA)**, providing roughly \$241 million in new ongoing funding.
 - Provides \$87 million for enrollment growth over two years.
 - Includes \$408 million in one-time funds to fully repay prior year deferrals.
- 2. California State University (CSU):** \$5.6 billion total.
 - Includes a **7% unrestricted base increase** (\$366 million ongoing), composed of a 5% "compact" increase and a 2% delayed increase from the previous year.
 - Expects the system to grow resident undergraduate enrollment by approximately 10,161 students (2.9%).
- 3. University of California (UC):** \$5.3 billion total.
 - Includes a **7% unrestricted base increase** (\$351 million ongoing).
 - Provides \$61 million ongoing to continue a plan replacing nonresident students with resident students at high-demand campuses.
 - Targets resident undergraduate growth of 2,968 students (1.4%).
- 4. Financial Aid and Student Support**
 - **Cal Grant Program:** The budget maintains **\$4 billion** in ongoing funding for the state's largest financial aid program, serving approximately 500,000 students.
 - **Student Support Block Grant:** \$100 million in one-time funds for flexible community college district support.
- 5. ELO-P funding by \$62.4M.**
 - This would guarantee that school districts receiving "Tier 2" reimbursements would receive a minimum of \$1800 per child per year from the state, thus ensuring that all youth receive strong afterschool/summer programming and support.



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