

## Amid lack of firefighters, residents step up

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### Body

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Aug 26, 2020( CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;;; Good morning, California. It's Wednesday, August 26. From brigades to Bud LightCivilian volunteer Jesse Katz battles the CZU August Lightning Complex Fire on Aug. 21 in Bonny Doon. Photo by Marcio Jose Sanchez, AP Photo As fires continue to rage across the state[1], stretching understaffed firefighting crews to the limit, some Californians are taking matters into their own hands and forming makeshift brigades to protect their communities.In the face of limited help from fire agencies, about 50 Bonny Doon residents[2] defied evacuation orders[3] to defend their town against the CZU August Lightning Complex fire tearing through Santa Cruz and San Mateo counties.

In nearby Boulder Creek and Ben Lomond[4], volunteer firefighting crews asked an elite emergency response team[5] to help them set up temporary command centers. And in Vacaville, one man used a 30-can pack of Bud Light[6] to fend off flames from the LNU Lightning Complex fire. Cal Fire, the state firefighting agency, later sent reinforcements to help residents[7] — but is stretched thin due to a dearth of inmate firefighters[8], historic blazes[9] that have charred an area larger than Delaware[10], and a limited supply of out-of-state firefighters[11] due to fires blazing across the West. Crews made progress on containing the blazes[12] Monday as more supplies were made available and weather conditions improved — but firefighters warned there was still a long way to go.For more information, check out the Los Angeles Times' fire map[13].\_\_\_\_\_The coronavirus bottom line:As of 9 p.m. Tuesday night, California had673,095 confirmed coronavirus casesand12,257 deathsfrom the virus, according toaCalMatters tracker[14].Also:CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking thestate's daily actions[15]. And we'retracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[16].Advertisement <https://www.socalgas.com/vision>Other stories you should know 1. Some students can return to school, state says Image via iStock Students[17] with disabilities, those who are homeless, English language learners and students at risk of abuse or neglect can return to school in small groups for in-person learning — even in counties on the state's coronavirus watch list[18] — under guidelines the state Department of Public Health released Tuesday[19]. Groups will be limited to 14 students and two supervising adults, and groups cannot mix with each other, according to the guidance. The news, which adds yet another wrinkle to the state's complex educational policies[20] amid the pandemic, comes as more counties fall off the watch list[21] and edge closer to meeting the requirements for reopening campuses. Gov. Gavin Newsom is also set to release new guidelines for reopening businesses[22] this week. 2. Newsom endorses propositions for first time Newsom attends a press conference in Los Angeles on Aug. 7, 2019. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters Newsom took a position Tuesday on four propositions, sharing for the first time his stance on some of the measures on California's November ballot[23] in a sign that campaign season is ramping up. The governor revealed his support for reinstating affirmative action policies in state colleges, universities and agencies (Prop. 16), restoring the right for parolees to vote (Prop. 17), and banning cash bail (Prop. 25) — as well as his opposition to rolling back certain criminal justice reforms (Prop. 20). Newsom: 'For years,

California has proudly led the way on fundamental civil rights and criminal justice reform but there's more we must do to root out racial inequity and structural bias and to embrace proven reforms that work.' The governor remained mum on several high-profile and controversial ballot measures, including one that would raise property taxes for large businesses and funnel the funds to local governments and schools (Prop. 15), and one that would allow Uber and Lyft drivers to remain independent contractors[24] with some additional benefits (Prop. 22). 3. California settles with districts accused of discrimination Image via iStock Three California school districts discriminated against Black students and those with disabilities by punishing them more harshly than other students for similar actions, and will now embark on five-year corrective plans overseen by an independent monitor, according to settlements Attorney General Xavier Becerra released Tuesday[25]. The news comes as school districts across California reconsider the presence of campus police[26] amid arguments that they disproportionately arrest and discipline students of color. Becerra: 'Our society is built on how we educate our children. When our schools use punishment discriminately, it has lasting consequences.' Key findings from the California Department of Justice's investigations include: At Barstow Unified School District, the rate of days of punishment for students reported for defiant behavior was 168% greater for Black students than white students. At Oroville City Elementary School District, Black students lost days of school due to suspension at a rate 18 times the state average, and middle school students with disabilities received nearly twice as many days as punishment as students without disabilities. At Oroville Union High School District, Black students were 56% more likely to be suspended than white students for the same types of behavior. 4. California coronavirus workers' comp claims soar A hospital employee enters Alta Bates Summit Medical Center in Oakland on Aug. 24. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters More than 35,000 Californians have filed COVID-19 workers' compensation claims since the pandemic began, translating to potentially more than \$2 billion in costs for employers and their insurers, CalMatters' Barbara Feder Ostrov reports[27]. Health care workers made up nearly 40% of all coronavirus-related claims, and Imperial County — which had the state's highest case rate in June — saw the highest rate of claims. Meanwhile, lawmakers are currently considering several bills that would extend and expand Newsom's executive order presuming essential workers who contracted COVID-19 were infected on the job. Advertisement <https://byebyemattress.com/> CalMatters commentary CalMatters columnist Dan Walters[28]: Unemployment benefits could be the difference between survival and homelessness for California's more than 3 million jobless workers, but payments are jeopardized by tech snafus and politics. How to break COVID-19 cycle: More restrictions now mean more freedom later. Let's not screw this one up, writes Jessica Levinson, a Loyola Law School professor[29]. Violating First Amendment rights: It's offensive that police unions are singled out in calls to ban contributions to prosecutors' political campaigns, argues Marshall McClain, president and CEO of the Los Angeles Airport Peace Officers Association[30]. Newsom must clarify Delta tunnel plan: This political culture of deferral, intended to finesse controversy, has only heightened mistrust and contention, writes Bruce Babbitt, former U.S. Secretary of the Interior[31]. Advertisement <http://lucaspublicaffairs.com/> Other things worth your time California's emergency alert system experiences technical difficulties as wildfires rage. // Los Angeles Times[32] To manage wildfires, California looks to what tribes have known all along. // CapRadio[33] Animals saved by a rescue network forged by years of Bay Area wildfires. // San Francisco Chronicle[34] Hundreds of protesters march in Los Angeles over police shooting in Wisconsin. // Los Angeles Times[35] Tahoe's new Gold Rush: Bay Area residents fleeing coronavirus push up home prices. // San Francisco Chronicle[36] Tahoe ski resort Squaw Valley to change its 'derogatory and offensive' name. // Sacramento Bee[37] California legislators cut state workers' pay. Just five of 120 requested pay cuts for themselves. // Sacramento Bee[38] The California DMV is selling drivers' data to private investigators. // Vice[39] See you tomorrow. Tips, insight or feedback? Email [emily@calmatters.org](mailto:emily@calmatters.org) [40].; Follow me on Twitter: [@emily\\_hoeven](https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven)[41] Subscribe to CalMatters newsletters here[42]. Follow CalMatters on Facebook[43] and Twitter[44]. CalMatters is now available in Spanish on Twitter[45], Facebook[46] and RSS[47]. [ 1]: [https://twitter.com/Cal\\_OES/status/1298344458635759617](https://twitter.com/Cal_OES/status/1298344458635759617) [ 2]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-25/bonny-doon-group-stays-to-fight-czu-fire-santa-cruz> [ 3]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Residents-defended-homes-from-the-CZU-fires-in-15511733.php> [ 4]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-24/fire-santa-cruz-mountains-firefighters-fema> [ 5]: <https://www.fema.gov/emergency-managers/national-preparedness/frameworks/urban-search-rescue> [ 6]: [https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/08/24/vacaville-man-fends-off-fires-with-bud-light/?preview\\_id=7401138](https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/08/24/vacaville-man-fends-off-fires-with-bud-light/?preview_id=7401138) [ 7]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Residents-defended-homes-from-the-CZU-fires-in-15511733.php> [ 8]: <https://calmatters.org/environment/2020/07/fire-season-california-inmate-coronavirus/> [ 9]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-fire-news-2020/> [ 10]: <https://www.fire.ca.gov/daily-wildfire-report/> [ 11]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/california-wildfires/article/Northern-California-is-shorthanded-on-fire-crews-15506287.php> [ 12]:

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<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-25/progress-weather-boosts-battle-northern-california-wildfires> [ 13]: <https://www.latimes.com/wildfires-map/> [ 14]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [ 15]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/> [ 16]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [ 17]: <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-schools-cohort-FAQ.pdf> [ 18]: <https://covid19.ca.gov/roadmap-counties/> [ 19]: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/small-groups-child-youth.aspx> [ 20]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/gavin-newsom-administration-departures/> [ 21]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-fire-news-2020/> [ 22]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-fires-reopening-evictions-covid-gavin-newsom/> [ 23]: <https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-november-2020-ballot-propositions-final-list/> [ 24]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/05/california-ab-5-labor-uber-lyft-ballot-measure/> [ 25]: <https://oag.ca.gov/news/press-releases/attorney-general-becerra-secures-settlements-barstow-and-oroville-school> [ 26]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/06/kamala-harris-vice-president-contender-2020/> [ 27]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=132934> [ 28]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=132641> [ 29]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/my-turn/2020/08/when-it-comes-to-covid-19-dont-let-the-good-news-become-the-bad-news/> [ 30]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/reader-reactions/2020/08/proposal-to-prohibit-police-unions-from-contributing-to-da-campaigns-violates-our-first-amendment-rights/> [ 31]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/my-turn/2020/08/gov-newsom-must-clarify-his-delta-tunnel-plan/> [ 32]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-25/wildfires-continue-to-illuminate-holes-in-californias-emergency-alert-messaging> [ 33]: <https://www.capradio.org/155426> [ 34]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/california-wildfires/article/Rescue-network-forged-by-years-of-Bay-Area-15511834.php> [ 35]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-25/protesters-marching-in-downtown-l-a-monday-night-decry-police-shootings> [ 36]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Tahoe-s-new-Gold-Rush-Bay-Area-residents-15511767.php> [ 37]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article245236525.html> [ 38]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/the-state-worker/article245201870.html> [ 39]: [https://www.vice.com/en\\_us/article/dyzeza/california-dmv-data-private-investigators%C2%A0](https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/dyzeza/california-dmv-data-private-investigators%C2%A0) [ 40]: [emily@calmatters.org](mailto:emily@calmatters.org) [ 41]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&#38;id=fdbf3734c1&#38;e=8df3ed9f4c> [ 42]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&#38;id=2a7ce24a72&#38;e=8df3ed9f4c> [ 43]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&#38;id=9b9a39b357&#38;e=8df3ed9f4c> [ 44]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&#38;id=ad27afd972&#38;e=8df3ed9f4c> [ 45]: [https://twitter.com/calmatters\\_es](https://twitter.com/calmatters_es) [ 46]: <https://www.facebook.com/calmatterses> [ 47]: <https://calmatters.org/category/calmatters-en-espanol/>

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