

Inside Newsom's tumultuous DNC appearance

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Body

Aug 21, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;;; Good morning, California. It's Friday, August 21. From prime time to Santa Cruz forestScreenshot of Newsom speaking at the Democratic National Convention on Aug. 20. Gov. Gavin Newsom was set to make the biggest appearance of his political career Thursday night — but things didn't go as planned.

Newsom backed out[1] of his prime-time speaking slot at the Democratic National Convention Thursday morning, citing the need to focus on wildfires raging across California[2]. But his remarks had been pre-recorded[3], raising questions about why the governor — often thought to have presidential ambitions — would turn down his largest and most prestigious platform yet. Then, minutes before he appeared in a cell phone video shot in the Santa Cruz forest[4] near an evacuation center, Newsom announced[5] he would be giving remarks after all. Newsom: 'Climate change is real. If you are in denial about climate change, come to California. Just today, the President of the United States threatened to defund our efforts on wildfire suppression because he said we didn't rake enough leaves[6]. Can't make that up.' By filming his appearance — which lasted less than three minutes — 'on my way to one of our relief centers,' Newsom avoided criticism he likely would have received for an ambitious speech touting California's diversity, innovation and progressive policies while its residents grapple with raging wildfires[7], rolling blackouts[8] and delayed unemployment benefits[9]. But even if Newsom had appeared as planned, his national profile has been overshadowed and his path to the presidency complicated by another California politician: Kamala Harris, who accepted the Democratic Party's vice presidential nomination[10] Wednesday night. Rose Kopolczynski, California Democratic strategist[11]: If Joe Biden is elected, Harris 'could be vice president or president for the next 16 years. While she could choose her own vice president in 2028, it is not going to be another Californian. (Newsom) could be running for president for the first time when he's 68 years old.' Alex Padilla was the only other Californian to appear Thursday night — a major opportunity for the Secretary of State, who may be gunning to fill Harris' empty Senate seat[12] if she and Biden win in November._____The coronavirus bottom line:As of 9 p.m. Thursday night, California had644,751 confirmed coronavirus casesand11,686 deathsfrom the virus, according toaCalMatters tracker[13].Also:CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking thestate's daily actions[14]. And we'retracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[15].Advertisement<https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/> Other stories you should know 1. Uber and Lyft win another reprieve A rally in opposition to AB 5 on July 9, 2019. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters Hours before Uber and Lyft planned to shut down in California[16], an appeals court on Thursday halted an order that would have forced the ride-hail companies to immediately reclassify their drivers as employees under the controversial state law AB 5. The last-minute intervention, which pushed the next hearing in the case to October[17], capped off yet another week of clashes between the gig-economy titans, drivers, regulators and lawmakers. The mayors of San Diego and San Jose sided with Uber and Lyft[18] Wednesday, drawing ire[19] from Assemblymember Lorena

Gonzalez, the San Diego Democrat who wrote AB 5. Meanwhile, Uber and Lyft are considering using a franchise-like model in California[20], which would allow them to circumvent AB 5 by having a third party hire drivers. John Cote, spokesman for the San Francisco city attorney, who sued Uber and Lyft in May[21]: 'These companies may have bought themselves a little more time, but the price is that they have to demonstrate — under oath — that they have an implementation plan that complies with the law.' 2. Los Angeles County misused taxpayer funds, agency says Image via iStock Los Angeles County will pay \$1.35 million for failing to disclose its use of public funds to advocate for two tax measures ultimately passed by voters, according to a settlement California's political ethics watchdog approved Thursday[22]. The settlement — one of the largest[23] approved by the California Fair Political Practices Commission — resolves complaints filed against the county for spending more than \$1 million in taxpayer funds on ads[24] supporting a 2017 measure that hiked sales taxes to address homelessness and a 2018 measure that levied a parcel tax for a clean water program. California and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which filed a civil lawsuit against the county, will each receive \$600,000. (The irony, as CalMatters columnist Dan Walters pointed out[25], is that the penalty for misusing taxpayer funds will be paid with taxpayer funds.) FPPC Chair Richard Miadich[26]: 'This a clear violation of the public trust when their leaders willfully ignore the law to use taxpayer money in a political manner.' A related fight is playing out in six lawsuits filed against Attorney General Xavier Becerra[27], alleging that his descriptions of contentious measures on California's November ballot — including some that would raise taxes — are misleading and politically biased. 3. How Prop. 16 could affect faculty diversity Dr. Melina Abdullah, former chair of the department of Pan-African Studies at CSU Los Angeles, on Aug. 18. Photo by Alexis Hunley for CalMatters Speaking of propositions, voters in November will weigh in on Prop. 16, which would allow public California agencies — like colleges and governments — to consider race, sex and ethnicity in admissions, contracting and hiring decisions. It could also make it easier for California colleges and universities to hire more faculty members of color, Prop. 16 backers say. While more than 66% of students at California's public colleges come from communities of color, the same is true for only one-third of tenured faculty, CalMatters' Mikhail Zinshteyn reports[28]. And at the University of California, one-third of tenured faculty were women despite women making up more than half of the student body. Michele Siqueiros of the Campaign for College Opportunity: 'I think folks are uncomfortable with the acknowledgement that perhaps you're discriminating against women when 70% of your faculty are male.' Ward Connerly of Californians for Equal Rights: '(Affirmative action) is really the enemy of white people who are contractors and Americans of Asian descent who are trying to get into the University of California at Berkeley.' CalMatters commentary Tax the rich: Newsom must call a special legislative session to focus on taxing the super wealthy and investing in an equitable recovery, argue Bob Schoonover, president of SEIU California and SEIU Local 721, and E. Toby Boyd, president of the California Teachers Association[29]. Avoiding 'Mad Max' future: If we want to prevent blackouts while progressing toward an emission-free grid, we must expand nuclear and hydroelectric power, writes Assemblymember Jordan Cunningham, a San Luis Obispo Republican[30]. Reclassify hydropower now: If we are going to meet California's power needs, we cannot relegate hydropower — our most affordable and reliable clean power — to second-class status, argues Assemblymember Adam Gray, a Merced Democrat[31]. Solving California's blackouts: We need to shift industrial demand to times when our grid can handle it and rapidly expand our clean energy resources, argue Jose Torres of the California Environmental Justice Alliance and Luis Amezcua of the Sierra Club[32]. Better online tools needed: California college websites don't do the best job directing students to appropriate math classes, write Pamela Burdman of Just Equations and Rogair Purnell, an education equity researcher[33]. Advertisement <http://lucaspublishing.com/Other-things-worth-your-time-Four-dead-as-firefighters-overwhelmed-by-Bay-Area-fires>. // San Francisco Chronicle[34] See photos, videos of lightning-sparked wildfires across the Bay Area. // San Francisco Chronicle[35] Pandemic, wildfires, scorching heat: How to help our children cope. // CalMatters[36] (plus video[37] and podcast[38]) Cal State in the age of COVID: Five takeaways from a chat with the chancellor. // CalMatters[39] San Diego County approves 19 schools to reopen, all but one private. // San Diego Union-Tribune[40] Folsom Prison now has California's largest active inmate outbreak. // Sacramento Bee[41] Newsom said he'd take a pay cut three months ago. He didn't. // Sacramento Bee[42] Climate change report forecasts hard times for Kern agriculture. // Bakersfield Californian[43] See you Monday. Tips, insight or feedback? Email emily@calmatters.org [44].; Follow me on Twitter: [@emily_hoeven](https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven)[45] Subscribe to CalMatters newsletters [here](#)[46]. Follow CalMatters on Facebook[47] and Twitter[48]. CalMatters is now available in Spanish on Twitter[49], Facebook[50] and RSS[51]. [1]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article245114650.html>? [2]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/08/california-fire-heat-wave-czu-gavin-newsom/> [3]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/politics-government/capitol-alert/article245114650.html>? [

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