

Governor Newsom Delivers State of the State Address 3.8.22

Published: Mar 08, 2022

SACRAMENTO — Governor Gavin Newsom [delivered his State of the State address](#) before the California Legislature today.

Below is the text as prepared for delivery:

State of the State Address

California Governor Gavin Newsom

March 8, 2022

On International Women’s Day, it’s great to say thank you, Madam Lieutenant Governor, for that introduction.

Speaker Rendon and Pro Tem Atkins, thank you for being here tonight.

To members of the Legislature and other state officials, thank you for joining us this evening.

And to my wife, Jennifer, the First Partner. Thank you for being the heart of our family, and for everything you do for California.

Given the state of our world, I don’t imagine there are many people outside these walls waiting on the words that will be said here tonight.

But it is important for us to come together, nonetheless.

Not just to mark how far we’ve come in our fight against COVID, but also to reaffirm our commitment to democratic institutions.

As the people of Ukraine continue to come under assault, 2 million already displaced from their homes, we take strength from their contagious courage, and their willingness to fight for their freedom.

Tonight, is also a moment for us to reflect on what it means to live in a society where elected leaders still settle our disagreements by and large with civility and compromise.

And how we derive strength from a government that reflects the people we represent.

Our Speaker, son of working-class parents and grandson of Mexican immigrants, worked his way through California’s public education system, earning a Ph.D. from UC Riverside. Now, committed to ensuring every child has access to early learning.

Our Pro Tem, born in poverty in Virginia, came to California and became a champion for housing and equal rights for all — the first openly gay woman to lead both the Assembly and state Senate.

Our Chief Justice, public school graduate, descendant of migrant farmworkers, speaking out against income inequality and tackling the cost of justice for people in poverty.

And our constitutional officers here tonight — they include the daughter of an Arkansas sharecropper, an immigrant from the Philippines, the daughters of parents born in China and Greece, one raised by a teacher from Panama, and the proud son of undocumented Mexican immigrants.

Thank you for your service.

California does democracy like nowhere else in the world.

No other place offers opportunity to so many from such diverse backgrounds.

But we cannot take our democracy for granted.

Authoritarian and illiberal impulses aren’t just rising overseas, they’ve been echoing here at home for some time. While we may not have

strongmen literally waging war in our country, we are plagued by agents of a national anger machine fueling division, weaponizing grievance.

Powerful forces and loud voices – stoking fear and seeking to divide us, weakening the institutions of our democracy. Counting on complacency to erode voting rights, scapegoating minorities. Conjuring conspiracies and promoting “otherness.”

Actively exploiting the “anger of the anxious.”

Anger that finds a home when people feel understandably disconnected from each other and our collective future, when that future doesn’t look as bright as the past. Making them more susceptible to the siren calls of those trying to tear us apart.

Foundationally, this is a threat we must all face, together and prove there is a better way – a California Way – forward.

The California Way means rejecting old binaries and finding new solutions to big problems.

Take climate policy, for example. California has no peers.

For years, we’ve set the rules and others have followed. But over time, we’ve learned we can’t solve big problems like climate change situationally, with short-term thinking. Look, no one’s naive about the moment we’re living in, with high gas prices and the geopolitical uncertainty fueling them.

In January we proposed to pause the gas tax increase.

Now, it’s clear we must go further.

That’s why — working with Legislative leadership — I’ll be submitting a proposal to put money back in the pockets of Californians, to address rising gas prices.

But at a time, when we’ve been heating and burning up, one thing we cannot do is repeat the mistakes of the past by embracing polluters. Drilling even more oil, which only leads to even more extreme weather, more extreme drought, more wildfire.

What more evidence do we need?

Just in the past few years, we’ve seen whole communities nearly wiped off the map.

Greenville. Paradise. Grizzly Flats.

How many more are we willing to sacrifice?

We need to be fighting polluters, not bolstering them. And in so doing, freeing us once and for all from the grasp of petro-dictators.

But this conversation can’t just be about oil supply. Daily life still demands too much fossil fuel.

That too has to change.

Underscoring the importance of accelerating California’s leadership in clean technology, this is not just a national security and an environmental justice imperative — clean energy is this generation’s greatest economic opportunity.

A perfect example — our dominance in electric vehicle sales and manufacturing.

It was California’s policies that created this market.

Now we have the opportunity to extend this leadership, to secure a critical component of the supply chain for batteries, by tapping one of the world’s largest lithium reserves – right here in California.

Our nation-leading climate investments — \$38 billion — will ensure that other innovations will surely follow. Not by re-creating the 20th

century by extracting more oil, but by extracting new ideas, drilling for new talent, by running our economy on a carbon-free engine.

That's the California Way.

When it comes to the economy, California is unmatched.

We dominate in research, innovation, entrepreneurialism, venture capital — and remain the world's fifth largest economy. Our GDP growth has consistently outpaced not only the rest of the country – but most other, large western democracies. In December alone, 25 percent of America's jobs were created right here in California. A million new jobs in the last 12 months. More new business starts during the worst of the pandemic than Texas and Florida combined.

But you know what makes us different than those states — besides the freedom of a woman's right to choose? It's that, as our businesses grow, we don't leave our workers behind.

Just consider what we did last year for the middle class in California, sending 12 billion dollars back — the largest state tax rebate in American history.

But we didn't stop there.

We raised the minimum wage.

We increased paid sick leave.

Provided more paid family leave.

Expanded child care to help working parents.

And this year, with your support, we will do something no other state in America has done — provide Health For All, regardless of immigration status.

That's the California Way.

Speaking of not leaving people behind, no state took bolder steps to protect public health and human life over the last two years.

Our lockdowns, distressing as they were, saved lives. Our mask mandates saved lives. Your choices saved lives.

California's experienced far lower COVID death rates than any other large state. Fewer than Texas, Ohio. Fewer than Florida — 35 percent, to be exact.

But even with three quarters of Californians being fully vaccinated, we are mindful that we cannot let our guard down.

That's why last month, we put out our SMARTER Plan – the nation's first blueprint to stay a step ahead of future variants and seasonal surges.

I just want to thank you, thank you members of the Legislature for all you did these past two years to keep us safe.

But there's another crisis we're still tackling. That's the crisis of homelessness, which has worsened over the last decade, not only here in California, but across the nation.

Just a few years ago, California lacked any comprehensive strategy. No accountability and no meaningful state resources to solve the problem.

But that's all changed.

In just three years, we not only have a comprehensive plan, we're also requiring new accountability and providing unprecedented investments for cities and counties on the front lines.

And while we moved a record 58,000 people off the streets since the beginning of the pandemic, we recognize we have more to do – particularly to address what’s happening on our sidewalks, reaching people who need the help the most.

Those with schizophrenia spectrum and psychosis disorders, many self-medicating with drugs or alcohol addictions.

That’s precisely what our encampment resolution grants and our new CARE Court seek to address.

Getting people off the streets, out of tents, and into housing and treatment is essential to making our streets safe for everyone, but public safety certainly isn’t just about homelessness.

Bobby Kennedy, just six weeks before he was killed by an assassin’s bullet, reminded us that the health of a society depends on the ability of people to walk their own streets in safety. Not to be frightened into isolation.

“A nation,” he said, “which surrenders to crime – whether by indifference or heavy-handed repression, is a society which has resigned itself to failure.”

Our approach is to be neither indifferent to the realities of the present day, nor revert to heavy-handed policies that have marked the failures of the past.

We’re funding local law enforcement and prosecutors to investigate and solve more crime, bolstering the Attorney General’s Office, prosecuting organized theft rings and getting illegal guns off the streets.

But we’re also investing hundreds of millions in new programs to tackle the root causes of crime, doubling down on proven violence-prevention programs.

That’s the California way.

Of course, to tackle any root cause, we need to talk about education.

And I’m not talking about that version of education “reform” being promoted in some states, where they’re banning books, where you can sue your history teacher for teaching history, and where you can’t say the word “gay.”

I’m talking about real transformation of our public education system, like we’re doing right here in California.

By creating choices – real choices – for parents, and unprecedented support for their kids.

A whole new grade — transitional kindergarten for all, nine hours of enrichment a day with true universal before- and after-school programs. Expanded summer school. Universal, nutritious meals, millions of new child savings accounts and free community college.

That’s the California Way.

Look, people have always looked to California for inspiration.

And now, in the midst of so much turmoil, with stacking stresses and dramatic social and economic change, California is doing what we have done for generations, lighting out the territory ahead of the rest, expanding the horizon of what’s possible.

We know that government cannot be the entire solution, but we also know that government has always been part of the solution.

By creating a platform for people and the private sector to thrive.

As Friedman said — we have a formula for success setting rules for risk-taking, not recklessness.

Infrastructure, Research & Development, investing in our conveyor belt for talent — the finest system of higher education in the world, our community colleges, UCs and CSUs. Ensuring society provides a hand up when people need help. Maintaining our pro-immigrant policies and welcoming refugees from around the world.

Those are California values.

Embracing diversity, but also seeking common ground. Pursuing greater connectedness.

Not exploiting division, with performative politics, and memes of the moment but by unifying toward common purpose.

Inviting more people with diverse perspectives, from different backgrounds –“To strive, to seek, to find, to not yield” — all into the fight for a better California.

Thank you.

###