



MIKE AND MICHELE PITEK say they brought their values as “true Californians” with them when they moved to Scottsdale, Ariz. Photographs by GINA FERAZZI Los Angeles Times

Californians may tilt Arizona

Michele Pitek moved to Arizona from California, her lifelong home, with her husband, Mike, about seven years ago in part because they were tired of struggling with the cost of living in the Bay Area despite both earning six-figure salaries.

Once they settled into a newly built home on more than an acre at the edge of Scottsdale with stunning views of rocky peaks, Pitek, 57, said there were some adjustments: learning to depend on a septic tank and treating well water that contains arsenic, for instance, and seeing John Deere bulldozers pull into the parking lots of shopping centers.

But the abundant desert beauty, with shooting stars streaking over their home nearly every night, coyotes howling and hawks swerving overhead, make up for it.

The Piteks are part of an exodus of Californians who have moved to the Grand Canyon State — more than 74,000 in 2022, according to the most recent data available from the U.S. Census Bureau. That’s more than a quarter of the people who moved to Arizona that year — easily the most from any state.

An influx of tens of thousands from the Golden State is changing politics in the longtime conservative stronghold, to the frustration of many residents

By SEEMA MEHTA | REPORTING FROM SCOTTSDALE, ARIZ.



THE GRAND CANYON State’s shifting political landscape has made it a major battleground in presidential elections.

The influx has led to questions about the impact on politics in this once ruby-red state, which is now among several battlegrounds that will determine whether Vice President Kamala Harris or former President Trump wins the White House in November. Trump leads by 14 percentage points in the state in an average of recent polling, according to Real Clear Politics.

President Biden won Arizona by fewer than 11,000 votes over Trump in 2020. After the election was called, one of Pitek’s former colleagues from Oakland texted her: “You turned it blue Michele.”

“I wish it was just me,” she said. “Mike and I are true Californians in a lot of ways, and we brought those values with us. We didn’t change. We’re Democrats.”

California is an overwhelmingly Democratic state — Biden won it by more than 29 points in 2020 — and it’s the home of many of the nation’s most prominent liberals, most notably Democratic presidential nominee Harris. Yet it is also home to more than 5.5 million registered Republicans, according to the secretary of state’s office.

[See Arizona, A6]

What a redraw of L.A. districts could do

California’s attorney general is urging the city to redraft council maps, which may lead to City Hall upheaval.

By DAVID ZAHNISER AND DAKOTA SMITH

Three years ago, a prominent Latino civil rights group offered up a plan to strengthen Latino voting power by dramatically redrawing Los Angeles City Council district boundaries.

The Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund wanted to ensure that eight of the council’s 15 districts had a significant number of voting-age Latinos. MALDEF’s proposal, submitted during a once-a-decade redistricting process, would have required wrenching changes to all but a handful of districts.

City Council members ultimately pursued a different strategy, approving maps that largely reflected the status quo and kept their districts mostly intact.

Now, California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta has begun pressing the city to conduct a new map-making process, raising the prospect of precisely the upheaval the council had worked to avoid.

The Times reported last week that Bonta’s office, after a two-year investigation, has expressed serious concerns about Latino voting representation in some parts of the city. If the council refuses to comply with his demand to draw a new map in time for the 2026 primary election, Bonta could launch a protracted legal battle against the city.

Drawing a new map, on the other hand, would trigger a potentially divisive fight over political representation — one that, although offering a fresh examination of Latino voting strength, could throw the established political order at City Hall into disarray.

The draft legal document prepared by Bonta’s office, a copy of which was reviewed

[See Districts, A12]



LOGAN, W.VA., hometown of Terra Vance, a distant cousin of GOP vice presidential nominee JD Vance. She says he’s disconnected from his Appalachian roots.

Vance has a fiery foe in the heart of Appalachia — and they’re related

By MACKENZIE MAYS

LOGAN COUNTY, W.Va. — Five generations of Vances gathered in West Virginia last month for a reunion, singing hymns and swapping stories in a quiet park hugged by towering green mountains waiting to burst into autumnal shades of orange.

JD Vance — the Republican vice presidential nomi-

nee who reunion attendees say is part of the family — was not among them.

“He is surely too ashamed to face any of us. Judas Iscariot would have a warmer reception,” said Terra Vance, an Appalachian activist who genealogy records show shares some ancestors with the politician.

Terra and JD Vance are distant cousins who have never met. They grew up in dif-

ferent states, with family lineage that intersected generations ago. But now, as the U.S. senator from Ohio leans on his Appalachian roots in his campaign for the White House, Terra Vance has garnered a following as a fiery and knowledgeable critic.

The 44-year-old disability rights nonprofit founder from Logan, W.Va. — population: 1,365 — presents herself as the “authentic hillbilly

[See Vance, A9]

Wide discrimination against users of rental vouchers is alleged

Housing group files complaints against scores of landlords, seeks enforcement of rules in California.

By ANDREW KHOURI

A national investigative nonprofit on Monday lodged discrimination complaints against more than 200 California landlords and their representatives — including major real estate brokerages — alleging that they illegally refused to rent to Section 8 voucher holders.

The Housing Rights Initiative filed the complaints, based upon an undercover investigation, with the California Civil Rights Department.

The nonprofit organization is asking the agency to look into penalties against the 203 companies and individuals, saying they violated a state law that makes it illegal to deny tenants solely

because they’d pay with a voucher. It’s also lobbying for more state funding to adequately enforce the law, which the group and other advocates contend hasn’t been done since the rules took effect in 2020.

“There’s nothing more tragic than when a family gets ... an opportunity to get a home and they can’t because real estate isn’t following the law,” said Aaron Carr, executive director of the Housing Rights Initiative. “It’s time for California to get tough.”

The Section 8 program, named after a section of the federal Housing Act, is one of the U.S. government’s most powerful tools to keep rental housing affordable and to fight overcrowding and homelessness.

Generally, tenants pay the equivalent of about 30% of their income on rent, with the voucher covering the rest. Unlike public housing, the subsidy can move with tenants so that they can find housing with private land-

[See Renters, A6]

Dodgers-Padres Game 3 coverage

Read about Tuesday night’s NLDS result at latimes.com/sports and in our Playoffs Extra at latimes.com/enewspaper.

Eastern Sierra shows its colors

Trees put on their fall spectacle, turning the landscape into a tapestry of yellow and gold. CALIFORNIA, B1

Bonta files suit against TikTok

Attorney general is one of 14 across U.S. alleging harm to young users. BUSINESS, A8

Weather

Turning sunny, warm. L.A. Basin: 85/62. B6

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