

ANALYSIS

Border policy divides party

For many Democrats, a centrist shift toward tougher immigration laws is unsettling.

By David Lauter

WASHINGTON — For a decade, starting with President Obama’s reelection and accelerating during Donald Trump’s years in office, Democrats moved to the left on immigration issues, downplaying border enforcement and advocating for the rights of migrants to seek asylum in the U.S.

For a time, the public moved with them.

The harsh enforcement measures pushed by President Trump, especially the separation of children from their families at the border, generated an intense backlash among voters.

Polls during Trump’s tenure found a steady increase in Americans who favored more immigration and legalization for those who had entered the U.S. without papers.

That has all changed.

As the number of migrants crossing the southern border has risen to record levels, public support for immigration has gone down. Republicans have pummeled President Biden on the issue, and it has divided Democrats.

The Democratic response, from the White House on down, has been to shift toward advocating for stronger border enforcement.

[See Immigration, A6]



Brian Van der Brug Los Angeles Times

OWENS LAKE evaporated into a brine pool encircled by vast salt flats after its inflows were diverted to a growing Los Angeles in 1913.

An increasing drain on the DWP

Heavy rain and flooding over the last year have caused roughly \$100 million in damage to Los Angeles Department of Water and Power infrastructure and dust control systems in the Owens Valley, according to officials, and that figure is expected to climb as Southern California endures yet another atmospheric river this week.

While heavy storms have dumped a bounty of rain and snow along the southern Sierra Nevada, enabling Los Angeles to draw millions of gallons of water for its residents, the precipitation has also taken a heavy toll on systems designed to prevent choking dust storms from developing on the dry bed of Owens Lake.

“We’re trying to build resilience into our Owens Valley operations,” said Adam Perez, manager of the Los Angeles Aqueduct. “But large amounts of stormwater in short order causes damage, and we do our best to address that.”

Sierra storms have been good for L.A.’s water supply but have caused costly damage to the aqueduct and dust control systems in the Owens Valley

By Louis Sahagún

The storm damage includes a major breach of the aqueduct that occurred in March, damage inflicted by Tropical Storm Hilary in August, and the submersion of dust sensors and dust control systems throughout the lake bed.

Although damage estimates are still being calculated, a preliminary assessment estimated the costs will be more than \$100 million, DWP officials said. The agency has not yet determined how much of that expense will be passed along to its 4 million ratepayers — roughly half of whom live in disadvantaged communities.

Owens Lake evaporated into a brine pool encircled by vast salt flats after its inflows were diverted to Los Angeles in 1913. After the salt flats became a source of unhealthy dust pollution, the city was ordered to control the problem.

[See Owens, A7]



Irfan Khan Los Angeles Times

FOR BEN CHIDA, Gov. Gavin Newsom’s top education advisor, his dark past has become his road map to diagnose problems in the traditional education system.

A key Newsom advisor bares his struggle with mental health

Ben Chida to youths in crises: ‘You’re not alone’

By Teresa Watanabe

The boy hated himself.

Six months into his first year in high school, he dropped out. For more than a year, he isolated himself in his Huntington Beach bedroom where he became addicted to video games and anonymously vented his anger online with racist and misogynistic screeds, haunted by suicidal thoughts and fantasies about hurting others. His health deteriorated as he binged on pepperoni pizza, grew obese and developed terrible rashes.

Then Ben Chida ventured out of his room.

Today, Chida, 38, is Gov. Gavin Newsom’s chief deputy Cabinet secretary, a key member of the team building an ambitious plan to reshape public education through a \$50-billion

continuum of services to create a healthy foundation for children and a path to meaningful jobs at the end.

Chida was the chief architect of five-year compacts with the University of California and California State University, pledging financial stability in exchange for gains in graduation rates, access and affordability. He guided a statewide data system, set to debut this year, to follow students through the educational pipeline into careers to assess what works and doesn’t.

He is driving Newsom’s Master Plan for Career Education, set for release this fall, that would help high school students explore

[See Mental health, A8]

California tightens rules on workers’ lead exposure

Safety board votes to lower acceptable levels of the metal despite objections from business groups.

By Emily Alpert Reyes

For the first time in decades, California is tightening its rules on workplace exposure to lead, a poisonous metal that can wreak havoc throughout the body.

Experts said the new

regulations will make California a national leader in battling the insidious and deadly effects of lead in the workplace.

The California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board voted 5 to 2 on Thursday to adopt the rules over the objections of business groups that said they were unworkable and difficult to understand.

“The evidence is undeniable that even small levels of exposure can have very, very serious effects,” board member Joseph M. Alioto Jr. said before voting in favor of updating the regulations.

Backers said the stricter requirements were needed in light of evidence that workers could suffer health hazards such as kidney dysfunction or hypertension from amounts of lead well below what California had allowed.

Failing to act on that scientific evidence until now “means that an unknown number of lead-exposed workers have died early from heart disease” or suffered other harm, said Barbara Materna, former chief of occupational health at the state’s Department of Industrial Hygiene.

[See Lead, A7]

Putin critic’s story not over

The director of the Oscar-winning film on Alexei Navalny discusses the activist’s legacy. **CALENDAR, E1**

Matsuyama wins with final surge

Japanese star shoots a 9-under 62, the lowest closing round by the winner at the Genesis Invitational. **SPORTS, D3**

Weather

Heavy rain.
L.A. Basin: 60/54. **B6**



Allen J. Schaben Los Angeles Times

L.A.’S TINY HOME WOES

Climate change may add to homelessness issue, columnist Erika D. Smith says. **CALIFORNIA, B1**



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