

Will abortion matter in O.C. races?

Opinions are strong, but it's unclear if the issue can sway voters in right-leaning region.

By Hannah Fry

Each day, Summer Bailey saw the congressional campaign signs staked into the succulent greenery near the entrance to Balboa Island in the heart of Newport Beach.

One touted Max Ukropina, a Republican businessman. The other was for former GOP Assemblyman Scott Baugh. Both candidates are vying for Rep. Katie Porter's seat in Congress, hoping to flip the Democratic-leaning district to the Republicans as she runs for the U.S. Senate.

Last month, Bailey decided to add a third sign to the mix, one that focused on abortion.

The white poster read "Both are anti-choice" in blue letters, with red arrows pointing to Ukropina's and Baugh's signs. When hers was removed, she put up another.

Bailey, 60, a nonpartisan voter, calls the issue of women's bodily autonomy her "war cry."

"I know a lot of pro-choice Republicans, both men and women, who might not choose to vote for a candidate based on that issue," she said. "But I want every single Republican out there to know that this year, if you [See Abortion, A7]



EBRAHIM NOROOZI Associated Press
A PROTESTER holds a portrait of opposition leader Alexei Navalny, Russian President Vladimir Putin's fiercest political foe, during a rally Friday in front of the Russian Embassy in Berlin.

Putin critic Alexei Navalny dies in prison, Russia says

Biden and Western allies blame leader for opposition figure's death

By Laura King

Russian opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who survived a near-fatal poisoning blamed on the Kremlin and wielded black humor and social-media savvy to battle President Vladimir Putin's autocratic rule even from behind bars, died in prison Friday, Russia's prison agency said. He was 47.

Supporters of Navalny, Putin's most unyielding and best-known critic, had long feared for his health

and safety as he endured punishing conditions in captivity, most recently at the remote, freezing Arctic Circle penal colony dubbed "Polar Wolf" where he was reported to have lapsed into unconsciousness after a walk and subsequently died.

Only a day earlier, in a video link from a court hearing at the prison, he had appeared in good spirits, even jokingly asking the judge to help pay the fines he had accrued for supposed misbehavior in confinement.

President Biden, like a host of other Western leaders, blamed Rus-

sia's leader, while acknowledging the circumstances were not yet clear. The Kremlin angrily insisted that no cause had yet been established.

"Putin is responsible for Navalny's death," said Biden, who praised the opposition leader as brave and principled — "everything Putin is not."

Hours after the announcement of the death on Russian state media, Navalny's wife, Yulia Navalnaya, told attendees at the Munich Security Conference in Germany that Russian officials lied constantly, and she [See Navalny, A4]

Wildfire smoke, heat are a double threat

Exposure to both together amplifies the health risk of either alone, a study finds.

By Hayley Smith and Corinne Purtill

State health officials know that extreme heat can cost lives and send people to the hospital, just like wildfire smoke. Now, new research finds that when people are exposed to both hazards simultaneously — as is increasingly the case in California — heart and respiratory crises outpace the expected sum of hospitalizations compared to when the conditions occur separately.

In a study published this month in the journal *Science Advances*, researchers determined that wildfire smoke and extreme heat together create a previously unrecognized "synergistic effect" or additional burden on people's health — raising their risk of hospitalization for cardiorespiratory causes by 7%.

Researchers also concluded that this excess harm is borne disproportionately by the most vulnerable Californians, and falls most heavily on areas with lower incomes, denser housing and less access to health insurance than it does in wealthier regions.

"This additional burden is not random," said Tarik Benmarhnia, a study author and climate change epidemiologist at Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego. "This is concentrated in very, very specific communities, and these communities are systematically less advantaged, with less resources and with more racial and ethnic minorities."

Researchers at Scripps and UCLA Fielding School of Public Health arrived at these conclusions after examining satellite imagery of wildfire smoke, temperature records, hospital admissions and demographic data from 2006 to 2019 for nearly 1,000 ZIP Codes across California — a sample covering two-thirds of the state's [See Dual danger, A7]



MICHAEL OWEN BAKER For The Times
CYRUS MAYER, center, was part of a "die-in" protest Tuesday in which activists urged the Ojai City Council to pass a resolution calling for a cease-fire in Gaza.

Fake blood and real screams

Ojai, half a world away from Gaza, has been rocked by increasingly brazen protests over Israel-Hamas war

By Hayley Branson-Potts

OJAI — The Ojai City Council was listening to public comments on a mundane short-term rental ordinance when a scream pierced the air.

Cyrus Mayer burst into the room, wearing a kaffiyeh headscarf and a white shawl soaked with faux blood.

"Helllllp!" shouted Mayer, a pro-Palestinian activist, punctuating his words with agonized screams. "Cease-fire! Cease-fire!"

Mayer collapsed onto the floor. He writhed. Then he

went quiet, pretending to be dead.

"Why doesn't anybody care? Why won't people help?" yelled a fellow protester in the crowd.

"Oh, Jesus," muttered resident Larry Steingold, annoyed as he stepped away from the lectern where he had been asking for a crack-down on vacation rentals.

City Council members shuffled out of the room — their meeting, once again, halted by protest.

Ojai, population 7,500, is half a world away from the Gaza Strip. But the eclectic tourist town — which has declared itself an "internat-

tional city of peace" and a "nuclear-free zone" — has been rocked in recent weeks by increasingly brazen protests over the war between Israel and Hamas.

This month, pro-Palestinian activists have targeted the historic Ojai Valley Inn because it is owned by the billionaire Crown family of Chicago, who are major shareholders of the military contractor General Dynamics. Protesters said they oppose U.S.-made weapons being used by Israel.

On Feb. 11, someone covered a sign for the famed resort — a celebrity haunt [See Ojai, A6]

Trump ordered to pay \$355 million for financial fraud

Judge's state civil case ruling also bars him from doing business in New York for 3 years.

By Michael R. Sisak

NEW YORK — A New York judge ordered Donald Trump and his companies on Friday to pay more than \$355 million in penalties, finding they had engaged in a years-long scheme to dupe banks and others with financial statements that inflated his wealth.

Trump won't have to pay out the money now, as an appeals process will have to play out, but the verdict is a stunning setback for the former president.

If he is ultimately forced

to pay, the size of the penalty on top of earlier judgments would dramatically diminish his financial resources. And the ruling undermines the Republican's carefully tailored image of a successful businessman that powered his unlikely rise from a reality television star to a onetime — and perhaps future — president.

Judge Arthur Engoron concluded that Trump and his company were "likely to continue their fraudulent ways" without the financial penalties and other controls he was imposing, and said that he and his co-defendants had "failed to accept responsibility" and that experts who testified for him had "simply denied reality."

"This is a venial sin, not a mortal sin," Engoron wrote [See Trump, A6]



SHANNON STAPLETON Pool Photo
THE FORMER PRESIDENT, pictured in court Jan. 11, said he plans to appeal the judge's ruling.

Youths charged in K.C. shooting

Two juveniles are held in connection with violence at the Super Bowl parade for the Chiefs. **NATION, A5**

Slides averted amid the deluge

Rainfall totals have been high, but the rate per hour has been less than in past disasters. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Ohtani flexes muscles in cage

The Dodgers slugger's batting practice sessions are must-see displays of power. **SPORTS, B12**

Weather

Becoming cloudy. L.A. Basin: 65/53. **B8**

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