

# State reduces safety checks in fields

Farmworkers say they are denied the shade and water required by heat-protection law.

By Robert J. Lopez

California has sharply cut its enforcement of heat-protection laws for outdoor laborers while extreme heat has intensified in recent years — endangering farmworkers, construction workers and others who toil in scorching temperatures — an investigation by the Los Angeles Times and Capital & Main has found.

From 2017 to 2023, the number of field inspections conducted by the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health, known as Cal/OSHA, dropped by nearly 30%, according to agency data. The number of violations issued to employers in that period fell by more than 40%.

Worker advocates say the numbers show a failure to adequately enforce California’s landmark outdoor heat-illness law, which was enacted nearly two decades ago after several farmworkers died in San Joaquin Valley fields. The law requires protections such as providing break areas with shade and “pure, suitably cool” water as “close as practicable” to workers when temperatures exceed 80 degrees.

“We just need Cal/OSHA to be out there more often and do more inspections that hopefully will save farmworker lives,” said Ephraim Camacho, a community worker for California Rural Legal Assistance who visits fields in the San Joaquin Valley. [See Farmworkers, A9]



**SHERRI OLLER**, right, gathers her belongings as one of Mayor Karen Bass’ Inside Safe program employees, left, speaks with Jonathan Saldana at a homeless encampment at Hollywood Boulevard and Gower Street.

# No busing of homeless for Olympics, Bass vows

Mayor says L.A. won’t resort to severe measures to address the issue, as happened in Paris, Rio and the 1984 Games

By Liam Dillon, David Zahniser and Doug Smith

In Paris, the French government packed homeless people and migrants onto buses and sent them out of the city as the Summer Olympics approached. In 2016, more than 70,000 were displaced from Rio de Janeiro’s favelas to make way for the event. And ahead of the Games in 1984, the Los Angeles Police Department saddled nearly three dozen mounted horse patrols to scatter homeless people into less visible areas downtown.

Now, in advance of the 2028 Olympics, Mayor Karen Bass is pledging that the city will not resort to such severe tactics to remove the tens of thousands living here without shelter.

“However our strategy evolves, it [See Problem, A8]



**BASS** speaks at a July event announcing new funding to electrify L.A.’s bus system ahead of the 2028 Games.

# GASCÓN FACING UPHILL BATTLE IN RACE

Poll shows the district attorney losing seat to challenger Hochman, still unknown to many.

By Connor Sheets

A new poll shows criminal law attorney Nathan Hochman with a sizable lead over Los Angeles County Dist. Atty. George Gascón in the race for the incumbent’s seat.

If the Nov. 5 election were held today, 45% of likely voters in L.A. County would vote for Hochman, while just 20% would vote for Gascón, according to the survey from the UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, co-sponsored by The Times.

As the election approaches, 35% of likely voters say they are still undecided. That gives the candidates fewer than 80 days to educate those undecided voters about their platforms and records in hopes of swaying opinions.

But as of now, there is “broad-based support for Hochman across nearly every subgroup,” according to Mark DiCamillo, director of the poll, conducted between July 31 and Aug. 11.

Gascón’s image among voters is largely negative, with 21% offering a favorable opinion and 45% an unfavorable opinion, while 34% had no opinion. By contrast, 35% offered a favorable opinion of Hochman, just 7% held an unfavorable opinion and 57% had no opinion.

Although the poll results show Gascón faces an uphill battle to reelection, [See D.A., A8]

## COLUMN ONE

# The battle for a male strip club empire

After Chippendales ran into trouble, it left a web of family drama, legal action



**A SHOW** at the Las Vegas Chippendales Theatre. The crowd of about 100 was a far cry from those that once packed the L.A. club.

By Brittney Mejia

The father of Chippendales was in his 30s when he launched what would become a multi-million-dollar empire of jacked, bow-tied male strippers.

Hundreds of women gawked as muscular men stripped down to g-strings in Somen “Steve” Banerjee’s L.A.-based club. Before long, Banerjee’s dancers were touring like rock stars, he’d opened a club in New York, and a “Saturday Night Live” sketch featured Patrick Swayze and Chris Farley as aspiring Chippendales performers.

Then, around 15 years after the story began, Banerjee’s reign ended abruptly. Law enforcement investigated allegations that he’d plotted to murder former employees and was linked to a homicide [See Chippendales, A16]

# She was born to win over Latino voters

Cesar Chavez’s granddaughter emerges as a public voice for Harris.

By Courtney Subramanian and Seema Mehta

When then-President Obama awarded California labor leader Dolores Huerta the Presidential Medal of Freedom — the nation’s highest civilian honor — one person was notably absent from the ceremony in the White House’s East Room:

Julie Chavez Rodriguez.

Huerta has known Chavez Rodriguez, the granddaughter of the legendary Cesar Chavez, who co-founded the United Farm Workers union with Huerta, since she was an infant. Chavez Rodriguez was working in the Obama administration at the time, but those who know her said her absence from the ceremony was not the least bit surprising.

“I couldn’t find Julie because she was busy working. And it’s like, ‘You should be sitting in the front row,’” said Valerie Jarrett, who [See Campaign, A7]



**JULIE CHAVEZ RODRIGUEZ**, pictured in 2023, is Kamala Harris’ presidential campaign manager.

## Data breach turns out worse

Email addresses were stolen on top of Social Security and other info. **BUSINESS, A11**

## The ruptured sidewalks of L.A.

There’s a big backlog of service calls and no repair plan, Steve Lopez writes. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

## What to see and do in Compton

Check out a farm and an art museum. Taste barbecue, sashimi and lemonade. **WEEKEND, L6**

**Weather**  
Partly sunny.  
L.A. Basin: 86°/63. **B10**



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