

ANALYSIS

Should gun laws be based on racist history?

2nd Amendment cases have cited precedents involving restrictions for enslaved people.

By Kevin Rector

As attorneys for California prepared recently to defend in federal court a state law requiring background checks for ammunition purchases, they found themselves in an awkward position.

Under a U.S. Supreme Court ruling from 2022, gun control measures are legitimate only if they are deeply rooted in American “history and tradition” or are sufficiently similar to some other centuries-old law.

The state lawyers had conducted a deep dive through hundreds of years of American jurisprudence and identified dozens of historical laws that they felt bolstered the modern measure’s legitimacy by showing that the government has long limited access to firearms and ammunition.

But there was a problem: Many of the historical laws were virulently racist, restricting access to weaponry for enslaved people, Indigenous Americans and other minorities.

In the end, the attorneys in California Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta’s office decided to push ahead and cite the laws, but with a major caveat.

“The Attorney General in no way condones laws that target certain groups on the basis of race, gender, nationality, or other protected characteristic,” they wrote in a footnote to their 2023 filing, “but these laws are part of the history of the Sec- [See **Laws**, A7]



Gina Ferazzi Los Angeles Times

MAMBA MEMORIALIZED

The Lakers on Thursday unveiled a statue of Kobe Bryant, which will stand outside Crypto.com Arena. Bryant, his daughter Gianna and seven others died in a helicopter crash in January 2020. **SPORTS, B10**

In Woodland Hills, extremes of temperatures and rain get worse



Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times

NESTLED next to the Santa Monica Mountains, Woodland Hills has long felt the brunt of some of L.A. County’s most extreme weather.

By Summer Lin and Salvador Hernandez

When Tony Clark noticed a small leak in his roof over the weekend, he didn’t sweat it. The storms had knocked a tile out of place, but the longtime Woodland Hills resident was accustomed to improvising when the weather got extreme.

Clark found a tarp to block the water until the rain passed.

“If you want to live out here, you’re gonna have to put up with high prices and extreme temperatures,” said Clark, 60, who has lived in the neighborhood for 20 years. “We’re the bottom of the valley — Woodland Hills is the basin — so we’re gonna get the hot hots and the cold colds.”

California has been battered over the last decade by the effects of climate change and extreme weather — [See **Suburb**, A5]

Taylor Swift has far-right pundits rooting for 49ers

Their odd stance, amid conspiracy ideas ahead of Super Bowl, is rife with ironies.

By Julia Wick

As America’s two favorite pastimes — football and intricate political conspiracy theories — collide in the run-up to Super Bowl LVIII, a strange thing has happened.

Several conservative commentators announced that they plan to root for San Francisco, a city that has long served as a bête noire to far-right America, with politicians and media outlets alike usually vilifying it as an acrid emblem of progressivism run amok.

The nascent 49ers fans declaring their unlikely allegiance are hardly driven by Bay Area devotion or Candlestick Park nostalgia. Rather, they are vocally sticking it to Taylor Swift, the nation’s biggest pop star and new-ish girlfriend of Kansas City Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce, who will be facing off against the 49ers on Sunday.

Swift has been at the center of a series of sprawling but unfounded right-wing conspiracy theories that allege she is somehow in cahoots with the NFL to hurt Donald Trump’s chances in the 2024 election and hand victory to President Biden in November, among other things.

Swift endorsed Biden in 2020 and her Super Bowl-bound boyfriend has appeared in Pfizer advertisements encouraging Americans to get COVID-19 vaccines. There is no evidence that she colluded with the NFL to guarantee her boyfriend a spot in America’s biggest sporting event, nor is there any evidence that she plans to endorse Biden at the end of the big game, as some theories allege.

On Sunday, conservative sports pundit Clay Travis took to Fox News and declared that he would be “proudly supporting the San Francisco 49ers, America’s team, on Sunday against Kansas City, Patrick Mahomes, Taylor Swift and Travis Kelce.”

The new love for San [See **Swift**, A7]



Senate Television

SENATE CANDIDATE Adam B. Schiff, a former federal prosecutor, became well known for leading the first House impeachment of then-President Trump in 2020.

Schiff’s tough justice goes back years before taking on Trump

By Laura J. Nelson

When Rep. Adam B. Schiff stood before the U.S. Senate on the final day of President Trump’s first impeachment trial, he reprised a familiar role: prosecutor.

The former assistant U.S. attorney hadn’t tried a case in more than a decade, but he was surprised how quickly the muscle memory came

back. Wearing a crisp blue suit, the Burbank Democrat launched into a lacerating closing argument, trying to convince senators that Trump lacked the integrity, morality and temperament to remain in the White House.

“He has betrayed our national security, and he will do so again. He has compromised our elections, and he will do so again,” Schiff said.

“You will not change him. You cannot constrain him. He is who he is. Truth matters little to him. What’s right matters even less. And decency matters not at all.”

The Senate ultimately voted to acquit Trump. But Schiff’s leading role in the historic proceeding has become etched in the nation’s political psyche, lionizing him among fellow Demo- [See **Schiff**, A10]

SUPREME COURT WARY OF BARRING TRUMP

Justices signal skepticism on letting a state disqualify national candidates.

By David G. Savage

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court justices gave a favorable hearing to former President Trump on Thursday, suggesting they will clear the way for him to seek election this year despite the mob attack on the Capitol that followed his loss in 2020.

The justices, both conservative and liberal, said they were skeptical of giving individual states the constitutional authority to disqualify candidates for a national office like the presidency.

“Why should a single state make this determination for the rest of the nation?” Justice Elena Kagan said. “It sounds awfully national.”

“It just doesn’t seem like a state call,” Justice Amy Coney Barrett added.

In December, the Colorado Supreme Court became the first and so far only state or federal court to rule that Trump must be removed from the primary ballot because he is not qualified to hold office again.

By a 4-3 vote, the state judges said Trump had violated Section 3 of the 14th Amendment, which says no person may “hold any office, civil or military” after having taken an oath to support the Constitution and later “engaged in insurrection” against the United States.

“We are here because, for the first time since the War of 1812, our nation’s Capitol came under violent assault. For the first time in history, the attack was incited by a sitting president of the United States to disrupt the peaceful transfer of presidential power,” said Denver attorney Jason Murray, who represented the Colorado voters who sued to disqualify Trump.

But he quickly ran into steadily skeptical questions from the justices. They spent little time on whether [See **Trump**, A5]

Classified-file report on Biden

Special counsel says president “willfully” held on to documents but recommends no charges. **NATION, A4**

Five Marines confirmed dead

This week’s helicopter crash near San Diego is under investigation, the military says. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Work begins on high-rise project

A \$5-billion complex including a hotel, condos and gardens gets underway in Beverly Hills. **BUSINESS, A6**

Weather

Cool and partly sunny. L.A. Basin: 60/40. **B6**

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