

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH

Thanks to Ellen Ansok for sharing this information to share on Quick Bytes:

Education & Libraries

There is a Bill (**AB1825**, the California Freedom to Read Act of 2024) to help stop censorship, discrimination and the banning of books. It has already been passed by the House, just needs the State Senate and the Governor. Please contact your State Senators to vote for this bill. Thank you!

Recently, California has passed several significant bills related to education and libraries:

1. **AB 1078:** This bill, signed by Governor Gavin Newsom, bans book bans and textbook censorship in California schools. It ensures that all students have access to textbooks that reflect California's diverse communities and prohibits school boards from banning instructional materials or library books based on inclusive and diverse perspectives.
2. **Library Laws 2024:** The California State Library has updated its guide to include statutes related to statewide and local library programs, tax provisions, and other miscellaneous provisions. This guide also includes a list of California court decisions and Attorney General opinions related to libraries.

Civic Engagement & Outreach

California has several bills and legislative efforts aimed at supporting military personnel and veterans. One notable bill is Assembly Bill 46 (AB 46), which seeks to exempt military pensions from state income taxes. This bill has gained bipartisan support and, if passed, would provide significant financial relief to military retirees and their dependents. However, due to fiscal concerns, the bill's advancement has been delayed until the next legislative session.

California has recently introduced several bills and laws aimed at improving the lives of veterans. Here are some key highlights:

1. **Veterans' Memorials (AB 2838):** This bill focuses on the creation and maintenance of memorials dedicated to veterans.
2. **Veterans' Suicide Prevention (SB 783):** This bill aims to address and reduce the incidence of suicide among veterans through various support measures.

Health & Wellness

California has been actively working on several bills to address food insecurity. Here are some key pieces of legislation:

1. **AB 1961 (End Hunger in California Act):** This bill aims to establish a task force to develop a strategic master plan to end hunger in California. The plan will include

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comprehensive recommendations to prevent hunger and ensure access to healthy, culturally relevant food for all.

2. AB 2595 (Summer Caregiver Meals Pilot): This bill will pilot a program allowing summer meal sites at public libraries to offer meals to caregivers accompanying a child.
3. SB 245 / AB 311 (Food For All): These bills aim to provide state-funded nutrition benefits to all Californians who are ineligible for CalFresh solely due to their immigration status.
4. AB 2033 (EBT on College Campuses): This bill requires at least one convenience or grocery store on each California Community College campus to accept EBT cards.
5. SB 600 (CalFresh Minimum Benefit Adequacy Act): This bill proposes to increase the minimum monthly benefits from \$23 to \$50 for all CalFresh participating households.

These efforts reflect a comprehensive approach to tackling food insecurity, from supporting students and caregivers to ensuring that all residents, regardless of immigration status, have access to necessary nutrition.

Affordable Housing:

On January 1, 2024, five new bills pertaining to housing came into effect.

This wave of legislation includes:

- SB 4 – Yes, In God’s Backyard (YIGBY)
- SB 423 – Streamlined Housing Projects (SB 35 Extension)
- AB 1033 – Accessory dwelling units (ADUs): local ordinances/separate sale or conveyance
- AB1332 – ADUs: pre-approved plans
- AB 480 – Surplus land

Environment

California has been very active in passing legislation to protect the environment. Here are some key bills and initiatives:

1. Climate Action Bills: Governor Gavin Newsom signed a historic \$15 billion climate package, which includes investments in wildfire and forest resilience, drought response, and long-term water resilience.
2. 2024 Priority Climate Bills: Some of the priority bills include:
 - SB 674: Refinery Air Pollution Transparency and Reduction Act
 - AB 1963: Paraquat Dichloride Prohibition

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- AB 3023: Cross Agency Funding and Coordination for Wetlands Restoration, Healthy Forests, and Wildfire Resilience.
- 3. 2021-2022 Environmental Legislation: This includes measures to mitigate climate change, cope with extreme heat, advance clean energy goals, and conserve natural lands.

These efforts reflect California's commitment to addressing climate change and protecting its natural resources.