

# SDMETRO

your business your life

NO. 4 VOL. 41

## SAN DIEGO'S



## MOST INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS



KIRBY & KIRBY LLP



MATTIA & YOUSIF  
LAW

HAHN   
LOESER  
attorneys at law

UCLA: Oil Shock Leading Risk to U.S Economy SEE PAGE 12

SERVING SAN DIEGO, LOS ANGELES AND IRVINE

619-777-7700

RJS LAW<sup>®</sup>  
A TAX LAW FIRM

[www.RJSlawfirm.com](http://www.RJSlawfirm.com)

Our mission is to always provide quality journalism for our readers by being fair, accurate and ethical and a credible resource for our advertisers.



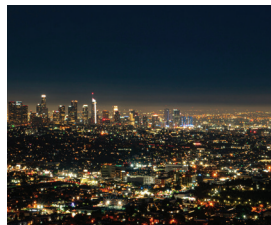
**SAN DIEGO'S MOST INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS**  
San Diego's Most Creative and Innovative Law Firms.  
**PAGE 4**



**If I Had 30 Days to Turn Around a Hotel, Here's Exactly What I'd Do**  
Hotel profitability depends on disciplined pricing, controlled discounts, direct bookings, efficient labor scheduling, strict departmental budgets, and strategic automation, all focused on maximizing GOPPAR by increasing retained revenue while minimizing unnecessary costs.. **PAGE 6**



**This million-square-foot data center would be the biggest in the state. How local leaders are challenging it**  
Imperial County halted California's largest proposed AI data center after public opposition over environmental, water, and health concerns. Lawsuits, legislation, and zoning disputes now challenge the project's future and regulatory oversight. **PAGE 8**



**California's population is stagnating as immigration and birth rates decline**  
California's population growth has slowed dramatically after decades of expansion, creating new economic and demographic challenges. The state must adapt policies, maintain aging infrastructure, and address workforce, housing, and long-term sustainability needs. **PAGE 10**



**UCLA Anderson Forecast Says Oil Shock has Replaced Tariffs as Leading Risk to U.S. Economy**  
The UCLA Anderson Forecast projects resilient U.S. and California economies despite Iran-driven energy inflation. All investment supports growth, but higher fuel costs, weak employment, housing constraints, and persistent inflation temper the outlook.. **PAGE 16**



**Off to Retirement!**  
A spontaneous post-retirement road trip through southwestern France led one couple to rediscover purpose, healing, and freedom, inspiring them to embrace a simpler life—and ultimately relocate to a historic French manor. **PAGE 18**

**Chairman | CEO**  
Robert Page  
BobPage@sandiegometro.com

**Publisher**  
Rebeca Page  
RebecaPage@sandiegometro.com

**Associate Editor**  
Douglas R. Page  
dpage@sandiegometro.com

**Art Director**  
Christopher Baker  
cbaker@sandiegometro.com

**Photography/Illustration**  
Benjamin Myers  
Jim Childers

**Contributing Writers**  
Martin Krumming  
Michael McHugh  
Marsha Sutton  
Alexi Koseff  
David Rottenberg  
Myrna Marston  
Marlise Kast-Myers  
Andrew Simmerman

**Advertising**  
**SALES & MARKETING DIRECTOR**  
Rebeca Page

Get in the loop with SD Metro's Daily Business Report. Sign up for daily emails on the latest business at sandiegometro.com

P.O. BOX 3679  
RANCHO SANTA FE, CA 92067

SD METRO magazine is published by REP Publishing, Inc. The entire contents of SD METRO is copyrighted, 2026, by REP Publishing, Inc. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited without prior written consent. All rights reserved. All editorial and advertising inquires can be made by calling or writing to the above. Editorial and ad deadline is the 24th of the month preceding the month of publication. Mail subscriptions of SD METRO are available for \$50 a year for addresses within the United States. A PDF version of this issue is available at sandiegometro.com. Additional information, including past articles, online-only content and the Daily Business Report can be found at sandiegometro.com. For reprints or plaques of articles published in SD METRO, please call Rebeca Page at 858-461-4484

All real estate advertising in this newspaper is subject to the Fair Housing Act which makes it illegal to advertise "any Preference limitation or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status, or national origin, or an intention, to make any preference, limitation or discrimination. "Familial status includes children under the age of 18 living with parents or legal custodians; pregnant women and people securing custody of children under 18. This magazine will not knowingly accept any advertising for real estate which is in violation of this law. Our readers are hereby informed that all dwellings advertised in this magazine are available on an equal opportunity basis. To complain of discrimination call HUD Toll-free at 1-800-669-9777. Th Toll-free telephone number for the hearing impaired is 1-800-927-9275.

Read us online at:  
sandiegometro.com



# The American Story You Didn't Know Began in Morocco

By Elizabeth Ireland | Times of San Diego

When people think about America's story, Morocco probably isn't the first place that comes to mind. Yet, long before the United States became the country we know today, Morocco was already making history alongside it.

In 1777, Sultan Mohammed III became the first world leader to recognize the newly independent United States publicly, opening Moroccan ports to American ships and establishing what would become one of the world's longest-standing diplomatic relationships. Less than a decade later, the two nations signed the Moroccan-American Treaty of Peace and Friendship, a treaty that remains in force today.

As the United States prepares to celebrate its 250th anniversary this July, Morocco offers travelers a unique opportunity to explore the places where this remarkable relationship first took shape. Think of it as a passport through history, with a few unforgettable stops along the way.

## Passport Stop No. 1: Tangier's American Legation

If there's one destination that belongs on every history lover's itinerary, it's the Tangier American Legation Museum. Tucked inside the winding streets of Tangier's historic medina, the elegant white building doesn't immediately reveal its huge significance. But step inside, and you'll find yourself standing in a place unlike any other museum in the world.

Gifted to the United States in 1821 by Sultan Moulay Slimane, the American Legation became the first American diplomatic property overseas. Today, it holds another remarkable distinction as the only U.S. National Historic Landmark located outside of the United States. Visitors can wander through beautifully restored rooms filled with historic maps, diplomatic correspondence, paintings and photographs that tell the story of more than two centuries of Moroccan-American friendship. It's one of Morocco's most unexpected hidden gems.

Be sure to leave yourself enough time afterward to simply explore Tangier itself. Order a coffee overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar, wander the medina and its souks without a destination in mind and join locals for an evening walk along the waterfront. It's the same effortless charm that has drawn travellers here for generations.

## Passport Stop No. 2: Follow in the Footsteps of American Writers

Long before Tangier became a favourite destination for modern travellers, it captured the imagination of some of America's most celebrated writers. Throughout the twentieth century, authors including Tennessee Williams, William S. Burroughs and Truman Capote spent time in the city, drawn by its creative energy and multicultural atmosphere.

Just a short drive from the American Legation, Café Hafa has been welcoming visitors since 1921. Terraced into the cliffs overlooking the Strait of Gibraltar, the café became a favourite

gathering place for artists, musicians and writers from around the world, including The Rolling Stones, and American novelist Paul Bowles. Order a traditional mint tea, settle into one of the blue-and-white terraces and enjoy the same sweeping views that have inspired generations of creative minds for thousands of years, going back to Phoenician era.

## Passport Stop No. 3: Casablanca's American Chapter

Casablanca may be best known for its Atlantic energy and Art Deco architecture, but the city also holds one of Morocco's most significant American history moments.

In January 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt and British Prime Minister Winston Churchill met in Casablanca for the Allied conference that helped shape the next phase of the Second World War. Held in the Anfa district, the meeting produced the famous "unconditional surrender" policy and placed Casablanca at the centre of a pivotal chapter in modern history.

While the original Anfa Hotel is no longer a traditional visitor site, travellers can still explore the neighbourhood and pair the history with a broader look at the city's cultural life. For a more contemporary connection, the American Arts Center in Casablanca offers a modern expression of the U.S.-Morocco friendship, with programming tied to arts, language and creative community.

## Passport Stop No. 4: Marrakech's Hollywood Connection

Long before streaming services and social media turned filming locations into travel bucket lists, Marrakech was already a favourite of Hollywood. The city's vibrant medina, dramatic architecture and unique natural lighting have attracted American filmmakers for decades. Alfred Hitchcock introduced millions of moviegoers to Marrakech in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956), filming memorable scenes in Jemaa el-Fnaa and one of its iconic restaurant "Dar Essalam". More recently, the city served as a filming location for *The Odyssey* (worldwide release in July 2026), directed by Christopher Nolan and starring Matt Damon, or in some other blockbuster productions including *Mission: Impossible – Rogue Nation*. Acclaimed directors like Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott and Christopher Nolan have all chosen Morocco as the backdrop for their films.

Visitors can experience that cinematic legacy firsthand by wandering through Jemaa el-Fnaa, where Hitchcock and Tom Cruise once filmed, or by exploring the winding streets and historic riads that continue to inspire filmmakers from around the world. Each autumn, the Marrakech International Film Festival brings many of the industry's biggest names to the city, further cementing its place on the global film map.

Like the enduring friendship between Morocco and the United States, Marrakech's connection with Hollywood has stood the test of time. For film lovers, it's a chance to step onto a set that's been captivating American audiences for nearly 70 years.



## SAN DIEGO'S **MOST INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS**



### **RJS LAW**

RJS Law is a full-service law firm focused on resolving personal, small business, and corporate tax matters involving both the IRS and California tax agencies. The firm works closely with clients to achieve favorable resolutions while minimizing financial exposure and collection activity.

Its attorneys routinely represent clients in audits, assist with the removal of liens, levies, and wage garnishments, negotiate installment agreements and Offers in Compromise, litigate cases before the Tax Court, and provide defense against potential criminal tax investigations and prosecutions.

Beyond tax law, RJS Law provides comprehensive estate planning and probate services, along with legal guidance related to trusts, wills, and estate administration.

Through its commitment to excellence, integrity, and client advocacy, RJS Law has earned a respected reputation within the San Diego community and continues to distinguish itself as a trusted legal resource. The firm is deeply committed to giving back to the San Diego community through charitable outreach and active civic involvement.



### **HAHN LOESER & PARKS**

Across San Diego and around the world, Hahn Loeser represents a diverse range of clients, including Fortune 500 corporations, privately held businesses, startups, nonprofit organizations, and individuals.

Founded in Cleveland in 1920, Hahn Loeser opened its San Diego office in 2012 to better serve clients throughout California and the West Coast. For over a century, Hahn Loeser has expanded its services while never losing sight of the firm's original commitment to character and integrity.

Hahn Loeser attorneys have built an impressive record of accomplishments in complex commercial and business litigation, class actions, real estate and title insurance litigation, consumer litigation defense, trade secret and non-compete litigation, wage and hour claims, probate and trust litigation, estate planning, and trust administration.

Hahn Loeser has achieved Diversity Lab's Midsize Mansfield Rule Certification Plus recognition. Hahn Loeser's San Diego office carries on the firm's reputation for excellence, commitment to client service, and dedication to the community. Its highly regarded attorneys and dedicated staff contribute their time and effort to numerous philanthropic and community organizations, including Promises2Kids, San Diego Volunteer Lawyers Program, San Diego County Bar Foundation, Legal Aid Society of San Diego, La Jolla Bar Association, and Feeding San Diego.



## KIRBY & KIRBY LLP

### KIRBY & KIRBY

Kirby & Kirby LLP is a prominent San Diego-based civil litigation law firm founded by father-and-son duo Michael L. Kirby and Jason M. Kirby. The boutique firm handles both plaintiff and defense cases, primarily focusing on business litigation, real estate litigation, personal injury, and securities litigation.

Located in downtown San Diego, the firm is highly regarded within the Southern California legal community and has been consistently recognized by U.S. News – Best Lawyers and Super Lawyers.

Kirby & Kirby LLP measures its success by the litigation results it has achieved for its clients.



## MATTIA & YOUSIF LAW

### MATTIA & YOUSIF LAW

Mattia & Yousif is a full-service law firm based in La Mesa. Led by principal attorneys Steve Mattia and Oday Yousif, Jr., the firm handles transactional and litigation matters in San Diego and throughout California.

With decades of experience, the attorneys take a personalized and detail-oriented approach to every case, making the legal process clear and accessible while addressing each client's unique needs. Their goal is to provide clients with peace of mind and security for the future.

Mattia's primary practice focuses on business transactions and estate planning. Yousif's primary practice focuses on personal injury and consumer protection litigation.

Whether it is a car accident or a fraudulent contract, the firm handles cases through every stage, from the initial claim through trial.

**GLASER  
WEIL**

**HARVEST LLP**

**PROCOPIO**

**MANATT, PHELPS  
& PHILLIPS LLP**

**FISHER  
PHILLIPS**

**CROSBIE GLINER SCHIFFMAN  
SOUTHARD & SWANSON ( CGS3 )**

**WILSON  
SONSINI**

**THE SCHENK  
LAW FIRM**

**SNELL  
WILMER**

**WILSON TURNER KOSMO LLP**

PROUD TO BE AMONG THE  
MOST INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS  
IN SAN DIEGO

**H A H N  L O E S E R**

H A H N L O E S E R & P A R K S L L P | H A H N L A W . C O M | 6 1 9 . 8 1 0 . 4 3 0 0  
6 0 0 W B R O A D W A Y | S U I T E 1 5 0 0 | S A N D I E G O , C A 9 2 1 0 1

SAN DIEGO | CLEVELAND | COLUMBUS | NAPLES | FORT MYERS | CHICAGO | SARASOTA | TAMPA | ORLANDO

# If I Had 30 Days to Turn Around a Hotel, Here's Exactly What I'd Do

By Robert Rauch | Hotel Guru



**HOW DO YOU FIX A HOTEL'S PERFORMANCE IN 30 DAYS?**

**DISCIPLINE.**

## Revenue Discipline Comes Before Everything Else

The first thing I look at is whether the hotel is actually getting the rate it should be getting.

I call this revenue discipline, and it starts with the best available rate. That is the non-discounted rate the hotel wants to sell. The question is how many guests are paying it versus how many are getting some kind of discount they may not have even needed.

From there, I look at what I call rate fences. These are rules that govern who gets a discounted rate and under what conditions. If a corporate account has negotiated \$159 per night, that rate belongs to that company's travelers, not to anyone who asks for it at the front desk. Rate fences keep discounted business in its lane.

The third piece of revenue discipline is length of stay management, and this one is often overlooked. If I know that Thursday through Sunday will be at high demand, the last thing I want is a guest checking in Thursday for a single night. I want four nights minimum. So I set a four-night minimum on Thursday, three nights on Friday, two on Saturday. I can also set maximums. If someone wants to check in Wednesday for two nights and leave Friday, I have to decide if that business helps or hurts me when I know Thursday is going to be full at a much higher rate.

Minimums and maximums together let you shape the business you take. Most hotels do not use them aggressively enough.

## Stop Paying Commissions You Don't Have to Pay

The second lever is direct bookings, and the math here is straightforward.

A typical OTA commission runs fifteen to twenty percent. A direct booking through your own website or by phone costs you nothing beyond whatever you are already spending on those channels. If the demand exists, why pay a commission to capture it?

For a 30-day push, I would run a rate available exclusively to guests who call the hotel directly or book on the hotel's own website. Not on any OTA. Not on any third-party aggregator. Direct only. The rate can include something that makes it feel special: breakfast, early check-in, a room upgrade. Something that gives the guest a reason to go direct and gives the hotel a reason to offer a rate that technically differs from what is on the OTAs without violating rate parity agreements.

Over 30 days, even a modest shift in direct booking mix has a real impact on net revenue. Not gross revenue. Net revenue, because you are keeping more of what you earn. This is key for your hotel profitability strategy.

## Labor Is Where Most Hotels Leak the Most Money

The single largest cost in any hotel is labor. That is where I look third, and I look hard.

The first question is whether employees are engaged during

their shift or whether there are stretches of idle time that are costing the hotel money. Poor scheduling is one of the most common and most correctable problems I see. You do not schedule eight housekeepers to clean what four can handle. You do not put two people on the front desk during a stretch of low arrivals when a manager could cover.

Beyond scheduling, there is redeployment. This is where I ask whether employees are spending their time on the highest-value activity they could be doing. A general manager sitting in an office responding to guest reviews, one by one, is a general manager not walking the property and engaging with guests. AI can draft those responses. The GM glances at it, approves it, done. That is not cutting corners. That is putting the GM where they create the most value.

### **When AI or some automation can substitute for a guest-facing opportunity, absolutely I do that.**

The same logic applies to room deliveries. As I have said before, “When AI or some automation can substitute for a guest-facing opportunity, absolutely I do that.” If I can send a robot to deliver a bottle of water or extra towels, I want that employee free to have a real conversation with a guest in the lobby. We now run three hotels where robots handle routine deliveries, and in every case it has improved the employee’s job, not eliminated it. For a closer look at how that works in practice, see *The Real ROI of Hotel Robots*.

### **The Budget Discipline That Most GMs Skip**

The fourth lever sounds simple, but it is one of the most effective tools I use: department budgets with teeth.

Every department head gets a budget for the month. They know exactly how much they can spend, down to the dollar. They cannot exceed that number without explicit approval from the general manager. The general manager’s job is to ask one question before approving anything above budget: is this an emergency, or can we live without it?

Most of the time, they can live without it.

Owners do not like missed budgets. They especially do not like overruns caused by department heads who simply were not paying attention. A department head who knows their limit and manages to it is doing their job. A department head who blows through their budget without a conversation with the GM is not.

I have seen hotels where department heads had no idea what they were authorized to spend. The result is predictable. When nobody is watching the checkbook, money finds a way out.

### **Why GOPPAR Is the Only Number That Tells the Full Story**

Each of these levers connects directly to gross operating profit per available room, the metric that tells the real story of a hotel’s performance. RevPAR measures revenue. GOPPAR measures what you actually keep.

As I see it, “If you can outperform the competition on rev-

enue and be disciplined on your costs, your GOPPAR will be high.” Better rate discipline means more revenue at full price. Fewer OTA commissions means more of that revenue clears the commission line. Leaner labor scheduling means lower payroll. Department checkbooks mean fewer surprise overruns. All four together move GOPPAR in the right direction.

We have one hotel that generates just over five million dollars in annual room revenue and produces a GOPPAR above twenty thousand dollars per room. For a 120-unit property, that is \$2.4 million in gross operating profit. That is not an accident. It is the result of discipline applied consistently across all four of these areas.

Not every hotel will hit that number, and not every market supports it. The 2026 hotel market outlook makes clear that RevPAR growth is flattening in many markets just as labor and operating costs stay elevated. In that environment, the hotels that win are not the ones chasing revenue at any cost. They are the ones converting more of their revenue to profit by running a tighter operation.

Thirty days is enough time to start turning around your hotel and seeing results. The operators who make these moves are not doing anything exotic. They are just running a more disciplined operation than the one next door.

JOIN US IN CONGRATULATING



MATTIA & YOUSIF  
LAW

ON BEING NAMED ONE OF  
SAN DIEGO’S MOST  
INNOVATIVE LAW FIRMS

PRACTICING LAW FOR OVER 10 YEARS:

ESTATE PLANNING • PROBATE  
CONSERVATORSHIP • PERSONAL INJURY  
CORPORATIONS & LLC • BUSINESS STRATEGY



MATTIA & YOUSIF  
LAW

MATTIAYOUSIF.COM  
(619) 795-6632

# This million-square-foot data center would be the biggest in the state. How local leaders are challenging it

By Deborah Brennan | CalMatters

In April, developers of the massive Imperial Data Center cleared a major hurdle after Imperial County Supervisors approved a plan to combine several tracts of land for the nearly one-million-square-foot facility in rural Southern California.

It would be the largest data center in the state; the parent company, Imperial Valley Computer Manufacturing, LLC describes it as a hyperscale facility, “designed exclusively for advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning operations.”

Last week, that progress came to a halt when the county board walked back its decision, declaring a 45-day moratorium on data centers and forming a public commission to advise the county on zoning policy for the facilities. Their reversal came after months of backlash, and a more than hour-long public hearing in which residents voiced sharp criticism of the sweeping project and its swift approval.

The developer, Sebastian Rucci, said he’s filing a lawsuit to seek a temporary restraining order against the moratorium today, arguing that the county failed to show a true emergency, explain what harms and impacts it will cause, and what specific concerns residents have raised.

“It’s defective,” he said. “The county wrote a moratorium after one year of the approvals. Moratoriums are not there as a planning tool. They’re there for very specific emergencies.”

The conflict over the massive facility reflects the push to build infrastructure for the mushrooming artificial intelligence industry, and Californians’ growing unease with its effects on air quality, water, energy, traffic and more.

Imperial Valley Computer Manufacturing, LLC promises that it will produce 2,500 construction jobs and 100 permanent jobs, and generate \$72.5 million in a one-time sales tax and \$28.7 million in annual taxes. But many residents and local leaders worry that the public health, environmental and economic costs to their

rural, working class community could outweigh those benefits.

Earlier this year, State Sen. Steve Padilla, a San Diego Democrat, introduced a series of bills aimed at data center construction in Imperial County and across California. One of those would revise membership of the Imperial County Air Pollution Control District, to provide stricter oversight of projects that affect air quality in the polluted region. The others would regulate energy use and tighten environmental protections for facilities throughout the state.

This year the City of Imperial filed a lawsuit challenging the data center’s review under the California Environmental Quality Act, known as CEQA. And local voters are gathering signatures for a referendum to ban data centers in the county. Rucci has said his project is permitted under existing zoning for industrial uses, and doesn’t require further environmental review.

“They can’t just come in and claim that they’re exempt and have a right to build the biggest data center in the state without any oversight,” Padilla said at a town hall in El Centro Thursday.

Padilla has been a vocal critic from the outset. In January he urged Imperial County Supervisors to refrain from approving the data center before conducting a thorough environmental review and seeking public input. One of his bills would change the Imperial County air board from its current composition of the five county supervisors to a broader panel of 10 local members, representing the county, city councils, public health, environmental groups, labor and agriculture.

“I think maybe it’s a good idea to have some people with professional training and credentials in environmental mitigation science,” Padilla said of the proposed change.

Some farmers and business owners in the audience were skeptical, arguing that expanding the board would expose them to ever more costly regulations, without addressing pollution from outside



the area, originating in Mexico or at the Salton Sea.

“We’re losing our ability to compete because of California specific rules and regulations,” said Lawrence Cox, owner of Coastline Family Farms. “I want clean air. I want clean water. But economics come to the forefront because of some of the rules and regulations that California legislators put in.”

Michelle Hollinger, a vice president for Victoria Homes, said home builders already face complex environmental rules, and argued that Padilla’s proposals would apply the same standards to newer projects such as data centers, while tackling hidden costs of lax regulation.

“Let me tell you what is actually expensive,” she said. “It is expensive when Imperial Valley has some of the highest pediatric asthma rates in California. It is expensive for families to take off work, paying for emergency room visits and watching children struggle to breathe. I do not want to hear that public health is too expensive, while rubber-stamping data centers that dodge CEQA.”

Padilla introduced two other bills to place restrictions on data center development statewide. One would require large data centers to pay the costs of their energy up front, and prevent them from transferring those costs to other ratepayers. Without those safeguards, Padilla said, “You’re going to suddenly create a gigantic sucking sound of electrons, drawing power, and creating scarcity and jacking up prices” from energy-intensive data center projects.

Another would prohibit data centers from receiving exemptions under the California Environmental Quality Act, which requires developers to disclose the impacts of their project, seek public input and propose ways to reduce any harmful effects.

It would also require the project to include zero-carbon energy production and storage, pay for all new grid investments to avoid shifting costs to other power customers, use recycled water, offset any increased air pollution and invest in local workforce development and training programs.

The bill puts developers on notice that “You’re going to do better than what is the minimum. You’re going to set a new standard in California,” Padilla said.

All of those bills have passed the state Senate and are awaiting votes in the Assembly.

The controversy over the Imperial Data Center is playing out in similar battles across the state, where other planned tech facilities are meeting community pushback, and watchdog groups are seeking disclosure of their effects.

Data centers are spreading to areas with overtapped water supplies, but aren’t providing public accounting of their extensive water use, CalMatters reported.

Imperial County is one of California’s most productive agricultural regions, but is exclusively reliant on the Colorado River and is subject to water shortages. So the Imperial Data Center’s projected water use is a key issue.

The company originally pledged to use recycled water from

“They can’t just come in and claim that they’re exempt and have a right to build the biggest data center in the state without any oversight.”

**- STATE SEN. STEVE PADILLA**

neighboring cities, but when that didn’t pan out, it sued Imperial Irrigation District in Imperial County Superior Court this month, seeking 260 million gallons of river water each year. Rucci stated in the lawsuit that the water would come from 160 acres of adjacent farmland the company purchased, which has an existing right to water service. He has proposed to follow the land and divert the water to the data center, stating that would not result in any additional water demand.

In many cases, companies are exempt from such disclosure for projects authorized under what’s called ministerial approval, or automatic permits for projects that meet certain zoning criteria.

That’s a big part of the dispute in Imperial County; the data center tract merger and an earlier grading permit were green-lighted under routine city planning rules, without the extensive environmental review normally required for large developments under California law.

The City of Imperial objected to that shortcut in a court complaint that argues that the project is located just a couple hundred feet from homes in the incorporated city, but doesn’t account for its effects on air quality in the region, which already suffers high rates of pollution and childhood asthma, nor for water use, energy demand or other impacts.

“This process lacks the essential safeguards necessary to ensure the public is protected and that the impacts caused by the Hyperscale AI Data Center are mitigated,” the City of Imperial argued.

Some voters want to take data centers off the table entirely. Earlier this month Monterey Park, a city in Los Angeles County, became the first U.S. city to pass a moratorium on data centers, fueled by months of controversy over a planned project.

Rucci maintains that public opposition to data centers has no bearing on the legal status of his project. He argues that county zoning would permit other industrial projects with greater impacts.

“People can’t just emotionally say that I dislike data centers,” he said. “It’s just a building, but with a lot less intensive use than other uses.”

Padilla thinks data center development can be done right, but said it requires guardrails to protect neighboring residents: “We can figure out ways to power this technology without completely destroying and exploiting communities.”

# CALIFORNIA'S POPULATION IS STAGNATING AS IMMIGRATION AND BIRTH RATES DECLINE

By Dan Walters | CalMatters

This story is part of California Voices, a commentary forum aiming to broaden our understanding of the state and spotlight Californians directly impacted by policy or its absence. Learn more here.

California's population exploded during and immediately after World War II, from 6.9 million in 1940 to 19.9 million in 1970, thanks to waves of migrants from other states drawn to California's surging economy and the famous postwar baby boom.

California absorbed its 13 million new residents by expanding its public infrastructure of schools, colleges, highways, parks and water systems and by welcoming immense private investment in new housing, new retail complexes, new factories and new office buildings.

Population growth slowed in the 1970s in the aftermath of the baby boom and as an economic evolution, from manufacturing to technology and services, changed the job market. The leading politician of the decade, Gov. Jerry Brown, declared that California had entered "an era of limits" and major infrastructure expansion was no longer needed.

However, the 1980s saw a new population surge, driven by immigration from other countries and a new baby boom. California's population jumped by 6 million — 5-plus million of them babies — during the decade, a more than 25% gain.

The increase was so large, relative to the nation as a whole, that California was awarded seven new congressional seats after the 1990 census.



SERVING SAN DIEGO, LOS ANGELES AND IRVINE

# RJS LAW

A TAX LAW FIRM

## TAX AUDITS, CIVIL & CRIMINAL TAX LITIGATION

- IRS Audits
- IRS Appeals
- IRS Collections
- OIC / Settlement
- Criminal Tax
- Innocent Spouse Relief
- Payroll Tax
- SBOE / Sales Tax
- FTB / State Tax
- Estate Tax
- International Tax
- Corporate Law
- Real Estate Law
- OVDP / Voluntary Disclosure
- EDD / California State Payroll Tax

Ronson J. Shamoun, Principal Attorney and CEO of RJS LAW, is an Adjunct Law Professor at the University of San Diego - School of Law where he teaches a Tax Practice and Penalties class. He was recently presented with the following awards:

- San Diego Metro Magazine - Best Attorney 2016
- San Diego Magazine - Top Attorney 2016
- San Diego Business Journal - Best of the Bar 2014, 2015 & 2016
- Martindale Hubbell's - AC Preeminent Rated 2014, 2015 & 2016
- San Diego Daily Transcript - Top Attorney 2014 & 2015
- San Diego Metro Magazine - 40 Under 40 - 2015



FULL SERVICE STAFF OF 9 ATTORNEYS & 2 CPAS

619-777-7700

RJSLawFirm.com

SAN DIEGO 303 A STREET, STE 400, SAN DIEGO, CA 92101  
 IRVINE 12 PARK PLAZA STE. 125B IRVINE, CA 92614 BEVERLY HILLS 8484 WILSHIRE BLVD. STE 210 BEVERLY HILLS, CA 90211

Unlike California’s expansive reaction to its postwar population increase, the 1980s boomlet sparked an adverse reaction in the 1990s, including new laws aimed at denying public services to undocumented immigrants and a power struggle within the Sierra Club over immigration’s impact on the environment.

Meanwhile, population growth slowed again, and in this decade virtually halted as immigration and birth rates declined and substantial numbers of people left California, thanks largely to the state’s sky-high living costs.

A recent study by researchers Hans Johnson, Julien LaFortune and Eric McGhee at the Public Policy Institute of California found that the total fertility rate has dropped from 2.21 children per woman in 2007 to 1.48 in 2023, far below what demographers call the “replacement level of 2.1 necessary to keep a population from declining.”

The state lost a congressional seat after the 2020 census and is likely to lose several more after the 2030 census. However, the impacts of California’s population plateau extend far beyond politics.

“A smaller population can offer benefits; it reduces pressure on housing and infrastructure needs,” the researchers wrote, “easing congestion and reducing the need for expansive public works projects.” They also cited potential improvements in the environment and increasing per pupil spending on education as enrollment declines.

“At the same time,” they added, “fewer births — and a smaller population — may bring challenges: they could accelerate K–12 enrollment declines and strain the state’s economic and safety net systems as fewer workers support a larger share of older Californians. Labor shortages could also hinder California’s economic development.”

Those are all valid points and many more potential impacts could be mentioned. But the underlying issue is whether political policies will reflect the new demographic reality.

The post-World War II population explosion manifested itself in a bipartisan effort to do what was needed to make the transition relatively painless. We haven’t seen such political adjustment to changing demographic trends since.

Meanwhile, the state’s population is twice what it was in 1970 and we still depend on what politicians wrought in the post-war era — such things as the State Water Plan and our extensive freeway network.

A stagnant population eases pressure for new infrastructure but we still need to maintain what we have and expand it to meet current needs. However, water projects have languished and we no longer build new highways.

Jerry Brown, who proclaimed the “era of limits” in the 1970s, returned to the governorship in 2011 and declared, “I want to get shit done.”

There’s still much that should be done.



## Need In-Home Care?

Call Golden Care  
 for a *free* home  
 assessment!

We are a concierge care company  
 and treat you like family.

(760) 828-5201 | getgoldencare.com

# Don't Forget the Broader Context of the Iranian Memorandum

By Victor Davis Hanson



The tentative “memorandum of understanding” with Iran has caused glee on the Left and furor among many on the Right. The Left might welcome “peace,” but surely not as much as it enjoys infighting on the Right over the details.

If last week Democrats were calling Trump a fascist warmonger, now they deride his peace efforts as those of a Neville Chamberlain patsy. Within 24 hours, the Left’s talking points shifted from a mad bomber-style Curtis LeMay in the White House to an impotent appeaser.

A week ago, some Republicans were arguing that not one of the prior seven presidents had dared to use force to stop Iran’s nuclear program. Now some of them are deriding him as an Iranian enabler.

## What We Are Missing

There are legitimate concerns about the tentative memorandum, including the idea of third-party cash infusions to the regime and claims that violence in Lebanon is somehow Israel’s fault. In truth, history shows that Hezbollah, with Iranian financial support, consistently instigates the killing and then whines when Israel—or the U.S. in past conflicts—responds disproportionately.

That said, much of the current hysteria assumes a radical change in Trump’s strategy rather than a continuity that has brought us to the current denouement. It also does not consider the wider strategic context of the memorandum, the critical role of domestic public opinion in shaping how wars are conducted, or the broader strategy of isolating and weakening the regime.

A closer look at the current position of the U.S. suggests it has done an enormous amount of fiscal, economic, and military damage to Iran—the full extent of which will not be known until foreigners are allowed into the country.

So why did Trump agree to a memorandum that does not treat Iran as a strategically defeated opponent without options?

## Do We Really Want to Micro-Manage Iran?

Iran has been militarily devastated, but it does not yet consider itself strategically inert. The regime has little concern for the welfare of its own people and assumes Trump will not retaliate against dual-use targets in the manner of most past presidents who ordered bombing campaigns.

Remember, Trump could have gotten a much better deal had we dealt with the Iranians as we did with the once-defeated Iraqis and Taliban, whose governments were forcibly replaced by ones

more agreeable to U.S. demands.

But, with a population of 93 million, Iran is neither Iraq nor Afghanistan, which together required decades of U.S. ground troops, \$2 trillion in treasure, 7,000 American deaths, and 53,000 wounded. And in the end, those efforts still did not result in lasting Western-style governments aligned with U.S. interests.

Neither Afghanistan nor Iraq was as large or as formidable as Iran. To fully dictate terms to Iran as if it were an inert protectorate, the U.S. would either have to bomb it to smithereens or send in thousands of ground troops, both politically unpalatable to the American people. Trump must deal with the realities that Americans have been sick of dealing with the Middle East for years. By now, they believe that any costly, enforced regime change on the ground—or any years-long no-fly zone—is not worth the life of a single American soldier.

### **The War that Is and Is Not Over**

Yet Iran remains militarily defeated if not devastated. Its ability to cause havoc should not be confused with the U.S. ability to inflict even greater damage on Iran's economy without significant concern about suffering losses in a “forever” war.

If Iran chooses to hit Kuwait with another dozen missiles this week, Trump can adopt the 1999 Bill Clinton-style approach to Serbia—something he has again so far avoided.

When that bombing stalemated in its fifth week, and Slobodan Milosevic remained defiant, Clinton ordered the bridges on the Danube taken out. And when there were still no concessions, NATO planes began dropping graphite bombs to disable 70 percent of the Belgrade grid, which, along with other dual-use targeting, finally forced Serbia to leave Kosovo.

So far Trump has avoided the Clinton–Obama-style bombing of such targets in Serbia and Libya (e.g., Libyan TV/radio stations, industrial works, docks, ports, private homes and compounds, etc.). But should Iran begin to ignore its promises and renege on its agreements (and it will), the regime would have no ability to keep its utilities, roads, and transportation viable if the U.S. were even only to spend 48 hours to knock them all out.

In short, the U.S., by disproportionately hitting an entire array of dual-use targets, can force Iran to adhere to its agreements at any time.

### **Trump's Political Viability?**

Why, then, did Trump agree to the memorandum instead of a few days of dual-use targeting?

He likely did so thinking he could manage the next four months until the midterms without an energy- and media-driven recession in the U.S. or abroad, which would likely ensure that the Republicans lose the House and perhaps also the Senate. And a Democratic Socialist-driven Congress would paralyze the MAGA agenda, guarantee two years of frenzied House subpoenas, and prompt a nonstop impeachment circus.

However, while 38 of the last 41 midterm elections have seen the

in-party lose congressional seats, a Republican loss is not preordained this November.

Republicans will likely win the redistricting wars, both in red state legislatures and through the Supreme Court outlawing racial gerrymandering. They might then pick up between five and ten new seats.

The Democrat Party has gone full socialist. And it has de facto embraced a number of unpopular 30/70 issues including property confiscations, open borders, transgender chauvinism, restoration of DEI, the New Green Deal, and 10,000 illegal border entries a day.

Opening the strait will soon crash the price of oil to prewar levels. And the U.S. economy, despite all the hysterical doom and gloom, ploughs ahead with record stock prices, strong employment figures, record foreign investment, more fossil fuel development, and massive deregulation and tax cuts in progress.

By November, we might even see inflation cooling with far lower gasoline prices and the memory of an active war abroad dissipating.

### **The Memorandum Is Not the End but the Beginning**

The cessation of American bombing and economic strangulation of Iran, if both should follow, would not mark the end but the beginning of a new phase of problems for Iran. Once “peace” arrives, so will the internet of some sort in Iran, and, with that, a horde of Western reporters. And then the world will begin to witness hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of damage done to the Iranian military-industrial complex.

The already restless people will feel even more contempt for the Revolutionary Guard and theocracy, who talked a grand game, but whose imbecility and weakness caused the wreckage of their country. They will especially resent the regime's effort to rebuild a half-century, multi-billion military infrastructure while subsidizing nihilist Arab terrorists—all at their expense. Arming the resistance is another tool when Iran breaks its word.

Critics of the preliminary memorandum of understanding, not without merit, argue that the Gulf states will effectively underwrite the rebuilding of Iran's civilian and military infrastructure. Regrettably, perhaps.

But not so fast. What the Gulf states say now, and what they actually do, are, as we know from the past, two different things. It will not be popular in the Gulf to aid the reconstruction of an Iran that had preemptively bombed Gulf nation airports, hotels, tourist centers, and oil refineries and caused them billions of dollars in damage.

### **Time Is Not On Iran's Side**

Iran thinks time is on its side, as Trump—at least for now—faces high gas prices and the midterms. In truth, time and dragging out negotiations are not in Iran's interest, given the midterms are not a sure Democratic bet, and the price of gas is already falling in the U.S.

Even if it behaves for the next four months as the memoran-

dum of understanding morphs into armistice negotiations, sooner or later the Iranian regime will revert to its innately terrorist nature and begin violating its agreements. And then Trump can hit Iran hard but not to the point of crashing oil prices or restarting the war.

And once the midterms are over, and oil prices return to—or fall below—prewar levels, Trump will be unbound to force Iran to comply with new demands or let it wail and gnash its teeth among the rubble of its own ruin.

### **The World of Oil is Changing**

Even more worrisome to Iran is the current mad scramble of the Gulf states to build new or to expand existing pipelines to the Red Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Arabian Sea—thereby neutering the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz altogether.

Indeed, in a year or two, Iran may find its enemies can far better bottle up Iran's imports and exports by closing the strait than Iran can do anything to interrupt the oil exports of the Gulf producers.

If Iran increases oil production, alongside Russia and expanded output in the United States and Venezuela, prices would likely drop—perhaps precipitously—and that would hit the economies of illiberal regimes in Moscow and Tehran far more than that of the United States.

### **Geo-Strategy Does Not Favor Iran or Its Former Allies**

Despite recent U.S. verbal, performance-art remonstrations against Israel, the Gulf and Israel will both see their interests increasingly aligned; for all the demonization of Israel, it poses no threat to the Gulf or moderate Arab nations. After all, in the past it has taken out two nuclear reactors in an unstable Iraq and Syria, demolished Hamas, intimidated the Houthis, and done more damage to Hezbollah than any other Western nation—all, ironically, to the profit and interest of the Gulf nations and the United States.

Europe may despise Trump. But his antics have prompted it to spend more money on defense, more rapidly, than at any time in NATO's history. And within a year, a bleeding Russia will have limited ability to threaten European NATO nations. Most are turning rightward and, despite denials, are trending toward the Trump model of increasing fossil fuel production, rearmament, tighter borders, deportations of criminal aliens, and a crackdown on crime.

Meanwhile, Russia is losing or stalemated in Ukraine. China can no longer buy cheap sanctioned oil. For all the talk of its rise, Beijing now imports over 10 million barrels of oil per day and 30 percent of its food.

China's technological position depends on espionage and on sending the West half a million Chinese students each year—at a time when illegal and legal immigration, along with student visas and green cards, are all under scrutiny in Europe and the U.S.

### **Lies About the Past**

Two other unhinged left-wing talking points claim that Iran is better off now than it was when it was never bombed during the 2015 Obama “Iran Deal” and that only Trump ensured the closure of the strait, which was open before his war.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren has been repeating both absurdities. Warren should ask the late supreme leader and some 80 of his theocratic terrorist cronies whether they would have preferred the ascendant Obama years a decade ago to their current domain in a fiery inferno.

Are we to believe the lunacy that the Iranian air force, air defenses, navy, and missile arsenal were actually in bad shape during the Obama and Biden years because of American sophistry and rhetoric, and that now, after 40 days of bombing, they are in their greatest form ever?

The strait was closed for a few weeks because Iran lost most of its military and had its nuclear program buried under a flurry of bombs. It remained mostly open under prior presidents, who repeatedly warned Iran to stop work on a bomb and then failed to back up their threats.

This year, beleaguered Iran was desperate to shut down the strait as Tehran saw its military and economy in shatters and its nuclear ambitions buried under rubble. Prewar Iran was content to keep the strait open while the regime spread terror and fear throughout the Middle East and beyond without fear of consequences.

In sum, the memorandum and what follows are not the end of the story but merely the beginning. What will follow—years of costly Iranian reconstruction, the absence of a nuclear deterrent, the ability of the U.S. to strike at will, an increasingly sidelined Strait of Hormuz, the Israeli diminishment of its proxies, new anti-Iranian alliances, the loss of nuclear patrons, and an even angrier and more restive populace—will not require an Iraq- or Afghanistan-like intervention.

As the Iranians digest all this, they will stop bragging about the memorandum and increasingly try to lie, finagle, and escape their doom loop—efforts that will only ensure further fragmentation and destruction of the regime.

# Chula Vista musician, 21, composes ‘Land of the Free,’ an orchestral tribute to America’s 250th birthday

By Elizabeth Ireland | Times of San Diego

Oluwaloba Salami was not supposed to like the violin. He was not supposed to like the orchestra, either.

“I actually said that sounds really boring. I don’t want to do that,” Salami recalled telling his mother when she suggested he sign up for orchestra class at his middle school in Hawaii. She signed him up anyway.

That moment of reluctant surrender set in motion a musical trajectory that recently arrived at a major milestone. The East County Youth Symphony premiered Salami’s “Land of the Free,” a 35-minute two-movement orchestral work composed in honor of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

Salami, 21, a former ECYS violinist in his formative years, dedicated the piece to the organization and its supporters free of charge.

“It’s been a real privilege to write something to give back to ECYS because of how much they’ve done for me as a performer, as a musician and especially as a composer,” he said.

## Encouraging young composer

Salami was born in Nigeria and arrived in the U.S. before his first birthday, settling in Chula Vista after his family spent time in New York. His father, a Navy serviceman, later relocated the family to Hawaii for a year. In the Aloha State, an eighth-grade composition assignment piqued Salami’s interest. He wrote something technically unplayable for a beginner, but his teacher saw the instinct behind it and encouraged him to take composition seriously.

Back in San Diego at Otay Ranch High School, he became principal violinist of the string orchestra and joined ECYS. He wrote two pieces for his high school that earned him admission to Lehigh University in Pennsylvania, where he is now a junior studying music composition.

“Land of the Free” was suggested by the ECYS conductor, who asked Salami to write something for the nation’s semiquincentennial. The score is deliberately sprawling, with many themes rather than a single central motif, to reflect a country Salami knows across sharply different geographies.

“I felt that America is just so diverse in mountain ranges and valleys,” he said. “Living in Pennsylvania felt like a culture shock to me. It didn’t feel like California at all. I thought, ‘Am I still in the United States?’”

Some of that terrain made its way directly into the music. Salami said hiking trips were part of what shaped the piece’s first movement, with the landscapes he encountered along the trail



Salami (far right) played the trumpet for the Otay Ranch High School Mustang Corps. (Photo courtesy of Oluwaloba Salami)

informing its sound.

The work also carries an explicit message to his generation. Salami said he polled peers before writing and found widespread cynicism about the current moment, which he understood and then chose to counter.

“A lot of people in Gen Z are very cynical and very pessimistic, and rightfully so. There’s a lot going on now and it’s all really confusing,” he said. “But my message was rather than being cynical, I encourage people to look forward. Looking to make America a better place, looking towards the future, that’s what I really want to focus on.”

Audiences responded. Younger attendees told him afterward they needed to hear it. Older ones caught familiar quotations woven through the score, such as Dvorak’s “New World Symphony,” Aaron Copland, Leonard Bernstein and even a trace of Looney Tunes.

Beyond “Land of the Free,” Salami is finishing a fantasy novel, “The Midnight Kingdom,” due for self-publication this summer, and drafting a new symphony he describes as a murder mystery. In August, he leaves for a semester abroad in Vienna, Austria.

“Whether it’s writing music or writing fiction, I just want to keep telling stories,” Salami said.

Salami hopes “Land of the Free” finds its way to orchestras beyond San Diego. But his eyes are on the musicians closest to home.

“I hope to inspire the younger people who were on the stage where I once was,” he said.

# UCLA Anderson Forecast Says Oil Shock has Replaced Tariffs as Leading Risk to U.S. Economy

By UCLA Anderson Forecast

The June 2026 UCLA Anderson Forecast for the U.S. and California finds the economy confronting another inflationary shock, this time driven by the war in Iran and the closing of the Strait of Hormuz. After tariff-driven inflation appeared to peak and the labor market began to stabilize, rising energy prices have created a new source of pressure on households, businesses and the Federal Reserve.

The national economy remains relatively resilient, but the Iran-related oil shock has replaced tariffs as the major inflation threat. GDP growth is now expected to hold at roughly 2.1% in 2026 rather than accelerate; inflation is forecast to peak at 4.5%; and unemployment is expected to rise only modestly to 4.5%. The key forces offsetting the oil shock and tariffs are investment in artificial intelligence, tax cuts and earlier fiscal support.

In California, the same energy shock creates additional pressures because of the state's specific low-emissions gasoline requirements and the importance of ports and logistics to the state economy. California continues to outpace the U.S. in output and income growth, but its labor market remains weak, and the employment recession described in prior Forecast reports is expected to continue through the third quarter of 2026.

## The National Economy

The June 2026 forecast for the nation describes an economy that had begun to move past the disruptions of 2025 before being hit by another adverse supply shock. The war in Iran and closure of the Strait of Hormuz have disrupted roughly 20 million barrels per day of oil flow, or about 20% of global daily oil consumption. The severity of the economic effect depends largely on how long the strait remains closed.

As the national report states, "The 2020s are beginning to look eerily similar to the 1970s," a decade marked by high inflation, slow growth and the reemergence of the term "stagflation." The current forecast does not predict a repeat of the 1970s, but the comparison reflects the sequence of supply shocks the economy has experienced since 2020: pandemic-era supply-chain disruptions, the war in Ukraine, tariffs and, now, the war in Iran.

The primary economic impact of the oil shock is inflation. Headline CPI inflation rose from 2.4% to 3.8% over two months and is expected to continue rising, peaking at 4.5% on a year-over-year basis by the end of 2026. Core inflation is expected to rise more gradually, peaking at 3.5% in the second quarter of 2027 as higher energy costs pass through to goods and services.

Tariff inflation, by contrast, appears to have peaked earlier in 2026. The overturning of many previous tariffs is expected to put modest downward pressure on goods and core inflation, but the report asserts that this effect will be small compared with the price disruptions caused by the conflict in Iran.

The labor market has held up better than expected but remains stagnant rather than strong. The unemployment rate was 4.3% in April, unemployment insurance claims remain near all-time lows, and nonfarm payrolls grew by an average of 76,000 jobs per month over the first four months of the year. The Forecast expects the unemployment rate to increase modestly to 4.5% by the end of 2026 and remain there as energy costs weigh on household spending and fiscal stimulus later moves into reverse.

The Federal Reserve now faces a more difficult policy environment. After cutting rates late in 2025 because of concerns about labor-market weakness, the Fed is unlikely to cut further in 2026. The Forecast expects the central bank to hold rates steady for the remainder of the year while it waits to see how persistent inflation becomes and how well the labor market holds up.

GDP growth is now expected to remain resilient rather than accelerate. Real GDP grew 2.1% in 2025, and the Forecast expects growth of 2.1% from the fourth quarter of 2025 to the fourth quarter of 2026. Growth is expected to weaken further to 1.8% in 2027.

The principal counterweight is the continued surge in artificial intelligence investment. Big Tech's AI infrastructure spending is expected to approach \$700 billion in 2026, more than 50% higher than in 2025. Combined with tax cuts and other fiscal support, this investment is expected to help the U.S. economy absorb the oil shock without falling into recession under the Forecast's baseline assumptions.

## The California Economy

The California forecast describes a state economy that remains bifurcated. California continues to outperform the U.S. in output and income growth, but employment remains weak and uneven. As the California report notes, the state's new bifurcated economy is not geographic, but sectoral, with AI, aerospace and other tech on one side, and the rest of the economy on the other.

California outpaced the U.S. in economic growth in the fourth quarter of 2025, and the Forecast estimates that the same happened in the first quarter of 2026. Investment in technology remains strong, with California continuing to attract a disproport-

tionate share of venture capital funding. Increased demand for commercial aircraft, defense goods and space products is expected later in 2026 and into 2027 and 2028.

At the same time, the state's labor market remains weak. California's unemployment rate has been above 5.0% for 27 months, and it stood at 5.3% in April 2026. Payroll jobs increased by 56,600 in 2025 after benchmark revisions, and by 97,200 over the first four months of 2026; but the Household Survey showed an employment loss of 111,000 and a labor force decline of 158,000 over the same period.

California is more exposed than the nation to the energy shock in several ways. The state uses a specific low-emissions gasoline that tends to make prices higher than the national average, and its ports handle cargo that crosses the Pacific on ships that require large amounts of more expensive fuel. Higher energy costs are expected to reduce consumer demand and add pressure to the logistics sector.

Goods movement had been mildly positive prior to the Iran War, with imports through Southern California's ports above pre-pandemic levels and air cargo showing signs of improvement, particularly in international traffic. But the Forecast expects a drop-off because of lower consumer demand, higher fuel costs for air and sea freight, and supply chain interruptions. Logistics

employment is expected to show little growth in 2026 and early 2027, followed by positive increases thereafter.

The state's high-productivity sectors remain the main source of longer-term optimism. Aerospace is benefiting from increased production at Boeing and Airbus, increased defense purchases and demand tied to space exploration and satellite production. Tech employment remains under pressure, but the Forecast assumes that AI-related hiring and the end of contraction in other parts of tech will eventually produce employment gains.

Housing remains a major constraint. The 10-year Treasury rate has risen above 4.4%, and 30-year fixed mortgage rates have moved above 6.5%. With war-induced inflation moving higher, the Forecast does not expect downward pressure on mortgage rates this year. Deportations are expected to further limit the construction workforce, while tariffs continue to raise the cost of imported building materials.

Permits remain relatively flat, and the 12-month run rate for new permits is around 110,000 units per year, well below what is needed to address California's housing affordability problem. The overall outlook for California is slightly weaker than it was three months ago, though income and output are expected to continue growing faster than the U.S., even as employment growth remains tepid.



### California Forecast Numbers

#### Unemployment Rates (Annual Averages)

2026: 5.5%

2027: 5.1%

2028: 4.2%

#### Total Employment Growth

2026: 0.2%

2027: 0.7%

2028: 2.5%

#### Non-Farm Payroll Jobs

2026: 1.2%

2027: 1.5%

2028: 2.0%

#### Real Personal Income Growth

2026: 2.3%

2027: 2.4%

2028: 2.5%

#### Residential Permits

2026: 115,000

2028: 122,000

### Outlook

The June 2026 Forecast reflects an economy that remains resilient but is being tested by another major supply shock. Nationally, the central risk has shifted from tariff-driven inflation to energy-driven inflation. The baseline forecast does not call for recession, but it does anticipate slower growth, higher inflation and a Federal Reserve with little room to cut interest rates.

In California, the challenge is more acute. The state continues to benefit from AI, aerospace and high-productivity sectors, but its labor market remains weak and its exposure to fuel prices, logistics disruption, deportations and housing constraints makes the outlook somewhat weaker than it was three months ago.

The UCLA Anderson Forecast's summer 2026 economic outlook conference, titled *The Blurring Lines Between Residential and Commercial Real Estate*, will be held on Wednesday, June 3, in collaboration with the UCLA Ziman Center for Real Estate.

# Off to Retirement!

## The traveling couple of Marlise Kast Myers and Benjamin Myers

By Marlise Kast-Myers | Photos by Benjamin Myers

We did it. We entered the world of retirement, more out of mental necessity vs financial freedom. The corporate world had taken its toll on my husband Benjamin, an artist and creative whose decades as a graphic designer floated further away from his true talents.

"I'm what they call a 'dinosaur' at the office," he explained.

I reminded Benjamin that he was only 48, but none of that mattered. It wasn't about age. It was about evolving with platforms, software, and technology, or in his words, "losing my soul."

And so, he quit, which ironically meant we could start the life we were meant to live. Between my freelance gigs, our side hustle selling antiques, and cashing in our rental property, we could wave goodbye to corporate comforts and hug the next half of our lives.

We had some nebulous plans but decided to let details unfold during a long layover-turned-divine detour. At Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, we downloaded Omio, a booking platform for trains, buses, and flights in Europe. We then found a rental car through Goldcar for \$15 a day.

So, we went rogue, forfeiting our flight back to San Diego for

five days of reflection, inspiration, and relaxation in the southwestern region of Nouvelle-Aquitaine. Other than embracing gastronomy, our getaway goal was to tap into aquatic healing as a cleansing from our old lives. During this "retirement baptism," we would seek out oceans, spas, and thermals between Bordeaux and Biarritz. It was intentionally spontaneous, with priorities set on all things anew.

Neither of us knew Bordeaux particularly well, although the wine had become a nightly guest at our table. We headed to Villas Foch, one of Bordeaux's only central hotels to offer spa facilities. As a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the former heritage bank sits on the ruins of Château Trompette, a 15th-century fortress. In 2001, the site transformed into an elegant 20-room hotel with bourgeois architecture and modern grandeur. A butler opened the door, and suddenly it was like stepping into a mansion where design, history, and comfort played equal parts.

Checkerboard floors led to a red-velvet staircase where a bubble chandelier and limestone walls climbed toward restful sophistication. Fine linens and plush robes set the tone for hydro-massages

In the Lori region, this 5.6 mile-long trail travels from Kobayr Monastery through Horomayr Monastery all the way to Odzun Church.



in a Roman-style swimming pool. Purified and ready to rumble, we headed to the hotel bar, Ferdinand, for an aperitif.

After dark, we walked to Place des Quinconces, one of the largest city squares in Europe. Anchoring the space was Monument aux Girondins, a towering landmark built between 1894 and 1902 to honor political leaders executed during the Reign of Terror. Designed to deter rebellion, the square was still serving its purpose, as locals gathered under the moonlight. From a couple sharing ice cream, to teenagers choreographing dance moves, I told my husband I wanted to be French.

The following day, he suggested the best place to start, Cité du Vin, the world's largest, interactive museum dedicated to wine. What better way to understand the culture than to taste it, where exhibitions, workshops, and multi-sensory experiences paid tribute to the grape.

Yet it wasn't until our city tour with Bruno Beurrier that we began to comprehend the deeper alliance between Bordeaux and wine.

"It's like water for us," explained Bruno, "It is life."

Pointing toward the sky, he clicked his heels, twirled in his kilt, and marched on. Bruno was excentric, passionate, and living his best life as Bordeaux's top guide. Originally from Gascony, he looked like a Monty Python character, sharing history and anecdotes with a 40-year reputation.

Security guards waved him through and restaurateurs gifted him samples, including truffles from Le Chocolat Alain

Ducasse. This sweet pause was a bean-to-bar experience under world-renowned chef, Alain Ducasse. With over 20 Michelin stars, Ducasse built a culinary empire that took a bite into chocolate. Obviously, we left with a few bars, hiding them into the depths of our luggage as if smuggling gold.

It was that good.

Bruno knew it, responding to any praise of local awesomeness with, "No, it's not amazing. It's Bordeaux."

He was right; Bordeaux was a destination with its own denotation, one powerhouse of meaning associated with some 7,000 châteaux and a wine culture so embedded, it felt more like a birthright than a product. At Triangle d'Or, Bruno waltzed us into L'Intendant, a cellar with over 1,600 Bordeaux labels. But Bordeaux went beyond the glass.

It was a city of quiet reinvention. Once blackened by centuries of soot, its façades had been painstakingly restored, revealing grand boulevards, monumental squares, and 18th-century riverfront mansions. Within its layers was culture at the Grand Théâtre de Bordeaux, indulgence at streetside cafés, and the hum of commerce along Rue Sainte-Catherine—the longest pedestrian thoroughfare in Europe.

"Tell me," Bruno asked, pointing toward a tram. "What's missing?"

Like all his riddles, we had no time to answer.

"Cables," he shouted. "No cables or wires anywhere! A testament to progress bowing to beauty."

With the skyline open wide, the city's history wasn't blocked



The royal blue staircase at Hôtel du Palais



The thermals in Salies-de-Béarn have been known to cure rheumatology, gynecology, and child development disorders.

by wire grids or preserved behind glass; it was lived in, walked through, and tasted. It was in the architecture of the 17th-century Basilique Notre-Dame de Bordeaux, and in the triumphal arch of Porte Cailhau. It was in the reflecting pools of Miroir d'eau, and in the bells of Saint-Andre Cathedral.

“Maybe we should retire in Bordeaux,” Benjamin joked.

I told him I would miss surfing, and so, onward we went toward the coast.

Waves were pumping in Biarritz, a glamorous seaside town on the southwestern Basque coast. Roughly 2.5 hours from Bordeaux, it gained attention when European royalty began visiting in the 1800s. American’s paddled out in the 1950’s, turning Biarritz into a surf destination. For a front row seat, we chose Hôtel du Palais Biarritz, originally built in 1855 as a summer villa for Empress Eugénie, wife of Napoleon III.

From a royal getaway to a casino hotel, it was a fire in 1903 that had it rising from the ashes as a “Palace,” the highest tier of luxury hotels. From kings and politicians to celebrities and well, us, those who entered the Belle Époque palace had been known to fall deeply in love with Biarritz, where waves peel like tangerines, history lingers, and for a fleeting moment, you feel like royalty yourself.

“You have a moth hole in your sweater,” my husband pointed.

Pinching off a grape from the fruit platter, I told him that moth holes were trending, and that regardless of my style, my confidence was very Jayne Mansfield. She too had been a guest, frequenting

the hotel along with Ava Gardner, Winston Churchill, and Victor Hugo who hoped “Biarritz would never become fashionable.”

My sweater was certainly helping.

Despite Hugo’s wish, things turned out differently for the seaside town. Even after empires fell, the guest list at Hôtel du Palais Biarritz evolved into artists, writers, and Hollywood’s golden set; the kind of place where Ernest Hemingway could write, Coco Chanel could reinvent style, and Frank Sinatra could order a nightcap.

Although crowns and ballgowns had been replaced by wetsuits and linen, the allure still remained, especially after a renovation in 2021 under Hyatt’s Unbound Collection. Without diminishing its heritage, the seafront landmark blended empire style with modern luxury, restoring original artwork, refined tapestries, and period furnishings. We capitalized on upgrades including La Rotonde restaurant by Chef Christophe Scheller, and Imperial Spa by Guerlain. It was like Baskin-Robbins of the spa world, sampling everything with a day pass including the indoor pool, jetted tub, hammam, and “tea bar.”

“My ice cube is monogrammed,” I told my husband.

It seemed, we had landed in the most luxurious hotel of our lives.

Benjamin raised his glass. “And that’s how you kick off retirement,” he said.

“—and die with zero,” I added, looking at our bill.

Onward we went toward affordable reality in Biarritz; surfing at

La Grande Plage, hiking to the port town of Saint-Jean-de-Luz, sampling cheese at Les Halles market, and watching the sunset from the lighthouse.

Until then, we had certainly relaxed but found little direction on what our future might hold.

Enter Dax. Twenty miles from the coast, the spa town on the Adour River was on our list for its thermal baths. While sipping on wine in Place de la Fontaine Chaude, we noticed a woman shucking oysters. Nursing a bottle of white, she pried open each shell, slurped it down, and closed her eyes to face the sun.

Benjamin insisted I practice my French and ask her where she bought the dozen on ice. And just like that, the stranger led us to Les Halles De Dax, a lively market where food merchants set up shop amidst communal tables. The place was packed, with locals passing platters of foie gras, cheeses, pastries, and other Landes products.

Appetites appeased, we checked into Le Splendid, an Art Deco landmark built in 1928 by architect André Granet. The historic hotel had Great Gatsby flair, pairing swanky elegance with purifying pools, an experience that felt equal parts therapeutic and theatrical. Curves and glamour, it still carried the ghosts of its former guests—Ernest Hemingway, Orson Welles, and Lauren Bacall. These days, most visitors come for mud over martinis.

That too is why we came, to cleanse in the minerals that have been drawing the weary, wounded, and curious. Long before spa days came with robes and tea, the Romans built a culture around its springs. Legend has it, even Roman Empress Julia Augusta sought treatment, though it was a nameless soldier's dog that sealed the town's reputation.

Left behind, sick and weak, the dog was later found full of life, having rolled in the river mud of the Adour. Naturally, we followed the dog's path. At the heart of town, the Fontaine Chaude bubbles at 140°F, steam billowing as locals pass by like it's no big deal. But it is a big deal, because it's what has made Dax the country's leading thermal destination. Rheumatism, arthritis, back pain—this is where people come to fix what time has stolen. The benefits were real as we hit the circuit: sauna, steam room, aqua sensory, salt therapy, ice bath, and a “flottarium” pool.

In Dax, wellness isn't a splurge, it's a system. Many treatments require prescriptions, and patients return like pilgrims chasing relief. We, on the other hand, were passing through, chasing a feeling we couldn't quite name. Somewhere between the oysters, wine, and waters, it started to make sense; Not the future entirely, but that maybe healing wasn't about fixing everything, but about pausing long enough to feel something shift, even if it started with a dog.

Next stop: Salies-de-Béarn, a postcard town of half-timbered homes and winding canals, affectionately dubbed the “Venice of Béarn.” At its heart lies a spring that produces water 10 times saltier than the sea. This liquid “white gold” has shaped the town's identity for centuries. According to legend, a wild boar was dis-

covered encrusted in salt crystals, leading locals to the source. People arrived with buckets, harvesting what would become essential to curing Bayonne ham and, eventually, themselves.

By the mid-1800s, the spring had gone from a salt source to a thermal sanctuary, reportedly curing everything from infertility to arthritis. Today, two systems exist: one for salt production, the other for healing.

We opted for the latter at Selya Thermals. Entrance was \$12, though access came with rules: Speedos and hair caps. Benjamin existed the locker room in both, which he purchased at reception.

“You don't have too much to say about the hole in my sweater now, do you?” I asked.

My top bun protruded my swimming cap, making me look like a cross between an eraser and an alien.

Benjamin pointed at my head. “Really?”

Comfort set in, as we rotated through the sauna, jacuzzi, and thermal pool with jets, bubbles, and a “swan neck” shower. The whole journey from sea to salt was starting to feel less like travel and more like transformation.

We slept deeply that night, thanks to both Salies-de-Béarn and Domaine Labouroume, a countryside bed-and-breakfast torn from a dream. Opened in 2022, the self-sustaining farmhouse had been brought to life by its owners, Aline and Jérémie. Pulling open a stall, Aline showed us drying potatoes and aging wine, both harvested onsite. Inside, the four rooms were styled with footed tubs, chesterfield sofas, and just enough antique charm to make you question your home decor.

“Life goals,” I whispered to Benjamin.

Minutes from town, the property offered quiet corners for reading, eating, and reflecting—the last of which we finally made time for.

“I want this life,” Benjamin said.

Squeezing his hand, I nodded, knowing that starting now, we were reclaiming ownership of our time. Retirement, we were realizing, wasn't about the inability to work; it was about the ability to be free; A life where reward outweighed risk, even when it wasn't calculated; A life rooted in meaning, not just income.

Ironically, it took four destinations to show us that. In Bordeaux, we learned that joy is harder to bottle than wine, as a feeling of refinement without effort. In Biarritz, that even with a moth-eaten sweater, you're exactly where you're supposed to be. In Salies-de-Béarn, that saltwater springs and slow farm life can heal more than the body. And in Dax, that oysters and a soldier's dog can sway a San Diego couple just enough to pack it all in, buy a 350-year-old manor, and move to France.

# California's Forgotten 1776 Story

By Will Swaim | California Policy Center

Two hundred and fifty years ago, in the space of 365 days, in one of history's best two-for-one deals, the world got Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and the Declaration of Independence.

There's a third reason to celebrate 1776. That same year, on November 1 – All Saints Day for the liturgically inclined – the Spanish priest Father Junipero Serra established the Mission San Juan Capistrano, the seventh of Spain's 21 California missions.

These days it's popular among blockheads to denounce these missions as slave camps and Serra as the whip-cracker in chief. Take the Instagram dad who recently denounced California's standard fourth-grade field trips to a local mission and the construction of a table-top California mission made with sugar cubes, popsicle sticks and construction paper.

"Missions for us are like plantations for the South," he says in a claim that discounts the horror of slavery and libels the Spanish mission system. Most of his 1,400 commenters enthusiastically endorse his assessment, praising him and themselves for their "awareness" of "the real story" behind California's missions.

"I had a long, detailed talk with the principal and my son's 4th grade teacher and I let them know that we will build the mission project but it will be historically accurate with rape murder hangings and more," writes one of them. "They asked if we could do something else. We built a greenhouse." You go, girl.

These aren't exceptions. In 2020, when George Floyd died in his drug-fueled struggle with Minneapolis cops, he set off rioting and statue-tumbling across the nation. But in California, where slavery was never legal and icons to Confederate leaders and slaveowners are rare, the attackers sought other targets. They often settled on statues of Christopher Columbus (who never set foot in California) and Father Serra (who did).

In that dark summer of Covid and Floyd, vandals destroyed Serra statues – or caused their removal into protective custody – throughout California, from San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, Santa Barbara, Ventura County, San Gabriel to Olvera Street and Mission Hills in Los Angeles County. Farther south, at the Mission San Juan Capistrano (where, full disclosure, yours truly graduated from the Catholic elementary school) church officials moved their Serra statue to safety behind the mission walls.

The vandals – and let's not limit that title to the mere statue-topplers, graffiti artists and chanting mobs – reiterate longstanding claims that Junipero Serra was a figure of Hitlerian evil, and the California mission system he helped establish no better than Nazi death camps.

New research reveals a far more nuanced history of Serra and the California missions he helped establish.

In describing that nuance it's important to establish a common-sense prior: Life is tragic, and one feature of human tragedy is that some powerful empire was always going to claim California. In doing so, that imperial power would inevitably and dramatically reshape the lives of the people who had lived in California for some 15,000 years. But if you had your choice about which of these global powers would prevail, you might have preferred the Spanish (or any Western Euro-

pean nation) over the Russians (who by the 1740s were already moving southward along the Pacific Coast of North America), or (given more time) an aggressive and hyper-racist 1930s Japan or (given even more time) the contemporary People's Republic of China.

Imperial Spain may have been among the very best of these or other alternatives. But that fact has been masked by American academics who often see Spain's medieval impulses – of cross and sword – in distinctly materialist terms: Spain used religion to justify or even obscure its violence and theft, they argue.

In fact, the Spanish crown took seriously both conquest and conversion. In letters from the New World, priests (especially Serra and his predecessor, the great Bartolomé de las Casas) defended the natives as children of God and therefore spiritual equals. For their part, the military officers complained that mission priests – especially Serra – coddled the natives and meddled in martial affairs they did not understand.

I'm not arguing that the mission system was a modern liberal institution. But in the seventeenth century, modern liberal institutions were still rare. Mission Indians did not enjoy the freedoms we associate with *The Wealth of Nations* or the Declaration. The error is in seeing the missions as merely coercive.

That error misses two important phenomena. By the time the Spanish really settled Alta California, intertribal warfare had become so widespread throughout the Southwest that it threatened the entire imperial project. Travel between Mexico City and what's now California was the equivalent of a trip to the moon – if that space voyage included aggressive aliens murdering one another as well as the travelers. Citing Cahuilla oral traditions and subsequent archeological finds, Yale historian Naomi Sussman notes the commonality of war among nearby tribes – including the Luiseño, Diegeño, Mohave, and Yuma. These battles for resources in California's arid deserts could be extinction-level events for the losers as well as the winners.

Some tribal leaders fought the Spanish. Others sat out the conflict hoping the storm would pass. Still others seized the opportunity to ally themselves with the newly arrived Europeans to negotiate peace agreements with other tribes. The Spanish, outnumbered in this new and hostile land, gladly accepted the role of diplomats and defenders of the peace.

In this newer history, the missionaries appear as comparatively sensitive cultural midwives in a violent world. The missionaries saw their native converts as spiritual equals – a remarkably short step from the Declaration's central, history-changing claim that all of us are created equal.

Those who believe that conversion itself was violent – that baptism was a crime against the native people – haven't read the actual history: After violent clashes with native tribes over the priests' early attempts to quash native religious practices, one research team notes, the priests "became more flexible with respect to allowing conversion but still allowing Native American religious rituals. This flexibility was the beginning of the building of more durable communities."

And because these "Native Americans identified as Catholic," they

were in fact treated as Spanish subjects deserving of protection. Laws crafted a century before Serra's arrival in Alta California "stated that in the Spanish legal system, baptized native people could not be enslaved and those who practiced agriculture had rights to land. Missionaries would use it to act as advocates for native land rights: "The land that they formerly held is not to be taken from those Indians."

As much as this will annoy our progressive friends, civil peace – these durable mission communities – produced the necessary preconditions for real prosperity. According to a growing body of recent scholarship, the mission system created California's first multiracial, multiethnic, and multilingual society. This emerging common culture included Spanish-language literacy, skilled trades, and a shared framework of Catholic religious and social norms. For those reasons, historians and economists now conclude, "Native Americans living on mission-legacy reservations" prospered far beyond those who lived outside the system. The mission Indians, these historians find, achieved "higher crop income per capita, greater earnings from work per capita, lower crime rates" than those of native communities outside the missions. Most remarkably, the data also shows that phenomenon persisted into the early twentieth century.

None of this diminishes the undeniable hardships, coercion, disease, and population losses associated with the mission era. It does suggest, however, that the historical record is more complex than portrayals that reduce the missions to institutions of unrelieved oppression.

Serra was key to all that – even at his own personal peril. Consider his response to news a year before the founding of the Mission San Juan Capistrano, native Americans rebelled against the San Diego mission. The rebels murdered two priests, including Serra's friend and colleague Father Luis Jayme; massacred several other Spanish settlers; and set fire to the mission buildings. Spanish soldiers quickly captured the rebel leaders and planned to execute them publicly.

Serra wrote immediately to Spain's top official in Mexico City.

"I make no excuses for announcing to Your Excellency the tragic news I have just received of the total destruction of the San Diego Mission, and of the death of the senior of its two religious ministers ... at the hand of the rebellious gentiles and of the Christian neophytes," Serra wrote. "All this happened November 5th, about one or two o'clock at night. The gentiles came together from forty rancherías, according to information given me, and set fire to the church after sacking it. Then they went on to the storehouse, the house where the Fathers lived, the soldiers' barracks, and all the rest of the buildings."

Having recounted the bloody fighting, Serra appealed for clemency. "Most Excellent Lord," he continued, "one [of] the most important requests I made of the Most Illustrious Inspector General, at the beginning of these conquests was: if ever the Indians, whether they be gentile or Christian, killed me, they should be forgiven...."

Yes, Serra acknowledged, the military is critical to the Christianizing mission in Alta California: "While the missionary is alive, let the soldiers guard him, and watch over him, like the pupils of God's very eyes. That is as it should be. Nor do I disdain such a favor for myself. But after the missionary has been killed, what can be gained by campaigns [of violent retribution]?"

Though he promised to make no excuses, Serra went on to provide one: the rebellion was a military failure, he argued, and following that catastrophe Christian mercy was essential.

"Some will say [the goal of a swift and terrifying military response

to the Indian uprising] is to frighten them and prevent them from killing others," Serra continued. "What I say is that, in order to prevent them from killing others, keep better guard over them [the priests and Spanish allies] than they did over the one who has been killed; and, as to the murderer, let him live, in order that he should be saved – which is the very purpose of our coming here, and the reason which justifies it. Give him to understand, after a moderate amount of punishment, that he is being pardoned in accordance with our law, which commands us to forgive injuries; and let us prepare him, not for death, but for eternal life."

Serra died in 1784 in what's now Carmel, California. And after his death came the deluge.

Today's ethnic romanticists, hating all things Western European and American, celebrate the Aztecs (ignoring their imperialism, colonialism, slavery and cannibalism) or Spain's successors, the Mexicans. But when Mexicans won their independence from sclerotic Spain in 1822, they quickly eliminated the delicate tension in the imperial system: they ejected the mission priests from Alta California and transformed the missions into mere economic machines run by military officials. Life for California's mission Indians under the Mexicans was to become far more cruel than it had ever been under the Spanish.

We may be thankful then that Mexican flag did not fly over California for long.

"Less than two decades after Serra's death, a different kind of vessel began appearing on the California coast," write the historians Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz in *Junípero Serra: California, Indians, and the Transformation of a Missionary*. "Ships from England and the United States began to call, first periodically and, over time, with increasing regularity." In June 1846, just 24 years after the Mexican flag first flew over Alta California, a group of California rebels supporting the U.S. in its war with Mexico, raised a Bear Flag emblazoned with the red star of Texas. Their California Republic lasted just six weeks, ending with the arrival of an American naval squadron in Monterey Bay. The Bear Flag was struck, the Stars and Stripes went up, and Mexico abandoned its claim. In 1850, California was admitted to the union.

Smith offered a theory of how people become prosperous. The Declaration offered a theory of how people become politically free. In that same miracle year of 1776, the founding of the Mission San Juan Capistrano marked California's incorporation into a social and political framework that would, over generations, make both of those ideals available here. The missions did not mark the arrival of freedom itself but as the beginning of the long, uneven process by which that freedom arrived.

These findings are not widespread. As my colleague Sheridan Karas has noted, it will be difficult to spread them in a public education system that certifies as "educated" children who generally can't read or perform math at grade level – a system that does not even measure historical knowledge.

That's how we get the vile campaign against Serra and the early missions. And it explains why, in September 2020, following the George Floyd summer, Governor Gavin Newsom could sign a bill to replace Serra's statue on the capitol grounds with a monument to Native Americans who once dominated the region.

The truth about Serra, the actual history, is still out there in the intellectual wilderness.

PRSRT STD  
US POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
PERMIT #3175  
SAN DIEGO, CA



# AND IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING OF YOUR ASCENT.

Congratulations  
from Alaska Airlines  
to San Diego's  
Best Law Firms.  
Your ambition and  
success are what  
keeps taking you—  
and San Diego—to  
new heights.

*Alaska*  
AIRLINES

