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CALIFORNIA

Lt. governor hopefuls pitch plans for state



Candidates for California's lieutenant governor in the 2026 June primary are, from left top, Michael Tubbs, Fiona Ma, Oliver Ma, from left bottom, Gloria Romero, Janelle Kellman, and Josh Fryday. COURTESY PHOTOS

Those eyeing No. 2 role discuss housing, climate, the economy

By Grace Hase
BAY AREA NEWS GROUP

California's lieutenant governor is often dismissed as a ceremonial understudy. But the office comes with seats on influential boards overseeing higher education, public land and the coast — influence that many of the six leading candidates for the state's No. 2 job say they want to use to shape housing, college affordability, climate policy and the economy.

The office is currently held by Eleni Kounalakis, who is termed out. The lieutenant governor serves as acting governor when the governor is out of state and presides over the state Senate, where the officeholder can cast a tie-breaking vote. The lieutenant governor, like the vice president, is also next in line in case the governor dies or is removed from office.

Gov. Gavin Newsom, who held the role for eight years under Gov. Jerry Brown, famously used his limited powers as acting governor to name the artichoke the state's vegetable and the avocado as the state fruit.

But the lieutenant governor also sits on boards for the University of California, California State University and California Community Colleges, giving the office a voice in higher

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Shirley Weber, Don Wagner and Michael Feinstein, from left, are running for California secretary of state in 2026. COURTESY PHOTOS

Secretary of state candidates discuss aims

By Kaitlyn Schallhorn
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From expanding voter registration opportunities to helping people get to the polls on Election Day, the candidates for California secretary of state have various ideas on how to improve the state's elections.

Four candidates are on the June 2 primary ballot for secretary of state: Democratic incumbent Shirley Weber, Republican Don Wagner and Green Party candidates Gary Blenner and Michael Feinstein.

Feinstein, Wagner and Weber all emphasized the important role the office plays in protecting voters' rights and access to voting, but they vary on ways they believe the state can better ensure its elections are free from interference and build trust with voters.

Wagner, in the Southern California News Group's 2026 Primary Voter Guide, said he'd like to do away with California's practice of mailing ballots to all registered voters.

"Having so many ballots out there, coupled with bloated voting rolls, allows for the possibility of interference and illegal influence over our elections," said Wagner, a member of Orange County's Board of Supervisors. "And even if such interference is not happening, the widespread perception of such interference undermines confidence in the system."

It's been an "ongoing challenge" to build trust in voting systems nationwide, said Weber, who has served as secretary of state since 2021.

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MIDDLE EAST

Drone hits UAE nuclear facility

United States and Iran signal they are prepared to resume war

By Jon Gambrell and Samy Magdy
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — A drone strike sparked a fire on the edge of the United Arab Emirates' sole nuclear power plant on Sunday in what authorities called an "unprovoked terrorist attack."

No one was blamed, but it highlighted the risk of renewed war as the United States and Iran signaled they were ready to fight again.

There were no reported injuries or radiological release. The UAE, which has hosted air defenses and personnel from Israel, recently accused Iran of launching drone and missile attacks. Tensions have risen over the Strait of Hormuz, a vital energy waterway gripped by Iran, which is under a U.S. naval blockade.

"For Iran, the Clock is Ticking, and they better get moving, FAST, or there won't be anything left of them," President Donald Trump posted on social media shortly after a call with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, whose attack on Iran with the U.S. sparked the war on Feb. 28.

Trump has repeatedly set deadlines for Tehran and then backed off.

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RIVERSIDE

State accused of withholding records after school mistrial

Attorneys in ex-student's sex abuse case claim defense violating orders

By Joe Nelson
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Attorneys for the state of California have been accused of violating two court orders by withholding thousands of pages of evidence in a sexual abuse lawsuit involving a former student at California School for the Deaf-Riverside.

Weeks after a judge declared a mistrial in the case over their evidence-handling failures, attorneys for the school and state Department of Education, which operates the school, have produced only about 7,746 pages of roughly 17,520 records that were allegedly withheld from the plaintiff's attorneys, according to a motion filed May 4 in Riverside Superior Court.

Attorneys Deborah Chang and Candice Klein are representing a former female student in the lawsuit alleging the school failed to protect her from repeated sexual assaults by five male classmates in 2022 and 2023, when she was 16 and 17 years old.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Fire destroys three structures at state prison in Norco

By David Wilson
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A fire broke out at the state prison in Norco this past weekend, destroying three structures at the facility.

The blaze was reported around 5:45 a.m. Saturday at the California Rehabilitation Center at Fifth and Western avenues, according to a report filed by the prison with the Governor's Office of Emergency Services.

Smoke was observed coming from the prison's carpentry shop. The prison's own fire department along with the Cal Fire/Riverside County Fire Department and the Corona Fire Department responded

and extinguished the fire, a California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation spokesperson said.

Two people were evacuated, but no injuries were reported. Some runoff affected a storm drain, but officials said there were no concerns about the drinking water, the report filed with the state said.

All staff and inmates were issued N95 masks and provided ice and water, the department spokesperson said.

A compromised power pole shut off electricity the facility. Generators were being used to power essential functions at the prison and Southern California Edison restored the power at 1:30 a.m. Sunday.

A video of the blaze posted on Facebook showed bright orange flames shooting skyward in front of the facility.

Three outlying structures — the carpentry shop, a pest control shed and a lumber storage building — were destroyed in the fire. Inmate housing and programming areas along with the main facilities were not affected, according to the corrections department.

The cause of the fire remained unknown as of Sunday and is under investigation.

The corrections department previously announced it would be closing the Norco prison by this fall. The closure is expected to save the state \$150 million annually.



A fire broke out at the California Rehabilitation Center at Fifth and Western avenues in Norco on Saturday. COURTESY OF JORDAN BOE

FORECAST

Riverside
83/52

Temecula: High 79 Low 47
Desert: High 89 Low 64
Mountains: High 61 Low 29

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