

CALIFORNIA TO-DO LIST

California is a state of many challenges ranging from homelessness to infrastructure. Legislators who are elected in November will have their work cut for them when they take office to address the serious problems facing our state. Below are policy reform ideas on 11 key issue areas from PRI's recent book *Saving California*. Each of the reform ideas are actionable proposals that have the potential for bipartisan support and should be at the top of the agenda for the newly-elected Legislature in 2023.



INCREASING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Lawmakers should consider a wide-ranging tax-rebate program to lure large-scale investments into poor areas such as south Los Angeles and the Central Valley. Such investments have helped turn local economies around, as seen in San Antonio, Texas.



TAX REFORM

Reforming California's tax system to incentivize jobs and housing would transform redundant retail property into housing and other uses. Tax reform can also rebuild California's middle-class to create a diverse tax base who can support themselves.



WATER

California needs to adopt an "all of the above" approach to water policy, centered around a vision of creating water abundance, through a multiplicity of approaches including building more surface and groundwater storage and applying more market mechanisms to water, such as a better way to price water.



HOMELESSNESS

California should prioritize support for private-sector institutions that have demonstrated greater flexibility and an ability to tailor services to the individual. This approach has created distinct advantages for these nonprofits over status quo public sector programs that aren't effectively addressing the state's growing homeless problem.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure takes long-term thinking, planning, and prioritizing, for which state government does a poor job. California needs to get far more bang for the bucks being spent. Lawmakers should determine the budget for various infrastructure categories, require Asset Management Plans to spend limited available funds more strategically, and focus on the long-term life-cycle of projects – rather than current fiscal year spending – to minimize life-cycle costs for projects and ensure proper maintenance.



HOUSING

Lawmakers should create "Housing Opportunity Areas," including the Central Valley plus San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial Counties, and the Antelope Valley in Los Angeles County. Housing Opportunity Areas would feature liberalized land-use regulations to promote new housing construction. Reforming "impact fee" laws that worsen housing affordability would transfer the "costs of growth" from new owners to the general tax base.



EDUCATION

In addition to removing newly-enacted restrictions on charter school growth, and expanding school choice options including homeschooling for all students, policymakers should consider creating education savings accounts to empower parents of students leaving public schools to use public education dollars to pay for private school tuition, homeschooling, or other learning alternatives.

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PUBLIC SAFETY

California should ensure that parole violations have quick, certain, and short consequences for breaking the rules, so offenders realize that they will be held accountable for failing to meet their end of the bargain when paroled. In addition, parole officers should focus on high-risk offenders, rather than giving the same attention to check kites.



STATE BUDGET AND SPENDING

Sacramento's current political dynamic makes spending reduction and reform practically impossible. However, lawmakers should avoid policies that put new burdens on the economy to ensure that California has sustained economic growth to generate the needed tax revenue to pay for essential services.



WILDFIRES

Even with adequate funding, California imposes too much bureaucracy and too many legal hurdles that delay and thwart effective action for thinning forests. The process should be streamlined to require just a single permit from a single agency for prescribed burns and other thinning methods. When lawmakers refuse to act, the governor should exercise his emergency powers to reduce the wildfire peril in those areas where the need is greatest.



HEALTH CARE

To give Californians more affordable health care options, lawmakers can repeal SB 910 and allow the sale of short-term plans that can last up to a year (and can be renewed for up to three) and cost 80 percent less than unsubsidized exchange plans because they are freed of Obamacare's costly mandates. Additionally, the state should also allow the sale of association health plans, which let small businesses and self-employed workers in the same industry band together to form an "association" and purchase health coverage like a large employer.