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Q&A with Rep. Robert Garcia

■ Is Joe Biden too old to be president? Can Congress get its act together? What can the federal government do to create viable, high-paying jobs in Downey? We asked our congressman, Rep. Robert Garcia.

DOWNEY – Rep. Robert Garcia, elected to Congress in 2023 and representing Downey in the 42nd congressional district, recently sat with the Downey Patriot for a wide-ranging interview covering international, national and local topics.

The interview was conducted by Eric Pierce on Jan. 23. Transcription by Alex Dominguez.

Downey Patriot: *There was a story in NPR last month that called the 118th Congress “the most unproductive in decades.” The most recent Gallup poll reported a 15% approval rating from the public. What do you think when you read stories like that?*

Garcia: I mean, I’m not surprised. I think that you have so many members of Congress that just want to obstruct and not have any progress. So many bill ideas go nowhere because there’s really no interest from the people that are leading Congress to bring forward bills that would actually help people; you know, lowering prescription drug prices, investing in city infrastructure, even supporting passing community projects. They refuse to bring those bills forward, and so, you know they have such a hard time even electing a speaker, and so that leads to the ability for us to not get stuff done, and I think that’s really unfortunate..

DP: *What do you say to critics that argue the United States should dedicate more of its attention and resources on its own people instead of the Ukraine and Middle East?*

Garcia: I think that both are important. First of all, our domestic issues are always the most important, but we also have responsibilities in other parts of the world. I would say that first, they’re right; I think that when I talk to residents, they want to spend our resources on things like ‘How do we create a fair immigration system, that’s fair and that works,’ ‘How do we actually expand healthcare to cover more people,’ ‘Why do we spend so much money in other places and not fixing up schools, or fixing up roads?’ I think all of those things are really good critiques of the way the federal government operates.

I do think, as to foreign aid, take Ukraine for example: I think it’s difficult to allow a democracy to fall, and the impact it will have long-term on the security of the United States, which is why I think Ukraine is so important. We have to get involved, for example, long-term in rebuilding Gaza, and ensuring that Palestinian people there have the ability to rebuild their lives, both free of Hamas, but also we have a responsibility to help. So those are things that are going to have to continue, but our domestic priorities still get funded, so that’s a huge challenge for us. I wish we would elect more people that are willing to spend money locally [rather] than giving huge enormous corporate tax breaks, or spending endless money on things, like for example the ballooning Pentagon budget; it should be strong, we need a strong military, but let’s focus on our schools and roads also.

DP: *How do you think that message can be best relayed to the public, in terms of the importance of helping Ukraine, and international relations and how it would impact the United States?*

Garcia: It directly impacts the United States. Let’s take the Ukraine issue. First, if Putin advances and takes over Ukraine, he won’t stop; he’ll continue to move into other parts of Eastern Europe, and try to take down other democracies, and it’s very dangerous for the security in that region. Russia has been a huge aggressor, so our national security interests are having a strong Europe and independent democracies. Russia is no longer a democracy that’s actually flourishing, and so there’s real security issues there. I think we’ve got to be adults and responsible about that responsibility.

It doesn’t mean that we should not be focused on our domestic priorities. I think if you look back, President Biden has passed some significant legislation on infrastructure, on climate investments. But there’s so much more need, like why don’t we pass sensible gun reform legislation, why haven’t we passed or expanded more healthcare options, why haven’t we made more education investments? I think that’s because we have a Congress that is broken, and that is more focused on demonizing people, particularly working people, than investing.



Rep. Robert Garcia speaks to the Downey Patriot during an interview in which he discussed international, domestic and local issues. Photo by Alex Dominguez

DP: *Are you optimistic that we can ever fix Congress and get it working and pass any sort of meaningful legislation?*

Garcia: I mean, yeah. I think if you look at the last Congress, they actually passed a lot of legislation. So I think we can. You have huge programs that come out of Congress, like when Congress authorized programs like Health Security, or creating Medicare, created the Affordable Care Act, or the infrastructure law that Biden passed. Congress can do really big, important things, it’s just that right now, unfortunately, the people that lead Congress are, in my opinion, very extreme.

DP: *Why do you think that is? Do you think it’s because they’re in it more for selfish reasons? What’s the reason? Why is it so extreme?*

Garcia: I think some folks in Congress don’t want to see the true diversity that the country is. The country is very diverse. I mean look at Downey; Downey is very diverse. A lot of folks resent that, and a lot of folks don’t want to support working-class people, or middle-class families. It’s just this focus on large corporations and the very wealthy; we’ve just got to shift some of that to help everyone.

Look, I think if you work hard, you should be able to take care of your family. You look at a community like Downey, you have very successful families; people that have worked very hard, people with great home ownership, folks that have businesses. It’s a strong community because there’s I think a sense of community. I think what happens is in a place like Congress, you have very extreme voices that drive very extreme agendas that have nothing to do with helping people back home.

DP: *Do you think it’s genuine? When you speak to these extreme right wing or even left wing congress members, when you speak to them off the record, are they the same people that they are on camera?*

Garcia: Yes, generally they are. When you have people saying and screaming things like, ‘We’re going to deport everybody who is undocumented,’ or ‘We’re going to roll back rights for anyone that’s LGBTQ,’ or ‘We’re not going to give women access to making choices about her own reproductive health,’ those are really extreme views that most people don’t agree with. One of the roles I’ve had to play, I’ve constantly had to kind of fight and push back on that, because those are not acceptable positions for, certainly not in California.

DP: *You’re on record as supporting President Biden as the Democratic nominee this November. He’s 81 years old. Do you have any concerns about his age?*

Garcia: None. I’ve obviously met him many times. I view President Biden’s age as he can offer from a place of wisdom and experience; he’s the most experienced person probably to ever be president. And I think we’re going to have two very clear options in front of us: President Biden and Donald Trump, and I think that, clearly, I think that Donald Trump is a very destructive force in our country. People don’t have to agree completely with all that President Biden has done; there’s diversity of things that we may all agree or not agree. But I think he’s a good man and I think he’s guided our country in the right direction.

DP: *Donald Trump is the presumptive Republican presidential nominee. Why do you think he’s so popular?*

Garcia: Well, first, this has always been a divided country; you have Democrats and you have Republicans. And so most Republicans are going to support whoever the Republican nominee is no matter who it is, and it happens to be Donald Trump.

I have mixed friends; I have friends who are supporting Donald Trump as well. Supporting Donald Trump doesn’t make you a bad person. I think there’s a lot of people who support him because they agree with his policies, and they kind of blow off some of the more outlandish things that he says or does. They might agree with his tax policy or his immigration policy. For me, it’s hard to support someone who says we should be shooting immigrants in the legs as they cross [the border], or that I think launched an insurrection at the Capitol. Those are serious things that concern me, which is why I could not support him.

Continued on page 2

Weekend at a Glance

Friday 64°

Saturday 61°

Sunday 62°

ON THIS DAY

1704:

The town of Deerfield, Massachusetts, was razed in the bloodiest battle of Queen Anne’s War, the second in a series of wars fought between Great Britain and France for control of the North American continent.

1916:

South Carolina raised the minimum age for factory and mine workers from 12 to 14.

1940:

For her performance in “Gone with the Wind,” Hattie McDaniel became the first African American to win an Academy Award, for best supporting actress.

Golfer Jimmy Demaret won his third PGA Tour event within an 8-day span, taking the St. Petersburg Open by one stroke.

1960:

A magnitude 5.8 earthquake devastated coastal Morocco, destroying the city of Agadir and killing approximately 12,000 people.

1968:

At the Grammy Awards, the Best Female R&B Vocal Performance category was given for the first time, and Aretha Franklin won it for “Respect.”

1980:

At the age of 51, Canadian hockey player Gordie Howe becomes the first to score 800 goals in the NHL.

2004:

“The Return of the King”—the last installment in the film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien’s epic fantasy The Lord of the Rings—received 11 Academy Awards, tying the record held by “Ben-Hur” (1959) and “Titanic” (1997).

2012:

North Korea agreed to suspend uranium enrichment and nuclear and long-range missile tests in return for U.S. food aid.

Monkees singer Davy Jones died of a heart attack at age 66.

BIRTHDAYS

Motivational speaker **TONY ROBBINS** (64), rapper **JA RULE** (48), basketball player **TYRESE HALIBURTON** (24) and U.S. Olympic swimmer **LYDIA JACOBY** (20).

Rep. Robert Garcia takes questions

Continued from page 1

DP: *Would you ever support term limits in Congress?*

Garcia: It's interesting, I don't know that I have a position. I mean, I supported term limits as mayor. I don't mind term limits; it's funny because I'm not one of those that actually has an issue with term limits. I think that term limits can actually serve a good purpose, to continue to move folks in and out.

I'm not opposed to term limits in Congress. What that number is I think is important. I happen to think that 12 years of service, we do that in California, that's not something I would be opposed to in Congress.

DP: *You've gotten really good at creating viral content, including clips that have been shared on Jimmy Kimmel and on Bravo. How much of that is strategic on the part of you and your team to reach a wider audience? Does it come natural?*

Garcia: I think it's both. I like pop culture so I naturally lean in that space, but it's also strategic. I think that in politics, it's a mistake to limit our reach to people who just read their newspaper and watch cable TV; if that's the only people we're talking to, then we're missing a huge amount of the population. So I think it's important for us to sort of insert ourselves into popular culture and entertainment, in sports and other pieces that people consume so they can learn about politics that way. So I try to include pop culture a lot into what we do, because I get people all the time that reach out to me after, whether it's something about Real Housewives or whatever it is, and they'll say, 'You know, I don't really follow Congress, but this was interesting, I learned something.' So I do think that part is strategic.

DP: *You've gotten to know Downey better over the past year. Is there anything about Downey that surprised you?*

Garcia: I don't know if it's a surprise, but I'm just always impressed by how Downey always kind of has everything that they need. It's so well organized, and there's such a sense of community pride. So it's a really complete city. People that are from Downey are from Downey; they don't say 'I'm from Los Angeles,' you know what I mean? Whereas a lot of cities consider themselves LA, I think Downey considers itself Downey, and I'm continually surprised and impressed by the sense of community that people have over Downey, and really, really strong families; there's just a really strong sense of family, of commitment. It's a nice balance.

I think people think this idea that Downey is conservative. Look, I don't think Downey is very conservative; I think Downey is quite diverse politically. But I think that there is a commitment to community, and of a strong culture if that makes sense; I think that's something that exists.

DP: *When you interact with Downey residents is there any particular issue that comes up the most?*

Garcia: It's funny, because I think when I was first campaigning talking to folks, there was a sense that there was a little instability going on in Downey, and

that seems to have gone away. Folks in Downey are still concerned with issues surrounding people who are unhoused, public safety is still a priority, and people still want to see the positive development continue. I often times hear about businesses that folks want, or businesses that they don't want, but it seems to be safety and the homeless challenge is an issue everywhere.

DP: *How in tune do you stay on local issues?*

Garcia: Well, I read the Downey Patriot. I try to stay up to date with what's going on in Downey through the Patriot, through Downey social media, obviously working with the elected officials. I think I stay pretty on track. I try to also talk to folks directly; I've visited the high schools, just constantly going to more Downey civic events just to learn, because I don't know everything. I think I've learned a lot in a year, businesses, schools, nonprofits, and more and more, I think, meeting with the public security officers, fire department; it's been great. And we have a great relationship with the city manager team.

DP: *On the topic of news in Downey, can you talk about local journalism? The LA Times laid off 115 people from the newsroom. Can you talk about what that means to local coverage?*

Garcia: Obviously, I

believe in local news coverage; I started at a local news site in Long Beach. The LA Times layoffs are really hard. That's a huge amount of LA Times staff; that's going to be a huge detriment – not just to the LA Times in LA – but all the cities, which the LA Times covers sometimes, right? So I think it's a shame. I think that organizations like the Patriot, like the [Long Beach] Post, like hyper-local news organizations, like the Signal Hill Tribune, for example, it's really important that they survive.

Imagine Downey not having the Patriot for news; then you're resorting to Facebook memes. I always tell people, don't believe everything you read on the internet because it can become a really toxic place. But it's really important to have strong, independent reporting, and news reporting, community papers, in communities.

DP: *The following question comes from George Manzanilla: What economic opportunities could the federal government bring back to Downey? For a long time the federal government was invested in the land here and it enabled the establishment of an aerospace industry (through the NASA and DOD contracts). Could there be an opportunity to create the same environment for the hydrogen*

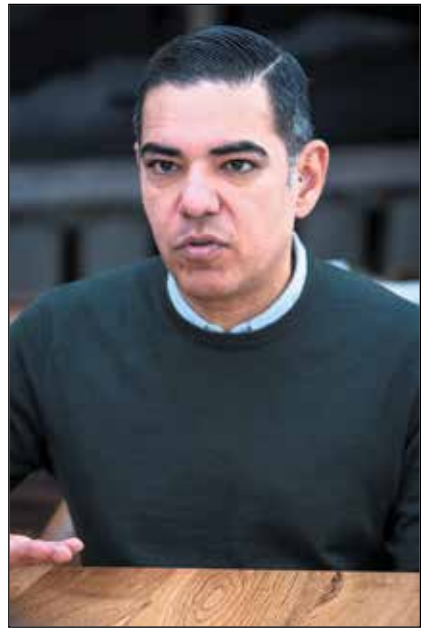
energy industry here through the Department of Energy?

Garcia: Yes. First, the federal government just gave a huge amount of grant money to California to expand hydrogen, and to create a hydrogen economy in California, and so that just got sent to the state. So the state's going to be engaged with cities that want to have and build their hydrogen economies, so enormous opportunity for Downey and other communities. So the federal government has a huge role to play in that piece.

The federal government has a huge role to play in business development through small business grants. The amount of money the federal government gave directly to Downey, for example during the pandemic, for small businesses was enormous, right? And so, there's always a role to play there. Hydrogen, especially, a huge role to play there in the future, and so I'm very hopeful that that is something that the federal government continue to engage in.

DP: *The final question comes from Kathy Perez: What is your favorite Carpenters song?*

Garcia: I think the song...is the song called 'Close to You,' I'm just trying to remember the title. Close to You? That's my favorite."



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- March 29th - 8:00pm
Downey Theatre Presents: Orquesta Akokán
- April 6th - 8:00pm
Downey Symphony Presents: Springtide
- April 7th - 3:00pm
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Downey's Martha Sodetani to receive Protector of Children Award

■ Civic leader Martha Sodetani was chosen to receive the Protector of Children Award by Community Family Guidance Center.

By Alex Dominguez
Staff Writer

DOWNEY – Former Downey Unified School District Board of Education member and longtime volunteer Martha Sodetani has been named as this year's recipient of the Protector of Children Award.

Sodetani was nominated and selected by members of the Community Family Guidance Center Board of Directors. Established in 1976, the Community Family Guidance Center is a nonprofit organization focused on serving underserved youth of Southeast Los Angeles County with their mental health, trauma, and behavioral needs through evidence-based programming.

Sodetani said she was "totally surprised" by the award.

"Mental health is so important," said Sodetani. "The organization that's honoring me, they've been active in our schools, serving our children for a few years, so I'm familiar with them from that point of view; seeing what they do, you know, the broad spectrum that they cover. But I was totally surprised."

She said that there are "disparities" among children.

"I think if we can level the playing field just a little bit, that certain community can rise up and succeed," said Sodetani. "Not just succeed, but be extremely successful in life and reach other people."

Sodetani is known for her over 17 years on the Downey Unified School Board, as well as a long resume of volunteer work, including with PTA, PTA HELPS, Gangs Out of Downey, Assistance League of Downey, and the Downey Coordinating Council.

She says, "as the schools go, so goes the city."



Martha Sodetani spent 17 years on the Downey Unified School District board of education. Photo by Alex Dominguez

"Being elected to the school board, that was having a voice for 20,000 students, and over 1,000 teachers, and so many employees."

Before that, however, she says that she was "making a difference one child at a time" as a foster parent to medically fragile babies.

Sodetani made the decision to begin fostering while at a crossroads in her life, finding herself even more inspired to do so after seeing the effects of foster care up close.

"I worked as a substitute in the school district about 35 years ago, and so I went to

different schools, and whenever they would remove students for a classroom, it seems like they would sit behind my desk," said Sodetani. "There were two brothers at Ward School, and they'd come to school with scratches on their faces, really deep scratches. So, they were behind my desk and they were coloring."

"The older boy said to the younger one, 'This time we might get a house with a yard, and there might be a dog,' and he was actually excited. I saw a whole new light as far as fostering went, in a positive way."

Though she wasn't sure on the final number, Sodetani says she fostered over 10 children over the course of around eight years, adopting three, and stopping only after the passing of her husband, Gordon.

Sodetani also spent time teaching Permanence and Safety Model Approach to Partnership and Parenting (PSMAPP) classes to other prospective foster and adoptive parents.

"I felt at that time, working directly with people who will have the children in their home, would have them really see the opportunity of being involved; you know, the family is going along and there are certain things happening, but you have opportunity to be a wedge and to change how that family goes."

Sodetani will be presented with the Protector of Children Award at the Children's Benefit Dinner, which will be held at the Sheraton Cerritos Hotel on May 2.

Bill Sinko, Executive Director of the Community Family Guidance Center, explained that the dinner is one of two fundraising events

held annually to help cover kids "who don't have any insurance or any other ways to pay for the services they need to meet their mental health challenges."

"It's our third year of doing the event. We get over 200 people that attend the event," said Sinko. "We get a lot of people of notoriety that come to it; Supervisor [Janice] Hahn has attended every year. We have senators that attend, a number of mayors that attend from all the different cities that

we serve. "It's just a great time that we have together, but more importantly it's a great fundraiser for the Center."

Sinko described Sodetani as "very worthy" of the Protector of Children Award.

"She's done a lot of great work in the Downey community, in particular working with everything from gang members to other kids in need," said Sinko.

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Dogs removed after animal cruelty investigation

DOWNEY – Five dogs were removed Monday after police investigated allegations of animal cruelty in Downey.

Officers responded to the 8100 block of Firestone Blvd. at about 9:30 am with animal control officers from the Southeast Area Animal Control Authority (SEAACA) after reviewing video on social media that appeared to show possible animal cruelty with an injured dog at the location.

Police located seven dogs on the property. Food and water was present but two of the dogs appeared to need medical attention for injuries and a medical issue, officials said.

No deceased dogs were found. Five of the dogs were removed from the property by animal control officers.

SEAACA is the lead agency handling the investigation. Anyone with additional information is asked to contact animal control supervisor Richard Lyons at (562) 803-3301 or richard@seaaca.org.

Furman Park to begin using recycled water

DOWNEY – Furman Park will soon move to recycled water to maintain its grounds.

The city council on Tuesday unanimously approved a subrecipient agreement with the Gateway Water Management Authority (GWMA), which will allocate \$814,800 of a Proposition 1 grant from the Department of Water Resources (DWR) towards the retrofit of the park's landscape irrigation system from potable to recycled water by extending an existing 8-inch recycled water main from Rio Hondo Golf Club to Furman. The extension of the city's recycled water main additionally allows for a similar retrofit of neighboring Rio Hondo Elementary School by Downey Unified School District.

According to city staff's report, completion of the project will increase the city's water use efficiency by conserving potable water.

The project is estimated to cost around \$1,410,444, split between the grant funds and a minimum \$595,644 in City matching funds, according to the subrecipient agreement.

The grant was provided to the GWMA from the DWR for the Regional Recycled Water Expansion Project

Downey is one of two GWMA member agencies that is a subrecipient of the grant, the other being the city of Bell Gardens.

Alex Dominguez, staff writer

Pacheco hosting birthday fundraiser

DOWNEY – Assemblywoman Blanca Pacheco is celebrating her birthday by hosting a re-election fundraiser Thursday, April 4, at Maggie's Pub in Santa Fe Springs.

The event is from 5:30-7:30 pm. Individual tickets are \$100 and go as high as \$5,000.

Expected to attend are Supervisor Janice Hahn, Downey Mayor Mario Trujillo, Councilman Horacio Ortiz, and elected officials from Norwalk, Paramount, South Gate and other local cities.

For more information, or to RSVP, email Nadia Simon at nadia@nas.consulting


Pacheco, a former Downey mayor, was elected to the California Assembly in 2022 and is up for re-election.

Date set for police, firefighter awards luncheon

DOWNEY – The 10th annual Police Officer and Firefighter of the Year awards luncheon will take place Tuesday, April 23, at the Rio Hondo Event Center.

Tickets are \$40 with proceeds benefiting the Downey Police and Fire Foundation.

In Memory of
Larry D. Carr
September 19, 1939 - February 18, 2024




Larry D. Carr, 84, died February 18, 2024, at a Lynwood hospital. He was born September 19, 1939 in Danville, Illinois, the son of Walter Benjamin Carr and Gertrude Ellen (Collins) Carr.

Larry graduated from Bell Gardens High School, class of 1959. Following graduation, he served in the United States Army from 1962-1965. Larry married his second wife, Marlyne (Lawson) Carr in 1986 and they settled in Downey, CA. They celebrated 37 years of marriage as of last June. In 2023, Larry marked 50 years as a Freemason. He enjoyed gardening, wood carving, and anything football.

In addition to his parents, he was predeceased by three brothers and his first wife Patricia. He is survived by his wife, sons Benjamin and his wife Debrah, and Kevin; brother Jim and his wife Brownie; daughters Tracie (Chrisco) Aguilar and Tiffanie (Chrisco) Laird and husband Anthony; and ten grandchildren: Marck, Breelyn, Riley, Melissa, Emilee and her husband Mitch, Allison, Julieanna, Grayson, Brayden, and Alivia as well as two great grandchildren: Layne and Mikaela. Larry was laid to rest in Tulare, California on February 27, 2024.

In Memory of
Roberta Jane Hawkins



Roberta Jane Hawkins, a resident of Downey for more than six decades, died January 30. She was 90. She was born in Boulder City, Nevada in 1933 and moved to Downey in 1943 where her father transferred with the US Postal Service. She attended Downey High School and graduated in the Class of 1951. Immediately following high school, she joined the FBI as a stenographer and moved to New York City at age 18, later transferring with the Bureau to San Francisco. Following her service with the FBI she enrolled at Cal State L.A. and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology. She joined the Los Angeles County Department of Children and Family Services where she spent 25 years as a children's social worker, retiring in 1990. An avid life-learner and arts and culture enthusiast, she enjoyed classical music concerts at Walt Disney Concert Hall, books, world travel, taking care of her beloved rescue dogs, and spending quality time with family and life-long friends. She was predeceased by her parents Robert and Katherine Hawkins, and sister Patricia Wilson of Downey, who died in 2022. She is survived by niece Katie Raya of Rancho Santa Margarita, nephews Daniel Wilson of Long Beach and Michael Wilson of Downey, grandnieces Lauren Aguilera and Emily Raya, and grandnephew Nathan Raya. A funeral mass and burial will be held on Saturday, March 9 at 9AM at All Souls Cemetery in Long Beach. The family requests donations be made in her honor to Homeboy Industries to support the work and vision of Father Gregory Boyle, SJ.

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Nikki Haley needs to drop out

A protracted battle against Donald Trump puts her political career in jeopardy.

By W. James Antle III

W. James Antle III is executive editor of the Washington Examiner magazine and author of “Devouring Freedom: Can Government Ever Be Stopped?”

It is the end of the road for Nikki Haley. The former South Carolina governor and US ambassador to the United Nations has been the last major GOP primary candidate standing against former President Donald Trump, but her defeat in her home state Saturday night makes clear who the Republicans’ 2024 presidential choice is.

Haley had steadfastly maintained that she wouldn’t budge if South Carolina Republicans opted for Trump over her. She is still raising money at a prodigious pace and buying advertising space in states that will vote in early March.

But Haley has won nowhere, including a Nevada primary she lost by 30 points to “none of these candidates.” Trump, who didn’t compete in that contest, won Nevada’s separate caucuses, which actually awarded delegates. She is not favored to win anywhere in the foreseeable future. Polling in Michigan and many of the Super Tuesday states suggests the results will get increasingly worse for Haley from here.

Republicans do have a history of rewarding past runners-up with the nomination in the future. This held true for Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Bob Dole, John McCain and Mitt Romney. And Trump’s unprecedented legal situation may require Republicans to have a backup plan.

But a protracted primary fight with Trump won’t set Haley up well for an attempt at securing the GOP nomination in 2028, or even as an “in case of emergency, break glass” option later this year.

Reagan and the others preceded their nominations by finishing second in genuinely competitive primary contests, which the 2024 race is not. At her current pace, Haley will not go to the 2024 Republican National Convention with many delegates. And given the deep commitment so many delegates have to Trump, Haley stretching out a long negative primary does not make her a likely Trump

emergency replacement.

In the coming days, Haley will hear from many Republicans who don’t want the Republican primary to end any time soon. But past primaries have gone on longer because other candidates have kept winning; Haley has no wins on the horizon. Even 2004 Democratic presidential candidate Howard Dean, whose famous scream was filled with erroneous predictions of victory, won his home state.

If Haley keeps going, she is likely to lose by progressively bigger margins as the race simultaneously shifts to multiple states and media markets. She may also be blamed for delaying the party’s consolidation around and joint fundraising with Trump while Democrats are sparing President Joe Biden from an even semi-competitive primary.

It has been difficult for Republicans to run against Trump this year without being perceived as running against the GOP base. That is the position in which Haley now finds herself. If she plans to help Trump win in November or have a personal comeback in the future, she should heed her home state’s voters and pull the plug.

Nikki Haley still has a shot

By Geoff Duncan

Geoff Duncan served as Georgia’s lieutenant governor from 2019-2023. He is the author of “GOP 2.0: How the 2020 Election Can Lead to a Better Way Forward for America’s Conservative Party.”

Nikki Haley’s defeat in the South Carolina primary was not the desired outcome for her or any Republican hoping for a different choice than former President Donald Trump, but it shouldn’t represent the death knell for her campaign. Immediately after the polls closed on Saturday night, CNN projected that the former South Carolina governor had come up short to Trump. It was an outcome that surprised absolutely no one, as Trump had enjoyed a 30-point lead in the polls before the primary, according to the FiveThirtyEight average.

The immediate delegate math and the polls may not be on Haley’s side, but believe it or not, many other numbers are. Here are just a few.

First, the money. During the fourth quarter of 2023, Haley out-raised Trump, \$24 million to \$19 million. The number was more than double the amount she raised in the third quarter. In January 2024, as the rest of the GOP field

winnowed, Haley’s fundraising again bested Trump’s, \$9.8 million to \$8.8 million.

Sure, Trump started the year with more cash on hand than Haley — \$33 million to \$14.5 million — but he also shelled out \$23 million dollars in the fourth quarter from his campaign account on legal fees and payment to his own properties. Since then, he has also been assessed roughly half a billion dollars in civil legal penalties (\$355 million plus interest for fraudulently inflating his net worth, as well as \$83.3 million in a defamation ruling involving sexual assault allegations, which he has denied but in which a jury found him liable for sexual abuse). Even though Trump plans to appeal both rulings, they create headaches for a candidate who has always refused to be forthcoming about the state of his personal finances.

The bottom line: Campaigns typically end when they run out of money, which is not a situation Haley is expected to face anytime soon, especially with at least 10 high-dollar fundraisers scheduled in the days post-South Carolina.

Second, the age factor. Trump (77) and President Joe Biden (81) are a combined 158 years old. Nearly six in 10 voters (59%) believe both frontrunners are old for the job, according to an ABC News/Ipsos poll. Father Time is undefeated, and neither man is getting any younger. Meanwhile, at 52, Haley is a quarter-century younger than both, and much closer to the median American age of 38.9. She would be the first fully Generation X president, breaking Baby Boomers’ stranglehold of the White House in the 21st century (except for Biden, whose 1942 birthdate falls in the Silent Generation).

Biden’s verbal stumbles are well-documented (most recently his conflation of the presidents of Egypt and Mexico at a press conference meant to dispel concerns about his mental fitness), but lately Trump has been giving him a run for his money, confusing Haley for former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in his attempt to shift blame for the events of January 6, 2021, and mixing up the leaders of Hungary and Turkey.

Third, there’s Super Tuesday. Of the 16 states that vote on March 5, 11 are not limited only to registered Republicans. Put another way, of the 874 delegates up for grabs on Super

Tuesday, about two-thirds are in states with at least semi-open primaries.

Trump and his allies have grumbled about independents’ ability to compete in GOP primaries. In the lead-up to last month’s New Hampshire primary, he complained that state law allowed “Democrats to vote in the Republican primary.” The claim was false, but it offers a valuable insight into Trump’s worldview: His appeal is extremely limited beyond his base. His low support among swing voters in the suburbs cost Republicans dearly in 2020. A recent NPR/PBS NewsHour/Marist poll found that almost two-thirds of Americans living in suburban areas hold an unfavorable opinion of Trump, and that Biden is leading Trump by 16 points with suburban registered voters.

Finally, and most importantly, there are world affairs. The suspicious death of Russian opposition leader Alexey Navalny has laid bare the importance of American leadership in the world. After pledging “devastating” consequences if Navalny were to die in prison, Biden’s words have yet to be met by serious action. Not to be outdone, Trump likened Navalny’s death to his own self-inflicted legal dilemma. Trump notably declined to condemn Russian President Vladimir Putin.

To her credit, Haley has taken dead aim at both Trump and Putin, accusing the former of emboldening the latter. She called Trump’s encouragement of Russia to invade NATO countries that do not meet their defense spending obligations “bone-chilling.” In words unlikely to ever come from Trump’s mouth, Haley added, “Vladimir Putin is not cool. This is not someone we want to associate with. This is not someone that we want to be friends with.”

There is only one viable exit ramp from the Trump-Biden sequel, and that is Haley. During the 2016 South Carolina primary, there were still six serious candidates in the GOP race.

There is no reason for Haley to stop now. Even if the Trump fever doesn’t break in time for 2024, there’s always 2028, and time for GOP voters to wake up to what might have been, and still might be.

Downey needs more housing, not less

Dear Editor:

Dense housing is a good thing. We need more of it in Downey.

Yes, I’m talking about that “controversial” multi-unit condo being built on Suva St. Buying a home here is already next to impossible unless you have a ridiculously high-paying career. So the next best thing is to build more apartments, condos, and duplexes for us average folk.

Let’s be honest, the “traffic” that it will attract is not your real concern. What you’re really worried about is that another dense multi-unit building is going to attract less desirable people and crime.

Look, ghetto people can’t afford condos in Downey anyway, so you have nothing to worry about. Plus if we’re being honest, you basically already live in Bell Gardens anyway. I mean if you’re north of the Rio Hondo then can you even say you’re a Downey resident at that point? You’re just lucky that the person who was tasked with mapping out the Downey border line had a stroke as they were doing northwest Downey. I bet you do all your shopping in Bell Gardens because it’s closer to you.

So please stop complaining about dense housing being built in Downey. Please stop only thinking about yourselves and think about others for once. We’re all just trying to survive. Stop being a NIMBY.

Mia Elinez

Downey

Our choices for President are lacking

Dear Editor:

After his decisive victory over Nikki Haley in South Carolina, it appears that Donald Trump has consolidated his nomination as the Republican nominee for President. This must have President Biden and the Democrats jumping out of joy.

Haley is probably a stronger candidate in a national election who could attract the female and independent vote. Trump is a more appealing opponent because he is a loser. Correction, a sore loser who refuses to admit that he lost the last election in spite of all the evidence that refutes his claims that the election was stolen from him.

Trump won over Hillary Clinton not because he was the best candidate but because he was least bad compared to Clinton. He lost to Biden for the same reason. Biden was the least bad of the two candidates.

Even with all the power of an incumbent President, Trump could not beat Biden. To think that he could beat Biden in spite of being out of office and with so many legal problems shows he is naive.

Trump’s legal problems are well documented. He faces 91 felony counts across two state courts and two different federal districts. They range from defamation and sexual assault, fraud to lower his tax bills, hush money payments to mishandling of classified documents.

Which begs the question: why is he so popular in the MAGA crowd? The answer is simple: they have stuck their head in the sand and state “My mind is made up, don’t confuse it with facts.”

As a registered Reagan Republican, it saddens me for the country that we will not elect the best candidate but the least bad. Hopefully, new enlightened leaders will appear in the future.

Jorge Montero
Downey

Anti-camping laws crucial to curbing homelessness

Dear Editor:

Your front-page article asking if sleeping on a sidewalk should be a crime is something my grandparents and parents (all of whom lived here in Downey) would have been baffled by.

You see, back then (1940s to 1970s) there were no homeless people in Downey. OK, maybe there were but we never saw them, nor were they called “homeless” or (ick) “un-housed”.

The terms for those who were “vagrants” or “shiftless” were (in no particular order) “bums, tramps, hobos, or panhandlers”. Derogatory? Yes, as back then there were plenty of jobs for those that wanted them, drug abuse was scarce, and the insane were housed in our mental institution system that was stupidly dismantled by the courts and politicians.

True, Downey had a few characters, “Mr. Waller” as my parents called him, who was all over town collecting recyclables on his bicycle, and “The One-Armed Man”, who indeed had only one arm, and was usually seen on a bus bench glowering at passing cars, but neither was spotted sleeping on the streets.

As for the current crop of filthy people talking to the sky and pushing stolen shopping carts? The so-called “temporary” housing is but a band-aid. As for those that refuse to even go into this type of housing, yes, they should be arrested and put into the criminal justice system until they agree to go into some sort of housing.

As to the insane and drug-addled, the state needs to rethink the idea of families and friends assisting them. It just won’t work.

Downey really needs to have a city-wide ordinance against overnight camping in vehicles or public places, arrest those who violate such an ordinance and force the county and state to do their jobs.

John Powell
Downey

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SPEED BUMP



DAVE COVERLY



Downey Community Calendar

CITY MEETINGS

- 1st & 3rd Wednesday, 6:30pm: Planning Commission, Council Chamber at City Hall.
- 1st Tue., 4:00pm: Recreation and Community Services Commission, Council Chamber, City Hall.
- 2nd & 4th Tue., 6:30pm: City Council, Council Chamber.
- 3rd Tue., 6:00pm: Library Advisory Board, at Downey City Library.
- 3rd Thurs., 6:30pm: CERT, at Downey City Council Chamber at City Hall, for more info call 299-5462.
- 4th Mon., 5 pm: Green Task Force, at City Hall.

Regularly Scheduled Meetings

- #### MONDAYS
- 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 2, at Downey United Methodist Church, call 869-6478.
 - 4:30 pm: Courage Forward Meeting, at 10829 New St, 2nd Floor, call 213-545-6810.
 - 4th Mon., 7:30 pm: Downey Numismatists, at Downey Retirement Center, call 862-6666.
- #### TUESDAYS
- 9 am: Quilters group, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, call 803-4459.
 - 9:30 am: Downey Seniors Club, at Apollo Park, call Irene Vallini at 328-7039.
 - 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza at 652-4399.
 - 12 pm: Rotary Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Mel Sanchez 562-665-4125.
 - 6 pm: Toastmasters Club 587, at First Baptist Church, contact Salvador Cervantes: tmsalcpuede@gmail.com.
 - 6:30-9 pm: Civil Air Patrol - Los Angeles Cadet Squadron 138, at Downey Adult School, Room M104, call 714-402-5157.
 - 7 pm: Downey Knights of Columbus Bingo, at 11231 Rives Ave., call 923-1932.
 - 7 pm: Boy Scout Troop 441, at Apollo Park, email scoutmaster@downeyboyscouts.com.
 - 7:30 pm: Downey Master Chorale, at Cornerstone Church, contact info@downeymasterchorale.org.
 - 1st Tues., 7:30 am: Gangs Out of Downey, at City Hall training room.
 - 1st Tues., 7:30 pm: Downey Amateur Radio Club, EOC room Downey Fire Station #1, 12222 Paramount Blvd.
 - 2nd Tues., 6 pm: Downey Fly Fishers, at Apollo Park, call 425-7936.
 - 3rd Tues., 12 pm: Downey Newcomers Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.
 - 3rd Tues., 6:30 pm: Community Emergency Response Team meeting, Fire station 1, 12222 Paramount.
 - 3rd Tues., 6 pm: American Legion #270, at Sizzler Restaurant, call 544-0372.
 - Tues., Thurs. & Sat., 10 am: Downey Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call John Fiorenza 652-4399

- #### WEDNESDAYS
- 7 am: Kiwanis Club, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Steve Roberson at 927-2626.
 - 9 am: Quilters Group, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, call 803-4459.
 - 10:30 am: Ballroom dance class, at Downey Community Center, call 776 7270.
 - 1 pm: Women's Bocce Club, at 7850 Quill Drive, call Marie Puch at 869-4366.
 - 7 pm: Royal Rangers Outpost 132, at Desert Reign Church, call 562-861-6011.
 - 1st Wed., 11 am: Woman's Club of Downey, call Cheryl Olson 833-8954.
 - 1st Wed., 11:30 am: Downey Coordinating Council, Community Center, call Bobbi Bruce 440-5416.
 - 1st Wed., 7:30 pm: Downey Stamp Club, at Maude Price School cafeteria, call 928-3028.
 - 2nd Wed., 11:30 am: Christian Women's Club, call Marilyn 928-2623.
 - 2nd Wed., 3:30 pm: Keep Downey Beautiful, at City Hall, call 904-7102.
 - 2nd Wed., 7 pm: Downey Model A Club, at Gallatin School Cafeteria, call 484-8415.
 - 3rd Wed.,: Downey Dog Obedience Club, for information please call Gina 869-5213 or Valerie 420-2972.
 - 3rd Wed., 10 am: Los Angeles County Quilters Guild, at Women's Club, call 860-8821 or 927-3635.
 - 4th Wed., 7:30 pm: US Coast Guard Aux. Flotilla 5-10, First Presbyterian Church, call Brian 419-5420.
 - Wed. & Fri., 10:15 am: Senior Bingo, at Apollo Park, call 904-7223

- #### THURSDAYS
- 7:30 am: Connections Networking, at Bob's Big Boy, for info., call Nick Smith, 861-5222.
 - 7:30 am: Soroptimist Int'l of Downey, for information, call Mia Vasquez, 806-3217.
 - 12 pm: Bingo, at Woman's Club of Downey - Proceeds benefit Rancho.
 - 12 pm: Optimist Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center.
 - 6:30 pm: Downey United Masonic Lodge # 220, 8244 3rd St., call 862-4176.
 - 7:30 pm: Downey Elks Lodge #2020, call 803-3557.
 - 1st Thurs., 6 pm, All other Thurs. 12 pm: Kiwanis Club of Downey, at Rio Hondo Events Center, call Roy Jimenez 283-2335.
 - 2nd Thurs., 12 pm: Creative Purposes, call Bill Wallace 923-2311.
 - 2nd Thurs., 7:30 pm: Beaming Rebel Foxes Collectors Club, call Carl D. Jones at 923-2400.
 - 2nd & 4th Thurs., 6:30 pm: Downey Lions Club, at Mimi's, call Lenora (310) 283-9825.
 - 3rd Thurs., 4 pm: Public Works Committee, at City Hall Training Room.
 - 4th Thurs., 10 am: Assistance League, at Casa De Parley Johnson, call 869-0232.
 - 4th Thurs., 7:30 pm: Downey Historical Society programs, at Community Center, call 862-2777.

- #### FRIDAYS
- 7:30 am: Pro Networkers, at Mimi's Cafe, call Barbara Briley Beard at 869-7618.

- #### SATURDAYS
- 9 am: Farmers Market, Downey Avenue at 3rd Street, call 904-7246.
 - 2nd Sat., 9-11 am: Free pancake breakfast, at Trinity Baptist Church in Downey, 8219 Florence Ave.

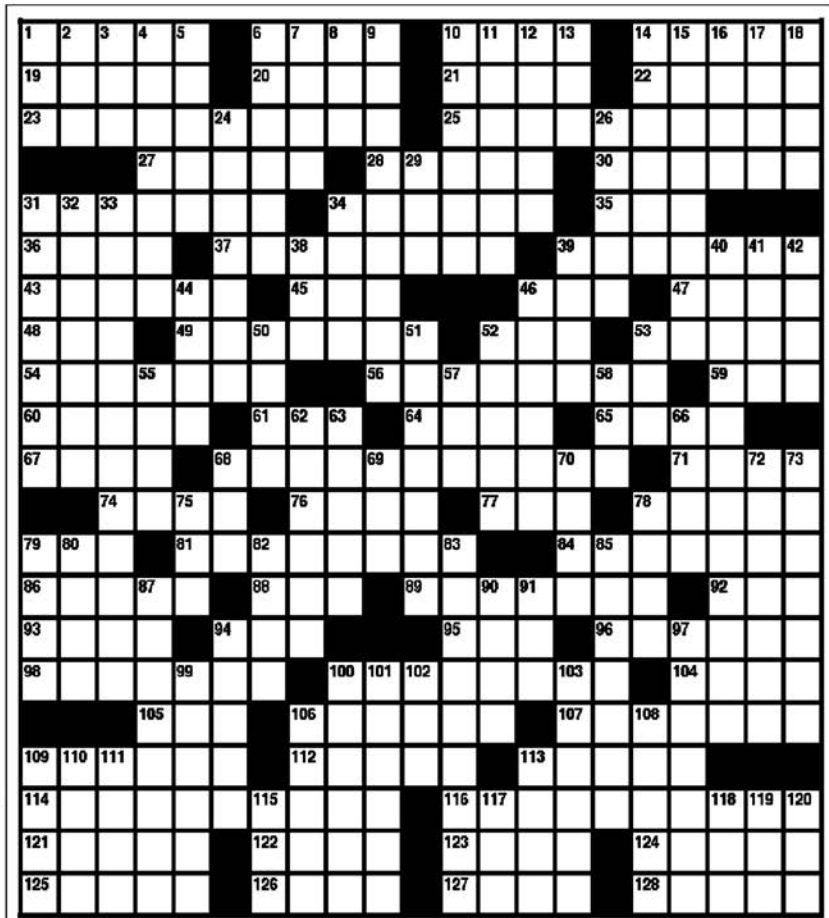
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Edited by Stanley Newman (www.StanXwords.com)
NETWORKING: With intersecting explanations
 by S.N.

<p>ACROSS</p> <p>1 Belittle</p> <p>6 Keyboarding mistake</p> <p>10 Pear variety</p> <p>14 NCAA women's hoops powerhouse</p> <p>19 Seuss environmentalist</p> <p>20 Boxcar rider</p> <p>21 Dublin's land</p> <p>22 Salk's conquest</p> <p>23 Artist's implement</p> <p>25 Red semiprecious stones</p> <p>27 Not as humid</p> <p>28 Lower joint</p> <p>30 Carry</p> <p>31 HS gym course</p> <p>34 Lowers oneself</p> <p>35 Lake, in Le Mans</p> <p>36 Sauting acronym</p> <p>37 Bad-weather adjective</p> <p>39 Glowingly beautiful</p> <p>43 Lipton competitor</p> <p>45 ___ culpa</p> <p>46 Cherry seed</p> <p>47 Sketch something</p> <p>48 Sofa section</p> <p>49 Eroded</p> <p>52 Sir ___ McKellen</p> <p>53 Brief quarrel</p> <p>54 Bright Crayola color</p> <p>56 Overplayed a role</p> <p>59 "Help needed" signal</p> <p>60 Network "across"</p> <p>33 Down</p> <p>61 ATM inputs</p> <p>64 Web programming language</p> <p>65 Network "across"</p> <p>40 Down</p> <p>67 School near Windsor Castle</p> <p>68 What real estate is worth</p> <p>71 Real estate measure</p>	<p>74 Leisurely run</p> <p>76 Princess' voice in Shrek</p> <p>77 Court VIPs</p> <p>78 Fiery heaps</p> <p>79 "What ___ a mind reader?"</p> <p>81 Footwear preserver</p> <p>84 Toward the rising sun</p> <p>86 LuPone or LaBelle</p> <p>88 Had been</p> <p>89 Makes lovable</p> <p>92 Coat of a cat</p> <p>93 Poet Khayyam</p> <p>94 Gibson or Brooks</p> <p>95 Saucepan topper</p> <p>96 Holder for hot sauce</p> <p>98 Grilled sandwiches</p> <p>100 Atlanta suburb</p> <p>104 Spanish compass point</p> <p>105 Poker prize</p> <p>106 Least experienced</p> <p>107 Statistics specialist</p> <p>109 Emerson's author friend</p> <p>112 Pass into law</p> <p>113 French wine valley</p> <p>114 Wild duck</p> <p>116 Hem and haw</p> <p>121 Barbecue residue</p> <p>122 Sore feeling</p> <p>123 NASA spacewalks</p> <p>124 Type of tooth</p> <p>125 Speak out against</p> <p>126 As compared to</p> <p>127 Pond film</p> <p>128 Astound</p> <p>DOWN</p> <p>1 Yodeler's perch</p> <p>2 Sort of snake</p> <p>3 NL West team</p> <p>4 Little League locale</p> <p>5 Crowd scene actor</p> <p>6 Remove grain from husks</p>	<p>7 Part of FYI</p> <p>8 Network "across"</p> <p>23 Across</p> <p>9 Show awe</p> <p>10 Tennis great Boris</p> <p>11 By mouth</p> <p>12 Horses' fathers</p> <p>13 Network "across"</p> <p>25 Across</p> <p>14 Electronic transfer</p> <p>15 Agree exactly</p> <p>16 Norwegian kingly name</p> <p>17 High Court count</p> <p>18 Meddlesome</p> <p>24 What some port authorities are</p> <p>29 Showy display</p> <p>26 Maiden name preceder</p> <p>31 Atonement</p> <p>32 Highest peak</p> <p>33 At home anywhere</p> <p>34 Had no doubt about</p> <p>38 Thurman of filmdom</p> <p>39 Citrus cover</p> <p>40 Pretentiously creative</p> <p>41 Alliance acronym</p> <p>42 Couples</p> <p>44 Be entitled to</p> <p>46 Jambalaya cousin</p> <p>50 Author Buchanan</p> <p>51 Game with five dice</p> <p>52 "Grr!"</p> <p>53 Intel gatherer</p> <p>55 "Billionth" prefix</p> <p>57 Network "across"</p> <p>68 Across</p> <p>58 Deploy</p> <p>62 Trying time</p> <p>63 Satirical sketches</p> <p>66 Novelist Kellerman</p> <p>68 Verbal shrug</p> <p>69 Mr. Potato Head part</p> <p>70 Egg-grading agcy.</p>	<p>72 Tough manager's only interest</p> <p>73 Springsteen's ___ Band</p> <p>75 Frat letter</p> <p>78 Mexican money</p> <p>79 Each, informally</p> <p>80 One of the Three Bears</p> <p>82 Hasn't paid</p> <p>83 Military volunteers</p> <p>85 13th-century pope</p> <p>87 Stumble on</p> <p>90 Food plan</p> <p>91 Summer hours in St. Pete</p> <p>94 Some baseball gloves</p> <p>97 Cellphone industry</p> <p>99 Document certifier</p> <p>100 La ___ (region of Spain)</p> <p>101 Get up</p> <p>102 Camcorder button</p> <p>103 Religion of China</p> <p>106 Attain</p> <p>108 Sweet smell</p> <p>109 Completed with ease</p> <p>110 Flimsy, as excuses</p> <p>111 Network "across"</p> <p>114 Across</p> <p>113 Hawaiian banquet</p> <p>115 Cave dweller</p> <p>117 Network "across"</p> <p>116 Across</p> <p>118 Menu phrase</p> <p>119 Bugs Bunny's whirling foe</p> <p>120 Before, in odes</p>
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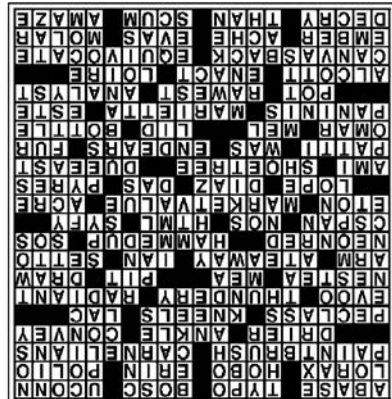
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TLC 5K

The 12th annual Downey TLC 5K in support of the TLC Family Resource Center was held Saturday at Apollo Park.

An estimated 2,000 people walked or ran the route to raise money for TLC, which provides counseling, homeless support and other critical services to Downey students and their families.

Photos courtesy City of Downey



State files lawsuit to block Kroger, Albertson's merger

State and federal regulators said a merger would result in less competition and higher prices.

By City News Service

The Federal Trade Commission, in conjunction with California and seven other states, announced a lawsuit Monday challenging the proposed \$24.6 billion merger of grocery giants Kroger and Albertsons.

California Attorney General Rob Bonta announced the state's involvement in the litigation during a news conference in downtown Los Angeles, later issuing a statement calling the merger "bad for workers, for agricultural producers and for California communities."

"In some markets in Southern California, Kroger-Albertsons is expected to be the only one-stop grocery option," Bonta said. "Today, we are going to bat for a more just and competitive economy, one where companies need to compete for labor and where prices and service matter. This merger will leave Californians with limited choices over where to shop -- and for workers in this industry, where to work. As

many families continue to feel the burden of inflation, fighting corporate consolidation that threatens to increase prices and reduce service is more important than ever."

The FTC is leading the litigation, joined by California, Arizona, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Wyoming, and the District of Columbia.

"This supermarket mega merger comes as American consumers have seen the cost of groceries rise steadily over the past few years. Kroger's acquisition of Albertsons would lead to additional grocery price hikes for everyday goods, further exacerbating the financial strain consumers across the country face today," Henry Liu, director of the FTC's Bureau of Competition, said in a statement. "Essential grocery store workers would also suffer under this deal, facing the threat of their wages dwindling, benefits diminishing, and their working conditions deteriorating."

In a statement, however, Kroger said the merger would help consumers by lower prices, and the FTC's action will ensure rising grocery costs.

"The FTC's decision makes it more likely that America's

consumers will see higher food prices and fewer grocery stores at a time when communities across the country are already facing high inflation and food deserts," according to Kroger. "In fact, this decision only strengthens larger, non-unionized retailers like Walmart, Costco and Amazon by allowing them to further increase their overwhelming and growing dominance of the grocery industry."

"The proposed merger with Albertsons Cos. will produce meaningful and measurable benefits for customers, associates and communities across the country. The combined company committed that no stores, distribution centers or manufacturing facilities will close as a result of the merger, including those divested to C&S Wholesale Grocers. Customers will benefit from lower prices and more choices following the merger close. The company committed to investing \$500 million to begin lowering prices day one post-close, and an additional \$1.3 billion to improve Albertsons Cos. stores."

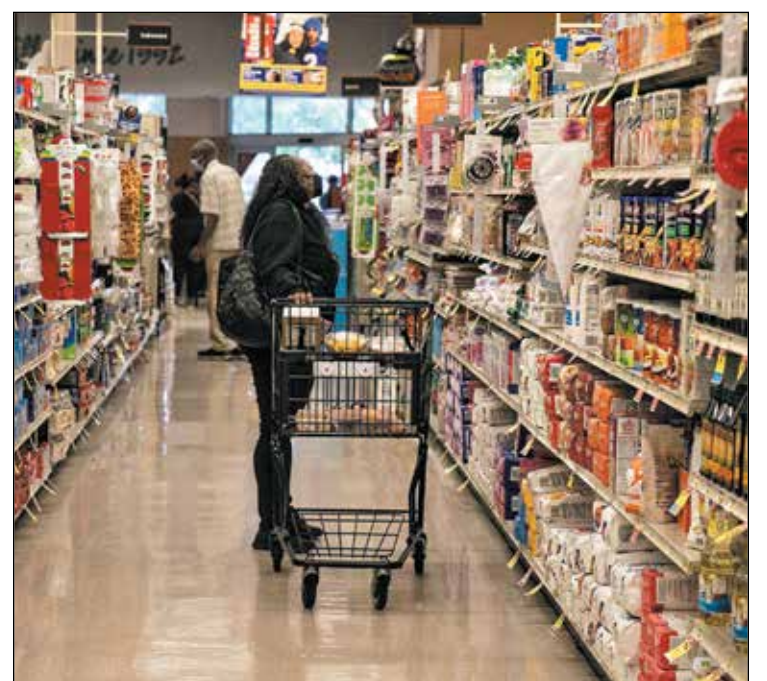
The proposed merger was announced in 2022, a deal that would consolidate ownership of Ralphs, Albertsons, Vons

and other supermarket chains. When the deal was announced, Kroger officials said the combined new company would include nearly 5,000 stores, 66 distribution centers, 52 manufacturing plants, 3,972 pharmacies and 2,015 fuel centers. More than 710,000 people work for the two companies.

Rodney McMullen, Kroger chairman and CEO, said in a statement in 2022 the deal would bring "superior value to customers, associates, communities and shareholders."

"Albertsons Cos. brings a complementary footprint and operates in several parts of the country with very few or no Kroger stores," McMullen said in a statement. "This merger advances our commitment to build a more equitable and sustainable food system by expanding our footprint into new geographies to serve more of America with fresh and affordable food and accelerates our position as a more compelling alternative to larger and non-union competitors."

In its statement announcing the deal, Kroger officials said the combined company anticipates divesting some stores. Those stores will be



spun off into a new standalone company established by Albertsons named SpinCo, which is expected to include between 100 and 375 affected store locations.

The proposed merger has been strongly opposed by the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which said the proposal would create a monopoly that would hurt workers and raise prices for consumers.

UFCW officials issued a statement Monday praising the FTC's action challenging the merger.

"UFCW local unions have loudly and soundly opposed

the proposed mega-merger of Kroger and Albertsons since day one because the megamerger would have resulted in lost jobs, closed stores, food deserts, and higher prices with reduced food choices -- all of this would have been destructive for workers, consumers, and entire communities," according to the union. "Importantly, the FTC decision recognizes the threat that the merger would have caused goes beyond consumers and calls out that it would also have damaged essential grocery store workers' wages, benefits and working conditions."

Santa Fe High seniors earn full scholarships after being named national scholars



Santa Fe High School seniors Zulema Gamboa (right) and Nevaeh Esteves-Parker have been named 2024 Posse Foundation Scholars, giving them full-ride scholarships to Hobart & William Smith Colleges in New York and Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, respectively.

■ Nevaeh Esteves-Parker and Zulema Gamboa both have 4.3 GPAs and will study on the East Coast.

SANTA FE SPRINGS – Santa Fe High School seniors Zulema Gamboa and Nevaeh Esteves-Parker have much in common. Friends since middle school, they have both become top scholars at Santa Fe High and aspire to pursue their higher education in locations where their learning experiences will be embellished by seasonal weather and traditions not common in Southern California.

Gamboa and Esteves-Parker, who share identical 4.3 GPAs, will soon start packing their bags to travel to prestigious colleges across the country after being named 2024 Posse Foundation scholars, earning full-ride scholarships to attend Hobart and William Smith Colleges in upstate New York and Dickinson College in Pennsylvania, respectively.

“It was a surreal moment when I found out I won the Posse scholarship,” Gamboa said. “Being a Posse scholar feels like a blessing to me. In the beginning you think the odds are too great to be named

a winner, so now that I have received this honor, I feel so proud and blessed to be able to live this experience. So far, the journey has been great, and the people are amazing.”

The unusual recruiting process of the Posse Foundation centers on a series of interviews with Posse-nominated students in more than 20 cities across the country, students who are looking to secure an admission at one of more than 60 Posse Foundation partner schools, many of which are private universities with small student populations. Posse’s mission is to recruit a small group of students with diverse backgrounds and train them to be the leaders of tomorrow.

As elementary school children, both Gamboa and Esteves-Parker found passions that helped shape their character and leadership skills and prepared them for the rigors of the Posse interview process.

Gamboa has been involved in the Associated Student Body (ASB) and leadership since the fourth grade, currently serving in Santa Fe’s ASB executive cabinet. Gamboa hopes to continue in student government roles at Hobart

and William Smith.

Likewise, Esteves-Parker discovered a love for softball in the fourth grade and has served as captain on Santa Fe’s junior varsity team for the last three years, though she said she has no plans to continue playing softball at the college level.

Esteves-Parker has her sights set on becoming a children’s clinical psychologist, a career path she learned about in her AP psychology class.

Her interest in the subject expanded when she joined the school’s Psychology Club, where she participated in stress seminars, including one during finals week where students wrote down their fears on a piece of paper and put it in a shredder as a coping mechanism.

“I’m attracted to this field because I’ve always been a good listener. With my family and friends, I am usually the person they come to talk to,” Esteves-Parker said. “I really enjoy helping people. The reason I stayed on the J.V. team instead of moving to Varsity in my senior year is so I could continue to mentor the younger players. This is a tough sport, and you can really get down on yourself.”

Gamboa is looking to major in biology on her way to a career as a licensed physical therapist, a career choice inspired by a movie Gamboa saw about a woman who required extensive physical therapy. Her proudest moment at Santa Fe came when she was the lead planner for the school’s 2023 Top 100 student scholar celebration, an honor that she also received.

“It was my big solo project, organizing the Top 100, and there was so much to do. It’s a huge event, but it turned out really well,” Gamboa said. “It was a big step up for me, because I had never hosted an event of this magnitude before. It was super fulfilling for me and helped me so much with my confidence.”

Both Gamboa and Esteves-Parker said they are grateful for the support they have received from Santa Fe High faculty and staff, excited about their new schools and looking forward to experiencing the four seasons and being in new geographic locations that can lead them to new people, new passions and help shape their identities further.



Tickets on sale for Kiwanis casino night

DOWNEY – The Downey Kiwanis Club is hosting a spring training themed Casino Night on Friday, March 15, from 6-10 pm at the Azar Event Center.

Tickets can be purchased by contacting Rose Schneeberger at (626) 915-5610 or rschneeberger5@gmail.com

Proceeds will help fund the club’s charitable projects in Downey.

Kids & Cops Day taking place Tuesday

DOWNEY – Downey middle school students are invited to participate in Kids & Cops Day, taking place Tuesday, March 5, from 9 am to noon at Doty Middle School.

The event is presented by Gangs Out of Downey, the 10-20 Club and the Downey Police Department.

Students will be teamed with police officers and compete in a variety of games and activities, including basketball, volleyball, dodgeball and relay races.

There is no cost to participate. Register online at 1020club.org/kids-and-cops

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