

POLITICO

California Playbook

BY [LARA KORTE](#), [JEREMY B. WHITE](#) AND [JUHI DOSHI](#)

Presented by The Nature Conservancy

THE BUZZ: We're getting down to the nitty gritty, folks.

Leaders in the Senate and Assembly this week unveiled their draft budget, laying out plans to send nearly \$10 billion back to Californians and shore up the state's reserves against an apparently inevitable fiscal downturn in years to come. Budget talks are far from over — now we enter into final negotiations between Senate President Pro Tem **Toni Atkins**, Assembly Speaker **Anthony Rendon** and Gov. **Gavin Newsom**, who will work to reconcile the differences laid out in their respective plans to come up with a budget bill.

Legislators need to pass the budget by June 15 in order to keep getting paid, but expect trailer bills and budget bills junior to follow with more spending items. The budget plan released by legislators on Wednesday contained many of the same priorities leaders mentioned earlier this year, with some important highlights.

Here's what's included (and left out):

1. **They still want \$200 checks for Californians** — Atkins and Rendon are sticking to their plan to send \$200 to those making less than \$125,000, including an extra \$200 per dependent. The budget also includes \$1.7 billion in assistance for small businesses and those with little to no income.
2. **No budging on \$400 checks for vehicle owners** — Legislators still aren't keen on Newsom's proposal to send relief checks based on car registration. The

governor argues distributing relief through the DMV is quicker and will cover vulnerable people who otherwise wouldn't be identified through the franchise tax board. Newsom's plan would also include a vehicle value cap, yet to be determined.

3. **All sides want funds for abortion support** — Legislators are proposing \$20 million over three years to support the the CA Abortion Support Fund, which will provide grants for nonprofit organizations and health care providers that help patients overcome barriers to abortion care, in addition to the tens of millions Newsom has [already proposed spending](#) on abortion and reproductive healthcare access.

Not included:

1. **More funding for county behavioral health** — This has been a consistent criticism of Newsom's CARE Court plan. The California State Association of Public Administrators, Public Guardians and Public Conservators argue that counties are already overwhelmed, and CARE Courts could refer even more patients to the struggling systems. On Thursday, the association said it is "sounding alarms" and asking for an ongoing allocation of \$200 million to augment annual county spending of \$258 million. Despite county workers' concerns about funding, the CARE Court bill has received [widespread support](#) and recently [passed the Senate](#) with a 38-0 vote.

2. **They want to change the Gann Limit** — The Legislature's budget plan keeps the state \$20 million under the disco-era spending limit. But lawmakers say something needs to change if California wants to remain fiscally healthy in the coming years. The solution? A ballot measure, put to the voters, asking them to give lawmakers more flexibility in spending the state's hundreds of billions of dollars.

Newsom has already said he's on board with such a measure. The tricky part will be convincing voters they should change a law that requires the state to send money back to taxpayers if revenues are too high.

BUENOS DÍAS, good Friday morning. While you were sleeping, Alameda County [reinstated its mask mandate](#) in most indoor public settings. Alameda is likely the first county in the state to resume its indoor mask mandate after dropping it in February after the omicron spike. As of Tuesday the statewide positivity rate was 7.9 percent, but we'll get updated numbers today.

Got a tip or story idea for California Playbook? Hit us up jwhite@politico.com and lkorte@politico.com or follow us on Twitter [@JeremyBWhite](#) and [@Lara_Korte](#) .

QUOTE OF THE DAY: "We pray that you will draw us together in a unity that serves California well." **Assemblymember Tim Grayson (D-Merced) in floor prayer after a tense Democratic caucus debate earlier this week.**

TWEET OF THE DAY: California labor advocate Cailtin Vega [@unionista27](#) on the **departure of Meta CEO Sheryl Sandberg** : "Hopefully it's the end of the era of telling women they need to 'lean in' to get ahead! We have been leaning, pushing, trying our best for a long time and the patriarchy is still here. New era—time for women to stand together and fight for each other and for all workers!"

WHERE'S GAVIN? Nothing official announced.

A message from The Nature Conservancy:

GOV. NEWSOM: CA Needs \$1B to Protect Nature.

California is not mobilizing fast enough to protect itself from climate change. A [\\$1 billion investment in the Nature-Based Solutions Budget Package](#) is needed to protect people and nature from climate change. The May Revise funding is not enough -- \$200 million more needs to be added with [funding directed to the Wildlife Conservation Board and state conservancies](#). That's a budget that will deliver results on the ground.

A FAILING SYSTEM — [“How California shuffles its mentally ill prisoners,”](#) by CalMatters’ **Byrhonda Lyons and Jocelyn Wiener**: “Three decades after California’s prisons first came under court monitoring for rampant abuse and neglect of prisoners with mental illness, the system is still failing to protect its sickest inmates. For many of these men (the vast majority of people behind bars are male) prison is not a place to heal. It is a place to disappear.”

— [“SFPD, Pride parade reach compromise — some police officers marching in uniform,”](#) by SF Chronicle’s **Ryan Kost**: “San Francisco police officers and Pride Parade officials have reached a compromise that will enable a small number of police to march in uniform at the June 26 event, after an earlier ban.”

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CAMPAIGN MODE

DEMS DROPPED THE BALL — [“LA Democrats weren't united against Sheriff Villanueva,”](#) by the Los Angeles Times’ **Connor Sheets**: “Despite anger over Villanueva’s political shift, L.A. County Democratic clubs and progressive advocacy groups, hampered by infighting and indecision, have failed to unite behind any of the candidates seeking to unseat the sheriff, according to party officials, delegates and voters.”

THE LEGEND FACTOR — [“Column: John Legend is on a mission to remind us why ‘local politics matter so much’,”](#) by the LATimes’ **Erika D. Smith**: “So far, he has endorsed at least 25 candidates in multiple states, including three who are running in California. He’s

also come out in support of Chesa Boudin, who is struggling to fend off a well-funded recall campaign and hang onto his job as district attorney of San Francisco.”

— “[Meet the young, ambitious Black man who wants Devin Nunes’ old House seat,](#)” by the LATimes’ Priscella Vega: “Hubbard is competing in a special election runoff on June 7 to serve the remainder of Devin Nunes’ term, which ends in early January. The 33-year-old Democrat faces an uphill climb for several reasons, not least the tiny share of Black voters in a district that historically has voted Republican.”

— “[Dividing issue in the race for state controller pits Californians’ hearts against their wallets,](#)” by SF Chronicle’s Joe Garofoli: “Nevertheless, the typically low-profile controller’s race has drawn prominent candidates this year to replace termed-out Democrat Betty Yee as California’s chief fiscal officer, someone who holds the power to audit any government agency that spends state funds. The controller also sits on 78 state boards and commissions, ranging from the protection of the state’s coastline to those overseeing health care facilities.”

RENDON’S TIMELINE: “_(ツ)_/” — “[A Conversation With Anthony Rendon After a Leadership Challenge,](#)” by the New York Times’ Jill Cowan: When asked how long he wants to be speaker, Rendon said “I don’t want to comment on that. The timing’s bad. I don’t want to poke any bears.”

PERSONAL ACCOUNT — “[People are attacking Chesa Boudin for diversion programs. I actually went through one,](#)” by SF Gate’s W.E. Banks : “I’ve been reading with disappointment some of the recent attacks on diversion programs in San Francisco, and some of the blame cast on Chesa Boudin, our district attorney, for supporting these programs, which offer an alternative to conviction and incarceration. As someone who directly benefited from diversion, I know all too well how valuable these programs are.”

CALIFORNIA AND THE CAPITOL CORRIDOR

LATE ATTEMPT: For the third time, 4 a.m. is on Sen. **Scott Wiener’s** agenda. The San Francisco Democrat is trying again, along with Assembly member **Matt Haney**, to let some cities keep bars open to the wee hours after he was thwarted in 2018 by then-Gov.

Jerry Brown (“we have enough mischief from midnight to 2 without adding two more hours of mayhem”) and in 2019 by weary Assembly colleagues. The vehicle is a to-be-amended SB 930 that started its legislative life as a housing bill.

SENTENCING STRUGGLE: An appeals court yesterday upheld elements of a prior ruling blocking Los Angeles DA **George Gascón**’s directives barring his deputy prosecutors — who sued to challenge the boss — from pleading prior serious and violent three strikes convictions and seeking special circumstances allegations that could result in life without parole. Gascón has modified other sentencing orders amid public pushback.

MORE TIME FOR CRIME: Democratic legislators on Thursday introduced a new bill aimed at upping the punishment for people who try to commit violent felonies at churches and schools in the wake of a string of attacks in California and across the country. Senate Bill 699 would create two enhancements for specific felonies attempted or committed at schools and churches: an extra two to four years for felonies including manslaughter, mayhem, kidnapping, robbery, carjacking and rape, and an extra 10 years for the commission or attempted commission of murder.

The bill is sponsored by Sen. **Susan Eggman** (D-Stockton), Sen. **Dave Min** (D-Irvine), Assemblymember **Carlos Villapudua** (D-Stockton) and Assemblymember **Cottie Petrie-Norris** (D-Laguna Beach).

FORMULA SHORTAGE: The California Department of Public Health’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is expanding its list of baby formula brands covered by WIC benefits from five to 130, the department [announced Thursday](#).

A message from The Nature Conservancy:



Two futures. One choice.

\$1B for Nature-Based Solutions in #CABudget.

ACT NOW

The Nature Conservancy 

NO MORE KOREAN BBQ? — [“The end of Korean BBQ in L.A.? What the gas stove ban means for your fave restaurants,”](#) by the LATimes’ Jenn Harris: “All that may change by 2023 — at least in new Los Angeles buildings. The L.A. City Council last week passed a

motion that would ban most gas appliances in new residential and commercial construction in the city, citing an effort to combat climate change.”

THAT’S GOTTA STING — [“Bees are legally fish in California, court rules. Here’s why and what led to it,”](#) by **Sacramento Bee’s Noor Adatia**: “Bees are now legally considered fish in California under the state’s endangered species law, an appeals court in Sacramento ruled Tuesday.”

SECRETARY FUDGE IN LA — [“HUD secretary joins Karen Bass in LA to see homelessness crisis, housing,”](#) by **Spectrum News 1**: “U.S. Housing and Urban Development Secretary Marcia Fudge visited Los Angeles Thursday at the request of Rep. Karen Bass, D-Los Angeles, to get a firsthand look at the city's homelessness crisis and how federal dollars are being used to address it.”

— [“Is San Francisco Mayor London Breed's transgender homeless plan constitutional,”](#) by **SF Gate’s Alec Regimbal**: “Because Breed's plan would prioritize transgender individuals, and because the state courts just struck down a law that requires companies to appoint women to their boards of directors, one may wonder whether the proposal violates the Equal Protection clauses in the U.S. and California constitutions.”

BIDEN, HARRIS AND THE HILL

— [“How Kamala Harris took down Corinthian Colleges as California’s attorney general, in her words,”](#) by **Sac Bee’s Gillian Brassil**: “Vice President Kamala Harris’ decade-long “journey for justice” on behalf of Corinthian Colleges students will soon come to a close as the Biden administration promises to relieve borrowers of their remaining federal student loans.”

[PELOSI VOWS ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN](#) — by **POLITICO’s Jordan Carney**: Speaker Nancy Pelosi is vowing that Democrats will dig into an assault weapons ban, but she’s facing a numbers crunch as she weighs whether to give it a floor vote.

SILICON VALLEYLAND

iTAXI — [“California regulators approve state’s 1st robotic taxi fleet,”](#) by the AP’s **Michael Liedtke**: “California regulators on Thursday gave a robotic taxi service the green light to begin charging passengers for driverless rides in San Francisco, a first in a state where dozens of companies have been trying to train vehicles to steer themselves on increasingly congested roads.”

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HOLLYWOODLAND

AMBER WANTS TO APPEAL — [“As Amber Heard plans appeal, her lawyer says she can’t pay Johnny Depp \\$10.4 million,”](#) by the LATimes’ **Christi Carras**: “Amber Heard will “absolutely” appeal the verdict reached this week in her defamation trial against ex-husband Johnny Depp, her attorney announced Thursday morning.”

MIXTAPE

METH USE — [“California jail deputy suspected of meth use while on duty,”](#) by the AP.

— “[California man allegedly groped women on cross-country flight](#),” by FOX News’ Paul Best.

— “[The Revolt Against Homelessness](#),” by the Atlantic’s Olga Khazan.

SANDBERG’S DEPARTURE — “[What Sheryl Sandberg’s ‘Lean In’ Has Meant to Women](#),” by the New York Times’ Emma Goldberg.

— “[Black Alumni Criticize Cal Poly’s Use Of Their Images On Banners](#),” by Mustang News’ Omar Rashad.

BIRTHDAYS

Steve Leder ... Jason Moss ... Eric Schmeltzer

A message from The Nature Conservancy:

GOVERNOR: CA Needs \$1B to Protect Nature.

The May Revision proposes an additional \$68 million for nature-based solutions including biodiversity, but California needs a bigger down payment on climate resilience to get our state on track. A \$1 billion investment is needed in the 2022 Nature-Based Solutions Budget Package to protect people and nature on our warming planet.

To ensure funds are spent efficiently and effectively, investments must be allocated to the Wildlife Conservation Board and state conservancies, which have a longstanding track record of effectively advancing protection and supporting the public use of natural resources.

[Invest \\$1B in the Nature-Based Solutions Budget Package to protect our planet.](#)

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