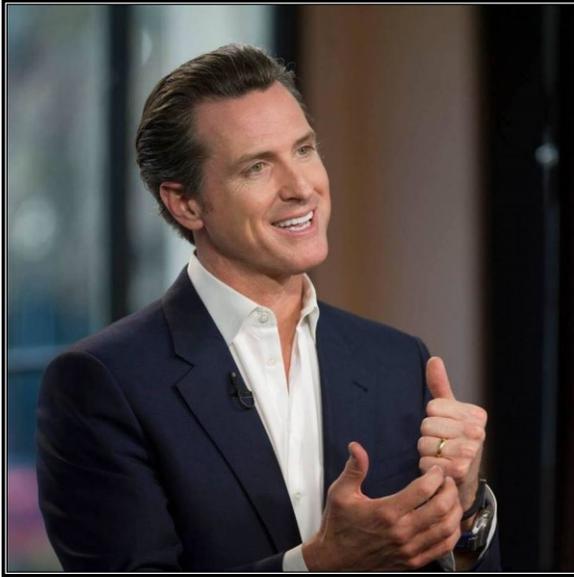


## HOMELESS IN PARADISE

October 7-13, 2021

### INTRODUCING HOMELESS IN PARADOX - Part 1



*In California  
can homelessness be resolved  
in just five short years?  
Boondoggle Buster  
Governor Gavin Newsom  
just changed history.  
He pledged 12 billion  
on September 29<sup>th</sup>  
to end homelessness.  
If his plan works here  
will it be a role model  
for the whole country?  
Why do I quiver?  
Fear of re-reaching Square One?  
Or Boonie's Burnout?*

### WILL CALIFORNIA SURVIVE THE BOONDOGGLE BUST THAT BECAME A BLAST?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

**COMING** full circle is called "returning to square one" in boondoggle-busting lingo. If I'm correct, that's nearly where I am after last weekend's monumental action by California Governor Gavin Newsom.

Merely two weeks and a day after surviving attempts to recall him, Gov. Newsom made boondoggle-busting history that should prove as powerful an influence on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Americana as the Big Bang theory was to 20<sup>th</sup> Century theories of how the universe was born.

Gov. Newsom didn't just bust the cycle of homeless boondoggling in California. He blasted it. Is it any wonder that I tremble?

### Governor Newsom Signs Laws That Tackle Homeless Crisis

California Gov. Gavin Newsom made history on Wed., Sept. 29 by signing seven new laws that address the homeless crisis in the nation's most populous state where wealth tops the sunshine state's charts. However, poverty is rampant across the charts' garbage-strewn bottoms, symbolic of filthy camps from river bottoms to roadside offramps to city streets.

The shrinking middle class struggles with housing in neighborhoods where they work but no longer can afford to live such as Monterey, Carmel, Pacific Grove, Seaside, Marina, Del Rey Oaks, Sand City and Pacific Grove. All these cities were once lumped under the Monterey Peninsula's nickname "Paradise," but that was then. This is now.

Fact is, Gov. Newsom's state-of-the-state address in 2020, weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in sheltering-people-in-place for nearly 1-1/2 years, was dedicated almost exclusively to homelessness. He said he knew it could be solved. Last week he signed legislation designed to prove it.

According to Gov. Newsom on Wed. at a news conference in Los Angeles, "We live in a situational world where people want to see results immediately. But when it comes to these issues, it takes years and years to see those results."

Since 2018, California has spent more than \$2.4 billion in federal and state money on several major homeless programs. Bulk of the money has been disseminated to local governments for such programs as Project Roomkey and Project Homekey that involved leasing motels and hotels for sheltering the homeless during the pandemic. Project Roomkey, for instance, started in July 2020, and ended August 31, 2021, both on the peninsula and in Salinas.

### **Big Money, Big Talk**

The 2021 California budget includes more than \$7 billion for financing 30 statewide housing and homelessness programs, according to the non-partisan Legislative Analyst's office, and commits approximately \$12 billion for homelessness programs in 2022 and 2023, most of which will be earmarked for local governments.

According to a new law Newsom signed Wednesday, however, local governments will be responsible for more accountability to the state over how they spend that money.

Newsom signed a law authored by Assemblywoman Luz Rivas, a Democrat from Arleta, which creates a new governing body to dole out up to \$2 billion in homelessness funding to local governments.

The new California Interagency Council on Homelessness will include directors of half a dozen state agencies that must review and approve local governments' plans for spending the money.

Busting the homeless boondoggle included Newsom's strict rule. "No plan, no money. We're coming in not just with sticks, but with real carrots," Newsom said on Wed.

### **Identifying Homeless Students And Other Bills**

One of the bills signed on Sept. 29 addresses the discrepancy between Point-in-Time statistics on homeless children and the actual numbers as recorded by educational institutions.

According to the 2019 Monterey County Homeless Census & Survey, there were 324 children and transitional age youth in our area; school records claimed more like 5,000+ homeless children in Monterey County.

This will be corrected by AB 27 by Assemblymember Luz Rivas (D-Arleta) summarized as: *Homeless children and youths and unaccompanied youths: requires all the state's 1,037 school districts, including charter schools, to identify their homeless students and refer them to services for them and their families.*

The bill's sponsor, Luz Rivas, referred to a 2020 UCLA study: "In California, there are enough homeless children to fill Dodger Stadium five times. We have to end that."

The eyes and ears of the nation will be on the major boondoggle-busting AB 27 as enactment unfolds, as they will on the other six bills:

- AB 362 by Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva (D-Fullerton) – Homeless shelters: safety regulations.
- AB 816 by Assemblymember David Chiu (D-San Francisco) – Homelessness: Housing Trust Fund: housing projects.
- AB 977 by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D-Encino) – Homelessness program data reporting: Homeless Management Information System.
- AB 1220 by Assemblymember Luz Rivas (D-Arleta) – Homelessness: California Interagency Council on Homelessness.
- AB 1443 by Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (D-Sacramento) – Mental health: involuntary treatment.

- SB 400 by Senator Brian W. Jones (R-Santee) – Homeless children and youths: local educational agencies: collaboration, training, and reporting.

Full details about the historic bills appear at Topics for You, Governor Newsom Signs Legislation to Address Homelessness and Mental Health Services, Highlights \$22 billion Housing and Homelessness Package, Published: Sep. 29, 2021 at <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2021/09/30/governor-newsom-signs-legislation-9-30-21/>.

### So What?

Timing is everything. Right?

Ironically, announcement of the \$22 billion package came on the eve of the closure of *Cedar Street Times*, the only media outlet on the Monterey Peninsula that consistently carried free coverage of homelessness for 15 years. Now that big money has entered the picture, will the media finally take over the spot I helped fill as an unpaid volunteer for seven years?

Welcome to "Homeless in Paradox," the new final series about what's known in boondogglers' lingo as "returning to square one."

If his new California Comeback Plan works (\$1.1 billion to clean up the streets of California by partnering with local governments to pick up trash and beautify downtowns, freeways, and neighborhoods) by generating 11,000 jobs over three years,) our boondoggle-busting, recall-defeating governor might wind up on a presidential ticket!

Let's hope all the solutions to the housing crisis work and California doesn't end up with the equivalent of the infamous "projects" of the east coast, aka Homeless in Paradox.

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### CREDITS:

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Book: *The Boondogglers' Bible - How to Fight Like City Hall to Win!!*

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