



Stronger California Advocates Network 2024 Legislative Agenda

An Agenda for Gender, Racial & Economic Justice



About the Stronger California Agenda:

California is home to millions of families who rely on common sense public policy to help them build assets, succeed in equitable and safe workplaces, access affordable and quality care for their children and other family members, and ensure access to reproductive health care. That is why advocates, legislators, and community members throughout the state stand together in support of the Stronger California Agenda for gender, racial, and economic justice.

The Stronger California Agenda has five pillars that frame the policy initiatives critical to the economic security of women and families in this state. It recognizes that women are critical to a strong and vibrant California economy and play a pivotal role in spurring economic growth in the state. California is home to 12% of the country's women, who comprise almost half the workforce in our state. In California, mothers are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinners in 59.5% of families, and these numbers are even higher for women of color. Women influence the economy as decision-makers for their families, as consumers, and as key participants in the workforce.

The Stronger California Agenda advances comprehensive policy reforms addressing the intersecting obstacles women and families face to leading economically secure lives. California has the fifth largest economy in the world, but one of the nation's highest poverty rates, disproportionately harming women and children. Harassment and discrimination in the workplace continue to impede women's ability to succeed. Child and elder care costs are prohibitively high, and insufficient affordable options limit opportunities for working family caregivers. Women are paid less than their male counterparts for the same work in virtually every job sector. They are also more likely to work in low-wage jobs and often lack family-friendly work policies necessary to make a living while also caring for their families. California has taken important steps to address these obstacles, but the work is not finished, and the 2024 Stronger California Agenda sets forth critical policy priorities to build on our progress and address the ongoing needs of our communities.

This Agenda is not just about women. It promotes policies that will improve the economic security of all Californians. Thank you for standing with the Stronger California Advocates Network in supporting this Agenda. A list of partners in the Stronger California Advocates Network is on the back page. To learn more, please visit StrongerCA.org.

Onward,



Noreen Farrell
Executive Director of Equal Rights Advocates
Co-Chair of the Stronger California Advocates
Network



Jessica Ramey Stender
Policy Director & Deputy Legal Director of Equal
Rights Advocates
Co-Chair of the Stronger California Advocates
Network

The 2024 Stronger California Advocates Network Agenda

Fair Pay, Job Opportunities & Workplace Justice

- **SB 1137: Recognizing Intersectionality under California Anti-Discrimination Laws (Introduced by Senator Smallwood- Cuevas)**

Senate Bill 1137 will amend state anti-discrimination laws to clarify that they protect against discrimination based on not just one protected characteristic, but also the intersection or combination of two or more protected bases (e.g., gender and race). Intersectionality is an analytical framework that captures how different forms of discrimination operate together, exacerbate each other, and can result in unique and amplified forms of prejudice and harm. For example, Black women experience discrimination stemming from a unique set of harmful stereotypes, different from the racism Black men experience and the sexism white women experience.

- **SB 1386 – The California Civil Rape Shield Preservation Act (Introduced by Senator Caballero)**

Senate Bill 1386 would protect survivors of sexual assault, rape, and sexual battery from further victimization by clarifying civil rape shield law, a law that protects the privacy of the survivors by prohibiting unnecessary and intrusive inquiries into their unrelated sexual history. Specifically, this bill would clarify that evidence of a victim’s sexual conduct unrelated to the case is not admissible to impeach their testimony as to consent or damages.

- **SB 1022: Defending Housing, Employment & Other Civil Rights Violations (Introduced by Senator Skinner)**

Senate Bill 1022 will allow California’s Civil Rights Department (CRD) to thoroughly investigate and effectively enforce the Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) on behalf of thousands of California residents and workers. This measure will ensure CRD is able to represent the interests of the state in enforcing California’s public policy to safeguard the rights and opportunities of all persons and protect against unlawful discrimination and other civil rights violations.

- **AB 2741 – Contract Worker Protections (Introduced by Assemblymember Haney)**

Assembly Bill 2741 will strengthen California’s labor code to ensure employees of staffing agencies—contract and temporary workers—have concrete onramps to stable, permanent employment and have the protections they need to advocate for themselves and their rights.

Expand Access to Affordable, Quality Early Childhood Care and Education

- **Child Care Budget Request**

The Governor’s January budget proposal failed to include promises the Governor made to child care providers and families. This budget request asks that California make good on its agreement to pay child care providers more fairly for the full cost of enriching care, based on a new “alternative methodology,” as soon as possible. This would ensure a final budget that rejects the current proposed “pause” on

building 20,000 new child care spaces, which would advance the Governor’s promise of 200,000 child care spaces by 2027.

Support Family-Friendly Workplaces

- **AB 518 – Paid Family Leave for Chosen Family (Introduced by Assemblymember Wicks)**

This bill would allow workers to access Paid Family Leave to care for seriously ill “chosen family” members. Paid Family Leave is entirely funded by worker contributions, but not all workers’ families are recognized. Assembly Bill 518 is vital to ensure equity and access to the existing program, especially for LGBTQ+ families and individuals. Chosen family members are recognized in job-protected *unpaid* leave, but workers remain unable to access these vital paid benefits without an inclusive definition of family.

- **SB 1090 – Early Application for Paid Family Leave and Disability Insurance Benefits (Introduced by Senator Durazo)**

California’s Paid Family Leave (PFL) and State Disability Insurance (SDI) programs provide critical support to working families and directly address many social determinants of health. However, California workers are not currently permitted to apply for PFL and SDI until they have already experienced a qualifying life event and are on unpaid leave from work. Senate Bill 1090 will allow workers to apply for these programs up to 30 days in advance of an anticipated leave, which will reduce barriers for California workers, especially lower-to middle-income workers, who rely on PFL and SDI to heal and care for their families.

- **AB 2499 – Strengthening Safe Leave (Introduced by Assemblymember Shivo)**

Assembly Bill 2499 empowers survivors of violence to secure their safety without sacrificing their economic security. It allows survivors to take leave from work for safety and recovery related reasons, allows their family members to take unpaid time off to support them and use their paid sick days for covered purposes, allows both to access safety-related accommodations at work, and streamlines access and enforcement of these critical rights.

Increase Economic Security by Combating Poverty & Building Assets

- **AB 1956 Crime Victim Services Stabilization Act + Crime Victim Services Funding Budget Request (Introduced by Assemblymember Reyes)**

The Crime Victim Services Budget Request and Crime Victim Services Stabilization Act provide \$200 million in ongoing funding to California’s crime victim services providers, supporting survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child abuse, elder abuse, and more. Due to ongoing instability and an anticipated \$630 million cut to the federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding, California’s victim service providers are at risk of devastating funding cuts, affecting essential services like housing, counseling, legal aid and more. The impact will fall hardest on smaller programs, communities that have been historically underserved, and rural programs. For survivors, this will reduce their ability to access the support and healing they need and deserve. Now is the time for California to invest in measures to support survivors of crime.

- **AB 2843 – Eliminating medical cost sharing for rape survivors (Introduced by Assemblymember Petrie-Norris)**

Assembly Bill 2843 removes the issue of cost-sharing as a barrier to a rape survivor seeking care and forensic testing. While forensic exams and rape kits are free, other costs associated with an ER visit are not, for those with private insurance. AB 2843 ensures rape survivors will have the benefit of a rape kit test and forensic exam, without financial barriers associated with an ERA visit. Moreover, they can receive the health care that they need following a traumatic sexual assault.

- **AB 2785 – Strengthening Tenant Protections (Introduced by Assemblymember Wilson)**

Assembly Bill 2785 proposes capping rental application fees at \$50, and would require landlords to refund applicants if they're not selected, as well as require clear refund policy language on application forms. The bill also mandates landlords to deposit security deposits in interest-bearing bank accounts with tenants listed as beneficiaries.

- **AB 1961 – End Hunger in California Act of 2024 (Introduced by Assemblymember Wicks)**

Assembly Bill 1961 establishes a task force that will develop, for the first time in California, a strategic Master Plan to End Hunger. California is the world's fifth largest supplier of food and produces nearly half of the nation's fruits and vegetables. However, more than one in five Californians, 8.8 million people, currently struggle with food insecurity. Hunger and lack of access to nutritious food are exacerbated by racial and economic inequalities: 40% of Black households and 30% of Latino households are food insecure in California. The task force will assist in the development of a Master Plan in collaboration with food system stakeholders at the local, regional, and state levels, and in partnership with tribal governments, on ways to remove barriers to access adequate, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food for all communities in California.

- **Reimagine CalWORKs – Budget Request**

CalWORKs is California's bedrock anti-poverty safety net. It provides life-saving cash aid and supportive services to 750,000 children living in 360,000 families who are overwhelmingly led by women (90%), with a disproportionate proportion being Latina/o (60%) and Black (17%). We urge the Legislature to reject the proposed CalWORKs double-cut of more than \$1 billion, which would include the complete withdrawal of the \$900 million Safety Net Reserve established to protect CalWORKs; and \$300 million in ongoing cuts to CalWORKs services and program administration.

We applaud the Governor's budget proposal to pursue new federal pilot alternatives to the failed and punitive Work Participation Rate (WPR) approach to anti-poverty policies that are rooted in racist and sexist stereotypes about low-income women of color. We ask the Legislature to expand on the Governor's proposal by making program changes proven to achieve progress in family outcomes, including: limiting family sanctions to federal requirements, empowering families to self-determine their participation activities, and permanently repealing the county Work Participation Rate (WPR) penalty pass-through.

Protect Health & Reproductive Rights

- **SB 729: Provide Equitable Fertility Coverage (Introduced by Senator Menjivar and Assemblymember Wicks)**

Senate Bill 729 advances reproductive freedom in California by requiring large group health plans to provide coverage for fertility and infertility care, including IVF. The bill will also update the definition of "infertility" to be inclusive of LGBTQ+ family planning experiences and help to ensure that anyone seeking to build a family has equitable access to infertility treatment and care.

- **AB 2085: Streamlining Clinic Licensure (Introduced by Assemblymember Bauer-Kahan)**

Assembly Bill 2085 will prohibit local interference with the delivery of constitutionally protected health care by establishing a streamlined approval process for development of community health clinics in California. One key barrier to health care is access to a clinic, and in a post-*Dobbs* world, access to abortion is more limited than ever. This bill ensures that local jurisdictions cannot interfere, without justification, in the establishment of comprehensive health care clinics.

The Stronger California Advocates Network

The Network is a historic collaboration of organizations and advocate coalitions with deep experience working with communities affected by the four pillars of the Stronger California Agenda. The Network capitalizes on the strengths of our members to advance the economic security for women and families.

Network Roundtable Members

9 to 5

ACLU of California

Act for Women and Girls

Alliance of Californians for Community

Empowerment

American Association of University Women

Asian Americans Advancing Justice

California Asset Building Coalition

California Child Care Resource & Referral Network

California Domestic Workers Coalition

California Employment Lawyers Association

California Latinas for Reproductive Justice

California Partnership

California Partnership to End Domestic Violence

California Women's Law Center

California Work and Family Coalition

Caring Across Generations

Center for Popular Democracy

Child Care Law Center

Child Care Resource Center

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice

Equal Rights Advocates

Equality California

First 5 California

Legal Aid at Work

Lutheran Office of Public Policy

Mujeres Unidas y Activas

National Council of Jewish Women

Organization United for Respect

Parent Voices CA

Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California

Raising California Together

Reproductive Freedom for All California

Restaurant Opportunities Centers (ROC) United

SEIU California

TechEquity Collaborative

Tradeswomen, Inc.

UFCW Western States Council

Voices for Progress

Western Center on Law and Poverty

Women's Foundation California

Work Equity

YWCA San Francisco & Marin

Network Supporters

Asset Building Strategies

Bet Tzedek

California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls

California Immigrant Policy Center

California Women Lawyers

Center for Responsible Lending

Centro Legal de la Raza

ChangeLab Solutions

Closing the Women's Wealth Gap Initiative

Coalition of Labor Union Women – CA Capitol Chapter

Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto

Consumer Attorneys of California

County of Santa Clara Office of Women's Policy

Courage California

Equal Justice Society

Feminist Majority

FreeFrom

Friends Committee on Legislation of California

The Garment Worker Center

Hand in Hand: The Domestic Employers Network

Insight Center for Community Economic Development

It's Time Network

Justice in Aging

National Housing Law Project

National Women's Political Caucus California

National Women's Political Caucus, LA Metro Public Counsel

The Public Interest Law Project

UltraViolet

Women Lawyers of Sacramento

Women's March Oakland

