



About the Stronger California Agenda

California is home to millions of women and families who rely on strong, forward-looking public policy to build economic security, thrive in equitable and safe workplaces, access affordable and high-quality care, and exercise their fundamental rights—including access to reproductive health care. At a time when federal actions are rolling back critical protections and undermining hard-won rights, California must lead.

Advocates, legislators, and community members across the state stand united in support of the 2026 Stronger California Agenda for gender, racial, and economic justice. Grounded in five core pillars, this agenda advances the bold policy solutions necessary to meet the urgency of this moment—protecting our communities while driving meaningful progress toward a more equitable and inclusive economy.

Women are central to California’s economic strength and resilience. California is home to 12% of the nation’s women, who comprise nearly half of the state’s workforce. Mothers are the sole, primary, or co-breadwinners in 59.5% of families—rates that are even higher for women of color. Women are not only workers, but decision-makers, caregivers, and drivers of economic activity in every region of the state.

Yet profound inequities persist. Despite California’s position as the fifth-largest economy in the world, it continues to have one of the highest poverty rates in the nation, disproportionately impacting women and children. Workplace harassment and discrimination remain pervasive barriers to economic advancement. The high cost and limited availability of child care and elder care constrain families’ ability to work and thrive. Women—especially women of color—continue to be paid less than men and are overrepresented in low-wage jobs that lack basic protections and family-friendly policies.

These challenges are compounded by escalating federal attacks on civil and constitutional rights, including reproductive freedom, workplace protections, immigrant rights, LGBTQ+

equality, and critical safety net programs. In this environment, maintaining the status quo is not enough. California must act decisively—not only to defend against these rollbacks, but to chart a stronger, more just path forward.

The 2026 Stronger California Agenda responds to this moment with urgency and ambition. It advances comprehensive, intersectional policy reforms that both safeguard fundamental rights and expand economic opportunity. This agenda is designed not only to protect women, families, and communities, but to strengthen systems, close equity gaps, and ensure that all Californians can achieve economic security and dignity.

Now more than ever, bold state leadership is essential. Together, we can build on California’s progress and ensure that our state remains a national leader in advancing gender, racial, and economic justice.

Thank you for standing with the Stronger California Advocates Network in support of this critical agenda. A list of partners is included on the following page. To learn more, please visit StrongerCA.org.

Onward,

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

Jessica Ramey Stender

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The Stronger California Advocates Network Roundtable

9 to 5

ACLU of California
Act for Women and Girls
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment
American Association of University Women
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
End Child Poverty California
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality California
First 5 California
Golden State Opportunity
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
Worksafe
YWCA San Francisco & Marin

The Stronger California Advocates 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

Ensuring Fair Pay, Job Opportunities And Workplace Justice

AB 2155 (Aguiar-Curry): Forced Arbitration Justice and Conformity Act

AB 2155 would end the practice of forcing workers to surrender their right to seek justice for sexual harassment or sexual assault and would prohibit employers from compelling arbitration for seamen, railroad employees, and other workers engaged in foreign or interstate commerce. By doing so, the bill strengthens survivors' and workers' rights and ensures access to the courts for those who have been harmed, while also ensuring clarity for employers by aligning California and federal law.

AB 1018 (Bauer Kahan): The Automated Decision Safety Act

AB 1018 will provide people with more information, important rights, and greater transparency into the use of Automated Decision Systems for critical areas of their lives—while requiring developers and deployers to take more responsibility for reducing the likelihood of discrimination.

AB 2495 (Kalra): Preventing Immigration-Related Coercion

AB 2495 will prohibit employers from coercing workers through unfair immigration-related practices in order to preemptively induce silence, inaction, or compliance around workplace violations. Existing retaliation laws are not enough to address this problem because they require that a worker first engage in protected activity, such as filing a wage claim. This bill amends Labor Code §1019 to make clear that immigration-related coercion itself is unlawful. Under this bill, coercion means to engage in conduct that would dissuade a reasonable person in that position from engaging in conduct which the person has a legal right to engage in, or to induce a reasonable person in that position to engage in conduct which the person has a legal right to abstain from. AB 2495 will empower immigrant workers to report ongoing or subsequent violations of workplace rights without an employer-created climate of fear.

AB 2624 (Bonta): Privacy for immigration service providers

AB2624 will expand the Secretary of State's privacy and address-confidentiality program, the Safe at Home Program, for pro-immigration service providers, volunteers, and clients, shielding home and work addresses from public records. It prohibits doxxing, online harassment, and sale or posting of personal information, and establishes civil remedies and criminal penalties to deter threats and violence. The bill is intended to reduce exposure of sensitive data, deter malicious online conduct, and provide strong legal tools to stop and remedy doxxing before it escalates into physical harm.

Increasing Access To Stable, Affordable, Quality Early Childhood Care And Education Child Care Budget Request:

The Governor and Legislature must protect and strengthen affordable child care in the state, by: Funding the new 77,000 publicly funded child care spaces as codified in state law; ensuring no family is disenrolled from care; prioritizing the transition to pay child care providers fairly, based on the true cost of care; funding an increase to subsidy payments for child care providers and

ensuring the pay policy is equitable; and providing financial support for child care providers impacted by the Los Angeles wildfires. For parents and guardians to support their families with dignity, California must fund affordable child care spaces. For child care providers to thrive, California must pay them for their expertise and dedication. To achieve real economic growth, California must treat publicly funded child care as the indispensable infrastructure it is.

Promoting Family-Friendly Workplaces

AB 65 (Aguiar-Curry): Parental Leave for Educators

AB 65 would grant school employees up to 14 weeks of leave with full pay, paid for by the employer, when an employee is experiencing or has experienced pregnancy, miscarriage, childbirth, termination of pregnancy, or recovery from those conditions. As public employees, most California school employees are not eligible for paid pregnancy leave. When school employees get pregnant they must first exhaust their sick leave before accessing differential pay, the amount that is left over after their substitute has been paid. Since unused sick leave can be converted to retirement credits through the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) when school employees retire, requiring educators to exhaust all their sick leave when dealing with a pregnancy related disability can have long lasting impacts, including reducing future retirement benefits by about \$100,000 over the course of an educator's retirement. AB 65 will help employees working in public schools and community colleges to take necessary leave from work for pregnancy, childbirth, and related conditions without sacrificing their financial security, the health of their families, or the health of their school communities.

SB 1149 (Durazo): Bereavement Leave for Chosen and Extended Family

SB 1149 would allow California workers to use unpaid, job-protected bereavement leave following the death of a chosen or extended family member. California is one of the few states to protect bereavement leave, but some workers are excluded simply because their family member isn't recognized under current law. Without bereavement leave, workers may be forced to choose between mourning a family member and their job. SB 1149 will make California bereavement leave more equitable by allowing workers to take job-protected leave following the death of a "designated person" who is a chosen or extended family member. This simple change will align California's bereavement leave with other state sick and family leave laws.

Budget Request: Full Funding for the California Workplace Outreach Program (CWOP) to Protect and Support Vulnerable and Immigrant Communities

This budget request seeks \$30 million per year for five years to fund the California Workplace Outreach Program (CWOP) through 2031. CWOP, originally named the Covid-19 Workplace Outreach Project, launched as part of the Labor and Workforce Development Agency's (LWDA) campaign to educate workers on paid leave, COVID mitigation health standards, and anti-retaliation protections. In 2023, the Legislature renamed CWOP the *California* Workplace Outreach Project and expanded its scope to cover all Labor Code protections. In 2025, CWOP

was codified into law (SB 578, Smallwood-Cuevas). CWOP has been successful in conducting outreach to workers in hard-to-reach and at-risk communities and providing them know-your-rights training, supporting them to vindicate their rights, and connecting them with services. This budget allocation will have no impact on the general fund and will instead come from the Labor and Workforce Development Fund.

Fighting Poverty & Promoting Asset-Building

AB 2299 (Calderon) + Budget Request: California Anti-Hunger Response and Employment Training (CARET) Act

Cruel federal cuts under H.R. 1 will cause nearly a million Californians to lose food benefits. California must act now to prevent a hunger crisis. AB 2299 (Calderon) would provide state-funded food benefits through the California Food Assistance Program (CFAP) to people who are excluded from the CalFresh program due to ableist, sexist, and racist federal time-limit work rules and new exclusions of legally-present humanitarian immigrants.

AB 1755 (Sharp-Collins): Do Not Punish Working Families Act

This bill would eliminate current law which requires a primary wage-earning parent in a two-parent family to work less than 100 hours per month for the family to be eligible for CalWORKs, even if they otherwise are needy and eligible for the program. This provision of law was based on assumptions about sufficiency of income from hours worked, which can be incorrect, and which have served no good purpose but to punish hard working families and harm children who are poor.

AB 1690 (Ahrens) + Budget Request: Extending the Young Childhood Tax Credit

No child should grow up in poverty—not in California, not anywhere. Currently, families become ineligible for the Young Child Tax Credit (YCTC) once their dependent turns six. This bill gradually expands YCTC eligibility by one year each year so that by 2038 all California Earned Income Tax Credit (CalEITC)-eligible families will qualify for the YCTC. Most families who qualify for the CalEITC are excluded from the full federal Child Tax Credit (CTC), and after the passage of H.R.1 at the federal level, at least one parent will need a Social Security Number in order to claim the CTC, making access to California's YCTC even more critical. By expanding the YCTC to all CalEITC-eligible families, state policymakers can ensure that all children, regardless of their age, have the support they need to thrive.

AB 1790 (Connolly): Close the Water's Edge Corporate Tax Loophole

This bill will end the corporate tax loophole known as Water's Edge, that allows multinational corporations to avoid paying California taxes on approximately \$3-4 billion in profits every year while working women and families struggle to pay their bills.

AB 2564 (Ward): Surveillance Pricing Protection Act

This bill prohibits businesses from using the personal information of a consumer to adjust the price of goods based on their individualized data profile, a practice known as surveillance pricing. This practice drives up the cost of groceries and other essentials for California households, harming working families. The Surveillance Pricing Protection Act will ensure consumers have the right to a “Standard Pricing” to prevent discriminatory and unfair pricing practices.

Budget Request: Supporting Victim Services

The federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) is California’s largest source of funding for victim services. In 2024 alone, 400 VOCA-funded programs across the state supported 940,000 survivors of crime with essential resources such as counseling, rapid rehousing, legal services, and crisis response. Due to shifting federal administration priorities, the federal funding stream has slowly decreased, leaving a gap in the amount needed to sustain local programs here in California. This budget request seeks to backfill the gap in federal funding with a one-time appropriation of \$100 million to stabilize victim services programs that support survivors of sexual and domestic violence, child abuse, human trafficking, elder abuse, and many others.

SB 1422 (Durazo) + Health4All Budget Request: Protecting Access to Health Care for Immigrant Communities

Over the past decade, California has made historic progress towards removing exclusions to full-scope Medi-Cal for income-eligible undocumented Californians. However this progress is now at risk due to 2025-26 state budget cuts that will prevent access to essential health care. In response, the Health4All Budget request urges rollbacks to last year’s Medi-Cal cuts for undocumented Californians, while SB 1422 aims to rollback the recent enrollment freeze of full-scope Medi-Cal for undocumented adults.

Protecting Health & Reproductive Rights

AB 1973 (Aguiar-Curry) Access to Safe Abortion Care

Modernizes California law to allow nurse practitioners, certified nurse-midwives, and physician assistants to provide abortion care to the full extent of their education, training, and clinical competency by removing restrictive and outdated statutory language. This bill expands access to safe abortion care by ensuring that California is fully leveraging its health care workforce so women and families can access the reproductive health care they need, where they are, when they need it.

AB 1876 (Addis): Protect Transgender Patients from Discrimination

Strengthens California law to explicitly prohibit health plans and insurers from discriminating against individuals based on sexual orientation, gender identity, or sex characteristics, and ensures transgender, gender-diverse, and intersex (TGI) Californians cannot be denied or limited

coverage for medically necessary health care. Health plans and insurers in California are required to cover medically necessary health care for TGI people, yet many community members continue to face barriers when accessing care. At a time when the federal government is undermining access to transgender health care, AB 1876 strengthens and reaffirms California's nondiscrimination protections to ensure TGI people can access medically necessary care without discrimination.

AB 1930 (Zbur): Safeguard Patient Privacy from Out-of-State Investigations

Protects the privacy of transgender patients and their health care providers by limiting when a person or entity located, headquartered, or incorporated in California can comply with or respond to subpoenas or investigations related to abortion or transgender health care. Hostile out-of-state efforts to obtain sensitive medical records related to lawful health care provided in California have created fear among patients about how their private medical information could be used against them. AB 1930 strengthens California's privacy protections to safeguard confidential medical information and ensure patients and providers are protected from politically motivated investigations targeting lawful health care.

AB 1542 (Ward): The California Sensitive Data Privacy Act

This bill closes a dangerous loophole in the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) by banning businesses from selling or sharing sensitive personal information to a third party. Californians deserve the right to feel safe and protected while going about their daily lives, seeking vital health care, attending places of worship, exercising their right to free speech or simply going to the grocery store to feed their families.

Budget Request: Protect and Expand Abortion Access by Maintaining the Uncompensated Care Grant Program

This budget request seeks \$30 million over three years (\$10 million per year) to sustain the Uncompensated Care Abortion Access Grant Program, which was established in 2022 after the U.S. Supreme Court's *Dobbs* decision, for people that need abortion and contraception care but cannot provide payment. The Program has depleted its initial funding amount, and without an appropriation this year it will cease to provide this critical support. With H.R. 1 and the federal government's continued hostility towards reproductive freedom, California must sustain this program to ensure continued access to essential health care.

Budget Request: \$26 Million Budget Request — Protect Access to Transgender Health Care

Escalating federal attacks are destabilizing access to health care for transgender, gender-diverse, and intersex (TGI) people, despite clear protections under California law. Proposed federal rules could block federal Medicaid funding for medically necessary care for transgender youth and penalize hospitals that provide this care, creating widespread uncertainty across California's health care system. This investment would establish a state-only Medi-Cal funding pathway to ensure providers can continue delivering legally protected transgender health care if federal funding is restricted, and provide targeted grants to stabilize and rebuild the provider network. Together, these investments would provide stability, ensure continuity of care, and reaffirm California's commitment to protecting access to medically necessary health care.

