



Established in 1991, UCC serves as the representative voice for state legislative advocacy for high-population counties in California. Initially composed of seven counties, the association has grown to 14 today. Over 80 percent of the state's population reside in UCC counties. Consequently, urban counties carry out critical programs and services to the state's most vulnerable populations. For more information, including details on our Board of Directors, please visit [our website](#).

January 21, 2022

Big Change in Senate Leadership Announced This Week

Senate President pro Tempore Toni Atkins **announced** this week that she has appointed Senator Mike McGuire (D-San Rafael) as Senate Majority Leader; the post has been occupied for the last three years by Senator Bob Hertzberg (D-Los Angeles). This new leadership assignment for the energetic Senator McGuire sets off several cascading changes. Senator Hertzberg becomes Majority Leader Emeritus, while Senator Susan Talamantes Eggman (D-Stockton) will assume the role of Assistant Majority Leader, a post previously held by Senator McGuire. Senator McGuire will also pass the mantle as chair of the Senate Governance and Finance Committee to one of his colleagues, but no announcement in that regard has been made.

Senator McGuire, who – among other roles – previously served on the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, has been a strong advocate for county governments broadly as well as for the specific needs of the rural areas of our state.

The role of Senate Majority Leader will, in Senator McGuire's words, be to work closely with Senate President pro Tem Atkins on setting the "legislative and budget priorities for the year" as well as managing the movement of bills through the Senate where Democrats maintain a supermajority (31 Democrats and 9 Republicans).

In related news, Senator Bob Hertzberg announced his candidacy this week to represent the newly redrawn Third District of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Former Senator Sheila Kuehl, who has represented the Third District since 2014, announced a year ago that she would not be seeking

reelection for a third term. Senator Hertzberg's entry into the race sets up a crowded field – sitting Assembly Member Richard Bloom and Senator Henry Stern have also announced they will be competing for this Board seat. Read more about the race in this *Los Angeles Times* [article](#).

Senate Gets First Opportunity to Pose Questions on Governor's Budget Proposal; Assembly's Turn Next Week

The Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee convened on Wednesday of this week to receive overview presentations from the Department of Finance and the Legislative Analyst's Office (LAO) on the Governor's recently released 2022-23 budget proposal. Due to audio problems, there was an extended delay at the beginning of the hearing; as a result, the committee's opportunity to engage in dialogue with Finance and LAO officials and to take public comment was somewhat truncated. We note the following highlights:

- The LAO's [handout](#) outlines several important considerations for the Legislature to consider as they assess the Governor's spending proposal. Notably, the LAO suggests that the Legislature focus on new, existing initiatives to ensure they can be successfully implemented and that the Legislature exercise caution before launching new major programs.
- Additionally, the LAO poses several questions about the Governor's multi-pronged workforce development proposal, specifically how the various efforts will be coordinated and what specific outcomes are being sought.
- The LAO also encourages the Legislature to consider setting aside additional general-purpose reserves.

Committee members asked a variety of follow-up questions. Areas of inquiry included how best to coordinate behavioral health expenditures across departments to ensure the most effective outcomes; why the Administration is proposing to wait until January 2024 to implement the proposed expansion of Medi-Cal coverage to all otherwise eligible individuals, regardless of immigration status; and whether the scope of climate investments is adequate.

Next Wednesday afternoon, the full Assembly Budget Committee will meet for its budget overview hearing.

Legislature Forms Vaccine Work Group

A group of Democratic lawmakers this week announced the formation of a Vaccine Work Group with the goals of (1) developing "cohesive and comprehensive, evidence-based policies" to stop the spread of COVID-19 and other diseases and (2) battling misinformation.

The Vaccine Work Group is comprised of Senators Richard Pan (Sacramento), Scott Wiener (San Francisco), Josh Newman (Fullerton) and Assembly Members Buff Wicks (Oakland), Akilah Weber (San Diego), Evan Low (San Jose), and Cecilia Aguiar-Curry (Winters). The press release announcing the Vaccine Work Group can be found [here](#).

The group will be examining data, hearing from experts, and engaging stakeholders to determine the best approaches to promote vaccines. The work group has been reviewing potential legislation, including access to shots and rules for schools and workplaces. Potential workplace vaccination requirements are possible, especially after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down President Biden's vaccine mandate for large workplaces.

Yesterday, Senator Wiener introduced the first bill stemming from the Work Group, **SB 866**, which would give children 12 and older the ability to consent to any vaccination approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration that meets the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's immunization advisory committee. Under existing law, Californians over the age of 12 can consent to the human papillomavirus (HPV) and hepatitis B vaccines without parental consent.

Single Payer Measure Heads to Assembly Floor

AB 1400, Assembly Member Ash Kalra's single payer measure, passed out of Assembly Appropriations Committee yesterday with **amendments** to make the bill contingent on a funding mechanism, essentially linking AB 1400 and ACA 11 more explicitly. AB 1400 is a two-year bill and, accordingly, must pass off the Assembly Floor by January 31. We will continue to report on related developments.

Legislature Holds Oversight Hearing on Ambulance Patient Offload Delays

The Assembly Emergency Management Committee held an oversight hearing this week on ambulance patient offload delays. Generally, the representatives from fire agencies and ambulance providers blamed hospitals for the patient offload delays. The hearing included a provider panel to balance the concerns and offer insight into the complexities associated with patient offload. Based on comments during the hearing, the Committee is considering legislation to address "wall time." The hearing agenda can be found [here](#).