

The Newsom Nightmare: Why California's Elites Refuse to Face Reality

By Victor Davis Hanson

We've had a series of debates on the future of California, at least in venues for the mayoral race in Los Angeles, in which the [outsider Spencer Pratt](#) challenged Karen Bass, the mayor, and Councilman Nithya Raman, both hard leftists.

And then we had these—a series of gubernatorial debates in which we had just two conservatives, Chad Bianco, the sheriff from Southern California, and Steve Hilton, Fox



commentator.

And they were arrayed against Kathleen Porter, Xavier Becerra, Antonio Villaraigosa, and, in addition, Tom Steyer.

Now, there's a common thread to all of this, none of the people on the Democratic side want to talk about any issues.

In the mayoral race, neither Bass nor Raman wanted to talk about what happened in the LA fire or why [Karen Bass](#) was in Ghana, or we don't want to talk about why the reservoirs were empty or the hydrants not working or it was against the law to remove brush or the conduct of the fire department—or the vice mayor phoning in a bomb threat.

So, when the mayor was gone, the vice mayor was under arrest. There was nobody in control of the city. Nobody wants to talk about the highest taxes on gas in the nation, the highest income tax. Nobody wants to talk about one-third of all the welfare recipients here. Almost half the nation's homeless are here.

The high-speed rail, \$250 billion boondoggle without a foot of track laid. Probably \$250 billion wasted in various government entitlement frauds administered by the state. I could go on and on, but when Spencer Pratt tried to mention these things and ask them why you did this or what ... They don't want to talk about it.

They don't want to talk about because for 20 years, they've had a supermajority in the Legislature in both the Senate and the Assembly, and it's been 20 years since a Republican governor. So, almost all the judiciary, both the federal judiciary under Joe Biden and Barack Obama's nominees, but mostly the state, Superior Court, Appellate Court, Supreme Court, have all been nominated and approved by Democrats.

And so, there's no one else to blame. That's why they will not talk about it. And their argument is essentially, we have this huge \$13 to \$14 trillion Silicon Valley, of which now they've turned on with their millionaire and billionaire taxes, and that runs the whole state. That's their argument.

Every time Gov. [Gavin Newsom](#) is presented with a critique of his leadership, he said, "We're the fifth-largest economy in the world." He never says that I've driven out oil refineries.

I prohibited pipeline construction. I drove out the timber industry, and that I, as a San Francisco County official, as a mayor of San Francisco, as a lieutenant governor of the state, and as governor, I've had over 32 years, and no one is more responsible for California as it is today than Gavin Newsom.

No, he won't talk about any of these problems. He just talks about Donald Trump, Donald Trump, Donald Trump. He has these nasty sort of Truth Social people who use capital letters, foul language, and threaten people. I'm gonna hit Trump in the mouth, or people in Europe got on their knee pads, kind of foul imagery, thinks it's really neat.

He gives these interviews where he kind of wiggles his shoulders, but he doesn't talk about his record. So how did we get here if they didn't tell us? How did a state that was well-governed and had a natural paradise and was the envy of all 50 states in matters of energy production, defense, production, tripartite higher education system, a solid K-12 educational, system, great infrastructure—

Why would the American Trucking Association say, "I don't want you driving on the 99 or north-south lateral"? Most dangerous highway in the nation per miles driven. What happened? Well, how did these people come to power? The first thing was that we had an explosion in technology in the 1970s and '80s, and due to the location of Stanford University and UC Berkeley, in between was Silicon Valley.

And that boomed as the creators of everything from computers to iPhones to iPads to Adobe to everything. Now it's AI, and that has now ballooned to \$14 or \$15 trillion in market capitalization, and it's left-wing. At least it was until recently. The state has turned on them. We'll see what happens.

But when [Gavin Newsom](#) says we're the fifth-largest economy in the world, he doesn't talk about

anything he's done. He's saying that despite our efforts, these people are multibillionaires, and they're anchoring our entire agenda and paying for it and subsidizing candidates, donating to candidates.

Second is when this thing started, high taxes, very little in return from it, we were losing 200 to 300,000 people a year. So, the proverbial Dalmatian Pete Wilson, Ronald Reagan, Arnold Schwarzenegger voter doesn't exist. He and she are in Montana. They're in Nevada. They're in Florida. They're in Tennessee. They're in Texas.

And they're making those states redder and redder, but they're gone. And then we had the highest level of illegal and legal immigration of any other state. So we probably had half of the original 11 million illegal aliens that were here, maybe up to 20, before the Biden influx. We don't know how many they are.

When Karen Bass was asked specifically, "Would you allow illegal aliens to vote in California elections?" She wouldn't answer the question because she knew she'd have to say yes and get some criticism from people on the stage, one person on the stage maybe. And so, 27% of the state residents were not born in the United States.

That's an enormous task of acculturation, assimilation, integration, language fluency, civic education. We didn't do any of that. And those are powerful lobby groups, and they feel as newcomers they are not as affluent, although many are, as the existing resident population, and they should have repertory entitlements, and they should run them.

And so, you put all of those things together and California is what it is. What can save California? What will save California?

Well, if the people who got their wish, and that's the people, 60% of the population who continually vote in the Karen Basses

and the Gavin Newsoms, and they approve of that agenda.

And yet gas is now about \$8 on the coast, and here it's about 6.50 a gallon [in California](#), \$2 at least higher than elsewhere. Electricity runs from 30 to 45 cents a kilowatt, and we're gonna have shortages. There's not enough water anymore because of the releases into the bay.

My point is that there's so much regulation, and there's so much bureaucracy, and there's so much diversion of key monies from infrastructure to illegal aliens or to subsidize the 50% of the state who's on Medi-Cal, if you have all of that, who can stop it?

The only answer is it won't work anymore. It'll reach collapse. It will be unsustainable. What can't go on, as the old proverb says, won't go on. And then people will say, "Well, where's my dialysis clinic?" Or, "It's too dangerous to drive to San Francisco from Fresno."

"A DUI person hit my daughter on the highway and left the scene of the accident, and we don't know where he is. And if we do know where he is, he's gonna be out with no cash bail."

So, when it starts to hit a majority of the people, and we're very close to that, then it won't go on anymore.

But the question I leave you with, when it's no longer sustainable and people say, "I can't take this anymore," and they start voting in a different fashion, will there be a California left to save?

First published in the [Daily Signal](#)