

California is at a critical juncture; John Cox is the right man to lead it

By Andrea Seastrand

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In my [previous column](#), I discussed the troubling times ahead if Gavin Newsom becomes our next governor. Fortunately for anyone who wants California to remain a viable place for ordinary people to live, voters have another choice in John Cox — someone who can bring long-needed balance back to Sacramento.

Cox's agenda focuses on making life better for all Californians, not just for the ultra-wealthy with political connections who have thrived under Jerry Brown and Democratic rule.

While working- and middle-class families are squeezed, Hollywood is benefiting from [a newly passed film tax credit](#) that will cost taxpayers billions before it expires in 2025. Silicon Valley's wealthy companies use complex accounting tricks to [dodge paying California state taxes](#), despite being some of the most profitable corporations in the world.

Yet everyone else is not so fortunate. The recent increases to the state's gas and car taxes are symbolic of how California is run.

Despite a multi-billion budget surplus, the state passed a permanent, highly regressive gas and car tax that will cost taxpayers more than \$50 billion over 10 years. The typical family of four will pay \$779.28 more per year in higher taxes. These types of taxes disproportionately impact people living paycheck-to-paycheck and, unlike large companies, do not have enough influence to create loopholes to get out of paying them.

As a final irony, the higher gas taxes will do little to relieve traffic congestion for low-income workers forced to endure long commutes into expensive urban areas because they cannot afford housing.

Despite not being in office yet, Cox already is showing leadership with his efforts to make the state more affordable. Cox helped [lead and finance](#) Proposition 6 (YES on 6), which would repeal the gas tax and require voter approval for future increases on fuel. Repealing the gas tax will finally let

voters send a strong message to Sacramento that people are fed up with rising taxes and the state's other policies that contribute to making the cost of living unaffordable. If Cox is elected, the taxpayer revolt against the gas tax could just be the start.

With the state Legislature remaining firmly in Democrats' hands, as governor, Cox's best tool would be his veto pen. With it, he could block any bill that would continue to send California in the wrong direction.

As California Democrats continue to [move further and further](#) to the far left of the political spectrum, this check on their actions becomes exponentially more important.

Due to the power to veto legislation, having a Republican as governor would require bipartisan cooperation on the biggest issues facing our state — something we are drastically missing when Democrats control all levels of government. Sacramento would be in for a major shakeup, as Cox would have final say on all legislation and with it, the leverage to push forward his agenda.

For moderate Democrats, independents and frankly, all of California, having a Republican governor like Cox is a good thing because it will bring balance. The current trend in California is a troubling one that squeezes ordinary people while handing out special treatment to well-connected wealthy interests. That trend could start to be reversed.

Cox has rightly focused his campaign on the issue of making California affordable again. In addition to rising transportation costs due to higher gas and car taxes, housing prices also are a flash-point issue. Working- and middle-class families are paying more and more for housing across the state. Rising housing costs more than wipe out any extra income workers receive from California's \$15 minimum wage that will be phased in by 2023.

While [Newsom favors increased government requirements](#) for housing construction, Cox focuses on the underlying problem of reducing the price of building new housing. Cox's background experience in real estate no doubt gives him insights on how to start making tangible progress toward solving the housing crisis.

Like many issues, housing is just one example of how Cox's career in business and ability to focus on the key issues like the cost of living make him a good choice for governor. California is at a critical juncture with two very different choices for its next leader. Let's hope this can be the moment California starts going back in the right direction.

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