

CLAIM THE FUTURE STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS

GROWING TOGETHER IN THE MODERN ECONOMY

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN CAUCUS**

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#GrowTogetherCA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Embrace The Modern Economy

1. State Employee Access To The Sharing Economy (AB 229, Chang):

Modernize outdated laws providing state workers with greater market choice through new transportation and short-term rental options.

- Under current law, the state reimburses employees for all necessary and actual expenses they incur when they travel on official state business.
- AB 229 will update state law to reflect the emergence of the sharing economy, ensuring that state employees can be reimbursed for services provided by transportation network companies and short-term lodging rentals.

2. Flex-Time (AB 1038, Jones): Update the traditional 40-hour work week by empowering employees with more flexibility to accommodate modern life.

- California's statutes make it very difficult for most employers and employees to select alternative workweek schedules, with no mechanism for individual employees to request a flexible work schedule.
- AB 1038 would permit an individual employee to request in writing an alternative workweek schedule providing for workdays up to 10 hours within a 40-hour workweek. Such a voluntary agreement between employers and employees would establish a mutually beneficial environment for working parents, students, and caregivers that leads to greater economic productivity and personal satisfaction.

3. Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force (AB 14, Waldron): Proactively shapes policy recommendations for the adoption of unmanned aircraft systems to meet California's specialized aerospace, agricultural, commercial, scientific, public safety, and government needs.

- Existing federal law provides for the integration of civil unmanned aircraft systems, commonly known as drones, into the national airspace system.

Recognizing the demand to expedite the integration of Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) into the National Airspace System (NAS), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has begun to delineate draft guidelines for UAS operation.

- AB 14 creates the Unmanned Aircraft Systems Task Force responsible for formulating a plan for the operation of unmanned aircraft systems in California. This task force will also develop a broad policy draft that will safeguard an individual's privacy while at the same time allowing for the public and private use of drones, and promoting the development of the unmanned aircraft industry in our state.

4. Federal Patent Reform (AJR9, Chang): Calls on Congress and the President to enact reforms that will minimize frivolous patent lawsuits while maintaining the integrity of federal patent system.

- Patent Assertion Entities (PAEs) – more colloquially referred to as “patent trolls,” – form shell companies that have no other purpose than to shakedown companies for perceived patent infringements.
- AJR 9 will urge the President and Congress to craft a balanced and workable approach to minimize abusive and frivolous patent litigation while ensuring that legitimate patent enforcement rights are protected and maintained.

Simplify & Expedite CEQA To Address California's Water & Housing Crises

5. Water Storage Construction – CEQA Streamlining (AB 311, Gallagher):

Expedite the construction of voter-approved water storage facilities that will increase water storage capacity across the state and help prepare for periods of drought, while also ensuring ample supply for economic growth.

- Last November, voters approved a water bond that included \$2.7 billion for above-ground water storage projects. As California enters its fourth year of drought, projects including the Sites Reservoir and Temperance Flat Dam are crucial to increasing the state's water supply and must be expedited.
- AB 311 does not eliminate environmental review, it simply ensures that the process is simplified and expedited in order to facilitate building critical

water storage projects identified in the CALFED Bay-Delta Program. Eligible projects would be Sites Reservoir, expanding Los Vaqueros Reservoir, Temperance Flat Dam, and in-Delta storage projects.

6. Building New Housing Supply – CEQA Streamlining (AB 641, Mayes):

Address California’s critical housing shortage by building new homes that will release pressure on home prices and help workers find housing options that are closer to work with shorter commutes.

- The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process can be time consuming for developers. CEQA documents submitted to the state by California’s 10 largest cities between 2004–2013 indicate that local agencies took, on average, around two and a half years to approve housing projects that required an Environmental Impact Review. In addition, the average development fee levied by California local governments (excluding water–related fees) was just over \$22,000 per single–family home compared with about \$6,000 per single–family home in the rest of the country.
- AB 641 would require CEQA litigation brought against a housing project to be resolved within 270 days. AB 641 does not loosen CEQA’s environmental standards, but rather merely limits the length of litigation so that urgently needed housing stock can be added to the market.

Ensure Tax Dollars Support An Efficient & Reliable Transportation System

7. Vehicle Weight Fee (AB 4, Linder): End the diversion of the Vehicle Weight Fee, restoring approximately \$900 million in annual funding for highway projects.

- As part of the “gas tax swap” in 2010, Vehicle Weight Fees were redirected from the State Highway Account to the General Fund to provide transportation-related bond debt service.
- With state finances regaining stability, weight fees are no longer needed to provide General Fund relief. AB 4 would restore the \$900 million in annual funding collected through the vehicle weight fee and dedicate it to highway repair projects.

8. Protection For BART Riders: No Strikes (AB 528, Baker): Protects the 400,000 riders that rely daily on the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) to get to work, go to school, see the doctor, visit family and friends, and engage in their communities. BART's services are essential to Bay Area residents, commuters, and the economy. Two strikes in 2013 brought the Bay Area to a grinding halt, cost more than \$73 million dollars a day to the Bay Area economy, and caused environmental damage in greater carbon emissions. These 2013 strikes occurred even though BART workers had agreed to a no-strike clause in their contract.

- In their past and current labor contracts, BART workers agreed to “no-strike” clauses that prohibited strikes and work stoppages. The workers went on strike anyway, because the contract with a no-strike clause had expired. They went on strike even though they had continued to receive wages and benefits under the expired contract during negotiations.
- AB 528 ensures that jobs and public safety, health, and welfare are protected in a way that is fair to workers and fair to riders. If BART employees continue to receive pay and other benefits under the expired contract, and that expired contract has a no-strike clause to which workers already agreed, the workers must abide by the no-strike clause of that contract during contract negotiations.

9. Commuter Shuttle Use Of Public Bus Stops (AB 61, Allen): Grants private commuter shuttles commonly referred to as “tech buses” the ability to use public bus stops, thereby taking commuters off the road and reducing congestion.

- Without an agreement with the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, the State Vehicle Code prohibits buses other than those operated by Muni from stopping and loading or unloading passengers in a bus zone.
- AB 61 clarifies the State Vehicle Code, affirming that local jurisdictions have the ability to permit employer-chartered shuttles use of municipal curb space.

10. Commitment To Long-Term Transportation Funding Solution. The Assembly Republican Caucus is committed to engaging in a productive dialogue that helps identify a stable funding source that: (1) meets the \$59 billion in existing deferred road maintenance and (2) provides robust support to meet the future transportation infrastructure demands of both individuals and commerce.