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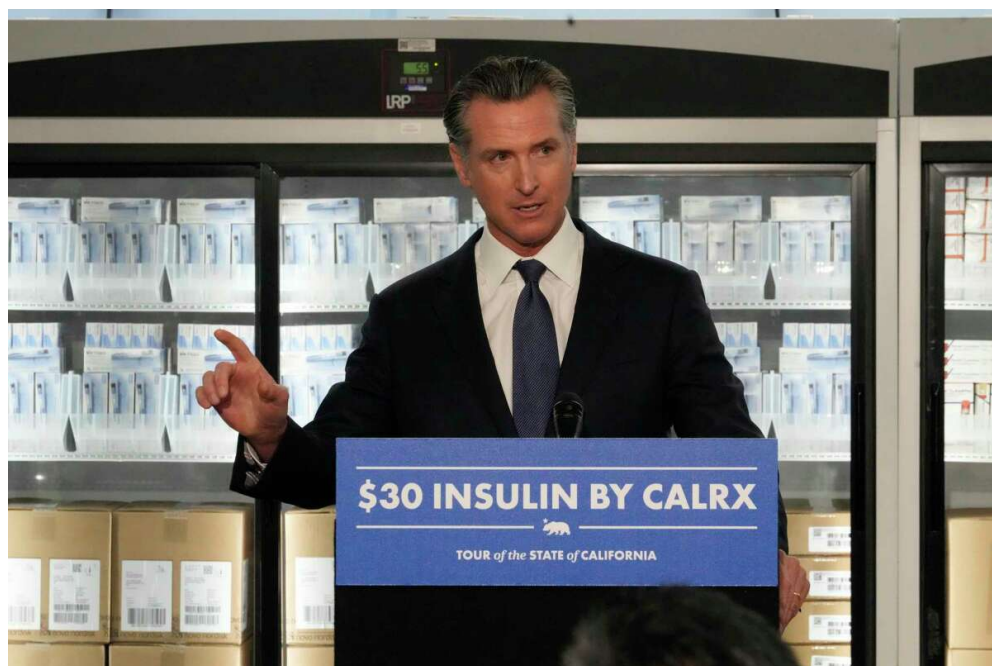
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OPINION // LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters: How single-payer health care in California will save us hundreds of billions

Chronicle readers

March 24, 2023



Gov. Gavin Newsom announces a partnership with Civica Rx to manufacture insulin for the state. Newsom has said he supports creating a single-payer health system in California.
Damian Dovarganes/Associated Press

Regarding “[New bill would pressure Newsom to speed up work on single-payer health care](#)” (Politics, SFChronicle.com, March 21): The “hefty tax increase” mentioned is accurate but widely misunderstood and often used by opponents of the single-payer model of financing universal health care to trick us into thinking that people will be burdened with unaffordable costs.

Gov. Gavin Newsom’s Healthy California for All Commission and over 20 other economic studies have shown that a single-payer program can reduce the cost of health care compared with the status quo. According to the commission, failure to carry out the overhaul envisioned by [state Sen. Scott Weiner’s SB770](#) will add [around \\$500 billion](#) to current spending over the next decade.

The key point is that fair and graduated taxes will replace the premiums we (and in some cases, employers) pay now. Imagine all health care services and medications “free” at the point of service (they’re prepaid)!

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Due to built-in savings, paying through taxes will bring our costs down. You can calculate an estimate of your own savings at <https://healthyca.org/calculator/>.

Turn your “tax increase” into savings by supporting single-payer reform.

Henry Abrons, Berkeley

Tolls won’t cut traffic

Regarding “[One plan to fix Bay Area traffic congestion: A toll for driving on the region’s highways](#)” (Bay Area, SFChronicle.com, March 9): Much of our highway congestion is the result of people commuting long distances for work. This is exacerbated by expensive housing where jobs are available.

Affluent people can choose to live near where they work (or telecommute) while working folks of modest or low incomes must travel far. Adding tolls to highways would further penalize those least economically able to pay more.

Every county in the Bay Area has towns that refuse to ensure there is housing for people of all economic levels, even in the face of state mandates.

Lack of affordable housing causes traffic and the “solution” of charging more on top of that is simply more of the same: the well-to-do punishing the less affluent for a problem the well-to-do have caused by their NIMBY-ism.

If you want to reduce traffic, the solution is to build affordable housing where jobs are instead of new “taxes” for those least able to pay.

David Mischel, San Francisco

Gas is more efficient

Regarding “[Bay Area will end sales of gas furnaces and water heaters. Here’s what it means for you](#)” (Bay Area, SFChronicle.com, March 15): I am concerned that we’re not focused on the right way to limit pollution and greenhouse gases.

In the Bay Area, electricity is the most unreliable source of energy. What if demand increased 10% or 20%? What is PG&E going to do?: build more gas-fired power plants.

Typical gas-fired power plants are 45% to 57% efficient in converting gas to electricity and can be as low as 30%. And remember electricity loses more efficiency the farther it moves through the grid.

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Compare that to the new gas furnaces that are 95% to 99% efficient in converting gas to heat. You can see the problem. The pollution we save locally is now generating more pollution for some other community and emitting more carbon emissions. Plus, we have substituted the most stable and reliable energy delivery system with a unreliable system.

If we are committed to minimizing global warming, this plan to phase out gas appliances will make matters worse until all electricity is generated by renewable sources, which is still a long way away.

New construction should only use 99% efficient gas furnances, which would be much better for the planet.

Rick Peterson, Novato

Tall trees pose risks

Regarding [“Trees bad for cities”](#) (Letters to the Editor, March 23): I would suggest that the call to replant eucalyptus trees in the center divide on Van Ness Avenue doesn’t go far enough in light of how many trees have fallen in recent storms.

San Francisco should re-examine the wisdom of allowing gigantic trees in residential neighborhoods. I’m looking out of my window and there’s a none too healthy looking tree that must be 100 feet tall, straining against the wind.

Linas Rukas, San Francisco

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Written By

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Here's what dazzling northern lights display looked like in California

California was treated to a rare, dazzling display of the northern lights. One scientist says they could be back soon.

BY ANNIE VAINSHTEIN

Another rare weather system is headed for California. Here's a timeline

BY GERRY DÍAZ

California's COVID battle hits another promising milestone

BY AIDIN VAZIRI

'Vertigo' remake will star Robert Downey Jr. Will it be shot in S.F.?

BY G. ALLEN JOHNSON

Opinion: Love Trader Joe's? Here's how to make it better

BY SOLEIL HO

San Francisco Chronicle

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