

## POLICY WATCH – August 2016

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NBLC is pleased to announce this year's Leaders of the North Bay. I found it so uplifting to learn about these people and organizations who are changing lives and doing the hard work to strengthen communities and increase opportunities. The keynote for the awards luncheon is a very topical speaker, Honey Al-Sayed. Ms. Al-Sayed will speak on her former homeland, Syria, and her efforts to restore peace there and improve the lives of women worldwide.

We also lament the failure to address the housing crisis, so dire in the North Bay. How can we not provide housing for our children and North Bay workers? More new housing is needed and we must seek out ways, like more second units, to meet the demand. Failure to build will hurt the vibrancy of our workforce and the vitality of our economy.

There is some hope there could be a compromise in the works to fix our roads. Guarded optimism is present for a passage of a bill this year. We are thinking good thoughts!

Lastly, new insights into the growth of automation and its impact on the workforce, especially on the men. Training existing and future workers for jobs that can't be automated needs to become a higher priority.

Best,



Cynthia

### Announcing the 2016 Leaders of the North Bay Honorees

North Bay Leadership Council is pleased to announce this year's Leaders of the North Bay. These awards were created to recognize leadership in five areas. The goal is to share these role models with the North Bay community to help inspire and grow new leaders. This year's honorees are certain to do just that!

The 2016 Leaders will be honored at a luncheon on November 4<sup>th</sup> at the Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael. They are:

**Caught in the Act of Leadership (Individual Leadership):** Matt Martin, Social Advocates for Youth

**We're All in this Together (Community Building):** Andrew Giacomini, Hanson Bridgett

**Paint the Community Green (Environmental Stewardship):** Nick Papadopoulos, Cropmobster

**The Light Bulb Went On (Innovative/Entrepreneurial Spirit):** Rachel Ginis, Lilypad Homes

**Empowering the Latino Community:** Wendy Lopez, PDI Surgery Center

The luncheon's keynote speaker is Honey Al-Sayed - a journalist, media consultant and educator. After the outbreak of the Syrian uprising, Honey Al-Sayed came to the U.S. and co-founded SouriaLi – an independent, nonprofit, online radio station where she serves as media consultant, host, and producer. She is also a co-founder of the RO'YA Association ("Vision for a Better Syria"), the founding association and main sponsor of SouriaLi Radio. Ms. Al-Sayed was the Creative Consultant on "Red Lines," an independent documentary film that presents a rare window into the Syrian conflict as it follows two young activists from the trenches to the halls of power worldwide and becoming, along the way, a searing exposé of that country's political and humanitarian crisis.



In Syria, Ms. Al-Sayed was the host and producer of the popular, bi-lingual radio show "Good Morning Syria," an award-winning program focused on civil and social reform. She also created a platform called Positive Media, which focuses on promoting leadership and tolerance in Syria by communicating positive messages at the grassroots level. Ms. Al-Sayed is a respected speaker on women's empowerment and the role of media and the arts in catalyzing social change and peacebuilding.

Tickets go on sale September 1<sup>st</sup> and always sell out quickly. Tickets are \$85/person or \$680/table of 8. To purchase tickets, go to [here](#). For more information, please contact [info@northbayleadership.org](mailto:info@northbayleadership.org).

## Housing Crisis Given Short Shrift by State Legislature



In [Trying to address California's lack of affordable housing](#), (Los Angeles Times, <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-sac-california-legislature-2016-affordable-housing-1470681866-htmlstory.html>), we get an update on the housing crisis response by the State Legislature. As addressed in the last issue of Policy Watch, the housing crisis is worsening and the most important way to ease this crisis is to build more housing. Gov. Brown proposed some streamlining measures to get more construction

going for workforce and affordable housing in "infill" neighborhoods.

Unfortunately, reports the LA Times, "Trailer Bill 707: A Brown-led initiative, now crafted as a "trailer" bill related to the state budget enacted in June, would streamline local approval for housing developments that reserve some of their units for low-income residents. If a version of the bill passes, the governor has agreed to spend \$400 million this year on housing subsidy programs. On Aug. 18, Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (D-Paramount) declared the Brown measure dead for the year, which ends the most prominent housing debate at the Capitol. It's also unlikely the \$400 million reserved for low-income housing subsidies as part of the deal will be spent. The by right housing measure is facing significant opposition, especially from powerful labor and environmental groups, who argue it cuts away too much review for housing under the state's primary environmental law governing development and should require higher wages for construction workers."

Other bills to watch include:

- AB 2299, AB 2406, SB 1069: “These three bills would try to make it easier for homeowners to add another housing unit in their backyards or as part of their existing homes. Sen. Bob Wieckowski (D-Fremont), the author of SB 1069, said it’s now all the more important for his additional unit bill to pass and he’s confident it will happen soon.” Second units could add thousands of new housing units in the very near term. The Bay Area Council says, “SB 1069 passed out of the Senate with broad bi-partisan support and a vote by the Assembly is coming within the next few days. It is supported by a rainbow coalition, including AARP, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Western Center on Law and Poverty, California Teachers Association and the California Chamber of Commerce.”

The Bay Area Council continues, “The gravity of the housing crisis was emphasized in results of a poll released this week by the Building Industry Association of the Bay Area that found residents overwhelmingly rank housing as the region’s biggest issue. There was particular concern about the ability of future generations and those with lower incomes to afford housing in the region. The poll also showed there is considerable support for making it easier to build more housing and streamlining the local housing approval process.”

- SB 879: This bill is a \$3-billion bond package of low-income housing subsidies that would require voter approval in November 2018.

These bills need to be passed by August 31<sup>st</sup>, so we will know soon what gets through the Legislature and on to the Governor’s desk for signing.

## Fix Our Roads – Compromise Bill Proposed but Will It Gain Republican Support?

In [New Transportation Funding Plan: A Hot Mess, With Some Active Transportation \\$](http://cal.streetsblog.org/2016/08/25/new-transportation-funding-plan-a-hot-mess-with-some-active-transp/#more-6567) by Melanie Curry, (StreetsBlog, <http://cal.streetsblog.org/2016/08/25/new-transportation-funding-plan-a-hot-mess-with-some-active-transp/#more-6567>) we get a look at the compromise reached between the Senate and Assembly on transportation. But, this compromise is between the Democrats in both houses, so don’t get your hopes up too soon that the Republicans will find what is proposed a worthy compromise, despite including some of the key items that Republicans have been demanding.



Melanie Curry says, “The bill, S.B. X1-1 and A.B. X1-26, is co-authored by Senator Jim Beall (D-Campbell) and Assemblymember Jim Frazier (D-Oakley), the “two Jims” who head up their separate houses’ special session transportation committees. It contains the gas tax increases that Beall believes are necessary to continue funding transportation, and it applies some funding to the freight corridor improvements that Frazier has made his focus. It also contains provisions that echo Republican demands for both more independence and more oversight of transportation departments, depending on the department.”

“Because it’s part of the Special Session, S.B. X1-1 is not subject to the normal legislative deadlines, so although the regular session officially ends on August 31, the bill can keep chugging along until the end of

November,” says Curry. “However, legislators’ attention will be on their re-election campaigns in the fall, and it’s not clear whether calling them back to a post-election session would be fruitful. It’s also not clear what kind of support the proposal will find among the rest of the legislators. Because it requires a two-thirds majority to pass, it will need the votes of all the Democrats and at least some Republicans in both the Assembly and the Senate to move forward. Which may be why it’s a very large bill that covers a lot of ground.”

Some of the details in the bill are:

- It would raise the gas tax by 17 cents a gallon and the diesel tax by 30 cents a gallon, and increase the vehicle registration fee by \$38, with a higher fee (\$165) for zero emission vehicles that by definition pay no gas taxes
- It would eliminate several confusing practices related to taxes, repay loans made by the transportation fund, and index taxes and fees to inflation to eliminate the need to raise or adjust them later
- It would allocate a total of \$7.4 billion annually to: state (\$2.9 billion); regional (\$534 million); and local jurisdictions (\$2.5 billion) for highway and road repair and maintenance; transit capital projects (\$516 million); freight corridor improvements (\$900 million); active transportation (\$80 million, with up to \$70 million additional from “efficiencies and savings” at Caltrans); and Advanced Mitigation Program (\$30 million)
- It would expand CEQA exemptions to include state roadway projects within an existing right of way
- It would increase the diesel tax by 30 cents per gallon, also indexed to inflation
- It would create an independent office of Inspector General for transportation and remove the California Transportation Commission (CTC) from oversight by the California State Transportation Agency, (CalSTA). CalSTA was created a few years ago to bring all the transportation departments together under one agency, including the CHP, the DMV, CTC, and Caltrans, among others. The CTC is an appointed body that makes decisions about which transportation projects get funding.

We are crossing our fingers that this bill finally gets the support it needs to be enacted but given the timing of taking action outside of the regular legislative session and the polarized climate in this election season, it will be miraculous if this bill passes this year. Please do contact your elected representatives to express support, perhaps while sitting in traffic on top of crumbling roads.

## Why Men Aren’t Working – And the Number Is Growing

The Washington Post’s Wonkblog explored “Why Men Aren’t Working – And the Number Is Growing,” by Yan Q. Mui (<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2016/06/20/why-americas-men-arent-working/>). Many theories abound on why the number in men in America’s workforce is declining. The blog says, But there’s one statistic that has been vexing economists. The size of the nation’s workforce -- known as the labor force participation rate -- continues to fall. Since the start of the downturn, the percentage of that population that has a job or is looking for one has dropped more than 3 percentage points, to 62.6 percent, a level not seen since the 1970s.”

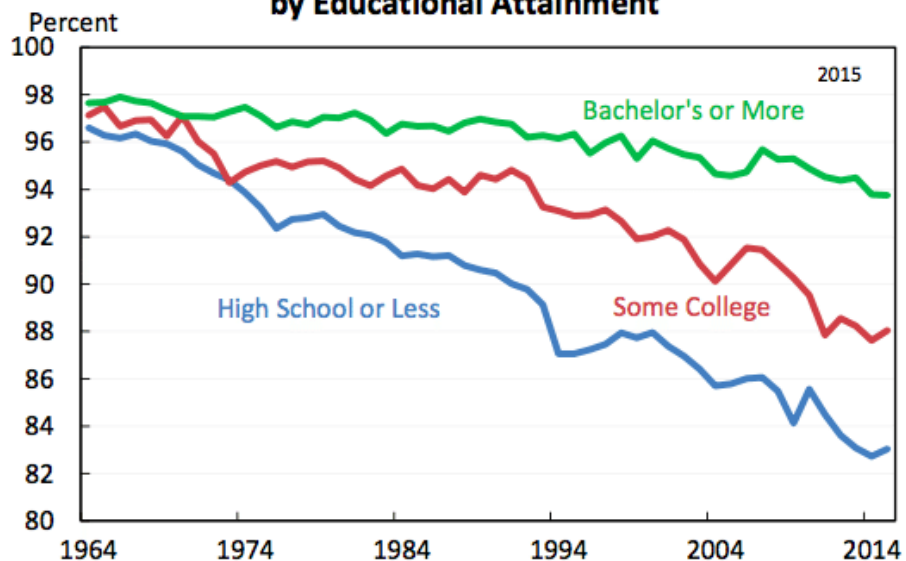
Mui says, “The problem is particularly pronounced among men between the ages of 25 and 54, traditionally considered the prime working years. Their participation rate has been declining for decades, but the drop-off accelerated during the recession. The high mark was 98 percent in 1954, and it now

stands at 88 percent. A new analysis from the White House’s Council of Economic Advisers found that the United States now has the third-lowest participation rate for “prime-age men” among the world’s developed countries. In other words, Greece, Slovenia and Turkey have a larger share of men in their workforces than the United States does. The United States beats only Italy and Israel.”

The article debunks the theory that women are supplanting the men, that isn’t the case and in fact, the number of women in the workforce has also declined. So is it men availing themselves of Social Security Disability Insurance rather than looking for work? In short, no.

The answer is the lack of education of the men NOT in the workforce. Mui says, “the CEA concludes that the problem is one of education and the erosion of demand for low-skilled workers. More than 90 percent of college-educated men are in the workforce, compared with 83 percent of those with a high school diploma or less. It’s a theme seen time and again in our increasingly globalized and high-tech economy: Blue-collar jobs that were once the cornerstone of the middle class get outsourced or replaced by automation.” Again, we see that the Fourth Industrial Revolution is taking its toll on the ability to find work if you lack the skills needed to compete, and if the predictions are right, we will see much greater increases in the amount of men, and women, unable to participate in the labor force.

**Figure 9: Prime-Age Male Labor Force Participation by Educational Attainment**



Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Current Population Survey (Annual Social and Economic Supplement); CEA calculations.

Another factor in the inability to find work also reflects on American life: America’s high rate of incarceration. Says Mui, “People in prison are not counted as part of the population for the purposes of labor market statistics. At first blush, that would actually boost the participation rate: A smaller population means the share in the workforce is larger. But in reality, there are immense and well-documented barriers to the job market for workers once they leave prison. And the gloomy prospects of the formerly incarcerated outweigh the statistical benefit of having a large prison population.”

We need to pay attention to these displaced workers and develop strategies and programs to help them return to gainful employment. Those people who are unable to be self-sufficient will shape our country’s future with demands for equity and need for basic income.

## Members in the News

### Speedway Motorsports Puts Fans, Families First with \$10 NASCAR Cup Series Kids' Tickets at All Eight Facilities Beginning in 2017

In conjunction with a NASCAR industry-wide effort to offer free NASCAR Camping World Truck Series and XFINITY Series tickets for children 12 and under next season, Speedway Motorsports, Inc. (NYSE: TRK) announced a company-wide Fans First initiative Monday to price select children's tickets at just \$10 each to Cup Series events at its eight premier speedways beginning in 2017.

### Congratulations to NBLC Companies named one of the 98 Best Places to Work in the North Bay

Ninety-eight companies have earned a spot on the Business Journal's 11th annual list of the "Best Places to Work in the North Bay." NBLC congratulates our members who were honored.

### Redwood Credit Union Offers 2016 Lake County Fire Victims Relief Fund

Redwood Credit Union (RCU) is accepting donations to assist those impacted by the Lake County Clayton Fire.

### Sonoma State University's Wine Business Institute Receives \$100,000 Gift from Republic National Distributing Company

The Wine Business Institute (WBI) at Sonoma State University (SSU) today announced the latest round of financial support for the future Wine Spectator Learning Center from Republic National Distributing Company, a family-owned business and the second largest wholesale wine and spirits distributor in the country.

### Star Staffing's Nicole Smartt shares secrets to her success in new book

Part autobiography, part self-help book, it is filled with insights Smartt learned during a career that has taken her to co-owner of a Petaluma staffing firm.

### AT&T Kicks Off Aspire Accelerator With 6 Leading Ed-Tech Startups

AT&T is working with 6 innovative ed-tech startups for the 2016 AT&T Aspire Accelerator class.

Read more online at [www.northbayleadership.org/news](http://www.northbayleadership.org/news)



### Who We Are

Over twenty years ago, business leaders founded the North Bay Leadership Council on a simple premise: We can accomplish more by working together. Today, the Council includes 47 leading employers in the North Bay. Our members represent a wide variety of businesses, non-profits and educational institutions, with a workforce in excess of 25,000. As business and civic leaders, our goal is to promote sound public policy, innovation and sustainability to make our region a better place to live and work. For more information: Call

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