



California Equity Quarterly

Winter 2014

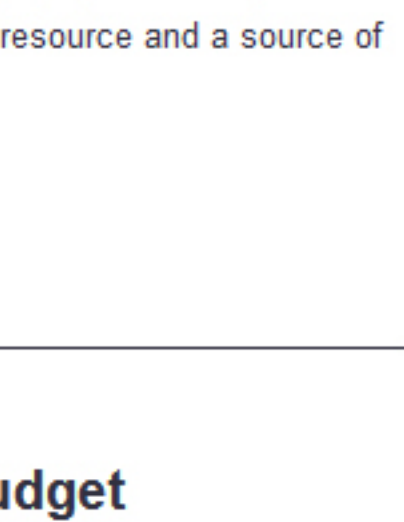
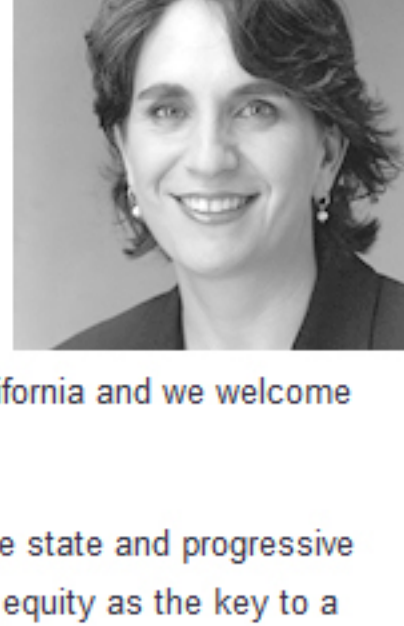
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PolicyLink is a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity by Lifting Up What Works ©.

Welcome from Founder and CEO Angela Glover Blackwell and President Judith Bell

We are delighted to introduce the inaugural issue of the *California Equity Quarterly*, a PolicyLink periodical devoted to lifting up the most innovative and transformative efforts to further equity in California. As PolicyLink celebrates its 15th year as a national research and action institute advancing economic and social equity, our home state of California is [poised to lead the nation](#) by adopting policies that embrace low-income communities and communities of color as integral to the fabric of a strong economy. California's population has been majority people of color for decades—a demographic reality the nation will soon face as a whole. Now is the time for the state to model how an equitable and inclusive society is the best way to attain shared prosperity.



Each issue of the *California Equity Quarterly* will focus on the equity implications of recent policies, highlight statewide news and local success stories, and celebrate emerging equity leadership. We aim to craft a publication that champions on-the-ground campaigns to achieve equity in California and we welcome your nominations, suggestions, and feedback in that effort.

In partnership with a growing number of dedicated equity advocates across the state and progressive leaders in Sacramento, PolicyLink is more committed than ever to advancing equity as the key to a booming California. We hope that the *California Equity Quarterly* will act as a resource and a source of inspiration for our state's flourishing equity movement.

Angela Glover Blackwell *Judith Bell*

California Policy Update Equity Analysis of the Governor's Proposed Budget



Governor Brown's 2014-15 proposed budget represents a dramatic departure from those of the last decade. Instead of focusing on how to close a multibillion dollar budget gap, this year's proposal examines how we should leverage a significantly better-than-anticipated budget surplus to prepare our state for a prosperous and stable future.

The governor's proposal wisely invests more funding in education, infrastructure, and health-care coverage and sensibly recommends expanding parole possibilities for nonviolent offenders. It recognizes that California's already rich racial and ethnic diversity is increasing as the population grows and that our state's future well-being is dependent on preparing this increasingly diverse population for the jobs of the future.

To accomplish this, the governor's budget includes important investments in low-income communities and communities of color. However, more reinvestment in critical, defunded programs is still needed, and the proposal misses opportunities to lay the groundwork for promising, new solutions.

Between now and June, when the budget is formally adopted, the governor, the legislature, and equity advocates should work to improve the budget by: (1) strengthening the targeting of disadvantaged communities; (2) ensuring that workforce inclusion goals are included in all budget expenditures; (3) prioritizing infrastructure investments that improve public health and expand access and opportunity in disinvested communities; (4) expanding investments to reduce incarceration and recidivism, and accelerate community healing; and (5) bolstering our safety net so that when individuals and families need help the most, it is available.

For more analysis, [read](#) our full equity overview of the proposed budget, which recommends investing in the people and places most left behind with a focus on three key priorities: 1) rebuilding our public infrastructure; 2) preparing our youth and workers for the jobs of tomorrow; and 3) supporting healthy, sustainable communities.

In Brief Promise Zone in Los Angeles

As part of a new place-based, federal anti-poverty initiative which builds on the successful [Promise Neighborhoods](#) program, [President Obama announced](#) that Los Angeles has been selected as the location for one of five new Promise Zones.

"Anybody in this country who works hard should have a fair shot at success. Period. Doesn't matter where they come from, what region of the country, what they look like, what their last name is, they should be able to succeed," said the President.

The effort will be a partnership between the federal government, the City of Los Angeles, local communities, and businesses to create jobs, increase economic security, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality, affordable housing, and improve public transportation.

The LA Promise Zone will include parts of the Pico-Union, Westlake, Koreatown, East Hollywood and Hollywood neighborhoods. The other Promise Zones will be located in San Antonio, Texas, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, eastern Kentucky, and the Choctaw Nation based in Oklahoma.

Temporary Setback for Fresno Bus Rapid Transit

In a 4-3 vote last Thursday, the Fresno City Council voted against moving forward with a bus rapid transit (BRT) project that would vastly improve public transportation, increase affordable housing choices and employment opportunities, and reduce pollution in low-income communities and communities of color.

Construction of the BRT was to be funded by \$50 million in already approved federal and state grants. The BRT is an integral component of the General Plan already passed by the council and Fresno's strategy to comply with a state mandate to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Although the vote was a setback, Fresno's equity advocates are committed to bringing the project back to city council for reconsideration. To find out how you can support the Fresno BRT campaign, please contact Building Healthy Communities FLARE Together Coordinator Christine Barker by emailing [christinebarker\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:christinebarker[at]gmail.com).

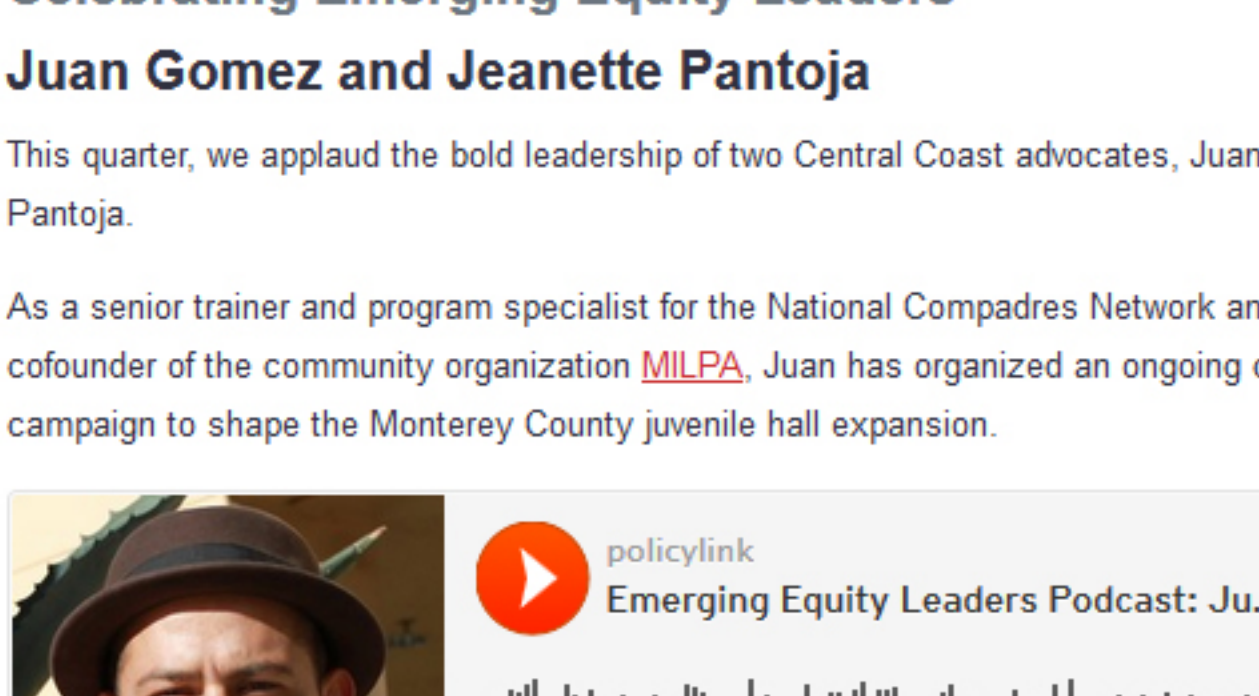
From San Quentin to Silicon Valley

The *Los Angeles Times* [reported on an innovative new program](#) at San Quentin State Prison called the "Last Mile," a high-tech incubator which teaches participants technology and business basics as training for a career in the tech sector.

Programs like the Last Mile that aim to ease the transition for California's [inflated incarcerated population](#) from prison back into our communities are critical bridges to equity, particularly for [our boys and men of color](#) who are overrepresented in prison.

[Watch the LA Times interview](#) featuring the Last Mile Founder Chris Redlitz and Kenyatta Leal, a recent graduate.

On the Ground: CAUSE CAUSE for Hope on the Central Coast



Ranging from lavish, seaside mansions to dilapidated labor camps, California's Central Coast is rife with social, economic, and environmental inequities, where farm worker, low-income, and immigrant communities face unique barriers to basic services, good jobs, and a healthy environment. But in the face of these challenges, one regional organization has effectively mobilized communities to create meaningful, equitable change: [CAUSE](#)—the Central Coast Alliance United for a Sustainable Economy.

Utilizing grassroots advocacy, community organizing, policy research, and leadership development to build the political power of farm and service industry workers and families across the Central Coast, CAUSE has helped effect equitable policy change across the region, including the implementation of local living-wage ordinances and health coverage expansion initiatives which have brought about improved wages and/or health benefits for over 7,500 working families.

A vital strategy, according to CAUSE Founder and co-Executive Director Marcos Vargas, is to foster electoral power through its position as a [California Calls](#) regional anchor, which allows it to engage tens of thousands of voters, and its affiliation with a new 501(c)4 organization, the [CAUSE Action Fund](#). CAUSE has also built the community's political muscle through the development of thousands of regional grassroots leaders who conduct issue outreach in intimate arenas, such as house meetings. Vargas believes that this political power has given the community more leverage to negotiate policy change.

Another unique key to CAUSE's strategic success is to build bridges with unlikely allies. For instance, CAUSE transformed the Ventura Chamber of Commerce from a vocal opponent to a major partner in Ventura's successful living-wage campaign by sharing comprehensive, nationwide data proving living wages increase productivity and do not burden local economies.

"As progressives, if we believe in our policies and have the research, we shouldn't be afraid to engage our opposition," said Vargas. "We've come a long way from being dismissed as socialists and Bolsheviks to working with business leaders to further policy reform."

In service of its vision to create a sustainable movement for equity, social justice, and sustainability, CAUSE is now looking to launch a 10-year economic justice initiative targeting the Central Coast's food chain workers, from farm to table, around pesticide policy reform and minimum wage and paid sick leave ordinances. According to Vargas, the Iroquois concept of "seven generations" informs CAUSE's long-term perspective.

"No one stands alone. We stand with the seven prior generations that got us here, and we have to think about the seven generations that will come after," explained Vargas. "We care about short-term policy wins, but we're in it for the long haul."

Celebrating Emerging Equity Leaders

Juan Gomez and Jeanette Pantoja

This quarter, we applaud the bold leadership of two Central Coast advocates, Juan Gomez and Jeanette Pantoja.

As a senior trainer and program specialist for the National Compadres Network and a policy analyst and cofounder of the community organization [MILPA](#), Juan has organized an ongoing community-led campaign to shape the Monterey County juvenile hall expansion.

If you would like to support the juvenile justice campaign in Salinas, please contact members of the Monterey County [Board of Supervisors](#) and ask them to support a new juvenile hall design with fewer beds and more space for restorative justice programs.

In her role as community worker for [California Rural Legal Assistance](#), [Jeanette Pantoja](#) has led efforts to elevate the voices of communities long forgotten by decision makers and bring clean drinking water to Salinas Valley's small, rural communities.

To learn more about drinking water contamination in your community, contact your county supervisor, local groundwater management agency and regional water board and ask them to ensure adequate regulation of industries that contaminate water sources.

Know any up-and-coming equity leaders? Please email nominations for next quarter's Emerging Equity Leaders to [CEQ\[at\]policylink.org](mailto:CEQ[at]policylink.org).

Infographic: Women's Wage Gap

How Are California's Women Faring?

WOMEN & THE WAGE GAP

Would you like an extra 120 tanks of gasoline or 62 weeks of groceries?

Women in CA are paid \$8,151 less per year than men. This lost income would buy a lot of gas or groceries!

National Partnership for Women and Families
MORE: WWW.NATIONALPARTNERSHIP.ORG/GAP

The Shriver Report recently released [A Woman's Nation Pushes Back from the Brink](#), a special report examining the unjust, inequitable economic insecurities faced by America's women. The report includes an essay by PolicyLink Founder and CEO Angela Glover Blackwell, entitled "The Changing Face of American Women."

Events

Select Committee on the Status of Boys and Men of Color
Hearing on Employment: Strategies, Innovations and Opportunities
February 21, 2014 from 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Elihu Harris State Building, 1515 Clay Street
Oakland, CA

Raising the Bar: How Smart Policy Choices Can Create Shared Prosperity in California
March 6, 2014
Sacramento Convention Center

Housing California 2014 Conference
April 15-17, 2014
Sacramento Convention Center

3rd Annual Transportation Choices Summit
April 22-23, 2014
Sacramento, CA

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