



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Media Contact: Blake Zante**

blakezante@csufresno.edu

(559) 278-1133

**THE MADDY INSTITUTE TO COHOST BIPARTISAN CALIFORNIA  
GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE FORUM ON APRIL 1 IN FRESNO**

**WHAT:** You are invited to a bipartisan California Gubernatorial Candidate Forum entitled "Affordability and Rural California."

**WHO:** Confirmed attendees:

- Xavier Becerra, attorney and former U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Chad Bianco, sheriff of Riverside County
- Steve Hilton, author and contributor, Fox News Channel
- Katie Porter, former member, U.S. House of Representatives
- Antonio Villaraigosa, former mayor, Los Angeles

Invitations have been issued to all candidates who reached above the 3 percent polling threshold in the March 1, 2026 average of polls conducted by [RealClearPolitics](#). In addition to the above confirmations, the other invited candidates include: Mayor Matt Mahan of San Jose, a new candidate not yet reflected in the polling data; Tom Steyer, entrepreneur; and U.S. Rep. Eric Swalwell (D-Castro Valley).

**WHEN:** Wednesday, April 1, 2026. Audience seating will begin at 11 a.m. PT. The event will be held from noon - 1:30 p.m. PT; 1:1 candidate availability will occur from 1:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. PT.

**WHERE:** California State University, Fresno

**FORMAT:** The forum will be led by a moderator; each candidate will have two minutes for opening statements followed by one hour of moderator-led questions and discussion. Each candidate will then receive an additional two minutes for closing statements.



**WHY:** In a poll of 1,000 registered California voters conducted by Public Opinion Strategies in November 2025, 91 percent of respondents believe grocery and food prices are "a problem for their family" and more than half recognize that regulatory costs increase food prices. We invite the candidates to speak to these issues and the policies that are impacting the economy of rural communities in California.

This forum is co-hosted by:

- Almond Alliance
- Ag Association Management Services Inc.
- Agricultural Council of California
- California Alfalfa and Forage Association
- California Apple Commission
- California Association of Wheat Growers
- California Association of Winegrape Growers
- California Blueberry Commission
- California Cherry Growers and Industry Association
- California Citrus Mutual
- California Cotton Ginners and Growers Association
- California Farm Bureau
- California Fresh Fruit Association
- California Grain and Feed Association
- California Olive Committee
- California Pear Growers Association
- California Poultry Federation
- California Seed Association
- California State Beekeepers Association
- California State Floral Association
- California Sweetpotato Council
- California Walnut Board
- California Warehouse Association
- California Wild Rice Advisory Board
- The Maddy Institute
- Olive Growers Council of California
- Olive Oil Commission of California
- Pacific Coast Renderers Association
- Walnut Alliance
- Western Growers
- Western Tree Nut Association

**RSVP:** Contact Blake Zante at [blakezante@csufresno.edu](mailto:blakezante@csufresno.edu) for registration information. **All attendees must register ahead of time in order to attend. Registration must be received by Monday, March 30, 2026, no exceptions.**