

NextGen California's 2026 Policy Wins Set the Stage for the Next Legislative Fight

The organization's 2026 advocacy delivered key legislative victories while laying the groundwork for continued action under a new administration



SACRAMENTO, CA, UNITED STATES,
October 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ --

As Governor Gavin Newsom concluded his final round of bill signings yesterday, [NextGen California](#) advanced significant policy victories in climate action, fighting food insecurity, expanding access to higher education, protecting immigrant and voting rights, strengthening workforce development, and addressing artificial intelligence. While this legislative session brought important progress, NextGen California

underscores the work that remains to address and advance important community-driven economic, environmental, educational, and workforce solutions with the next administration.

“

Vital steps were made along the road to a more equitable California on issues such as climate change, housing, digital equity, consumer protections, school meals, voting rights, and more.”

Arnold Sowell Jr., Executive Director of NextGen California

“Individuals, families, and communities across our state are feeling the immense pressure of the rising cost of living – housing, gas, electricity, and food costs – brought about by global conflicts and federal policies that threaten the well-being of millions of Californians,” said Arnold Sowell Jr., Executive Director of NextGen California. “As California prepares for a change in elected leadership, a new governor and new members of the legislature, we must

call upon these leaders to move with the urgency, courage, and innovation needed to meet the moment. They must pursue bold policies that respond to the realities facing our communities from tackling the climate crisis to addressing the state’s health care worker shortage. NextGen stands ready to take on the work ahead—organizing with our partners, developing pragmatic yet progressive policy and budgetary solutions, providing information and resources to the public about important issues, and holding state leaders accountable for their actions.

“As he prepares to leave office, we’d also like to acknowledge the good work done by Governor Newsom and his team over the past eight years. Vital steps were made along the road to a more

equitable California on issues such as climate change, housing, digital equity, consumer protections, school meals, voting rights, and more. Though our team hasn't always been pleased with every decision coming out of his office, we were deeply appreciative of the openness, expertise, and accessibility of his staff. The NextGen team thanks you all for a job well done."

NextGen California pushed for policies to strengthen pathways to higher education and good-paying careers, including AB 2301 (Soria), which would have expanded access to bachelor's degrees in nursing to address the state's nursing shortage. This bill was unfortunately vetoed for the third time, however, NextGen California will engage the next Administration and urge them to take a comprehensive look at the parameters by which community colleges can expand their four year degree offerings – particularly in areas where there are workforce shortages such as nursing.

Here are some highlights of the 39 bills Governor Newsom signed into law this year which were supported by NextGen California:

AI Safeguards: SB 947 (McNerney) – The No Robo Bosses Act: Protects workers from the injustices and inequities that could potentially occur from employers' unfettered use of automated decision systems.

Combating Climate Change:

- SB 327 (McNerney) – Protecting Ratepayers from Utility Abuses: Protects Californians from spiking electric and gas utility costs by prohibiting for-profit utilities from charging ratepayers to lobby against local efforts to municipalize energy utility service.
- SB 868 (Wiener) – Small-Scale Solar Access – "Balcony Solar": Lowers barriers that prevent Californians, specifically renters and apartment dwellers, from accessing affordable solar by making portable solar generation more accessible.
- SB 886 (Padilla) – California Technology Innovation & Ratepayer Protection Act: Requires the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) to establish an electrical corporation tariff on data centers with a peak load demand of at least 25 megawatts (MW) and requires data centers to pay their own electricity costs.
- SB 913 (Becker) – Clean Local Power Act: Enables customer-owned resources like home batteries and smart thermostats to be fully utilized to provide grid reliability, support California's clean energy transition, and lower costs for ratepayers.

Ending Food Insecurity: AB 1857 (Aguiar-Curry) – The Grocery Store Access Act: Prohibits restrictive covenants that limit grocery stores and supermarkets from locating in otherwise suitable commercial properties.

Higher Education Equity:

- AB 1159 (Addis) – California Learner Personal Information Protection Act (CALPIPA): Modernizes existing student data protections, clarifies data collection boundaries, and expands data privacy safeguards.

- AB 2251 (C. Rodriguez) – Improving Financial Aid Access by Strengthening Cost of Attendance Adjustment Processes: Expands students’ access to financial aid by increasing transparency in institutional cost of attendance (COA) budget calculations and standardizing the COA adjustment process across California’s colleges and universities.
- AB 2422 (Caloza) – Protections for Students with Delayed Financial Aid Awards: Provides critical protections for California’s students, preventing them from being unfairly penalized by their institutions for administrative delays in their financial aid disbursements that are beyond their control.

Immigrant Rights: AB 1807 (Gabriel & Carrillo) – Immigration Enforcement: Use of State-Owned Property: Protects immigrant Californians by prohibiting the use of State-owned properties for the purposes of certain federal immigration enforcement activities.

Inclusive Democracy:

- SB 1164 (Cervantes) – The California Voting Rights Act of 2026: Prohibits election policies and practices that result in — or is likely to result in — voter suppression.
- SB 1360 (Cervantes) – Language Access in the California Voting Rights Act of 2026: Ensures that eligible voters in California have access to voting materials in their preferred language.

Workforce Development:

- SB 845 (Pérez) – High School Youth Apprenticeship: Expands youth apprenticeship in the state by implementing key components of the Master Plan for Career Education and California Youth Apprenticeship Committee recommendations.
- SB 1012 (Smallwood-Cuevas) – Fire Camp to Career Act: Creates equitable and sustainable pathways for incarcerated individuals with fire camp experience to access stable, union-affiliated skilled trades careers.

###

NextGen California is a nonprofit advocacy organization that breaks down barriers and rebalances power in the State Capitol on behalf of all Californians.

Tyler Bushnell

NextGen California

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Bluesky](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

[X](#)

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.