

Kalra Capitol Report



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Rain No Match for Mexica New Year!

Mexica New Year, also known as the Aztec New Year or the Nahuatl New Year, is an important cultural and spiritual celebration observed by the Mexica people, who are the indigenous people of the Valley of Mexico. Local celebrations are an important way to honor, preserve and share the cultural heritage of the Mexica people with the broader community.

This year, in March, Aztec Dance group Calpulli Tonalehqueh hosted the 25th Mexica New Year ceremony at Emma Prusch Park in San José and it was the biggest celebration of this ceremony in the nation. Attendees and visitors enjoyed observing ceremonial dances, listening to cultural songs, and experiencing the beat of traditional drums. Native American dancers dressed in colorful traditional outfits and feather headbands performed, making the three-day celebration even more colorful and brightening the rain.

The celebration showcased different traditional rituals and ceremonial dances each day, including a beautiful sunrise ceremony and an arts & crafts market. Additionally, the Muwékma Ohlone Tribe of the San Francisco Bay Area co-hosted the 2nd Annual Cali Native Night at the 25th Mexica New Year.

As the Muwékma Ohlone Tribe's homeland includes most of Santa Clara County, Assemblymember Kalra was especially thrilled to attend the Mexica New Year celebration in San José. "Thank you Calpulli Tonalehqueh for bringing the community together to celebrate this beautiful tradition and I'm so grateful to the Muwékma Ohlone Tribe for their continued advocacy."



A Message From Assemblymember Ash Kalra

Hello Friends and Constituents!

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones in good health and spirits during these complex times. As your California Assembly representative and Chair of the Committee on Labor and Employment, I am honored to begin a new legislative session with all of you, and I am optimistic about the positive changes we can bring over the next two years.

As we embark on this new session, I want you to know that my colleagues and I remain fully committed to working on behalf of the people of California. Our state is facing numerous challenges, from the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the escalating effects of the climate crisis and other issues, including economic inequality and the lack of affordable housing. It is our duty to work together to confront these challenges head-on.

I'm very excited about some of the legislation that I have introduced during the past few months, including AB 57, which would help address the issue of urban deforestation and create more green spaces in urban areas by establishing "pocket forests" or small-scale, urban forests. I'm also proud to share AB 919, the Stable Homes Act, which would help keep families in their homes and preserve affordable housing. To follow the progress of these bills, please visit the California Legislative Information website at leginfo.legislature.ca.gov.

I am grateful for the opportunity to represent such a diverse and lively community here in Assembly District 25, and I am eager to hear about your priorities and concerns. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with any questions or suggestions you may have at 408-286-2535.

Together, we can create a better future for all Californians. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Sincerely,



Assemblymember Ash Kalra



Assemblymember Ash Kalra
& Veggielution host:

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2023

Saturday October 7th

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California Recognizes Lunar New Year as a State Holiday



This year's Lunar New Year Celebration was very special for many reasons, not the least of which because California recently became the first state in the nation to recognize this annual tradition as a state holiday. Asm. Kalra was a primary author of AB 2596, Asm. Low's legislation that advocated for this state holiday recognition, signed into law by Governor Newsom in 2022. Asm. Kalra supported this important acknowledgment because his district encompasses the majority of San José, including Little Saigon and Vietnam Town, and has observed many joyful Lunar New Year celebrations over the years.

2023 is the Year of the Cat to the Vietnamese community and simultaneously, the Year of the Rabbit to other Asian and Pacific Islanders communities that celebrate the Lunar New Year. Fourth in the Vietnamese zodiac, the Rabbit exemplifies cleverness, kindness, and elegance while the Cat in the Vietnamese zodiac is the symbol of affection and creativity.

To commemorate Lunar New Year as an official state holiday, the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus hosted a 2023 Lunar New Year celebration at the Governor's mansion in Sacramento. Assemblymember Kalra attended the festivities as a member of the Caucus.

"The continued celebration of Lunar New Year in California is a much-needed sign of hope in our Asian-American and Pacific Islander communities – so well-deserved after enduring such challenging times with the pandemic and a rise in hate crimes targeting AAPI individuals and communities."

Holi Welcomes Spring to Assembly District 25!

On March 11th, Asm. Kalra attended the Association of Indo Americans' 2023 Holi Fest at Discovery Meadow Park in downtown San José. Holi, also known as the Festival of Colors, is a Hindu cultural celebration of the triumph of good over evil as the spring season arrives. Holi festivities allow celebrants to forgive and forget their troubles, laugh, and enjoy the company of friends. This year's Holi Fest welcomed another spring season with the traditional throwing of colored powders, in the joyful spirit of diversity and inclusiveness. Event attendees cheerfully danced and sang to upbeat music and drums, while local food vendors showcased the richness of South Asian and Indian cuisine.



As the first Indian American and Hindu American legislator to serve in the California Legislature, Asm. Kalra delivered remarks on stage at Holi Fest, noting that the message of Holi has always reminded him of the strength of our community and the auspiciousness of unity. He then joined the crowd in dancing and singing, and he did not forget to frequently renew his bag of colored powders to celebrate with the community. "I'm happy that the Association of Indo Americans and their partners continue the beautiful tradition of Holi. I hope everyone has an awesome spring."

Assemblymember

Ash
Kalra

Legislative Accomplishments

2021-2022 Legislative Session



AB 30 Access to Nature Act.

AB 30 affirms that all Californians have a right to access nature and directs state agencies to incorporate consideration of that right into investments and policies regarding nature access, especially for nature-deprived communities.
Chapter 939, Statutes of 2022

AB 98

Tied-House Advertising. Expands the existing "tied-house" law exemption for fully enclosed arenas in the City of San Jose to include the newly opened, Tech CU Arena, home of the San Jose Barracuda.
Chapter 267, Statutes of 2022

AB 256

Racial Justice Act for All. Following up on the landmark AB 2542 (Chapter 317, Statutes of 2020), AB 256 ensures all Californians with prior, racially biased convictions and sentences can challenge racial bias in their case and provides the courts remedies to address the racial bias under the California Racial Justice Act.
Chapter 739, Statutes of 2022

AB 293

Preneed Funeral Trust Accounts. By providing consumers and their surviving loved ones a convenient way to locate and claim unused preneed funeral funds, AB 293 provides long-needed consumer protections for unclaimed preneed funeral arrangements held in trust by a funeral establishment.
Chapter 514, Statutes of 2021

AB 323

Nursing Homes and LTC Facilities Accountability.

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only disproportionately affected nursing home residents, but it has revealed underlying problems such as understaffing and mismanagement. AB 323 ensures CDPH properly applies crucial oversight of long-term care facilities by updating citation penalties and standards for negligent care.
Chapter 458, Statutes of 2021



AB 655

California Law Enforcement

Accountability Reform (CLEAR) Act. Introduced on the heels of the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol and amplified by a 2022 California State Auditor report on police conduct and bias, AB 655 requires law enforcement agencies to screen candidates for participation in a hate group or advocacy of public expressions of hate or violence. If a complaint alleging such conduct is filed against a peace officer, it would create grounds for an investigation that could result in disciplinary action.
Chapter 854, Statutes of 2022



AB 1506

Newspaper Carriers. AB 1506 extends the sunset for newspaper carriers' classification exemption and mandates key reporting requirements related to carrier wage rates and classification data. This bill strikes a critical balance between ensuring the continued vitality of our written news while also recognizing that those who deliver the news have labor rights that must be protected.
Chapter 328, Statutes of 2021

AB 1885

Veterinarian Recommendation and Cannabis for Animal-Use. An expansion of existing law (AB 2215, Chapter 819, Statutes of 2018) which allowed veterinarians to discuss cannabis treatment, AB 1885 permits veterinarians to recommend cannabis for therapeutic use in animals and requires the Veterinary Medical Board to create guidelines for such recommendations.
Chapter 389, Statutes of 2022



AB 2167

Alternatives to Incarceration. AB 2167 requires courts to consider alternatives to incarceration such as diversion programs, restorative justice, and probation in sentencing decisions. This recommendation by the California Committee on the Revision of the Penal Code is one of many steps in finally shifting California away from an overly punitive, costly system that disproportionately impacts marginalized communities.
Chapter 775, Statutes of 2022

AB 2208 **Fluorescent Lamps.** In light of the now widely-accessible mercury-free and energy-efficient LED bulbs, AB 2208 prohibits the sale of screw or bayonet base type compact fluorescent lamps starting on January 1, 2024, and the sale of pin-base type compact fluorescent lamps and linear fluorescent lamps starting on January 1, 2025.
Chapter 409, Statutes of 2022

AB 2524 **VTA PERB Opt-In.** AB 2524 allows Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) and its employees to opt-in to the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) jurisdiction. By giving VTA and their employees access to PERB's jurisdiction, unfair labor practices can be resolved in a more efficient and affordable manner.
Chapter 789, Statutes of 2022



AB 2278 **30x30.** Building upon Executive Order (EO) N-82-20, AB 2278 requires the California Natural Resources Agency to report to the Legislature on progress made towards achieving the state's conservation goals. This annual report will encourage continued community partnerships for

developing the best strategies to conserve 30% of the state's land and coastal waters by 2030.
Chapter 349, Statutes of 2022

AB 2662 **Department of Fair Employment and Housing.** Introduced in response to a 2020 court case affirming the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) has the right to bring civil actions that fit its ongoing mission, AB 2662 clarifies and codifies the Department's duty to represent and act in the public interest.
Chapter 35, Statutes of 2022

AB 2763 **Job Order Contracting.** To increase the efficiency and accelerate the completion of smaller projects, AB 2763 authorizes the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) to use job order contracting (JOC) for typical work that may span over a two-year contract. Similar JOC agreements for LAUSD have resulted in project costs being reduced by an average of 9.3%.
Chapter 803, Statutes of 2022



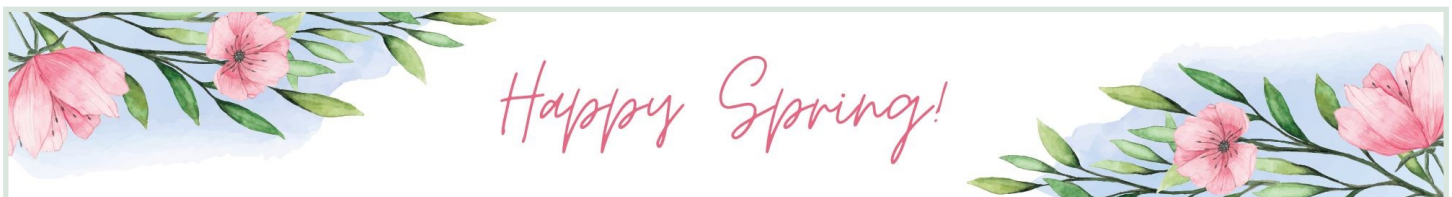
AB 2300 **CalWORKs & CalFresh.** AB 2300 expands good cause employment exemptions for CalWORKs and CalFresh recipients and ensures that recipients are made aware of their workplace rights. By expanding these exemptions, low-wage workers will no longer have to choose between staying in an abusive workplace to meet their weekly minimum and the assistance provided by these safety net programs.
Chapter 588, Statutes of 2022

AB 2955 **Commercial Fishermen.** AB 2955 extends the sunset on the commercial fishermen's exemption from AB 5 for three years while maintaining critical reporting requirements from the EDD about the extent of unemployment claims filed by these workers.
Chapter 443, Statutes of 2022



AB 2418 **District Attorney Reporting.** Despite the extraordinary power they wield, district attorneys publicly report very little information on their role in the criminal justice process. AB 2418 remedies this discrepancy by requiring district attorneys to collect and report data about their cases, including demographic information, geographical

information about the alleged crime and charging information. This bill expands upon work being done by district attorneys across the state and will create greater transparency and accountability in our criminal legal system.
Chapter 787, Statutes of 2022



Black History Month Celebration Returns to First AME Zion Church



At the end of February, Assemblymember Ash Kalra held his 7th Annual Black History Month Celebration in person for the first time since 2020. The event celebrated Black History Month and acknowledge the selfless dedication and contributions Black leaders have made in Assembly District 25. It displayed how important it is that we continue to recognize, pay homage, and uplift our Black leaders. The Black community has been disproportionately impacted by the Covid-19 Pandemic, and it is now more important than ever to honor our unsung heroes who served our residents unconditionally and con-

tinue to do so without asking for recognition.

This year's event was held at the First AME Zion Church, which is the oldest Black Church in San José. The church was founded in 1870 and was the locale of Asm. Kalra's last pre-pandemic celebration. Housing a museum of Black History in its Community Hall, the church showcases stories of trailblazers, activists, and artists of the Black community who have contributed to African American Culture and civil rights. The museum is both beautiful and inspiring and continues the tradition of serving the Black community in San José that the church has upheld since its inception. Additionally, Kalra was honored to be joined by the chair of the CA Legislative Black Caucus, Assemblymember Lori Wilson.

Island Taste Caribbean Grill, the brainchild of partners Marc and Dorianne St Fleur, was honored for Leadership in Business. Both hailing from New York City and raised by Caribbean immigrants, the duo created a menu that showcases traditional island staples such as Jamaican Jerk Chicken and Oxtail, as well as delicious vegan options like their exquisite Coconut Curry. Through Island Taste's food, the story of successful Black entrepreneurs and their parents, as well as that of the Caribbean islands themselves, is told. San José is now exposed to the rich variety of tastes and cultures that the Black diaspora has to offer. Not only did Island Taste attend the event to accept their well-deserved recognition, but they also catered the occasion with their scrumptious cuisine.

The Leadership in Community Service award was presented to the **National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Silicon Valley Chapter**, and accepted by their chapter president, Sheila Heacock. NCBW was founded in 1981 in New York City to address the problems and opportunities facing African American. Since then they have initiated programs to address issues and inequalities faced by the African American family, career advancement, political and economic empowerment, and leadership. The NCBW, Silicon Valley Chapter serves as an advocacy organization focused on the empowerment of women of African descent through programs that meet their diverse needs in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties. Sheila Heacock is their current President and has served the Silicon Valley community for 30 years all while working full time for NASA. Whether it was through STEM based Summer Camps or food drives this NCBW president has put in the work. Sheila a living embodiment of what "Black Excellence" means and serves as a perfect example of the kinds of leaders that NCBW helps create for our community. The community owes you its gratitude and thanks Sheila Heacock and NCBW for your amazing service to San José and the greater Silicon Valley community.

Monica Kitchiner received the Leadership in Advocacy Award from Asm. Kalra. After witnessing the racism, segregation, and disenfranchisement of the Jim Crow Laws of her youth, Monica was inspired to address socioeconomic inequalities in our society and pursue civil rights advocacy. After graduation from SJSU in 1968

she worked on numerous projects ranging from compiling research for dropout prevention which led to the creation of the "Turn It Around" program. Additionally, she worked on the City of San José's Gang Intervention Program, created the Youth Entrepreneur Program, the Youth Employment Program, San José Smart Start Program, and served as Program Coordinator for the Strong Neighborhood Initiative. She has been a delegate for the California Democratic Party since 2014. Monica's goal is to make this country better for all Americans, and the Black community to promote empathy to reduce prejudice, ban partisan gerrymandering, and have tough conversations about the history of America. Monica has acted as a true advocate for her community both legislatively and through work in philanthropy.

The Legacy Award went to musician **J.C. Smith**, the 2017 ECEM Male artist of the year and leader of Metro Newspaper's Best of Silicon Valley "Best Original Local Band." In 2006 Bay Area Blues Society voted his band the West Coast Blues Band of the Year. Smith has toured throughout the United States, Eastern Europe, Mexico, South America, and Russia, to sellout crowds, sharing the stage with notable artist such as Hubert Sumlin, B.B. King, Buddy Guy, Buddy Miles, Son Seals Willie Bigeyes Smith, Pinetop Perkins and many more. What is most admirable about J.C. is not just his musical ability but how he has served his community and Black culture. By organizing multiple concerts and events whose proceeds were donated to Doctors Without Borders, he aims to provide much-needed aid to Ukraine and other communities in need. J.C. Smith shares the story and culture of American Black history through Jazz all across the world. His music displays how captivating and influential Black music is through his kind and generous philanthropy. The Legacy Award recognizes the dedication and tireless efforts of community leaders who will continue their work for many years to come. It was a great honor to witness J.C. Smith receive this award, as he has demonstrated the power of music to positively impact people all over the world.

Congratulations and thank you to our five outstanding 2023 honorees of Assembly District 25 Black History Month Celebration. We all look forward to having more in person Honoree events just like this.



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- Measure T Community Oversight
- Neighborhoods Commission
- Parks and Recreation Commission
- Planning Commission
- Senior Citizens Commission
- Work2Future Board
- Youth Commission

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www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments/city-clerk/boards-commissions/official-roster

Asm. Kalra Attends African American Flag Raising



On February 10th, Assemblymember Kalra participated in the City of San José's African American Flag Raising ceremony, which was held in collaboration and partnership with the NAACP and BLKC to celebrate Black History Month. This year's theme was "Black Resistance: Past, Present, and Future." During the ceremony, Assemblymember Kalra and Asm. Alex Lee jointly presented a Certificate of Recognition on behalf of the California State Legislature to acknowledge and thank local Black community leaders and organizations for their commitment to promoting, honoring, and celebrating the culture, history, and traditions of the African American community. It is important to remember that Black history cannot be confined to a single month, as it is intricately interwoven with American history. This event serves as a reminder of that fact, and highlights how Black resistance throughout history has been a powerful force for change and improvement in the Black experience in America.

Kalra said, "Moving forward, we must continue to work towards eradicating systemic barriers and injustices by uplifting the Black community and centering African American voices"

District Office Relocates within Downtown San José

Assemblymember Ash Kalra and his district staff have relocated from their former district office in the Alfred E. Alquist Building to their new location at 111 W. St. John Street, adjacent to San Pedro Square. This relocation is part of a larger initiative to transform the location of the Alquist Building into much-needed housing for San José State University staff, faculty, and graduate students.

In 2021, the Governor signed legislation that allowed the Department of General Services to transfer ownership of the Alquist building to the CSU, a move championed by Assemblymember Kalra and former state Senator Beall. The decision to transfer ownership came after the Department of General Services suggested that the building, which is in a state of disrepair, be sold or transferred. Kalra and Beall saw the potential for the property to provide additional housing space for the campus and pushed for its acquisition. By acquiring the Alquist building, the CSU gains a valuable piece of real estate located in a crucial pedestrian corridor in downtown San José.

The potential for up to 1,000 apartment units on-site, with half reserved for graduate students, faculty, and staff and the other half for non-university affiliated renters and tenants, positions this as SJSU's most transformative development project in decades. It represents a crucial step in addressing San José's housing crisis and providing affordable housing for those who work and study in the city.

OUR OFFICE HAS MOVED!

NEW LOCATION & NUMBER
 111 W. St. John Street
 Suite 1150
 San Jose, CA 95113
 408-286-2535

ASSEMBLYMEMBER
Ash Kalra
 DISTRICT 25

Photos from Around the Capitol, the District & Beyond



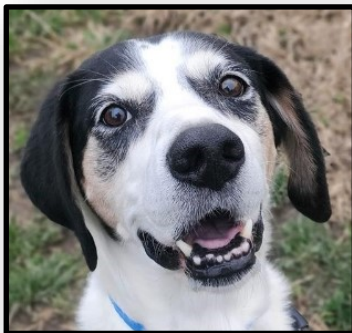
Make a Friend for Life at San José Animal Care Center!

Meet **Jedidiah** (A1273867)! He's a six year old, black and white pointer mix, who has been at the shelter since the New Year. Looking for a furever family, he is described by shelter staff as great on a leash, and a happy, social dog who absolutely loves the outdoors!

Maybe a senior cat is a better fit for your lifestyle? Meet **Patricia** (A1288677) a female domestic, shorthair sweetheart. She's an older lady at approximately 14 years old and is looking for a companion to share her golden years with.

Donald-Clyde (A1290000) is a white duck of unknown age who has been at the shelter since the end of February. Donald could be the perfect yard-mate for **This BIRD** (yes, really!) (A1287549), a green and brown rooster who has been cock-a-doodle-doing around the San José Animal Care Center for about two months.

Want to learn more about these adorable pets and make yourself a new best friend for life? For adoption inquiries and more information about this sweet pup, please call 408-794-PAWS (7297) and leave a message. Or visit the San José Animal Care Center website at www.sanjoseanimals.com. Adoptions are conducted Tuesday through Sunday between 9am and 4pm, on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS. If you are interested in adopting, please write down the I.D. number of the pet you would like to meet.



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F: (408) 286-2560
We've moved!

State Agencies Contact Information

Administrative Law	(916) 323-6225
Aging	(916) 419-7500
Alcoholic Beverage Control	(916) 419-2500
Board of Equalization	(800) 400-7115
Bureau of Automotive Repair	(800) 952-5210
California Courts	(415) 865-4200
California Highway Patrol	(800) 835-5247
Caltrans	(916) 654-2852
Child Supportive Services	(866) 901-3212
Civil Rights Department	(800) 884-1684
Consumer Affairs	(800) 952-5210
Controller's Office	(916) 445-3028
Developmental Services	(916) 654-1690
Employment Development	(800) 300-5616
Fair Political Practices Commission	(916) 322-5660
Fish & Wildlife	(916) 445-0411
Food & Agriculture	(916) 654-0466
Health Care Services	(916) 445-1248
High Speed Rail Authority	(916) 324-1541
Insurance	(800) 927-4357
Motor Vehicles	(800) 777-0133
Parks & Recreation	(800) 777-0369
Public Health	(916) 558-1784
Rehabilitation	(916) 324-1313
Secretary of State	(916) 653-6814
Social Services	(916) 651-8848
Toxic Substances Control	(800) 728-6942
Veterans Affairs	(800) 952-5626

