



EQUITY ON THE MALL FOR A GOLDEN STATE FOR ALL

Thousands rally at the Capitol for the San Joaquin Valley

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(Sacramento, CA) – Residents, community leaders and local elected officials from the San Joaquin Valley flooded Capitol Mall to rally for a Golden State for All. Thousands of Californians from throughout the San Joaquin Valley traveled during the early hours of the morning to raise their voices and call on our state leaders to step up and be as bold in supporting their region as they are for other areas of California.

The day of action included the unveiling of the [San Joaquin Valley Health Fund's 2018 policy platform](#). The policy platform focuses on the key issues of health, education, environment, land use planning, and immigration. The platform seeks to promote positive policy and systems changes to improve the health and well-being of vulnerable children and families, and advance racial equity and social justice in the region. During the unveiling, the Fund was joined by Senate President pro Tem Kevin DeLeon (CA-24), Senator Ed Hernandez (CA-22) and Assembly members Susan Talamantes Eggman (CA-13), Tony Thurmond (CA-15), Ash Kalra (CA-27) and Dr. Joaquin Arambula (CA-31).

“Last year, we wanted to let policymakers know that the Valley is rising and will no longer be overlooked and left behind,” stated Chet P. Hewitt, President and CEO, Sierra Health Foundation and The Center. “This year we bring a message of hope and expectation, calling for actionable steps to improve the health of the Valley.”

Unfortunately, the Valley faces terrible inequities including:

- One in three children lives in poverty, and in some counties nearly half of all children live in neighborhoods with high poverty rates.
- Tap water is unsafe to drink for students in one in four schools.
- There are significant disparities in educational opportunities and performance between the diverse racial and ethnic populations in the Valley.
- More than one in four children doesn't have access to nutritious foods.
- San Joaquin Valley children ages 10-17 face a greater risk of being incarcerated, with the felony juvenile arrest rate higher in every county than the statewide average.

Following the policy platform unveiling, the day of action continued with a rally on the Capitol's west steps. The crowd of San Joaquin Valley residents and leaders were joined by 15 local and state policymakers including Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (CA-63) and California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, who stood in solidarity, supporting a Golden State for All, protection of DREAMers, and with a deep understanding that the health of the Valley is connected to the overall health of all Californians.

“The power of the people is real and growing in the San Joaquin Valley. We as a legislature are committed to building a movement across issues, ethnicities and counties so that future generations have a healthier future,” said Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (CA-63).

“Our policymakers cannot solve the problem of inequity in the state between race, income and health, or help the state truly be the Golden State, unless we examine and confront the complex issues that continue to plague the San Joaquin Valley,” stated Pastor Trena Turner, Executive Director, Faith in the Valley.

“The San Joaquin Valley has more wealth than just crops and oil. We are here to change the policy focus to ensure the future of the Valley is bright and the region continues to thrive,” said Pedro Hernandez, Policy Advocate, Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability.

The day ended with a community forum and polling session entitled “Democracy in Action: Moving the Valley Forward” to create a healthy, vibrant and prosperous region, during which participants heard and discussed messages from gubernatorial candidates addressing key issues facing the San Joaquin Valley.

Equity on the Mall demonstrated the momentum of a growing movement, as it doubled in size from last year’s event. Rooted in the legacy of the farmworker movement, more than 70 community organizations demonstrated their unified voice and collective power by attending this year’s Equity on the Mall, advocating for a healthier Valley and California for all.

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*The **San Joaquin Valley Health Fund** is a partnership of more than 70 nonprofit organizations, along with 11 state and national foundations, who are jointly working to build a greater level of health equity in this important part of our state. The Fund is managed by The Center with funding from Sierra Health Foundation, The California Endowment, Rosenberg Foundation, The California Wellness Foundation, W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Blue Shield of California Foundation, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, Dignity Health, Tides, Hellman Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation. www.shfcenter.org/sjvhealthfund*

***The Center** works to promote health and racial equity in communities throughout California with local, state and national partners. www.shfcenter.org*