



Making California Better in 2021

At CalMatters, we know California can solve its challenges and create a brighter future. And we know that quality, high-impact journalism plays a vital role in creating that future.

With nearly 40 million people and the world's fifth-largest economy, we have endless opportunities. We also have substantial problems to solve together. Explaining our government and how it works - or doesn't - and holding elected officials accountable for their decisions creates a better informed and more engaged California, a more secure democracy, and a state where more people may build the lives of their dreams.

CalMatters is an award-winning, nonpartisan, nonprofit journalism venture that explains how California's government works and why it matters. We're based in Sacramento, with journalists across California, covering both the decision-making that happens in the Capitol and the effects of those policies in all corners of the state. We work to lift up the stories of those whose voices are rarely heard in government.

Because of the investments by our generous supporters, our work results in new legislation, investigations of lawmakers, regulation overhauls, and discussions across the state - from committee rooms to living rooms. Here's a sampling of how we make a difference.

WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE.

NURSING HOMES: A [CalMatters investigation](#) of California's poor oversight of nursing homes was repeatedly cited in an October [special hearing](#). The chair of the Assembly Health Committee said the story "[blew the lid off of my thinking](#)." Later, in a tense hearing, he criticized the state health department, saying: "We have to wait for news articles. We have to wait for people to die." The chair promised new legislation to address the problems. The investigation by CalMatters' Jocelyn Wiener found that the state allowed California's largest nursing homeowner to operate many facilities even as their license applications languished in pending status - or were outright denied. A [lawsuit](#) citing 142 safety violations in one of the homes that was denied a license blames the operators for 24 COVID-related deaths at the facility.



*Assemblyman Jim Wood
Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters*



Miles Hall was killed by police during a mental health crisis. Photo by Anne Wernikoff, CalMatters

MENTAL HEALTH: [Following our story](#) on the state's inability to fund the newly created 9-8-8 mental health hotline system, the state Department of Health Care Services announced it would spend \$20 million to support the call centers. Under the federal legislation establishing the hotline system, states can fund it by attaching new fees to phone lines. Our health and mental health reporter, Jocelyn Wiener, wrote about the legislation stalling, and the **following day the state stepped in to establish the hotline system and mental health services for those in need**, surprising even those advocating for the funding.

WILDFIRES: A new 2021 law signed by Governor Newsom grew out of a CalMatters live event. In October 2019, State Senator Bill Dodd joined CalMatters' environment reporter Julie Cart and Lenya Quinn-Davidson, a fire advisor with UC Extension and director of the Northern California Prescribed Fire Council, to discuss [wildfire prevention in California](#). Following the conversation, Senator Dodd and his staff began discussing the need for a bill that would provide legal and liability protection to entities managing prescribed burns should the fires they set get away from them.

EVICCTIONS: Our pandemic-related eviction series [Staying Sheltered](#) (produced in English and Spanish), combined massive database analysis with personal stories as we followed a half dozen of the more than 2 million Californians who were behind on rent and subject to eviction without the temporary moratorium. As a result of our reporting, evictions in several areas in the state were canceled and communities came together to help the families we profiled -- including having their rent paid and receiving gift cards to buy Christmas presents. And in Sacramento, the stories of those same families, combined with our data journalism, led to new laws to protect them.

UNEMPLOYMENT: Throughout the pandemic, our newsletter journalist, Emily Hoeven, has reported on the [Employment Development Department's massive scandal](#) that resulted in at least \$20 billion being paid out for fraudulent unemployment claims. Lawmakers repeatedly cited our reporting as attempts were made to fix the problem. And, after we [reported on Stephanie Moore](#), a 38-year-old housekeeper in Los Angeles who lost her job during the pandemic, Bank of America restored her unemployment payments. The payments had been unexpectedly stopped due to an erroneous suspicion of fraud, forcing her to move back in with an abusive ex.



I hope you know that SB 332 grew out of the CalMatters webinar you moderated... and now here we are with a bill on the Governor's desk. Not only a victory for ...wildfire prevention, but a victory for CalMatters as well.

Les Spahn



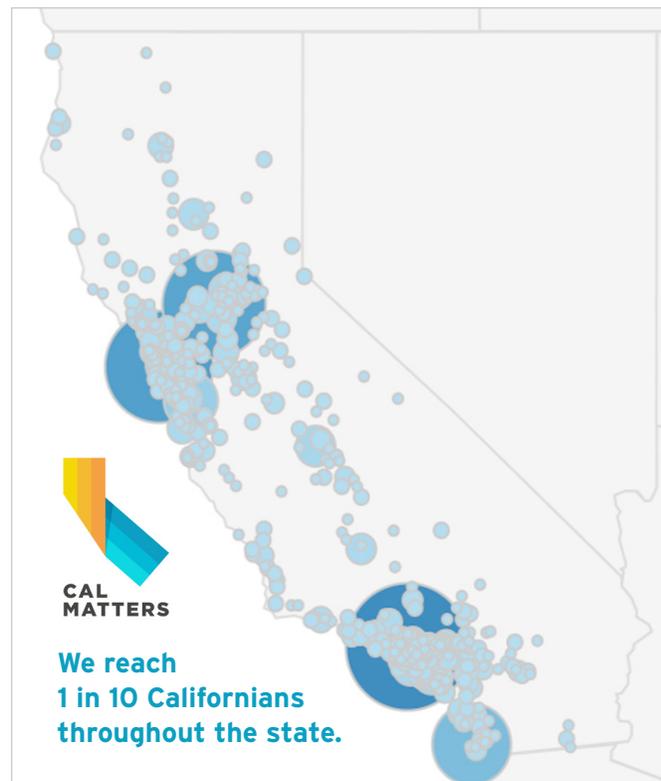
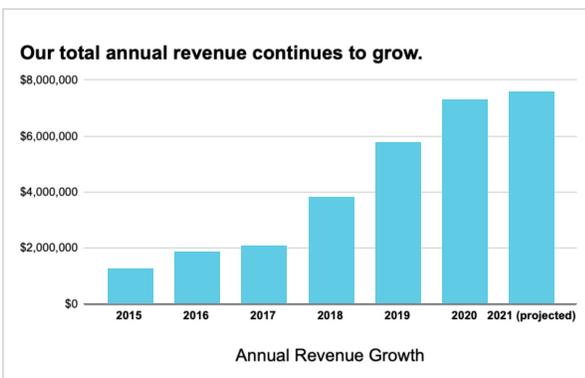
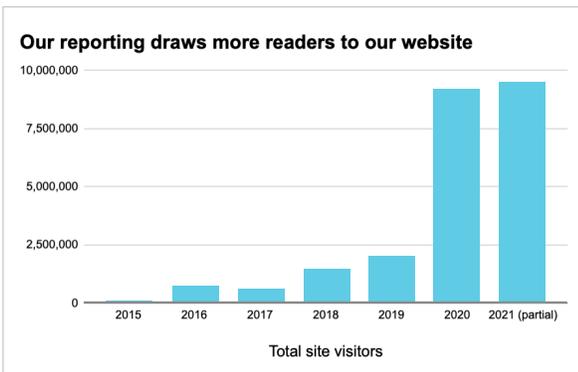
Legislative Director,
Senator Bill Dodd



Teresa Trabucco fell behind on rent during the pandemic. Photographed by Tash Kimmell, CalMatters

WE'RE GROWING.

A growing number of readers rely on our work because our stories impact their lives. We now average 1.8 million website visitors per month. Millions more see our work through Apple News, Patch, and the more than 200 media organizations in California to which we give our stories at no cost.



WE'RE RECOGNIZED FOR OUR EXCELLENCE.

We're proud that our team and our work have been recognized and honored with many local, state, and national [awards](#).

-  The Online News Association, the world's largest digital journalism association, named CalMatters as one of four finalists among publications our size for General Excellence, the top prize in our industry.
-  Our Capitol reporter, Laurel Rosenhall, was chosen Journalist of the Year by her peers at the Sacramento Press Club.
-  Environmental reporter Rachel Becker won top honors from the Society of Environmental Journalists for Outstanding Environmental Reporting.
-  The California News Publishers Association honored us with six first-place journalism awards for election analysis, COVID coverage, and other stories.

WHAT'S COMING IN 2022

While 2021 was a year of continued struggle for many, for CalMatters it was an opportunity to again prove our value to the people of California. In the weeks and days surrounding the recall election in September, we saw a spike in visits to our website as people sought information to help them make an informed decision as they cast their ballots; throughout the year our reporting was cited in committee hearings and during floor debates; and our work directly impacted the lives of those whose stories we shared.

In 2022, a year of critical elections and continued COVID recovery, we have three priorities as we pursue our mission of holding decision-makers accountable, informing the electorate, and making our state a better place to live. We will:

1. Become a **must-follow news source** for even more Californians;
2. Reach more voters on more platforms with our **ballot proposition election guide**;
3. Deliver hard-hitting, smart reporting across all of our beats by **hiring top reporters and adding state-of-the-art technology tools** to help us compete in a noisy news environment.

We depend on your generous support to make all of this happen.
Thank you for your investment in making California the best it can be
- we're here for and because of you.



Neil Chase, CEO



Simone Coxe, Board Chair/Co-Founder

WAYS TO GIVE.

CalMatters depends on the generous support of people just like you. In our ongoing effort to make it as easy as possible for you to contribute to our mission, here are some options for you to consider:

- Give online by going to [CalMatters.org/gifts](https://calmatters.org/gifts) and click on the donate button
- Mail a check to CalMatters: 1017 L Street, #261 Sacramento, CA 95814
- Send your gift electronically from your bank account to ours
- Save on capital gains taxes and still receive your charitable tax-deduction by sending us stock
- Give directly from your IRA
- Leave a legacy by including us in your estate plan

For more information, go to calmatters.org/gifts or contact Kate Looby, Chief Development Officer, at kate@calmatters.org or 415-933-0480.

CalMatters reporters are experts on the issues they cover and are regularly called on to share their knowledge with national, state, and local audiences.

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CalMatters is an independent, non-partisan and free press that keeps Californians informed about our government. Our democracy is well served by their reporting.

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Becky Morgan, former Republican California State Senator