This year California policy makers have to figure out what they’ll need most: a sword, a shield, an olive branch, or an umbrella.

In December, state Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon came out swinging with a strong post-election statement in response to President Trump's threat to deport undocumented immigrants: "If you want to get to them, you have to go through us."

Then legislative Democrats hired former U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder to represent them in case of attacks on a range of programs where California has taken a lead, such as criminal justice and immigration. "Having the former attorney general of the United States brings us a lot of firepower in order to prepare to safeguard the values of the people of California," said state Senate president pro tempore Kevin de León.

Governor Jerry Brown has certainly not shied away from the fight either. He has stated that there will be no retreat on policies he’s worked hard on such as climate change. He has appointed Xavier Becerra, a veteran of federal politics, as...
Letter from CalNonprofits CEO, continued from page 1

What are the changes California nonprofits are experiencing for themselves and for their communities? This year we will be tracking “Government in Transition; Nonprofits in Transition,” starting with an online survey. The survey will ask what nonprofits are concerned about in this changing policy environment, what impacts they anticipate and how they plan to respond. Be on the lookout for this – your input will inform our role as the voice of California’s nonprofit community and is key to our collective success in this upcoming period of change.

Jan Masaoka
CEO, CalNonprofits
jann@calnonprofits.org

View from Sacramento, continued from page 1

state attorney general. And he ended his State of the State address with these words: “California is not turning back. Not now, not ever.”

But not everyone agrees on a saber-rattling approach. In response to the hiring of Holder, Senate Republican Leader Jean Fuller (R-Bakersfield) issued a statement saying it was unnecessary and “based upon fear and overreaction by some politicians…” Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula (D-Fresno) was more muted in his reaction: “As the new chair of the Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, I look forward to the opportunity to work with our federal and state representatives to ensure programs better serve the people of the Central Valley.”

And there’s cautiousness all around. State Senator Ricardo Lara (D-Bell Gardens) authored a bill that was passed and signed by the Governor, SB 10, that would have helped families with mixed immigration status to buy health insurance. But it required a waiver from the federal government and California has decided not to follow through with the waiver request. Lara explained that because he doesn’t “trust the Trump administration to do what’s best for California and to implement the waiver in a way that protects people’s privacy and health, this is the first California casualty of the Trump presidency.”

Governor Brown’s proposed state budget also shows restraint. California could lose over $20 billion in federal funding a year if Congress rolls back the Medicaid expansion and ends subsidies for insurance through Covered California. Brown said that state officials have done “a lot of scenario planning” with regard to federal actions, but these are not included in the proposed budget. Still, together with his Finance Department’s less-than-optimistic revenue forecast, Brown is insisting on continued growth of budget reserves. He stresses this in the opening pages of the budget document in a dedication to the Governor’s recently deceased dog Sutter that reads, “save some biscuits for a rainy day.”

What’s a nonprofit to do? This year it will be especially important to pay attention to the state budget process. On the down side, there is deep concern and uncertainty about what Congress and the Trump Administration might do. On the brighter side, State Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor predicts that California could have “considerably more revenue” next year than the governor forecasts. Given these factors, organizers and advocates will be fighting to protect spending, especially in programs the Governor has targeted for cuts such as childcare, affordable housing and higher education. Be prepared to see changes when the Governor releases his May Revision. In fact, this year it may be necessary to continue to revise the budget later in the summer as well.

Also, expect to see lots of action in the Legislature to defend and continue California programs. For example, State Senator Ben Hueso (D-San Diego) has authored a bill that would authorize grants to nonprofit organizations to provide legal help for immigrants facing deportation. In introducing Senate Bill 6, Hueso explained, “We have an obligation to defend every person who is under the shadow of the California flag.”

In what’s looking to be a very not-normal year at the State Capitol, watch for our e-Alerts to keep you up to date throughout it all. We’ll do our best to let you know when you’ll need swords, shields, olive branches, and umbrellas – or all of the above.
Q: We’re worried that Obamacare will be repealed under the new Trump Administration. What impact will this have on coverage for my employees?

So much is up in the air and unknown at this point. There are many popular provisions of the Affordable Care Act (popularly called Obamacare) that the Republicans are not likely to repeal such as guaranteed insurability and coverage for children to age 26. The most recent news indicates that the Affordable Care Act is not likely to be repealed immediately without a replacement plan in place. We do not know what that replacement plan will look like but CIS will keep you informed as we learn of new regulations and details.

Q: What’s the board’s role in oversight of insurance? We feel we need some kind of oversight, but we don’t have anyone on the board who’s an insurance whiz.

The board is responsible for providing oversight and governance of the organization’s financial health. Insurance plays an important role in protecting the financial health of the organization. The board should carefully select an insurance broker that deeply understands nonprofits to act as a consultant on insurance matters to the CEO and the board. A broker works for you and not the insurance company. Broker selection is crucial to this process and the board should review the selection every few years to ensure the broker is providing the proper guidance to the organization. A broker that specializes in nonprofits will have access to all the markets that insure nonprofits and can therefore get the broadest coverage available for the premium dollars. Some boards will delegate the actual purchasing of coverage to the organization staff but retain oversight on broker selection and final decisions. The board should be informed of any major claims that could harm the organization either financially or otherwise.
Every year, CalNonprofits Insurance Services awards $10,000 to a CalNonprofits member doing excellent work in a specific area. Because 2016 was an important election year, we focused the Award on voter engagement.

We were thrilled to receive 47 nominations from members doing incredible work. The nominees ranged from large organizations with paid staff to small and all-volunteer organizations, from Humboldt to San Bernardino, and included organizations focused on arts, education, human services, youth, disability rights, immigration, voting rights, elder care, environment, and more.

Three distinguished judges from the boards of CalNonprofits and CalNonprofits Insurance Services struggled to select finalists, and then a winner.

“Some of these are so inspiring that I almost cried reading them,” said Sarah Pillsbury, CalNonprofits board member and judge. “The efforts of all these organizations clearly made a difference in their communities—not always by getting someone to vote, sometimes by building a relationship for next time.”

Many of the nominees did phone banking, canvassing door-to-door, and held voter registration drives. A few of them had more unusual approaches:

- **Access Humboldt** produced and broadcasted candidate forums and professional-quality videos featuring diverse perspectives and local analysis. One program was so successful other community access TV stations re-broadcast them.

- **Palm Springs International Film Festival** mounted a video contest called 60 Seconds to Impact where filmmakers, including high school students and local community members, submitted one minute videos on the importance of voting.

- **Arts Connection** partnered with local artist and activist Michael Segura to present political cartoon workshops in San Bernardino and hosted discussions with cartoonists from the San Diego Tribune and the Los Angeles Sentinel.

- **The Center for the Study of Political Graphics** produced a “Presidential Rogues Gallery” exhibit in July and August (overlapping the party conventions) that featured 60 posters satirizing political parties and candidates from the 1960s to the present.

- **The Community Coalition** hosted a civic engagement themed music festival and used new text-messaging technology order to engage younger potential voters.

- **Future Roots** added regular voting-related public service announcements to their DUBLAB radio programming, paired with social media messages, to reach young adults in their community.

Many of the nominated organizations made individual empowerment the core of their voter engagement work. Community Resources for Independent Living told us a story about a young woman who is hard of hearing but wanted to help out with phone banking. With training and encouragement from leaders and peers she ended up making more calls per hour than anyone else on the team.

**Hinasas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE)** shared the story of a young mother who is not a citizen: “She wanted to ensure that people who were able to vote exercised their right in order to improve their communities and everyone who lives in them regardless of immigration status.” **Girls, Inc. of Los Angeles** used a mock election to teach program participants about voting and to reach their parents. **LA Voice** reported, “the formerly incarcerated men and women who made up most of our paid phone banking team had a transformative experience.”

And the Winner is... Coalition on Homelessness San Francisco

**The Coalition on Homelessness** serves and advocates for people who are living without permanent housing in San Francisco. They are “deeply committed to uplifting the political power of the homeless community” and make sure that “decisions that effect homeless people are made with input from homeless people themselves.”

With that philosophy in mind, the staff of COH launched into a campaign of “voter activation” that included increasing political participation of poor and homeless people, as well as educating and inspiring San Franciscans to vote for the measures that secured funding for ending homelessness.

With input from homeless people, COH developed a slate of 10 measures—five they wanted to pass and five they wanted to defeat—which were then distributed city-wide. Homeless and low-income people participated in phone banking, door-to-door precinct walking, voter registration drives, and writing and distributing campaign messages through the Street Sheet newspaper. They also organized public demonstrations “that artistically demonstrated our opposition to a proposed ban on tents in the city.”

Longer-term, COH is translating voter activism into ongoing participation in their projects and systemic change work. “Anti-homeless rhetoric is a huge barrier to our work in San Francisco... we need people to help us fight to end homelessness all year long.”
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