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presstelegram.com

PORT OF LONG BEACH

Another bridge detour coming

Ramp from Gerald Desmond to northbound 710 will close so new connector can be built

By Chris Haire
chaire@seng.com
@CJHaire on Twitter

Yet another detour — and the requisite gridlock that will accompany it — will soon hit those driving over the 50-year-old Gerald Desmond Bridge to the northbound 710 Freeway. And this one will last awhile.

The connector ramp from the bridge to the 710 north, which has 2,000 to 4,000 vehicle trips a day, will close Saturday night, a necessary but possibly painstaking step in the construction of the Gerald Desmond's \$1.5 billion replacement as it barrels toward a summer 2019 completion date. That ramp, officials announced Wednesday, must close because

the path of the new bridge's 710 connector ramp will intersect with it. The current ramp will be demolished in several stages, starting in a couple of weeks. "The common phrase is the traffic patterns are changing," said Denis Wolcott, a spokesman for the bridge replacement project, a joint partnership between the Port of Long Beach and Caltrans. "Motorists should allow enough time to accommodate those changes." Within the past two months,

BRIDGE » PAGE 4



At top, trucks make the transition onto the northbound 710 Freeway in Long Beach on Wednesday. The ramp will close Saturday. PHOTO BY SCOTT VARLEY

CALIFORNIA

RED VS. BLUE



Next, November: Both parties largely survive 'jungle' primary to square off in general election

By Keith Sharon, Jordan Graham, Jeff Horseman and Kevin Modesti
Staff writers

The election calendar said June, but what happened Tuesday was the first volley in the battle of November. California Democrats appeared to avoid a nightmare scenario in Tuesday's "jungle" primary format, while Republicans earned some key victories that will set up a contentious election Nov. 6. As it turns out, Democrats and Republicans, in most cases, were able to survive the jungle (meaning the top two finishers in each race advance, no matter the party affiliation). Across the state, hundreds of thousands of votes

NOVEMBER » PAGE 7

Congress: Primary vote in critical House races exposes the strengths and flaws of California party politics

By Jordan Graham
jgraham@seng.com, @JordanSGraham on Twitter

For Democrats, consider it crisis averted. After national pundits wrung their hands over the possibility that California's top-two primary system would turn Democratic voter enthusiasm into a Democratic voter nightmare, several key Southern California races ended with Democratic candidates still standing. It wasn't easy. And ongoing ballot counts still might shift some specific outcomes. But the numbers show that seven key California congressional districts, including five in Los Angeles and Orange County, still have a chance to shift the balance of power in the House of Representatives in the Nov. 6 general election.

CONGRESS » PAGE 7

INSIDE: More primary coverage. PAGES A3, A6-8

INSIDE: Vote tallies from Tuesday's primary. PAGE A8

ABOVE: Republican gubernatorial candidate John Cox speaks Tuesday during an election party in San Diego.

GREGORY BULL
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

CITY COUNCIL

Incumbents set to focus on biggest LB issues


Mungo, Uranga look beyond campaigns

By Chris Haire
chaire@seng.com
@CJHaire on Twitter

The band will not break up after all. After weeks of fierce campaigning and heated exchanges with their opponents, the City Council incumbents for both East Long Beach's District 5 and West Long Beach's District 7 appear to have come out on top during Tuesday's general election, which coincided with the statewide primary. Though neither Stacy Mungo nor Roberto Uranga has officially won — certification by the Los Angeles County registrar won't be done for a couple of weeks — they will both likely receive second terms after each received about 53 percent of the vote with all precincts reporting. The victories mark the end of months of campaigning, in which both had to defend their records over the previous four years. Now the real work begins: The council, the incumbents said, has a mandate from voters and the necessary continuity to build on their first terms and tackle some big issues, including reducing bureaucracy, fighting climate change and helping the homeless find places to live. "The team stays together," said Uranga, who represents District 7. "It's an affirmation. Voters agreed that we did a good job and want us to continue." District 7 resident Dolores Williams, who voted for Uranga, seemed to agree. "I'm glad that Councilman Uranga won," she said Wednesday. "He is a strong advocate for the 7th District, and I am confident that he will continue to represent us well with integrity and strong leadership." But how much support the incumbents would garner wasn't always clear. For weeks, Uranga and his opponent, Jared Milrad, engaged in a contentious back-and-

COUNCIL » PAGE 4

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Election 2018

Measure M passes to aid city's finances

Opponents consider litigation over use of utilities revenue

By Chris Haire
chaire@scng.com
[@CJHaire on Twitter](https://twitter.com/CJHaire)

Long Beach voters have given the city's financial health a much-needed booster shot.

During Tuesday's statewide primary, 53 percent of voters approved Measure M, also known as the Charter Amendment, which will allow the city to continue a decades-old practice of transferring money from the utilities fund to the general fund.

The measure's passage will immunize the city from potentially draconian cuts, allow continued investments in public safety and other services, make the \$12 million that Long Beach owes its own Water Department, theoretical, and alter the possible consequences if the city were to lose a lawsuit currently winding its way through appeals, the city said.

"The financial health of the city was al-

ways strong," Mayor Robert Garcia said, "but this allows us to move forward in the direction we've been going."

But it also will likely increase customers' water bills, including those who do not live in Long Beach but still use the city's Water Department; raising questions about possible disenfranchisement.

A lawsuit challenging the measure also might land in the city attorney's lap, as opponents to its passage suggested Wednesday that city officials may have misused their authority and taxpayer funds to push for the amendment, something the city denies.

"Once the final votes are tallied for Measure M, we will be weighing whether or not to pursue litigation that challenges this measure on several issues," former Councilwoman Gerrie Schipske said in a statement on behalf of herself and the three others who authored the argument opposing Measure M.



Garcia

MEASURE M » PAGE 12

Professor wins seat on LB school board

Juan Benitez is first Latino elected to panel in 25 years

By Chris Haire
chaire@scng.com
[@CJHaire on Twitter](https://twitter.com/CJHaire)

Cal State Long Beach professor Juan Benitez was headed for a lopsided win over his rival, Downey High School history teacher Cesar Armendariz, in the battle to replace the retiring John McGinnis as the District 3 representative on the Long Beach Unified school board, according to results posted early Wednesday.

Benitez led, 62.38 percent to 37.62 percent, with all 41 precincts reporting, according to the Los Angeles County Registrar. Benitez would become the district's first Latino member on its Board of Education in 25 years. Those results are unofficial until the registrar certifies them.

The school board has not had a Latino member since Jenny Orpopeza left office in 1994. The district is 55.4 percent Latino and this year has 14,500 stu-

dents classified as English learners, according to the California Department of Education.

Armendariz was born in Ecuador and immigrated to the United States with his parents when he was 10 years old. Benitez's parents are from Mexico.

Both spoke Spanish as a first language.

The similarities, though, don't end there. The two candidates have similar goals for improving the district, including focusing on the achievement gap; college readiness and career pathways; students' psychological and emotional well-being; and improving parental engagement.

Their strategies for tackling these issues, though, diverge: Benitez, who has fundraised significantly more than Armendariz, wants to use his experience as an academic and researcher to find data-driven solutions to the achievement gap, and finding ways to balance the need

BENITEZ » PAGE 12



Benitez

HIGHER EDUCATION

Realizing a dream



THOMAS R. CORDOVA — STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Reagan Romali, president-superintendent at Long Beach City College, helps Wendy Quiñonez with her graduation cap Monday.

LBCC: Graduate who fled domestic violence will receive a degree today

By Rich Archbold
rarchbold@scng.com

Wendy Quiñonez was experiencing domestic violence, living in her car and battling mental health problems, but she never gave up on her dream of going to college and graduating.

"I went through a really tough divorce that ended up driving me out of my apartment; soon after I found myself homeless, sleeping in my car, with my son staying at my sister's house," she said. "All of this fear grew bigger as I couldn't find someone to show me support."

She finally found an apartment in Long Beach and enrolled at Long Beach City College "to make my dream happen."

That dream will come true today, when she will join more than 1,900 others in graduation ceremonies.

Quiñonez had an early celebration Monday wearing her cap and gown in the office of LBCC President-Superintendent Reagan Romali.

"I can't believe this is happening," Quiñones said with a broad smile, as Romali helped her put on her cap and gown as a sort of dress rehearsal.

LBCC » PAGE 12

LONG BEACH UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATIONS

More than 5,400 high school students will receive their diplomas this month in the Long Beach area.

Here's the graduation lineup for the Long Beach Unified School District's Class of 2018.

Tuesday

▪ Jordan High School, 5 p.m.
 645 graduates
 LBCC's Veterans Memorial Stadium, 5000 E. Lew Davis St.
 Parking is \$10
 For more information, call the office at 562-423-1471, ext. 2152

Wednesday

▪ Poly High School/PAAL, 6 p.m.
 about 992 seniors
 LBCC's Veterans Memorial Stadium, 5000 E. Lew Davis St.
 Parking is \$10
 For more information, call 562-591-0581

June 14

▪ Reid Continuation High School, 1 p.m.
 88 graduates
 Cabrillo Auditorium, 2001 Santa Fe Ave.
 For more information, call 562-

989-2098
 ▪ Millikan High School, 2 p.m.
 775 students
 LBCC's Veterans Memorial Stadium, 5000 E. Lew Davis St.
 Parking is \$10
 For more information, call 562-425-7441

▪ Renaissance High School, 3 p.m.
 Poly High School Auditorium, 1600 Atlantic Ave.
 For more information, call 562-591-7477
 ▪ Avalon High School, 4 p.m.
 37 graduates
 Avalon Theater, 1 Casino Way, Avalon.
 For more information, call 310-510-0790

▪ McBride High School, 4:30 p.m.
 About 165 seniors
 LBCC Hall of Champions Gymnasium, 3932 Faculty Ave.
 For more information, call 562-425-3539
 ▪ Wilson High School, 5 p.m.
 831 students
 Stephens Field (Wilson football stadium), 4400 E. 10th St.
 For more information, call 562-

433-0481
 ▪ Cabrillo High School, 5:30 p.m.
 500 students
 Jaguar Stadium at the high school, 2001 Santa Fe Ave.
 For more information, call 562-951-7700

▪ Lakewood High School, 7 p.m.
 759 graduates
 LBCC's Veterans Memorial Stadium, 5000 E. Lew Davis St.
 Parking is \$10
 For more information, call 562-425-1281

June 15

▪ Educational Partnership High School, noon
 Lakewood High School Auditorium, 4400 Briercreech Ave., Lakewood
 For more information, call (562) 218-0493
 ▪ Beach High School, 2:30 p.m.
 Millikan High School Auditorium, 2800 Snowden Ave.
 For more information, call (562) 426-6846
 For more LBUSD graduation information, visit lbschools.net.

REMEMBRANCE

Deukmejian memorial service set for Saturday

Tribute to ex-governor is at Terrace Theater

By Rich Archbold
rarchbold@scng.com

A memorial service to celebrate the life of former Gov. George Deukmejian will take place at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Terrace Theater in Long Beach.

The memorial for California's 35th chief executive who died at his home May 8 at the age of 89 is free. The theater is located in the Long Beach Performing Arts Center, 300 E. Ocean Blvd.

Speakers will include Steve Deukmejian Merksamer, Deukmejian's former chief of staff; Ken Khachigian, long-time political consultant; retired California Supreme Court Justice Marv Baxter; former Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster; and George Deukmejian, Jr., the governor's son.

The family asks that donations be made in the governor's name to the YMCA-Model Legislature George Deukmejian Endowment, the California Science Center, Cal State Long Beach Disabled Students Services or the Ararat Home of Los Angeles.

Deukmejian who was born in New York, had a decades-long love affair with Long Beach, his adopted city, which started when he opened his one-man attorney's office in Belmont Shore in 1955.

After his retirement from politics, which included terms as a state legislator, state attorney general and governor, Deukmejian was visible at public events around the community for years. Deukmejian earned the title, "Iron Duke," for his fiscally conservative and tough-on-crime stands while embracing social reforms.

Fellow Republicans and Democrats considered him a friend and mentor.

Reserved and modest, Deukmejian called it "embarrassing" when the new courthouse downtown was christened the Governor George Deukmejian Courthouse.

Deukmejian had his official papers and documents transferred from Stanford University to Long Beach State University, only one of two California governors to have their archives housed at a public university.

"He just loved Long Beach so much," former Mayor Beverly O'Neill said. "He gave the city a sense of pride. He was the epitome of what a public official should be, filled with integrity and trust. He had a likability about him and was accessible to everyone."



LBCC

FROM PAGE 3

“We are so proud of you,” Romali told her. “You inspire all of us with what you have accomplished. You honor us.”

Quiñonez will receive an associate’s degree in business administration. She will transfer to Cal State Long Beach in the fall to pursue a degree in international business.

Quiñonez said she was able to overcome seemingly insurmountable odds with the help of the Long Beach Guidance Center and her clinical therapist, Ana Nguyen.

But, she said, all of the fear and pain she had bottled up inside her “made its way out without me being able to control it.”

She had a mental breakdown and sought help at the Guidance Center where she was diagnosed with PTSD and schizophrenia.

“The Guidance Center and Ana understood what my son and I had gone through and helped us heal and move on,” she said. “Ana helped me get my self-confidence and made me feel stronger.”

She said she wanted to make her story public so others, struggling like she did, can be encouraged to seek help and lead a successful, fulfilling life.

“I’m here now to let you know you can overcome obstacles, too,” she said.

Quiñonez’s Class of 2017-2018 consists of 1,925 graduate who have earned an associate of arts or an associate of science degrees



Reagan Romali, president-superintendent at Long Beach City College, and Wendy Quinonez are all smiles as Quiñonez tries on her cap and gown in Long Beach Monday.

THOMAS R. CORDOVA
STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

and 316 students who have earned one or more certificates of achievement.

Fifteen students will be graduating with highest honors, attaining a perfect 4.0 grade-point average.

The valedictorian is Mackenzie Howard, a second-generation LBCC history major. She is following in the footsteps of her father, who played on the LBCC 1995 Viking football team. A graduate of Lakewood High School, Howard is a Merit Scholar with a perfect grade-point average. She is transferring to Long Beach State in the fall and plans to become a teacher.

The oldest graduate to receive a degree will be 75-year-old Eugene Sylve who attended LBCC in the 1960s and was a linebacker on the football team. President-Superintendent Romali recognized Sylve at her State of the College address in February. She said Sylve’s life took “some challenging twists and turns, including time spent in prison, and facing many health issues related to diabetes.” But Sylve returned

to LBCC to continue his education and give back to the community with a degree in human services, Romali said.

“It’s never too late to make an impact,” she said.

Graduate Hannah Kaho is a good example of the Long Beach College Promise and a legacy student, according to Ginny Baxter, a member of the LBCC board of trustees. The Long Beach College Promise extends the promise of a college education to every student in the Long Beach Unified School District.

Kaho, a 2015 graduate of Lakewood High, is a third-generation LBCC student. Her father and grandparents also attended LBCC. She attended the LBCC Child Development Center before going to LBUSD schools. She will transfer to Long Beach State and major in history.

The keynote speaker will be Dr. J. Luke Wood, the Dean’s Distinguished Professor of Education in the College of Education at San Diego State. He serves as the director of the joint Ph.D program

in education between San Diego State and Claremont Graduate University and director of the Ed.D program in community college leadership.

The ceremony is from 4 to 6 p.m. at Veterans Memorial Stadium, 5000 E. Lew Davis St. No tickets are required. Seating will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Parking is free in the Veterans Stadium parking lot entered from Conant Street or Faculty Avenue. Guests and graduates are asked to arrive early because of heavy traffic expected on Carson Street and Clark Avenue.

Benitez

FROM PAGE 3

for math and science programs with maintaining the humanities, keys he said to producing good citizens.

He also wants to make it easier for parents to be engaged, possibly by having school board meetings be held in the community at times and not at district headquarters.

Benitez could not be reached Wednesday.

“My background in experience and research will help,” Benitez said last month. “The superintendent and the school board have done a good job, but that doesn’t mean we can’t do better.”

Armendariz, meanwhile, said he prefers to listen to parents first and then formulate how best to help them and their students. He also wants to improve relationships with the larger community, suggesting the dis-

trict could create partnerships where businesses let students intern for them.

“We need partners in the community,” Armendariz said in May.

Benitez has received endorsements from half of the City Council and Mayor Robert Garcia, the police and fire unions, and several other elected officials.

Armendariz has been endorsed by McGinnis, who he hopes to succeed; two other school board members; and Eduardo Lara, who ran against him and Benitez in the April primary.

Armendariz last month admitted that given the money his opponent has raised, defeating Benitez would be an “uphill battle.” On Tuesday, despite the large deficit early, Armendariz said he was celebrating the end of the campaign.

“I’m at peace,” he said. “We worked hard from the very beginning and now we just wait.”



Armendariz

PASSAGES

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Ghislaine de Bergeyck Iliff

September 8, 1929 - April 27, 2018

Ghislaine Iliff passed away in the early morning hours of April 27, 2018 at a rehabilitation center where she was recuperating from a recent fall while tending to her garden.

Ghislaine was born in Belgium and was raised at the castle Cortewalle. In the 1960s, she immigrated to the United States and worked as an economist at the Belgian Embassy in Washington, D.C. This is where she met her husband, Warren Iliff, the director of the Washington Zoo. Ghislaine and Warren traveled the world both for business and pleasure.

Gigi, as she was known to her friends, arrived in Long Beach in 1996 when Warren was named as the founding president and director of Long Beach’s Aquarium of the Pacific until his retirement in 2002. Gigi was fondly called the First Lady of the Aquarium. Gigi was a warm, outgoing, fun-loving lady who charmed everyone she met.

Gigi supported local philanthropies, most notably the Assistance League of Long Beach, St. Mary’s Medical Center Foundation and animal rescue agencies.

Her favorite past times were gardening, reading, and her book club. She was also an avid bridge player.

She was predeceased by her husband Warren (2006), and survived by her sister, Michelle, niece, Sofia of Portugal, and nephew, Gwendolyn of Belgium and extended family overseas.

There will be a memorial service at St. Bartholomew Catholic church in Long Beach on Friday, June 8th at 10:30am. Her ashes will be scattered at sea in a private service. Please sign the guest book at www.presstelegram.com/obits

Measure M

FROM PAGE 3

Those violations, the authors said, include “violations of government code prohibiting the use of government resources for the passage of a ballot measure.”

Financial health

For years, the city had charged the Water Department permit fees to use the pipelines that run under Long Beach, and then transferred any surplus revenue — money not used to maintain the pipelines or otherwise keep the Water Department running smoothly — into the general fund. That practice raised \$91 million over the last decade, according to city figures.

But a lawsuit brought against the city by Schipske and resident Diana Lejins challenged the city’s ability to transfer funds, citing a 1996 state law that requires ballot initiatives in order to levy new taxes.

In a November settlement, the city agreed to stop transferring money into the general fund and to pay back \$12 million to the Water Department over four years.

That settlement created a financial problem for the city, which will already have to fill an \$11.6 million structural deficit for its next fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. Had the Charter Amendment not passed, the city would have needed to cover an additional \$8.3 million hole, according to John Gross, Long Beach’s director of financial management.

Gross was not available for comment Wednesday.

Gross has said his team drafted two budgets, one for if the amendment passed and one for if it didn’t. The latter, he said, would have forced a difficult conversation about where to cut expenses.

Instead, the city will be able to transfer up to 12 percent of gross revenue from the water fund to the general fund.

Opponents to the amendment, though, argued on Wednesday that City Hall needs to be more financially prudent, but voters instead gave them free rein.

“The message is they can just continue spending like there’s no tomorrow,” Lejins said.

But Garcia countered, saying that the vote is an affirmation of the council’s work.

“The people trust us,” Garcia said.

Past, future lawsuits

The city’s finances got some extra good news with the amendment’s passage, according to Deputy City Attorney Rich Anthony.

The \$3 million annual payment Long Beach must make to the Water Department over the next four years has essentially become moot.

Long Beach must abide by the settlement and continue making payments, Anthony said. But as long as the revenue transferred from the Water Department to the general fund is more than \$3 million, which the attorney said it should be, the payment will be pro forma.

“It will be a paper transfer,” he said. “The \$3 million will go to the Water Department, but it will just come back.”

The amendment could do the same for a second lawsuit that is winding through the appeals process, Anthony said.

That lawsuit is similar to the one the city settled last year, but it involves transfers from the gas fund. A judge initially threw that lawsuit out, but the decision was appealed.

The city is expected to file its brief on the case in the next few weeks, Anthony said, but any decision on whether to uphold the original judge’s dismissal of the case or to force a jury trial could be at least a year away.

If the city loses that lawsuit, it would not have to stop transfers — doing so would create another \$10 million hole in the budget, Gross has said — but would potentially force it to pay the gas fund back for transfers made from 2015 to the first half of this year, Anthony said.

Still, the effect would be that money would be transferred from the general fund to the gas fund and back again.

Anthony said he hasn’t discussed with the City Council whether continuing the lawsuit, if the appellate judge reverses the original dismal, would be worth it now that the amendment has passed.

But the city’s legal entanglements over the amendment could continue beyond the gas-fund lawsuit. Schipske, Lejins, and taxpayer advocates Tom Stout and Joe Weinstein said in their joint statement that they believe the city “used tax dollars to advocate for the passage of Measure M.”

Under state law, the city may spend money to educate voters on ballot

initiatives, but it cannot advocate for or against them.

“There is a large amount of gray area” between education and advocacy, Anthony conceded.

But he added the city was told that the state’s Fair Political Practices Commission declined to open investigations into two complaints they received from the measure’s opponents, citing lack of sufficient evidence.

The opponents’ statement, though, also alleged impropriety by the City Council in advocating for the amendment.

“The Mayor and several City Council members used their personal emails to purposely mislead voters by stating Measure M is not a tax, when it is,” the statement said. “They also told voters the transfers would be taken from surplus funds, when the ballot measure states it will take transfers from gross revenues.”

Anthony responded that the council members may advocate for any issues they want, as long as they aren’t using city resources.

“They have First Amendment rights,” he said.

Lejins, though, said that whether it is legal or not, the council’s campaigning amounted to “blackmail.”

“They scared voters, saying services would be taken away,” Lejins said. “It was extortion.”

What’s next?

City staffers will spend the coming weeks shoring up the budget proposal that they will present to the City Council for discussion, changes and, ultimately, approval. They will do so, Garcia said, without the need to make tough choices about which services to cut.

“I’m for it,” said District 7 resident Pablo Marin, who voted for the measure Tuesday. “It gives the city financial flexibility.”

Water customers, meanwhile, should see their bills go up by about \$3 beginning in October, according to Gross; the same amount bills decreased after the November settlement.

That goes for a handful of customers who don’t live in Long Beach but use its Water Department, including residents of a small pocket of unincorporated land within Long Beach.

Those water customers did not get to weigh in on the measure.

“It’s a little odd,” Anthony said, “but you have to be a resident to amend the charter.” Their rates will still be lower than if they got their water from one of the surrounding cities.”

Robert Smith, 56

Karl Drolson, 77

Michael Foglesong, 76

Isidra Villa Monzon, 86

Sharon Bolton, 91

Kathryn Schroeder, 53

Ralph Trosino, 96

Cathy Rogers, 64

Eugene Poole, 65

Michael Kane, 55

The families were assisted by McKenzie Mortuary. For more details on service dates and times, contact (562) 961-9301

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