

# Voters in both parties back UC system

Poll finds wide regard for its medical centers, research, education amid Trump’s attacks.

By JAWEED KALEEM

Republican and Democratic voters share common ground when it comes to the University of California: Both sides express widespread support for UC, its research, medical centers and ability to elevate the lives of students, a statewide poll shows.

Strong majorities of registered voters across demographic groups — urban and rural, racial, education levels — said UC research was good for their communities, including 62% of Californians with only high school diplomas. Voters in their 20s have the most favorable view of research.

The survey results, from the nonpartisan UC Berkeley Institute of Governmental Studies, come as the university system faces major battles with the Trump administration over deep research funding cuts and President Trump’s demand of a \$1-billion fine to resolve federal charges of anti-semitism at UCLA.

“In an era where the benefits of public higher education are being questioned, the polling results suggest that California’s residents see the value in a UC education and recognize the many different ways the UC system contributes positively to the state,” said G. Cristina Mora, the institute’s co-director.

For months, the University of California has been enveloped in the nationwide drive by Trump to reshape higher education, which he sees as a bastion of liberalism hostile to conservative thinking. The 10-campus UC system has faced hundreds of millions of dollars in cuts to federal research support that the Trump administration derided as wasteful spending. Last month federal officials suspended more than half a billion dollars in medical study grants to UCLA. Negotiations with the federal government to restore the grants are ongoing.

The Berkeley poll of 6,474 registered California voters showed a more nuanced political picture between Democrats and Republicans against the backdrop of White House invective that accuses selective universities of being hotbeds of race- and gender-based discrimination rooted in diversity, equity and inclusion movements that Trump says don’t match the will of the American people.

UCLA, UC Berkeley and UC Irvine have been accused by the Trump administration of illegally using race in admissions. The entire UC system is also under federal investigation for allegations [See Poll, A6]



JULIE LEOPO For The Times



MYUNG J. CHUN Los Angeles Times

ANA BANUELOS, top, waves a U.S.-Mexico flag during protests at the Glass House in Camarillo. Above, anti-ICE demonstrators gather at Oxnard City Hall.

## For Latinos in Oxnard, a summer of anger

### Immigration enforcement raids have fueled distrust in the community and put officials on the defensive

By Ruben Vives

Latinos make up more than half of Oxnard’s 202,000 residents, and they have long taken pride in helping to build this sprawling city by the sea.

Constructed around the same agriculture fields where Cesar Chavez organized migrant laborers before establishing the United Farm Workers of America, Oxnard is a place where Latino influence is omnipresent — from music festivals to eateries.

At City Hall, officials have made it a priority to protect the area’s immigrant residents and workforce — whether that involves bolstering tenant rights against pred-

atory landlords, or joining a civil rights lawsuit against indiscriminate raids.

But a summer of immigration sweeps has fueled distrust in the community, and put city officials on the defensive.

The Trump administration’s crackdown has sparked street protests, as well as complaints that city officials need to be more proactive and forceful in the face of federal immigration enforcement.

“Tensions are high in the community right now and relations are being strained,” said Lucas Zucker, co-executive director of Central Coast [See Oxnard, A8]

## A cause celebre for human mama bears

### South Lake Tahoe activists want state to spare ‘Hope,’ a home raider with a cub.

By JESSICA GARRISON

Lake Tahoe — with its luxury vacation homes dotted through alpine forests, its tens of thousands of tourists, and its huge concentration of the species *Ursus americanus* — has long been at the center of California’s human-bear conflicts.

Bears stroll out of the woods and across crowded beaches to snatch food from



KATHI ZOLLINGER

HUMANS should learn to better coexist with bears, including “Hope” and cub “Bounce,” activists say.

## FDA overhauls its guidance on COVID shots

The changes may make it harder for many people to get the vaccination.

By RONG-GONG LIN II

New federal guidance surrounding COVID vaccine authorization could make it more difficult for many people to be inoculated against the circulating — and, now, seasonally spiking — coronavirus.

Under the approval for the updated COVID-19 vaccines issued this week by the Food and Drug Administration, adults younger than 65 who are otherwise healthy would need to consult with a healthcare provider before getting the shot.

It’s the latest move by U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., a vaccine skeptic, and his allies aimed

specifically at COVID vaccines, which were developed during President Trump’s first term in an effort dubbed Operation Warp Speed.

It also came just hours before the Trump administration said it had fired the director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Susan Monarez, who was confirmed to the post by the U.S. Senate just 29 days earlier.

Monarez was forced out after Kennedy and other officials asked her if she was aligned with efforts to change vaccine policy, and she declined to agree without consulting her advisors, the Washington Post reported Wednesday.

“Secretary Kennedy and HHS have set their sights on weaponizing public health for political gain and putting millions of American lives at risk,” Monarez’s attorneys, Mark S. Zaid and Abbe David Lowell, said in a [See Vaccine, A5]

## Torrance police agree to reform

### The resolution with Bonta’s office follows a scandal involving racist text messages.

By JAMES QUEALLY

The Torrance Police Department and the California attorney general’s office have entered into an “enforceable agreement” meant to reform the troubled agency following a scandal that led prosecutors to toss dozens of criminal cases linked to officers who sent racist text messages, officials said.

Atty. Gen. Rob Bonta announced the reforms — which will include changes to the agency’s use-of-force and internal affairs practices, along with the creation of an external oversight

body and the appointment of a third-party monitor — during a news conference in downtown Los Angeles on Thursday morning.

Bonta credited former Torrance Police Chief Jeremiah Hart with approaching him after the scandal erupted in 2021, leading to collaborative reform efforts.

“The Torrance Police Department has demonstrated a commitment to self-reflection to looking inward ... to address systemic challenges,” Bonta said Thursday.

Bonta and interim Torrance Police Chief Bob Dunn said the changes would play out over five years. The attorney general promised a cultural shift in a city that was rocked by the comments of officers who appeared to hate a sizable chunk of the community they were hired to protect.

The California attorney general’s office announced its Torrance investigation in December 2021, the same day a Times investigation first revealed the contents of the text messages and the names of most of the officers involved. Court records and documents obtained by The Times showed the officers made offensive comments about a wide range of groups. They joked about “gassing” Jewish people, attacking members of the LGBTQ+ community and using violence against suspects.

The worst comments were saved for Black men and women, whom the officers repeatedly called “savages” or referred to with variations of the N-word. One officer shared instructions on how to tie a noose and posted a picture of a stuffed animal being hanged [See Reform, A14]



ANA RAMIREZ San Diego Union-Tribune

### TIJUANA RIVER’S THREAT

Bolstering concerns of neighbors, research finds high levels of toxic gas near a waterway filled with sewage in San Diego County. CALIFORNIA, B1

### Consumers may see higher prices

Smaller sellers could pass along costs as U.S. halts the historical duty exemption known as “de minimis.” BUSINESS, A10

### Telluride auteurs and rock stars

Film festival includes Chloe Zhao’s “Hamnet,” a “Springsteen” feature and a McCartney doc. ENTERTAINMENT, E1

### Weather

Mostly sunny. L.A. Basin: 92/67. B6



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## OpenAI’s ChatGPT led teen to a ‘dark and hopeless place,’ suit says

By QUEENIE WONG

Adam Raine, a California teenager, used ChatGPT to find answers about everything, including his schoolwork as well as his interests in music, Brazilian jiu-jitsu and Japanese comics.

But his conversations with a chatbot took a disturbing turn when the 16-year-old sought information from ChatGPT about ways to take his own life before he died by suicide in April.

Now the parents of the

teen are suing OpenAI, the maker of ChatGPT, alleging in a nearly 40-page lawsuit that the chatbot provided information about suicide methods, including the one the teen used to kill himself.

“Where a trusted human may have responded with concern and encouraged him to get professional help, ChatGPT pulled Adam deeper into a dark and hopeless place,” said the lawsuit, filed Tuesday in San Francisco County Superior Court.

OpenAI said in a blog

post Tuesday that it’s “continuing to improve how our models recognize and respond to signs of mental and emotional distress and connect people with care, guided by expert input.”

The company says ChatGPT is trained to direct people to suicide and crisis hotlines. OpenAI said that some of its safeguards might not kick in during longer conversations and that it is working on preventing that from happening.

Matthew and Maria [See OpenAI, A11]