

SOLANO CHRONICLE

WRITTEN BY INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS AT CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON SOLANO



(NOAH BERGER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES)

Bring It! First Woman of Color Tapped as VP

BY RUDY MURPHY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Kamala Harris, whose mother immigrated to the United States from India, completed the Democratic ticket headed by former Vice President Joe Biden to become America’s first female Vice President.

Although new to the political stage nationally, VP Harris has been involved in local politics in the State of California for several years. Prior to being elected Vice President, Harris served as Senator from California. In that position, she was only the second woman of color in the Senate, behind Carol Moseley Braun (D-Illinois) who served from 1993 to 1999.

During her time as Attorney General of the State of California, Harris’ office was accused of slowing the process of release of non-violent offenders and of allowing second-time offenders who have served half their sentences to be eligible for parole. Harris’ office denied the claim. According to Donald Specter, Executive Director of the Prison Law Office and lead counsel on *Brown v. Plata*, “As far as I know, she (Harris) did very little to improve the criminal justice system when she was Attorney General.”

Despite perceptions of her record as District Attorney and Attorney General, criminal justice advocates see the possibilities the progressive wing of the Democratic Party has in Harris. “I think her record in the Senate is very good.” said Inimai M. Chettiar, director of the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice. “I think what remains to be seen is what kind of criminal justice platform she brings forward.”



Biden and Harris make first appearance as running mates – (Associated Press)

Joseph R. Biden Elected President

BY RUDY MURPHY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

After almost 40 years of public service, including two terms as Vice-President to Barack Obama, and decades as Delaware’s Senator, Joseph R. Biden, became the 46th President of the United States.

Born November 20th, 1942 in Scranton PA., Joe Biden was drawn into the realm of politics after being inspired by President John F. Kennedy in 1961. After graduating from law school, Biden began to work at a local law firm in Wilmington Delaware, and affix himself to the Democratic Party. Then in 1970, became a member of the New Castle County Council. By 1972, his local political standing grew, and although seen as a long shot, the Democratic Party asked him to run against Republican incumbent J. Caleb Boggs for United States Senate. After an exhausting campaign, he surprisingly won.

Then, tragedy brought everything to a halt. A car accident took the lives of his wife and daughter, and severely injured both his sons. The loss left Biden contemplating suicide.

He would later go on to say that he understood how despair led people to just cash it in; how suicide wasn’t an option but a rational option. But heavily supported by the strength of his family, Biden forged through, and at the bed side of his injured sons he was sworn in as the fifth youngest Senator in the nation’s history.

From 1973 to 2009, Biden would become a voice in foreign policy, serve as chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and later chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee. A brief tale of the political tape records his policies included expanding NATO, (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), pushing for strategic arms limitations with the Soviet-bloc nations, peace in the Balkans, and being against the first Gulf War. (see **PRESIDENT** on page 8)

IN THIS ISSUE

SOLANO COVID-19 UPDATE

HEALTH AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

PASSING OF NOTABLE FIGURES

COVID-19

What You Need to Know About Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL
AND PREVENTION

What is coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)?
Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness that can spread from person to person. The virus that causes COVID-19 is a novel coronavirus that was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China.

How does COVID-19 spread?

The virus that causes COVID-19 probably emerged from an animal source, but now it seems to be spreading from person to person. It's important to note that person-to-person spread can happen on a continuum. Some diseases are highly contagious (like measles), while other diseases are less so. At this time, it's unclear how easily or sustainably the virus that causes COVID-19 is spreading between people.

What are the symptoms of COVID-19?

Patients with COVID-19 have had mild to severe respiratory illness with symptoms of

- fever
- cough
- shortness of breath

What are severe complications from this virus?

Many patients have pneumonia in both lungs.

How can I help protect myself?

The best way to prevent infection is to avoid being exposed to the virus that causes COVID-19.

There are simple everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory viruses.

These include

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

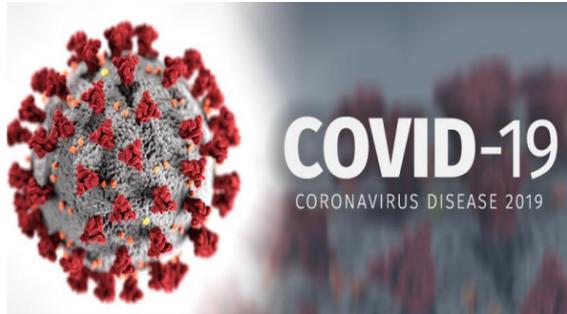
If you are sick with COVID-19 or suspect you are infected with the virus that causes COVID-19, follow the steps below to help prevent the disease from spreading to people in your home and community.

Wear a facemask

You should wear a facemask when you are around other people (e.g., sharing a room or vehicle) or pets and before you enter a healthcare provider's office. If you are not able to wear a facemask (for example, because it causes trouble breathing), then people who live with you should not stay in the same room with you, or they should wear a facemask if they enter your room.

Cover your coughs and sneezes

Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw used tissues in a lined trash can; immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 to 95% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty.



Clean your hands often

Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, clean your hands with an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, covering all surfaces of your hands and rubbing them together until they feel dry. Soap and water should be used preferentially if hands are visibly dirty. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

Clean all "high-touch" surfaces every day

High touch surfaces include counters, tabletops, doorknobs, bathroom fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets, and bedside tables. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a household cleaning spray or wipe, according to the label instructions. Labels contain instructions for safe and effective use of the cleaning product including precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

Monitor your symptoms

Seek prompt medical attention if your illness is worsening (e.g., difficulty breathing). **Before** seeking care, call your healthcare provider and tell them that you have, or are being evaluated for, COVID-19. Put on a facemask before you enter the facility. These steps will help the healthcare provider's office to keep other people in the office or waiting room from getting infected or exposed.

Ask your healthcare provider to call the local or state health department. Persons who are placed under active monitoring or facilitated self-monitoring should follow instructions provided by their local health department or occupational health professionals, as appropriate.

If you have a medical emergency and need to call 911, notify the dispatch personnel that you have, or are being evaluated for COVID-19. If possible, put on a facemask before emergency medical services arrive.

A few reminders...

Isolation separates sick people that can spread the disease from healthy people.

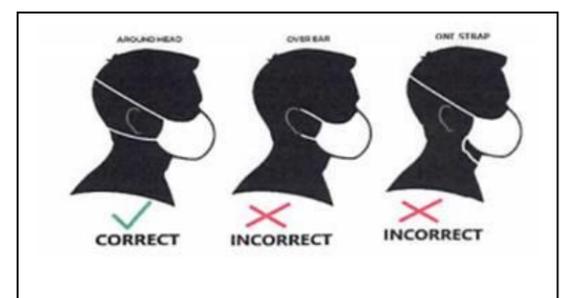
Quarantine separates people exposed to a disease to see if they become sick, and it keeps them away from healthy people. These people do not show symptoms but they may have the disease in a beginning stage and show symptoms later, or they may never get the disease.

Isolation and **quarantine** are used to protect the population by preventing exposure to people who have or may have an infectious disease.

SYMPTOMS OF COVID-19

- *Fever or chills*
- *Cough*
- *Short of breath/difficulty breathing*
- *Tiredness*
- *Muscle or body aches*
- *Headache*
- *New loss of taste or smell*
- *Sore throat*
- *Congestion, runny nose, pink-eye*
- *Nausea or vomiting*
- *Poor appetite or diarrhea*
- *Chest pain or pressure*

Remember, if you develop any symptoms, you should tell staff or a health care worker right away.



VACCINES AND COVID SAFETY

**COVID-19 VACCINATION
INFORMATION**

CCHCS PUBLIC HEALTH

WHY SHOULD I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE SHOTS?

- You get the vaccine shots to prevent you from getting really sick or dying from COVID-19.
- The vaccine shots will help you build up the ability to fight off getting sick from COVID-19.
- The vaccines have been tested on 10,000’s of people and it is felt to be safe and can prevent you from getting sick.
- If you are vaccinated it may prevent you from becoming seriously sick if you are exposed to others who are sick with COVID-19 and may help protect your family, friends, and your community, especially those who may be at higher risk for getting very sick from COVID-19.

DO I NEED TO PROTECT OTHERS IF I GOT THE COVID-19 VACCINE SHOTS?

- Yes, you still need to follow the COVID-19 instructions:
 1. Cover nose and mouth with a mask.
 2. Avoid close contact (six feet away).
 3. Wash your hands.
 4. Get tested for COVID-19 if you are exposed to someone sick with COVID-19.
- No vaccines can protect you 100% so even if you got the vaccine, you might be able to pass COVID-19 to others even though you feel well.
- No vaccines protect you right after you get the shot.
- Some of the vaccines require two shots before you are protected and it takes a couple of week after you have finished your shots before your body builds up the protection.

CAN I GET SICK FROM THE VACCINE SHOTS?

- You cannot get COVID-19 from getting the shot.
- Some people might feel some side effects after getting their shots for a few days. Some may last for about three days. These side effects let you know your body is building protection against getting sick with COVID-19.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I FEEL SICK AFTER GETTING MY VACCINE SHOT?

- It does not mean you have COVID-19.
- Take some time to rest and allow your body to feel better.
- If you do not feel better after three days, seek medical attention.
- If you develop hives, swelling of the face or throat, or difficulty breathing, seek medical attention.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER I GET THE COVID-19 VACCINE SHOTS?

- You will receive a vaccination card that tells you what COVID-19 vaccine shot you received, the date you received it, and where you received it.
- Most vaccines require 2 shots – If you get both shots you are done with getting your COVID-19 vaccine.

I GOT MY FIRST SHOT AND I NEED A SECOND SHOT. WHAT DO I DO?

- It is very important that you receive your second shot if you need one.
- If you do not get your second shot, you will not have the protection you need from getting sick with COVID-19.
- If you need a second shot, you should get the same COVID-19 vaccine shot that is listed on your vaccination card.



CORRECTIONS AND REHABILITATION

HUMANIZING PRISONS & JAILS IN THE UNITED STATES

**DANA R. BROWN
NEWSPAPER SPONSOR**

Dr. Gabor Mate’s quote, “When you study prison populations and childhood trauma, you see a common preponderance of childhood trauma and mental illness. The two go together. So what we have in prison are the most traumatized people in our society.” Exemplifies our society’s need for understanding the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). The decades-long research is the largest public health study in our nation that millions of people have not heard of. Over 440,000 individuals have been part of the ACE study through Kaiser Permanente in San Diego county.

Our research-proven opportunity is a paradigm shift in how we support individuals, and families, who have been impacted by poverty, community violence, human trafficking, domestic violence, gang violence, being undocumented, a refugee, etc. in preventing systems retraumatizing already traumatized individuals and families.

Everyone should be held accountable, with compassion. Hurt people hurt people.

We are harmed through relationships, and through relationships, we heal. Neurologically, we are wired to connect with each other. When we are born, we need the secure attachment of trusted adults in our lives.

Please know my name is Dana Brown. A passionate advocate on healing-centered, equity-focused systems change, I’m humbled for an opportunity to share more on our opportunities to transform punitive systems to cultures of care, hope, and healing. I am grateful to learn from, share with, and collaborate together on behalf of residents in jails or prisons, and their families in our communities, throughout our state and nation.

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study was published in May 1998 by co-principal investigators, Dr. Vincent Felitti, Kaiser Permanente, and Dr. Robert Anda, Centers for Disease Control.

The ACE study, which reflects household dysfunction, in utero to age 18, along with expanded ACE studies reflective of community trauma and across the lifespan, proves the impact of trauma (acute, chronic, complex, systems-induced, and vicarious) which affects our

neurological, biological, and epigenetics (family history and DNA), and our capacity to access our “thinking” brain (capacity to access the prefrontal cortex which is where we

access logic, reasoning, emotional control, self-regulation, capacity to learn). When we feel safe, with a trusted adult, we can soothe an anxious brain and dysregulated body. When we feel safe, we can calm a brain in hypervigilance. When we feel safe, we can access our higher level executive functions in our “thinking brain.”

Dr. Nadine Burke Harris, California’s first Surgeon General, released a 438-page report on December 9, 2020, on reducing, by 50%, in one generation, the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Every single one of us has an opportunity, and a responsibility, of being part of the solution.

In 2019, California tax dollars invested \$12,134.00 to educate a child/adolescent in public education. In 2019, California tax dollars invested \$ 81,000 to house an individual in jail or prison.

Those who have been impacted directly are the voices of those served. Lived experiences bring wisdom and expertise that can guide us in moving forward with transforming our “systems” to cultures of care, hope, and healing.

The most important investment of prevention dollars in our society, in today’s age, are supporting families’ individual needs with trauma-informed service providers and resilience-building opportunities.

Humanizing our jails and prisons through supporting residents when they return to their families and communities is an opportunity we all have. Ensuring our tax dollars are invested with transforming these systems, cross-sector in a socio-ecological model, through an equity-focused, healing-centered lens through the integration of ACEs science within programs, practices and policies where people live, work, pray, and play is our Call to Action.

The Solano Chronicle Gets First Outside Sponsorship

**RUDY MURPHY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**

The Solano Chronicle is happy to announce its first outside sponsorships from District 7 Representative Dana Brown (San Diego) and the Archbishop King of the African Orthodox Church (AOC) in San Francisco.

Originally called the “Solano Vision” before adding the word “news” to aid its direction, the entire paper was confined to events within the walls of CSP-Solano. After a change at the top, which brought in Damon Cook as Editor-in-Chief, the paper was renamed “The Solano Chronicle.

The publication, under Cooke, was part of a packet sent to local and distant businesses in and around the State of California. The packets also included brochures representative of some of the resident-created programs as well as essays from a handful of CSP-Solano residents that happened to be the life’s work of one of the paper’s new sponsors. Together, the two sponsors have decided to collaborate to minimize the cost of supporting such a monumental undertaking.



Archbishop Franzo King D.D. stands in front of the Saint John Coltrane African Orthodox Church in the Fillmore District on Wednesday, February 10, 2016. (Ekevara Kitpowsong/ Special to S.F. Examiner)

The Archbishop, with roots entrenched in Northern California, has been active in the pursuit of equal rights, community outreach, early restorative justice programs, and continued spiritual presence since the politically-charged 1960’s. Continuing to pursue and reverse some of the disastrous trends that plague communities of color, the Archbishop established the Saint John Coltrane Church in San Francisco, where he continues ministering, supplying food to local families, and aiding the homeless. In the 1980’s, he opened a program that taught youth to play musical instruments like the drums, saxophone, guitar, and piano – not only for the ones who attended the church but for kids all across the city.

Dana Brown, who is active in the greater San Diego area, has built an educational platform that highlights the need to address childhood trauma, a root cause and contributing factor for most of the men and women in prison settings.

Along with becoming the district’s Regional Southern California Facilitator for Adverse ACE’S Connection network, in which Brown mentors and teaches the youth groups to process early and present childhood trauma. Brown also lectures at San Diego State University and Alliant International University School of Criminal Justice.

She is a Commissioner for the Gang Prevention and Intervention program in San Diego and Chair for the Youth Committee that bears the same platform. Ms. Brown has also founded a character development program at the elementary school level, focusing her attention on those in her community. She helped found “Youth Voice” and “OurSOLES” (Our Students of Leadership *Empowerment* Service), and has won several distinguished awards for her service in the community.



Photo courtesy of Dana Brown

On behalf of the residents of CSP-Solano and its staff, we thank past Editor-in-Chief Damon L. Cooke for his vision and welcome the Archbishop King and Dana Brown as the Solano Chronicle’s first outside contributors.



John Lewis in 2006 (Gary Wayne Gilbert)



A horse-drawn carriage carrying the body Rep. John Lewis (D-Ga.) crosses the Edmund Pettus Bridge on July 26, 2020 in Selma, Alabama. (Photo: Michael M. Santiago/Getty Images)



Representative John Lewis receiving the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Barack Obama in 2011. (Credit...Doug Mills/The New York Times)

IN MEMORIAM

Leadership Through Good Trouble

Remembering Congressman John Lewis

RUDY MURPHY

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

If there was ever an example of staying active on the battlefield of life, Congressional Representative John Lewis lived that narrative by giving direction to the odyssey of the Civil Rights Movement.

Getting into what he called “good trouble,” John Lewis was arrested more than forty times during the 1960’s while peacefully protesting the insalubrious treatment of African Americans.

Born on February 21, 1940 in Troy, Alabama, John Lewis was the great-grandson of slaves and the son of sharecroppers. He grew up in the “Jim Crow” south and was affected by the discrimination of Blacks via its law enforcement and sanctions.

As a child, John would sneak off to school instead of helping his father work the family farm, then return home and practice giving speeches to the animals, mostly chickens. This beginning narrative would become a preamble for bigger things to come.

In 1961, John volunteered to participate as one of the Freedom Riders challenging segregation at interstate bus terminals across the south. During those protests, he and many others were brutally beaten and arrested several times for simply sitting in seats reserved for white patrons.

At the age of twenty-three, John Lewis was not only a key note speaker but also the youngest to address those who marched on Washington on August 28, 1963. He was the last living speaker on that day which included his mentor, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Almost two years later, Lewis would help organize and lead more than 600 peaceful marchers across the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, AL in a push to give blacks the right to safely vote. In an effort to suppress those marching, then-Governor Wallace dispatched local and State Troopers with the order to do what they needed to do to keep John and others from crossing the bridge. As the world watched, Lewis and many others were viciously assaulted. John Lewis was among those severely injured.

Public outrage by such an open display of senseless violence, live on television news programs, forced President Lyndon Johnson to sign the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Following those years, Lewis continued to stay active through his philosophy of nonviolence in order to bring about change. By 1966, Lewis was able to add almost four million minorities to voter registration rolls.

In 1981, Lewis was elected to the Atlanta City Council in Atlanta, GA. By 1986, he found himself representing Georgia’s 5th District in Congress, a position he held until his passing on July 17, 2020. Lewis was highly respected on both sides of the aisle for his selfless acts and sacrifices.

In his last public appearance, and despite his failing health, John Lewis took to the streets to march and then stand on the “Black Lives Matter” mural painted on the street in front of the White House.

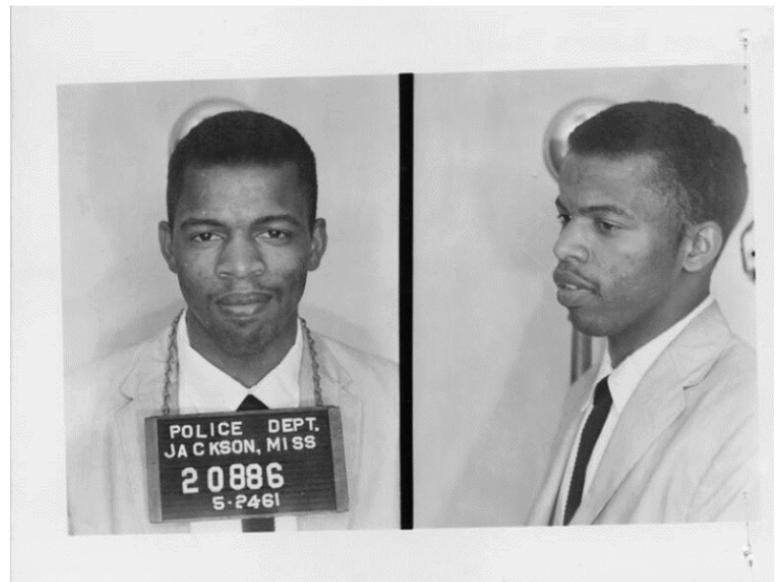
“I felt restless,” he said, “I had to do something.”

At his memorial, Lewis was eulogized by four past Presidents of the United States – Jimmy Carter, George W. Bush, William Jefferson Clinton, and the first Black President, Barack Obama.

John Lewis, Civil Rights activist, leader, and servant of all people, passed away at age eighty.

He is survived by his son Miles Lewis and several extended family members.

John R. Lewis
February 21, 1940-July 17, 2020



Rep. John Lewis tweeted his booking photo to mark the day he was released from prison 53 years ago. @repjohnlewis via Twitter

HUMAN INTEREST

IBSHP Coordinator's Personal Journey is Hope for Others

RUDY MURPHY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Each Prison has a voice, at Solano, part of that voice is Self Help Times, which aims to move conversations from the intersection of rhetoric to reality by bringing its community together.

For most of the residents of CSP-Solano, identifying the root cause of their linear criminality and for some, its progression, is histories launch pad. For Kurt Androsky, finally being able to acknowledge what he was, turned out to be the key, but it wasn't always that easy.

"I really didn't go in search of change," said Kurt, "I had a sentence of 100 years to life," he said, "I was struck out 4 times as a three striker."

Like most of the men here, and across CDCR, Kurt saw no hope. "I really didn't have an issue with the time, this was my fifth term," said Kurt, "I just saw being on the 180 yards as one long haul."

It is widely understood that those who have yet to find their bearing, generally have some sort of "Denial." Not being willing or able to identify it will keep the person from change. "There are four types of denial," said Kurt, "a lack of information, unconscious, conscious, and delusion."

As for what it took for Kurt to see which one was the dominant factor, he had to have a functional mind. But in his dysfunction, that was one thing he didn't have at the time. During his sentence of 100 years to life, Kurt received the news that he had terminal cancer, and an estimated eight months to a year to live. The doctors put him on heavy pain pills, three times a day.

Kurt acknowledged that even being told he was going to die, didn't stop his criminal addictive thinking. "All I thought about was how I could use this to my advantage," he said.

One thing that didn't change was the work and progress of those he saw as getting their lives together. Kurt was able to recognize the change he desired in some of the men around him. "The Badgetts, John and Lance," said Kurt, "were heading in the direction I needed to be going."

His history with the two Mentors in the OMCP program is long and tenured. Although Kurt was not part of the LTOP, (Long Term Offender Program) path, it was the IBSHP program that helped him pace his recovery, and rehabilitation.

Kurt noted that having been a business owner before, he knew any problem, or challenge someone has can be met with a solution. "But there are steps," he said. "The first thing is to recognize the problem, then you can clarify it."

Kurt used his personal battle as an example. "If I know I have a drug problem, I need to figure out why I have it," he said. According to Kurt, the next step is to look for alternative solutions, and weigh the cost/benefit of each one. Once you've done that, pick an alternative, think it out, then act.

But for the changes Kurt started to make, his cancer diagnosis remained. Finally, after it spread, and he found himself in the hospital, he had finally hit bottom. "I was able to look up," he said. When Kurt decided to take back his life, he leaned heavily on his understanding of leadership. "I think inclusivity, in any organization is critical for building a healthy organization," said Kurt, "it allows everyone to feel they are a part of the process."

Kurt recognized the collective push to better the community around him in the actions of what the Badgetts were doing in LTOP, and then found his own place with the IBSHP, which led him to become one of its coordinators.



Photo Credit: (Marta Goerzen)

That was about fifteen years ago. Now, after putting in the work, Kurt has earned a parole date, and finds himself preparing for parole.

"I'm taking with me a fellowship that's worldwide," he said.

Kurt was referring to his foundation he built once he hit rock bottom while in the hospital. "I can go anywhere in the world and find people on the same path I am a part of here," he said. "There are 7,700 weekly N.A., (Narcotics Anonymous) meetings, so where ever I go, I can raise my hand and say my name is Kurt, and I'm an addict."

"I've gone from 100 years to life, to having one year to live, to now walking out of prison," said Kurt.

As for being a part of the leadership in the IBSHP, Kurt sees that his journey offers hope to those just coming in and are looking for those alternatives in the decisions they need to make. "Although I'm incarcerated, I'm like a lot of people around here, I really do want to see the best for others, even if at one time I struggled to see it for myself."

We Want Your Submissions!

The Solano Chronicle welcomes submissions, including content and Letters to the Editor, from all members of the CSP Solano community. As we begin the process of returning to regular circulation of the newspaper, please direct all submissions to R. Lynne Ruvalcaba, Supervisor of Correctional Education Programs, for forwarding to the Solano Chronicle staff for consideration.

POLITICS

The Presidential Process

RUDY MURPHY
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Republicans and Democrats chose their Presidential candidates via primaries and caucuses before awarding electoral votes that will ultimately indicate the winner of the Presidential race. But what are electoral votes, what is the Electoral College, and how does this all work?

Established by Article 2, Section 1 of the United States Constitution, the Electoral College is the formal body responsible for election of the President of the United States. There are 538 voting members (electors) of the Electoral College. According to the Constitution, each state is assigned a number of electors equal to the combined total of the state’s Senate and House of Representative delegations. This includes the District of Columbia, otherwise known as Washington, D.C.

(Fact: The District of Columbia, while not a state, is granted three electoral college votes.)

Every four years since the election of George Washington as the nation’s first President in 1779, the country has voted to determine who will hold the office for the next four years. Most states require all electoral votes to be awarded to the candidate that garners the plurality of votes in that state, with the exception of Maine and Nebraska. Those states use what is called “The Congressional District Method” to allocate electoral votes based on districts. One elector within each congressional district is elected by popular vote in that district, with the

remaining electors representing the two U. S. Senate seats selected by state-wide popular vote.

When voters go to the polls in Presidential races, they are actually just voting for a slate of electors vowing to cast their ballots for that ticket. For any candidate to win the Presidency, they need to win 270 electoral votes, or just over 50% of the 538 electoral votes.

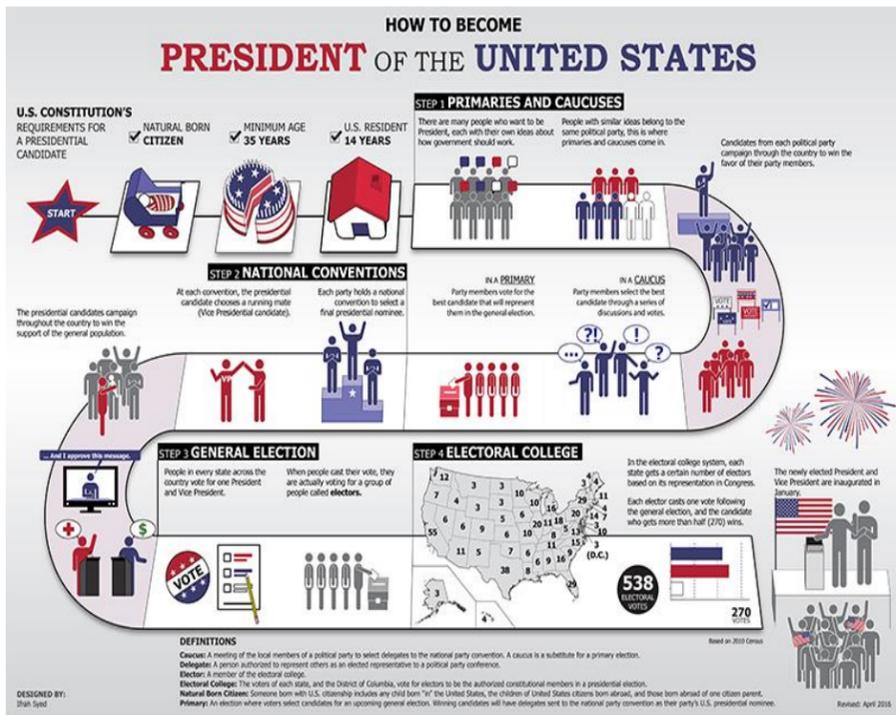
Disagreements between those who support use of the Electoral College and those who don’t have grown since the election of Donald Trump, who defeated Hillary Clinton in Electoral College votes but not popular votes in 2016. Proponents of the system say it protects the rights of the smaller states and is the cornerstone of American Federalism. Critics argue that it is unfair, deeming it undemocratic because the actual population of a state does not equal the number of electoral votes it has.

In an article written for the Washington Post, Aaron Blake stated that the Electoral College forces candidates to structure their campaigns in specific ways. “They have to focus on about a dozen purple, or swing, states such as Florida, Ohio, Wisconsin, Virginia, and Iowa,” he said. Blake felt this was what allowed Donald Trump to overcome the 3,000,000 difference in popular votes cast for Hillary Clinton in 2016 and pick up the coveted electoral votes despite voter turnout being about 60% nationwide.

In a popular vote, states with higher turnout would directly increase and influence the outcome of the Presidential race to a greater degree. The electoral voting system does not penalize states for low voter turnout. The states will always get the same number of electoral votes whether turnout is 30% or 70%.

Historically, slaves and women were the most disenfranchised voting groups. Women did not get the right to vote until passage of the 19th Amendment in 1920, 100 years after the Women’s Suffrage Movement began.

At that time, about 20 million women did not have the right to vote. Blacks were entirely excluded from the process until 1965 and the passage of the Voting Rights Act signed into law by then-President Lyndon Johnson. Had the two populations secured the right to vote earlier, America’s path forward through history may have been significantly different. However, with new voter restrictions and voter identification laws, a return to the days of the disenfranchised could play a pivotal role in future elections. Currently, twenty-two states, including California, Colorado, and Idaho, are slowly returning voting privileges to ex-felons, but only after they are off parole.



What About That Popular Vote?

Five times has a Presidential candidate won the popular vote across America, only to lose the electoral vote. Four were before women and blacks had the right to vote, and one time after the fact:

- ❖ 1824, Andrew Jackson won almost 45,000 more popular votes than Quincy Adams
- ❖ 1876, Samuel Tilden won 250,000 more votes than Rutherford B. Hayes
- ❖ 1888, Grover Cleveland received more than 100,000 more votes than Benjamin Harrison
- ❖ 2000 Al Gore won more than 500,000 votes than George W. Bush
- ❖ 2016, Hillary Clinton, the first woman to secure a Presidential nomination, won more than 3,000,000 more votes than Donald J. Trump

FROM PAGE 1

President

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

In 1987, Biden made his first run for Presidency of the United States, but left the campaign trail when reports of him plagiarizing a speech came out. Then in 1988, a health scare sidelined him. Continued headaches, and two life threatening brain aneurysms led to blood clots in his lungs, a second surgery, and a seven month recovery period. When he returned to the political stage, Biden would go on to sponsor the now heavily debated Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, now acknowledged by both Biden and vice-President elect Harris, as misguided. Although it added 100,000 police officers, it also increased the sentences for a number of crimes that have continued to directly impact people of color, specifically Hispanic, and Blacks, leading to the massive incarceration of the two.

In 2007, Biden again ran for president. But the top two politicians, Hillary Clinton, and Barak Obama, eclipsed his years of Senate experience.

After Obama won the 2008 Democratic nomination for president, Biden was asked to be the Vice-President. His blue-collar upbringing and union ties were seen as strengths by Obama, and would be essential to Democrat's chances in winning necessary swing states, like Pennsylvania.

During the two terms Biden served as Vice-President, he worked across the aisle using the viable relationships he established during the decades he served in the Senate to help pass a bipartisan agreement on tax increases, and push for more gun control after the elementary school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut in 2013. In the midst of his third push for the highest office in the land, some of those relationships were pointed out by one time rival and now Vice-President Kamala Harris during a 2020 Democratic debate. Those relationships, according to Harris had a direct impact on her as a little girl. Harris questioned him about his willingness to work with the openly racist and segregationist Senators James Eastland, and Herman Talmadge in the 1970's.

Despite unfavorable showings on the initial primary ballots, Biden still emerged from the most diverse field of candidates including five women, to win the Democratic nomination. However; it also exposed just how divided the country was.

As Biden assumes his role as Americas 46th President, how much has changed? Some political allies, and opponents are still entrenched in both the Senate, and Congress. But no one appears more uniquely qualified to take on America's political and racial division. At the Federal level, the winds of political change have steadily blew in favor of reform on the progressive side. The changes have now began to settle in at the state levels across America.

Biden believes the White House Cabinet he is putting together will reflect the changing face of America, help heal the nation, and restore Americas standing around the world.

Despite President Donald Trumps continued debunked claims of voter fraud, Biden was declared president-elect on November 7th, 2020, four days after the elections, and inaugurated on January 6, 2021.

In his initial acceptance, Biden took to Twitter, noting he was honored to be chosen to lead this great country. He tweeted, "The work ahead of us will be hard, but I promise you this: I will be a President for all Americans-whether you voted for me or not. I will keep the faith that you have placed in me."

COVID-19 HANDWASHING TECHNIQUES

1 Apply soap to wet hands or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to dry hands.



2 Rub hands palm to palm.



5 Rub backs of fingers into the opposing palm with fingers interlocked.



6 Grasp thumb in other hand and rub while rotating around the thumb. Repeat with other thumb.



3 Rub hands palm to backside and switch.



4 Interlace fingers and rub hands palm to palm.



7 Rub finger nails, including the thumb, into the opposing palm and repeat.



8 If using soap, rinse off with water and turn off faucet with a clean towel. If using hand sanitizer, once hands are dry they are safe.

