

Editor's Introduction, Winter 2025

Issue Contents

We begin by focusing on legislative staffing, a topic which is understudied, especially at the state legislature level. Drawing on a unique data set, Michelangelo Landgrave's lead article offers a quantitative analysis of how the California State Assembly utilizes different groups of staffers. He determines that Hispanic and Asian American Pacific Islander staffers are disproportionately placed in constituency service positions. This finding has implications not only for California but for American legislative bodies more generally.

Next, we continue the CJPP tradition of publishing articles examining budgeting in the western states. We feature ten such articles, including detailed studies of budgeting in Arizona and Nevada, two states that have been missing from our analyses in recent years. In 2024, we saw sharp divisions among the states in terms of overall fiscal health, with some states running surpluses and others facing deficits. These fiscal health differences interacted with increasingly sharp partisan splits to affect how much was invested in public education, whether any tax relief was provided, and the like. While the extent of Democratic or Republican control of the levels of power was especially critical for budgetary decisions, intraparty splits about budget related matters were also significant in some states.

The inclusion of the budgeting articles underscores the journal's long-standing interest in comprehensive, fine-grained comparisons of policies and politics. I am unaware of any other publication that offers such detailed cross-state analyses of budgetary decisions, for example.

Editorial Transition

This is my last issue as the CJPP editor. I am proud to have taken on this role and remain strongly committed to the journal's mission. I am also excited that Professor Amal Kumar, my departmental colleague, will be the new editor. Amal's creativity and scholarly thoughtfulness will serve the CJPP well. Readers can look forward to more communication from him.

Thanks

I want to take this opportunity to thank the College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies at Sacramento State, staff of the Center for California Studies, our editorial board, and our ad hoc reviewers for all they have contributed during my four years as editor. Publishing an academic journal is a team effort, and I have been most fortunate to have outstanding support.

In preparing the most recent issues, I want to express particular appreciation to two people. The first is Jenna Westbrook-Kline for her careful copy-editing, amidst her other responsibilities for the Center for California Studies. The second is our associate editor, Wesley Hussey, for astute advice about many aspects of the journal as well as great feedback regarding the budgeting and other articles.

I also wish to thank the following people who served as manuscript reviewers in 2024 (members of the CJPP editorial board are designated with italics).

Elizabeth Bergman, California State University, East Bay

Harry Blain, California State University, Sacramento

Jeffrey Cummins, California State University, Fresno

Wesley Hussey, California State University, Sacramento

Thad Kousser, University of California, San Diego

Stacy Fisher

Amal Kumar, California State University, Sacramento

Nicole Lambrou, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona

Danielle Martin, California State University, Sacramento

Megan Mekelburg, California Governor's Office

Shanna Pearson-Merkowitz, University of Maryland

Hugh Stafford, University of California, Davis

Frederik Strabo, University of California, Davis