

EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EXECUTIVE ORDER N-31-25

WHEREAS, since taking office in 2019, my Administration has been focused on building a California for All, investing in efforts to make government work for everyone by reaching underserved communities and demographic groups, expanding access to services that meet people's basic needs so they can focus on pursuing opportunities and advancement, and actively assessing disparities in opportunity and outcomes to more effectively deliver governmental services to all intended beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS examples of this work include championing implementation of universal transitional kindergarten and school meals, expanding access to health care, issuing an executive order and signing legislation creating a Racial Equity Commission to support state and local governmental agencies in analyzing data to identify barriers in access and opportunity that may be contributing to disparities in outcomes among demographic groups, creating the largest paid volunteer corps in the country that builds skills for the volunteers and critical connections in our communities through their service, and more; and

WHEREAS, since its initial establishment as an advisory committee in 1965, the California Commission on the Status of Women and Girls has brought sustained focus and advocacy promoting equality and justice for all women and girls and addressing disparities and barriers that uniquely impair opportunities and equal access for women and girls, and California's steadfast commitment to reproductive freedom and the success of California's Equal Pay Pledge are exemplars of recent work to advance that important goal; and

WHEREAS we have made substantial progress as a state over the last six years, but much work remains, including the particularly urgent need to confront California's growing crisis of connection and opportunity for men and boys; and

WHEREAS the progress that women have made is to be celebrated, and it is not a zero-sum question of continuing the important work to support equality and opportunity for women and girls while also addressing the challenges facing men and boys: doing so directly benefits society as a whole; and

WHEREAS these efforts to support men and boys must be positioned within a broader approach that adapts and is responsive to the distinct needs of all people—so as to reinforce, not undermine, California's longstanding equity work on behalf of women, girls, and other marginalized groups; and

WHEREAS it is therefore in the best interest of all of us to broaden opportunities for success and address the disparities in outcomes for men and boys, which include the following:

- Men account for nearly 80 percent of all suicides, and young men are three times more likely to die by suicide than young women;
- Men are more likely than women to use all types of illicit drugs, and men are dying of drug overdoses at two to three times the rate of women;
- Depression is ranked as a leading cause of death among men, and mental health conditions often go untreated among men because they are far less likely to seek treatment than women;
- Young men are more disconnected from school, work, and relationships than ever before, with nearly one in four men under 30

- Young men are more disconnected from school, work, and relationships than ever before, with nearly one in four men under 30 years old reporting that they have no close friends, a five-fold increase since 1990, with higher rates of disconnection for young Black males, and a lack of social connection is associated with increased risk of poor health, including mental health disorders, poverty, and even premature death;
- Studies show that adolescents who spend more than three hours daily on social media face a higher risk of experiencing symptoms of depression and anxiety, and a recent survey found that American teens spend more than four hours a day on social media platforms on average each day;
- Men have higher prevalence of cardiovascular disease and cancer than women;
- Labor force participation among men without a college degree is at historic lows, with about one in nine men aged 25-54 neither working nor looking for work, and the unemployment rate for men in California is higher than the rate for women;
- College enrollment and completion rates for men have dropped significantly over the past decade; and
- The school suspension rate for boys is more than double the rate for girls, with even higher rates for Black and American Indian and Native Alaskan boys; and

WHEREAS addressing challenges facing men and boys also requires continued attention to cycles of violence, including community violence and domestic and interpersonal violence, which have lasting impacts on education, mental health, and long-term economic opportunity; and

WHEREAS the disparities and poor outcomes detailed above vary across demographic groups: college enrollment and employment challenges are most acute for Black men, while the suicide crisis is most severe for white men; and

WHEREAS my Administration is in the midst of implementing several initiatives that are directly responsive to addressing the negative outcomes for men and boys highlighted above, including:

- California Jobs First, a statewide plan built with input from 13 regions to drive sustainable economic growth, innovation, and access to good-paying jobs over the next decade, paired with \$125 million to support new projects and \$92 million for new apprenticeship and job programs;
- The Master Plan for Career Education, which focuses on strengthening career pathways, prioritizing hands-on learning and real-life skills, and advancing educational access and affordability, and which complements investments to develop career passports and credit for prior learning and enhance regional coordination to align educational and workforce programs with real-world jobs in the local community;
- Mental Health for All, California's plan to build a stronger and more equitable behavioral health system, with the goal to make sure every Californian—especially those who have struggled to get help like men and boys—can access high-quality mental health and substance use disorder treatment when and where they need it:
 - Proposition 1, passed by the voters in 2024 to modernize the state's behavioral health care delivery system and provide \$6.4B in bond funds to build treatment facilities and housing, strengthens California's broader efforts to reimagine the entire behavioral health system—connecting services, expanding access, and improving outcomes for all Californians;

- The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative invests billions of dollars to create a larger and more representative workforce supporting behavioral health for young people, to improve coordination and integration across different settings delivering behavioral health care so there is no wrong door for young people attempting to access care, streamlining reimbursement for providers delivering needed behavioral health services, and reducing stigma around behavioral health needs;
- The California Community Schools Partnership Program, which is transforming more than 2000 public schools into community hubs that provide integrated educational, health, and mental health services to students and families through more than \$4 billion in grants; and
- California Volunteers, which is tasked with engaging Californians in service, volunteering, and civic action and operates the largest service force in the nation, in addition to facilitating volunteer and civic engagement opportunities across the state; and

WHEREAS focused attention is necessary to ensure these efforts provide maximum positive impact for the men and boys across our state who can benefit from them; and

WHEREAS my Administration, in partnership with the Legislature, has made historic investments to address the shortage of teachers and counselors in our public schools, allocating more than \$1 billion to strengthen the teacher workforce; and

WHEREAS, for years, female teachers in our public schools have outnumbered male teachers by more than two to one, limiting the exposure of boys to educated and caring male teachers who can serve as role models; and

WHEREAS my Administration, in partnership with the Legislature, has expanded access to transitional kindergarten (TK), and beginning this fall, the expansion will be fully implemented so that all children who turn four by September 1 each year will be eligible to enroll in TK, underscoring the importance of providing resources to support schools in delivering developmentally appropriate practices that support the needs of all early learners; and

WHEREAS researchers and parents are actively debating the value of taking a “redshirt year,” particularly for boys, meaning delaying the start of kindergarten, to allow the child to mature physically, emotionally, and socially, given the relatively slower development of boys relative to girls; and

WHEREAS the data highlighted above underscore the urgent need for a sustained and coordinated government focus on more broadly addressing the challenges affecting men and boys and on identifying and remedying any gaps or barriers in existing governmental initiatives and programs that limit participation in or obtaining the benefits of governmental services.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor of the State of California, in accordance with the authority vested in me by the State Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue the following Order to become effective immediately:

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. The California Health and Human Services Agency, in consultation with the Department of Health Care Services, the California Department of

Public Health, and other relevant departments, shall develop recommendations to address the suicide crisis among young men within existing initiatives, including the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative and other components of the Master Plan for Kids' Mental Health, and to support the mental health and help-seeking behavior of boys, men and the communities that support them, including those affected by violence, to access timely services and seek treatment if needed, including development of pathways for men and boys in need to participate in improved behavioral health services that are expanding through California's Mental Health for All Plan and the Master Plan for Kid's Mental Health.

2. The Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement, in consultation with the Office of the First Partner and the Executive Director of the State Board of Education, shall identify opportunities for promoting and enhancing the participation of men and boys in service opportunities through California Volunteers.
3. The Governor's Office for Business and Economic Development, the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, the California Health and Human Services Agency, the Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement, and the California Department of Veterans Affairs, in consultation with the Office of the First Partner and the Executive Director of the State Board of Education, shall work together to identify opportunities for enhancing full participation of men and boys in the services and activities currently being implemented under California Jobs First, the Master Plan for Career Education, the Children and Youth Behavioral Health Initiative, and the California Community Schools Partnership Program, including review of outreach, marketing, and promotional materials.
4. The California Health and Human Services Agency, with support from the Center for Data Insights and Innovation, shall support its constituent departments, boards and offices in examining, using existing data, gender disparities in service uptake across programs they administer to identify any gaps in service delivery and assessing potential programmatic changes to address any disparities identified.
5. The Executive Director of the State Board of Education shall, and the California Department of Education and California Commission on Teacher Credentialing are requested to, identify opportunities, within the initiatives underway as part of the more than \$1 billion invested to strengthen the teacher workforce, to improve recruitment of men as teachers and school counselors, including review of outreach, marketing, and promotional materials and partnerships with institutions of higher education.
6. The California Health and Human Services Agency and the Executive Director of the State Board of Education shall, and the California Department of Education is requested to, review existing research and, as appropriate, engage outside experts to provide recommendations on any changes to existing state law or guidance to local educational agencies and parents and guardians: for providing developmentally appropriate transitional kindergarten and kindergarten curriculum and classroom environments that take into account the full range of learning modalities for young children, including boys; and on circumstances where it may be appropriate to delay the start of kindergarten for children, and particularly boys, including the interaction between the full

implementation of transitional kindergarten in the 2025-26 school year and any such recommendations.

7. The agencies identified in Paragraph 3 may develop additional recommendations to improve men's mental health and assist men in finding opportunity and purpose in California.
8. Other agencies and departments within my Administration shall assist in the efforts directed by this Order if requested, and agencies and departments not subject to my authority are requested to do the same.
9. The agencies identified in Paragraph 3 shall provide an update to the Governor's Office within two months on implementation of this Order and shall provide updates on a quarterly basis on implementation of this Order and any actions proposed in response to it.

I FURTHER DIRECT that as soon as hereafter possible, this Order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given of this Proclamation.

This Order is not intended to, and does not, create any rights or benefits, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the State of California, its agencies, departments, entities, officers, employees, or any other person.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 30th day of July 2025.

GAVIN NEWSOM
Governor of California

ATTEST:

SHIRLEY N. WEBER, PH. D
Secretary of State