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# California readies for 900 new laws

By Melody Gutierrez Updated 5:10 pm, Friday, December 26, 2014

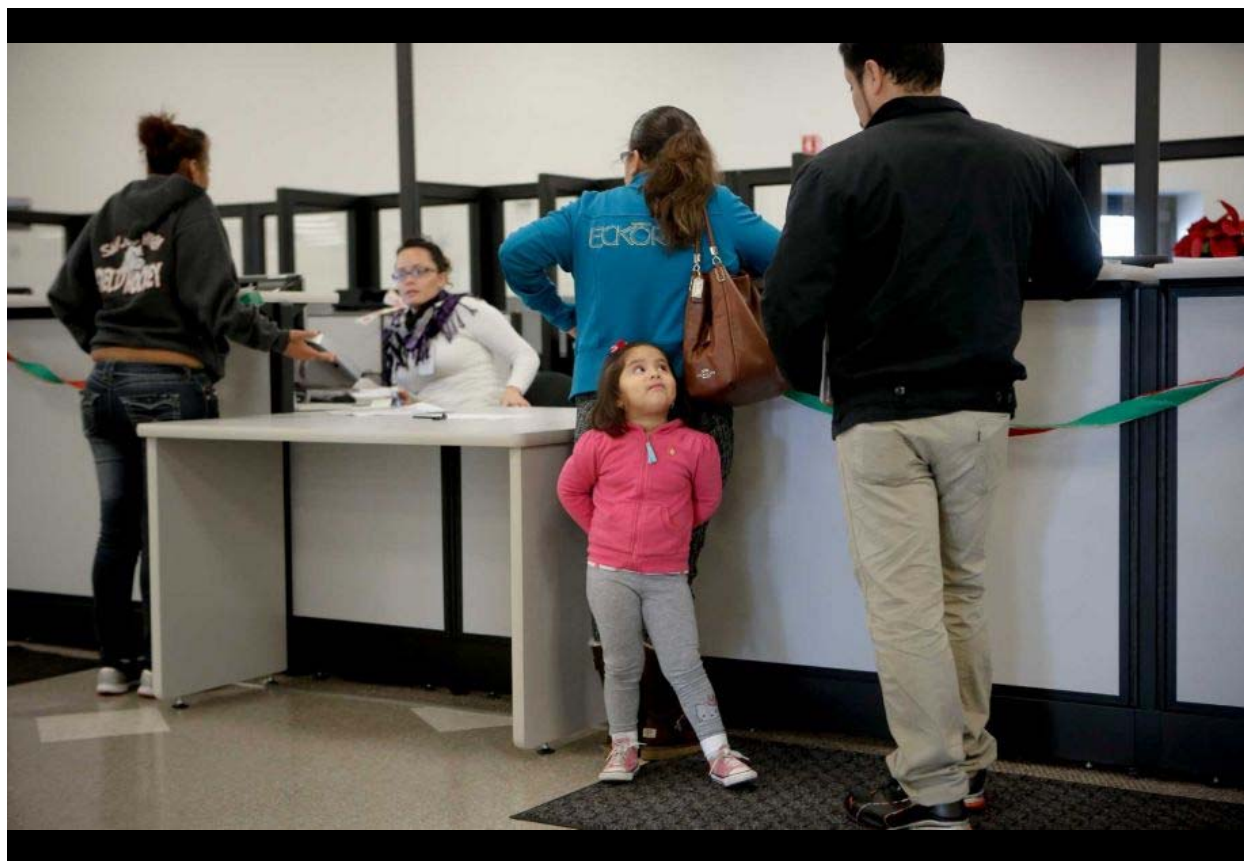


IMAGE 1 OF 7

Diana Chacon waits for his parents, Marabel Nam bo and Juan Chacon, at San Jose's DMV.

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**SACRAMENTO** — New Year's Day will usher in hundreds of new laws in California, including a landmark law that allows undocumented individuals to receive a driver's license.

In all, California will add 930 new laws, most of which will go into effect Thursday. Some of the most talked-about laws won't take effect until July, such as a statewide ban on plastic bags, required sick leave for employees and a requirement that new

smartphones come with antitheft technology.

Here's a look at some of the new laws:

**Driver's licenses:** More than a million driver's license applications from people living in the U.S. without documentation are expected under a law that passed in 2013, but goes into effect Jan. 1.

The Department of Motor Vehicles opened four driver's license processing centers, including one in San Jose, extended its hours and hired additional staff to brace for the onslaught of applications under AB60, which allows undocumented people to drive legally in California.

Officials anticipate processing approximately 1.4 million driver's license applications under AB60 during the next three years. First-time applicants can make an appointment at [www.dmv.ca.gov](http://www.dmv.ca.gov). The DMV is closed New Year's Day, but will be open Friday.

**"Selfie" protections:** Revenge will come at a price for those who post private naked photos or videos of someone without his or her consent. The new law extends privacy protections to all individuals who take nude "selfies" intended to be private. A law passed last year to offer "revenge porn" protections did not include selfies. Anyone who violates the new law by disseminating a protected image could be charged with disorderly conduct, a misdemeanor.

In July, a second "revenge porn" law will allow a person whose naked image was shared online without his or her consent to file a civil suit for monetary damages against the perpetrator under a pseudonym in court.

**Care homes:** State-licensed assisted-living homes could be subjected to substantially increased fines for major violations under a new law that arose out of several instances of failures at care facilities in the state, including last year's botched closure of Valley Springs Manor in Castro Valley, where residents were left behind when the state shut it down.

The previous maximum fine of \$150 levied for serious incidents including death will be

raised to a maximum of \$10,000 in cases of physical abuse and \$15,000 for violations that lead to a death. Facility operators can appeal the fines.

Another law would ban residential care facilities for the elderly from accepting new residents if they have not corrected serious health and safety violations or have failed to pay a state-issued fine.

**Sexual assault:** Colleges and universities in California will be required to adopt policies against sexual assault that radically rewrite what constitutes consent as a condition of receiving state financial aid.

Under the new law, the standard for consent to sexual activity in campus judicial hearings shifts from whether a person said “no” to whether both partners said “yes.” The law only applies to the burden of proof used during campus disciplinary hearings, not criminal proceedings.

**Birth to death:** Birth certificates will receive a makeover in California to accommodate same-sex couples. Instead of being able to select only mother or father when identifying a parent, birth certificates will include “parent” as an option.

How death certificates are filled out for transgender people also will be updated. Under a new law, coroners will be required to list the gender consistent with how the person lived, instead of solely relying on the person’s anatomy.

The bill was inspired by Christopher Lee, co-founder of the San Francisco Transgender Film Festival, who committed suicide in 2012. Lee’s friends were dismayed to learn his death certificate listed him by his anatomical gender, female.

**Education:** All public high schools will be required to submit grade point averages electronically for each graduating senior to the California Student Aid Commission to increase the number of students who receive Cal Grant award offers for higher education. Students or schools failing to send GPA information is among the more common reasons students don’t receive Cal Grants.

**Groundwater:** California will begin the long process of regulating groundwater for the first time in the state’s history under three new laws that require local agencies to create

sustainable groundwater management plans to ensure priority basins are sustainable by 2040.

**Mug shots:** It will be illegal in California for websites to profit from posting arrest mug shots by charging embarrassed people to have them removed. Under the new law, commercial websites could face a \$1,000 civil penalty for each violation in what lawmakers called a “mug shot racket.”

Many of the people whose mug shots have been posted by websites were never convicted of a crime.

**School pesticides:** Parents will have the right to know what pesticides are used at K-12 schools and many licensed child care centers. Pesticides can be used on school campuses to get rid of cockroaches, vermin and weeds, but the new law will make chemical pesticides a last resort and increase disclosures of what is used.

**Sex abuse:** Childhood sex abuse victims will have more time to press charges against their abusers under a law that goes into effect Jan. 1. Victims of childhood sexual abuse previously had until they turned 28 years of age to press charges, but the new law extends the age limit to 40.

**'Audrie's Law':** Teens will face increased penalties and receive fewer privacy protections if convicted of sex acts on someone who is passed out from drugs or alcohol or incapable of giving consent due to a disability. Known as “Audrie's Law,” the tougher penalties were sought after a Saratoga teen named Audrie Pott committed suicide days after she was sexually assaulted while unconscious. The teens convicted in the attack were given light sentences between 30 days and 45 days in juvenile detention.

**Prison transition:** State prison inmates will be given current California Identification cards upon release in hopes of helping them apply for jobs and housing or access health care and social services.

**Plastic bags:** Later this year, California will begin phasing out single-use plastic bags. The statewide ban goes into effect July 1 in grocery stores and pharmacies and a year later in convenience stores and liquor stores. The state became the first in the nation to ban single-use plastic bags, although many cities and counties in California already have

bans in place.

**Paid sick leave:** Millions of Californians will begin earning paid sick leave under a law that takes effect in July. Largely affecting retail, fast food and other service-industry jobs that don't offer sick leave benefits to full-time or part-time employees, the law will allow workers to earn one hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

California became the second in the nation to require the benefit, after Connecticut.

**Kill switches:** Smartphones manufactured after July 1 and sold in California must come pre-equipped with antitheft technology that allows the owner to temporarily or permanently render the phone inoperable if stolen or lost. Consumers would be prompted to enable the kill switch as the default setting during the initial setup of a new smartphone. Consumers can opt out if they choose.

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