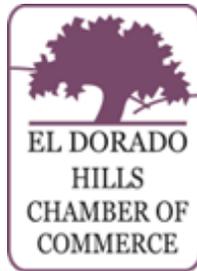




# UCAN

united chamber advocacy network

## 2022 Year End Report



ELK GROVE  
CHAMBER  
OF COMMERCE



For the **United Chamber Advocacy Network**, 2022 was active and, in many ways, successful during the second year of a two-year legislative session.

The year began with the approval and distribution of UCAN's annual State Policy Agenda, generated by the responses from a survey distributed by UCAN chambers to their members.

## **2022 UCAN Policy Agenda**

As has been the case since the UCAN coalition began in 2018, the issues of taxes and regulations topped the list of chamber members' concerns in 2022. In addition, concerns about COVID Regulations and Recovery, Housing Availability, and Public Safety/Retail Theft/Homelessness were troubling to UCAN chamber members.

UCAN chamber leaders brought forth some additional priorities for the network to address in 2022 beyond legislative concerns. It was also agreed to engage with candidates for local legislative races that opened up due to redistricting and retirements. Leaders recommended continued expansion of UCAN

## **UCAN Legislative Forum**

Four legislators – Assemblymembers Ken Cooley, James Gallagher, Kevin Kiley, and State Senator Jim Nielsen joined UCAN chamber leaders in February at the UCAN Legislative Forum. Members received and commented on the 2022 UCAN State Policy Agenda. Assemblymember Cooley noted that it is essential to have the voice of small business and local chambers of commerce present in the legislative process to counter the strong presence of labor unions, environmental groups, and others. Assemblyman Kiley remarked the UCAN network has been very helpful to his office in amplifying his legislative proposals with real-world examples and how valuable a consistent presence of UCAN is in the legislature.

Rachel Michelin, CEO of the California Retailers Association, was a featured speaker at the forum. Ms. Michelin addressed criminal retail theft, a significant concern for residents and business owners throughout California. Due to increases in crime and shoplifting, many law enforcement leaders attribute reductions in penalties to the passage of Proposition 47 (2014). Michelin, a leading voice on behalf of large and small retailers, thanked the UCAN chambers for their partnership in supporting legislation in 2022 that sought to reform Prop 47 and reduce retail theft.

## **Criminal Retail Theft**

UCAN supported several bills that sought to address retail theft, only one of which was approved by the legislature:

- UCAN Advocate Dave Butler and Roseville Chamber CEO Rana Ghabdan, testified in support of AB 1599, authored by Assemblyman Kiley, which would have repealed Prop 47. AB 1599 failed in Assembly Public Safety, 2-5 on a party-line vote.
- UCAN also testified in support of SB 1108, authored by Senator Patricia Bates of Orange County. Similarly, SB 1108 would have repealed much of Prop 47 but failed in Senate Public Safety, 1-4, also in a party-line vote.
- Butler and Rancho Cordova Chamber leader Doug Brewer joined Ms. Michelin and the California Retailers Association at a press conference at the Capitol in support of AB 2390 authored by Assemblymember Al Muratsuchi of the South Bay area of Los Angeles. AB 2390 combined minor reforms to Prop 47 and a diversion program for first-time offenders. This softer, hybrid approach failed to gain a single vote in Assembly Public Safety, 0-5.
- The only bill addressing retail theft approved by the legislature and signed into law by Governor Newsom was SB 301 by Senator Nancy Skinner, which created additional penalties for the sale of stolen merchandise online.

In response to the legislature's failure to address the concerns of retailers, small business, and residents regarding increased criminal retail theft, the UCAN chambers will host a forum on Thursday, March 2, 2023, in partnership with the California Retailers Association and local law enforcement officials, calling attention to the need to reform Prop 47.

### **COVID Restrictions**

In the 2022 UCAN member survey, 70% of respondents opposed a mandated employer vaccine requirement for employees. When Assemblymember Buffy Wicks of Oakland introduced AB 1993, which would require employers to require proof of vaccination from their employees, it was clear UCAN should oppose the bill. Before the bill's first hearing, UCAN chamber leaders joined a Zoom call with Assemblymember Wicks' staff expressing our grave concerns. Coincidentally, before the call concluded, her staff member informed the group Wicks had decided to pull the bill from committee!

### **AB 257 – Fast Food Regulations and Wages**

Late in the session, UCAN worked diligently to oppose AB 257, authored by Assemblymember Nate Holden of Los Angeles. The bill established the *California Fast Food Council*, creating new workplace requirements, HR regulations, and wage levels (up to \$23 per hour) for fast food restaurants with 100 or more franchisees nationwide. The bill was sponsored by the Service Employees International Union and the California Labor Federation which have long sought to unionize the fast-food industry. UCAN organized a video call with Senator Richard Pan's office (Elk Grove), urging him to oppose the bill on the floor. Joined by restaurant owners from the Lincoln Chamber, the Elk Grove Chamber, and the California Asian Chamber, UCAN and the California Restaurant Association noted the additional regulations were duplicative and unnecessary, seriously harming the franchisor-franchisee relationship. Artificially high wages would damage franchise and independent restaurants and reduce teen employment opportunities. Unfortunately, AB 257 was approved in the Senate – by only one vote – and signed into law with great fanfare on Labor Day by Governor Newsom.

### **Successful Veto Request: AB 1717 – Prevailing Wages on Forest Management Contracts**

Forest fuels reduction to prevent catastrophic wildfire is critically important to northern California communities, including El Dorado, Placer, Yuba, and Sutter counties. UCAN was invited by lobbyists for north state water districts to request a veto of AB 1717 from the Governor. Authored by Assemblymember Cecelia Aguilar-Curry, the bill would have required local forest management and fuels reduction contracts to pay prevailing wages, typically only a requirement for large-scale public transportation projects. UCAN argued that applying prevailing wage to forest thinning projects would result in fewer acres being treated with limited funds and present an additional barrier for local contractors to compete for work. Thankfully, Governor Newsom vetoed AB 1717, whose message stated, "I am concerned that adding these projects to the definition of "public works" would introduce delays to critical fire mitigation projects necessary to protect vulnerable communities in the state."

### **UCAN Expansion**

In 2022, the UCAN network added two chambers of commerce – the Lincoln Area Chamber of Commerce and the Rocklin Area Chamber of Commerce. Lincoln Chamber CEO Tom Linderi and Rocklin Chamber CEO Robin Trimble will "share a seat" on the UCAN Leadership Council with the Roseville Area Chamber of Commerce to serve south Placer County businesses.



## UCAN Legislator Scorecard – Floor Votes

The chart below reflects the number and percentage of times UCAN legislators voted with UCAN's position on bills presented to their respective house floors. In many cases, when a legislator chooses to "not vote" on a bill that UCAN opposes, that action is considered voting with UCAN's position.

Member	Bigelow	Gallagher	Kiley	Cooper	Nielsen	Dahle	Pan
With UCAN	7/10	7/10	9/10	7/10	9/10	9/10	5/10
%	70%	70%	90%	70%	90%	90%	50%

### A look ahead to 2023

UCAN leaders will gather in late November to assess UCAN's performance and consider program adjustments. Initial priorities may include seeking reform of Proposition 47 to address criminal retail theft and considering legislation providing a minimum wage to address adverse effects of youth employment resulting from the enactment of AB 257. Keep in mind the current measure allows an increase of the minimum wage in franchise restaurants to as much as \$23 per hour.

A UCAN member survey will be distributed in December to identify priorities and establish the 2023 UCAN State Policy Agenda. The final policy plan will be presented to chamber members and the 2023-2024 UCAN legislative delegation in early March 2023.



Rachel Michelin, CEO of the California Retailers Association, thanks UCAN chamber leaders for their partnership in supporting legislation to reduce criminal retail theft by reforming elements of Prop 47, which reduced penalties for many crimes in California.

Assemblymember James Gallagher (left) and Senator Jim Nielsen express support for the 2022 UCAN State Policy Agenda at the UCAN Legislative Forum held in March at the Sutter Club.



Representatives from UCAN, the California Restaurant Assn and restaurant owners from the Lincoln, Elk Grove and CalAsian Chambers met with staff of Senator Richard Pan to express concerns about AB 257 which will increase regulation and wage requirements for fast food restaurants in California.

## WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US!

The UCAN chambers will work with our advocates at Advocacy and Management Group in Sacramento to monitor legislative proposals and assist chamber leaders and chamber members in supporting bills that align with our shared priorities and oppose bills that are inconsistent with our unified agenda.

To learn more, contact one of the UCAN chambers directly. Visit [amgroup.us/ucan](http://amgroup.us/ucan) or email [ucan@amgroup.us](mailto:ucan@amgroup.us)

### 2023-24 UCAN STATE LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

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