



IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

**A HOMELESS PERSON** in Los Angeles gathers his belongings prior to a cleanup. The city's actions are at the center of a lawsuit.

## Mayor urges wealthy to fund housing

Bass' State of the City speech focuses on how to move homeless Angelenos into affordable units.

BY DAKOTA SMITH AND DAVID ZAHNISER

As she forges ahead with her fight against homelessness, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has gone looking for help in all sorts of places. She has teamed up with Los Angeles County agencies to bring mental health services to the city's sprawling homeless encampments. She has lobbied Sacramento for more money to build temporary housing. And she has persuaded officials in Washington to loosen the rules that determine when a homeless Angeleno becomes eligible for a federally funded apartment.

Now the mayor is asking L.A.'s wealthiest Angelenos for help. In her State of the City address Monday, she unveiled a campaign that asks business leaders, philanthropic organizations and others to donate millions of dollars to an effort to acquire buildings so they can be used as apartments for the city's homeless population.

"We have brought the public sector together," Bass said, speaking to a packed City Council chamber. "And now we must prevail on the humanity and generosity of the private sector."

The pitch comes as Bass is working to break a logjam that has limited the city's ability to move homeless Angelenos out of interim housing, such as hotel and motel rooms, into apartments they can afford — while tens of thousands of

## Cleanup evidence altered by city

A federal judge has found that Los Angeles city officials altered evidence to support the city's defense against allegations that it illegally seized and destroyed homeless people's property.

Warning that the city will likely face sanctions following a forensic examination, U.S. District Judge Dale S. Fischer wrote in an order that the city had not only "altered, modified, and created documents relevant to Plaintiff's claims" but had also failed to produce legitimately requested documents.

"Suffice it to say that the City's credibility has been damaged significantly," she wrote.

According to court filings, records documenting what was taken during cleanups and the legal authorization for the seizure were altered or created up to two years after the cleanup occurred and in some instances just days before they were turned over to the plaintiffs.

In some records, the word "bulky items" was replaced by "health hazards" or "contaminated," after Fischer had ruled the city's law prohibiting bulky items unconstitutional.

In a court filing, Shayla R. Myers, an attorney with the Legal Aid Found-

Judge says L.A. officials changed documents in a case over seizure of homeless people's property

By Doug Smith



AL SEIB Los Angeles Times

**SANITATION** workers clean an area near an encampment in 2019. A judge said the city altered records related to cleanups.

ation of Los Angeles who is representing the eight plaintiffs, described the changes as so significant "they rise to the level of fraud on the court."

"In our view this isn't just about altering or creating evidence, it's about misleading the court and the public about the existence of safeguards to ensure the city isn't illegally throwing away unhoused people's belongings," Myers said in an interview.

"They argue that they have processes in place to ensure they aren't violating unhoused people's rights. ... And those are the very documents that the court found to be altered or fabricated."

A spokesman for the Los Angeles city attorney declined to answer The Times' questions about the case, saying the office does not comment on pending litigation. The alleged doctoring occurred during Mayor Eric Garcetti's administration, Myers said, although delays in producing documents have continued since Karen Bass became mayor.

The plaintiffs, seven homeless people and the group Ktown for All, allege that the city violated their

[See Homeless, A6]

## 'It just feels so bleak': Apathy could decide '24 election

Biden and Trump face 'double haters' and other voters who can't get excited about either candidate

By FAITH E. PINHO

Although Haley Fox, 30, frequently chats politics with friends and family, she said, the moment the phrase "election 2024" comes up she feels her body fill with dread.

"There hasn't been anything that has represented me for a really long time," said Fox, a San Diego-based photographer. "So, like, 2024, just seeing what we have to choose from — it just feels so bleak."

For Fox and many other Americans, election-year ennui is setting in.

President Biden and former President Trump became their parties' presumptive nominees weeks ago, capping one of the shortest primary seasons in U.S. history and beginning the long runway to the general election.

"It's essentially two incumbents running against each other, is how it feels," said Jared Sichel, a Republican strategist and co-found-

er of the Costa Mesa-based GOP marketing firm Winning Tuesday. "It's kind of just Groundhog Day for a lot of people."

Voters who don't want either option — "double haters," as they're dubbed — make up about 15% of the electorate, according to polling last month from USA Today and Suffolk University. Other polls show their share to be closer to one-fifth of the electorate.

In a neck-and-neck race [See Election, A7]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

**TURNOUT** in California was the second-worst for a presidential primary despite being on Super Tuesday.

## USC cancels graduation speech

University cites safety reasons in calling off valedictorian's address after pro-Palestinian views prompt threats.

By JAWEED KALEEM

Saying "tradition must give way to safety," USC has made the unprecedented move of canceling the upcoming graduation speech of an undergraduate valedictorian who has come under fire for her pro-Palestinian views.

The move, according to USC officials, is the first time the university has kept a valedictorian from the traditional chance to speak on stage at the annual commencement ceremony, which typically draws more than 65,000 people to the Los Angeles campus.

In a campuswide letter, USC Provost Andrew T. Guzman cited unnamed threats that have poured in shortly after the university

[See USC, A9]

### Highway 1 is likely to reopen in May

Repairs to the coastal route in Big Sur should allow partial use by Memorial Day. CALIFORNIA, B1

### Dodgers great Carl Erskine dies

Pitcher with "The Boys of Summer" was one of last surviving Brooklyn players. SPORTS, B10

**Weather**  
Mostly sunny.  
L.A. Basin: 77/55. B6

For the latest news, go to [latimes.com](http://latimes.com).

### Editor critical of NPR suspended

In an essay for another outlet, Uri Berliner had alleged liberal bias at his workplace. BUSINESS, A8

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## Conservative justices question legality of obstruction charges against Jan. 6 rioters

By DAVID G. SAVAGE

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court cast doubt Tuesday on the legality of obstruction charges lodged against some 300 rioters arrested for breaking into the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021.

The court's conservatives questioned whether the 2002 Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which was aimed at cor-

porate accounting fraud, can be used more broadly to prosecute those who obstruct "any official proceeding," including Congress' 2021 certification of President Biden's election victory.

Chief Justice John G. Roberts Jr. and Justice Neil M. Gorsuch noted that the law made it a crime to destroy or conceal documents to impair an "official pro-

ceeding," but they voiced doubt over extending it to any disruptions of a proceeding.

"Would a sit-in that disrupts a trial qualify?" Gorsuch asked. "Would a heckler in today's audience qualify? Would pulling a fire alarm before a vote qualify for 20 years in prison?"

While the court's three liberals appeared to agree [See Court, A9]



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