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THE SACRAMENTO BEE

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Retailers lobby for Calif. bills on shoplifting, theft

BY LINDSEY HOLDEN
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National big box chains and the trade groups that represent them have dramatically increased spending on lobbying

this year — and it appears as though it's paying off.

Since the beginning of the year, Assembly Speaker Robert Rivas, D-Hollister, and Senate President Pro Tem Mike McGuire, D-Healdsburg, have both proposed multi-bill

packages to address shoplifting and organized retail theft.

Rivas in October formed an Assembly Select Committee on Retail Theft. The concerted attention lawmakers are devoting to the topic is relatively new. There were far fewer legislative

efforts to take on the topic in years past.

Rachel Michelin, CEO of the California Retailers Association, last week said during a Sacramento Press Club panel "this dynamic has changed in the Capitol in terms of having these

conversations."

The Retailers Association paid significantly more for lobbying year-over-year, spending about \$70,391 during the first quarter of 2023 and about \$577,682 during the first quarter of 2024, according to Secretary of State's Office lobbying disclosures.

Most of that money, \$500,000, went to a lobbying coalition pushing for changes to the Private Attorney General Act, or PAGA, which allows employees to file lawsuits seeking civil penalties for state Labor Code violations.

SEE BILLS, 7A



LEZLIE STERLING lsterling@sacbee.com

Jack and Debbie Lindh stand on the front porch in Grass Valley last month. They were recently told State Farm will no longer insure their property.

State Farm clients anxious; insurer starts major policy cuts

BY STEPHEN HOBBS
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Debbie Lindh leaned forward in a chair on the front porch of her Grass Valley home and pointed at the house directly across a narrow street.

Lindh, 71, and her husband were recently told State Farm

will no longer insure their property near the city's downtown.

Yet the neighbor across the street is not losing coverage. Her insurer is also State Farm.

"It's just so arbitrary," said Lindh, who noted the many trees that surround both her home and that of her neighbor's.

"This house versus that

house? I just totally don't get it."

A little over a month after State Farm's decision to drop roughly 30,000 home, rental and other property policies statewide, confusion and anger remain strong in Nevada County, one of the areas of the state deeply affected by the cuts. It is home to Grass Valley and Ne-

vada City, both about 50 miles northeast of Sacramento and densely filled with trees.

State Farm said it is dropping policies across California for financial reasons and is ending coverage in areas with wildfire hazards, among other factors. A company spokesman declined

SEE POLICY, 9A

Police clear protesters at USC but make no arrests

BY ANGIE ORELLANA HERNANDEZ, JAWEED KALEEM, HAYLEY SMITH AND HANNAH FRY
Los Angeles Times

In a swift-moving, pre-dawn operation three days before graduation ceremonies begin, USC and Los Angeles police officers in riot gear cleared a pro-Palestinian encampment from the center of campus Sunday as protesters beat drums and chanted.

No arrests were reported and no violence erupted during the police sweep, a university spokesperson said.

"Earlier today, the University of Southern California Department of Public Safety successfully removed the illegal encampment rebuilt on the university's campus. It was necessary to request the Los Angeles Police Department to respond to provide security as this was carried out peacefully," Joel Curran, senior vice president of communications, said in a statement.

"We want to thank LAPD for assisting DPS in clearing the encampment and restoring normalcy for students and community as quickly and safely as possible," he said. "We will share more information with our community later today."

At 4:17 a.m. USC issued an alert saying the LAPD had arrived and that people should leave the park area in the center of campus. Officials gave demonstrators the option to leave before being arrested. A group of about 30 protesters left the encampment as LAPD pushed

SEE PROTESTERS, 7A

Parts of Gaza in 'full-blown famine,' UN aid official says

BY LIAM STACK, AARON BOXERMAN, AMANDA TAUB AND KEN BELSON
NYT News Service

JERUSALEM

The leader of the World Food Program said parts of the Gaza Strip are experiencing a "full-blown famine" that is spreading across the territory after almost seven months of war that have made delivering aid extremely challenging.

"There is famine — full-blown famine in the north, and it's moving its way south," Cindy McCain, the program's director, said in excerpts released late Friday of an interview with "Meet The Press."

McCain is the second high-profile American leading a U.S. government or U.N. aid effort who has said that there is famine in northern Gaza, although her remarks do not constitute an



New York Times

Palestinian children waiting for food in Rafah, southern Gaza Strip, in March.

official declaration, which is a complex bureaucratic process.

She did not explain why an official famine declaration has not been made. But she said her

assessment was "based on what we have seen and what we have experienced on the ground."

The hunger crisis is most severe in the strip's northern

section, a largely lawless and gang-ridden area where the Israeli military exercises little or no control. In recent weeks, after Israel faced mounting global pressure to improve dire conditions there, more aid has flowed into devastated the area.

On the diplomatic front, negotiations resumed in Cairo on Saturday aimed at reaching a cease-fire and an agreement to release Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners. A delegation of Hamas leaders traveled to the Egyptian capital, the Palestinian armed group said.

Over the past few days, Israel and mediators in the talks — Egypt, Qatar and the United States — have awaited Hamas' response to the latest cease-fire

SEE GAZA, 9A



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