

# Gavin Newsom's Vision for the Golden State

*San Francisco mayor tours California in anticipation of gubernatorial run*

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Gavin Newsom, the San Francisco mayor who made a name for himself nationwide as a vocal advocate for gay marriage, came to Santa Cruz on Tuesday night as part of his tour through the state. Newsom, 41, is widely considered as a candidate for the upcoming 2010 California governor's race. *City on a Hill Press* sat down with him after the town hall meeting to discuss his political ambitions, his campaign and his vision for the state.

**You have said that holding these town hall meetings is meant to help you determine whether or not you want to run for governor. Can you say, with any degree of specificity, when you'll come to a decision?**

I feel very committed to this effort, so the question is really when will I announce, not when we know. We know. I want to do this ... We have been very aggressive in going out and reaching out and doing these unfiltered town halls as a way to really gauge what people are ... looking for.

What I'm hearing is very positive feedback, not because every answer is satisfactory or every idea is 100 percent in line, but that people like this approach and they believe this approach would be promising, not just during a campaign but in terms of governing the state.

**The issue of your looks comes up quite often. Do you think that this affects how you're perceived as a politician?**

It shouldn't. Some don't like it, they have real disdain for the gelled hair, and I know that, and I know what you're thinking out there. At the end of the day people don't care about that, they care about what you can do to make a difference in their lives. ... Our universal health care plan, our universal preschool program ... What we're doing on cleaning and greening our environment in San Francisco, what we've done on poverty eradication.

Those are the reasons I ran for mayor, and those are the reasons I want to run for governor, is to scale that. And if I can't offer something along those lines to people, then who cares whether or not I wear a blue suit or a grey suit, whether or not I'm this tall or short? It doesn't matter. What matters is what we can do to make a difference for people.

**You're talking about universal health care and greening. Your greening efforts have been criticized in terms of Measure H in San Francisco. Do you think this criticism is legitimate?**

Oh yeah, [Measure H] was a big mistake. That was a takeover of PG&E. I don't think that was about environmental stewardship, I think that was about an ideological agenda.

[San Francisco has] the most aggressive solar pro-



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gram in America, not just the state of California; the most aggressive strategy for alternative fuel vehicles in the country ... We've done more on biodiesel and alternative energy sources than any city in America. ... We've already reduced our CO2 emissions 6 percent below 1990 levels, and we're already in 2009. We have done that and we've grown our economy. We have the most progressive environmental policies in the state of California and in this country, by any objective standards. I think people recognize that, so I'm very proud of our environmental work.

**The greening happening in San Francisco is partially through new regulations and partially through efforts by the city. Do you foresee those regulations being extended throughout the state any time soon?**

Yes, of course. We need to do more recycling, we need to be more focused on energy efficiency and energy conservation, we need to have stronger green building standards. We have the most aggressive green building standards in America. We need to electrify our vehicle fleet, not just in the Bay Area and San Francisco; it needs to happen up and down the state of California. There's no way we'll get from 12 percent renewables as a portion of our energy portfolio to 33 percent by 2020, pursuant to AB 32, unless we get serious. ... San Francisco's made a lot more progress, and we've been a stronger economic output and engine because of it. We have unemployment at 6.6 percent, the state at 9.3 percent. We've grown new green-collar jobs to a degree, now we've attracted 118 green-collar companies into our city. We can do a lot more in this state, so I'm going to work aggressively to do a lot more if I'm governor.

**A lot of what you're talking about, including universal health care, involves government spending. You recently were the force behind a massive cut in San Francisco's spending. Does this mean a cut in services?**

Yep, and there will be a lot more because of the budget deficit, but there's not going to be a cut of our universal health care. In fact, last week we just announced we've increased the opportunity for people earning up to \$106,000 for a family of four. Expanding our universal health plan for people earning up to 500 percent of poverty.

You're not going to see any cuts in our universal health plan ... you're not going to see cuts into our support of housing for homeless people ... you're not going to see cuts into residential treatment for people with bipolar disorder, or that are dually diagnosed with drug or alcohol addictions ... you're not going to see any teachers laid off. You're going to see an enhancement [to all of these].

But yeah, I'm dealing with reality. Every big-city mayor in this country is dealing with reality. That is, there are going to be cuts. ... And we're going to have to make even tougher decisions



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**GAVIN NEWSOM**, mayor of San Francisco, came to Santa Cruz on Tuesday for a town hall meeting about his potential run for governor in 2010. Newsom, in his talk, promised green building and stronger social services.

over the next few months, but I'll make those decisions, I won't defer them.

**If you were Arnold Schwarzenegger right now, what would you do?**

I'd do everything in my power to convince the one outstanding, remaining Republican that they need to step up to the plate and do the right thing and as we speak, they're hopeful they can get one of two Republicans they think are "in play," but what a terrible way of describing Sacramento and the game plan that goes on there. It's interesting, you know, a lot of candidates would talk about the fact that they're better at playing the games because they've been around Sacramento.

I think it's time to end the game-playing, period, in Sacramento, and move in a completely different direction. That's another one of the reasons I'm running for governor. That being said, I wouldn't be doing what the governor has been doing, because it produced the result that we have today, and I think none of us are particularly satisfied with the results in Sacramento.

**A lot of the things that you say you're going to push for San Francisco cost money. Would you also plan on funding them on the state level, which would be significantly more expensive?**

Not necessarily, in relative terms. Conditions are the same. I'm the only mayor of a county in the state of California. It's a big differential between other mayors that govern a city. I govern a county, so I have welfare, adult and aging services issues, I have issues that disproportionately impact health of people, and so as a consequence I'm very familiar with the challenges of the state.

The reality is that [San Francisco's] budget deficit is bigger, on a percentage basis, than the state's budget deficit. I have more constraints — yes, even



more constraints — as a mayor of San Francisco, in terms of set-aside funding, than the state of California. Yet we're doing universal health care, and universal pre-school, and universal after-school programs, and we're doing more in poverty eradication, with a high minimum wage, and a sick-leave ordinance, and

doing working families tax credits, and getting more people banks and other check-cashing places, and more people housed that are out on the streets and the sidewalks.

So, if we can do it, we can do it in the state. ... Again, that's why I ran a campaign of ideas when I ran for mayor for the first time, and that's why I'm running a campaign of ideas for governor this time, and I think it will distinguish our efforts.

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