

# SANTA MARIA TIMES



## Bulldogs' drought ends

Magana makes cross-country state meet. **SPORTS, B1**



## Raffle to support schools

Local dealerships partner to help raise funds for annual giveaway. **CENTRAL COAST, A3**



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**THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 2017**

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LEN WOOD, STAFF

Michelle Francisco talks to her grandkids Iziah, 9, Surey, 3, Julian, 5, and Nathaniel, 4, who she adopted at the Santa Maria Juvenile Courthouse on Wednesday.

# Moore-Alabama storm grows

Trump remains silent

**ZEKE MILLER and STEVE PEOPLES**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump dodged questions about the turmoil in the Alabama Senate race on Wednesday, declining to join national Republicans who've called for Roy Moore to abandon the race amid allegations of sexual impropriety with teenage girls. Far from surrendering, Moore's camp challenged the credibility of one of the accusers.

Trump, who withstood allegations of sexual assault weeks before his own election, was uncharacteristically silent when faced with questions about the scandal, which has rattled the party and left Moore's would-be colleagues threatening to expel him should he win. Republicans had looked to Trump as one of the few remaining hopes for pushing a fellow political rebel from the race.

Another hope was Sean Hannity, the Fox News Channel host and onetime Moore defender. On his Tuesday evening show, Hannity gave Moore 24 hours to explain "inconsistencies" in his response to allegations of child molestation or else exit the Alabama race.

Appearing to ease off on Moore, Hannity noted Wednesday night that things appeared to be worsening for the candidate,

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# 16 Santa Barbara County children have new families

Ceremony at Santa Maria Juvenile Court celebrates National Adoption Month

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After months of waiting, 16 Santa Barbara County children were joined with their forever families Wednesday at Santa Maria Juvenile Court as part of

National Adoption Month.

Partnering with County Child Welfare Services' Our County Our Kids, the court celebrated with thousands of other families nationwide who welcomed their new children into their homes.

Also in attendance were Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) volunteers, who helped be a voice for each child throughout their adoption process.

"Today, we have eight families here that will be welcoming 16 children, which is amazing because in this county, along with many others, the need for families to adopt and foster safe homes for youth is so significant," said Gustavo Prado, department business specialist for Santa Barbara County's Department of Social Services.

"There are a lot of families that are often unaware of the need for foster care, and how easy it'd be to become a resource home for a foster child, or an emergency shelter home," he added.

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# First GOP senator opposes tax bill

**ALAN FRAM AND MARCY GORDON**  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Wisconsin's Ron Johnson on Wednesday became the first Republican senator to say he opposes his party's tax bill, signaling potential problems for GOP leaders. Passage of a similar package seemed certain today in the House, where a handful of dissidents conceded they expected to be steamrolled by a GOP frantic to claim its first

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# Hancock trustees vote 4-1 to support DACA



STAFF FILE

Hancock College trustee Dan Hilker looks over the board of trustees' agenda during their regularly scheduled meeting. Hilker voted against the board's DACA resolution under the belief that it did not do enough to directly protect the affected student population.

'I want to see something with teeth,' says lone dissenter

**MATHEW BURCIAGA**  
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A resolution supporting the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program was approved by the Hancock College board of trustees on Tuesday night, two months after the Trump administration announced its intent to end the program.

"I am extremely pleased that the board adopted the resolution in support of the DACA program," Kevin G. Walthers, superintendent/

president of Hancock College, said Wednesday. "The action taken by our board reaffirms our mission and commitment as a college to change the odds for all of our students."

Passed on a 4-1 vote, the resolution re-endorses the college's commitment to all students (regardless of their immigration or legal status) and calls on Congress to "preserve the DACA program and to work toward comprehensive immigration reform." The trustees have previously offered support to and promoted inclusion for undocumented students, and the college has directly worked with undocumented student groups since the Trump administration's

decision.

Hancock College police do not detain, question or arrest individuals based on suspected legal status, and the college does not provide confidential student records (unless directly authorized by the student or required by law) without a judicial warrant, subpoena or court order.

Although he agreed with the sentiment of the resolution, Area 2 Trustee Dan Hilker voted against the measure, believing that it did not do enough to directly protect the affected student population.

"I was hoping to see something with teeth," he said

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# Investigation: Nepotism widespread in tax agency

**KATHLEEN RONAYNE**  
Associated Press

SACRAMENTO — A troubled California tax agency was stripped of its hiring authority Wednesday after a state personnel board investigation into nepotism found nearly one in five employees were related to or living with a coworker.

"Favoritism or perceived favoritism toward employees having personal relationships with other employees had a dispiriting and stressful impact on overall employee morale," the investigation into the Board of Equalization found.

The investigation is the latest report into wrongdoing at the BOE, a 5-member elected body that until recently over-

saw collection of more than \$61 billion in revenue and employed nearly 5,000 people. Lawmakers stripped it of most of its authority this summer, transferring most of the employees to new agencies. Due to the employee transfer, the personnel board's order requires the new California Department of Tax and Fee Administration to provide a detailed report on personal relationships between its employees and to let the state's central human resources department oversee its hiring for at least a year.

Both the BOE and the tax and fee administration concurred with the investigator's findings, and both have already adopted new anti-nepotism policies that comply with state rules, accord-

ing to responses they provided to the investigator.

"The BOE is interested in aggressively addressing and correcting these issues in a timely manner," David Gau, the board's executive director, wrote in the response.

Complaints of widespread nepotism prompted the personnel board's investigation. According to the report, one employee anonymously complained: "We call it the 3 f's for job requirements. You gotta be friends, family or friends of family to get hired."

In April 2017, at least 835 of 4,767 employees were related to a co-worker by blood, adoption, marriage, domestic partnership or cohabitation, the investiga-

tion found. That number was based on a survey by BOE supervisors in each department and might not reflect the full scope of personal relationships. The investigation outlined instances of a father and daughter, cousins, and spouses reporting to the same supervisor.

California state government departments are supposed to write anti-nepotism policies that discourage hiring people with personal relationships in the same small department, reporting to the same supervisor or in supervisor/subordinate relationships. It also directs agencies to base hiring on merit. The Board of Equalization's nepotism

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DISCOVER DIGITAL



VIDEO: Lompoc football aims to advance in Orange County

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LOTTERY	A2	JUMBLE	A8	COMICS	B5
OBITUARIES	A4	HOME/GARDEN	A9	BUSINESS	B7
OPINION	A7	SPORTS	B1	ASTROGRAPH	B7

