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An edition of the **San Jose Mercury News**

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## Nursing homes got cash, cut care

Law that provided additional money had few safeguards to ensure it was spent as intended

By Christina Jewett and Agustin Armendariz  
*California Watch*

California's nursing homes have received \$880 million in additional funding from a 2004 state law designed to help hire more caregivers and boost wages.

But 232 homes did just the opposite. They either cut staff, paid lower wages or let caregiver levels slip below a state-mandated minimum, a California Watch investigation has found. Included among these homes were 24 facilities in Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

The homes that made these cuts collected about \$236 million through 2008, the last year of available data. That's more than a quarter of the total Medi-Cal funding increase shared by the state's nursing homes. But the law that made the extra money possible included few safeguards to ensure that patient care improved.

Many nursing homes appeared to have used the cash infusion to help bolster their bottom lines, according to a California Watch analysis of state nursing home data. Among the 131 homes that

See **NURSING**, Page 4

## ELECTION 2010 GOVERNOR'S RACE

# Brown issues debate challenge

Democrat says he'd take on top GOP gubernatorial hopefuls in as many as four cities

By Steven Harmon

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LOS ANGELES — In a brazen move cheered by thousands of Democrats, Jerry Brown challenged both Republican gubernatorial candidates to a series of three-way debates starting next month.

In what looked like an attempt to shake up a primary dominated by Republicans fighting it out — and grabbing all the attention — on the airwaves, Brown lived up to his unpredictable reputation as he sprung the idea on Democratic activists gathered at the downtown convention center for the state party's annual convention.

See **BROWN**, Page 9

## EROSION OF THE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

California, once a champion of low-cost, world-class higher education for all, sees the dream slipping away 50 years later

# BROKEN PROMISE

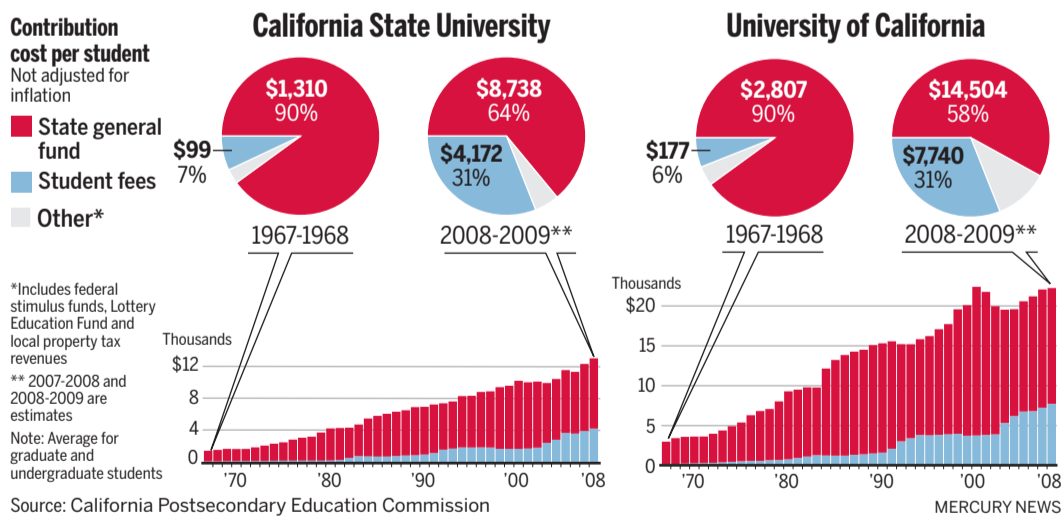


PAULINE LUBENS/BAY AREA NEWS GROUP PHOTOS

UC Berkeley is borrowing more than \$300 million to build its new Student Athlete High Performance Center, above, and pay for a Memorial Stadium retrofit.

## Shifting the cost of education to students

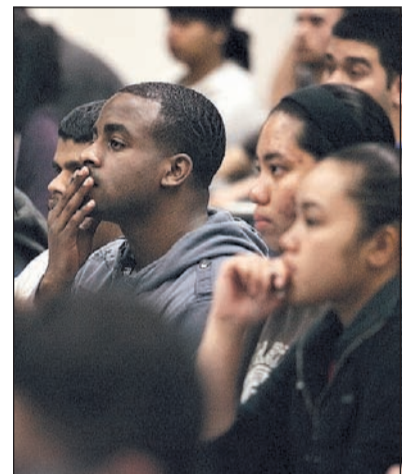
California has been decreasing its contribution since 1967 despite its early pledge to provide low-cost college education.



**Money:** Caught in a budget meltdown, state has steadily reduced its share of costs

**Growth:** Population surge puts pressure on schools to keep up with demand

**Oversight:** Lack of coordination means money is not spent efficiently



Students attend a lecture at San Jose State. All Cal State schools have cut costs and raised fees.

By Lisa M. Krieger

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Fifty years ago this month, California promised a low-cost, high-quality university education for every qualified high school graduate in the state. But that promise — inflated by growing populations and academic aspirations — expanded beyond the state's willingness to pay for it.

What went wrong? How did the university system that was long the envy of the world suddenly become the focus of angry street protests, overcrowded classrooms, soaring tuition and a monumental debate over whether the state can ever make good again on its groundbreaking mission?

While the recession turned a slow-brewing problem into an instant crisis, a Bay Area News Group analysis of California's higher-education mess reveals that many factors drove the inevitable and ugly collision between the university system's ambitious and uncoordinated growth and the state's declining ability and desire to pay for it. Among the most critical:

■ **Plummeting state support:** Since 1990, state spending per student has dropped by half in inflation-adjusted dollars. While the state paid about 90 percent of a student's education 40 years ago, it now pays 69 percent for Cal State students and 62 percent for those in the University of California system.

■ **No guaranteed funding:** Unlike K-12 education, universities are

See **EDUCATION**, Page 6

## INSIDE TODAY'S TIMES

■ **BOXER'S BATTLE:** The U.S. senator could face re-election trouble in what's been a tough year for Democrats. **Page A3**

■ **SERVING HUNDREDS:** St. Vincent de Paul breaks ground on a 2,000-square-foot dining facility for Pittsburg's needy. **Page A15**

■ **HIS POWER PERSISTS:** Today marks 30 years since President Robert Mugabe took control in Zimbabwe. **Morning Report**

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### MORNING REPORT

Iceland volcano keeps spewing ash, grounding airline flights



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**WEATHER B10**  
 Mostly sunny  
 H: 60s L: 40s

**DON'T MISS OUR SPECIAL OFFERS ON THE BACK OF THIS SECTION**

