

# TimesOC

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Photos courtesy of Irvine Barclay Theatre

**THE FRANCISCO TORRES** Latin Jazz Quintet kicked off a series of performances at the Irvine Barclay Theatre filmed at the venue on March 6.

## In tune with the times

Irvine Barclay Theatre launched free streaming jazz concerts this month.

BY VERA CASTANEDA

**I**n tune with venues that have garnered the resources to grow in the digital space, the Irvine Barclay Theatre is offering new livestream concerts.

A series of performances, filmed at the theater, kicked off with the Francisco Torres Latin Jazz Quintet on March 6. The Bryan Cabrera Trio with Edmund Velasco followed on March 13 and the Joey Sellers Quintet is scheduled on March 20.

The free series is sponsored by the Recording Industry's Music Performance Trust Fund and Orange County Musicians Union Local 7. The union selected the musicians featured in the series, many of whom rely on work in nightclubs and

restaurants that have been affected by COVID-19 pandemic closures.

Musicians are filmed with six cameras in the nearly empty venue by the theater's in-house team.

Jerry Mandel, president of the Irvine Barclay Theatre, said they established a team focusing on recording to put performances on livestream, subscription format and to use in promotional videos. Mandel calls it a work in progress and plans to make video a mainstay part of the theater.

"We're still learning how to do this," Mandel said. "By the

end of the spring or summer, we'll have regular series. We're now reaching out to some of the top musicians in the country to see if they want to do this sort of thing. It's not going to be something we just did during the COVID [pandemic]." The 750-seat venue, located on the UC Irvine campus, typically hosts music, dance, theater and lectures. Staff have spent the past year figuring out how to bring performances to audiences in new ways.

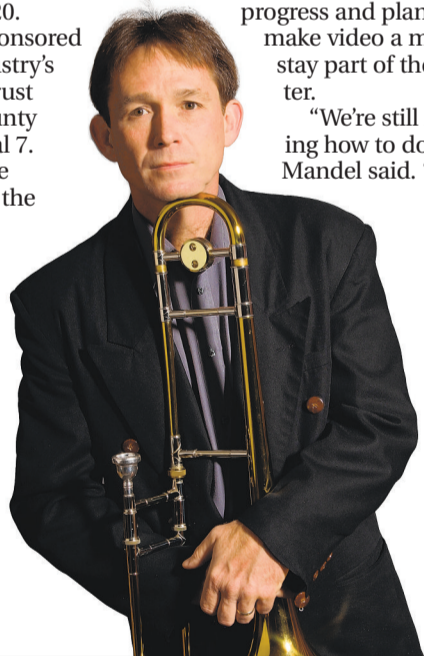
"I concluded about

two months into COVID that whatever happens in the future, it's not going to be the same as it was before ... we can't be just a building that presents shows," Mandel said.

For 11 weeks last summer, the theater brought a live jazz concert series to outdoor dining at Newport Beach's Bayside Restaurant. In the fall, they partnered with the city to host a drive-in concert at Orange County Great Park featuring True Willie and the Boys, the Mariachi Divas as well as ballet folklórico and Bollywood performances.

More partnerships are on the horizon. Mandel said they are working with various community arts groups. They've announced a ticketed "Nat Geo Live: Mysterious Seas" live event on

See *Tune*, page R4



**JOEY SELLERS** Quintet is set for March 20.



**BRYAN CABRERA** performed with Bryan Cabrera Trio with Edmund Velasco on March 13.

See *Placing*, page R4



Courtesy of the Children's Bureau

**THE CHILDREN'S BUREAU** is hosting a virtual orientation event this week for prospective foster parents.

## 'A VENUE OUTSIDE OF OUR VENUE'

Drive-in concerts at City National Grove of Anaheim go steady for the foreseeable future.

BY VERA CASTANEDA

Concertgoers have been honking their horns and flashing their lights in approval of one of the few ways to see shows during the coronavirus pandemic.

Rooftops and parking lots in Santa Ana, Costa Mesa, Fullerton, Tustin, Irvine and Westminster have become venues making use of California car culture to bring a drive-in model for movies and live performances.

Nederlander Concerts launched the Drive-In OC concert series at City National Grove of Anaheim last summer and have been offering a steady lineup including Fitz & the Tantrums, Banda El Recodo, La Sonora Dinamita, Iliza Shlesinger, Ziggy Marley, Tori Kelly and Kaskade.

They've hosted about 60 concerts and comedy shows grossing more than \$3.4 million in ticket sales with nearly every performance selling out.

The most recent acts announced are overwhelmingly of the electronic dance music vari-



**AUDIENCE MEMBERS** sit on top of their cars for a view of Kaskade at the outdoor stage of the Drive-In OC series in October 2020.

ety. Desert Hearts is set to perform on Friday, Whethan on Saturday, ARMNHMR on March 26 and 27 and CloZee on April 17.

"The reason that we keep coming back to EDM is because there isn't a whole band that has to get together, travel, bring in a bunch of equipment and rehearse," said Jordan Harding, general manager of the City National Grove of Ana-

heim. "A DJ can come to Drive-In OC, walk up on stage and just start performing."

The concerts are designed to be as contactless as possible.

Tickets are sold per car with a maximum of five people. Temperature checks are conducted at the gate upon entry and vehicles are

See *Concerts*, page R4



Photos courtesy of Steve Thrasher

**SINGER-SONGWRITER** Andrew McMahon performs in the first concert of the Drive-In OC series in July 2020.

## Nonprofit having difficulty placing children

The Children's Bureau has been unable to hold in-person orientations for prospective foster parents during the pandemic.

BY BEN BRAZIL

A nonprofit that runs a foster care and adoption agency is seeking new foster parents in Orange County.

The Children's Bureau, which serves about 48,000 at-risk children and families in Orange and Los Angeles counties, hasn't been able to hold in-person orientations for prospective foster parents due to the pandemic. The nonprofit has seen a small decline in the number of new foster parents.

The nonprofit said it has had to turn away at least 10 sets of siblings weekly due to the deficit of foster families.

Older children are also facing difficulty finding homes in the foster care system.

The nonprofit, whose Orange County locations are in Anaheim and Santa Ana, runs a foster care and adoption agency with Los Angeles County, though they will take foster parents from Orange County.

The Children's Bureau will host a virtual orientation from 4 to 5 p.m. Thursday, when attendees will be able to learn the details of becoming a foster parent.

Melissa Yunk, the nonprofit's communications specialist, said the Children's Bureau has faced various hurdles during the pandemic.

The nonprofit shifted its child abuse prevention and mental health services to virtual programming.

The organization has also had to adapt to school closures.

"Many of the children that receive our services are referred through their schools, their school counselors or their after-school program counselors — the

See *Placing*, page R4

# Buena Park opts to stay in community energy group

BY BEN BRAZIL

The Buena Park City Council decided Tuesday night to remain in a community choice energy group that could increase local use of renewable energy and potentially lower rates for residents.

Buena Park is part of the Orange County Power Authority along with Huntington Beach, Fullerton and Irvine, which is spearheading the effort.

The program is the county's first iteration of community choice energy, or CCE, which is at the forefront of a California energy revolution.

CCE programs provide cities with an alternative to major energy providers like Southern California Edison, the energy titan serving most of Orange County and the region.

Through a CCE, local governments can retain control of purchasing power, setting rates and collecting revenue, though the local utility still maintains the electrical grid. CCEs can choose to purchase more renewable energy sources.

While the concept has spread throughout the state, it is still controversial. The Lake Forest City Council chose to drop out of the authority last month. That decision sparked controversy as Voice of OC reported that the mayor has connections to Southern California Gas Co.

A narrow majority of the Buena Park council came out in support of the continuing with the authority on Tuesday night as they rejected a motion to drop out of the program with a 2-3 vote. Councilman Art Brown and Mayor Pro Tem Sunny Youngsun Park voted in favor of pulling out.

"I think it's a very good predictor of how successful this Power Authority community choice energy will be because of every single CCE in the entire state ... 100% are saving money right now," Mayor Connor Traut said. "I don't even know how you can argue with that."

Irvine and Fullerton agreed to form the O.C. Power Authority in late November. Irvine has agreed to fund the program through 2022.

Buena Park, Lake Forest and Huntington Beach joined the group in December. Other cities have expressed interest in potentially joining the CCE.

"I've been working on this since

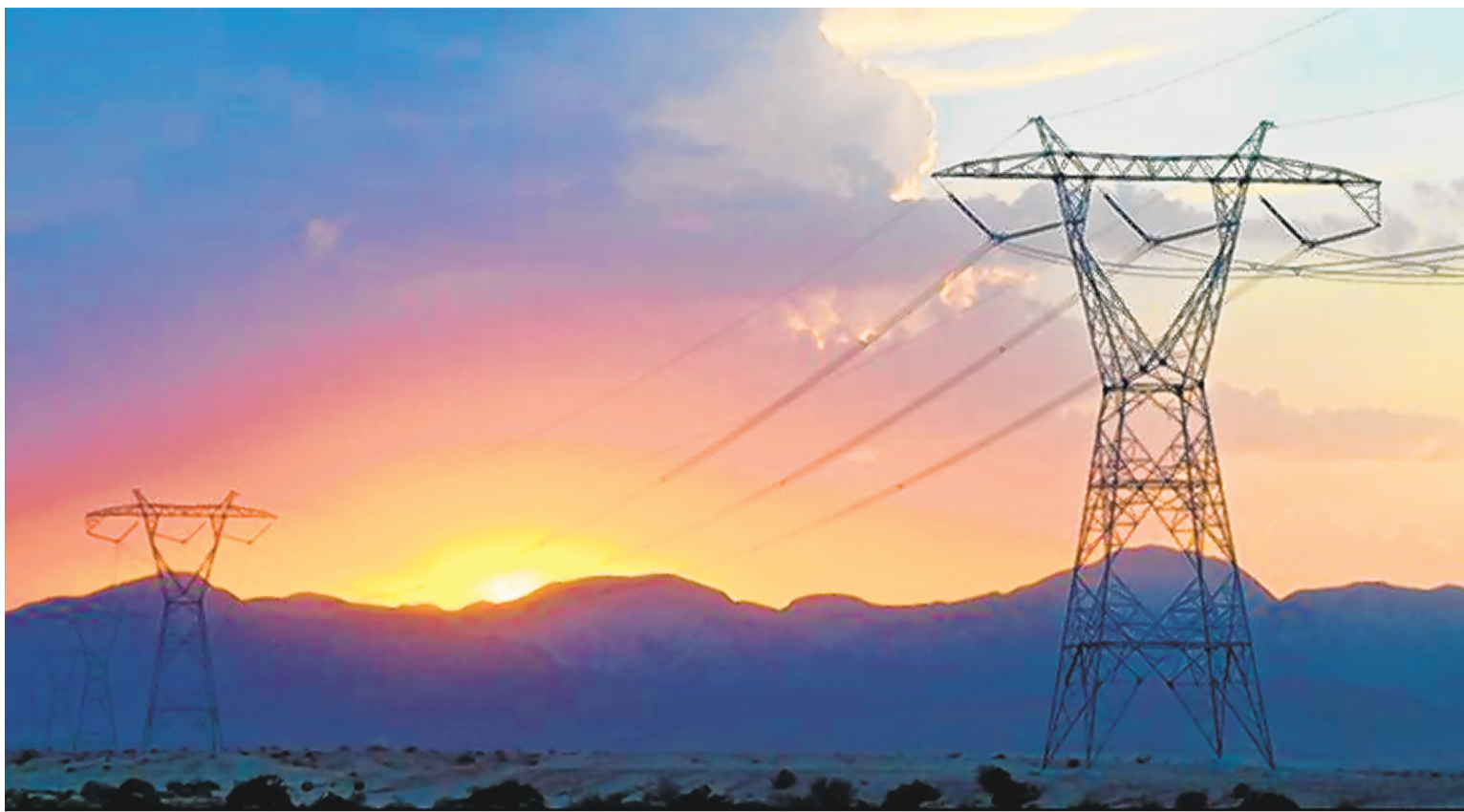


Photo by San Diego Gas & Electric

**BUENA PARK** chose to remain in a community choice energy program with other Orange County cities that could potentially lower rates for residents.

before I was elected, because I want to create a more secure environment for our children's future," said Councilwoman Susan Sonne, who is the city's representative on the O.C. Power Authority board.

"I want to give residents more choices, and I want to ensure we have access to the programs that are going to serve us. So I'm convinced that the Orange County Power Authority is the best option to achieve these results."

Brown said during the meeting that the city has not been transparent enough with residents about the authority. He said he's been approached by residents who don't understand the program.

Brown also said it's challenging for residents to opt out of the program.

"They have to pay a fee, which is unfair to the public because we forced them into this," Brown said. "Why should they have to pay to get out?"

Brown also said the state already mandates green energy from the power companies.

"So we're coming to that anyway whether we join the [O.C.

Power Authority] or not," Brown said.

Park echoed Brown's comments and added that the city should do more research into the energy market before coming to a conclusion.

"Just like any contract that the city has ascertained, don't we go through a competitive bidding process to see if this particular vendor is providing good and beneficial programs and services?" Park said. "We haven't done any of those."

Park also took umbrage with the fact that Irvine has two board members on the authority while other cities have one.

"It's actually no upfront costs, but that is at the expense of giving two votes to Irvine," Park said. "And I know that Lake Forest had a big issue about this weighted voting system. And because it ultimately kind of dilutes the local control of the residents of Buena Park."

A poll taken by the city showed that 63% of residents, or 182 respondents, supported the CCE and 37% opposed it.

The public submitted 12 letters in support of the program and 18

**"Just like any contract that the city has ascertained, don't we go through a competitive bidding process to see if this particular vendor is providing good and beneficial programs and services? We haven't done any of those."**

— Sunny Youngsun Park  
Buena Park mayor pro tem

letters in opposition.

While the letters were not read aloud at the meeting, a few residents showed up to provide public comments.

"Community choice energy is one of the most impactful tools the municipality has to address climate change," said Jose Castaneda, who is the Orange County policy manager of the climate action campaign. "It would benefit all Buena Park residents, businesses, schools and stakeholders for the city to stay in Orange County Power Authority."

"OCA offers local control compared to [Southern California Edison]. You can't have local control with a monopoly entity that serves 10 million customers in the

Southern California region."

Val Sadowinski, a former Buena Park council candidate, said at the public comment section of the meeting that they don't need another bureaucratic entity in the city like the CCE.

"I have lived in the same house for more than 46 years, and Southern California Edison is my electrical power provider — very dependable, responsive to transformer blowouts and power outages," Sadowinski said. "I refuse to change and depend on a new entity ... I'd rather stick with the devil that I know than the devil I do not know."

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# A private viewing of Salvador Dali works and contemporary art opens in Fullerton

You can walk through the galleries of the Dali Theatre and Museum in Spain from your laptop or you can drop by the Muckenthaler Cultural Center in Fullerton to see some original Salvador Dali works in person.

The center's exhibit "The Persistence of Memory: Salvador Dali and His Influence," on view until April 8, showcases a mix of Dali's work and art inspired by Dali including drawings, photos, film and dance. Guest curator Kelly Chidester built the show around Dali's original artworks taking interest in what she calls one of the most parodied works ever created, Dali's "The Persistence of Memory."

"I took a lot of time considering what defined Dali's work and why artists might be drawn to surrealism," Chidester said. "I had conversations with artists and other curators and educators about what defined Dali's work and legacy."

The show's supporting groups and artists include Thinkspace Projects, the Bowlers Museum, Cal State Fullerton art department, Zoot Valasco, GERMS, Timothy Robert Smith and Kazuhiro Tsuji.

Cal State Fullerton, in particular, lent the short film "The Death of Salvador Dali."

The center is hosting groups of no more than four people for 15-minute intervals to view the exhibit privately with buffer time between reservations to avoid overlapping visits.

—From staff reports



"SURREAL DREAM" by Genevieve Burruss (above), "Difencion Reiterda" by Koz Dos (upper right), and "Round About" by Timothy Robert Smith (lower right) are on view at the Muckenthaler Cultural Center.

## IF YOU GO

**What:** "The Persistence of Memory: Salvador Dali and His Influence"

**When:** Through April 8, Monday through Thursday, noon to 4 p.m.

**Where:** 1201 W. Malvern Ave., Fullerton

**Cost:** \$5 entry fee for groups of no more than 4 people; reservations required

**Info:** [themuck.org](http://themuck.org)



# Legislators Petrie-Norris and Bates push for fentanyl regulations

BY MATT SZABO

The usage and trafficking of the drug fentanyl has exploded in California in recent years, leading two Orange County legislators to push for stricter penalties in a bipartisan effort.

Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach), who represents the 74th District, hosted a virtual news conference Tuesday along with state Sen. Patricia Bates (R-Laguna Niguel) and Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes.

Assembly Bill 1351 was co-authored by Petrie-Norris and Bates and would reclassify fentanyl as a Schedule 1 drug like cocaine or heroin in California's criminal code, enacting the greatest restrictions and penalties on its use.

Existing law classifies fentanyl as a Schedule 2 drug. Senate Bill 75, introduced by Bates, was co-authored by Petrie-Norris and is a mirrored bill also seeking to lower the number of fentanyl-related deaths in the state.

AB 1351 and SB 75 also authorize courts to impose a fine between \$20,000 and \$8 million for each offense. They are expected to be heard by the Assembly and Senate Public Safety Committees this spring.

"It seems like the opioid crisis is

See **Fentanyl**, page R5

## CONCERTS

Continued from page R1

parked 10 feet apart from each other giving some space on the driver's side for folding chairs.

Some stay in their cars (or on top) while others opt to use their small outdoor space. There's an app to queue for restrooms while food can be preordered with tickets and delivered to the car.

Harding worked with the city and the state's department of public health to coordinate the drive-in concerts in the venue's parking lot.

For the first performances, Harding booked Dana Point singer-songwriter Andrew McMahon for three sets. The shows sold out with 274 cars per set in the venue's parking lot and 4,000 additional viewers paid to watch the livestream at home.

Since the series launched last year, every show has been an opportunity for improved tweaks. The venue started out using an FM transmission exclusively but later began to offer both radio and a traditional PA sound system. They changed their seven-people-per-car maximum to five people in order to manage social distancing.

They've also increased capacity to 300 vehicles in the parking lot and invested in a larger and higher stage.

"We're increasingly receiving



Courtesy of Steve Thrasher

A CONCERTGOER attends the Kaskade Drive-In OC series at City National Grove of Anaheim in October 2020.

calls from artists and their teams asking, 'How do we get involved in this?' Artists are anxious to perform," Harding said.

Singer-songwriter Quinn XCII was eager to share his latest album "Change of Scenery II" with a live audience.

Postponing the release of new

music never crossed his mind. Instead, he felt more motivated than before and turned what he intended to be an EP into a full-length album.

"We have done a few drive-in shows already so the decision to put on another one for the album was a no-brainer," wrote Quinn

via email. "They've proven to be a really great escape for fans and a temporary alternative to what we think of as a normal live show. I want as many people as possible to experience the new music live for the first time and that's where bringing in the livestream component came into play."

## IF YOU GO

**What:** Drive-In OC

**When:** Deserts Hearts Takeover on Friday, Whethan on Saturday, ARMNHMR on March 26 and 27, CloZee on April 17

**Where:** 2200 East Katella Ave., Anaheim

**Cost:** \$180 to \$400 per car

**Info:** [citynationalgroveofanaheim.com](http://citynationalgroveofanaheim.com)

Quinn was scheduled to perform a sold-out show on March 11 with a livestream available for free.

Although the drive-in series is mitigating some of the venue's financial damage and keeping about 75% of staff employed, Harding said it's not a permanent replacement for live shows because it's not a sustainable business model.

"We created a venue outside of our venue," Harding said. "We're gonna keep it rockin' until we can get back into hosting shows indoors at a viable capacity ... These shows are really unusual, and you don't really know what it's like until you've been to one. I think people will look back at the pandemic and talk about these driving concerts as a highlight."

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## PLACING

Continued from page R1

people that see them and interact with them daily and can see their behavioral patterns," Yunk said.

"Having kids not in school, and not in the after-school programs, that has cut down a lot of how we are able to get referrals and get these kids services what they need."

The nonprofit is finding different ways to reach children who may need their help through online advertising and outreach on Facebook and other websites.

Many of these children could be in abusive homes, which is only exacerbated by the stressors of the pandemic, Yunk said.

"Being stuck at home can put children at a higher risk of abuse," Yunk said.

"Our largest struggle throughout the pandemic is figuring out how to reach the kids that could benefit from our services while they're stuck at home."

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For more information, visit [all4kids.org](http://all4kids.org).

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## TUNE

Continued from page R1

March 31 and a performance in conjunction with the Torrance Cultural Arts Center featuring Grammy-nominated pianist and composer David Benoit on April 3.

The theater, with a staff of about 15, has been able to avoid layoffs and furloughs. They've received two coronavirus relief loans as well as financial help from UC Irvine and the city.

"We're not doing great financially, but we're not losing a lot," Mandel said. "We're going to come out of it and open the next year in good shape."

They also launched a fundraising campaign last November to protect staff jobs. In four months, the campaign exceeded their goal and raised more than \$320,000. They plan on using the additional funds to purchase new equipment.

A plaza for outdoor shows may be completed by June and could serve as a lifeline for dance companies.

The Festival Ballet Theatre performs more than 20 shows at the Barclay. Last March, dancers had rehearsed for months and new sets were created for a sold-out "Swan Lake" that closed before opening day due to the pandemic.

The group rescheduled the production for the fall, but ended up canceling again.



Courtesy of Irvine Barclay Theatre

PERFORMANCES ARE SHOT live at the venue by the Irvine Barclay Theatre's in-house team.

## IF YOU WATCH

**What/When:** Joey Sellers Quintet on March 20 at 4 p.m.

**Where:** Online  
**Cost:** Free (RSVP required)  
**Info:** [thebarclay.org](http://thebarclay.org)

In December, the company planned an outdoor production of their annual "The Nutcracker," their biggest moneymaker that

supports productions later in the season. But it was canceled about a week before opening day when outdoor activities were shut down in California.

Some audience members donated the money they'd paid for their tickets rather than seeking a refund. The Festival Ballet Theatre then held an online auction to help pay for company expenses and the dancers who rehearsed for the canceled productions in 2020.

Salwa Rizkalla, founder and artistic director of Festival Ballet Theatre, said only one paid staff member is working in the office and most of the dancers the company works with have filed for unemployment.

The dance studio is kept open for classes limited in size and individual dancers who need to keep in shape or produce their own video auditions.

Rizkalla anticipates a good summer. She said she's received her COVID-19

vaccination and she feels hopeful. As long as they are able to produce "The Nutcracker" in 2021, the company will stay afloat.

"Love of dance is in their blood," Rizkalla said. "They will keep working in any environment — out in the parking lot whenever they are able to. All of us are really striving to stay alive and keep classical ballet alive."

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# FENTANYL

Continued from page R4

the one thing in California that has not paused for COVID-19," Petrie-Norris said during the news conference. "It is raging all across our state, leaving destruction, death and heartache in its wake ... Fentanyl is now the leading cause of opioid deaths. It's one of the most dangerous and deadly substances in the world. Just two milligrams is enough to kill."

The conference included three parents whose children died after taking fentanyl in the last two years. Jamie Puerta of Santa Clarita lost his 16-year-old son, Daniel; Amy Neville of Aliso Viejo lost her 14-year-old son, Alexander, and Matt Capelouto of Temecula lost his 20-year-old daughter, Alexandra.

Puerta said he found half a blue pill on top of his son's dresser that he had believed to be oxycodone, but upon testing it was revealed to be pure fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is 50 to 100 times more powerful than morphine.

"I do not condone my son wanting to try drugs, but he didn't deserve to die for it," Puerta said. "Unfortunately, talking to my local law enforcement, they don't have the tools that they need so they can actively prosecute these drug dealers who are selling these drugs to our children."



Screencap by Matt Szabo

**ASSEMBLYWOMAN** Cottie Petrie-Norris (D-Laguna Beach) speaks during a virtual news conference Tuesday.

"They are walking the streets today, and I don't understand how this can be. Our law enforcement and legislators, when they took an oath, they swore to protect and serve. We are asking our law enforcement and legislators to protect us from the scourge of fentanyl in our communities, and to please serve justice."

According to the California Department of Public Health, there were 1,603 deaths related to fentanyl overdose in 2019, a large increase over the 373 fentanyl-related deaths reported just two years earlier.

In Riverside County, District Atty. Mike Hestrin's office has recently charged three men with murder for allegedly supplying fentanyl to drug users. Barnes said the narcotics teams working for

the Orange County Sheriff's Department seized 12 pounds of pure fentanyl in 2017, 103 pounds in 2018 and 208 pounds of the substance in 2019.

"It's exponentially increasing every year, and it's because the law does not include this narcotic," Barnes said.

"It's less costly to purchase for the cartels, and it's easier to traffic because one kilo of fentanyl is equivalent to 50 kilos of heroin ... I can't stress enough how much we've been fighting to change this law. The law as it exists today has enhanced penalties for trafficking sales of narcotics for methamphetamine, for heroin, for cocaine, but it explicitly does not include fentanyl."

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