

December 21, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom –

It is with gratitude and respect that I write to tender my resignation from your administration. Working by your side and helping you to lead California during this unique moment in California's history has been a profound honor as well as the most intense, challenging, and humbling experiences of my professional life.

When we started this journey in 2018, neither one of us could have predicted the perfect storm of crises that would hit California and test its leadership: a global pandemic, historic wildfires and a climate crisis at its peak, the bankruptcy of the state's largest utility, civil protests against police violence and systemic racism sparked by the tragic death of George Floyd, and the heart-wrenching stress and strain felt by millions of Californians as the pandemic-induced recession battered our economy, transforming it from one of the strongest in the state's history—with record budget surpluses and historically low unemployment—to one in need of federal support.

Throughout these challenges, it has been my privilege to serve by your side and to witness your leadership. I wish that every Californian could know the Gavin Newsom that I saw leading California with compassion, discernment, and vision over the last two years.

I am extraordinarily proud that in helping you lead, we built one of the most diverse Governor's Office staffs in the history of the state. Of course, diversity alone is not enough, and I am proud to have started a diversity, equity and inclusion working group in the Governor's office to ensure that all voices are included in the Administration's decision making, and that equity is at the forefront of our own workplace culture.

I am also proud that we made real progress on the issues that I have spent my career fighting for: expanding paid family leave, investing in child care and moving towards universal preschool, dramatically growing the Earned Income Tax Credit with a real focus on providing greater economic security for families with the youngest children, providing economic and social support for Californians no matter their immigration status and providing humanitarian aid to immigrants at our border, spurring social innovation and setting the stage for the next social compact that Californians must set forth to address the future of work and the aging of Californians. I am equally proud to be leaving as a climate warrior, having had the great privilege to work with your climate cabinet and energy task force to address the climate emergency California and the globe are facing in real time.

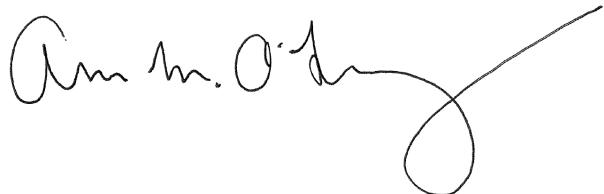
During the pandemic, I also witnessed the best of state government: hundreds of thousands of state employees working under difficult conditions to provide emergency services, whether it was innovating to keep small businesses open and our seniors fed through our Great Plates program, making sure that Californians living on the street could have safe and healthy shelter through Project Roomkey, developing a pipeline for the supply of critical PPE when the federal government was unable to do so, or digging into the COVID19 racial equity data to develop a more targeted response and a health equity measure to ensure that state and local governments are held accountable for addressing the extreme disparities in how this virus has ravaged communities. I also had the privilege of working with California leaders, through the Business and Jobs Recovery task force, who advised us in real time with information and ground truth as we worked to develop sectoral guidance for safe reopening, increased public awareness about the measures needed to safely stay open, and developed ideas for stimulus for small business and longer-term economic recovery.

I feel very confident about the future of our state, even at this most challenging time, because I know that the people who are leading California – starting with you and including our elected officials and staff in the executive branch and in the state legislature and our civil servants – have the public's interest at the forefront of what they do every day.

I look forward to finding ways to continue the progress we have made together on behalf of our fellow Californians. And I will be doing all that I can from outside state government to support you and the team as we march on in our effort to control the virus and help California's economy recover.

Thank you for trusting me to serve you and the First Partner during this epic time in our State's history.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann M. O'Leary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop on the "L" and "e" of "O'Leary".

Ann M. O'Leary