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A Historic Class of Leaders Just Got Elected. Sway Strategies Turns That Moment Into Momentum for Your Mission.

Co-founders L.A. Plax and Clair Whitmer would like a word with you about making some shift happen. Several words, actually. With a chart.

LOS ANGELES — November 5, 2026 — Nobody launches a business the same week as a midterm election. That would be insane. That would be the kind of thing two women with color-coded spreadsheets, a shared calendar that has achieved sentience and a group chat whose name cannot be printed in a press release would do. Which is why Sway Strategies, a women-owned strategic communications, government relations and public affairs firm, is launching today: days after California chose Xavier Becerra as its first elected Latino governor and voters broke so many glass ceilings that the country needs a big broom and a tetanus shot.

Sway Strategies is opening its doors to clients anywhere in the world seeking to navigate the political landscape and turn advocacy into actual change. Not bumper-sticker "change." Change the line item. Change the regulation. Change the eligibility guidelines on page 14 that nobody reads but everybody is affected by. Change that drives equitable economic and community development.

The timing is not subtle. Voters didn't whisper. They didn't leave a passive-aggressive sticky note on the fridge. They marched in with a brass band and a banner that said, "The economy, please. And make it the kind that works for people who don't own a yacht."

"Policy moves when the right argument reaches the right people at the right moment," said **L.A. Plax**, co-founder of Sway Strategies. "A new governor and a new class of legislators mean new relationships and new conversations and new opportunities to put entrepreneurs, women and communities of color at the center of California's economic agenda. That window is open right now. We built Sway to help our clients climb through it. And we brought snacks."

Here's the scoreboard, just in case you are the one person in the country who didn't spend election night refreshing results. Becerra will succeed term-limited Governor Gavin Newsom after promising to deliver "a California we can afford," a sentence that every small business owner in the state just read out loud to their accountant. When the California Legislature convenes on December 7, a new cohort of lawmakers will join a body already boasting a record number of women members. Nationally, voters handed Democrats majorities in both houses and elected the country's first Black woman governor, its first Native American woman governor, its first Muslim U.S. senator and its first openly gay male U.S. senator. In one night. We still have chills.

“The November 3 election delivered more history than we dared hope for, and I’m an optimist who reads budget trailer bills for fun, so that’s saying something,” said **Clair Whitmer**, co-founder of Sway Strategies. “Now the whole country gets to refocus on the thing that brought L.A. and me together in the first place: economic mobility for everyday people, and giving them an opportunity—and a path—to advocate for what they care about. Our job is to get the people closest to the problem—small business owners, community organizations, local agencies running on fumes—into the room with those leaders. And then make sure they walk in with data people can understand, repeat at dinner and care about. No jargon fog. Nobody has time for jargon fog.”

Expertise, operationalized. (Translation: we know things, and we do things with them.)

Here’s the thing about expertise in 2026. Information is everywhere. It’s in your pocket. It’s in your other pocket. What’s still rare is understanding which facts matter, which meetings matter, when to push, when to reframe, and when to stop polishing the memo and just pick up the phone. That’s what Sway sells. Experience, relationships, pattern recognition and accountability for what happens next. Five practice areas, zero filler:

- **Strategy:** research, opportunity and gap analysis, organizational alignment, brand positioning, and grant and program administration. We sort the urgent from the important, and the possible from the “bless your heart.”
- **Stories:** messaging, communications planning, executive communications, campaign development, audience targeting, data storytelling and speechwriting.
- **Influence:** public affairs, media outreach, advocacy campaigns, coalition and partnership development, legislative and policy strategy, and stakeholder engagement. We build the case, build the coalition and maintain the momentum until we cross the finish line.
- **Events:** event strategy and production, conferences, press conferences, program and product launches, community convenings and trainings. Events that turn audiences into advocates.
- **Full PR & marketing:** brand identity, creative and design, paid, earned, social and owned media, newsletters, and retained or ad hoc marketing and public relations support. Sometimes you need a strategy. Sometimes you need a story. You always need sway.

Who calls Sway? Public agencies. Foundations. Nonprofits. Associations. Economic and community development organizations. Coalitions. Businesses with a public purpose. And community leaders staring down a complicated problem at 11 p.m., alone with cold coffee and a worn-out whiteboard.

A launch that led to a launch

Plax and Whitmer cooked up Sway while building Made in California, the statewide labeling and marketing program for California manufacturers that Governor Newsom launched in August 2026. Whitmer handled the statutory and regulatory work, the technology and the user experience, which is to say the parts that make people’s eyes glaze over and are the reason anything works. Plax built the brand, the marketing assets, the manufacturer storytelling and the partner outreach, which is to say the parts that make people actually show up. Since launch, applications have

come in daily from manufacturers across industries and regions. Somewhere in there, the two of them looked at each other and said, “We should do this for everybody.” And so they are.

Other projects on the résumé:

- SCALE (Success, Capital Access and Leadership for Entrepreneurs), the brand for California’s statewide small business support network, which is expected to top 80 partners in program year 2026–27.
- The Outsmart Disaster Resiliency Roadmap, a six-step business preparedness guide in English, Spanish and Simplified Chinese, which has now certified more than 130 trainers across the state.
- The inaugural California Women’s Economic Summit, a May 2026 convening of women entrepreneurs, business support organizations, policymakers and funders. Sold out the first year.

About the co-founders

L.A. Plax runs marketing, communications, relationships and public engagement, and has never met a complicated policy she couldn’t turn into a story your aunt would forward. She earns media, wrangles coalitions around shared priorities and manages integrated campaigns and events, including the 1,000-plus-attendee 2023 California Economic Summit for California Forward. One thousand people. Zero public meltdowns. Her portfolio runs from public awareness campaigns for the City of Santa Monica to international sustainability marketing for the Rainforest Alliance to a global advocacy campaign that drew more than 5 million petition signatures. One more time: five million. That’s a small country.

Clair Whitmer runs program strategy, operational structure and systems thinking, which means she’s the one who asks “and then what happens?” until everyone in the room is a little tired but the plan is a lot better. As former Deputy Director of the California Office of the Small Business Advocate (CalOSBA), she led the expansion of the state’s small business support network and commissioned California’s first report on the economic contributions of diverse small businesses. Before that, she designed the City of Fresno’s pandemic-era Save Our Small Businesses relief program and held leadership roles at Maker Media, Slashdot Media and CNET, because apparently one career wasn’t enough.

About Sway Strategies

Sway Strategies is a women-owned strategic communications, government relations and public affairs firm helping clients at every level of government, across the globe, navigate the political landscape and turn advocacy strategy into meaningful change and equitable economic and community development. Through strategic advising, data storytelling, advocacy and awareness campaigns, events and a full-service marketing and public relations hub, Sway builds audiences, advocates and assets. Fill the gaps. Fill the room. Make your point. Make shift happen. Book a free consultation and subscribe to the Shift Happens newsletter at www.swaycalifornia.com.

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