

Sununu heads west to speak to CA GOP

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September 23rd, 2021

Gov. Chris Sununu will be the keynote speaker for the California Republican Party's annual convention in San Diego Friday night.

Sununu's office said the governor planned to leave the state Wednesday night and return to New Hampshire Saturday morning.

No taxpayer money will be used during the visit, officials said.

According to the state party's website, Sununu will be attending a VIP reception prior to speaking to the convention. Both events are in the Manchester Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Sununu said he's considering running for the U.S. Senate to try to unseat Democrat Maggie Hassan in 2022.

California is a must-go destination for U.S. Senate candidates from both major political parties to raise money. Sununu can't accept any donations unless and until he sets up at least a federal committee to explore a Senate run.

Sununu will fly to Los Angeles and then on Thursday visit the business of a personal friend of his, according to Benjamin Vihstadt, the governor's spokesman.

"He has no political meetings or fundraisers on his schedule outside of keynoting the CA GOP meeting," Vihstadt said.

The visit comes a little over a week after California Gov. Gavin Newsom survived a recall election launched by GOP critics of his policies, including the steps he took aiming to control the spread of COVID-19.

Convention organizers recommend all convention-goers wear face coverings while indoors during all public events.

They note that current regulations require the unvaccinated to wear masks while inside at the venue.

"Chris Sununu is once again abandoning New Hampshire just as our hospitalizations are peaking and cases are on the rise to go on a political junket in California," Democratic Party Chairman Raymond Buckley said in a statement.

"The governor should be focusing on protecting the health and safety of Granite Staters — not furthering his political ambitions by pandering to Mitch Mc-Connell's favorite donors on the other side of the country."

In an October 2020 report, the free-market Cato Institute gave Sununu and three other GOP governors an "A" grade on fiscal policy.

Throughout the visit, Sununu administration officials said Sununu retains full authority to govern New Hampshire while he's away.

Under the state constitution, Senate President Chuck Morse, R-Salem, would take any necessary actions as acting governor during Sununu's absence.