



Californians & Their Government

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PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides a voice for the public and likely voters—informing policymakers, encouraging discussion, and raising awareness on critical issues of the day.

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News Release

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PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

Slim Majority Support “Split Roll” Property Tax; One-Third Support Reinstating Affirmative Action, with Many Undecided

COVID-19 CONCERNS REMAIN HIGH; MOST SAY US RACE RELATIONS ARE WORSE THAN A YEAR AGO

SAN FRANCISCO, September 16, 2020—A slim majority support a November ballot measure that would change how commercial property is taxed, and well below half support a measure that would repeal the state’s ban on affirmative action in the public sector. Most Californians are concerned about contracting COVID-19—similar to May—while on the issue of race relations in the US, six in ten believe they have gotten worse in the last year, a major shift in opinion from early 2019. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Proposition 15 would change the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property by basing it on current market value instead of purchase price—amending the 1978 landmark citizens’ initiative (Prop 13) and creating a “split roll” tax. Among likely voters, 51 percent favor and 40 percent oppose, with Democrats (72%) far more likely to support than independents (46%) and Republicans (17%). Less than half of homeowners (47%) would vote yes, compared with 56 percent of renters. Younger Californians are much more likely than older residents to support Proposition 15 (60% ages 18 to 44, 46% age 45 and older). Support is highest among likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (62%) followed by those in Los Angeles (54%), Inland Empire (51%), Central Valley (47%), and Orange/San Diego (41%).

“Californians are divided on Proposition 15, with Republicans and Democrats, younger and older voters, and renters and homeowners showing widely different support for this tax and spending initiative,” said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Proposition 16 would repeal a 1996 constitutional amendment (Prop 209) that banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in public hiring decisions. Among likely voters, 31 percent would vote yes and 47 percent would vote no, with one in five (22%) undecided. Forty-six percent of Democratic likely voters support Proposition 16, compared with 26 percent of independents and 9 percent of Republicans. The San Francisco Bay Area (40% of likely voters) and Los Angeles (37%) are the only regions with more than one-third support (28% Orange/San Diego, 25% Central Valley, 20% Inland Empire).

“Support for Proposition 16 is well below 50 percent, with one in five voters undecided about this effort to add diversity as a factor in public employment, education, and contracting decisions,” Baldassare said.

Most Californians Are Concerned about Getting COVID-19, and a Slim Majority Think the Worst Is behind Us

A solid majority of Californians say they are either very (28%) or somewhat concerned (33%) about getting the coronavirus and needing to be hospitalized. This is similar to May (24% very concerned,

34% somewhat concerned), when California had about half as many new cases daily as now. Asked about restrictions on public activity to prevent COVID-19 spread, 34 percent want more restrictions, 26 percent want fewer, and 39 percent want about the same. A slightly larger share of Californians want more restrictions now than did in May (25% more, 28% fewer, 46% about the same).

A slim majority of Californians say the worst is behind us on where the US currently stands with respect to the pandemic, while 42 percent say the worst is yet to come—essentially unchanged from May (46% worst behind us, 48% worst yet to come). Adults nationwide hold similar views (51% worst behind us, 43% worst yet to come) according to a September CNN survey.

“Californians continue to express concerns about getting sick from the coronavirus, and a slim majority say the worst is behind us,” Baldassare said.

Governor’s Approval Remains High Overall and on Handling the Pandemic

Six in ten (59% adults, 60% likely voters) approve of how Governor Gavin Newsom is doing his job. This is close to the record-high 65 percent of adults and 64 percent of likely voters approving in May, and it is above his approval rating (44% adults, 43% likely voters) a year ago. Asked about the governor’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak, 62 percent of both adults and likely voters approve. In May, 69 percent of both adults and likely voters said they approved of how he was handling the pandemic.

“Governor Newsom continues to receive high marks for his overall job performance and his handling of the coronavirus outbreak as the state has faced a surge in the virus and a multitude of crises,” Baldassare said.

With the 2019–20 legislative session closing earlier this month, about half of Californians (50% adults, 45% likely voters) approve of how the state legislature is handling its job. Democrats (64%) are far more likely than independents (44%) and Republicans (15%) to approve.

Most Say Race Relations in the US Have Gotten Worse over the Past Year

Asked how race relations in the US compare to a year ago, six in ten Californians (59%) say they have gotten worse, far more than those saying race relations have gotten better (9%) or are about the same (31%). This contrasts sharply with views in January 2019. At that time, 45 percent said race relations had gotten worse—14 percentage points below today—while 20 percent said they had gotten better, and 34 percent said they were about the same.

“In a major shift in public opinion over time, six in ten Californians are now saying that race relations in the United States are worse than they were a year ago,” Baldassare said.

At a time of nationwide protests over police brutality and systemic racism, 53 percent of Californians think police in their community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always (24%) or most of the time (29%). More than a third say police do so only some of the time (28%) or almost never (11%). Nineteen percent of African Americans say police treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always or most of the time, far lower than among Asian Americans (44%), Latinos (56%), and whites (58%).

Biden Maintains Wide Lead over Trump, with Californians Closely Watching the Presidential Race

In the presidential race, Joe Biden leads Donald Trump by a wide margin in California, with 60 percent of likely voters favoring Biden/Harris and 31 percent favoring Trump/Pence. This margin is similar to May (57% to 33%), before the vice-presidential candidates were included. Biden is the overwhelming choice among Democrats (94% support), Trump is the overwhelming choice among Republicans (82% support), and Biden holds a lead (56% to 31%) among independents. Biden leads by wide margins in the

San Francisco Bay Area (71% to 18%), Los Angeles (69% to 23%), and Orange/San Diego (55% to 38%), with a closer race in the Inland Empire (47% to 40%) and Central Valley (46% to 45%).

More than eight in ten likely voters are following news about the presidential candidates very (53%) or fairly (34%) closely, similar to four years ago (61% very, 33% fairly). An overwhelming majority are very (57%) or somewhat (28%) interested in the series of presidential debates that begins later this month.

“With Joe Biden leading Donald Trump by a wide margin, nearly all Californians say they are closely following the presidential election and are interested in the upcoming debates,” Baldassare said.

Three in ten Californians (31% adults, 32% likely voters) approve of the job President Trump is doing, similar to May (35% adults, 33% likely voters) and last September (30% adults, 35% likely voters). Today, Republicans are far more likely to approve (82%) than independents (36%) or Democrats (5%). Approval of the president’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak (29% adults, 32% likely voters) also is similar to May.

Among likely voters, a solid majority have either a great deal (40%) or quite a lot (20%) of confidence in California’s system of elections, a notable increase from one year ago (22% great deal, 20% quite a lot).

Approval of Congress Is Low, but Most Like Their Own Representative

Likely voters’ approval of Congress (21%) is lower than for the president (it’s the same—31%—among all adults). However, most (55% adults, 56% likely voters) approve of their own House representative. Nearly half (44% adults, 46% likely voters) approve of US Senator Dianne Feinstein, down slightly from February (51% adults, 50% likely voters) and similar to a year ago (40% adults, 44% likely voters). US Senator Kamala Harris has approval from 54 percent of adults and 56 percent of likely voters, similar to February (49% adults, 54% likely voters) and up from a year ago (40% adults, 43% likely voters).

“Kamala Harris is receiving positive reviews for her job performance as California US Senator in the wake of being selected as the Democratic vice-presidential candidate,” Baldassare said.

If the 2020 election for the US House of Representatives were held today, 60 percent of likely voters would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 33 percent would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. In the eight competitive California House districts according to the Cook Political Report (districts 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 48, and 50), a majority (54%) favor the Republican candidate and 42 percent favor the Democrat.

Overwhelming Majority Believe California Is in a Recession, with Optimism Low for the US Economy

As California and the nation continue to confront the economic impact of the pandemic, many Californians express concern about the state’s economy and the national outlook. An overwhelming majority (72% adults, 77% likely voters) say California is currently in a recession. In addition, three in ten (31% adults, 34% likely voters) say the state is in a serious recession rather than a moderate or mild one. This is similar to the shares saying California was in a serious recession in May (34% adults, 38% likely voters), three months into the COVID-19 lockdowns. Today, 35 percent of Republicans, 31 percent of Democrats, and 28 percent of independents say the state is in a serious recession.

Most Californians (58% adults, 60% likely voters) think the US will have bad times economically during the next 12 months, while about three in ten (35% adults, 31% likely voters) expect good times economically. The share expecting bad times is down notably from May, when it was 70 percent of adults and 73 percent of likely voters.

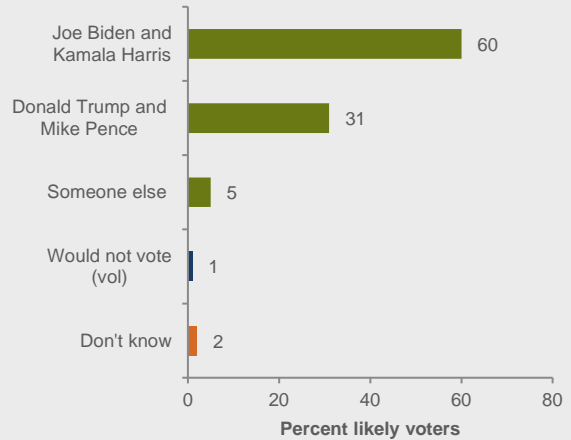
“Californians are in a gloomy economic mood as the fall election draws closer, with majorities believing that the state is in a recession and the nation will be in bad financial times for the next year,” Baldassare said.

November 2020 Election

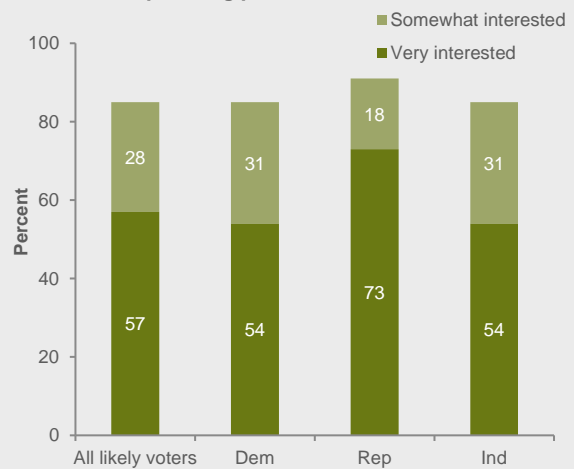
Key Findings

- Joe Biden leads Donald Trump by a wide margin among likely voters (60% to 31%) in the presidential race. Half of likely voters are following news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election very closely, and 57 percent are very interested in the upcoming presidential debates. *(page 7)*
- Among likely voters, 60 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate for the US House of Representatives in their district; 33 percent would vote for the Republican candidate. Fifty percent of likely voters would prefer to elect a representative to Congress who has experience in politics instead of someone who is new to politics (36%). *(page 8)*
- Fifty-one percent of likely voters would vote yes on Proposition 15 (changes tax assessment) and 40 percent would vote no. Forty-five percent of likely voters say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15 is very important, with no voters 12 points more likely than yes voters to say this. *(page 9)*
- Thirty-one percent of likely voters would vote yes on Proposition 16 (allows diversity as a factor in employment, education, contracting), and 47 percent would vote no. Thirty-four percent of likely voters say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16 is very important; fewer than half of both yes and no voters say this. *(page 10)*
- Six in ten likely voters have quite a lot or a great deal of confidence in the system in which votes are cast and counted in California elections. Fifty-four percent are concerned that it is too hard for eligible people to vote, while a similar 50 percent are concerned that it is too easy for ineligible people to vote. *(page 11)*

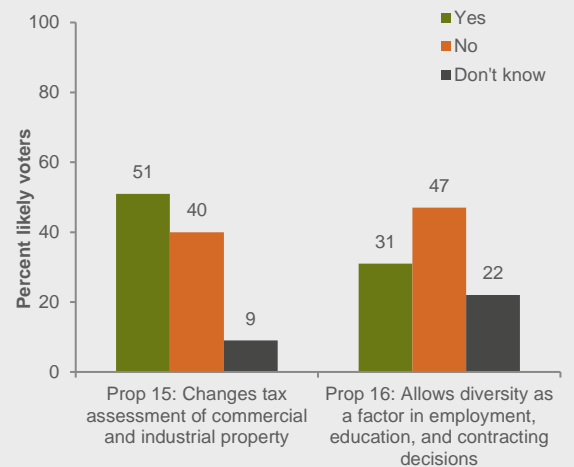
Choice for president in November 2020 general election



Interest in upcoming presidential debates



November 2020 ballot measures



Presidential Election

As the presidential election enters the fall season, 87 percent of likely voters say they are following news about the candidates very (53%) or fairly (34%) closely—slightly lower than in September 2016 (61% very, 33% fairly). Today, the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris leads over the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence by 29 points (60% to 31%). Biden’s lead over Trump was similar in our May survey (57% to 33%), when we were not including the vice-presidential running mates. Currently, Biden has strong support from Democrats (94%), Trump has strong support among Republicans (82%), and Biden leads among independents (56% to 31%). Biden leads by wide margins in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Orange/San Diego, while the race is closer in the Inland Empire and the Central Valley. Majorities of whites (56%), Latinos (64%), and those in other racial/ethnic groups (77%) support Biden. (Sample sizes for Asian American and African American likely voters are too small for separate analysis.) Biden’s lead is wider among women (65% to 28%) than men (56% to 35%).

“If the November 3 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, the Libertarian ticket of Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen, or the Green Party ticket of Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Biden-Harris	Trump-Pence	Jorgensen-Cohen	Hawkins-Walker	Someone else (vol)	Would not vote for president (vol)	Don't know
All likely voters		60%	31%	3%	2%	–	1%	2%
Party	Democrats	94	3	–	1	–	–	1
	Republicans	12	82	3	1	–	–	2
	Independents	56	31	3	3	–	4	4
Region	Central Valley	46	45	2	6	–	–	1
	Inland Empire	47	40	10	–	–	–	3
	Los Angeles	69	23	3	2	–	1	2
	Orange/San Diego	55	38	4	1	1	1	1
	San Francisco Bay Area	71	18	1	3	–	3	4

The first of three presidential debates will be held on September 29. More than eight in ten likely voters say they are interested in the debates, including nearly six in ten who say they are very interested. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (73%) say they are very interested, as do smaller majorities of Democrats and independents (54% each). Trump supporters (73%) are more likely than Biden supporters (52%) to say they are very interested. Likely voters in the Inland Empire and Orange/San Diego (63% each) are the most likely to say they are very interested. Half or more across younger and older age groups, whites (61%), Latinos (51%), and those in other racial/ethnic groups (50%) say they are very interested.

“How interested, if at all, are you in the upcoming presidential debates—very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested, or not at all interested?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All likely voters	Party			Age	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	18 to 44	45 and older
Very interested	57%	54%	73%	54%	54%	59%
Somewhat interested	28	31	18	31	31	26
Not so interested	8	9	3	10	10	7
Not at all interested	6	6	6	6	5	7

Congressional Elections

If the 2020 election for the US House of Representatives were held today, 60 percent of likely voters would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 33 percent would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. Similar shares held these views before the midterm election in September 2018 (54% Democratic candidate, 37% Republican candidate). Today, an overwhelming majority of partisans support their own party, and a slim majority of independents favor the Democratic candidate. The Democratic candidate is preferred by large margins in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, and by narrower margins in Orange/San Diego and the Inland Empire; likely voters are divided in the Central Valley. Majorities across all racial/ethnic, age, gender, income, and homeownership groups say they would vote for the Democratic candidate. The shares preferring the Democratic candidate increase as education levels rise (50% high school only, 58% some college education, 66% college graduate). Among those who approve of President Trump’s job performance, 86 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate; among those who disapprove, 86 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate. Democratic candidates are preferred by a 37-point margin (65% to 28%) in Democratic-held districts, while Republican candidates are preferred by a 15-point margin (53% to 38%) in Republican-held districts. In the eight competitive California districts as defined by the [Cook Political Report](#), a majority favor the Republican candidate (54%) over the Democratic candidate (42%).

“If the 2020 election for US House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district? (If other/unsure: As of today, do you lean more toward the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?)”

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Congressional district		Competitive house districts
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Democratic district	Republican district	
Republican/Lean Republican	33%	2%	87%	39%	28%	53%	54%
Democratic/Lean Democratic	60	94	7	52	65	38	42
Don't know	7	4	5	9	7	9	4

Fifty percent of likely voters prefer to elect a representative to Congress who has experience in politics, while 36 percent prefer someone who is new to politics. Similar shares held these views before the midterm election in September 2018 (46% has experience, 36% new to politics). A strong majority of Democrats prefer experience, half of Republicans would like someone new, and independents are divided. Regionally, majorities in Los Angeles (57%), the San Francisco Bay Area (53%), and Orange/San Diego (51%) prefer experience, while likely voters in the Inland Empire prefer someone new (57%); those in the Central Valley are more divided (43% experience, 39% new). Among racial/ethnic groups, a majority of Latinos (56%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (62%) prefer experience, compared to 45 percent of whites. About half or more across age, gender, income, and homeownership groups prefer experience. A majority of likely voters in Democratic-held and competitive districts say they want someone with experience, while those in Republican-held districts are more divided.

“Would you prefer to elect a representative to Congress who has experience in politics, or is new to politics?”

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Congressional district		Competitive house districts
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Democratic district	Republican district	
Has experience in politics	50%	66%	30%	43%	53%	40%	51%
Is new to politics	36	22	52	41	34	45	41
Both (volunteered)	5	4	5	5	4	5	1
Don't know	10	8	13	11	9	11	7

Proposition 15: Changes Tax Assessment of Commercial Property

Proposition 15 would change the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property by taxing them based on current market value, instead of purchase price—amending the 1978 landmark citizens’ initiative, Proposition 13, and creating a “split roll” tax system. Proposition 15’s increased property taxes on commercial properties would provide new funding to local governments and schools. When read the Proposition 15 ballot title and label, 51 percent of likely voters would vote yes, 40 percent would vote no, and 9 percent are undecided. An overwhelming majority of Democratic likely voters (72%) would vote yes, while an overwhelming share of Republicans (72%) would vote no; independents are divided (46% yes, 46% no). Regionally, support for Proposition 15 is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (62%). Renters (56%) are somewhat more likely than homeowners (47%) to say they would vote yes, as are younger Californians compared to older residents (60% 18 to 44, 46% 45 and older). A majority of Latinos (57%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (60%) would vote yes on Proposition 15, while whites are divided (48% yes, 41% no).

“Proposition 15 is called the ‘Increases Funding for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 15?”*

Likely voters only		Yes	No	Don't know
All likely voters		51%	40%	9%
Party	Democrats	72	20	8
	Republicans	17	72	11
	Independents	46	46	8
Region	Central Valley	47	44	9
	Inland Empire	51	35	14
	Los Angeles	54	39	6
	Orange/San Diego	41	49	10
	San Francisco Bay Area	62	29	9
Homeownership	Own	47	44	9
	Rent	56	35	9

*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 25.

Forty-five percent of likely voters say that the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15 is very important to them, while 36 percent say it is somewhat important. Similar shares of Republican likely voters (49%), independents (44%), and Democrats (43%) say the outcome of Proposition 15 is very important. Among those who would vote yes on Proposition 15, 42 percent say the outcome is very important; among those would vote no, 54 percent say the outcome of the vote is very important.

“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15?”

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Vote on Proposition 15	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Very important	45%	43%	49%	44%	42%	54%
Somewhat important	36	41	29	34	46	26
Not too important	11	9	13	16	10	12
Not at all important	3	3	5	2	1	6
Don't know	4	4	4	2	1	2

Proposition 16: Allows Diversity as a Factor in Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions

In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209, a constitutional amendment that banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in California. This November, Californians will vote on Proposition 16, which would repeal Proposition 209 and restore affirmative action in the state. When read the Proposition 16 ballot title and label, 31 percent of likely voters would vote yes, 47 percent would vote no, and 22 percent are undecided. More than four in ten Democratic likely voters (46%) would vote yes; majorities of Republicans (72%) and independents (58%) would vote no. Fewer than half of likely voters across all regional, demographic, and racial/ethnic groups (41% Latinos, 40% other racial/ethnic groups, 26% whites) say they would vote yes; many are currently undecided in each group. Women (32%) and men (31%) are about as likely to say they would vote yes; women are more likely to say they do not know how they would vote (28% women, 15% men).

“Proposition 16 is called the ‘Allows Diversity as a Factor in Public Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 16?”*

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don't know
All likely voters		31%	47%	22%
Party	Democrats	46	27	26
	Republicans	9	72	20
	Independents	26	58	16
Region	Central Valley	25	53	21
	Inland Empire	20	59	21
	Los Angeles	37	41	22
	Orange/San Diego	28	51	22
	San Francisco Bay Area	40	41	19
Gender	Men	31	54	15
	Women	32	41	28

*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 25.

Thirty-four percent of likely voters say that the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16 is very important to them; an additional 39 percent say it is somewhat important. Similar shares of Republicans (36%), independents (33%), and Democrats (32%) say that the outcome is very important to them. Older Californians (37% 45 and older) are somewhat more likely than younger Californians (29% 18 to 44) to hold this view. Latinos (39%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (38%) are somewhat more likely than whites (30%) to say that the outcome is very important. Fewer than half of likely voters who would vote yes (43%) or no (37%) say that the outcome of the vote is very important to them.

“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All likely voters	Party			Vote on Proposition 16	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Very important	34%	32%	36%	33%	43%	37%
Somewhat important	39	41	34	35	42	40
Not too important	13	14	9	17	12	15
Not at all important	6	3	12	6	2	8
Don't know	8	8	9	8	3	1

California Elections and Voting

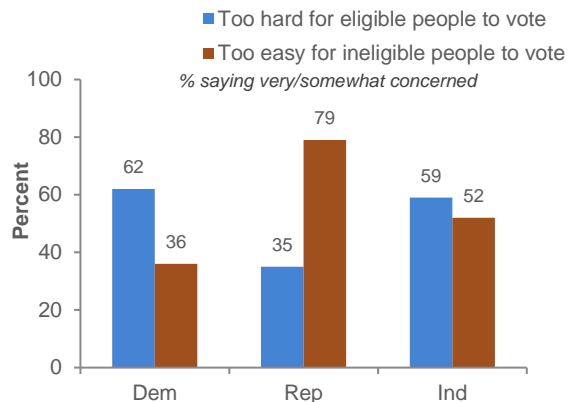
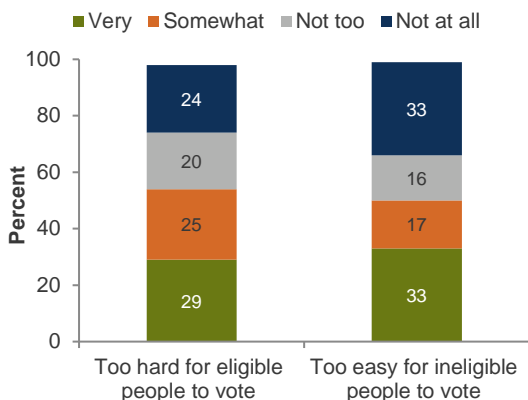
Amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, California has decided to employ an extensive vote-by-mail system for the November election. With every voter set to receive a mail ballot, how much confidence do California’s likely voters have in their voting system? Six in ten have a great deal (40%) or quite a lot (20%) of confidence; fewer than four in ten have some (19%) or very little (19%). Fewer likely voters had a great deal (22%) or quite a lot (20%) of confidence last September (28% some, 27% very little). Today, Democrats are much more likely than Republicans and independents to express a great deal of confidence. Across regions, about four in ten or fewer express a great deal of confidence. Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (44%) are the most likely to express confidence. About four in ten across age, gender, and income groups have a great deal of confidence. Likely voters with at least some college education (42%) are more likely than those who have not attended college (32%) to hold this view. Similar shares of homeowners (40%) and renters (35%) have a great deal of confidence. Those in Republican-held districts (30%) are much more likely than those in Democratic-held districts (16%) to have very little confidence; in the eight competitive house districts, 36 percent say this.

“How much confidence do you have in the system in which votes are cast and counted in California elections—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?”

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Education			Competitive house districts
		Dem	Rep	Ind	High school only	Some college education	College graduate	
Great deal	40%	51%	23%	37%	32%	41%	42%	31%
Quite a lot	20	24	13	20	22	17	22	12
Some	19	17	23	14	21	17	20	18
Very little	19	7	36	26	24	21	14	36
None (volunteered)	2	1	3	3	1	3	1	3
Don't know	1	1	2	–	–	1	1	1

Fifty-four percent of likely voters are very (29%) or somewhat (25%) concerned that it is too hard for eligible people to vote in California elections, while half are very (33%) or somewhat (17%) concerned that it is too easy for ineligible people to vote. Today, more likely voters are concerned that it is too hard than last year (21% very, 21% somewhat). Democrats (62%) and independents (59%) are far more likely than Republicans (35%) to be concerned that it is too hard for eligible people to vote. Conversely, Republicans (79%) are far more likely than independents (52%) and Democrats (36%) to be concerned that it is too easy for ineligible people to vote. Concern that it is too hard is higher among Latinos (59%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (73%) than among whites (48%). Concern that it is too easy is lower among whites (47%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (48%) than among Latinos (58%).

Concern about voting in California elections

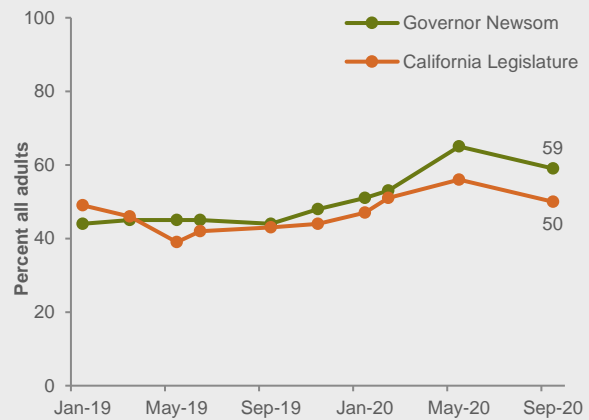


State and National Issues

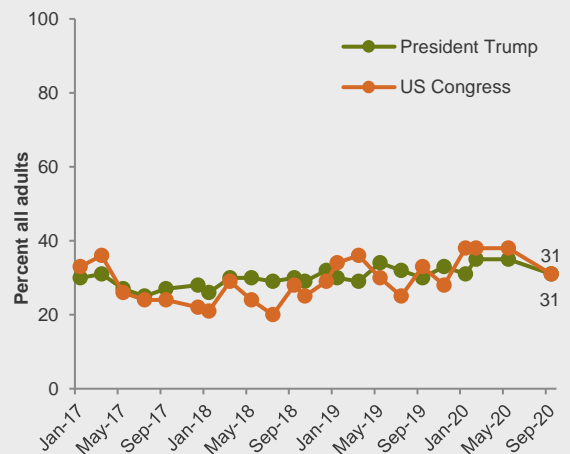
Key Findings

- Fifty-nine percent of Californians approve of Governor Newsom’s job performance. Fifty percent approve of the state legislature overall, and 52 percent approve of their own state legislators. *(page 13)*
- Three in ten adults approve of President Trump. Thirty-one percent approve of the US Congress, while 55 percent approve of their own representative in the US House. *(page 14)*
- Forty-four percent of Californians approve of Senator Dianne Feinstein and 54 percent approve of Senator Kamala Harris. *(page 15)*
- A slim majority of Californians think the state is going in the right direction (51%). About seven in ten say the state is in an economic recession. *(page 16)*
- About six in ten adults are very (28%) or somewhat (33%) concerned about getting the coronavirus and being hospitalized. Seventy-three percent say there should be about the same (39%) or more restrictions (34%) on public activity in their area as there are now. *(page 17)*
- Thirty-five percent of adults think the US will have good times financially over the next 12 months. Forty-six percent of adults rate their personal finances as excellent (11%) or good (35%). *(page 18)*
- Forty-nine percent are pessimistic that Americans of different political views can come together and work out their differences, while 47 percent are optimistic. Fifty-nine percent say race relations are worse than they were a year ago, 31 percent say they are the same, and 9 percent say they are better. *(page 19)*

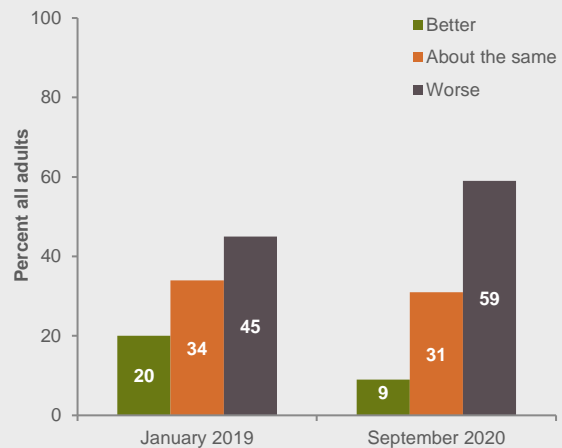
Approval ratings of state elected officials



Approval ratings of federal elected officials



Belief that race relations in the United States are _____ than they were a year ago



Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

Governor Newsom’s approval rating is at 59 percent among adults and 60 percent among likely voters today. In May, a record-high 65 percent of adults and 64 percent of likely voters approved of the way the governor was handling his job, while 44 percent of adults and 43 percent of likely voters approved of Governor Newsom last September. Today, Governor Newsom’s approval rating is 85 percent among Democrats, 51 percent among independents, and 19 percent among Republicans. Majorities across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups and regions approve.

Six in ten Californians approve of the governor’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak (62% adults, 62% likely voters). In May, 69 percent of adults and 69 percent of likely voters approved on this issue. Today, majorities across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ ethnic groups and regions approve, while partisans are divided (83% Democrats, 57% independents, 27% Republicans).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gavin Newsom is handling his job as governor of California?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		59%	30%	10%
Likely voters		60	37	3
Party	Democrats	85	11	4
	Republicans	19	77	4
	Independents	51	38	11
Region	Central Valley	55	37	8
	Inland Empire	56	34	10
	Los Angeles	62	27	11
	Orange/San Diego	60	31	9
	San Francisco Bay Area	64	24	11

At the close of the 2019–20 legislative session, 50 percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters approve of the way the state legislature is handling its job. Approval ratings were similar in May (56% adults, 50% likely voters) and slightly lower last September (43% adults, 38% likely voters). Today, 64 percent of Democrats, 44 percent of independents, and 15 percent of Republicans say they approve.

A similar proportion (52% adults, 48% likely voters) approve of the way that the legislators representing their state assembly and senate districts are doing their jobs. Approval among adults was similar in February (53% adults, 52% likely voters) and last September (46% adults, 41% likely voters). Today, 62 percent of Democrats, 49 percent of independents, and 25 percent of Republicans approve of their own legislators. Half or more in all regions with the exception of the Inland Empire (41%) say they approve.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of ...?”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
the way that the California Legislature is handling its job	Approve	50%	64%	15%	44%	45%
	Disapprove	36	20	75	45	43
	Don't know	14	15	10	12	12
the job that the state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time	Approve	52	62	25	49	48
	Disapprove	34	24	64	39	41
	Don't know	14	14	11	12	11

Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

President Trump’s approval rating is at 31 percent among adults and 32 percent among likely voters, similar to May (35% adults, 33% likely voters) and last September (30% adults, 35% likely voters). Today, President Trump’s approval rating is at 82 percent among Republicans, 36 percent among independents, and 5 percent among Democrats. The president’s approval is below 50 percent across regions of the state and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups. In a recent Gallup poll, 42 percent of adults nationwide approved of President Trump.

Approval of the president’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak (29% adults, 32% likely voters) is similar. In May, 36 percent of adults and 34 percent of likely voters expressed approval on this issue. Today, fewer than half across demographic groups, racial/ethnic groups, and regions say they approve, while partisans are divided (79% Republicans, 31% independents, 4% Democrats). In a recent CNN poll, 40 percent of adults approved of the way President Trump is handling the coronavirus outbreak.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		31%	66%	3%
Likely voters		32	67	2
Party	Democrats	5	94	1
	Republicans	82	16	2
	Independents	36	60	4
Region	Central Valley	41	56	3
	Inland Empire	39	61	1
	Los Angeles	25	71	4
	Orange/San Diego	35	63	2
	San Francisco Bay Area	21	75	4

Approval of the way the US Congress is handling its job (31% adults, 21% likely voters) is lower than approval of the president among likely voters. Today, fewer than three in ten across partisan groups approve of Congress (20% Democrats, 20% Republicans, 28% independents), while fewer than half across regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups approve of Congress. In a recent Gallup poll, 21 percent of adults nationwide approved of Congress.

Majorities of adults (55%) and likely voters (56%) approve of their own representative in the US House, similar to February (55% adults, 57% likely voters) and last September (49% adults, 51% likely voters). Today, majorities of Democrats (68%) and independents (54%) and fewer Republicans (39%) approve of their own representative. About half or more across all regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups approve of their own US House representative.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of ...?”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
the way the US Congress is handling its job	Approve	31%	20%	20%	28%	21%
	Disapprove	63	77	75	67	75
	Don't know	6	3	6	5	3
the way your own representative to the US House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job	Approve	55	68	39	54	56
	Disapprove	30	21	46	29	32
	Don't know	15	11	15	17	12

Approval Ratings of California’s US Senators

US Senator Dianne Feinstein has approval from 44 percent of adults and 46 percent of likely voters. Approval among adults is slightly lower than in February (51% adults, 50% likely voters) and is similar to last September (40% adults, 44% likely voters). Today, 65 percent of Democrats approve, compared to 40 percent of independents, and 16 percent of Republicans. About half in Los Angeles (49%) approve compared to fewer in other regions (46% Central Valley, 44% San Francisco Bay Area, 43% Orange/San Diego, 37% Inland Empire). Majorities of African Americans (58%) and fewer Asian Americans (46%), Latinos (46%), and whites (43%) approve. Approval of how Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as US senator is similar among women (45%) and men (44%) and approval is higher among those 55 and older (52%) than young residents (41% 18 to 34, 40% 35 to 54).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as US senator?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		44%	39%	17%
Likely voters		46	45	9
Party	Democrats	65	26	9
	Republicans	16	74	10
	Independents	40	43	16
Region	Central Valley	46	44	11
	Inland Empire	37	43	20
	Los Angeles	49	36	15
	Orange/San Diego	43	45	12
	San Francisco Bay Area	44	33	23

In the wake of Kamala Harris being selected as the Democratic vice presidential candidate, 54 percent of adults and 56 percent of likely voters approve of the way Harris is handling her job as US senator. Approval was similar in February (49% adults, 54% likely voters) and lower last September (40% adults, 43% likely voters). Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats (79%) approve, compared to 51 percent of independents and 15 percent of Republicans. Half or more in Los Angeles (61%), the San Francisco Bay Area (58%), Orange/San Diego (51%), and the Inland Empire (50%) approve compared to fewer in the Central Valley (47%). Majorities of African Americans (68%), Latinos (58%), Asian Americans (56%), and whites (51%) approve. Fifty-nine percent of women and 49 percent of men approve, and majorities across age, education, homeownership, and income groups approve of how Kamala Harris is handling her job as US senator.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Kamala Harris is handling her job as US senator?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		54%	33%	13%
Likely voters		56	38	6
Party	Democrats	79	15	6
	Republicans	15	77	8
	Independents	51	35	14
Region	Central Valley	47	44	9
	Inland Empire	50	38	12
	Los Angeles	61	24	14
	Orange/San Diego	51	39	10
	San Francisco Bay Area	58	27	15

Overall Mood

Amid the COVID-19 crisis and numerous wildfires burning along the west coast, about half of adults (51%) and likely voters (48%) think the state is going in the right direction, while 45 percent (48% likely voters) feel it is going in the wrong direction. The share saying right direction was slightly higher in May (58% adults, 56% likely voters). Today, Democrats are far more likely than independents and Republicans to think things are going in the right direction. Across regions, half or more in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, Orange/San Diego, and the Inland Empire say right direction; conversely, 54 percent in the Central Valley say wrong direction. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (64%) are the most likely to say right direction followed by African Americans (57%), Asian Americans (56%), and whites (41%). About half of women (53%) and men (49%) say this, as do about half across education levels (50% high school only, 49% some college education, 54% college graduate). Renters (56%) are somewhat more likely than homeowners (47%) to say California is going in the right direction.

“Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”

		Right direction	Wrong direction	Don't know
All adults		51%	45%	4%
Likely voters		48	48	3
Party	Democrats	68	27	5
	Republicans	14	83	3
	Independents	40	55	5
Region	Central Valley	43	54	2
	Inland Empire	50	44	6
	Los Angeles	54	41	5
	Orange/San Diego	52	45	3
	San Francisco Bay Area	53	44	3

About three in four Californians (72% adults, 77% likely voters) say that California is in an economic recession, and three in ten believe it is a serious recession rather than a moderate or a mild one. Similar shares felt California was in a serious recession in May (34% adults, 38% likely voters) when COVID lockdowns had been in place for only a few months. Today, similar shares of Republicans (35%), Democrats (31%), and independents (28%) say the state is in a serious recession. A plurality in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area hold this view. Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (34%) are the most likely to say this, while Asian Americans (25%) are the least likely. Californians over age 35 (34%) are more likely than those younger than 35 (23% 18 to 34) to think the state is in a serious recession, while about three in ten across gender, education, income, and homeownership groups hold this view.

“Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? If yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Yes, serious recession	31%	28%	31%	38%	23%	31%	34%
Yes, moderate recession	29	33	31	27	24	28	32
Yes, mild recession	11	11	7	12	15	11	10
Yes, don't know (<i>volunteered</i>)	1	1	1	2	–	–	1
Not in a recession	23	24	25	18	31	24	20
Don't know	4	3	4	4	6	5	4

Coronavirus Concerns

While the number of COVID-19 cases in California has been falling, the state is still averaging about 4,000 new cases per day as well as 100 deaths over the last two weeks. In that context, six in ten Californians are very (28%) or somewhat concerned (33%) that they will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization. Notably, findings today are similar to May when there were about half as many new cases daily (24% very concerned, 34% somewhat concerned). Today, Californians with annual household incomes under \$40,000 are twice as likely as those with incomes of \$80,000 or more to be very concerned (34% to 17%). There are also differences across racial/ethnic groups, with African Americans and Latinos much more likely than Asian Americans and whites to be very concerned. Partisans also differ in their level of concern, with Democrats (35%) and independents (24%) much more likely than Republicans (12%) to be very concerned. The proportion who say they are very concerned also varies by age, with younger Californians less likely than older Californians to hold this view (21% 18 to 34, 30% 35 to 54, 31% 55 and older). Across the state’s regions, the share who are very concerned is highest in Los Angeles (36%) followed the Inland Empire (28%), Orange/San Diego (28%), the Central Valley (24%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (20%).

“How concerned, if at all, are you that you will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very concerned	28%	34%	30%	17%	48%	19%	39%	19%
Somewhat concerned	33	29	33	38	17	47	32	31
Not too concerned	21	18	22	25	16	19	15	27
Not at all concerned	18	19	15	20	18	15	13	22

As California considers its next steps regarding COVID-19, it has revised its criteria for loosening and tightening restrictions on activities. Under this new system, every county in California is assigned to one of four tiers based on its test positivity and adjusted case rate using metrics from the last three weeks. During the period that we fielded this survey, over half of California counties were in tier one—which places the most restrictions on activities. Just 11 counties—mostly small, rural counties—were in tiers three and four. When asked about the restriction on public activity in their area, nearly three in four Californians say there should be about the same number of restrictions or more restrictions. Just one in four say there should be fewer restrictions. Findings were similar in May (25% more restrictions, 28% fewer, 46% about the same). Californians with incomes of \$80,000 or more and whites are more likely than others to think there should be fewer restrictions. Notably, 61 percent of Republicans compared to 32 percent of independents and just 9 percent of Democrats want fewer restrictions. Men (33%) are more likely than women (20%) to think there should be fewer restrictions right now.

“Thinking about the restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak in your area, do you think there should be more restrictions right now, or fewer restrictions right now, or about the same number of restrictions right now?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
More restrictions	34%	42%	36%	26%	42%	43%	40%	26%
Fewer restrictions	26	17	28	34	21	19	19	32
About the same number of restrictions	39	40	35	40	37	38	39	41
Don't know	1	2	–	–	–	–	2	1

Economic Conditions

As Californians think about the economy, they do so through the prism of the COVID-19 pandemic. When asked about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak, 51 percent say the worst is behind us, while 42 percent say the worst is yet to come. These findings are relatively unchanged since May (46% worst behind us, 48% worst yet to come). Adults nationwide hold nearly identical opinions according to a September CNN survey (51% worst behind us, 43% worst yet to come).

Turning to economic conditions, nearly six in ten Californians think that over the next year, the US will have bad economic times compared to 35 percent who expect good times. This is a noticeable change from May, when 70 percent of Californians expected bad times, and 23 percent expected good times. There are notable differences among partisans with about three in four Democrats and a majority of independents expecting bad times compared to three in ten Republicans expecting bad times. Majorities across regions expect bad times as do majorities across racial/ethnic and income groups. Expectation of bad times decreases as age levels rise.

“Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?”

		Good times	Bad times	Don't know
All adults		35%	58%	7%
Likely voters		31	60	9
Party	Democrats	17	77	6
	Republicans	54	31	15
	Independents	36	55	9
Region	Central Valley	41	52	7
	Inland Empire	34	58	8
	Los Angeles	30	61	9
	Orange/San Diego	41	53	6
	San Francisco Bay Area	32	64	4

When asked about their own personal financial situation, 46 percent say they are in excellent (11%) or good shape (35%), while over half rate it only fair (37%) or poor (17%). Perceptions were nearly identical in May (9% excellent, 36% good, 37% only fair, 18% poor). Today, there are stark differences across income groups, with just one in five lower-income Californians saying they are in excellent or good financial shape compared to seven in ten higher-income Californians saying this. A similar pattern emerges with educational attainment: those with no college (33%) are much less likely than those with some college (44%) or a college degree (65%) to say they are in excellent or good shape. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos and African Americans are much less likely than Asian Americans and whites to rate their own personal financial situation positively. Across regions, residents in Orange/San Diego (55%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) are most likely to rate their personal finances as excellent or good, and homeowners (60%) are much more likely than renters (34%) to hold this view.

“How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Excellent	11%	3%	6%	22%	12%	13%	4%	15%
Good	35	19	38	48	20	48	25	41
Fair	37	45	48	23	27	25	51	32
Poor	17	32	7	6	42	14	19	12
Don't know	1	–	1	–	–	–	2	–

Political and Racial Divisions

As Californians prepare for the presidential election, they are divided about whether Americans of different political views can still come together and work out their differences (47% optimistic, 49% pessimistic). Californians were also divided in February (49% optimistic, 48% pessimistic), while in January 2019 they held more hopeful views (58% optimistic, 40% pessimistic). Today, there is partisan agreement with majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents being pessimistic. Across racial/ethnic groups, there are stark differences with about six in ten African Americans and Latinos being optimistic, while six in ten Asian Americans and whites are pessimistic. Pessimism increases sharply with rising income, and those with at least some college (56%, 59% college graduate) are more likely than those who have not attended college (36%) to be pessimistic. About half of Californians who approve of President Trump are optimistic (52%), while about half of those who disapprove of President Trump are pessimistic (52%).

“These days, do you feel optimistic or pessimistic that Americans of different political views can still come together and work out their differences?”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Optimistic	47%	43%	39%	48%	62%	35%	59%	40%
Pessimistic	49	56	58	51	37	59	35	58
Don't know	4	2	3	1	6	1	5	2

When it comes to race relations in the United States today, 59 percent of Californians say things are worse than they were a year ago, while three in ten say things are about the same, and one in ten say things are better than they were a year ago. In January 2019, fewer Californians said race relations were worse (45%), while more said relations were better (20%) than they were a year ago. Today, about six in ten across parties say race relations are worse than a year ago, as do majorities across racial/ethnic groups. Majorities across age, education, and income groups say race relations are worse as do both men and women. Among those who disapprove of President Trump, 62 percent say race relations are worse, while among those who approve of President Trump, 51 percent hold this view.

“What is your opinion with regard to race relations in the United States today? Would you say things are better, worse, or about the same than they were a year ago?”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Better	9%	7%	11%	8%	11%	12%	10%	8%
About the same	31	30	31	32	24	33	32	31
Worse	59	63	57	58	61	55	57	61
Don't know	1	–	2	1	3	–	2	–

With nationwide protest over police brutality and systemic racism, 53 percent of Californians think that police in their community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always (24%) or most of the time (29%), while about four in ten say they do so only some of the time (28%) or almost never (11%). In February, 61 percent of Californians said police treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always (30%) or most of the time (31%). Today, just 19 percent of African Americans say police treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always or most of the time compared to far more Asian Americans (44%), Latinos (56%), and whites (58%). About three in four Republicans (77%) and half of independents (56%) hold this view compared to fewer than four in ten Democrats (36%).

Regional Map



Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from survey research associate Alyssa Dykman, project manager for this survey, and associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner, and survey research associate Rachel Lawler. The Californians and Their Government series is supported with funding from the Arjay and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the PPIC Donor Circle. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC's survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,704 California adult residents, including 1,254 interviewed on cell phones and 450 interviewed on landline telephones. The sample included 502 respondents reached by calling back respondents who had previously completed an interview in PPIC Statewide Surveys in the last six months. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from September 4–13, 2020.

Cell phone interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving). Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement to help defray the cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender.

For both cell phones and landlines, telephone numbers were called as many as eight times. When no contact with an individual was made, calls to a number were limited to six. Also, to increase our ability to interview Asian American adults, we made up to three additional calls to phone numbers estimated by Survey Sampling International as likely to be associated with Asian American individuals.

Live landline and cell phone interviews were conducted by Abt Associates in English and Spanish, according to respondents' preferences. Accent on Languages, Inc., translated new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

Abt Associates uses the US Census Bureau's 2014–2018 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt Associates used 2016 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,704 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,422 registered voters, the sampling error is ± 3.9 percent; for the 1,168 likely voters, it is ± 4.3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately. We also present results for congressional districts currently held by Democrats or Republicans, based on residential zip code and party of the local US House member. We analyze the results of those who live in competitive house districts as determined by the [Cook Political Report’s 2020 House Race Ratings](#) updated September 11, 2020. These districts are 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 48, and 50; a map of California’s congressional districts can be [found here](#).

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 41 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by CNN and Gallup. We also repeated questions from national surveys by the Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.

Questionnaire and Results

CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

September 4–13, 2020

1,704 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR ±3.5% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE
 PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

1. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gavin Newsom is handling his job as governor of California?

59% approve
 30 disapprove
 10 don't know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the coronavirus outbreak?

62% approve
 31 disapprove
 6 don't know

3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

50% approve
 36 disapprove
 14 don't know

4. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job that the state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time?

52% approve
 34 disapprove
 14 don't know

5. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

51% right direction
 45 wrong direction
 4 don't know

6. Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (if yes, ask: "Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?")

31% yes, serious recession
 29 yes, moderate recession
 11 yes, mild recession
 1 yes, don't know (*volunteered*)
 23 no
 4 don't know

7. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

71% yes [*ask Q7a*]
 29 no [*skip to Q8b*]

7a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

44% Democrat [*ask Q8*]
 24 Republican [*ask Q8a*]
 5 another party (*specify*) [*skip to Q9*]
 26 independent [*ask Q8b*]

8. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

64% strong
 35 not very strong
 1 don't know

[skip to Q9]

8a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 69% strong
- 30 not very strong
- 1 don't know

[skip to Q9]

8b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 24% Republican Party
- 47 Democratic Party
- 21 neither (*volunteered*)
- 8 don't know

9. [likely voters only] If the November 3rd presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: [rotate] [1] the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, [2] the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, [3] the Libertarian ticket of Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen, [or] [4] the Green Party ticket of Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker? [If respondent says "none of these" ask: "Would you vote for someone else, or would you not vote for president?"]

- 60% Joe Biden and Kamala Harris
- 31 Donald Trump and Mike Pence
- 3 Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen
- 2 Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker
- someone else (*specify*) (*volunteered*)
- 1 would not vote for president (*volunteered*)
- 2 don't know

[question 10 not asked]

11. [likely voters only] How closely are you following the news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

- 53% very closely
- 34 fairly closely
- 9 not too closely
- 3 not at all closely
- don't know

12. [likely voters only] How interested, if at all, are you in the upcoming presidential debates—very interested, somewhat interested, not so interested, or not at all interested?

- 57% very interested
- 28 somewhat interested
- 8 not so interested
- 6 not at all interested
- don't know

Changing topics,

13. [likely voters only] If the 2020 election for US House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for [rotate] [1] the Republican candidate [or] [2] the Democratic candidate in your district? [If other/don't know, ask: "As of today, do you lean more toward [read in same order as above] [1] the Republican candidate [or] [2] the Democratic candidate?"]

- 33% Republican/lean Republican
- 60 Democrat/lean Democrat
- 7 don't know

14. [likely voters only] Would you prefer to elect a representative to Congress who [rotate] [1] has experience in politics [or] [2] is new to politics?

- 50% has experience in politics
- 36 is new to politics
- 5 both (*volunteered*)
- 10 don't know

Next, we have a few questions to ask you about some of the propositions on the November ballot.

15. [likely voters only] Proposition 15 is called the “Increases Funding for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It taxes commercial and industrial property based on current market value, instead of purchase price. The fiscal impact is increased property taxes on commercial properties worth more than \$3 million providing \$6.5 billion to \$11.5 billion in new funding to local governments and schools. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 15?

- 51% yes
- 40 no
- 9 don't know

16. [likely voters only] How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 45% very important
- 36 somewhat important
- 11 not too important
- 3 not at all important
- 4 don't know

17. [likely voters only] Proposition 16 is called the “Allows Diversity as a Factor in Public Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.” It permits government decision-making policies to consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in order to address diversity by repealing a constitutional provision prohibiting such policies. There would be no direct fiscal effect on state or local governments. The effects of the measure depend on the future choices of state and local government entities and are highly uncertain. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 16?

- 31% yes
- 47 no
- 22 don't know

18. [likely voters only] How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 34% very important
- 39 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 6 not at all important
- 8 don't know

On another topic,

19. [likely voters only] How much confidence do you have in the system in which votes are cast and counted in California elections—a great deal, quite a lot, some, or very little?

- 40% great deal
- 20 quite a lot
- 19 some
- 19 very little
- 2 none (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

[rotate questions 20 and 21]

20. [likely voters only] How concerned are you that it is too hard for eligible people to vote in California elections? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 29% very concerned
- 25 somewhat concerned
- 20 not too concerned
- 24 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

21. [likely voters only] How concerned are you that it is too easy for people who are not eligible to vote in California elections? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 33% very concerned
- 17 somewhat concerned
- 16 not too concerned
- 33 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

Changing topics,

22. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president?

- 31% approve
- 66 disapprove
- 3 don't know

22a. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Trump is handling the coronavirus outbreak?

- 29% approve
- 68 disapprove
- 3 don't know

23. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the US Congress is handling its job?

- 31% approve
- 63 disapprove
- 6 don't know

[rotate questions 24 and 25]

24. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as US Senator?

- 44% approve
- 39 disapprove
- 17 don't know

25. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Kamala Harris is handling her job as US Senator?

- 54% approve
- 33 disapprove
- 13 don't know

26. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way your own representative to the US House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job?

- 55% approve
- 30 disapprove
- 15 don't know

Changing topics,

27. How concerned, if at all, are you that you will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 28% very concerned
- 33 somewhat concerned
- 21 not too concerned
- 18 not at all concerned
- don't know

28. Thinking about the restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak in your area, do you think there should be [rotate] [1] more restrictions right now [or] [2] fewer restrictions right now [or] [3] about the same number of restrictions right now?

- 34% more restrictions right now
- 26 fewer restrictions right now
- 39 about the same number of restrictions right now
- 1 don't know

29. Which comes closer to your view about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak: [rotate] [1] the worst is behind us [or] [2] the worst is yet to come?

- 51% the worst is behind us
- 42 the worst is yet to come
- 7 don't know

Changing topics,

30. Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?

- 35% good times
- 58 bad times
- 7 don't know

31. How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?

- 11% excellent
- 35 good
- 37 only fair
- 17 poor
- 1 don't know

[question 32 not asked]

Changing topics,

33. These days, do you feel [rotate] [1] (optimistic) [or] [2] (pessimistic) that Americans of different political views can still come together and work out their differences?

- 47% optimistic
- 49 pessimistic
- 4 don't know

[question 34 not asked]

35. What is your opinion with regard to race relations in the United States today? Would you say things are [rotate 1 and 2] [1] (better), [2] (worse), or about the same than they were a year ago?

- 9% better
- 31 about the same
- 59 worse
- 1 don't know

[question 36 not asked]

37. Do you think the police in your community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?

- 24% almost always
- 29 most of the time
- 28 only some of the time
- 11 almost never
- 3 always (volunteered)
- 1 never (volunteered)
- 5 don't know

Next,

37a. Should the state government be doing more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in California, or is this something that the state government should not be doing?

- 59% should do more
- 36 should not do more
- 5 don't know

38. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

- 16% very liberal
- 22 somewhat liberal
- 29 middle-of-the-road
- 20 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 3 don't know

39. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

- 26% great deal
- 41 fair amount
- 25 only a little
- 7 none
- 1 don't know

[d1–d16 demographic questions]

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