



GOVERNOR'S ELECTIONS IN CALIFORNIA

November 2006

➤ **The California governor's contest this year has national significance.**

The California governor's election is one of the most closely watched of the 36 states that will elect a governor this fall. Currently, there are 28 Republican governors and 22 Democratic governors in office. Of the 36 contests, 13 Republicans and 13 Democrats are up for reelection, and there are 10 open gubernatorial seats, nine of which are now occupied by Republicans. In California, widely considered a solidly "blue" or Democratic state, Republican governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has held a double-digit lead over Democratic State Treasurer Phil Angelides in every monthly PPIC Statewide Survey since July.

➤ **Republicans have outnumbered Democrats in the California governor's office.**

Of the 38 California governors, 21 have been Republicans, 11 have been Democrats, and six were from other parties. Six of the last 10 governors have been Republicans. For 26 of the past 40 years, California's governors have served in a "divided government," with at least one legislative house controlled by the other party. Jerry Brown and Gray Davis had Democratic-majority legislatures, while Ronald Reagan had a Republican-controlled legislature for only one year.

➤ **A second term for incumbents has been routine for California governors.**

The last California governor to fail in a bid to be reelected for a second term was Democrat Culbert Olson in 1942. Since then, every governor has run for and been elected to a second term. Earl Warren was elected to a third term, Pat Brown was not, and governors were limited to two terms in 1990.

➤ **California governors have been predominantly white men born outside of the state.**

Only seven governors throughout California's history were California natives, while 29 were born in other states, and two were foreign-born, Arnold Schwarzenegger, born in Austria, and John Downey, from Ireland. Californians have yet to elect a woman, an African American, or an Asian American as governor. The state has had one Hispanic governor, Romualdo Pacheco, Jr., in 1875.

➤ **Most California governors have had an active career in government.**

Nearly all of California's 38 governors had previously served in government before they were elected, in state, national, and local offices. Most governors served in the state legislature or in an executive branch office such as lieutenant governor, state treasurer, attorney general, controller, and secretary of state. Several governors were active in national politics after leaving office: five served in the U.S. Senate, and one in the U.S. House of Representatives; Earl Warren, a former district attorney, was appointed Chief Justice of the United States, and Ronald Reagan went on to become President.

➤ **Voter turnout in governor's elections is falling and reached a low in November 2002.**

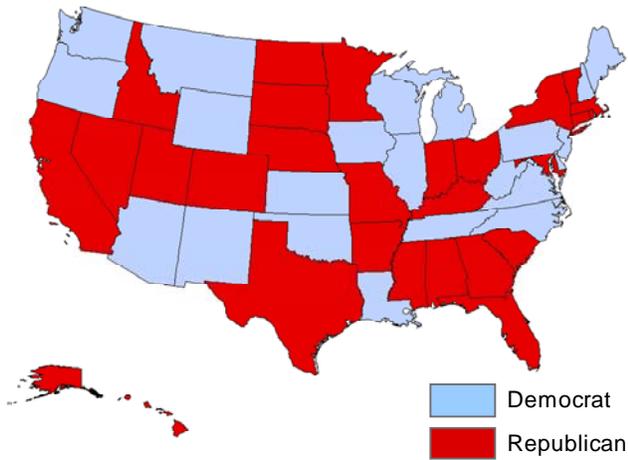
Voter turnout among eligible adults in a governor's election hit a record high in 1938, when Culbert Olson was elected, with turnout of 66.8% of eligible adults and 74.7% of registered voters. In seven of the eight general elections since 1974, fewer than half of the eligible adults have voted for governor. Since 1990, voter turnout has averaged 41.4 percent for eligible adults and 56.8 percent for registered voters. Turnout reached a new low in 2002, the year Gray Davis was reelected (36.1% of eligible adults; 50.6% of registered voters). Despite the state's population growth, more voters went to the polls in November 1990 (7.9 million) than in the November 2002 election (7.7 million).

➤ **Only one governor faced a recall and was replaced by the voters.**

The recall provision in the California constitution allows for a statewide vote to remove an elected official from office and to elect a replacement candidate on the same ballot. Many governors in recent decades faced the threat of recall, but Gray Davis in October 2003 was the only governor to actually face one. He was removed from office by a 55 to 45 percent vote in a special election and was replaced by Arnold Schwarzenegger, who received 48.6 percent of the votes, the most among 135 candidates.

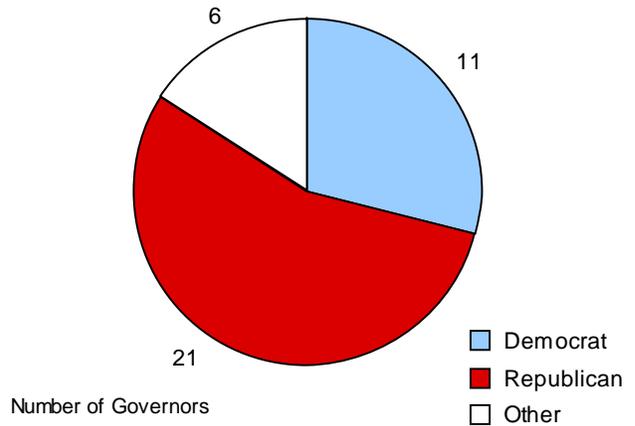
Governor's Elections in California

United States Governors by Party Affiliation



Source: New York Times, 2006 Election Guide

California Governors by Party Affiliation



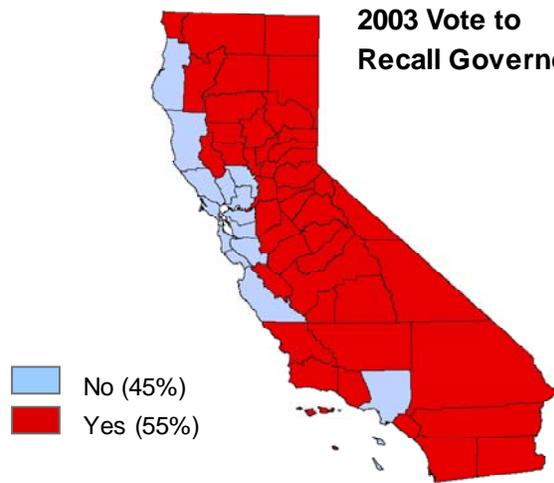
Source: California State Library, Governor's Gallery

2002 Governor's Election



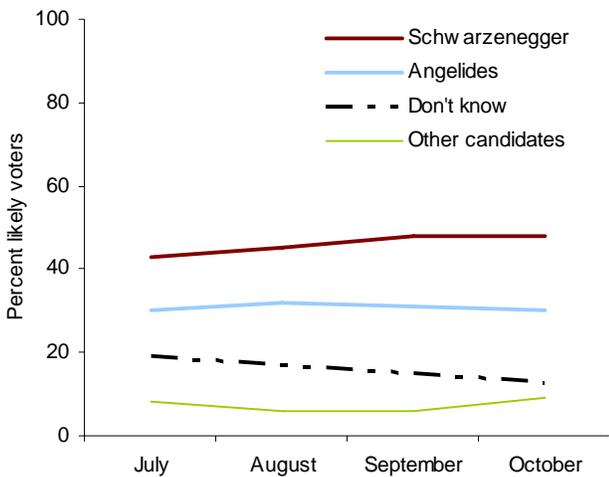
Source: California Secretary of State, Statement of Vote, 2002 General Election

2003 Vote to Recall Governor



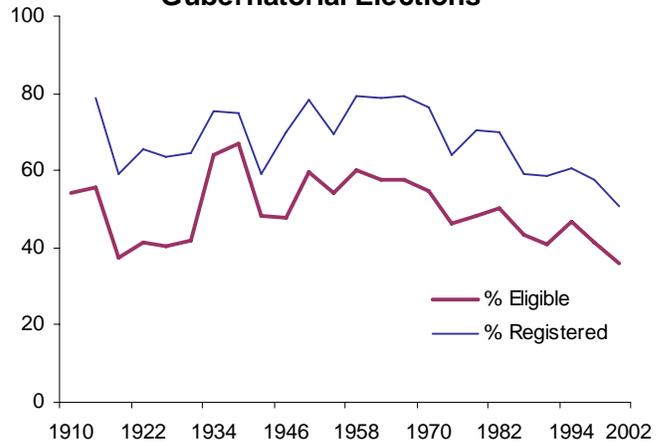
Source: California Secretary of State, Statement of Vote, 2003 Statewide Special Election

Preference for Governor in 2006



Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys, July, August, September, and October 2006

Voter Turnout in California's Gubernatorial Elections



Source: California Secretary of State, Statement of Vote, 2002 General Election; Comparative Voter Registration and Participation in Statewide Elections - 1910 - 2002