

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

DECEMBER 2009

Californians & their government



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in collaboration with
The James Irvine Foundation



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 103rd PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 220,000 Californians.

This survey is the 38th in the *Californians and Their Government* series, which is conducted periodically to examine the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. The series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. This survey seeks to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers about public opinions, and stimulate public discussion and debate about important state and national issues.

This survey was conducted as California's 2010 gubernatorial race takes shape and as many initiative measures circulate for qualification on the 2010 statewide ballot. As 2009 ends, news about the state's budget deficit and unemployment rate is still very grim. Nationally, the U.S. Senate debates health care reform, President Obama announced a troop surge for Afghanistan, and job loss slowed slightly.

This survey presents the responses of 2,004 adult residents throughout the state, interviewed in English or Spanish and reached by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on these topics:

- The June 2010 primary, including Republican primary likely voter preferences in the choice for gubernatorial candidate; likely voters' preferences in potential match-ups in the November gubernatorial election; favorability ratings of candidates and satisfaction with candidate choices; and attention to news about the candidates. The survey also examines the perceived importance of six issues, dealing with elections, governance, and social matters, that could end up as 2010 ballot measures.
- State and national issues, including the overall mood and outlook for California and the country; perceptions of the state economy; approval ratings of state and federal elected officials; perceived seriousness of the state budget deficit, general preferences for handling it, and concerns about spending cuts in local services; assessments of regional water supplies and the perceived importance of passing a state water bond; and attitudes toward federal policies on the economy, health care reform, and Afghanistan. The survey also examines residents' concerns about their own housing and financial situation.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and the extent to which Californians—based on their political party affiliation, region of residence, race/ethnicity, and other demographics—may differ with regard to perceptions, attitudes, and preferences involving the June 2010 primary and state and national issues.

This report may be downloaded free of charge from our website (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org. View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday, December 16, 2009.

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

Whitman Leading, But Most GOP Voters Undecided

BROWN TOPS REPUBLICANS IN POTENTIAL MATCHUPS—BUT FALLS SHORT OF MAJORITY

SAN FRANCISCO, December 16, 2009—Former eBay CEO Meg Whitman leads the field among likely voters in the GOP gubernatorial primary with 32 percent support, compared to 12 percent for former Congressman Tom Campbell and 8 percent for state Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner. But the highest percentage of likely GOP voters—44 percent—is undecided, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from The James Irvine Foundation.

In hypothetical head-to-head matchups for the November general election, the prospective Democratic candidate and current state Attorney General Jerry Brown bests all three Republicans. But he does so with less than majority support.

Six months before the gubernatorial primary, the four major party candidates expected to be on the ballot are attracting little enthusiasm or attention among Californians likely to vote. Only 10 percent of likely voters are very closely following news about the candidates, and 33 percent are fairly closely following the news (36% not too closely, 20% not at all closely). Just 32 percent of likely voters are satisfied with their choices of candidates in the primary, and 42 percent are not (26% don't know). Democrats are more likely to express satisfaction (38%) than independents (29%) or Republicans (25%). But across parties and ideological groups, more likely voters are unsatisfied with their choices than satisfied.

“Voters have more immediate concerns than who is going to be the next governor,” says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. “Despite all the advertising in this early stage of the campaign, Republican primary voters are more likely to say they are undecided than to favor one of the three GOP candidates. At the same time, the Democrats’ likely candidate falls short of majority support when matched up against the Republican contenders.”

REPUBLICANS FAIL TO MAKE BIG IMPRESSION, AND BROWN MAKES A MIXED ONE

At least half of likely voters across parties and demographic groups don't know enough about Whitman to have an opinion about her or haven't heard of her. Her highest favorability ratings are among Republicans, independents, and conservatives (28% of each) and men (27%). Sixty-eight percent of women are unable to give an opinion of Whitman—the only woman in the race—compared to 51 percent of men. Seventy percent of likely voters have no opinion of Campbell. His highest ratings are among Republicans (21%), San Francisco Bay Area likely voters (24%), men (20%), those with household incomes of at least \$80,000 (20%), and renters (21%). Seventy-three percent of likely voters have no opinion of Poizner, who has no more than a 12 percent favorability rating in any group.

Opinion is evenly divided on Brown (35% favorable, 36% unfavorable). A majority of Democratic likely voters (52%) have a favorable opinion of him, a majority of Republicans (59%) have an unfavorable one, and independents lean toward unfavorable (39% unfavorable, 34% favorable). A sizeable 69 percent of likely voters under age 35 cannot give an opinion of the former two-term governor.

In potential November matchups, Brown leads Whitman by 6 points (43% to 37%), Campbell by 12 (46% to 34%), and Poizner by 16 (47% to 31%) among likely voters. Partisan preferences are key in these leads. Independent likely voters are divided in a race between Whitman (37%) and Brown (36%), and they support Brown over Campbell (40% to 25%) and Poizner (42% to 23%). Among female likely voters, Brown has a 12-point lead over Whitman, a 21-point lead over Campbell, and a 22-point lead over Poizner.

MORE VOTERS PREFER CANDIDATES TO RAISE MONEY THAN SPEND THEIR OWN

What qualities do likely voters value in a candidate for statewide office? Half (49%) view a candidate more positively for using mostly money from supporters in a campaign, and 39 percent hold a more positive view of a candidate who uses his or her own money. Pluralities of Republicans (55%), independents (50%), and Democrats (46%) view a candidate who uses supporters' money more positively.

California's likely voters are evenly split on whether it's more important for a candidate to have experience in elected office (43%) or running a business (43%). The fault lines are ideological and political, with Democrats (60%) and liberals (63%) valuing experience in office, and Republicans (61%) and conservatives (61%) valuing experience in business.

TWO-THIRDS VOTE ON BUDGET, GAY MARRIAGE ARE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

At a time when many initiatives are circulating to qualify for the 2010 ballots, the survey asked likely voters to assess the importance of a half-dozen issues that may be up for a vote. Which issues are viewed as very important—either because they are favored or opposed?

- Lowering the vote requirement for the legislature to pass a state budget: 54 percent
- Allowing same-sex couples to marry in California: 51 percent
- Allowing voters to select any candidate, regardless of party, in state primaries: 47 percent
- Legalizing marijuana in California: 38 percent
- Allowing voters to call a constitutional convention in California: 35 percent
- Allowing public funding of statewide campaigns in California: 32 percent

Given the importance likely voters place on the issue of lowering the legislative threshold to pass a state budget, it's not surprising that 88 percent of them call the budget situation a big problem. When asked how they would prefer the state to deal with a multibillion-dollar gap between revenues and spending, 44 percent say mostly through spending cuts, while 39 percent would prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Since January, the preference for dealing with the budget gap mainly through cuts has increased 12 points (32%) among likely voters and for the mixed approach has declined 9 points (48%).

In the aftermath of the legislature's passage of a package of bills designed to address the state's water crisis, the survey asked about the \$11.1 billion water bond measure that is part of the package and is slated to be on the November ballot. How important is it that voters pass the measure? Most likely voters say it is very important (43%) or somewhat important (31%).

61% APPROVE OF OBAMA—FEWER BACK ECONOMIC, HEALTH CARE, AFGHAN PLANS

Turning to Californians' assessments of federal leaders and issues, most Californians (61%) approve of the way President Obama is handling his job—similar to their views in September (63%) and more approving than adults nationwide, according to a CBS News/*New York Times* poll (50% approve,

39% disapprove). Californians are much more approving of Obama's performance than they are of Congress. They give Congress a 38 percent approval rating, also similar to September (39%). About half (51%) approve of the job their own member of the U.S. House of Representatives is doing, a 5-point drop from September (56%).

But California residents are less satisfied with Obama's handling of the economy. Only 31 percent say his economic policies have made economic conditions better. By comparison, 42 percent say his policies have made no difference and 21 percent say they've made economic conditions worse. Californians are split over whether the federal government's response to the financial crisis will help the state, with 46 percent saying it will and the same percentage saying it will not. And although a majority of California residents were satisfied with the first federal stimulus package, they are less willing to support more spending to stimulate the economy: just 39 percent would support it, and 53 percent would oppose it.

Half of Californians support (52% vs. 39% oppose) proposed changes to the health care system—a top domestic priority for Obama— given what they know about the legislation. Their views have changed little since September (51% support, 38% oppose). Californians' support declines sharply with age and is lowest among those 65 and older (42%). Californians are more supportive (61% vs. 33% oppose) of creating a government health insurance plan to compete with private insurers, as they were in September (62% support, 33% oppose).

Californians take a pessimistic view of the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan. Just 6 percent say things are going very well, with 26 percent saying they are going fairly well and the majority saying things are going not too well (32%) or not at all well (29%). A plurality (44%) say U.S. troops in Afghanistan should be decreased, while just 33 percent say they should be increased.

In the wake of Obama's December 1 speech announcing an increase in U.S. troops and setting a timetable for withdrawal, Californians are divided on his plan: 49 percent favor it and 45 percent are opposed. The results are similar to Americans nationwide in a *USA Today*/Gallup poll (51% favor, 40% oppose). Across parties, a majority of Democrats (55%) favor the president's plan, Republicans (54%) oppose it, and independents are split (46% favor, 46% oppose).

MORE KEY FINDINGS

- **Jobs, economy dwarf other issues** — [page 13](#)

As it has since January 2008, jobs and the economy top the list of Californians' concerns, with 61 percent calling it the most important issue facing the state in an open-ended question. The state budget, deficit, and taxes come in a distant second (13%), and water (2%) is further down the list.

- **Governor, legislature approval ratings at record lows** — [page 15](#)

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's approval rating of 27 percent sinks to a new low among all adults. It's been at 40 percent or below since August 2008. The legislature's approval rating is lower still and matches its record of 17 percent, first recorded in July 2009.

- **For Californians, the recession is still up close and personal** — [pages 14, 22, and 23](#)

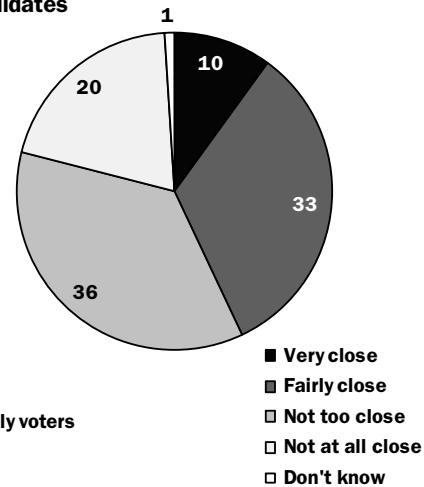
Reports about the end of the recession are unconvincing to most Californians: 91 percent say the state is in a recession and 60 percent say it is a serious one. Half of the state's residents are very (34%) or somewhat (16%) concerned that they or someone in their family will lose a job in the next year, and another 11 percent volunteer that their family has already experienced job loss. And 65 percent of residents say they are very (45%) or somewhat (20%) concerned that they will not have enough money to pay the rent or mortgage. Nevertheless, 53 percent expect their financial situation to improve a lot (6%) or some (47%) over the next year.

2010 CALIFORNIA ELECTION

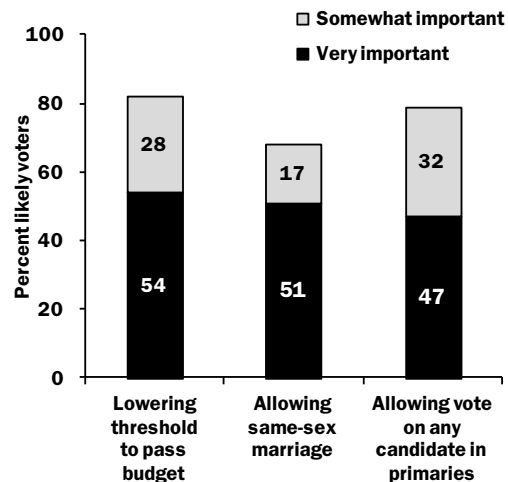
KEY FINDINGS

- Meg Whitman currently leads among Republican primary likely voters in the 2010 gubernatorial primary with 32 percent support against Tom Campbell and Steve Poizner; a higher percentage are undecided. Gubernatorial candidates are attracting very close attention by only one in 10 likely voters and just one in three are satisfied with their candidate choices. *(page 7)*
- If the November general election were held today, the presumed Democratic candidate Jerry Brown beats all three possible Republican candidates; still, Brown leads each with less than majority support. *(page 8)*
- Likely voters are evenly divided in their opinions of Jerry Brown, while most haven't heard of or don't know enough to have an impression of the three Republicans. *(page 9)*
- When it comes to candidate qualities, likely voters are sharply divided along partisan and ideological lines about whether it's more important if a candidate has experience in elected office or in running a business. A majority of likely voters view more positively a candidate campaigning with money from supporters than one using his or her own money. *(page 10)*
- Of issues that may appear on 2010 ballots, over half of likely voters say the issues of lowering the legislative vote threshold to pass a state budget and allowing same-sex marriage are very important; almost half say the issue of allowing voters in primaries to select any candidate regardless of party is very important. Marijuana legalization, a constitutional convention, and public campaign financing are viewed as less important issues. *(page 11)*

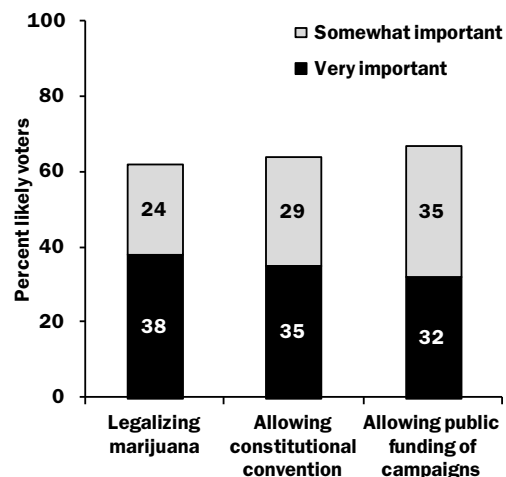
Attention to News About Gubernatorial Candidates



Importance of Potential Ballot Issues



Importance of Potential Ballot Issues



JUNE GUBERNATORIAL PRIMARY

Six months before the June 2010 California gubernatorial primary election, 32 percent of likely voters in the Republican primary would cast a vote for former eBay CEO Meg Whitman, while a higher percentage (44%) is undecided. Republican primary likely voters include the 15 percent of independent (decline-to-state) voters who say they will vote a Republican ballot. (Independents may also choose a Democratic or non-partisan ballot). Twelve percent of Republican primary likely voters would vote for former Congressman Tom Campbell and 8 percent for California State Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner. Men are more likely than women (37% to 26%) to support Whitman, while half of women are undecided. Among the reasons that many likely voters may be undecided: in favorability questions (reported on page 9), 41 percent of Republican primary likely voters have either not heard of or don't know enough to have an opinion of any of the three candidates. Among those able to say whether they feel favorably or unfavorably about any of the three, support increases to 46 percent for Whitman, to 18 percent for Campbell, and to 11 percent for Poizner, with 21 percent undecided.

“If the Republican primary for governor were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?”

<i>Republican primary likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Age		Gender	
		18–54	55 and older	Men	Women
Meg Whitman	32%	34%	31%	37%	26%
Tom Campbell	12	10	15	13	11
Steve Poizner	8	7	8	7	8
Someone else	4	4	4	4	4
Don't know	44	45	42	39	51

The June primary election is attracting little attention from likely California voters. Just 10 percent are following news about the gubernatorial candidates very closely, with 33 percent following fairly closely. A majority are not too closely (36%) or not at all closely (20%) following candidate news. How does the current level of attention compare with past gubernatorial elections? Two months before the March 2002 primary, 12 percent were very closely and 39 percent were fairly closely following news. Three months before the June 2006 primary, 13 percent were paying very close and 39 percent fairly close attention to candidates. The 2003 recall of Governor Davis was an exception: in August (two months prior), 45 percent were very closely and 44 percent fairly closely following news.

With the field down to four individuals in the two major parties, 42 percent of likely voters say they are not satisfied with their choices of gubernatorial candidates. One in three are satisfied; 26 percent are unsure. Across parties and ideological groups, more likely voters say they are dissatisfied than satisfied with their choices, but Democrats (38%) are more satisfied than independents (29%) or Republicans (25%).

“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for governor next June?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Satisfied	32%	38%	25%	29%	35%	31%	32%
Not satisfied	42	41	43	45	45	49	37
Don't know	26	21	32	26	20	20	31

POTENTIAL NOVEMBER GUBERNATORIAL MATCHUPS

There are currently no declared candidates in the Democratic primary, although former governor and current California State Attorney General Jerry Brown has all but formally declared his candidacy. Brown currently leads all three Republican candidates, though falling short of majority support, in hypothetical November election matchups. He has a 6-point lead over Meg Whitman (43% to 37%), a 12-point lead over Tom Campbell (46% to 34%), and a 16-point edge over Steve Poizner (47% to 31%).

Partisan preferences are a major factor in these leads. In each potential contest, more than seven in 10 Democratic likely voters express support for Brown, while about two in three Republican likely voters express support for the Republican candidate. Independent likely voters are divided in a race featuring Whitman (37%) and Brown (36%), while they would support Brown over Campbell (40% to 25%) and Brown over Poizner (42% to 23%). Likely voters who describe themselves as politically liberal support Brown over each of the three Republicans candidates by a wide margin. Conservatives favor the Republican candidates and moderates express more support for Brown. Women would vote for Brown in each case (by 12 points over Whitman, 21 points over Campbell, and 22 points over Poizner). Men are divided between Brown and Whitman (41% vs. 41%) and Brown and Campbell (42% vs. 39%), while they support Brown over Poizner (44% vs. 35%).

“If these were the candidates in the November 2010 governor's election, would you vote for...”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
Meg Whitman, the Republican	37%	11%	67%	37%	41%	33%
Jerry Brown, the Democrat	43	73	13	36	41	45
Don't know	20	16	20	27	18	22
Tom Campbell, the Republican	34	9	68	25	39	29
Jerry Brown, the Democrat	46	78	12	40	42	50
Someone else (volunteered)	1	–	1	2	1	1
Don't know	19	13	19	33	18	20
Steve Poizner, the Republican	31	7	65	23	35	28
Jerry Brown, the Democrat	47	79	13	42	44	50
Someone else (volunteered)	1	–	1	2	1	1
Don't know	21	14	21	33	20	21

More than six in 10 Latino likely voters support Brown in all three matchups. Whites are slightly more likely to favor Whitman over Brown (43% vs. 38%), but favor Brown over Poizner (42% vs. 38%), and are divided between Campbell and Brown (41% vs. 40%). Support for Brown over both Campbell and Poizner declines with age, but against Whitman, support for Brown is higher among likely voters age 35 and older. At least half in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles support Brown each time. Likely voters in the Other Southern California region prefer both Campbell and Whitman over Brown, but are divided between Poizner and Brown. The sample size for Central Valley likely voters is too small to analyze.

CANDIDATE FAVORABILITY

Before being asked about primary or general elections, voters were asked to give their impressions of the four gubernatorial candidates. They were provided with each person's name and commonly used title (the official titles that will appear on ballots have not yet been decided) and asked whether they had a favorable or unfavorable opinion, or whether they didn't know enough to have an opinion. Most likely

CANDIDATE FAVORABILITY (CONTINUED)

voters cannot give an opinion about the Republican candidates. While more likely voters can give an opinion of Jerry Brown, that opinion is divided (35% favorable to 36% unfavorable).

Fifty-two percent of Democrats have a favorable opinion of Brown, while one in three cannot give an opinion. A majority of Republicans (59%) see him unfavorably and independents lean toward the unfavorable view (39% unfavorable to 34% favorable). Men and women are both divided. In light of a long history in government, including serving as California secretary of state, California governor, mayor of Oakland, and currently as attorney general, likely voters aged 35–54 (36% favorable, 39% unfavorable) and 55 and older (40% favorable, 42% unfavorable) are much more likely to express an opinion of Brown than likely voters under age 35, of whom 69 percent cannot give an opinion.

At least half of likely voters across parties and demographic groups don't know enough to have an opinion or have not heard of businesswoman Meg Whitman, former CEO of eBay. Her highest favorability ratings are among Republicans, independents, and conservatives (28% of each) and among men (27%). Women are far more likely to be unable to give an opinion of Whitman than men are (68% to 51%). Ability to give an opinion on Whitman increases with education and income level. Seventy percent of likely voters are unable to give an opinion of former Congressman Tom Campbell, who also served as California director of finance and as state senator. Fewer than one in five across most groups can articulate an impression of Campbell. His highest ratings are among Republicans (21%), San Francisco Bay Area likely voters (24%), men (20%), those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (20%), and renters (21%). Seventy-three percent of likely voters and more than two in three across parties and demographic groups are unable to comment on California Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner, a businessman who also served on the National Security Council. He receives at most 12 percent favorability from any group.

“Please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these candidates for governor, or don’t you know enough about him or her to have an opinion?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		All Likely Voters	Party			Gender	
			Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
How about Jerry Brown, California state attorney general?	Favorable	35%	52%	17%	34%	36%	35%
	Unfavorable	36	16	59	39	39	32
	Haven't heard of him (volunteered)	3	3	3	4	2	4
	Don't know enough to have an opinion	26	29	21	23	23	29
How about Meg Whitman, businesswoman?	Favorable	22	13	28	28	27	16
	Unfavorable	19	26	12	18	22	16
	Haven't heard of her (volunteered)	10	11	9	10	8	13
	Don't know enough to have an opinion	49	50	51	44	43	55
How about Tom Campbell, former congressman?	Favorable	16	16	21	11	20	12
	Unfavorable	14	16	10	12	15	13
	Haven't heard of him (volunteered)	11	11	11	14	9	13
	Don't know enough to have an opinion	59	57	58	63	56	62
How about Steve Poizner, California state insurance commissioner?	Favorable	9	8	12	5	10	8
	Unfavorable	18	19	14	24	23	14
	Haven't heard of him (volunteered)	10	10	10	15	10	11
	Don't know enough to have an opinion	63	63	64	56	57	67

CANDIDATE QUALITIES

California’s likely voters are evenly divided on whether they think it’s more important for a candidate running for statewide office to have experience in elected office (43%) or experience running a business (43%). These findings are similar to August 2002 (44% experience in office, 42% experience in business) and April 1998 (44% elected office, 40% business) although in May 1998, 46 percent said experience in office was more important than business experience (36%).

Today a political and ideological rift divides likely voters on the question of the more important qualification. Democrats and liberals value experience in office, while Republicans and conservatives value business experience. Independents emphasize business experience over time in office (50% to 32%), but moderates lean toward experience in elected office (44% to 39%).

Supporters of Jerry Brown stress the importance of elected experience, of which Brown has a great deal, while the supporters of the Republican candidates stress the importance of experience running a business, which Meg Whitman and Steve Poizner possess. Among those who place importance on time in elected office, about two in three support Brown over any of the three Republicans. Among those preferring a candidate to have experience running a business, 61 percent favor Whitman over Brown, 55 percent Campbell over Brown, and 53 percent Poizner over Brown.

“People have different ideas about the qualifications they want when they vote for candidates for statewide office, such as governor or U.S. senator. Which of these is most important to you...?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
Experience in elected office	43%	60%	27%	32%	63%	44%	30%
Experience running a business	43	26	61	50	23	39	61
Neither (volunteered)	4	5	2	5	5	5	1
Both (volunteered)	6	5	6	8	5	9	4
Don't know	4	4	4	5	4	3	4

When it comes to financing election campaigns, half of likely voters (49%) view more positively a candidate using mostly money from his or her supporters rather than a candidate using his or her own money (39%). In May 1998, views of candidates using supporters’ money were similar (52% to 49% today); candidates using their own money were viewed somewhat less positively (34% to 39% today). Republicans (55%) are more likely than independents (50%) and Democrats (46%) to view the candidate using supporters’ money more positively. A majority of liberals (56%) prefer the use of contributor money, as do 50 percent of conservatives. Moderates are divided. Whether they prefer the use of contributor money or candidates’ own money, Brown wins out in matchups—except against Whitman, among those favoring a candidate using his or her own money (40% Whitman, 41% Brown).

“People have different ideas on how candidates for statewide office should pay for their political campaigns. Which of these do you view most positively? A candidate using mostly...”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberal	Moderate	Conservative
...his or her own money to pay for political campaigning	39%	42%	38%	29%	33%	42%	41%
...money collected from his or her supporters to pay for political campaigning	49	46	55	50	56	45	50
Don't know	12	12	7	21	11	13	9

BALLOT ISSUES

Do Californians view the issues that are likely to surface on the 2010 ballots as relevant to their concerns? We asked voters to assess the importance of six issues that could be on the ballot if some of the initiatives currently circulating qualify. Because specific, official ballot titles and labels for these initiatives have not yet been finalized or made public, likely voters were asked only to assess the importance of each of these issues, keeping in mind that they could appear on one of the 2010 ballots.

A majority of likely voters (54%) say the issue of lowering the two-thirds vote threshold for the state legislature to pass a budget is very important. Half (51%) also consider the issue of allowing same-sex couples to marry in California to be very important. Nearly half (47%) say the same on the issue of allowing voters to select any candidate, regardless of party, in California’s primaries. They are less likely to call the following issues very important: legalizing marijuana in California (38%), allowing voters to call a constitutional convention (35%), or allowing public funding of statewide campaigns in California (32%).

Over half of Democrats, Republicans, and independents alike believe the issue of lowering the two-thirds vote requirement for passing a budget is very important. Across demographic groups, the percentage calling this issue very important increases with age, is higher among men than among women (58% to 49%), and is somewhat higher among Latinos than whites (58% to 52%).

Independents (40%) are much less likely than Democrats or Republicans (52% each) to consider the issue of allowing same-sex couples to marry to be very important. Whites are more likely than Latinos (53% to 40%) and women are more likely than men (58% to 44%) to hold this view. Evangelical Christians are much more likely than others (60% to 48%) to consider this issue very important.

Aside from independents (52%), fewer than half across parties and demographic groups consider the issue of allowing voters to select any primary candidate very important. Importance also tapers off for the issues of legalizing marijuana, calling a constitutional convention, and allowing public funding of statewide campaigns: Each is considered very important by fewer than 45 percent across most groups.

“Several issues will be decided by California voters in the June 2010 election and others may be headed to the November 2010 ballot. Please tell me how important each of the following issues is to you. How about...”

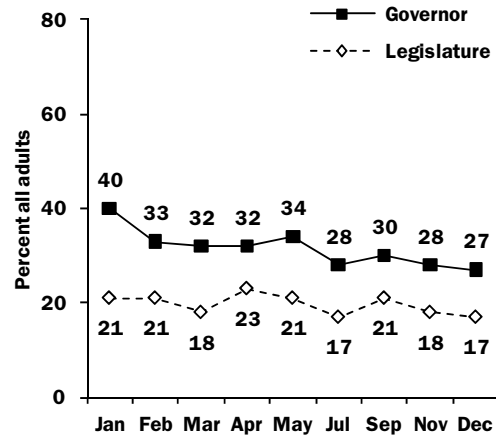
<i>Likely voters only</i>		Lowering the vote requirement for the California state legislature to pass a state budget?	Allowing same-sex couples to marry in California?	Allowing voters to select any candidate, regardless of party, in California’s primaries?	Legalizing marijuana in California?	Allowing voters to call a constitutional convention in California?	Allowing public funding of statewide campaigns in California?
<i>Percent saying issue is very important</i>							
All Likely Voters		54%	51%	47%	38%	35%	32%
Party	Democrat	57	52	47	39	35	37
	Republican	52	52	47	39	36	29
	Independent	54	40	52	31	28	32
Age	18–34	44	56	41	44	48	31
	35–54	54	49	49	35	32	31
	55 and older	57	51	48	40	33	34
Race/Ethnicity	Latinos	58	40	44	40	35	38
	Whites	52	53	48	37	34	29
Gender	Men	58	44	47	38	40	33
	Women	49	58	47	39	30	31

STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

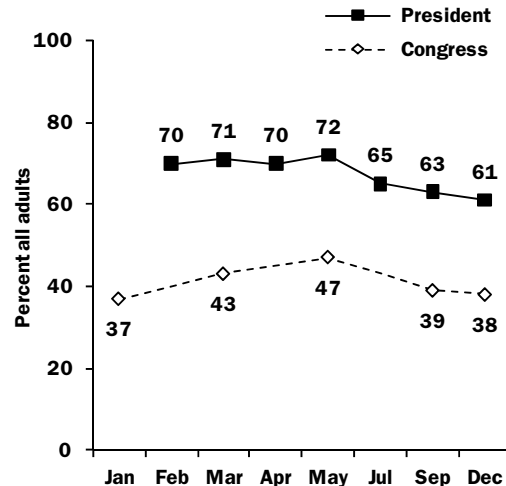
KEY FINDINGS

- Heading into what will likely be a difficult budget year, approval ratings of the governor and legislature show no signs of improvement, while concerns about the economy and budget are high. *(pages 13, 15)*
- Forty-four percent of Californians and half of Central Valley residents say the water supply in their part of California is a big problem and majorities say the supply will be inadequate for future needs; 43 percent of likely voters say it's very important that voters pass an \$11.1 billion water bond. *(page 17)*
- Approval of President Obama is far higher than approval of Congress; ratings of both have held steady since September. *(page 18)*
- About half of Californians support the overall health care proposal under discussion in Congress; they express greater support for a public option and for mandating that all Americans have health insurance. On each proposal, voters are deeply divided along party lines. *(page 20)*
- Most Californians say the military effort in Afghanistan is not going well. Although only one in three think the number of troops should be increased, half support Obama's plans for a troop surge and a withdrawal timetable. A majority of Democrats favor Obama's plan, while a majority of Republicans oppose it. *(page 21)*

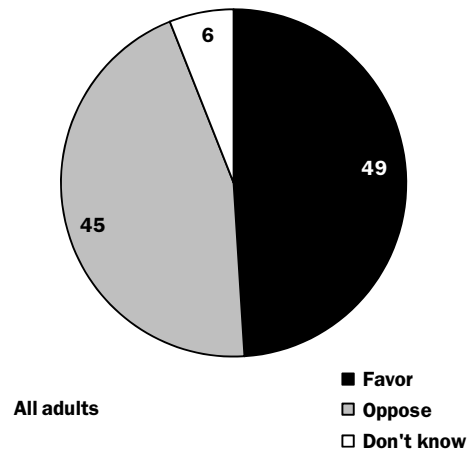
2009 Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



2009 Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



President Obama's Plans for Afghanistan



OVERALL MOOD

The economy remains uppermost in the minds of Californians, with six in 10 citing jobs and the economy (61%) as the most important issues facing the state, in an open-ended question; 13 percent cite the state budget. The economy has topped the list of concerns among Californians since January 2008, and has increased 19 points since January 2009 (42% January, 63% February, 58% March, 59% April, 54% May, 52% September, 61% today). At least half across parties, regions, and demographic groups cite the economy as the top issue, but mention of this issue declines sharply as income rises.

Californians continue to be negative about the state's direction. Seventy-five percent of Californians say the state is headed in the wrong direction, while just one in five say it is headed in the right direction. Likely voters are even more pessimistic (11% right, 82% wrong). Over two in three Californians have held a negative view since June 2008. Today, more than two in three across parties, regions, and demographic groups say California is heading in the wrong direction, with Latinos (68%) and younger adults aged 18 to 34 (67%) least likely to hold this view.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	19%	17%	13%	17%	11%
Wrong direction	75	75	82	77	82
Don't know	6	8	5	6	7

Californians are much more optimistic about the direction the United States is heading, with four in 10 saying the U.S. is heading in the right direction (42%); still, a majority say things are going in the wrong direction (53%). The perception that the country is headed in the right direction has increased 10 points since January (32%), but decreased 15 points since May (57%). Californians are only slightly more optimistic than adults nationwide (37% right direction, 56% wrong track) according to a similar question in a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll. Unlike Californians' perceptions of the direction of the state, there is a partisan divide on this national question, with 56 percent of Democrats saying the country is headed in the right direction, and 78 percent of Republicans saying it is going in the wrong direction. Independents are more likely to say wrong direction (53%). Whites (60% wrong direction) are much more pessimistic than Latinos (46%). Pessimism increases as age increases.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	42%	56%	19%	39%	39%
Wrong direction	53	39	78	53	56
Don't know	5	5	3	8	5

Nearly six in 10 Californians (58%) think that the United States will experience bad economic times during the next 12 months, while 35 percent expect good times. The perception that good times are coming has increased 11 points since January (24%), and is similar to May (33%). Today, Republicans (76%) are much more likely than independents (58%) and Democrats (56%) to say bad times are coming. Across regions, residents in Los Angeles (51%) are the least likely to hold this negative view while residents in the Other Southern California region (61%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (62%) are the most likely.

CALIFORNIA ECONOMY

Californians' negative perceptions of the U.S. economy are mirrored in their expectations of the state's economic conditions in the next year. Two in three Californians (66%) expect bad times during the next 12 months, while 28 percent expect good times. Since January 2008, at least two in three Californians have held this negative view, although it has decreased 11 points since January 2009 (77%).

Today, while strong majorities across parties think the state can expect bad economic times, Republicans (75%) are more likely than Democrats (69%) and independents (63%) to hold this view. More than six in 10 across regions expect bad times. Whites (74%) are far more likely than Latinos (54%) to hold this negative view and expectations of bad times increase as age, education, and income rise.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good times	28%	26%	18%	32%	20%
Bad times	66	69	75	63	73
Don't know	6	5	7	5	7

Nine in 10 Californians say the state is in a recession, with 60 percent saying it's a serious recession. Since January, a majority of Californians have called the recession serious (59% January, 63% March, 53% May, 57% September, 60% today). Likely voters (67%) are more likely than residents overall (60%) to call the recession serious. The perception that California is in a serious economic recession is held by a solid majority across parties (67% Democrats, 61% Republicans, 58% independents) and regions. Whites (65%) are much more likely than Latinos (49%) to say the recession is serious. The belief that California is in a serious recession is higher among residents age 35 and older, those with at least some college education, and those with annual household incomes of \$40,000 or more. Homeowners are much more likely than renters (65% to 53%) to say the state is in a serious recession.

“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	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Serious recession	60%	67%	61%	58%	67%
Moderate recession	26	21	30	26	22
Mild recession	5	4	3	5	4
Not in a recession	7	6	5	9	5
Don't know	2	2	1	2	2

STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Californians' negative views of the state's condition are reflected in low approval ratings of state elected officials.

Governor Schwarzenegger's approval rating (27%) drops to a record low, while his disapproval rating (60%) is near the record high reached in September (61%). His approval ratings among likely voters are similar. The governor's approval rating among Californians has been at 40 percent or below and his disapproval rating at least 50 percent since August 2008. Today, at least half of partisans disapprove of the governor's performance (68% Democrats, 50% Republicans, 54% independents). Disapproval is high across regions, with residents in Los Angeles (66%) most likely to disapprove. Latinos (71%) are far more likely than whites (53%) and women (64%) are more likely than men (56%) to disapprove of the governor. Approval is greater among more educated and wealthier Californians.

The California Legislature's approval ratings continue to be much lower than the governor's and match its record low of 17 percent first reached in July; 70 percent disapprove. Likely voters are even more negative (10% approve, 83% disapprove). Approval ratings of the California Legislature have been below 30 percent since April 2008. Today, strong majorities of Californians across parties (71% Democrats, 80% Republicans, 76% independents) and regions disapprove of the legislature. Whites (78%) are far more likely than Latinos (55%) to disapprove of the legislature and disapproval increases sharply with rising age, education, and income.

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	27%	22%	35%	29%	30%
	Disapprove	60	68	50	54	60
	Don't know	13	10	15	17	10
<i>...the California Legislature is handling its job?</i>	Approve	17	14	11	15	10
	Disapprove	70	71	80	76	83
	Don't know	13	15	9	9	7

Californians' approval (30%) of their individual state legislators is also at a record low, while disapproval (53%) matches the record high first reached in September. Approval ratings among likely voters today are more negative than among all adults. At least half of Democrats (53%), Republicans (61%), independents (55%), and residents across regions disapprove of their own legislators. Whites (59%) are far more disapproving than Latinos (44%), and men (56%) more disapproving than women (50%). Disapproval is higher among residents with incomes of \$40,000 or more and increases as age and education rise.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	30%	28%	23%	27%	25%
Disapprove	53	53	61	55	63
Don't know	17	19	16	18	12

STATE BUDGET

Nearly all Californians (96%) recognize the state budget situation as a problem in California. Seventy-eight percent of Californians call it a big problem, while 18 percent call it somewhat of a problem. The 78-percent figure matches the record high first reached September 2008 and again in September 2009. Since March 2008, at least two in three Californians have said the budget situation is a big problem. Today, at least eight in 10 across parties and over seven in 10 across regions call the budget situation a big problem. Whites (88%) are far more likely than Latinos (62%) to call it a big problem. The perception of the state budget as a big problem increases sharply with rising age and education and income levels.

“Do you think the state budget situation in California—that is, the balance between government spending and revenues—is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem for the people of California today?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Big problem	78%	83%	91%	80%	88%
Somewhat of a problem	18	14	8	16	10
Not a problem	2	1	1	2	1
Don't know	2	2	–	2	1

The current state budget faces a multibillion-dollar gap between revenues and spending; as state officials plan for next year's budget, this gap is only projected to grow. When Californians are asked how they would prefer to deal with the state's budget gap, 39 percent say mostly through spending cuts, and 37 percent say a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Far fewer say mostly through tax increases (8%) or that it is okay to borrow money and run a deficit (8%). Likely voters (44%) are somewhat more likely than all Californians (39%) to prefer spending cuts; among likely voters, the preference for dealing with the budget gap mostly through spending cuts has increased 12 points since January, while preference for a mixed approach has declined 9 points. Today, nearly half of Democrats (48%) prefer a mix, while 58 percent of Republicans prefer mostly spending cuts, and independents favor cuts (45%) over a mix (36%).

“How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Mostly spending cuts	39%	26%	58%	45%	44%
Mostly tax increases	8	13	3	6	8
Mix of spending cuts and tax increases	37	48	32	36	39
Okay to borrow money and run a deficit	8	7	2	6	4
Other	2	2	2	3	2
Don't know	6	4	3	4	3

Over eight in 10 Californians are very (55%) or somewhat concerned (28%) about the effect of spending cuts on their local government services—those provided by city and county governments and public schools. Sixty percent were very concerned in September. San Francisco Bay Area residents (58%) are the most likely to be very concerned, but over half of residents across regions say the same. Democrats (67%) are far more likely than Republicans and independents (50% each) to be very concerned.

WATER POLICY

Earlier this year the governor called a special session of the legislature to address the state’s water crisis. How do Californians view the water supply in their part of California? Nearly three in four Californians say that their water supply is a big (44%) or somewhat of a problem (29%). Across regions, residents in the Central Valley (50%) are the most likely to view water supply as a big problem, followed by residents in the Other Southern California region (47%), Los Angeles (45%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (32%). About half of Democrats (48%) and Republicans (50%) say water supply is a big problem, while fewer independents (41%) hold this view. Homeowners (50%) are much more likely than renters are (37%) to call the water supply in their region a big problem. This view increases with age.

“Would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?”

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Big problem	44%	50%	32%	45%	47%	52%
Somewhat of a problem	29	25	33	29	28	26
Not much of a problem	25	22	34	23	22	20
Don’t know	2	3	1	3	3	2

Californians were asked if the water supply in their part of the state would be adequate or inadequate for what will be needed in 10 years. Only one in three Californians say adequate (32%), while nearly six in 10 say inadequate (28% somewhat, 29% very). Democrats (38%) are the most likely to say very inadequate, while fewer Republicans (29%) and independents (27%) hold this view. Across regions, majorities believe their area water supply will be inadequate for future needs.

As part of the special session, the governor and legislature passed a water package that includes conservation requirements, plans for new storage, water quality clean-up and recycling, and a council to oversee restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This package includes a proposal for an \$11.1 billion bond measure to pay for water projects. How important is the passage of this bond measure to Californians? Nearly eight in 10 Californians view passage as very (47%) or somewhat important (32%). Likely voters are somewhat similar (43% very, 31% somewhat). Democrats (52%) are far more likely than Republicans (37%) and independents (36%) to view the passage of the water bond as very important. Across regions, residents in Los Angeles (54%) are the most likely to say it is very important, while residents in the Other Southern California region (43%) are the least likely. Latinos (60%) are far more likely than whites (40%) to view the bond passage as very important.

“The governor and legislature recently passed a water package that includes water conservation requirements and plans for new water storage systems, water clean-up and recycling, and a council to oversee restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This package includes a proposal for an \$11.1 billion bond measure to pay for water projects. How important is it that voters pass the bond measure?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	47%	52%	37%	36%	43%
Somewhat important	32	31	32	37	31
Not too important	7	7	10	6	9
Not at all important	8	3	13	14	10
Don’t know	6	7	8	7	7

FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

Six in 10 Californians (61%) continue to approve of President Obama’s job performance, similar to September (63%) and July (65%), but down 11 points since May (72%). Californians today are more approving of the president than adults nationwide, according to a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll (50% approve, 39% disapprove). In California, strong majorities of Democrats (82%) approve of the president, 56 percent of independents approve, while just a quarter of Republicans (25%) approve. A majority of likely voters (54%) approve of President Obama. Across regions, strong majorities of residents in Los Angeles (67%), the San Francisco Bay Area (67%), and the Central Valley (60%) approve, compared to 52 percent of Other Southern California residents. The president’s approval ratings decline as age increases. Latinos are far more likely than whites to approve of President Obama (75% to 49%).

Approval ratings of Congress (38%) remain well below Obama’s, are similar to September’s (39%), but have fallen 9 points since May (47%). Just three in 10 likely voters approve of congressional performance today. Californians are much more likely to approve of Congress than adults nationwide, according to a November CBS News poll (26% approve, 60% disapprove). In California, strong majorities of Republicans (78%) and 55 percent of independents disapprove of Congress, while Democrats remain divided (46% approve, 45% disapprove). Approval ratings of Congress decline with rising age, education, and income. Latinos (55%) are twice as likely as whites (27%) to say they approve of Congress. Among Californians who approve of Obama, 56 percent approve of Congress.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	61%	82%	25%	56%	54%
	Disapprove	33	14	69	37	40
	Don't know	6	4	6	7	6
<i>...the U.S. Congress is handling its job?</i>	Approve	38	46	18	37	29
	Disapprove	54	45	78	55	66
	Don't know	8	9	4	8	5

When it comes to their own House members, half of Californians approve (51%) of their performance, while 34 percent disapprove. Approval today is 5 points lower than in September (56%), but similar to September 2008 (49%). Among likely voters today, 49 percent approve and 40 percent disapprove. Since September, approval ratings for House representatives have declined across parties. Among Republicans, approval ratings have fallen 10 points (50% September, 40% today) and among independents approval has declined 6 points (53% to 47%). Ratings are relatively unchanged among Democrats (62% to 58%). Among Californians who approve of Obama, 64 percent approve of their representative; among those who approve of Congress, 77 percent approve of their representative.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	51%	58%	40%	47%	49%
Disapprove	34	28	46	35	40
Don't know	15	14	14	18	11

ECONOMIC POLICY

Although a solid majority of Californians today are positive about the overall job Barack Obama is doing as president, only 31 percent say his economic policies have made economic conditions better. Forty-two percent say his economic policies have had no effect and 21 percent say they have made economic conditions worse. Likely voters are divided on the effects of Obama's economic policies (30% better, 29% worse, 35% no effect so far). Californians are similar to adults nationwide, according to an October Pew Research Center survey (31% better, 20% worse, 42% no effect so far). California voters are divided along partisan lines. While 43 percent of Democrats believe Obama's economic policies have made conditions better, 49 percent of Republicans say they've made conditions worse. About four in 10 in each party say his policies have had no effect thus far. A plurality of independents (40%) say they've had no effect. Among those who approve of the president, 47 percent say better conditions; 44 percent say no effect.

“Since taking office, have Barack Obama’s economic policies made economic conditions better, worse, or not had an effect so far?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Better	31%	43%	9%	33%	30%
Worse	21	9	49	21	29
No effect so far	42	42	37	40	35
Too soon to tell (volunteered)	4	4	3	4	4
Don't know	2	2	2	2	2

Californians are divided about the effect the federal government's response to the current financial crisis will have on California. Forty-six percent think the actions taken by the federal government will help the California economy, while 46 percent say they will not help. Findings today are similar to January's (44% will help, 43% will not help), and mark a 7-point increase in positive perceptions since October 2008 (39% help, 47% not help). Likely voters are pessimistic in their assessment of the impact federal actions will have on California (40% help, 54% not help). Democrats (55%) are more likely to say they will help, and independents (50%) and Republicans (72%) more likely to say they won't.

“Do you think the federal government’s actions in dealing with the current financial crisis will help the California economy, or not?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, will help	46%	55%	22%	42%	40%
No, will not help	46	35	72	50	54
Don't know	8	10	6	8	6

Although Californians expressed satisfaction (57%) with the first economic stimulus package in January, today they are not as willing to support additional federal spending above the \$787 billion already set aside to stimulate the economy; just 39 percent support, and 53 percent oppose such spending. Findings today are similar to September's (38% support, 56% oppose). Six in 10 likely voters say they oppose additional federal stimulus spending. Across parties, Democrats (50%) are more likely to support additional stimulus spending, while majorities of independents (64%) and Republicans (79%) oppose it. Opposition to additional stimulus spending increases with rising age, education, and income.

HEALTH CARE REFORM

Health care reform has regained national importance since President Obama took office. Early last month the House approved reform legislation, and debate continues in the Senate. In California, given what residents know about the changes being developed by Congress and the Obama administration, 52 percent are in favor and 39 percent oppose them. Likely voters are divided (46% support, 48% oppose). Support among both residents and likely voters is nearly identical to September (51% adults, 46% likely voters). Democrats (71%) support these changes, while Republicans (76%) oppose them. Independents are more likely to support (48%) than oppose (39%) the changes. Californians are similar to adults nationwide in their support, according to a November ABC News/*Washington Post* poll (48% support, 49% oppose). Today in California, men (56%) are somewhat more likely than women (49%) to say they support the plans being developed, and support is higher among Latinos (68%) than among whites (40%). Support declines sharply with rising age and is lowest among those age 65 and older (42%).

“Overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the proposed changes to the health care system being developed by Congress and the Obama administration?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Support	52%	71%	18%	48%	46%
Oppose	39	20	76	39	48
Don't know	9	9	6	13	6

Californians continue to be more supportive when asked specifically about the creation of a new government health insurance plan that would compete with private health insurance plans. Sixty-one percent of adults and 57 percent of likely voters say they would support a new government health insurance plan. Support today among adults and likely voters is similar to September (62% adults, 59% likely voters). Support is far higher among Democrats (77%) and independents (62%) than among Republicans (30%). Support declines with age—those aged 65 and older are least supportive (48%). Californians are more supportive of a government health insurance plan than adults nationwide, according to the ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, (53% support, 43% oppose).

“Would you support or oppose a government health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Support	61%	77%	30%	62%	57%
Oppose	33	16	64	31	38
Don't know	6	7	6	7	5

In a separate question, Californians were asked if they would support or oppose requiring all Americans to have health insurance, with the government providing financial help for those who cannot afford it; 68 percent support this idea while 28 percent oppose it. Californians are as likely as adults nationwide to say they favor requiring health insurance, with government help to those who need it (66% favor, 30% oppose), according to an October Pew survey. In California, strong partisan divisions are evident in levels of support (82% Democrat, 66% independent, 35% Republican). Among residents who support a public option, 86 percent support an individual health mandate. Support, again, declines sharply with rising age and is lowest among those age 65 and older (59%).

AFGHANISTAN

The U.S. military effort in Afghanistan began after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, with the goal of eliminating Al Qaeda operations there. While much has happened in the past eight years in Afghanistan—including the removal of the Taliban from political power, a new constitution, and presidential elections—insurgent forces and charges of political corruption continue to erode Afghan stability. This month we asked residents how well they think the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan is going. Six percent of Californians say things are going very well, 26 percent say fairly well, 32 percent say not too well, and 29 percent say not at all well. Findings among likely voters are similar. Strong majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups say things are going not too well or not at all well. Californians are more likely than adults nationwide to say the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan is going not at all well (29% to 16%), according to a November Pew survey.

“Thinking about Afghanistan, how well is the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan going?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very well	6%	7%	4%	4%	5%
Fairly well	26	20	35	23	28
Not too well	32	36	31	39	36
Not at all well	29	29	21	28	25
Don't know	7	8	9	6	6

When asked specifically about the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan, a plurality of Californians say that over the next year, they think the number should be decreased (44%), while 33 percent think it should be increased, and 14 percent think it should stay the same. Likely voters are more likely to think troop levels should increase (44%). Californians are similar to adults nationwide, according to the Pew survey (32% increase, 40% decrease, 19% kept the same). Across parties, Republicans (54%) think the number of troops should be increased, while Democrats (49%) and independents (48%) think it should be decreased. Support for increasing troop numbers increases with rising age, education, and income.

“Over the next year, do you think the number of troops in Afghanistan should be increased, decreased, or kept the same as it is now?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Increased	33%	29%	54%	32%	44%
Decreased	44	49	25	48	35
Kept the same	14	15	13	12	12
Don't know	9	7	8	8	9

President Obama announced a plan on December 1 for deploying an additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan and setting a timetable for withdrawal. In response, we began asking residents on December 4 whether they favored or opposed his plan. Californians are divided (49% favor, 45% oppose). Support is similar to that among adults nationwide, according to a recent *USA Today*/Gallup poll (51% favor, 40% oppose). California’s likely voters are more likely to favor (52%) than oppose (42%) the Obama plan. Across parties, Democrats (55%) favor it, Republicans (54%) oppose it, and independents are divided (46% favor, 46% oppose). Among those who say the number of troops should be increased, 64 percent favor the plan; among those who think it should be decreased, 36 percent favor it.

PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION

With 91 percent of Californians saying the state is in a recession, and 60 percent saying it is a serious one, half of Californians say they are very (34%) or somewhat concerned (16%) that they or someone in their family will lose their job in the next year; another 11 percent volunteer that their family has already experienced job loss. Overall concern about job loss has been similar since March (51%). Although this month marks an 8-point decline in concern since January (58% to 50% today), the percentage volunteering that their family has already experienced job loss is up 6 points (5% to 11%). Today, residents with annual household incomes below \$40,000 are nearly twice as likely as residents with \$80,000 or more in income to say they are very concerned about job loss (41% to 22%). Latinos (47%) are far more likely than whites (27%) to say they are very concerned, and high levels of concern are also expressed by those without any college education (44%), those with children 18 or under (42%), and renters (39%). Men (33%) and women (35%) are similarly likely to say they are very concerned about job loss.

“Are you concerned that you or someone in your family will lose their job in the next year, or not? (if yes: Are you very concerned or somewhat concerned?)”

	All Adults	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Latino	White
Very concerned	34%	41%	35%	22%	47%	27%
Somewhat concerned	16	18	15	16	20	14
Not concerned	38	24	39	56	21	47
Lost job already (volunteered)	11	16	10	6	10	12
Don't know	1	1	1	–	2	–

When asked specifically about having enough money to pay their rent or mortgage, 65 percent of residents say they are very (45%) or somewhat concerned (20%). The percentage saying very concerned is up 6 points since May and March (39% each). Renters (60%) are far more likely than homeowners (35%) to say they are very concerned about falling behind in their payments. Across regions, residents in Los Angeles (52%), the Central Valley (49%), and the Other Southern California region (44%) are more likely than San Francisco Bay Area residents (35%) to say they are very concerned. Across income groups, residents in households earning less than \$40,000 a year are more than twice as likely as those in households earning more than \$80,000 to say they are very concerned (61% to 23%).

“How concerned are you, if at all, about not having enough money to pay your rent or mortgage?”

	All Adults	Region				Homeownership	
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Owners	Renters
Very concerned	45%	49%	35%	52%	44%	35%	60%
Somewhat concerned	20	13	18	21	22	19	19
Not too concerned	14	13	18	9	14	16	10
Not at all concerned	21	22	28	17	20	29	10
Already behind (vol)/ Don't know	–	3	1	1	–	1	1

PERSONAL FINANCIAL SITUATION (CONTINUED)

When it comes to Californians' perceptions of their own personal financial situation, just 35 percent would rate it as excellent (6%) or good (29%); most describe it as only fair (39%) or poor (25%). Californians' perceptions of their own financial situation are similar to those of adults nationwide, according to a November Pew survey (5% excellent, 30% good, 40% fair, 25% poor). In California today, 40 percent of those in households earning less than \$40,000 say their situation is poor, compared to just 8 percent of those in households earning \$80,000 or more. Across racial/ethnic groups, 17 percent of Latinos call their financial situation excellent or good, compared to 48 percent of whites saying the same. Across regions, Los Angeles (26%) residents are the least likely to say their situation is excellent or good, while residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (44%) are the most likely. Excellent or good financial self-ratings increase as age and education increase.

“Thinking about your own personal finances, 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	Latino	White
Excellent	6%	2%	5%	12%	1%	10%
Good	29	13	30	51	16	38
Only fair	39	45	42	28	47	33
Poor	25	40	23	8	36	19
Don't know	1	–	–	1	–	–

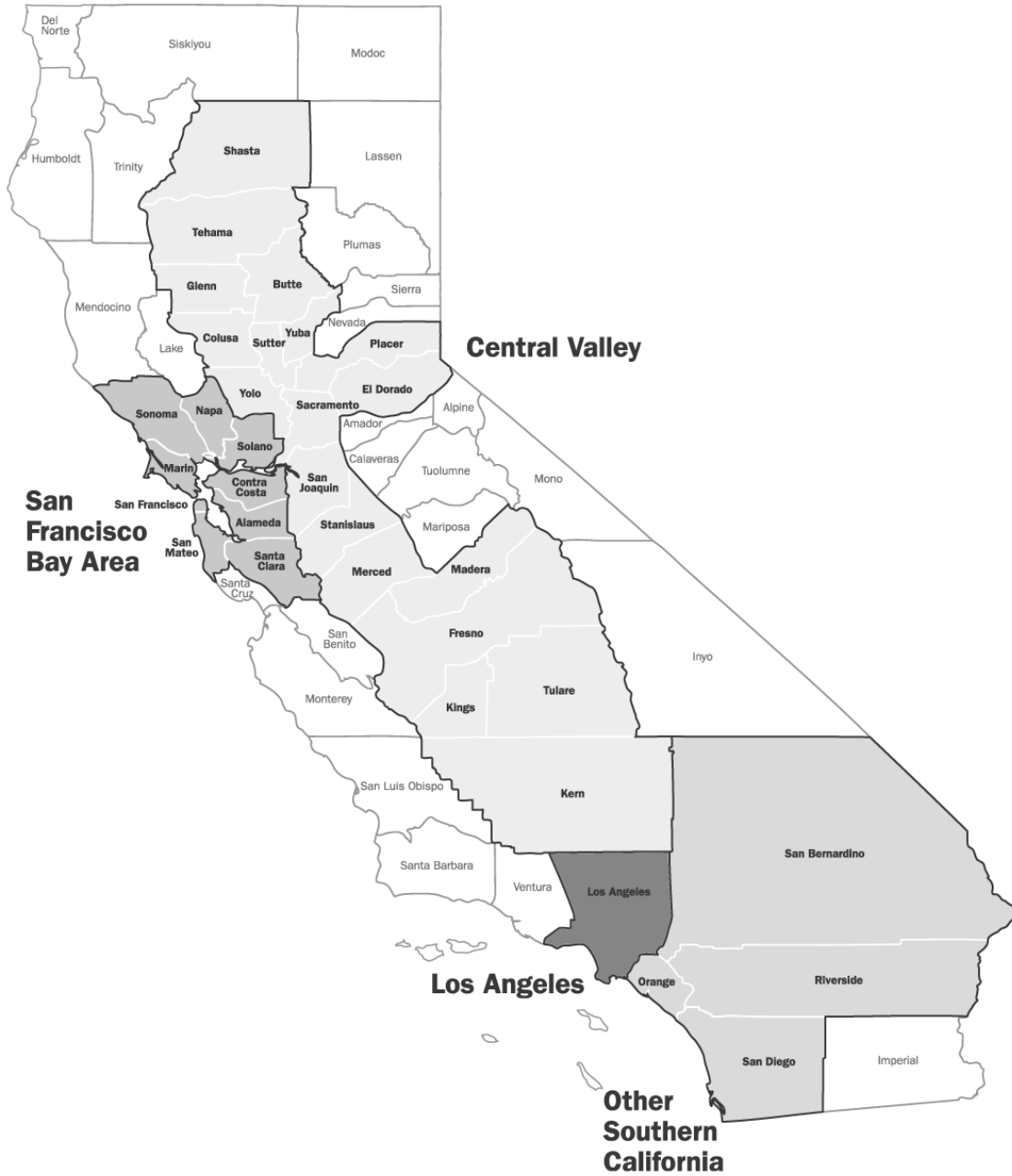
When asked in a separate question to assess their financial situation compared to a year ago, 53 percent of Californians say they are worse off, 36 percent say they are about the same, and only 9 percent say they are better off. In September 2002, after the dot-com bubble burst and amidst financial market uncertainty, Californians were much less negative about their financial situation compared to the previous year (30% better, 23% worse, 45% about the same). Today, pluralities of residents across most political, regional, and demographic groups say their situation is worse compared to a year ago.

Californians are more optimistic when thinking about their financial situation over the next year. Fifty-three percent say their situation will improve a lot (6%) or improve some (47%), 29 percent say it will get a little worse (22%), or a lot worse (7%), and 13 percent volunteer that it will stay the same. Californians are similar to adults nationwide, according to the Pew survey (6% improve a lot, 50% improve some, 19% a little worse, 8% a lot worse, 13% same). Pluralities of residents across political, regional, income, and other demographic groups say their financial situation will improve over the course of the next year.

“Over the course of the next year, do you think the financial situation of you and your family will improve a lot, improve some, get a little worse, or get a lot worse?”

	All Adults	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Latino	White
Improve a lot	6%	6%	7%	5%	7%	3%
Improve some	47	50	47	43	53	43
Get a little worse	22	23	22	20	19	23
Get a lot worse	7	7	10	6	8	8
Stay the same (volunteered)	13	7	11	22	7	18
Don't know	5	7	3	4	6	5

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 Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, and from survey research associates Dean Bonner and Jennifer Paluch. The *Californians and Their Government* series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. We benefit from discussions with PPIC staff, foundation staff, and other policy experts; however, the methods, questions, and content of this report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 2,004 California adult residents, reached on landline telephones and cell phones. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days between December 1 and December 8, 2009. Interviews took an average of 18 minutes to complete.

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 and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. 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. A total of 200 cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These 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 and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. 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 for their time to help defray the potential 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 and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English and Spanish according to respondents’ preferences. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc conducted the telephone interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI we used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2007 and 2008 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey for California, both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare it against landline and cell phone service reported in the survey. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any differences in demographics and telephone service.

The sampling error for the total of 2,004 adults is ± 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,565 registered voters, it is ± 2.5 percent; for the 963 likely voters, it is ± 3 percent; for the 352 Republican primary likely voters, it is ± 5 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 four 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, and “Other Southern California” includes Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. Residents from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 30 percent of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. Sample sizes for African Americans and Asian Americans are not large enough for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (those who are registered as “decline to state”). We also include the responses of “likely voters”—those who are most likely to vote in the state’s elections based on their past voting, current interest, and voting intentions.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, CBS News, CBS News/*New York Times*, the Pew Research Center, and *USA Today*/Gallup.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

December 1–8, 2009

2,004 California Adult Residents:
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 2\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?

[code, don't read]
61% jobs, economy
13 state budget, deficit, taxes
5 education, schools
4 health care, health costs
3 immigration, illegal immigration
2 government reform
2 water, water supply, drought
9 other
1 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

27% approve
60 disapprove
13 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

17% approve
70 disapprove
13 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?

30% approve
53 disapprove
17 don't know
5. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

19% right direction
75 wrong direction
6 don't know
6. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

28% good times
66 bad times
6 don't know
7. 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?*)

60% yes, serious recession
26 yes, moderate recession
5 yes, mild recession
7 no
2 don't know
8. Are you concerned that you or someone in your family will lose their job in the next year, or not? (*if yes: Are you very concerned or somewhat concerned?*)

34% yes, very concerned
16 yes, somewhat
38 no
11 have lost job already (*volunteered*)
1 don't know

9. How concerned are you, if at all, about not having enough money to pay your rent or mortgage: very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about this?

- 45% very concerned
- 20 somewhat concerned
- 14 not too concerned
- 21 not at all concerned

Now thinking about your own personal finances...

10. 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?

- 6% excellent
- 29 good
- 39 only fair
- 25 poor
- 1 don't know

11. Would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as you were a year ago?

- 9% better off
- 53 worse off
- 36 same
- 2 don't know

12. Over the course of the next year, do you think the financial situation of you and your family will improve a lot, improve some, get a little worse, or get a lot worse?

- 6% improve a lot
- 47 improve some
- 22 get a little worse
- 7 get a lot worse
- 13 stay the same *(volunteered)*
- 5 don't know

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

- 79% yes *[ask q13a]*
- 21 no *[skip to q14b]*

13a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 45% Democrat *[ask q14]*
- 31 Republican *[skip to q14a]*
- 4 another party *(specify) [skip to q15]*
- 20 independent *[skip to q14b]*

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

- 51% strong
- 45 not very strong
- 4 don't know

[skip to q15]

14a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 50% strong
- 46 not very strong
- 4 don't know

[skip to q15]

14b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 23% Republican Party
- 52 Democratic Party
- 20 neither *(volunteered)*
- 5 don't know

[responses recorded for questions 15 to 30 are for likely voters only]

Next, please tell me if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of these candidates for governor, or don't you know enough about him or her to have an opinion?

[rotate questions 15 to 18]

15. How about Jerry Brown, California State Attorney General?

- 35% favorable
- 36 unfavorable
- 3 haven't heard of him *(volunteered)*
- 26 don't know enough to have an opinion

16. How about Tom Campbell, former congressman?

- 16% favorable
- 14 unfavorable
- 11 haven't heard of him *(volunteered)*
- 59 don't know enough to have an opinion

17. How about Steve Poizner, California State Insurance Commissioner?

- 9% favorable
- 18 unfavorable
- 10 haven't heard of him *(volunteered)*
- 63 don't know enough to have an opinion

18. How about Meg Whitman, businesswoman?

- 22% favorable
- 19 unfavorable
- 10 haven't heard of her *(volunteered)*
- 49 don't know enough to have an opinion

[delayed skip: if q13a=independent, ask q19, if q13a=Republican, skip to q20, otherwise skip to q21]

19. California voters like you will be able to choose between voting in the Republican primary, the Democratic primary, or selecting a nonpartisan ballot on June 8th. All three ballots include state proposition measures. Do you plan to vote in the Republican primary, the Democratic primary, or on the nonpartisan ballot?

- 15% Republican primary *[ask q20]*
- 19 Democratic primary *[skip to q21]*
- 58 nonpartisan ballot *[skip to q21]*
- 8 don't know *[skip to q21]*

20. If the Republican primary for governor were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? **[rotate names and then ask "or someone else"]**

- 32% Meg Whitman
- 12 Tom Campbell
- 8 Steve Poizner
- 4 or someone else *(specify)*
- 44 don't know

If these were the candidates in the November 2010 governor's election....

[rotate questions 21 to 23]

21. Would you vote for...**[rotate names]**

- 34% Tom Campbell, the Republican
- 46 Jerry Brown, the Democrat
- 1 someone else *(specify)*
- 19 don't know

22. Would you vote for...**[rotate names]**

- 31% Steve Poizner, the Republican
- 47 Jerry Brown, the Democrat
- 1 someone else *(specify)*
- 21 don't know

23. Would you vote for...**[rotate names]**

- 37% Meg Whitman, the Republican
- 43 Jerry Brown, the Democrat
- 20 don't know

24. How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2010 governor's election?

- 10% very closely
- 33 fairly closely
- 36 not too closely
- 20 not at all closely
- 1 don't know

25. In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for governor next June?

- 32% satisfied
- 42 not satisfied
- 26 don't know

[rotate questions 26 and 26a]

26. People have different ideas about the qualifications they want when they vote for candidates for statewide office, such as governor or U.S. senator. Which of these is most important to you? **[rotate 1 and 2]** (1) that the candidate has experience in elected office, **[or]** (2) that the candidate has experience running a business?

- 43% experience in elected office
- 43 experience running a business
- 4 neither (*volunteered*)
- 6 both (*volunteered*)
- 4 don't know

26a. People have different ideas on how candidates for statewide office should pay for their political campaigns. Which of these do you view most positively? **[rotate 1 and 2]** (1) a candidate using mostly his or her own money to pay for political campaigning, **[or]** (2) a candidate using mostly money collected from his or her supporters to pay for political campaigning.

- 39% own money
- 49 money from supporters
- 12 don't know

Next, several issues will be decided by California voters in the June 2010 election and others may be headed to the November 2010 ballot. Please tell me how important each of the following issues is to you.

[rotate questions 27 to 30]

27. How about allowing voters to select any candidate, regardless of party, in California's primaries? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 47% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 8 not too important
- 9 not at all important
- 4 don't know

27a. How about allowing public funding of statewide campaigns in California? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 32% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 14 not too important
- 13 not at all important
- 6 don't know

28. How about allowing voters to call a constitutional convention in California? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 35% very important
- 29 somewhat important
- 15 not too important
- 11 not at all important
- 10 don't know

28a. How about lowering the vote requirement for the California State Legislature to pass a state budget? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 54% very important
- 28 somewhat important
- 7 not too important
- 6 not at all important
- 5 don't know

29. How about legalizing marijuana in California? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 38% very important
- 24 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 24 not at all important
- 1 don't know

30. How about allowing same-sex couples to marry in California? Is this issue very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important to you?

- 51% very important
- 17 somewhat important
- 10 not too important
- 21 not at all important
- 1 don't know

31. Changing topics, do you think the state budget situation in California—that is, the balance between government spending and revenues—is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem for the people of California today?

- 78% big problem
- 18 somewhat of a problem
- 2 not a problem
- 2 don't know

32. As you may know, the state government currently has an annual budget of around \$85 billion and faces a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues. How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?

- 39% mostly through spending cuts
- 8 mostly through tax increases
- 37 through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases
- 8 okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

33. How concerned are you about the effects of spending cuts on your local government services—those provided by city and county governments and public schools?

- 55% very concerned
- 28 somewhat concerned
- 9 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

34. Next, would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?

- 44% big problem
- 29 somewhat of a problem
- 25 not much of a problem
- 2 don't know

35. Do you think that the water supply that is available for your part of California will be adequate or inadequate for what is needed ten years from now? (*if inadequate: is that somewhat inadequate or very inadequate?*)

- 32% adequate
- 28 somewhat inadequate
- 29 very inadequate
- 11 don't know

36. The governor and legislature recently passed a water package that includes water conservation requirements and plans for new water storage systems, water clean-up and recycling, and a council to oversee restoration of the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. This package includes a proposal for an \$11.1 billion bond measure to pay for water projects. How important is it that voters pass the bond measure?

- 47% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 7 not too important
- 8 not at all important
- 6 don't know

37. On another topic, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

61% approve
33 disapprove
6 don't know

38. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?

38% approve
54 disapprove
8 don't know

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

51% approve
34 disapprove
15 don't know

40. Do you think that things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

42% right direction
53 wrong direction
5 don't know

41. 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

42. Next, since taking office, have Barack Obama's economic policies made economic conditions better, worse, or not had an effect so far?

31% better
21 worse
42 no effect so far
4 too soon to tell (*volunteered*)
2 don't know

43. Do you think the federal government's actions in dealing with the current financial crisis will help the California economy, or not?

46% yes, will help
46 no, will not help
8 don't know

44. Would you support or oppose additional federal spending above the \$787 billion already set aside to try to stimulate the economy?

39% support
53 oppose
8 don't know

45. Overall, given what you know about them, would you say you support or oppose the proposed changes to the health care system being developed by *[rotate]* [1] Congress *[and]* [2] the Obama administration?

52% support
39 oppose
9 don't know

[rotate questions 46 and 46a]

46. Would you support or oppose a government health insurance plan to compete with private health insurance plans?

61% support
33 oppose
6 don't know

46a. Would you support or oppose requiring that all Americans have health insurance, with the government providing financial help for those who can't afford it?

68% support
28 oppose
4 don't know

47. Now thinking about Afghanistan, how well is the U.S. military effort in Afghanistan going: very well, fairly well, not too well, or not at all well?

- 6% very well
- 26 fairly well
- 32 not too well
- 29 not at all well
- 7 don't know

48. Over the next year, do you think the number of troops in Afghanistan should be increased, decreased, or kept the same as it is now?

- 33% increased
- 44 decreased
- 14 kept the same
- 9 don't know

48a. **[asked starting December 4]** As you may know, President Obama has decided to increase the number of U.S. troops in Afghanistan by 30,000 while also setting a timetable that calls for the U.S. to begin withdrawing troops from that country in 2011. In general, do you favor or oppose this plan?

- 49% favor
- 45 oppose
- 6 don't know

49. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: **[read list, rotate order top to bottom]**

- 12% very liberal
- 18 somewhat liberal
- 32 middle-of-the-road
- 23 somewhat conservative
- 13 very conservative
- 2 don't know

50. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 25% great deal
- 39 fair amount
- 29 only a little
- 7 none

[d1 to d18: demographic questions]

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The Public Policy Institute of California is dedicated to informing and improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research on major economic, social, and political issues. The institute's goal is to raise public awareness and to give elected representatives and other decisionmakers a more informed basis for developing policies and programs.

The institute's research focuses on the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including economic development, education, environment and resources, governance, population, public finance, and social and health policy.

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Mark Baldassare is President and Chief Executive Officer of PPIC.

Walter B. Hewlett is Chair of the Board of Directors.

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