
Preface

California is now in the midst of historic changes that will profoundly affect the future of the state. To improve understanding of these changes and their effect on the political status quo, PPIC conducted a series of large-scale public opinion surveys during the 1998 California election year. This report presents the results of the fifth and final survey of the year. The first four were conducted in April, May, September, and October. The purpose of the surveys is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and informing the state's public policies. The surveys are intended to provide the public and policymakers with relevant—advocacy-free—information on the following:

- Californians' overall impressions and concerns about the economy, population growth, governance, and quality of life and about key issues such as education, welfare, and immigration.
- Differences in social and political attitudes among different demographic, age, and economic groups and across different regions of the state.
- The characteristics of groups that are shaping the state's elections and policy debates.
- The political attitudes underlying "voter distrust" of government and low voter turnout and how both affect the outcomes of elections and the success of ballot initiatives.

Copies of the earlier reports or additional copies of this report may be ordered by calling (800) 232-5343 [mainland U.S.] or (415) 291-4415 [Canada, Hawaii, overseas]. The reports are also posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org).



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**CALIFORNIANS CLAMOR FOR EDUCATION REFORM;
LACK FAITH THAT STATE GOVERNMENT CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, January 11, 1999 — As Governor Gray Davis rings in an “Era of Higher Expectations,” a new survey by the Public Policy Institute of California reveals a public that deeply distrusts state government and has little confidence in its ability to tackle important challenges such as education reform.

“If Governor Davis is serious about this new era, he must first focus on raising the public’s expectations about state government, because they couldn’t be much lower,” said PPIC Statewide Survey director Mark Baldassare. “At this point, even if he clears the bar he has set for himself on education, the Governor will have a hard time convincing the public that he and the State Legislature are responsible for the progress.”

Californians are more likely to name education than any other issue as the one they would like to see the Governor and State Legislature work on in 1999. At the same time, 58 percent say they have “only some” confidence, 21 percent very little confidence, and 9 percent no confidence in their leaders’ capacity to solve the state’s most significant problems. By a three-to-one margin (75% to 21%), Californians believe that the initiative process will address state issues more effectively than laws passed by their elected officials.

Ambitious Wish List for Education Reform

Since the November elections, Californians have reached a high degree of consensus about education reform and overwhelmingly support a number of specific proposals. Given that they are more likely to name teachers as the source of problems in K-12 public schools than any other reason, it is not surprising that there is strong support for proposals that would improve the quality of instruction. Eighty-four percent favor increasing teachers’ pay based on merit, and a similar number support increased training and tougher credential standards. There is also strong support for efforts to increase standards for student learning. Nearly 90 percent of those surveyed favor a requirement that students pass achievement tests before promotion to the next grade, and 91 percent support remedial after-school and summer school programs for under-achieving students.

Many of the reforms supported by the public will be costly. But even with the state facing a deficit, Californians are consistent about their concern for improving education. Eighty-five percent say that spending on K-12 education should be given a high priority. However, it is not clear that they understand the trade-offs, because 56 percent and 58 percent also give high priority to spending on public health and welfare and on public colleges and universities, respectively. Only support for spending on corrections, such as prisons, has dropped significantly since 1994 (from 42% to 26%).

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Public Also Wants Infrastructure Investments

Despite limited funds, Californians also voice support for infrastructure investments to help prepare the state for rapid population growth over the next two decades. Seven in ten residents say it is very important to build K-12 public schools, colleges, and universities, one in four say it is somewhat important, and only 3 percent say it is unimportant. Fifty percent say it is very important, 39 percent somewhat important, and 8 percent unimportant to build and expand water storage facilities. Nearly half believe that building roads, highways, and freeways is very important, while 42 percent say it is somewhat important, and only 9 percent unimportant.

This possibly unrealistic assessment of how far public dollars can go may be fueled in part by tremendous optimism about the state's future. Sixty-three percent say that things are going in the right direction, while 28 percent think that the state is headed in the wrong direction. Consumer confidence also remains strong. Thirty-one percent of Californians report being better off financially than they were a year ago, 14 percent worse off, and 54 percent in the same situation. Looking ahead a year, 43 percent think they will be better off, 7 percent worse off, and 48 percent in the same situation.

About the Survey

The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces at work in California elections and in shaping the state's public policies. The survey is intended to provide the public and policymakers with relevant information on the following: Californians' overall impressions of key policy issues and of quality of life, the differences in social and political attitudes among demographic groups and across different regions of the state, the characteristics of groups that are shaping the state's elections and policy debates, and the political attitudes underlying "voter distrust" of government and low voter turnout.

Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,022 California adult residents interviewed from December 4 to December 13, 1998. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for the 1,562 voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 996 likely voters is +/- 3.5%. For additional information on survey methodology, see page 27.

Dr. Mark Baldassare is a senior fellow at PPIC. He is founder and director of the Orange County Annual Survey at UC Irvine. For over two decades, he has conducted surveys for major news organizations, including the Orange County Edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Orange County Register*, KCAL-TV, KRON-TV, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to independent, nonpartisan research on economic, social, and political issues that affect the lives of Californians. The Institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett.

This report appears in full on PPIC's Web site (www.ppic.org).

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California 2000 Election

Presidential Primary

Although Republicans fared badly in the November elections—especially in California—the survey results do not suggest a tremendous Democratic advantage in the March 2000 presidential primary. This will be the first open presidential primary in history, meaning that all voters will be able to choose from a list of presidential candidates from all parties. The survey asked people to choose from a preliminary list gathered from the currently apparent potential candidates or to suggest another candidate. If the primary were held today, Al Gore would get 31 percent and Texas Governor George W. Bush 21 percent of the likely-voters' support. Other candidates trail far behind: Elizabeth Dole (9%), Pete Wilson (5%), Richard Gephardt and Steve Forbes (4% each).

Within their parties, Bush and Gore have strong support. Fifty-three percent of Democrats would vote for Gore and 40 percent of Republicans would vote for Bush. Independent voters and other party members favor Gore over Bush by a 10 point margin. Gore receives stronger support in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas, while Bush has a slight edge over Gore in the Central Valley. Fifty percent of Latinos support Gore. White non-Hispanics give Gore and Bush equal support (23% each). Men are equally divided between Gore and Bush (26% each), while women favor Gore over Bush (34% to 17%).

"If the Presidential Primary were held today, who would you vote for?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Al Gore	31%
George Bush	21
Elizabeth Dole	9
Pete Wilson	5
Steve Forbes	4
Richard Gephardt	4
Dan Quayle	3
Someone else	4
Don't know	19

(Likely Voters) (December)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Al Gore	53%	5%	25%	35%	33%	19%	50%	26%
George Bush	8	40	15	19	23	24	16	23
Elizabeth Dole	6	13	9	9	8	12	7	10
Pete Wilson	2	9	4	5	3	6	2	5
Steve Forbes	1	8	5	2	5	7	1	5
Richard Gephardt	7	1	2	4	4	3	2	4
Dan Quayle	1	7	2	3	1	5	2	3
Someone else	2	2	9	4	3	4	2	3
Don't know	20	15	29	19	20	20	18	21

Leading Presidential Candidates

Looking past the primary to the 2000 presidential election, the survey provides some interesting insights: California voters are about evenly split between Gore (45%) and Bush (47%). Pete Wilson's presidential aspirations aren't currently supported by likely voters; in a presidential election, he would do much worse than Bush against Gore, garnering only 37% of the vote. For those who believe that Latinos are disaffected with the Republican party generally, the results indicate that it may be much more a matter of their disaffection with Pete Wilson. In a Bush-Gore contest, Bush would get 36 percent of the Latino vote and Gore would get 59 percent. But in a Wilson-Gore contest, Wilson would get 21 percent and Gore 75 percent of the Latino vote.

Gore and Bush have strong support within their parties. Democrats favor Gore over Bush by 75 percent to 18 percent. Republicans favor Bush over Gore by 86 percent to 9 percent. Independent voters and other party members are equally divided between the two. Gore's support is stronger in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas, while Bush leads Gore in the Central Valley. Latinos favor Gore by a 23 point margin. White non-Hispanic voters favor Bush over Gore by a 19 point margin (55% to 36%). Gender differences are small: Men favor Bush (50%) over Gore (43%); women favor Gore slightly (47%) over Bush (45%).

While Gore would beat Wilson by 54 percent to 37 percent if they were the major party candidates, both have strong support within their own parties. However, independent voters and other party members favor Gore over Wilson by a two-to-one margin. Gore is favored over Wilson by large margins in the Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay areas, while Wilson has a slim lead over Gore in the Central Valley. Latinos support Gore over Wilson by a three-to-one margin. Wilson and Gore are tied among non-Hispanic whites (44% each). There is a gender gap: Gore has a 12 point lead over Wilson among men but a 22 point lead among women.

"If these were the candidates for the Presidential Election in the year 2000, who would you vote for?"

(Likely Voters)	December
George Bush	47%
Al Gore	45
Don't know	8
Pete Wilson	37
Al Gore	54
Don't know	9

(Likely Voters) (December)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
George Bush	18%	86%	41%	42%	42%	61%	36%	50%
Al Gore	75	9	43	52	49	31	59	42
Don't know	7	5	16	6	9	8	5	8
Pete Wilson	10	74	27	34	30	45	21	40
Al Gore	83	16	55	59	59	40	75	49
Don't know	7	10	18	7	11	15	4	11

"Definition of Marriage" Initiative

Reaction to the "definition of marriage" initiative that has qualified for the 2000 ballot undercuts the state's reputation for unconventional attitudes. The measure would require that only a marriage between a man and a woman be recognized in this state, and Californians sound very much like other Americans on this and other issues regarding gay and lesbian rights. In a *Newsweek* survey in 1998, 61 percent of the respondents said that there should not be legally sanctioned gay marriages, and Americans were evenly divided on special legislation to guarantee equal rights for gays and lesbians (47% to 46%), while 58 percent favored health and other employee benefits for domestic partners.

Among likely voters in California, 64 percent support the "definition of marriage" initiative, with Republicans overwhelmingly in favor and Democrats supporting it by a 10 point margin. Support for this initiative is strongest in the Central Valley, while opposition is highest in the San Francisco Bay area. Latinos and other voters voice similar support.

Despite their strong opposition to extending the definition of legal marriage to gay couples, California voters are evenly divided on special legislation to guarantee equal rights for gays and lesbians. Moreover, six in 10 say that the domestic partners of gay and lesbian employees should receive health insurance and other benefits.

"On the 2000 ballot, there will be a 'definition of marriage' initiative, which would provide that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Yes	64%
No	33
Don't know	3

(Likely Voters) (December)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	53%	82%	49%	65%	54%	73%	65%	63%
No	43	16	45	33	40	26	34	33
Don't know	4	2	6	2	6	1	1	4

"Do you think there should or should not be ..."

(Likely Voters)	December
<i>Special legislation to guarantee equal rights for gays and lesbians</i>	
Should	46%
Should not	48
Don't know	6
<i>Health insurance and other benefits for domestic partners of gay and lesbian employees</i>	
Should	58
Should not	35
Don't know	7

School Voucher Initiative

As an education reform, vouchers were an issue in the November election campaigns, and a school voucher initiative is being discussed for the 2000 ballot. Results of the survey indicate that vouchers are a divisive and partisan issue but also suggest that they don't have the kind of strong support or opposition that might be expected.

A narrow majority (52%) of likely voters favor an initiative that would allow the use of public funds for parents to send their children to private or parochial schools, but more than four in 10 oppose it. Republicans favor school vouchers by a two-to-one margin, but a majority of Democrats oppose them. Support is strongest in the Central Valley, and opposition highest in the San Francisco Bay area. Six in 10 Latinos favor school vouchers. Among people with children in public schools 55 percent favor and 42 percent oppose vouchers.

The conflict Californians feel about school vouchers is underscored by the fact that about half think vouchers would make public schools better by fostering competition, but four in 10 think they would make public schools worse by taking away needed resources. Those who have children in public schools are evenly divided, with 49 percent saying vouchers will make schools better and 46 percent saying they will make schools worse. Nevertheless, a solid majority, including people with children in public schools, believe vouchers would help lower-income families, while only one-third think of vouchers as a subsidy for the wealthy.

"One of the initiatives being considered for the state ballot in the year 2000 would create a voucher system that would allow the use of public funds for parents to pay to send their children to private or parochial schools. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Yes	52%
No	43
Don't know	5

(Likely Voters) (December)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	42%	63%	55%	51%	48%	55%	59%	50%
No	53	32	42	44	46	42	40	44
Don't know	5	5	3	5	6	3	1	6

"Which of these two views is closest to yours: (a) The voucher system would make public schools better by making public and private schools compete for students and public funds; (b) The voucher system would make public schools worse because the loss of students would result in less public funds?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Make schools better	50%
Make schools worse	41
Other / no difference	1
Don't know	8

"Which of these two views is closest to yours: (a) A voucher system will subsidize wealthy parents who send their children to private and parochial schools; (b) A voucher system will help lower-income parents send their children to a better private or parochial school instead of to their local public school?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Subsidize wealthy parents	32%
Help lower-income parents	57
Other / no difference	3
Don't know	8

Reapportionment Initiative

Reapportionment is a highly controversial issue among political insiders, but the survey suggests that it's a non-issue among voters. There has been talk of placing an initiative on the ballot that would take legislative reapportionment after the 2000 census out of the hands of the Governor and State Legislature and give the responsibility to an independent commission. Among likely voters, 46 percent would vote for the initiative, 41 percent are opposed, and 13 percent are undecided. Republicans and independent voters and other party members are more likely than Democrats to support the initiative. The strongest support is in the Central Valley. There are no differences by race and ethnicity.

One reason that voters are ambivalent about this initiative is that most don't believe they know enough about how the Governor and State Legislature would handle reapportionment. One-quarter think that a Democratic governor and Democratic-controlled State Legislature would provide a plan that is fair and one-quarter think they would offer an unfair plan, while half are unsure. Democrats (36%) are more likely than Republicans (12%) and other voters (18%) to say that a fair plan would be devised; however, one-half or more of likely voters, regardless of party, are uncertain.

"After the 2000 census, state legislative and congressional district boundaries will be redrawn. This reapportionment is done by the Governor and State Legislature. An initiative would take reapportionment out of the hands of the Governor and the State Legislature and give it to an independent commission. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Yes	46%
No	41
Don't know	13

(Likely Voters) (December)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	44%	49%	47%	44%	46%	52%	46%	46%
No	44	38	35	43	42	35	42	40
Don't know	12	13	18	13	12	13	12	14

"The new California Governor is a Democrat, and the State Legislature may be controlled by the Democrats after the 2000 election. Do you think the Governor and State Legislature will provide a reapportionment plan that is fair or one that is unfair, or don't you know enough about it to have an opinion?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Fair	25%
Unfair	23
Don't know	52

Media Watch

More Californians (78%) now say they are following news about California politics and elections than at any time during the 1998 election cycle, including April (52%), May (61%), September (54%) and October (67%). About one in five Californians say they are very closely following news stories about California politics and elections, while six in 10 are following this kind of news fairly closely. Two in 10 are not paying much attention to state political news. The voters' current, relatively high attentiveness to state political and election news could be a result of the national news coverage of the impeachment hearings in December.

One in three likely voters rates news organizations as doing an excellent or good job in covering the news about California politics and elections. Four in 10 say that the media are doing only a fair job, while 18 percent say they are doing a poor job. The excellent and good ratings given by likely voters are very similar to those given for election news coverage in May (35%), September (35%), and October (37%).

"How closely have you been following the news stories about California politics and elections?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Very closely	19%
Fairly closely	59
Not too closely	19
Not at all closely	3

"How would you rate the job that news organizations are doing in reporting about California politics and elections?"

(Likely Voters)	December
Excellent	5%
Good	32
Fair	43
Poor	18
Don't know	2

California Policy Issues

Most Important Issue

When asked to name the one issue that they would most like the Governor and State Legislature to work on in 1999, more than one-third of Californians single out schools and education. Among likely voters, the count rises to 40 percent. Fewer than one in 10 mentions crime (7%) or the economy, immigration, or poverty (5% each), taxes (4%), or health care (3%). Eighteen percent say they are not sure about what issue the Governor and State Legislature should work on.

San Francisco Bay area residents are the most likely to want to see action on education, while Central Valley residents are somewhat less likely to say that schools should be the top priority. Central Valley residents are more likely than residents of other regions to want progress on taxes and government regulations. Still, education is the number one issue in all three state regions. There are no differences by race and ethnicity. Republicans (35%) and Democrats (38%) are equally likely to want the Governor and State Legislature to work on K-12 public schools.

"Which one issue facing California today do you think is most important for the Governor and the State Legislature to work on in 1999?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Schools, education	36%	38%	42%	31%	36%	36%
Crime, gangs	7	10	4	5	7	8
Immigration, illegal immigration	5	5	4	3	4	5
Jobs, the economy	5	6	3	6	7	5
Poverty, the homeless, the poor, welfare	5	5	4	6	6	4
Taxes	4	3	4	9	2	5
Health care, HMOs	3	3	2	4	3	4
Environment, pollution	2	2	3	1	1	2
State budget, state and local finance	2	2	1	4	1	3
Traffic and transportation	2	1	4	2	1	2
Drugs	1	1	0	1	0	1
Government regulations	1	1	2	3	0	2
Growth, overpopulation	1	1	0	1	0	1
Housing costs, availability	1	0	3	0	1	1
Race relations, ethnic tensions	1	1	1	1	1	1
State government, governor, legislature	1	1	1	0	1	1
Water	1	1	1	2	0	1
Other	4	2	3	4	4	2
Don't know	18	17	18	17	25	16

Mood of the State

One explanation for the large percentage of those who cannot name a problem for government to tackle may be the mood of the state. It remains highly positive, with optimists outnumbering pessimists by more than a two-to-one margin. In the current survey, 63 percent say that things are going in the right direction in California, while 28 percent think that things are going in the wrong direction and 9 percent are unsure. The positive sentiments today are higher than in the April (56%), May (56%) and September (57%) surveys and equivalent to those in the October survey (62%).

The mood varies across the state's major regions. Los Angeles area residents (66%) are the most upbeat, followed by those living in the San Francisco Bay area (59%) and the Central Valley (57%). Latinos are more likely than other residents to say that the state is going in the right direction (67% to 61%). Democrats (69%) are more positive than Republicans (55%) about the direction of the state.

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

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Right direction	63%	66%	59%	57%	67%	61%
Wrong direction	28	25	32	34	23	30
Don't know	9	9	9	9	10	9

Spending Priorities

The spending priorities of Californians suggest that their optimism about the state's future may lead to an unrealistic assessment of how much public spending can accomplish. With the state government facing a billion dollar deficit, Californians are consistent about their concern for improving education: 85 percent say that spending on K-12 education should be given high priority. However, 56 percent and 58 percent also give high priority to spending on public health and welfare and on public colleges and universities, respectively. Ironically, given voter support of the three-strikes initiative, only 26 percent give high priority to spending on corrections.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to give high priority to spending on schools (91% to 76%), and parents of public school children are more likely than others to place a high priority on such spending (92%). However, there are no differences across regions in the priority given to K-12 spending.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans to give high priorities to health and welfare (65% to 39%) and colleges (62% to 48%). Central Valley residents are the least likely to give high priority to spending in the areas of public health and welfare and public colleges and universities. San Francisco Bay area residents are the least likely to give high priority to spending on corrections, including prisons. Latinos are more likely than others to give a high priority to spending on public colleges and universities (70% to 54%); this is especially interesting in light of the fact that Latinos have the lowest college participation rates of any major ethnic group. They are no different from others in their priority rankings for other spending categories.

The importance the public places on K-12 education funding has been constant in recent years. In the 1994 California Business Roundtable Survey, 83 percent gave K-12 public schools a high

priority, 64 percent gave public colleges and universities a high priority, 54 percent gave public health and welfare a high priority, and 42 percent gave corrections a high priority.

"The state government faces a \$1 billion deficit next year. Given the state's limited funds, what priorities should be given to each of these categories of public spending in the state budget?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
<i>Kindergarten through 12th grade</i>						
High	85%	87%	84%	82%	87%	85%
Medium	9	7	9	12	7	9
Low	6	6	7	6	6	6
<i>Public health and welfare</i>						
High	56	58	57	49	58	55
Medium	28	25	30	36	24	30
Low	16	17	13	15	18	15
<i>Public colleges and universities</i>						
High	58	62	57	52	70	54
Medium	29	26	29	33	21	31
Low	13	12	14	15	9	15
<i>Corrections, such as prisons</i>						
High	26	30	17	26	30	25
Medium	35	36	29	32	32	34
Low	39	34	54	42	38	41

Images of K-12 Public Schools

When asked to name what they think is wrong with K-12 public schools, Californians are most likely to hold teachers responsible for public schools not performing as well as they could. Twenty-two percent place the blame on teachers, 12 percent on lack of state funding, 11 percent say it is the parents, and 11 percent think that the major issue is overcrowded classrooms and school buildings in need of repair. Five percent or fewer mention lack of local funds, local school boards, state officials, students, unions, or gangs, crime, drugs, and alcohol. In light of the debates over bilingual education and the effect of non-English speakers in the schools, it is interesting that only 2 percent consider this as the major reason for low-performance among schools.

In the San Francisco Bay area, residents are equally likely to mention the lack of state funds and teachers (18% each) as the main reasons that schools are not performing as well as they could. In the other regions, teachers are named at least twice as often as any other reason. There are no differences by race and ethnicity. Democrats and Republicans (21% each) are equally likely to say that teachers are most responsible. Parents of public school children say teachers (19%), lack of funds (16%), and overcrowding (13%) are the main reasons for public schools not performing better.

"People have different ideas about what they think is wrong with California's K-12 public schools. What is the one reason you think is most responsible for public schools not performing as well as they could?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Teachers	22%	24%	18%	21%	23%	21%
Lack of state funds	12	11	18	9	10	13
Overcrowded classrooms, school buildings need repairs	11	11	9	11	11	11
Parents	11	11	11	12	9	12
Local school boards, local school administrators	5	4	6	5	5	5
Curriculum, books	4	4	4	3	3	5
Lack of local funds, local voters not passing taxes	4	3	5	5	2	4
Lack of standards and testing	4	4	4	3	4	4
Students	3	3	2	3	3	2
Gangs, crime, drugs, alcohol	2	3	2	3	3	2
Immigrant students, non-English speaking students	2	3	2	2	4	2
State officials	2	1	2	2	1	2
Unions	1	0	1	0	1	1
Other answer	8	8	7	10	8	8
Don't know	9	10	9	11	13	8

K-12 Education Reform

Californians have reached a high degree of consensus about a number of proposals that are currently being discussed for improving K-12 public schools. However, and again reflecting an optimism about how much can be accomplished with limited funds, they support an array of reforms that will be costly, especially in their combined effects.

There is strong support for proposals that would improve the quality of teaching. More than eight in 10 residents are in favor of increasing teachers' pay, based on merit, to attract more and better teachers. A similar number are in favor of requiring that teachers be given more training and have tougher credential standards before they teach in the classroom. Support is consistently high across the major regions of the state, race and ethnic groups, and political parties. Eighty-six percent of parents with children in public schools support increasing teachers' pay and increasing teachers' training as ways to improve teacher quality.

There is equally strong support for efforts to increase the standards for student learning. Nine in 10 want to require remedial after-school programs and summer school for students who are not performing at their grade level. The same number want to increase standards for learning and require students to pass achievement tests before they are promoted to the next grade. Again, there are no differences by region, race and ethnicity, or across political parties. Ninety-two percent of

parents with children in the public schools want programs for remedial students, while 84 percent want students to pass achievement tests before they are promoted.

As an indication of their concerns about the negative effects of classroom overcrowding, 83 percent favor reducing class sizes to a maximum of 20 students from kindergarten through sixth grade. About eight in 10 across all regions, racial and ethnic groups, and political parties favor extending the class size reduction that is currently under way in kindergarten through the third grade. Ninety percent of parents with children in the public schools favor an extension of class size reduction to include kindergarten to sixth grade.

Californians are less supportive of the state intervening when local public schools are not performing well. About half are in favor of requiring the state to take over a local public school when their students have low test scores and show no signs of improving, while four in 10 are opposed. There are no differences by region or party. Latinos are more likely than others to support state intervention (66% to 52%). Of parents with public school children, 58 percent are in favor of this education reform.

"How do you feel about the following proposals that have been made for improving K-12 public schools in California? Do you favor or oppose ..."

"... increasing teachers' pay based on merit, to attract and retain more and better teachers?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	84%	85%	90%	80%	83%	84%
Oppose	15	14	8	18	15	15
Don't know	1	1	2	2	2	1

"... requiring that teachers be given more training and have tougher credential standards before they teach in the classroom?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	85%	86%	84%	84%	89%	83%
Oppose	14	12	13	15	10	15
Don't know	1	2	3	1	1	2

"... increasing standards for learning and requiring that students pass achievement tests before they are promoted to the next grade?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	88%	89%	85%	88%	88%	89%
Oppose	10	10	14	10	11	10
Don't know	2	1	1	2	1	1

"... requiring remedial after-school programs and summer school for students who are not performing at their grade level?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	91%	93%	88%	90%	95%	90%
Oppose	8	6	10	8	5	9
Don't know	1	1	2	2	0	1

"... reducing class sizes to a maximum of 20 students from kindergarten through the sixth grade?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	83%	84%	79%	86%	86%	81%
Oppose	15	15	17	13	12	17
Don't know	2	1	4	1	2	2

"... making local school-site officials accountable for student performance by requiring the state to take over a local public school when its students have low test scores and have not shown signs of improving?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Favor	56%	59%	56%	59%	66%	52%
Oppose	39	36	39	36	30	42
Don't know	5	5	5	5	4	6

Future Growth and Infrastructure

Given that the state is expected to grow from 33 million now to nearly 50 million in 2020, we asked about the importance of building infrastructure today to accommodate future growth. Californians were, again, consistent in their concern about education, but also consistent in believing that it is important to spend in other areas as well.

Seven in 10 residents say it is very important for the state government to spend public funds to build K-12 public schools and public colleges and universities. One in four think this is somewhat important, and only 3 percent say this is not important. People in the Los Angeles area and Latinos are more likely than others to say that building education facilities is very important, and Democrats (76%) are more likely than Republicans (57%) to say so.

Half of Californians think that spending public funds to build and expand water storage facilities along the northern California rivers that feed into the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is very important. Four in 10 say it is somewhat important, while only 8 percent say it is not

important. With historical consistency, people in the San Francisco Bay area are the least likely to think building more water infrastructure is very important. Latinos are more likely than others to think that expanding the water storage facilities is very important. There are no differences by party.

Half of Californians also think that it is very important to spend public funds to build more roads and expand the state's highways and freeway system. Four in 10 say it is somewhat important, one in 10 say it is not important. Those living in the Los Angeles area are the most likely to think that expanding the highway and freeway system is very important. Latinos are more likely than others to think that spending money on building more roads is very important. There are no differences between Democrats and Republicans.

"California's population is 33 million today and is expected to reach nearly 50 million by 2020. People have different ideas about what the state government should be doing now to plan for the future. How important do you think it is for the state government to be spending public funds on ..."

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
<i>Building K-12 public schools and public colleges and universities</i>						
Very important	69%	73%	66%	66%	79%	65%
Somewhat important	27	24	29	28	18	30
Not important	3	3	4	5	2	4
Don't know	1	0	1	1	1	1
<i>Building and expanding water storage facilities</i>						
Very important	50%	51%	39%	54%	58%	47%
Somewhat important	39	39	42	36	34	41
Not important	8	5	15	8	6	9
Don't know	3	5	4	2	2	3
<i>Building more roads and expanding highways, freeways</i>						
Very important	48%	51%	45%	46%	52%	46%
Somewhat important	42	40	41	45	39	43
Not important	9	9	13	9	9	10
Don't know	1	0	1	0	0	1

Political Trends

Job Performance

As has been the case in recent national polls, President Clinton continues to receive high marks in California for his job performance. The ratings have been steady this year, and they remained high in the December survey while the House Judiciary Committee was meeting to discuss impeachment allegations. One of the more striking findings of the survey is the large difference in the President's approval ratings across race and ethnic groups.

Six in 10 Californians say Clinton is doing an excellent or good job as President, one in five say he is doing a fair job, and another one in five rate his job performance as poor. The President's "excellent" or "good" ratings are similar to those in the May (58%), September (58%), and October (60%) surveys.

Clinton's job ratings vary considerably across voter groups. Eighty percent of Democrats say he is doing an excellent or good job in office, 12 percent rate him as fair, and only 8 percent say he is doing poorly. Fifty-seven percent of independent voters and other party members give him excellent or good marks, 23 percent say fair, and 20 percent rate him as poor. Among Republicans, 29 percent say he is doing an excellent or good job, 27 percent a fair job, and 44 percent think he is doing a poor job in office. Ratings by party are also unchanged since the October survey.

As noted above, Clinton's job ratings also vary greatly by race and ethnicity. Fifty percent of non-Hispanic whites give him excellent or good ratings, compared with 54 percent of Asians, 72 percent of Latinos, and 90 percent of African Americans.

The U.S. Congress gets lower job performance ratings than the President. Thirty-three percent think the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives are doing an excellent or good job, 42 percent rate them as fair, 22 percent as poor, and 3 percent are uncertain. Compared to the October survey, positive ratings are down by 6 points.

Among Republicans, 36 percent say Congress is doing an excellent or good job, 44 percent say fair, 18 percent poor, and 2 percent are undecided. Among Democrats, 30 percent rate the Congress as excellent or good, 39 percent as fair, 29 percent as poor, and 2 percent are unsure. Among independent voters and other party members, 25 percent say the legislators are doing an excellent or good job, 50 percent say fair, 23 percent poor, and 2 percent are undecided. Ratings of Congress are down across all the parties, compared to the October survey. Latinos (42%) are the most likely to give excellent or good ratings to the Congress, followed by Asians (34%), non-Hispanic whites (30%), and African Americans (28%).

"How do you rate the job performance of ..."

	President Clinton				U.S. Congress		
	May	Sept	Oct	Dec	May	Oct	Dec
Excellent	21%	22%	26%	26%	3%	5%	4%
Good	37	36	34	33	30	34	29
Fair	25	21	19	20	49	40	42
Poor	16	20	21	20	15	19	22
Don't know	1	1	0	1	3	2	3

Initiative Process

Although Californians in the October survey voiced concern about various aspects of the initiative process, in the present survey they expressed more confidence in that process than in their elected officials. When asked which is the best way to address the most important problems facing the state today, Californians overwhelmingly favored the citizens' initiative process (75%) over relying on the Governor and State Legislature to pass state laws (21%). Independent voters and other party members are even more likely than Democrats or Republicans to place their faith in the initiative process. This confidence in the initiative process is found across all of the major regions of the state and across racial and ethnic groups.

"What do you think is the best way to address the most important problems facing California today: (a) The Governor and State Legislature should decide what to do and pass state laws; (b) California voters should decide what to do by bringing citizens' initiatives to the ballot box and passing them?"

	All Adults	Voters			Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Other	Latino	Other
Governor and Legislature	21%	22%	27%	15%	18%	22%
Citizens' initiatives	75	75	69	80	79	73
Don't know	4	3	4	5	3	5

Governor and State Legislature

One reason that the initiative process enjoys such strong support is that very few Californians feel highly confident about the problem-solving abilities of the Governor and State Legislature. When it comes to solving the state's most important problems, only 11 percent of the people have a great deal of confidence in the state's elected leaders. Six in 10 say they have only some confidence in them, while three in 10 have little or no confidence in them. Independent voters and other party members are even more likely than Democrats or Republicans to say they have little or no confidence in the problem-solving abilities of the Governor and the State Legislature. There are no differences across regions of the state or between racial and ethnic groups.

"How much confidence do you have in the Governor and State Legislature when it comes to their ability to solve the state's most important problems: Do you have a great deal, only some, very little, or no confidence?"

	All Adults	Voters			Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Other	Latino	Other
Great deal of confidence	11%	15%	9%	7%	14%	11%
Only some	58	58	61	58	55	60
Very little	21	17	22	24	22	20
No confidence	9	10	6	10	8	9
Don't know	1	0	2	1	1	0

Trust in State Government

When the question is put in terms of "trust" rather than confidence, Californians give state government even lower ratings. It is a dubious consolation that their trust in their state government is somewhat better than their trust in the federal government, as evidenced by comparisons between similar questions asked in the September survey and the current survey. Interestingly, low trust in government is one of the few strongly bipartisan attitudes reflected in the survey.

Thirty-seven percent say that they can trust the state government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, while 33 percent say they have a high level of trust in the federal government. Republicans are the least trusting of their state government. Latinos express more trust than other racial and ethnic groups. There are no regional differences.

Fifty-two percent say that the state government wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes, while 65 percent say the federal government wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes. Democrats are a little less likely than others to say that state government wastes a lot of the taxpayers' money. Central Valley residents (58%) are more likely than others to say that there is a lot of government waste. There are no differences by ethnicity and race.

The view that state government is run by a few big interests is shared by 64 percent of Californians, while 70 percent hold this view of the federal government. Independent voters and other party members are more likely than Democrats and Republicans to think that the state government is run by a few big interests. There are no differences across regions of the state. African Americans (81%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (65%), Latinos (62%), or Asians (55%) to believe that big interests run the state government.

"How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?"

	All Adults	Voters			Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Other	Latino	Other
Just about always	4%	3%	2%	2%	6%	3%
Most of the time	33	37	30	35	37	33
Some of the time	60	58	65	61	54	62
None of the time	2	1	1	1	2	1
Don't know	1	1	2	1	1	1

"Do you think that the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?"

	All Adults	Voters			Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Other	Latino	Other
A lot	52%	50%	56%	57%	55%	51%
Some	41	42	41	40	36	43
Don't waste very much	5	7	2	2	8	5
Don't know	2	1	1	1	1	1

"Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?"

	All Adults	Voters			Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Other	Latino	Other
A few big interests	64%	65%	67%	73%	62%	65%
Benefit of all of the people	29	29	27	22	32	28
Don't know	7	6	6	5	6	7

Political Orientation

Overall, Californians divide pretty evenly in identifying themselves as liberals, middle-of-the-road, or conservatives, but there are regional, ethnic, gender, and partisan differences.

Six in 10 Californians are moderate to somewhat conservative in their political thinking. However, Central Valley residents (44%) are more likely than San Francisco Bay area residents (32%) or Los Angeles area residents (35%) to say they are conservative. Latinos (56%) are as likely as non-Hispanic whites (58%) to call themselves middle-of-the-road to somewhat conservative, while Asians (65%) are more likely and African Americans less likely (46%) to categorize themselves in this manner. Men are more likely than women to describe themselves as moderate to somewhat conservative (62% to 53%), while women are more likely than men to say they are liberals (34% to 25%).

Democrats are more likely than Republicans and other voters to describe themselves as liberals (46% to 10% to 33%). Republicans are much more likely than Democrats and other voters to call themselves conservatives (65% to 20% to 26%). Independent voters and other party members are more likely than Republicans or Democrats to say they are political moderates (41% to 32% to 25%). Still, across all three political groups, most voters describe themselves as middle-of-the-road to somewhat conservative (Democrats: 48%; Republicans: 70%; other voters: 60%).

"Would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle of the road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Very liberal	8%	8%	9%	5%	8%	8%
Somewhat liberal	22	22	27	17	24	21
Middle of the road	32	33	31	32	30	32
Somewhat conservative	26	24	24	33	26	26
Very Conservative	11	11	8	11	10	11
Don't know	1	2	1	2	2	2

Political Interest

Despite the rising percentage of Californians who say they pay attention to political and electoral news stories, only 37 percent closely follow what's going on in government and public affairs. In the Pew Research Center Survey in June 1998, a similar 36 percent of Americans said they followed government and public affairs most of the time. In California, Latinos (27%) and Asians (25%) are much less likely than non-Hispanic whites (43%) and African Americans (44%) to say they frequently follow what goes on in government. Republicans (48%) are more likely than Democrats (39%) or other voters (36%) to closely follow public affairs and government. Only 22 percent of nonvoters are highly attentive.

"Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, hardly ever, or never?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Most of the time	37%	35%	40%	36%	27%	41%
Some of the time	42	42	41	42	42	42
Only now and then	15	16	15	16	22	13
Hardly ever	4	5	3	4	7	3
Never	1	2	1	1	2	1
Don't know	1	0	0	1	0	0

Name the New Governor

This apparent lack of interest in politics and government may explain the fact that only 53 percent could name the newly elected Governor. Predictably, that ability varied with voter status and likelihood of voting. Only 31 percent of nonvoters could name the new governor, compared to 60 percent of registered voters and 68 percent of those most likely to vote in elections. People living in the Los Angeles area were less likely to name Gray Davis than those living elsewhere. Forty percent of Latinos could name the Governor-elect, compared with 61 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

The ability to name the new governor correlates strongly with age, education, and income. Only 32 percent of those under 30 years old knew the name, compared with 51 percent of those 30 to 44 years of age and 68 percent of those 45 and older. Only 36 percent of those with a high school education or less named Gray Davis, compared with 52 percent of those who attended some college and 69 percent of those who graduated from college. Those living in households earning under \$40,000 a year were less likely to recall that Gray Davis was the new Governor than those earning \$40,000 or more (42% to 62%).

"California voters elected a new Governor on November 3rd. Could you give me the name of the new Governor of the State of California?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Gray Davis mentioned	53%	50%	60%	58%	40%	58%
Other names, Don't know	47	50	40	42	60	42

Social and Economic Trends

Consumer Confidence

California consumer confidence remains as strong today as it was before the November election, with Latinos expressing the most confidence in their future. Thirty-one percent of Californians report being better off financially than they were a year ago, 14 percent worse off, and 54 percent in about the same situation. San Francisco Bay area residents are the most likely and Central Valley residents the least likely to say they are better off now than last year. Latinos are a little more likely than others to say their finances have improved. Those earning under \$40,000 a year are less likely than those with higher incomes to say their finances have gotten better in the past year (27% to 35%).

Looking ahead a year, 43 percent think they will be better off, 7 percent worse off, 48 percent in the same situation, and 2 percent are uncertain. Latinos are much more optimistic than others about their financial prospects for next year. Los Angeles area residents are also more optimistic about next year.

Democrats (32%) and independent voters and other party members (35%) are more likely than Republicans (22%) to say that their finances have improved since last year. Democrats (46%) and independent voters and other party members (44%) are also more likely than Republicans (32%) to say that their finances will get better in the next year. Republicans are the most likely to report that their finances have not changed and will stay the same next year.

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

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Better off	31%	30%	35%	26%	35%	29%
Worse off	14	14	11	19	12	15
Same	54	55	54	54	51	56
Don't know	1	1	0	1	2	0

"Do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Better off	43%	46%	39%	40%	53%	39%
Worse off	7	5	9	8	4	8
Same	48	46	50	50	40	51
Don't know	2	3	2	2	3	2

Income Inequality

Despite the high consumer confidence, Californians are much more likely than people in other states to see themselves living in a society of haves and have nots, and a surprisingly large number place themselves in the have-not category. Yet, residents are divided about whether or not the government should do more to make sure that Californians have an equal opportunity to succeed.

Fifty-six percent believe that California divides into haves and have nots, while 41 percent disagree. By comparison, according to a 1998 Gallup Survey, 39 percent of Americans see American society as so divided, while 59 percent disagree. In California, those in households earning less than \$40,000 a year are more likely than those in households earning \$80,000 or more to have this perception. African Americans (76%) are more likely than Latinos (59%), non-Hispanic whites (54%), or Asians (44%), and Democrats (63%) and independent voters and other party members (60%) are more likely than are Republicans (46%) to see the state as divided into haves and have nots.

Thirty-five percent of Californians say they are in the have-not economic group. By comparison, 24 percent of Americans described themselves as have nots in a 1998 Gallup Survey. In California, 52 percent of those in households earning less than \$40,000 a year, 26 percent in those earning \$40,000 to under \$80,000, and 14 percent in those earning over \$80,000 a year say they are have nots. Half of Latinos, 45 percent of African Americans, 29 percent of Asians, and 28 percent of non-Hispanic whites consider themselves have nots. Fifty-two percent of the non-college educated, 37 percent who attended some college, and 14 percent of college graduates say they are in the have-not group. Thirty-two percent of registered voters and 46 percent of nonvoters say they are the have nots.

Half of Californians believe that everyone has an equal opportunity to get ahead, while nearly half think the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an opportunity to succeed. Those living in households earning less than \$40,000 a year are the most likely to say that the government should do more. African Americans (74%) and Latinos (52%) are more likely than Asians (41%) and non-Hispanic whites (39%) to favor more government intervention. Democrats (55%) are more likely than Republicans (28%) or other voters (43%) to want the government to do more to make sure that everyone has an equal opportunity to succeed.

"Some people think California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have nots, while others think that it is not divided in that way. Do you think California is divided into haves and have nots or do you think California is not divided in that way?"

	All Adults	Income			Ethnicity	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$79,999	\$80,000 or More	Latino	Other
Divided into haves, have nots	56%	58%	54%	50%	59%	55%
Not divided that way	41	38	42	47	38	42
Don't know	3	4	4	3	3	3

"If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or have nots?"

	All Adults	Income			Ethnicity	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$79,999	\$80,000 or More	Latino	Other
Haves	57%	41%	66%	79%	42%	63%
Have nots	35	52	26	14	50	30
Don't know	8	7	8	7	8	7

"Do you think that in California today: (a) All people have an equal opportunity to get ahead, or (b) The government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to succeed?"

	All Adults	Income			Ethnicity	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 - \$79,999	\$80,000 or More	Latino	Other
People have equal opportunity	52%	46%	58%	54%	46%	54%
Government should do more	45	52	39	46	52	42
Don't know	3	2	3	0	2	4

Immigration from Mexico

In 1994, California voters passed Proposition 187, an initiative with many provisions that clearly implied distrust and resentment of immigrants, particularly illegal immigrants. That mood appears to be changing, but not across the board. When asked about attitudes toward Mexican immigrants and illegal immigration, responses varied considerably by region and ethnicity. However, there was more general agreement about the effectiveness of border enforcement and school attendance of children who are illegal immigrants.

A narrow majority of Californians say they consider Mexican immigrants a benefit to the state because of their hard work and job skills, while about one-third describe them as a burden because they use public services and schools. Central Valley residents are the least likely to say that Mexican immigrants are a benefit. Latinos (70%) are much more likely than African Americans (55%), Asians (52%), or non-Hispanic whites (42%) to describe Mexican immigrants as beneficial. Republicans (35%) are much less likely than Democrats (57%) and other voters (55%) to describe Mexican immigrants in positive terms.

Forty-four percent say that illegal immigration from Mexico has been a big problem since 1994. Another 40 percent perceive it as somewhat of a problem, while only 14 percent think it has not been a problem. San Francisco Bay area residents are the least likely to describe illegal immigration as a big problem. Non-Hispanic whites (53%) are more likely than African Americans (43%), Asians (40%), and Latinos (29%) to identify illegal immigration as a big problem. Republicans (58%) more often see illegal immigration as a big problem than Democrats or other voters (41% each).

Few people believe that the federal government's walls, fences, and increased border patrols have made a significant difference in terms of preventing illegal immigration from Mexico to California. Thirteen percent say these efforts have made a big difference, 51 percent say some difference, and 35 percent say no difference. There are no large variations by region. Non-Hispanic whites (10%) are less likely than African Americans (20%), Asians (16%), or Latinos (14%) to say that the walls, fences, and border patrols have had a significant effect on illegal immigration.

About one in five thinks that children who are illegal immigrants in California today should be prevented from attending public schools. This includes 27 percent of non-Hispanic whites, 21 percent of Asians, 14 percent of Latinos, and 10 percent of African Americans. Central Valley residents are more likely than people in other regions, and Republicans (35%) are more likely than Democrats (16%) or other voters (22%) to favor this restriction. There are no differences between parents with children in public schools and other adults on this issue.

"Which of these views about immigration from Mexico is closest to yours: (a) Mexican immigrants are a benefit to California today because of their hard work and job skills; (b) Mexican immigrants are a burden to California today because they use public services and schools?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Immigrants are a benefit	52%	54%	54%	48%	70%	45%
Immigrants are a burden	36	35	31	39	20	42
Neither	7	7	8	5	5	8
Don't know	5	4	7	8	5	5

"In the past four years, do you think that illegal immigration from Mexico to California has been a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Big problem	44%	45%	39%	47%	29%	50%
Somewhat of a problem	40	40	41	39	46	38
No problem	14	14	18	11	24	10
Don't know	2	1	2	3	1	2

"Do you believe that the federal government's increased border patrols and building walls and fences on the California-Mexico border will make a big difference, some difference, or no difference in preventing illegal immigration?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Big difference	13%	14%	9%	13%	14%	12%
Some difference	51	49	51	54	46	52
No difference	35	36	39	31	38	34
Don't know	1	1	1	2	2	2

"Do you think that children who are illegal immigrants in California today should be prevented from attending public schools or not?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	22%	21%	19%	24%	14%	25%
No	75	77	78	72	85	72
Don't know	3	2	3	4	1	3

Migration Plans

During the recession and the debates over Proposition 187 and other highly charged issues, there was considerable talk about "white flight" and related questions of migration and population stability in the state. California now faces tremendous population growth and the certainty of being, within a decade, the first state without an ethnic majority. These circumstances have again raised questions about population stability and which groups might be likely to relocate within or prefer to leave the state. The survey's findings suggest that Californians' plans for future residence are consistent with their general optimism about the state's direction and economy—most plan on staying in the state for the near future.

One in three Californians plans to move from his or her county of residence within the next five years. However, of those, two-thirds plan to stay in the state. People living in the Los Angeles area are more likely than people in other regions to say they will move in the next five years, with 27 percent anticipating a move within the state and 14 percent expecting to leave the state. Those who live in large cities are the least likely to say they will remain in their current county (55%); most say they will move inside the state (28%) rather than outside of the state (13%). Those living in small towns, villages, or the country are the most likely to say they will stay put (72%).

Non-Hispanic whites are the most likely to say they will stay in their county of residence (68%). Of those who plan to move, 28 percent will relocate somewhere in California rather than outside of the state (10%). While Latinos are more likely than non-Hispanic whites to think they will leave their county of residence, they are no more likely to move out of the state. Three out of four Latinos who expect to move will relocate elsewhere in California. Asians (60%) and African Americans (50%) are about as likely as Latinos to say they will still be living in their county of residence five years from now.

Interestingly, those who are born in the United States (85%), those born elsewhere who have become citizens (88%), and noncitizens (86%) are equally likely to say they will be living in their current county of residence or somewhere else in California in five years.

Age correlates with plans to stay put or relocate in California. Among those under 30 years old, 42 percent plan to stay in their current county, 39 percent think they will move somewhere else in California, and 34 percent expect to move out of state. In every other age group, six in 10 or more expect to stay in their current county, with most of those who plan to move saying they will stay in the state. Those holding post-graduate college degrees (71%), living in households earning \$80,000 or more (71%), and living in their current residence for 10 or more years (71%) are the most likely to say they will be living in their current county of residence in five years.

"Five years from now, do you see yourself living in your current county of residence or do you expect to be living somewhere else? (If elsewhere: Is that inside or outside of California?)"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Living in current county	63%	57%	68%	69%	58%	65%
Elsewhere in California	22	27	20	17	28	20
Elsewhere outside of California	11	14	8	11	11	12
Don't know	4	2	4	3	3	3

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. The findings of this survey, the fifth in the series, are based on a telephone survey of 2,022 California adult residents interviewed from December 4 to December 13, 1998. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to four times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish, as needed.

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 U.S. Census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,022 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. The sampling error for the 1,562 voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 996 likely voters is +/- 3.5%. Sampling error is just 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.

Throughout the report, we refer to three geographic regions. "LA Metro" includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. "SF Bay Area" includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties. "Central Valley" includes Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba counties. These three regions were chosen for analysis because they account for approximately 85 percent of the state population; moreover, the growth of the Central Valley has given it increasing political significance.

We contrast the results for Latinos with results for "other" ethnic and racial groups. Latinos account for about 24 percent of the state's adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. For likely voters, the sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. Most of the "other" responses are non-Hispanic whites. We also contrast the opinions of Democrats and Republicans with "other" registered voters. The "other" category includes nonaffiliated voters and members of other political parties.

In some cases we compare the PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by *Newsweek* in 1998, by the Pew Research Center in 1998, and by the Gallup Organization in 1998. We also adapted questions asked by the Texas Poll in 1995 and 1997, by the University of Michigan (National Election Studies) in 1996, and by the Pew Research Center in 1996, 1997, and 1998. In other cases we discuss differences between 1994 and 1998; the earlier data come from surveys of California voters conducted during the 1994 election cycle by Mark Baldassare for the California Business Roundtable.

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: THE CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF CALIFORNIA
DECEMBER 4-13, 1998
2,022 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

[Responses recorded for first 13 questions are from likely voters. All other responses are from all adults.]

1. First, I have a few questions about elections. In March 2000, California will hold an open Presidential Primary. That means the voters will be able to vote for anyone they choose, regardless of the candidate's party. If the election were held today, who would you vote for? *(rotate names, then ask "or someone else?")*
 - 31% Al Gore, a Democrat
 - 21 George Bush, Jr., a Republican
 - 9 Elizabeth Dole, a Republican
 - 5 Pete Wilson, a Republican
 - 4 Steve Forbes, a Republican
 - 4 Richard Gephardt, a Democrat
 - 3 Dan Quayle, a Republican
 - 4 someone else *(specify)*
 - 19 don't know
2. If these were the candidates for the presidential election in the year 2000, who would you vote for? *(rotate)*
 - 47% George Bush, Jr., a Republican
 - 45 Al Gore, a Democrat
 - 8 don't know
3. And if these were the candidates for the presidential election in the year 2000, who would you vote for? *(rotate)*
 - 37% Pete Wilson, a Republican
 - 54 Al Gore, a Democrat
 - 9 don't know
4. On another topic, a number of propositions are being considered for the state ballot in the year 2000. One initiative would create a voucher system that would allow the use of public funds for parents to pay to send their children to private or parochial schools. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?
 - 52% yes
 - 43 no
 - 5 don't know
5. Which of these two views is closest to yours: *(rotate)* (a) the voucher system would make public schools better by making public and private schools compete for students and public funds; (b) the voucher system would make public schools worse because the loss of students would result in less public funds?
 - 50% make schools better
 - 41 make schools worse
 - 1 other, no difference
 - 8 don't know
6. Which of these two views is closest to yours: *(rotate)* (a) a voucher system will subsidize wealthy parents who send their children to private and parochial schools; (b) a voucher system will help lower-income parents send their children to a better private or parochial school instead of their local public school?
 - 32% subsidize wealthy parents
 - 57 help lower-income parents
 - 3 other, no difference
 - 8 don't know
7. On the 2000 ballot, there will be a "definition of marriage" initiative, which would provide that only a marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?
 - 64% yes
 - 33 no
 - 3 don't know
8. Thinking about what might be done to protect gay rights, do you think there should or should not be special legislation to guarantee equal rights for gays and lesbians?
 - 46% should
 - 48 should not
 - 6 don't know
9. And do you think there should or should not be health insurance and other benefits for domestic partners of gay and lesbian employees?
 - 58% should
 - 35 should not
 - 7 don't know
10. On another topic, after the 2000 census, state legislative and congressional district boundaries will be redrawn. This reapportionment is done by the Governor and State Legislature. An initiative would take reapportionment out of the hands of the Governor and the State Legislature and give it to an independent commission. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on this initiative?
 - 46% yes
 - 41 no
 - 13 don't know

11. The new California Governor is a Democrat, and the State Legislature may be controlled by the Democrats after the 2000 election. Do you think the Governor and State Legislature will provide a reapportionment plan that is fair or one that is unfair, or don't you know enough about it to have an opinion?

25% fair
23 unfair
52 don't know

12. On another topic, how closely have you been following the news stories about California politics and elections?

19% very closely
59 fairly closely
19 not too closely
3 not at all closely
0 don't know

13. And how would you rate the job that news organizations are doing in reporting about California politics and elections?

5% excellent
32 good
43 fair
18 poor
2 don't know

14. Next, some questions about the state. Which one issue facing California today do you think is most important for the Governor and the State Legislature to work on in 1999? (*code don't read*)

36% schools, education
7 crime, gangs
5 immigration, illegal immigration
5 jobs, the economy
5 poverty, the poor, the homeless, welfare
4 taxes
3 health care, HMOs
2 environment, pollution
2 state budget, state and local finance
2 traffic and transportation
1 drugs
1 government regulations
1 growth, overpopulation
1 housing costs, housing availability
1 race relations, ethnic tensions
1 state government, governor, legislature
1 water
4 other (*specify*)
18 don't know

15. And do you think things in California are generally going in the direction or the wrong direction?

63% right direction
28 wrong direction
9 don't know

The state government faces a one billion dollar deficit next year. Given the state's limited funds, what priorities should be given to each of these categories of public spending in the state budget, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority? (*rotate 16 to 19*)

16. What priority should be given to spending for kindergarten through 12th grade public education, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority?

4% (1) very low priority
2 (2)
9 (3)
18 (4)
67 (5) very high priority

17. What priority should be given to spending for public health and welfare, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority?

7% (1) very low priority
9 (2)
28 (3)
24 (4)
32 (5) very high priority

18. What priority should be given to spending for public colleges and universities, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority?

5% (1) very low priority
8 (2)
29 (3)
28 (4)
30 (5) very high priority

19. What priority should be given to spending for corrections, such as prisons, on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority?

17% (1) very low priority
22 (2)
35 (3)
13 (4)
13 (5) very high priority

20. On another topic, people have different ideas about what they think is wrong with California's K-12 public schools. What is the one reason you think is most responsible for public schools not performing as well as they could?
(code don't read)

- 22% teachers
- 12 lack of state funds
- 11 overcrowded classrooms, school buildings need repairs
- 11 parents
- 5 local school boards, local school administrators
- 4 curriculum, books
- 4 lack of local funds, local voters not passing taxes
- 4 lack of standards and testing
- 3 students
- 2 gangs, crime, drugs, alcohol
- 2 immigrant students, non-English speaking students
- 2 state officials
- 1 unions
- 8 other answer (specify)
- 9 don't know

How do you feel about the following proposals that have been made for improving K-12 public schools in California? (rotate questions 21 to 26)

21. Do you favor or oppose increasing teachers' pay based on merit, to attract and retain more and better teachers?

- 84% favor
- 15 oppose
- 1 don't know

22. Do you favor or oppose requiring that teachers be given more training and have tougher credential standards before they teach in the classroom?

- 85% favor
- 14 oppose
- 1 don't know

23. Do you favor or oppose increasing standards for learning and requiring that students pass achievement tests before they are promoted to the next grade?

- 88% favor
- 10 oppose
- 2 don't know

24. Do you favor or oppose reducing class sizes to a maximum of 20 students from kindergarten through the sixth grade?

- 83% favor
- 15 oppose
- 2 don't know

25. Do you favor or oppose requiring remedial after-school programs and summer school for students who are not performing at their grade level?

- 91% favor
- 8 oppose
- 1 don't know

26. Do you favor or oppose making local school-site officials accountable for student performance by requiring the state to take over a local public school when their students have low test scores and have not shown signs of improving?

- 56% favor
- 39 oppose
- 5 don't know

27. On another topic, how do you rate the job performance of president Bill Clinton at this time?

- 26% excellent
- 33 good
- 20 fair
- 20 poor
- 1 don't know

28. And how do you rate the job performance of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives at this time?

- 4% excellent
- 29 good
- 42 fair
- 22 poor
- 3 don't know

On another topic, people have different ideas about the state government in Sacramento. These ideas don't refer to Democrats or Republicans in particular, but just to government in general. We want to see how you feel about these ideas.

29. How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- 4% just about always
- 33 most of the time
- 60 some of the time
- 2 none of the time (code don't read)
- 1 don't know

30. Do you think that the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?

- 52% a lot
- 41 some
- 5 don't waste very much
- 2 don't know

31. Would you say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?
- 64% a few big interests
 - 29 benefit of all of the people
 - 7 don't know
32. What do you think is the best way to address the most important problems facing California today? (*rotate*) (a) the Governor and State Legislature should decide what to do and pass state laws; (b) California voters should decide what to do by bringing citizens' initiatives to the ballot box and passing them.
- 21% Governor and Legislature
 - 75 citizens' initiatives
 - 4 don't know
33. And how much confidence do you have in the Governor and State Legislature when it comes to their ability to solve the state's most important problems? Do you have a great deal, only some, very little, or no confidence?
- 11% great deal of confidence
 - 58 only some
 - 21 very little
 - 9 no confidence
 - 1 don't know
34. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain you are registered to vote in the precinct or election district where you now live, or haven't you been able to register to vote yet? (*if yes: are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or independent?*)
- 37% yes, Democrat
 - 27 yes, Republican
 - 3 yes, other party
 - 12 yes, independent
 - 21 no, not registered
35. Would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle of the road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?
- 8% very liberal
 - 22 somewhat liberal
 - 32 middle of the road
 - 26 somewhat conservative
 - 11 very conservative
 - 1 don't know
36. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?
- 18% a great deal
 - 50 fair amount
 - 28 only a little
 - 4 none
 - 0 don't know
37. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs most of the time, some of the time, only now and then, hardly ever, or never?
- 37% most of the time
 - 42 some of the time
 - 15 only now and then
 - 4 hardly ever
 - 1 never
 - 1 don't know
38. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?
- 55% always
 - 19 nearly always
 - 10 part of the time
 - 4 seldom
 - 11 never
 - 1 other
 - 0 don't know
39. California voters elected a new Governor on November 3rd. Could you give me the name of the new Governor of the State of California? (*code don't read*)
- 53% Gray Davis
 - 5 other name
 - 42 don't know
40. On another topic, as far as your own situation, would you say that you and your family are financially better off or worse off or just about the same as you were a year ago?
- 31% better off
 - 14 worse off
 - 54 same
 - 1 don't know
41. Now looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?
- 43% better off
 - 7 worse off
 - 48 same
 - 2 don't know
42. On another topic, some people think California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think that it is not divided in that way. Do you think California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think California is not divided in that way?
- 56% divided into haves and have-nots
 - 41 not divided that way
 - 3 don't know

43. If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or have-nots?

57% haves
35 have-nots
8 don't know

44. Do you think that in California today: (*rotate*)
(a) all people have an equal opportunity to get ahead, or (b) the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to succeed?

52% people have equal opportunity
45 government should do more
3 don't know

45. On another topic, which of these views about immigration from Mexico is closest to yours: (*rotate*)
(a) Mexican immigrants are a benefit to California today because of their hard work and job skills; (b) Mexican immigrants are a burden to California today because they use public services and schools.

52% immigrants are a benefit
36 immigrants are a burden
7 neither
5 don't know

I'd like to ask you a few questions about immigrants who are in California illegally.

46. In the past four years, do you think that illegal immigration from Mexico to California has been a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?

44% big problem
40 somewhat of a problem
14 no problem
2 don't know

47. Do you believe that the federal government's increased border patrols and building walls and fences on the California-Mexico border will make a big difference, some difference, or no difference in preventing illegal immigration?

13% big difference
51 some difference
35 no difference
1 don't know

48. And do you think that children who are illegal immigrants in California today should be prevented from attending public schools or not?

22% yes
75 no
3 don't know

On another topic, California's population is 33 million today and is expected to reach nearly 50 million by 2020. People have different ideas about what the state government should be doing now to plan for the future. (*rotate questions 49 to 51*)

49. How important do you think it is for the state government to be spending public funds to build and expand water storage facilities along the Northern California rivers that feed into the Sacramento-San Joaquin delta?

50% very important
39 somewhat important
8 not important
3 don't know

50. How important do you think it is for the state government to be spending public funds to build more K-12 public schools, public colleges, and universities?

69% very important
27 somewhat important
3 not important
1 don't know

51. How important do you think it is for the state government to be spending public funds to build more roads and expand the state's highways and freeway system?

48% very important
42 somewhat important
9 not important
1 don't know

[Questions 52-63 are demographic questions. They include the question below, which appears with the other tables presented in the survey report.]

Five years from now, do you see yourself living in your current county of residence or do you expect to be living somewhere else? (*if elsewhere: is that inside or outside of California?*)

63% living in current county
22 elsewhere in California
11 elsewhere outside of California
4 don't know

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

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