

SEPTEMBER 2008

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

CALIFORNIA

# Californians & their government

in collaboration with  
The James Irvine Foundation

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**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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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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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 90<sup>th</sup> PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 192,000 Californians. This survey is the 31<sup>st</sup> in the *Californians and Their Government* series, which periodically examines the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. The series is currently supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation.

This survey seeks to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers, and stimulate public discussion about state and national issues and the November general election. The context for this survey includes a presidential campaign, a downturn in the national economy, and the state budget standoff. Through analysis of likely voters, we examine issues in the fall general election, including the presidential race and three of the state propositions on the November ballot. The survey also examines Californians' opinions of state and national issues, including their overall outlook on the state and economic conditions, perceptions of elected officials who represent them in Sacramento and Washington, perceptions and policy preferences regarding the state budget, general attitudes towards the citizens' initiative process, attitudes toward the workings of the two-party system, and overall importance of and enthusiasm about the 2008 presidential election.

This report presents the responses of 2,002 California adult residents, including 1,157 likely voters, on these specific topics:

- The November election, including preferences in the presidential election and satisfaction with the choice of candidates; importance of candidates' debate performances and preferences about what issues should be included in the debates; candidate preferences for handling specific policy issues; attention to news about the presidential candidates; support for and perceived importance of Proposition 4 (parental notification of a minor child's abortion) and Proposition 8 (eliminating same-sex couples' right to marry); and support for Proposition 11 (redistricting reform) and perceptions of the need for changes in the redistricting process.
- State and national issues, including the current direction of the state and future economic outlook, approval ratings for Governor Schwarzenegger, the California Legislature, and respondents' own state legislative representatives; approval ratings for President Bush, the U.S. Congress, Senators Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and respondents' own congressional representatives; the general direction and economic outlook for the state; attitudes toward the state budget; perceptions of the citizens' initiative process; and attitudes towards the major political parties and the presidential election.
- 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 November election ballot and state and national issues.

Copies of this report may be ordered online ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) or by phone (415-291-4400). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org). View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.









## IN WAKE OF BUDGET STANDOFF, SUPPORT GROWS TO LOWER TWO-THIRDS THRESHOLD

At the time of this survey, the state budget standoff had entered its fourth month, and Californians' frustration with the process was reflected in their changing views about structural reform. Three in four (76%) say major changes are needed in the budget process – an increase of 11 points since May, when the governor released his revised budget. Nearly half (49%) think it would be a good idea to lower the threshold for passing the budget from two-thirds to a 55 percent majority of the state legislature. This proposal, which was defeated at the polls in 2004, is opposed by only 37 percent of the state's residents. A year ago, nearly half (46%) thought this change was a bad idea, and only 44 percent thought it was a good idea.

A majority (62%) say it would be a good idea to strictly limit the amount of state spending increases allowed each year, while less than a third (31%) consider it a bad idea.

## APPROVAL RATINGS FOR STATE LEGISLATURE, BUSH SINK TO NEW LOWS

Against the backdrop of a worsening economy and the longest budget impasse in state history, Californians are feeling grim about the future and dissatisfied with many of their state and national leaders.

A record-high 44 percent of adults say that jobs and the economy are the top issues facing the state. This is true across all party and demographic groups, although Democrats (47%) and independents (44%) are more likely than Republicans (36%) to hold this view.

Nearly seven in 10 Californians (68%) expect bad times financially in the year ahead. About half say the current housing situation in California will hurt their finances a great deal (31%) or somewhat (21%). The perception that the state is going in the wrong direction is widely held (68%). While this negative view has changed little since last month, it has grown by 18 points in the last year.

Californians are pessimistic about their elected leaders' ability to handle the challenges:

- **State legislature gets record low rating:** Only one in five Californians (21%) approve of the job the legislature is doing, a decline of 5 points since last month.
- **Constituents give their own legislators low marks:** Only one in three residents (34%) approve of the job their own state senator and assembly member are doing, an 8-point drop since March and a 7-point drop from a year ago.
- **Governor fares slightly better:** Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's 38 percent approval rating has held steady from last month but is still 12 points lower than a year ago.
- **President Bush's approval drops to new low:** Among Californians, the president's approval rating is 23 percent, a slightly more negative assessment than he received in a recent CBS News/New York Times national poll (27% approval).
- **Congress' job approval rating slips:** Congress' 29 percent approval rating is about the same as last month, but 4 points lower than in March.
- **Congressional representatives rated higher:** The state's residents give higher approval ratings to their own Congressional representative (49%) and to Senator Dianne Feinstein (48%), Senator Barbara Boxer (44%), and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (40%).

## **MORE KEY FINDINGS:**

### **How Californians would have balanced the budget – Page 20**

As they have since January, a plurality of residents (43%) favor a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, while fewer (36%) favor balancing the budget mainly through cuts and fewer still (7%) prefer tax hikes alone or borrowing money and running a deficit (5%). But they are deeply divided along party lines in their preferences.

### **Residents conflicted over the initiative process – Page 21**

As they get ready to vote on a state ballot that includes 12 propositions—10 of them citizens' initiatives—Californians say the process is flawed and that there are too many initiatives on the ballot and that they're too complicated. However, 38 percent say initiatives should be the guiding force in determining policy, while 32 percent choose the legislature and 20 percent prefer the governor.

### **Many say a third political party is needed – Page 22**

Despite their views that there are important differences between the two major parties, a slim majority of Californians (52%) say that the nation needs a third political party. Republicans are much less likely than they were four years ago to say that the two major parties are doing an adequate job.

## **ABOUT THE SURVEY**

This survey is the 31<sup>st</sup> in the *Californians and Their Government* series and is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. It seeks to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers, and stimulate public discussion on state and national issues and the November general election. This is the 90<sup>th</sup> PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 192,000 Californians. Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,002 California adult residents interviewed from September 9–16, 2008. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2% and for the 1,157 likely voters is +/- 3%. For more information on methodology, see page 25.

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998.

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This report will appear on PPIC's website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) after 10 p.m. PDT on September 24.

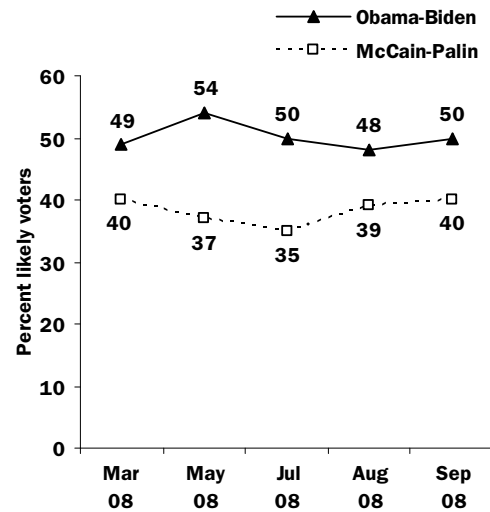
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# NOVEMBER 2008 ELECTION

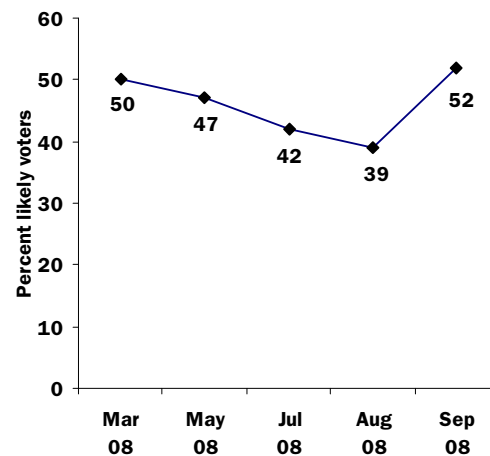
## KEY FINDINGS

- Among California's likely voters, the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden leads the Republican ticket of John McCain and Sarah Palin (50% to 40%) in the presidential race—a lead similar to last month, before running mates were chosen. Nearly two in three likely voters are satisfied with their choice of candidates in the presidential election, up sharply from last month, with independents the least satisfied with their choices. (page 8)
- Sixty-five percent of likely voters say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting this year. Eight in 10 likely voters say candidates' debate performances are important in deciding their vote in the presidential election (38% very, 41% somewhat). Among likely voters, the top debate issue is the economy. (pages 9, 10)
- Regardless of their choice for president, likely voters think Obama would do a better job of handling health care, jobs and the economy, and energy policy, but that McCain would better handle foreign policy. Likely voters are divided over who they think would do a better job handling immigration and the situation in Iraq. (pages 10, 11)
- Likely voters are more inclined to vote yes than no on Proposition 4, a constitutional amendment requiring parental notification before termination of a minor's pregnancy (48% yes, 41% no, 11% don't know). More would vote no than yes on Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment that would ban same-sex marriage (41% yes, 55% no, 4% don't know). Likely voters are divided, with many undecided, on Proposition 11, which would give redistricting authority to a citizens' commission (38% yes, 33% no, 29% don't know). (pages 12-14)

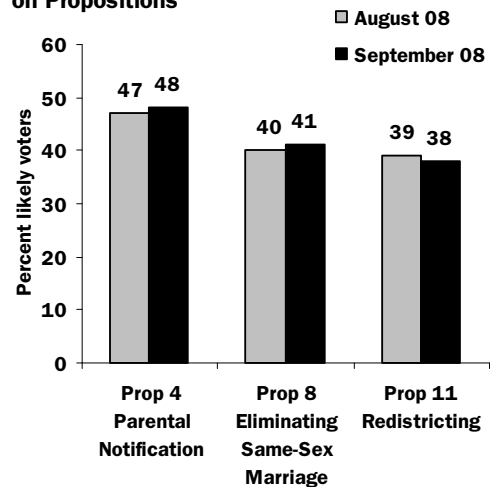
Presidential Election



Percent Following News About Presidential Candidates "Very Closely"



Percent Who Would Vote "Yes" on Propositions



## 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In this year’s presidential race, California’s likely voters support the Obama-Biden Democratic ticket by a 10-point margin over the McCain-Palin Republican ticket (50% to 40%). The Democrats’ lead is nearly identical to that found in PPIC’s August survey (48% Obama, 39% McCain), despite a flurry of campaign activity since that time—including the national nominating conventions and the announcement of running mates. While registered voters in California give the edge to Obama-Biden, registered voters nationwide are more closely divided, according to several recent national surveys.

California’s likely voters are loyal to their parties in this race, with Democrats overwhelmingly supporting the Obama-Biden ticket (84%) and nearly the same percentage of Republicans backing McCain-Palin (83%). Support for the GOP ticket has increased 6 points among Republican likely voters since August. Among independent likely voters, Obama-Biden leads McCain-Palin by 18 points (53% to 35%).

The announcement of Sarah Palin as John McCain’s running mate seems to have had little effect on female likely voters in California. In August, women supported Obama over McCain by 21 points (53% to 32%) and today they support the Obama-Biden ticket over the McCain-Palin ticket by 20 points (56% to 36%). Among Latino likely voters today, Obama-Biden leads McCain-Palin (57% to 30%), but the Democratic advantage has dropped substantially since August, when Obama led McCain by a more than four-to-one margin (71% to 16%). Both male likely voters and white likely voters continue to be divided today. Among self-described evangelical Christians, 59 percent support the McCain-Palin ticket, an increase of 6 points since August.

**“If the November 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election were being held today, would you vote for the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden or the Republican ticket of John McCain and Sarah Palin?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Obama-Biden	McCain-Palin	Someone else	Don't know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		50%	40%	3%	7%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	84	10	1	5
	<b>Republican</b>	9	83	1	7
	<b>Independent</b>	53	35	4	8
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	44	43	5	8
	<b>Women</b>	56	36	1	7
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	57	30	1	12
	<b>Whites</b>	44	46	3	7

While overall candidate preferences have changed little in the last month, voters’ satisfaction with their candidate choices has climbed (48% August to 64% today). The most dramatic shift in the last month occurred among Republicans. In August, just 35 percent of Republicans expressed satisfaction, while 64 percent were unhappy. Today, the reverse is true: 67 percent are satisfied and 31 percent are not. Meanwhile, independents are divided (49% satisfied, 47% not satisfied). Latino likely voters are much more likely to say they are satisfied today (64%) than they were in August (51%).

**“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. President on November 4<sup>th</sup>?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>Satisfied</b>	64%	74%	67%	49%	64%
<b>Not satisfied</b>	32	25	31	47	35
<b>Don't know</b>	4	1	2	4	1

**2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (CONTINUED)**

California voters have been asked to go to the polls frequently in recent years—the November 4<sup>th</sup> election will mark the 11<sup>th</sup> statewide election since 2002. Nevertheless, voters turned out in record numbers for February’s presidential primary, and interest in the November 4<sup>th</sup> election is high: In our current survey, two in three likely voters (65%) say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting in this election. Just 20 percent are less enthusiastic and 14 percent volunteer that their enthusiasm is the same.

Democratic likely voters (76%) are the most apt to say they are more enthusiastic than usual, followed by Republican (62%) and independent likely voters (53%). Likely voters supporting the Obama-Biden ticket (76%) are much more likely to express enthusiasm than those supporting the McCain-Palin ticket (59%). Sixty-three percent of both Latino and white likely voters say they are more enthusiastic about voting in this election, while women express more enthusiasm than men (69% to 60%). At least six in 10 likely voters across age groups and regions say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting, with middle-aged voters (68%) and San Francisco Bay Area (70%) and Los Angeles (66%) voters the most likely to express this view.

**“Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual, or less enthusiastic?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>More enthusiastic</b>	65%	76%	62%	53%	63%
<b>Less enthusiastic</b>	20	13	20	35	24
<b>Same (volunteered)</b>	14	10	16	12	13
<b>Don’t know</b>	1	1	2	—	—

Between September 26<sup>th</sup> and October 15<sup>th</sup>, four national televised debates will be held—three between presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama and one between vice-presidential candidates Sarah Palin and Joe Biden. Eight in 10 likely voters say the candidates’ performances will be very (38%) or somewhat important (41%) in deciding how they vote. Democrats (43%) are more likely than Republicans (36%) or independents (32%) to say that debate performances will be very important in their voting decision. Similarly, 43 percent of Obama-Biden voters consider the debates very important to them, compared to 35 percent of McCain-Palin voters. Latinos (54%) are far more likely than whites (33%) to hold this view. Women place more importance on the debates than men (43% to 33%).

**“In deciding who to vote for in the November 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election, how important to you are the candidates’ performances in public debates?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>Very important</b>	38%	43%	36%	32%	54%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	41	38	41	47	37
<b>Not too important</b>	13	12	14	16	7
<b>Not at all important</b>	7	5	7	3	1
<b>Don’t know</b>	1	2	2	2	1

## ISSUES AND CANDIDATE RANKINGS

When it comes to the actual content of the presidential debates, in an open-ended question, four in 10 likely voters offer that they would most like to hear the candidates discuss the economy (40%). Far fewer name the war in Iraq (12%), immigration (7%), or health care (6%). In the 2004 presidential race, the economy also topped the list of issues voters wanted to hear about in debates, although fewer named it (30%). Then, voters more frequently mentioned the war in Iraq (19%) and health care (12%). The 2000 race between Republicans Bush-Cheney and Democrats Gore-Lieberman reflected better economic times. Then, likely voters most wanted to hear about schools and education (19%), followed by health care (15%), Social Security and Medicare (14%), and taxes (11%). Just 5 percent named the economy.

Today, the economy tops the list across political groups (47% independents, 46% Democrats, 33% Republicans) and all demographic groups. In the debates, Democrats and independents are more likely than Republicans to want to hear about the war in Iraq, while Republicans are more likely to say immigration should be discussed. Obama-Biden voters are more likely than McCain-Palin voters to say candidates should debate economic issues (46% to 32%) and the Iraq war (16% to 8%), while McCain-Palin voters are more likely to want to hear about immigration (11% to 4%). Latinos are twice as likely as whites (12% to 6%) to say they are interested in hearing about immigration in the debates. Young voters (37%) are nearly as likely as others to mention the economy, but are more likely than others to say gay rights and same-sex marriage (9%) should be discussed in the debates.

**“Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about during the presidential debates?”**

Top four issues mentioned Likely voters only	All Likely Voters	Party			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Economy</b>	40%	46%	33%	47%	39%
<b>War in Iraq</b>	12	15	9	13	13
<b>Immigration, illegal immigration</b>	7	4	11	5	12
<b>Health care, health costs</b>	6	7	3	7	4

When asked which presidential candidate would do a better job of handling these top issues, likely voters are more apt to name Barack Obama over John McCain on jobs and the economy (53% to 37%) and health care (57% to 29%). They are divided over who could better handle the war in Iraq (49% Obama, 44% McCain) and immigration (42% Obama, 40% McCain).

On who would best handle jobs and the economy, most Democratic likely voters (83%) name Obama, while most Republicans (70%) back McCain. Independents are more likely to say Obama (50%) than McCain (39%). Of likely voters supporting the Obama-Biden ticket, 90 percent trust Obama to handle the economy; of those supporting the McCain-Palin ticket, 79 percent trust McCain. And of those who want the candidates to debate the economy, 59 percent believe Obama could better handle this issue. Women are more likely to pick Obama (58%), while men are more divided (47% Obama, 42% McCain).

When it comes to handling the war in Iraq, a strong majority of Republican likely voters (84%) believe McCain is the candidate for the job; Democrats also fall along party lines (79% Obama). Independents are divided over this issue (48% Obama, 46% McCain). A vast majority of Obama-Biden voters (87%) name Obama and more than nine in 10 McCain-Palin voters (93%) name McCain. Men are divided (48% McCain, 46% Obama), while women favor Obama over McCain (51% Obama, 41% McCain).

Likely voters are divided over who would best handle immigration, with 68 percent of Democrats saying Obama and 71 percent of Republicans naming McCain. Independents are split (40% Obama, 39% McCain).

**ISSUES AND CANDIDATE RANKINGS (CONTINUED)**

Three in four Obama-Biden voters (74%) say Obama would do the better job on immigration and three in four McCain-Palin voters (75%) say McCain would. Latinos are twice as likely to name Obama (53% to 26%).

Obama has the largest lead over McCain on the issue of health care (57% to 29%). While most partisan voters support their party's candidate (82% of Democrats trust Obama, 60% of Republicans trust McCain), 23 percent of Republicans think Obama could do a better job than McCain on this issue. Independents think Obama would do a better job than McCain by a wide margin (59% to 25%). Eighty-eight percent of Obama-Biden voters support Obama on health care, compared to the 66 percent of McCain-Palin voters who support McCain on this issue. Majorities of women and men pick Obama.

**"Regardless of your choice for president, which of these candidates would do a better job on...?"**

		Likely Voters	Party			Latinos
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...jobs and the economy</i>	<b>John McCain</b>	37%	10%	70%	39%	27%
	<b>Barack Obama</b>	53	83	17	50	62
	<b>Other</b>	1	1	2	—	2
	<b>Don't know</b>	9	6	11	11	9
<i>...the situation in Iraq</i>	<b>John McCain</b>	44	16	84	46	37
	<b>Barack Obama</b>	49	79	12	48	56
	<b>Other</b>	2	1	1	3	1
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	4	3	3	6
<i>...immigration</i>	<b>John McCain</b>	40	15	71	39	26
	<b>Barack Obama</b>	42	68	12	40	53
	<b>Other</b>	2	2	3	2	3
	<b>Don't know</b>	16	15	14	19	18
<i>...health care</i>	<b>John McCain</b>	29	9	60	25	23
	<b>Barack Obama</b>	57	82	23	59	64
	<b>Other</b>	3	1	2	3	2
	<b>Don't know</b>	11	8	15	13	11

When it comes to handling energy policy, Obama has a 13-point edge over McCain (51% to 38%) among California's likely voters. Support falls along partisan lines: Most Democrats (77%) name Obama and most Republicans (74%) support McCain. Independents back Obama over McCain by 20 points (55% to 35%).

Of six issues addressed, McCain only has an edge over Obama on handling foreign policy (51% to 43%). Eighty-eight percent of Republicans back McCain in this area, while 74 percent of Democrats support Obama. But 21 percent of Democrats think McCain could better handle foreign policy. Independents favor McCain over Obama by a wide margin (53% to 36%) on this issue.

With the election just over a month away, nine in 10 voters are following news about the election very (52%) or somewhat closely (39%). The percentage following news very closely increased 13 points since our August survey (39%), just before the party conventions. More than half of Democrats (56%) and Republicans (52%) are following news very closely, compared to 44 percent of independents. The percentage following news very closely increases with age, education, and income. At least half of both Obama-Biden (56%) and McCain-Palin (51%) supporters are very closely following election news.

**PROPOSITION 4: PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

Almost half of likely voters support Proposition 4 (48% yes, 41% no), a citizens’ initiative that would amend the state constitution to prohibit the termination of an unemancipated minor’s pregnancy until 48 hours after the notification of her parent or guardian. One in 10 likely voters are undecided. In August, likely voters were more closely divided (47% yes, 44% no). In 2005 and 2006, California voters rejected similar propositions (2005: 47% yes, 53% no; 2006: 46% yes, 54% no).

Across parties, Republicans (67%) are the most likely to favor this initiative, and their support has increased by 5 points since August. Fifty-three percent of Democrats are opposed, while independents are divided (48% yes, 44% no)—findings similar to August. Among likely voters, a strong majority of evangelical Christians (69%) support Proposition 4, while others are more likely to oppose it (48% no, 40% yes). Likely voters with children aged 18 or younger (51% yes, 40% no) are more likely than those without children (46% yes, 42% no) to support Proposition 4. Women and men express similar levels of support, while Latinos are more likely than whites to say they would vote yes.

**“Proposition 4 is called the ‘Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor’s Pregnancy Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 4?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don’t know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		48%	41%	11%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	36	53	11
	<b>Republican</b>	67	22	11
	<b>Independent</b>	48	44	8
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	49	41	10
	<b>Women</b>	46	41	13
<b>Parents of children under 18</b>	<b>Yes</b>	51	40	9
	<b>No</b>	46	42	12
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	54	39	7
	<b>Whites</b>	48	42	10

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 29.

As in August, eight in 10 likely voters—including at least three in four across party groups—say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4 is important to them. Independents (42%) are less likely than Democrats (49%) and Republicans (50%) to call it very important. The outcome is more likely to be considered very important by supporters (54%) than opponents (44%). Among likely voters, women (56%) are much more likely than men (39%), Latinos (55%) are more likely than whites (44%), and those with children (56%) are more likely than those without children (43%) to say the outcome is very important.

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 4</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	47%	49%	50%	42%	54%	44%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	32	33	32	34	32	34
<b>Not too important</b>	12	13	10	15	12	14
<b>Not at all important</b>	5	3	3	6	1	7
<b>Don’t know</b>	4	2	5	3	1	1



## PROPOSITION 8: SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

A majority of California likely voters oppose Proposition 8 (55% no, 41% yes), which would amend the state constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry, and would recognize marriage between a man and a woman only as valid in California. This is a turnaround from 2000, when California voters approved by a wide margin (61% to 39%) a ballot initiative that prevented the state from recognizing same-sex marriages. After a recent California Supreme Court decision that found the same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional, Proposition 8 qualified for the November ballot.

Today, 62 percent of Republicans are in favor of Proposition 8, while seven in 10 Democrats (71%) and about half of independents (53%) are opposed. While overall support is similar to August (40% yes, 54% no), the no vote for Democrats has increased 5 points, and the yes vote for independents has increased 6 points. Self-described conservatives (67%) are far more likely than liberals (17%) to vote yes on Proposition 8, while moderates are more likely to say they would vote no (57%) than yes (35%). Less than half of voters across regions would vote yes, with support highest in the Other Southern California region (49%) and opposition highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (66%).

Likely voters who have never been married (61% no) are more likely to oppose this initiative than those who are married (52% no). Opposition is greater among whites than Latinos (56% to 50%). Men and women are similar in their opposition. Evangelicals are as likely to vote yes (64%) as others are to vote no (63%).

### “Proposition 8 is called the ‘Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?”\*

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don't know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		41%	55%	4%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	25	71	4
	<b>Republican</b>	62	34	4
	<b>Independent</b>	42	53	5
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	43	53	4
	<b>Women</b>	39	56	5
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	46	50	4
	<b>Whites</b>	41	56	3

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 30.

Eight in 10 likely voters say the outcome of Proposition 8 is either very (54%) or somewhat (26%) important to them. More Republicans (57%) and Democrats (56%) than independents (44%) call it very important. Those who plan to vote yes (62%) are more likely than those who plan to vote no (51%) to say the outcome is very important. Since August, the proportion considering it very important has increased somewhat among likely voters (48% to 54%), Democrats and Republicans, and both yes and no voters.

### “How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 8?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 8</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	54%	56%	57%	44%	62%	51%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	26	23	23	30	24	27
<b>Not too important</b>	13	14	12	14	11	13
<b>Not at all important</b>	7	7	7	9	3	9
<b>Don't know</b>	—	—	1	3	—	—

**PROPOSITION 11: REDISTRICTING**

California’s likely voters today are divided on Proposition 11 (38% yes, 33% no, 29% undecided), an initiative constitutional amendment to take the authority to draw legislative districts away from elected officials and give it to a commission of registered voters. In 2005, a similar proposition, which would have given redistricting authority to a panel of retired judges, was rejected (40% yes, 60% no).

While this proposition does not enjoy majority support within any political group today, Republicans (45%) are more likely than Democrats (36%) and independents (29%) to support it. Support today is similar to August (39% yes, 36% no), but the yes vote has increased by 5 points among Democrats and dropped by 10 points among independents. Fewer than half in all regions would vote yes. Whites (40%) are more likely than Latinos (34%) and men (42%) are more likely than women (35%) to say they would vote yes on Proposition 11. Support for Proposition 11 increases as age and education level rise.

**“Proposition 11 is called the ‘Redistricting Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.’  
If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 11?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		38%	33%	29%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	36	33	31
	<b>Republican</b>	45	31	24
	<b>Independent</b>	29	43	28
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	42	36	22
	<b>Women</b>	35	30	35
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	34	39	27
	<b>Whites</b>	40	31	29

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 30.

About seven in 10 likely voters (69%) think the redistricting process is in need of major (43%) or minor (26%) changes. This perception is the same as last month (69%) and just 4 points lower than last September (73%). Strong majorities in all parties say change is needed. Sixty-five percent or more across regions hold this view. Latinos are more likely than whites (76% to 67%) and men more likely than women (74% to 63%) to say that major or minor changes are needed to the redistricting process.

Six in 10 of those who would vote yes on Proposition 11 believe that major changes are needed, compared to three in 10 who would vote no. Another three in 10 no voters think the process is fine the way it is. Of those likely voters who say major changes are needed, 56 percent would vote yes on Proposition 11.

**“Do you think the way the governor and legislature go about the redistricting process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or is it fine the way it is?”**

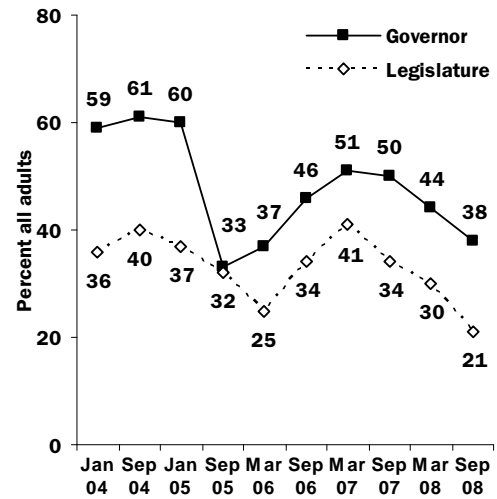
<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 11</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Major changes</b>	43%	43%	43%	37%	62%	31%
<b>Minor changes</b>	26	27	28	27	25	29
<b>Fine the way it is</b>	16	15	14	19	7	30
<b>Don’t know</b>	15	15	15	17	6	10

# STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

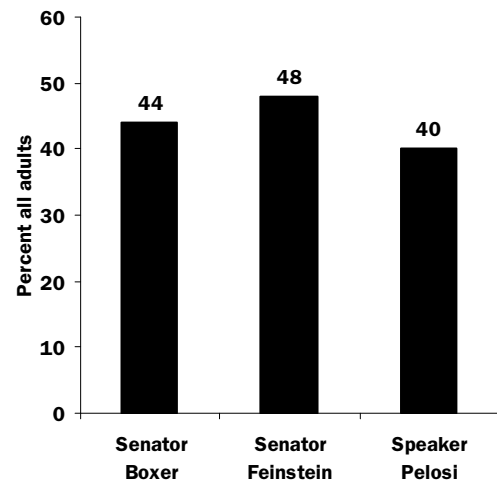
## KEY FINDINGS

- A record percentage of Californians (44%) continue to name the economy as the most important issue facing the state. Nearly seven in 10 say the state is headed in the wrong direction, and that the next 12 months will bring bad economic times. Personally, 52 percent say the current housing situation will hurt their financial situation in the next year. (pages 16, 17)
- About four in 10 adults approve of the governor's job performance, one in five approve of the state legislature, and one in three approve of their own state legislators. About one in four approve of the president's job performance, and three in 10 approve of Congress. California's two senators, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, and voters' own representatives receive higher ratings. (pages 18, 19)
- About three in four adults say the state budget situation is a big problem and that major changes in the budget process are needed. Nearly half say that changing the vote requirement to pass a state budget from two-thirds to 55 percent is a good idea; six in 10 say strictly limiting state spending is a good idea. (page 20)
- Nearly two in three residents say changes are needed in the citizens' initiative process (36% major, 28% minor); most agree there are too many propositions on the ballot and even more say the wording of initiatives is too complicated and confusing. (page 21)
- Most residents say there are important differences between the two major political parties; half say a major third party is needed. Strong majorities say they are more interested in politics this year than in 2004 and say it really matters who wins the 2008 presidential election. (pages 22, 23)

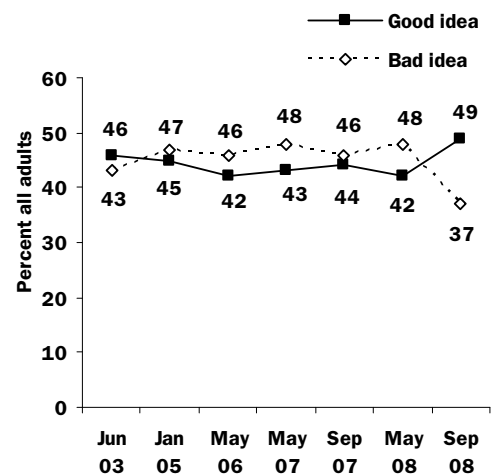
Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



Change Budget Passage Vote from Two-thirds to 55 Percent



**OVERALL MOOD**

The economy is foremost on Californians’ minds today, as it has been throughout 2008. This month, a record high 44 percent name jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state. Similar to last month, only 9 percent say the state budget situation is the most important issue facing the state, despite a budget impasse of record duration. Fewer name education (6%), immigration (6%), gasoline prices (5%), or housing (5%). Since last September, mention of immigration has declined 12 points while mention of the economy has climbed 31 points.

The economy is the top issue mentioned today across all political, regional, and demographic groups. Democrats (47%) and independents (44%) are more likely than Republicans (36%) to name jobs and the economy. Residents in Los Angeles (49%) are the most likely to name jobs and the economy, while those in the Central Valley (38%) are least likely. Latinos (56%) are far more likely than whites (37%) to name the economy, and mention of jobs and the economy decreases with increasing education and income. Whites (13%) are more likely than Latinos (3%) to name the state budget as the top issue, and the percentage naming the state budget increases with higher age, education, and income.

**“Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?”**

Top six issues mentioned	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Jobs, economy</b>	44%	47%	36%	44%	41%
<b>State budget, deficit, taxes</b>	9	10	12	11	12
<b>Education, schools</b>	6	8	4	5	6
<b>Immigration, illegal immigration</b>	6	2	12	5	7
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	5	5	6	5	4
<b>Housing costs, availability</b>	5	5	4	6	5

Californians continue to say that the state is headed in the wrong direction. Only one in five residents say California is going in the right direction, while 68 percent say it is going in the wrong direction. For a full year, at least half of Californians have said the state is headed in the wrong direction. This negative perception did not change from last month, but has increased 18 points since last September.

Today, the view that the state is going in the wrong direction is widely held, and includes at least six in 10 across parties, regions, and demographic groups. Democrats (72%) and Republicans (68%) are somewhat more likely than independents (60%) to agree. Latinos are far more likely than whites (78% to 63%) and women are more likely than men (71% to 66%) to say the state is going in the wrong direction.

**“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	
<b>Right direction</b>	21%	19%	22%	27%	21%
<b>Wrong direction</b>	68	72	68	60	67
<b>Don't know</b>	11	9	10	13	12

## ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

With 44 percent of Californians saying the economy is the most important issue facing the state today, nearly seven in 10 residents (68%) say that they expect bad times financially during the next 12 months in California. The current negative outlook is similar to last month (71%) and 9 points higher than last September.

Today, at least six in 10 across all parties, regions, and demographic groups think that during the next 12 months California can expect bad times financially. Democrats (75%) and independents (70%) are more likely than Republicans (62%) to hold this view. Renters and homeowners alike are equally pessimistic in their outlook for the state (69% each). The perception that bad times can be expected increases with higher income and education levels.

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

		Good times	Bad times	Don't know
<b>All Adults</b>		20%	68%	12%
<b>Homeownership</b>	<b>Own</b>	18	69	13
	<b>Rent</b>	23	69	8
<b>Region</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>	21	65	14
	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	18	70	12
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	19	71	10
	<b>Other Southern California</b>	23	66	11
<b>Annual income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	24	66	10
	<b>\$40,000 to \$79,999</b>	22	67	11
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	17	73	10
<b>Likely Voters</b>		17	72	11

With the economy on Californians' minds and with the credit crisis affecting many residents, do Californians think the current housing situation will hurt their personal financial situation in the next year or so? About half of Californians say the situation will hurt their financial situation a great deal (31%) or somewhat (21%), while 44 percent say it will not. These perceptions were similar in December 2007 (28% great deal, 24% somewhat, 45% no).

While there is a shared pessimism across parties about many economic issues, housing is not one of them. Democrats (54%) and independents (53%) are far more likely than Republicans (37%) to say that the housing situation will hurt their financial situation. This perception is higher among renters than homeowners, and decreases with higher age, education, and income.

**“Do you think the current housing situation in California will hurt your financial situation in the next year or so, or not?”**

	All Adults	Annual Income			Homeownership	
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to \$79,999	\$80,000 or more	Own	Rent
<b>Yes, a great deal</b>	31%	43%	28%	21%	26%	39%
<b>Yes, only somewhat</b>	21	22	19	22	22	21
<b>No</b>	44	31	50	55	50	36
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	3	2	2	4

## STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

Californians' pessimism about the direction of the state and its economy and their frustration over a late state budget are reflected in their ratings of state leadership. Governor Schwarzenegger's approval rating of 38 percent today holds steady from last month, but is 12 points lower than a year ago (50% approve, 38% disapprove). Across political parties, half of Republicans (53%) approve of the governor, while 61 percent of Democrats disapprove. Independents are divided (45% approve, 49% disapprove). Likely voters are slightly more approving than Californians overall in their assessment of the governor (42%).

Across regions, residents in Los Angeles (64%) are the most likely to disapprove, followed by residents in the Other Southern California region (55%), San Francisco Bay Area (49%), and Central Valley (48%). Latinos (73%) are far more likely than whites (44%) to disapprove of the governor's job performance. Governor Schwarzenegger's approval ratings increase with higher age, education, and income.

The state legislature fares much worse than the governor, recording a new low in its job approval rating, with just 21 percent of residents and 16 percent of likely voters approving of legislators' job performance. In the past month, their approval rating has slid 5 points among residents (26% to 21%) and 4 points among likely voters (20% to 16%). The legislature has received majority disapproval ratings since the beginning of the year. Today, solid majorities across regional, political, and demographic groups disapprove of the legislature's job performance. Whites (73%) are much more likely to disapprove of the legislature than Latinos (59%) and men (71%) are somewhat more likely than women (63%) to disapprove.

### “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	38%	33%	53%	45%	42%
	Disapprove	55	61	39	49	51
	Don't know	7	6	8	6	7
<i>... the California Legislature is handling its job?</i>	Approve	21	21	13	21	16
	Disapprove	67	68	79	70	76
	Don't know	12	11	8	9	8

Half of residents (50%) and likely voters (52%) today disapprove of the job their own state senate and assembly representatives are doing, and about one in three residents (34%) and likely voters (35%) approve. Since March, their approval ratings have declined 8 points among both residents (42% to 34%) and likely voters (43% to 35%). In September 2007, Californians were evenly divided (41% approve, 40% disapprove) in their assessments of the job performance of their own state legislators. Across parties today, Republicans (57%) are more likely to disapprove than independents (50%) and Democrats (47%). Across regions, Central Valley residents (54%) are the most likely to disapprove, followed by residents in Los Angeles (50%), the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Other Southern California region (47% each).

### “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	34%	37%	29%	39%	35%
Disapprove	50	47	57	50	52
Don't know	16	16	14	11	13

## FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

President Bush reaches a new low job approval rating among Californians this month (23% approve, 74% disapprove). Likely voters (28%) are somewhat more approving of the president. Although 59 percent of Republicans approve of Bush's job performance, 80 percent of independents and 92 percent of Democrats disapprove. Californians today are only somewhat more negative in their assessments of the president than adults nationwide, according to a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll (27% approve, 68% disapprove). Strong majorities across regions and demographic groups disapprove of the president's job performance, with San Francisco Bay Area residents (84%), Latinos (83%), and residents under 35 (85%) among the most likely to express disapproval.

The U.S. Congress also receives low marks from residents this month (29% approve, 63% disapprove). Findings today are similar to last month's, but residents today are somewhat more disapproving than in March (33% approve, 55% disapprove) and last September (33% approve, 57% disapprove). Today across political parties, Republicans (77%) are much more disapproving of Congress than independents (64%) and Democrats (54%). At least six in 10 across regions disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing, and whites (69%) and men (68%) are much more likely than Latinos (50%) and women (57%) to disapprove. Disapproval of the U.S. Congress increases with higher age, education, and income.

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

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	23%	6%	59%	18%	28%
	Disapprove	74	92	37	80	70
	Don't know	3	2	4	2	2
<i>... the U.S. Congress is handling its job?</i>	Approve	29	37	18	27	26
	Disapprove	63	54	77	64	67
	Don't know	8	9	5	9	7

By comparison, the job approval ratings for Senators Dianne Feinstein (48%) and Barbara Boxer (44%) and for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (40%) are higher than the overall approval for the U.S. Congress (29%). Californians also give their own House representatives higher approval ratings (49% approve, 31% disapprove); findings today are similar to those in March (47% approve, 30% disapprove) and last September (50% approve, 30% disapprove). Across parties today, Democrats (55%) and independents (54%) are more likely than Republicans (45%) to approve of their own House representatives. Across regions, residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) and the Central Valley (50%) are the most approving of their own representatives, followed by residents in Los Angeles and the Other Southern California region (47% each). Latinos (54%) and women (52%) are somewhat more likely than whites (47%) and men (47%) to approve of their own representatives in the House.

### "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	49%	55%	45%	54%	52%
Disapprove	31	29	39	30	33
Don't know	20	16	16	16	15

## STATE BUDGET

With a record-setting delay in the passage of a new state budget, Californians say the budget situation is a big problem (78%)—a 5-point increase from last month (73%), and a 14-point increase since January (64%) when the governor first released his budget plan. Strong majorities across regional, political, and demographic groups say the budget situation is a big problem.

Three in four residents also say major changes (76%) are needed in the budget process, while 17 percent say minor changes are needed, and just 4 percent say it is fine the way it is. The view that major changes are needed has increased 11 points since May (65%) when the governor released his revised budget. At least seven in 10 residents across regional, political, and demographic groups hold this view.

**“Overall, do you think the state budget process in California, in terms of both revenues and spending, is in need of major changes, minor changes, or do you think it is fine the way it is?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Major changes</b>	76%	79%	83%	76%	79%
<b>Minor changes</b>	17	17	13	16	16
<b>Fine the way it is</b>	4	2	2	4	3
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	2	4	2

So how do Californians want to deal with the multibillion-dollar budget deficit facing the state? A plurality of residents (43%) and likely voters (48%) continue to favor a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, while fewer say the gap should be addressed mostly through spending cuts (36% adults, 37% likely voters). Far fewer still say they prefer tax increases alone (7%) or borrowing money and running a deficit (5%). Since January, most residents have said they prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Today, voters remain deeply divided along party lines in their preferences for a budget solution.

With a record late budget agreement, how do Californians feel about changing the two-thirds vote requirement to a 55 percent majority for the legislature to pass a budget? A record percent of residents (49%) and likely voters (46%) think it would be a good idea. Democrats (54%) are more likely to say this is a good idea, while Republicans (50%) are more likely to say it is a bad idea, and independents are divided (46% good, 45% bad). A year ago, more adults (46%) and likely voters (56%) said this proposal to change the vote requirement was a bad idea. In addition, most residents think that strictly limiting the amount that state spending could increase each year is a good idea (62% good, 31% bad). Findings are similar among likely voters. Across parties, strong majorities of Republicans (77%) and independents (64%) say it is a good idea; half of Democrats (53%) also agree.

**“Spending and tax reforms have been proposed to address structural issues in the state budget. Please say whether you think the proposal is a good idea or a bad idea.”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>How about replacing the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority vote for the state legislature to pass a budget?</i>	<b>Good idea</b>	49%	54%	40%	46%	46%
	<b>Bad idea</b>	37	34	50	45	43
	<b>Don't know</b>	14	12	10	9	11
<i>How about strictly limiting the amount of money that state spending could increase each year?</i>	<b>Good idea</b>	62	53	77	64	63
	<b>Bad idea</b>	31	39	19	30	30
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	8	4	6	7



## CITIZENS' INITIATIVES

Given the generally low level of approval that Californians give to their state elected officials today, what or whom would they prefer to have the most influence over public policy? Thirty-eight percent of residents say they would prefer initiatives on the state ballot to have the most influence, 32 percent would prefer the legislature, and 20 percent say the governor; likely voters express similar preferences. Initiatives are preferred somewhat more now than in September 2006 (33% initiatives, 32% legislature, 23% governor).

But many Californians also view the initiative process as flawed, with 64 percent saying major (36%) or minor (28%) changes are needed, while 29 percent say it is fine the way it is. Findings today are similar to those of September 2006 (37% major, 31% minor, 25% fine). Today, strong majorities across parties agree that changes, major or minor, are needed in the initiative process. Latinos (49%) are the most likely to say major changes are needed. Even among residents who prefer initiatives to have the most influence over public policy, 60 percent say either major (30%) or minor (30%) changes are needed.

**“Do you think the citizens’ initiative process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Major changes</b>	36%	36%	28%	29%	30%
<b>Minor changes</b>	28	30	30	29	32
<b>Fine the way it is</b>	29	29	35	36	32
<b>Don't know</b>	7	5	7	6	6

This November, 12 propositions are on the state ballot, including 10 citizens’ initiatives. What do residents think about the number of propositions on state ballots in general? Six in 10 residents and likely voters (59% each) agree that there are too many propositions on the state ballot. In September 2006, when there were 13 propositions on the upcoming ballot, including eight citizens’ initiatives, a similar number of residents (59%) and likely voters (58%) agreed. An even more widely held complaint about the initiative process concerns the wording of initiatives: 78 percent of residents and 84 percent of likely voters agree that initiative wording is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what would happen if an initiative passed. Strong majorities across regions, parties, and demographic groups agree.

**“For the following items, please say if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>There are too many propositions on the state ballot.</i>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	29%	33%	26%	33%	30%
	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	30	29	30	33	29
	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	24	25	25	22	26
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	12	9	15	9	12
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	4	4	3	3
<i>The ballot wording for citizens’ initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes.</i>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	49	55	56	53	55
	<b>Somewhat agree</b>	29	29	26	33	29
	<b>Somewhat disagree</b>	11	8	9	8	8
	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	8	6	6	6	6
	<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	3	—	2

## MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

With all of the attention that Californians say they are paying to news about the presidential candidates, what do they think about the two major political parties? A solid 79 percent of residents and 81 percent of likely voters say there are important differences in what Republicans and Democrats stand for overall, while 18 percent of residents and likely voters say there are not important differences. In September 2004, 75 percent of residents said there were important differences and 21 percent said there were not. Across parties today, more than eight in 10 Democrats (85%) and Republicans (83%) agree there are important differences, while 69 percent of independents say the same. Men (78%) and women (81%), Latinos and whites (80% each), and evangelical Christians (81%) and others (79%) similarly agree that there are important differences between Republicans and Democrats. Of likely voters supporting either the Republican or Democratic ticket, both groups (86% Obama-Biden, 80% McCain-Palin) think there are important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for.

**“Overall, do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Yes, there are important differences</b>	79%	85%	83%	69%	81%
<b>No, there are not important differences</b>	18	14	16	29	18
<b>Don't know</b>	3	1	1	2	1

Despite 79 percent of Californians saying there are important differences between the two parties, a slim majority say they would like to see a third major party. Fifty-two percent of residents and likely voters say the Democratic and Republican parties do such a poor job of representing the American people that a third major party is needed, while 41 percent of residents and likely voters say the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people. Not surprisingly, independents are the most likely to say a third major party is needed, while Democrats and Republicans give a more mixed assessment. The perception that the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job of representation is much higher among evangelical Christians than among others (49% to 38%).

Compared to four years ago, Californians today are somewhat more likely to say a third major party is needed (2004: 48% adequate job, 46% third party needed). Findings among independents today are nearly identical to four years ago (2004: 34% adequate job, 62% third party needed). While Democrats are about as likely as they were four years ago to say the two major parties are doing an adequate job (51% in 2004 to 48% today), Republicans are much less likely than they were four years ago to say so (58% in 2004 to 44% today).

**“In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Adequate job</b>	41%	48%	44%	35%	41%
<b>Third party is needed</b>	52	44	49	62	52
<b>Don't know</b>	7	8	7	3	7

## ELECTION IMPORTANCE

How much interest is this presidential election generating with the public at large, including voting and nonvoting adults? Echoing likely voters, two in three Californians (67%) say they are more interested in politics this year than they were in 2004, the last presidential election year. Twelve percent of residents are less interested, and 21 percent volunteer that they are as interested as they were in 2004. In August 2004, findings were nearly identical (64% more interested, 12% less interested, 23% same amount of interest) when comparing interest in politics that year to interest in 2000.

Today, more than six in 10 residents across regions, racial/ethnic, gender, age, education, and income groups say they are more interested this year than they were in 2004. Across voter groups, more than six in 10 Democrats (69%), independents (65%), and Republicans (64%) say they are more interested. Independents (17%) are somewhat more likely than Republicans (10%) and Democrats (8%) to say they are less interested this year than they were in 2004. Two in three likely voters supporting Obama-Biden and two in three supporting McCain-Palin say they are more interested in politics this time around.

### “Are you more interested or less interested in politics this year than you were in 2004—the last presidential election year?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>More interested</b>	67%	69%	64%	65%	65%
<b>Less interested</b>	12	8	10	17	8
<b>Same (volunteered)</b>	21	23	25	17	26
<b>Don't know</b>	—	—	1	1	1

In terms of making progress on important issues facing the country, 75 percent of residents believe that it really matters who wins the 2008 presidential election. One in five residents (21%) say things will pretty much be the same regardless of who is elected president. In September 2004, 71 percent of residents said it really mattered who won, while 26 percent said things would pretty much be the same.

More than two in three residents across regional and demographic groups today believe the election outcome really matters when it comes to making progress on important issues. Across parties, strong majorities believe the outcome will matter, although Democrats (85%) are more likely to hold this view than Republicans (76%) or independents (71%). Likely voters supporting Obama-Biden (88%) are somewhat more likely than those supporting McCain-Palin (77%) to say it really matters who wins the election.

### “As far as making progress on the important issues facing the country is concerned, does it really matter who wins the 2008 presidential election, or will things pretty much be the same regardless of who is elected president?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Really matters</b>	75%	85%	76%	71%	79%
<b>Things will be the same</b>	21	13	20	24	18
<b>Other (volunteered)</b>	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Don't know</b>	3	1	3	4	2

# REGIONAL MAP

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# METHODOLOGY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research support from Jennifer Paluch, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner, Sonja Petek, and Nicole Fox. The *Californians and Their Government* series is currently 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.

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,002 California adult residents interviewed from September 9–16, 2008. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, 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. Telephone numbers in the survey sample 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. Each interview took an average of 18 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing. We used recent U.S. Census and state data 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. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,002 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 1,467 registered voters, it is +/- 2.5 percent; for the 1,157 likely voters, it is +/-3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for 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. 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 past voting, current interest, and voting intentions. Following up on previous PPIC Statewide Surveys, we also asked parents about their children’s summer activities (see Questionnaire and Results, D5 to D5e), including questions from a national survey by Public Agenda. We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by CBS News/*New York Times*, ABC News/*Washington Post*, Gallup, Gallup/*USA Today*, and the Pew Research Center.



# QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

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## CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

September 9–16, 2008

2,002 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 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]*
  - 44% jobs, economy
  - 9 state budget, deficit, taxes
  - 6 education, schools
  - 6 immigration, illegal immigration
  - 5 gasoline prices
  - 5 housing costs, housing availability, subprime housing crisis
  - 4 health care, health costs
  - 3 crime, gangs, drugs
  - 2 environment, pollution
  - 2 gay rights, same-sex marriages
  - 11 other
  - 3 don't know
2. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
  - 21% right direction
  - 68 wrong direction
  - 11 don't know
3. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?
  - 20% good times
  - 68 bad times
  - 12 don't know
4. Do you think the current housing situation in California will hurt your financial situation in the next year or so, or not? *(if yes: do you think it will hurt your financial situation a great deal or only somewhat?)*
  - 31% yes, a great deal
  - 21 yes, only somewhat
  - 44 no
  - 4 don't know
5. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?
  - 73% yes *[ask q5a]*
  - 26 no *[skip to q6b]*
  - 1 don't know *[skip to q6b]*
- 5a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?
  - 42% Democrat *[ask q6]*
  - 32 Republican *[skip to q6a]*
  - 5 another party *[specify] [skip to q7]*
  - 21 independent *[skip to q6b]*
6. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?
  - 66% strong
  - 32 not very strong
  - 2 don't know

*[skip to q7]*





12. Which candidate would do a better job on jobs and the economy?

- 37% John McCain
- 53 Barack Obama
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 9 don't know

12a. Which candidate would do a better job on health care?

- 29% John McCain
- 57 Barack Obama
- 3 other (*specify*)
- 11 don't know

12b. Which candidate would do a better job on immigration?

- 40% John McCain
- 42 Barack Obama
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 16 don't know

13. Which candidate would do a better job on foreign policy?

- 51% John McCain
- 43 Barack Obama
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 5 don't know

14. Next, how closely are you following news about candidates for the 2008 presidential election?

- 52% very closely
- 39 fairly closely
- 7 not too closely
- 1 not at all closely
- 1 don't know

15. In deciding who to vote for in the November 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election, how important to you are the candidates' performances in public debates?

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

16. Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual, or less enthusiastic?

- 65% more enthusiastic
- 20 less enthusiastic
- 14 same (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

Changing topics,

*[rotate 3 blocks of questions randomly: (1) 17, 18; (2) 19, 20 (3) 21, 22]*

17. Proposition 4 is called the "Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy Initiative Constitutional Amendment." It changes the California Constitution, prohibiting abortion for unemancipated minors until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian, or in limited cases, substitute adult relative. It provides an exception for medical emergency or parental waiver. Fiscal impact is potential unknown net state costs of several million dollars annually for health and social services programs, court administration, and state health agency administration combined. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 4?

- 48% yes
- 41 no
- 11 don't know

18. How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

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

19. Proposition 8 is called the “Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It changes the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. It provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. Fiscal impact over the next few years includes potential revenue loss, mainly sales taxes, totaling in the several tens of millions of dollars, to state and local governments. In the long run, it will likely have little fiscal impact on state and local governments. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

- 41% yes
- 55 no
- 4 don't know

20. How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 8—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 54% very important
- 26 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 7 not at all important

21. Proposition 11 is called the “Redistricting Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.” It changes authority for establishing state office boundaries from elected representatives to a commission. It establishes a multilevel process to select commissioners from the registered voter pool. The Commission will be comprised of Democrats, Republicans, and representatives of neither party. Fiscal impact is potential increase in state redistricting costs once every ten years due to two entities performing redistricting. Any increase in costs probably would not be significant. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 11?

- 38% yes
- 33 no
- 29 don't know

22. Do you think the way the governor and legislature go about the redistricting process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or is it fine the way it is?

- 43% major changes
- 26 minor changes
- 16 fine the way it is
- 15 don't know

23. Changing topics, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

- 38% approve
- 55 disapprove
- 7 don't know

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

- 21% approve
- 67 disapprove
- 12 don't know

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

- 34% approve
- 50 disapprove
- 16 don't know

26. On another topic, 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
- 19 somewhat of a problem
- 1 not a problem
- 2 don't know





46. As far as making progress on the important issues facing the country is concerned, does it really matter who wins the 2008 presidential election, or will things pretty much be the same regardless of who is elected president?

- 75% really matters who wins
- 21 things will pretty much be the same regardless
- 1 other (specify)
- 3 don't know

[d1-d4: demographic questions]

[d5-d5e asked only of parents of children ages 5 to 15]

Now thinking about your oldest or only child between the ages of 5 and 15,

D5. Are you generally satisfied with the organized activities and programs available to your child during the summer months, or do you find that you really don't have enough good options?

- 64% generally satisfied with the organized activities and programs
- 34 really don't have enough good options
- 2 don't know

When you think about your child's summer, how concerned are you—if at all—about each of the following?

[rotate d5a through d5d]

D5a. How about that you might have trouble finding someone to take care of him or her?

- 26% very concerned
- 15 somewhat concerned
- 17 not too concerned
- 42 not at all concerned

D5b. How about that she or he will fall behind in academics?

- 39% very concerned
- 18 somewhat concerned
- 13 not too concerned
- 29 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

D5c. How about that you won't be able to afford the things she or he wants to do?

- 45% very concerned
- 25 somewhat concerned
- 12 not too concerned
- 18 not at all concerned

D5d. How about that there's not enough things to capture his or her interest?

- 33% very concerned
- 21 somewhat concerned
- 15 not too concerned
- 30 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

D5e. How important is it to have your child engaged in physical activities and the outdoors during the summer?

- 87% very important
- 11 somewhat important
- 2 not too important

[d6-d16: demographic questions]



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