PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Rachel Lawler, and Deja Thomas

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Key Findings

This year began with the omicron surge, which is causing disruption, uncertainty, and stress for many Californians. Although encouraging signs of an economic recovery are present, rising prices are a worrisome trend for consumers. Governor Newsom and the state legislature are working with a large surplus of revenues for state spending, while President Biden and the US Congress are unable to pass major legislation as partisan divisions loom large following the one-year anniversary of the Capitol insurrection.

These are the key findings of a statewide survey on state and national issues conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California from January 16 to 25, 2022:

- **COVID-19, homelessness, and jobs, the economy, and inflation** top the list when we asked Californians to name the most important issues for the governor and legislature to work on in 2022. Majorities continue to approve of the way that Governor Newsom and President Biden are handling COVID-19, although partisans are deeply divided in their assessments.

- **Half of Californians think the state is headed in the right direction**—similar to a year ago. A majority believe that the governor and legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot this year. Solid majorities favor the governor’s budget plan and COVID spending package.

- **Two in three say the worst is behind us in the coronavirus outbreak**—a significant decline since last May. About four in ten are concerned about getting the coronavirus and requiring hospitalization—a significant increase since last May. In the midst of the omicron surge, there continue to be demographic, political, and regional disparities in COVID vaccinations.

- **About half of Californians say that the state is in a recession**—a significant decline from a year ago. Forty-seven percent of all adults—compared to 28 percent of lower-income residents—say they are in excellent or good shape financially. One in five Californians—compared to one in three lower-income residents—say that recent price increases have caused severe financial hardship.

- **A majority of Californians approve of President Biden’s performance in office**—similar to approval ratings for Governor Newsom. One in three approve of the US Congress, while approval ratings are much higher for the California Legislature.

- **About four in ten say that the nation is headed in the right direction.** A similar share say that they expect good economic times in the US during the next 12 months.
State of the State

Californians most often name COVID-19 (19%) as the most important issue for the governor and legislature to work on in 2022. Additionally, more than one in ten Californians name homelessness (13%) or jobs, the economy, and inflation (12%) as most important. Fewer mention crime, gangs, and drugs (7%), or housing costs and availability (7%). Across partisan groups, Democrats are most likely to mention COVID-19; Republicans are most likely to mention jobs, the economy, and inflation, or crime, gangs, and drugs; and independents are equally as likely to mention COVID-19 or homelessness. Half of Californians say the state is headed in the right direction, with Democrats far more likely than Republicans and independents to say this. Half or more in Los Angeles, Orange/San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area say things are going in the right direction, compared to about four in ten in the Central Valley and Inland Empire. Among racial/ethnic groups, majorities of Latinos (61%), African Americans (55%), and Asian Americans (54%) say this, compared to 41 percent of whites. The overall share saying things are going in the right direction remains similar to last January.

A majority of Californians (58% adults, 54% likely voters) are optimistic that Governor Newsom and the state legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot over the next year. A similar share (62% adults, 57% likely voters) said this in January 2021. Today, Democrats are far more optimistic about this than are independents and Republicans. Half or more across age, gender, income, and racial/ethnic groups hold this optimistic view. More than half across regions are optimistic that Newsom and the state legislature can work
together, with the exception of 49 percent of residents in the Central Valley. After hearing a summary of Governor Newsom’s budget proposal, which includes $213.1 billion in General Fund spending, a solid majority of Californians (63%) and likely voters (60%) are in favor. Strong majorities of Californians (73%) and likely voters (69%) are in favor of Governor Newsom’s $2.7 billion COVID-19 Emergency Response Package.

A majority think Newsom and the legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes, will be able to work together</th>
<th>No, will not be able to work together</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.
Californians most often name COVID-19 as the top issue facing the state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>COVID-19, coronavirus</th>
<th>Homelessness</th>
<th>Jobs, economy, inflation</th>
<th>Crime, gangs, drugs</th>
<th>Housing costs, availability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>All adults</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Likely voters</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Democrats</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Republicans</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independents</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Valley</strong></td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inland Empire</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Los Angeles</strong></td>
<td>22</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Orange/San Diego</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SF Bay Area</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>African Americans</strong></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asian Americans</strong></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Latinos</strong></td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Whites</strong></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Less than $40,000</strong></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>$40,000 to $79,999</strong></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td><strong>$80,000 or more</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.
COVID-19 Pandemic

As the US continues to grapple with the omicron variant and high case numbers nationwide, two in three Californians (67%) say that, when it comes to where the country stands in the coronavirus outbreak, the worst is behind us. About a quarter (26%) say the worst is yet to come. In May 2021, the share saying the worst is behind us peaked at 86 percent—a share that has since decreased by 19 percentage points. Across partisan groups, three in four Republicans—compared to two in three Democrats and independents—say the worst is behind us. Majorities across regions and across age, education, gender, income, and race/ethnicity groups are optimistic that the worst is behind us.

Amid a recent surge in cases, many adults are optimistic about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Worst is behind us</th>
<th>Worst is yet to come</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2022</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2020</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


While an overwhelming majority of Californians say they have been vaccinated, more than one in ten say that they will definitely not (12%) or probably not (2%) receive the coronavirus vaccine. Among adults who have received the vaccine, 61 percent say they have also received a booster or additional dose after being fully vaccinated. There continue to be demographic, political, and regional disparities in COVID vaccinations. When asked whether the omicron variant makes them more likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine, most unvaccinated adults (86%) expressed that it does not make them more likely to get vaccinated (11% say it makes them more likely to be vaccinated).

With high vaccine rates reported across the state, 57 percent of Californians are not too (26%) or not at all (31%) concerned that they will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization, compared to fewer who are very (16%) or somewhat concerned (26%). The share of Californians expressing concern declined steadily from September 2020 through May 2021—but it has increased 14 percentage points since last May. Some groups are more likely than others to be very concerned. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (21%), Asian Americans (19%), and African Americans (17%) are somewhat more likely than whites (11%) to say they are very concerned. The share saying they are very concerned declines as education and income levels increase.
**Concern about getting the coronavirus has increased after a steady decline during the last year**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Very concerned</th>
<th>Somewhat concerned</th>
<th>Not too concerned</th>
<th>Not at all concerned</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2022</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2021</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar 2021</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 2021</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 2020</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2020</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2020–2022.
Most Californians say they have already received the coronavirus vaccine

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Already got vaccine</th>
<th>Definitely get vaccine</th>
<th>Probably get vaccine</th>
<th>Probably not get vaccine</th>
<th>Definitely not get vaccine</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Valley</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange/San Diego</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF Bay Area</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $40,000</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.
Economic Conditions

About half of Californians think that California is in an economic recession, with more saying it is a serious or moderate recession rather than a mild recession. About six in ten Californians in the Central Valley, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego—compared to fewer than half elsewhere—think the state is in a recession. Republicans are far more likely than Democrats and independents to hold this view. In recent months, about half of Californians have said the state was in a recession, while earlier in the pandemic the share saying this was much higher.

Most Californians think the state is in a recession

![Chart showing the percentage of Californians who think the state is in a recession over time.](chart)

**Source:** PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2020–2022.

Fewer than half of Californians rate their financial situation as excellent or good—just as they have each time we’ve asked this question during the pandemic. There are stark differences across demographic groups. Notably, four in ten or fewer African Americans and Latinos say their finances are in excellent or good shape, compared to majorities of Asian Americans and whites. There are also sharp differences across income and education groups; Californians with lower income levels and less formal education are less likely to rate their personal finances positively.
About six in ten Californians say that recent price increases have caused their household severe (20%) or moderate (41%) financial hardship. This hardship is more common among women than men, Latinos than other racial/ethnic groups, and in the Central Valley and Inland Empire than elsewhere in the state. Republicans are more likely than Democrats or independents to say price increases have caused hardship. There are also sharp differences across income groups, with lower-income residents much more likely than higher-income residents to say price increases have caused severe hardship.

### Ratings of personal finances vary by income and race/ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Only fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than $40,000</td>
<td>25</td>
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<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>$40,000 to $79,999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>43</td>
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<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>26</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.
Approval of Elected Officials

Four months after Gavin Newsom beat back an attempt to recall him from office, 56 percent of Californians approve of his job performance as governor. Approval of Governor Newsom has remained above 50 percent since January 2020. Eight in ten Democrats and 45 percent of independents approve of Newsom, while more than eight in ten Republicans disapprove. Approval is higher in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area than elsewhere and much higher among African Americans and Latinos than Asian Americans.

Recent price increases have caused financial hardship for most Californians

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Severe hardship</th>
<th>Moderate hardship</th>
<th>No hardship</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Valley</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inland Empire</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orange/San Diego</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SF Bay Area</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td>Asian Americans</td>
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<td>Latinos</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
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<tr>
<td>$80,000 or more</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16-25, 2022.
Americans and whites. Notably, women continue to be more likely than men to approve of the governor. Fewer than half of Californians (47%) approve of the state legislature, a share that has remained in this range for the past two years.

**Most Californians continue to approve of Governor Newsom**

As President Biden enters his second year in office, 53 percent of Californians approve of the job he is doing as president—much lower than a year ago and similar to approval of Governor Newsom today. Democrats remain far more likely than Republicans or independents to approve of President Biden. While more than six in ten Latinos and African Americans approve of President Biden, about half of Asian Americans and whites do so. Women are somewhat more likely than men, and residents in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles are somewhat more likely than those elsewhere, to approve of the president. Approval of Congress remains low, with a 32 percent approval rating. Notably, across parties, regions, and demographic groups, approval only rises above half among Latinos.

About six in ten Californians approve of the way that Governor Newsom and President Biden are handling the coronavirus outbreak, which was named as the state’s top issue.
Approval of President Biden has declined during the last year

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2021–2022.
**Majorities approve of Governor Newsom and President Biden**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Governor Newsom</th>
<th>California Legislature</th>
<th>President Biden</th>
<th>US Congress</th>
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<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
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</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.

**State of the Nation**

Fifty-six percent of adults and 66 percent of likely voters think things in the US are going in the wrong direction (right direction: 38% adults, 30% likely voters). A year ago, fewer said things were going in the
wrong direction (43% adults, 50% likely voters). Today, strong majorities of Republicans (89%) and independents (69%) hold this negative view, while Democrats are divided (47% right direction, 48% wrong direction). Majorities across regions think the country is going in the wrong direction, ranging from 51 percent in Los Angeles to 66 percent in the Inland Empire. Most African Americans, Asian Americans, and whites believe the US is going in the wrong direction, while 52 percent of Latinos think it is going in the right direction. Californians making more than $40,000 are more likely to feel things are going in the wrong direction, compared to those making less than $40,000.

**Most Californians think things in the US are headed in the wrong direction**

![Image showing trend over years](image)

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Surveys, 2003–2022.

Fifty-nine percent of adults and 72 percent of likely voters think President Biden and the US Congress will not be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year (will be able to work together and accomplish a lot: 36% adults, 24% likely voters). Last January, shortly after President Biden took office, far fewer adults (26%) and likely voters (32%) doubted the working relationship between the president and Congress. Today, majorities across political parties, regions, gender, and age groups believe the president and Congress will not be able to work together, and the share with this opinion increases sharply as income levels rise. Across racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of Asian Americans and whites say President Biden and Congress will not be able to work together, while most Latinos say the opposite; African Americans are divided.
A majority of Californians (54%) believe the US will experience bad economic times in the next 12 months (38% good times). These negative views were similar last January (49%, 45% good times). Half or more across political parties, regions, and demographic groups expect bad times, with the exception of Democrats, Latinos, and those with at most a high school education, who are more divided in their views of the country’s financial outlook. 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>No, will not be able to work together</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
<td>Independents</td>
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<td>67</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.
### US Democracy

Fifty-three percent of Californians and about half of likely voters (48%) are very or somewhat satisfied with the way democracy is working in the United States. Democrats are much more likely to be at least somewhat satisfied than are Republicans or independents. Half or more across regions are very or somewhat satisfied. Majorities of African Americans, Asian Americans, and Latinos hold this view, compared to 44 percent of whites. The share of Californians who are very or somewhat satisfied with the way

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**Majorities expect bad economic times for the US in the next 12 months**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Good times</th>
<th>Bad times</th>
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<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16-25, 2022.
democracy is working declines as age, education, and income levels increase and is much higher among renters (59%) than homeowners (47%).

### About half of Californians are at least somewhat satisfied with the way democracy is working in the US

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very satisfied</th>
<th>Somewhat satisfied</th>
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<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16-25, 2022.

Californians are divided about whether Americans of different political views can come together and work out their differences (47% optimistic, 49% pessimistic). This division remains nearly unchanged from March 2021 (49% optimistic, 48% pessimistic). Today, majorities across political parties hold pessimistic views. Across racial/ethnic groups, a solid majority of whites and half of Asian Americans are pessimistic, while about six in ten African Americans and Latinos are optimistic. Regionally, half or more in the Inland Empire, Los Angeles, and the San Francisco Bay Area are pessimistic about Americans coming together, while a slim majority in the Central Valley are optimistic; Orange/San Diego residents are divided. The share of Californians holding pessimistic views increases sharply as education and income levels rise.
Slightly more than a year after the attack on the US Capitol, 40 percent of Californians and about half of likely voters (48%) think there will be an increase in political violence in the US in the next few years. Forty percent of Californians and 36 percent of likely voters think there will be the same amount of political violence as there is now. Few think there will be a decrease in political violence (14% adults, 12% likely voters). Similar shares across political parties and regions as well as gender and age groups say political violence will increase. Among racial/ethnic groups, Asian Americans and whites are much more likely than African Americans and Latinos to say violence will increase, and the shares with this view increase as education levels rise. Those making more than $40,000 are more likely to believe that political violence will grow, compared with those making less than $40,000.
### Four in ten Californians think political violence will increase in the next few years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Increase</th>
<th>Decrease</th>
<th>Same amount</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>40%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>Democrats</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**SOURCE:** PPIC Statewide Survey, February 2022. Survey was fielded from January 16–25, 2022.

### Regional Map

This map highlights the five geographic regions for which we present results; these regions account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. Residents of other geographic areas (in gray) are included in
the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

Regional Map

This map highlights the five geographic regions for which we present results; these regions account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. Residents of other geographic areas (in gray) are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less-populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California. Coauthors of this report include survey analyst Deja Thomas, who was the project manager for this survey; associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner; and survey analyst Rachel Lawler. The Californians and Their Government survey is supported with funding from the Arjay and Frances F. Miller Foundation and the James Irvine Foundation. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC’s survey team.
Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,640 California adult residents, including 1,266 interviewed on cell phones and 374 interviewed on landline telephones. The sample included 585 respondents reached by calling back respondents who had previously completed an interview in PPIC Statewide Surveys in the last six months. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from January 16–25, 2022.

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

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

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

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

Abt Associates uses the US Census Bureau’s 2015–2019 American Community Survey’s (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt Associates used 2019 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ±3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,640 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,349 registered voters, the sampling error is ±3.9 percent; for the 1,048 likely voters, it is ±4.6. For the sampling errors of additional subgroups, please see the table at the end of this section. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.
We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 41 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 16 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.

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

Numerous questions were adapted from national surveys by Gallup, ABC News/Washington Post, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and the Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.
Unweighted N-size and margin of error

Questions and Responses

January 16–25, 2022
1,640 California adult residents; 1,048 California likely voters:
English, Spanish

Margin of error ±3.5% at 95% confidence level for the total sample and ±4.6% for likely voters.
Percentages may not add to 100 due to rounding.

1. First, which one issue facing California today do you think is the most important for the governor and state legislature to work on in 2022? [code, don’t read]
   19% COVID-19, coronavirus, mandates
   13% homelessness
   12% jobs, economy, inflation
   7% crime, gangs, drugs
   7% housing costs, availability
   5% education, schools, teachers
   5% state budget, deficit, state spending
   4% immigration, illegal immigration
   3% environment, pollution, global warming
   3% health care, health insurance
   2% gasoline prices, oil prices
   2% government in general, problems with elected officials, political parties
   2% government regulations
   2% infrastructure
   2% water, water availability, drought
   7% other (specify)
   5% don’t know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gavin Newsom is handling his job as governor of California?
   56% approve
   34% disapprove
   10% don’t know

3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the coronavirus outbreak?
   59% approve
   36% disapprove
   5% don’t know

(question 4 not asked)

5. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?
   47% approve
39% disapprove
14% don’t know

6. Do you think that Governor Newsom and the state legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?
58% yes, will be able to work together
34% no, will not be able to work together
8% don’t know

7. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
50% right direction
45% wrong direction
5% don’t know

8. Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (If yes, ask: “Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”)
23% yes, serious recession
20% yes, moderate recession
8% yes, mild recession
2% yes, don’t know (volunteered)
40% no, not in an economic recession
7% don’t know

Next,

9. How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?
8% excellent
39% good
36% only fair
16% poor
– don’t know

(questions 10 and 11 not asked)

12. Have recent price increases caused any financial hardship for you or your household? (If yes ask: “Is that a severe hardship that affects your ability to maintain your current standard of living, or is it a moderate hardship that affects you somewhat but does not jeopardize your current standard of living?”)
20% severe hardship
41% moderate hardship
38% no hardship
– don’t know

On another topic,

13. 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?
39% big problem
14. Governor Newsom recently proposed a budget plan for the next fiscal year that includes $213.1 billion in general fund spending, and a $45.7 billion surplus. The governor’s proposal—which also revises the existing budget—includes funding for COVID-19 vaccines and testing, expanding healthcare access, strengthening efforts against climate change, confronting homelessness, tackling the cost of living, and increasing public safety. The proposed plan puts $34.5 billion into the state's various reserve funds including $20.9 billion in the state's rainy day fund. In general, do you favor or oppose the governor’s budget plan?

63% favor
28% oppose
3% haven’t heard anything about the budget (volunteered)
6% don’t know

15. As part of his budget, the governor proposes a $2.7 billion COVID-19 Emergency Response Package—including $1.4 billion in immediate funding. This proposal seeks to bolster testing capacity, increase vaccination rates, support frontline workers, and strengthen the health care system. In general, do you favor or oppose this proposal?

73% favor
23% oppose
4% don’t know

On another topic,

16. [likely voters only] Overall, would you say the September 2021 governor’s recall election has made you feel better, feel worse, or no different about California politics and elections?

18% feel better
39% feel worse
41% no different
2% don’t know

Please tell me if you would support or oppose the following changes to the way the recall process works in California. Currently, supporters need to gather signatures from registered voters equal to 12 percent of the total votes cast in the previous election for that office to qualify a recall election. For the September recall election, 1.5 million signatures were required. If there is an effort to reform the recall process...

[rotate questions 17 and 18]

17. [likely voters only] Would you support or oppose raising the signature requirement to 20 percent of the total votes cast in the previous election for that office? This would have been 2.5 million signatures to qualify the September recall election. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

50% support
46% oppose
4% don’t know

18. [likely voters only] Would you support or oppose changing the signature requirement to 10 percent of all
registered voters in California? This would have been 2.1 million signatures to qualify the September recall election. Do you support or oppose this proposal?

43% support
52% oppose
5% don’t know

Currently, if a majority vote “yes” on part one of the recall ballot, the governor is removed from office, and the candidate who receives the most votes on part two of the recall ballot is elected as the replacement for the governor. If a majority vote to recall the governor...

[rotate questions 19 and 20]

19. [likely voters only] Would you support or oppose changing the law to appoint the lieutenant governor as governor for the remainder of the four-year term?

50% support
44% oppose
6% don’t know

20. [likely voters only] Would you support or oppose changing the law to appoint the lieutenant governor as governor and having a special ballot measure to replace the governor in the next statewide election?

50% support
42% oppose
8% don’t know

21. [likely voters only] A joint legislative committee is holding hearings and will make recommendations for improving the recall process that would require voter approval. Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to have state propositions about changing the recall process on the 2022 election ballot?

60% good idea
35% bad idea
5% don’t know

Changing topics,

22. How much of a problem are violence and street crime in your local community today—a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

34% big problem
31% somewhat of a problem
35% not much of a problem
1% don’t know

23. How would you rate the job your local police are doing in controlling crime in your community: excellent, good, fair, or poor?

18% excellent
37% good
32% fair
11% poor
2% don’t know
24. Do you think the police in your local community treat all racial and ethnic groups fairly almost always, most of the time, only some of the time, or almost never?
   28% almost always
   28% most of the time
   21% only some of the time
   11% almost never
   2% always (volunteered)
   1% never (volunteered)
   10% don’t know

Onto another topic,

25. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Joe Biden is handling his job as president of the United States?
   53% approve
   43% disapprove
   3% don’t know

26. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Biden is handling the coronavirus outbreak?
   59% approve
   39% disapprove
   2% don’t know

(question 27 not asked)

28. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the US Congress is handling its job?
   32% approve
   60% disapprove
   8% don’t know

29. Do you think that President Biden and the US Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?
   36% yes, will be able to work together
   59% no, will not be able to work together
   5% don’t know

30. Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
   38% right direction
   56% wrong direction
   6% don’t know

31. Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?
   38% good times
   54% bad times
   8% don’t know
Changing topics,

34. How satisfied are you with the way democracy is working in the United States? Are you very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not too satisfied, or not at all satisfied?
12% very satisfied
41% somewhat satisfied
24% not too satisfied
20% not at all satisfied
2% don’t know

35. These days, do you feel [rotate] [1] (optimistic) [or] [2] (pessimistic) that Americans of different political views can still come together and work out their differences?
47% optimistic
49% pessimistic
4% don’t know

36. Do you think in the next few years you will see an increase in political violence in the US, a decrease in political violence in the US, or the same amount there already is?
40% increase in political violence in the US
14% decrease in political violence in the US
40% the same amount there already is
6% don’t know

On another topic,

37. How concerned, if at all, are you that you will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?
16% very concerned
26% somewhat concerned
26% not too concerned
31% not at all concerned
1% have already been hospitalized due to coronavirus (volunteered)
– don’t know

38. Which comes closer to your view about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak: [rotate] [1] the worst is behind us [or] [2] the worst is yet to come?
67% the worst is behind us
26% the worst is yet to come
8% don’t know

39. Have you personally received the COVID-19 vaccine, or not? [If yes, ask: “Did you receive a single-dose vaccine, the first of two doses, or have you received both doses of a two-dose vaccine?”]
7% yes, single-dose vaccine [skip to q40]
6% yes, first of two doses [skip to q40]
69% yes, both doses of two doses [skip to q40]
39a. The coronavirus vaccine is now available to all individuals 5 and older. Will you definitely get the coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it, or definitely not get it?
2% definitely get the vaccine [skip to q41]
2% probably get the vaccine [skip to q41]
2% probably not get the vaccine [skip to q41]
12% definitely not get the vaccine [skip to q41]
82% already got the vaccine [if q39=yes, code q39a="already got the vaccine"]
1% don’t know [skip to q41]

40. Have you personally received a booster or additional dose of the COVID-19 vaccine after you were already fully vaccinated, or not? This could include receiving a third dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or receiving another vaccine after getting the one-dose Johnson and Johnson vaccine.
61% yes [skip to q42]
39% no [skip to q42]
– don’t know [skip to q42]

41. Does news about the omicron variant of the coronavirus make you more likely to get a COVID-19 vaccine, or not?
11% yes, makes me more likely to get vaccinated
86% no, does not make me more likely to get vaccinated
3% don’t know

42. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?
78% yes [ask q42a]
22% no [skip to q43b]

42a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?
46% Democrat [ask q43]
24% Republican [skip to q43a]
6% another party (specify) [skip to q44]
25% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 43b]

[likely voters only]
48% Democrat [ask q43]
25% Republican [skip to q43a]
6% another party (specify) [skip to q44]
21% decline-to-state/independent [skip to 43b]

43. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?
54% strong
42% not very strong
3% don’t know
43a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?
64% strong
31% not very strong
5% don’t know

44. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: [read list, rotate order top to bottom]
12% very liberal
22% somewhat liberal
31% middle-of-the-road
21% somewhat conservative
9% very conservative
4% don’t know

45. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?
23% great deal
37% fair amount
31% only a little
9% none
– don’t know

Authors

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