PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

Mark Baldassare, Dean Bonner, Sonja Petek, Jui Shrestha
May 2014

Supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation
PPIC Statewide Survey mission

- Provide timely, relevant, nonpartisan data on political, social, and economic opinions
- Inform and improve state policymaking, raise awareness, encourage discussion
- Provide a voice for all Californians in important state policy debates
  - 297,000+ Californians since 1998
  - 140+ general, issue, and regional surveys
Californians and Their Government

- General series funded by The James Irvine Foundation
- State government
  - state budget and fiscal issues
  - approval ratings and political trust
- Federal government
  - approval ratings and political trust
  - health care, climate change, energy policy
- Telephone interviews, May 8 to 15
  - 1,702 adults, ± 3.6% margin of error
  - 1,038 likely voters, ± 4.6% margin of error
  - 901 primary likely voters, ± 4.9% margin of error
Outline

- PPIC Statewide Surveys
- State government
- Federal government
- Conclusions
Approval of state elected officials

Governor Brown
California Legislature

May 2012 May 2013 May 2014

% 80 60 40 20 0

39 48 50
35
25

40

50

Outlook for the state

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

- Right direction: 45%
- Wrong direction: 48%
- Don't know: 7%

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: 44%
- Bad times: 47%
- Don't know: 9%

All adults
State and local budget knowledge

In general, how much would you say you know about how your state and local governments spend and raise money?

- A lot: 14%
- Some: 38%
- Very little: 35%
- Nothing: 12%
- Don't know: 2%

All adults
Making state budget decisions

And when it comes to the tough choices involved in the state budget this year, would you prefer that the governor and legislature make all of the decisions about spending and taxes or that California voters make some of the decisions about spending and taxes at the ballot box?

[Bar chart showing percentages for All adults, Dem, Rep, Ind, Likely voters for Governor and legislature vs California voters]
Views of Proposition 13

Proposition 13 is the 1978 ballot measure that limits the property tax rate to 1 percent of assessed value at time of purchase and annual tax increases to no more than 2 percent until the property is sold. Overall, do you feel passing Proposition 13 turned out to be mostly a good thing for California or mostly a bad thing?
Attitudes toward raising taxes

For each of the following, please say in you favor or oppose the proposal.

- Increasing state taxes on the purchase of cigarettes: 69% Favor, 30% Oppose
- Increasing state taxes on the purchase of alcoholic beverages: 61% Favor, 37% Oppose
- Taxing the extraction of oil and natural gas in California: 43% Favor, 51% Oppose
- Increasing the California vehicle license fee: 18% Favor, 79% Oppose
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?
Use of surplus budget funds

The state is projected to have a budget surplus of several billion dollars over the next several years. In general, how would you prefer to use this extra money?

- Pay down state debt and build up the reserve
- Restore some funding for social service programs that were cut in recent years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pay down</th>
<th>Build up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Governor’s revised budget plan

Governor Brown recently released a revised budget plan for the next fiscal year…

In general, do you favor or oppose the governor’s budget plan?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% favor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rainy day fund plan

The governor and the legislature are placing a measure on the November 2014 ballot that would change the state’s rainy day fund. The plan includes setting aside 1.5 percent of general fund revenues every year and any capital gains revenues that exceed 8 percent of general fund revenues…

In general, do you favor or oppose this plan?
How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right?

- Most of the time: 25%
- Only some/None (vol.) of the time: 67%
- Just about always: 5%
- Don't know: 2%

All adults
State government waste

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

Percentage who think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes:

- **All adults**: 48%
- **Likely voters**: 53%
- **Rep**: 70%
- **Ind**: 47%
- **Dem**: 36%
Seriousness of water supply problem

Would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?
Reduced water use during drought

Are you and your family using less water on indoor activities like showers, baths, and washing dishes, or not?

- A lot less: 40%
- A little less: 39%
- No: 19%
- Don't know: 2%

All adults

Are you and your family using less water on lawn care and landscaping, or not, or do you not have outdoor space at your home?

- A lot less: 38%
- A little less: 28%
- No outdoor space: 23%
- No: 11%
- Don't know: 1%
Gubernatorial primary race

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

- Jerry Brown, a Democrat: 48%
- Tim Donnelly, a Republican: 15%
- Neel Kashkari, a Republican: 10%
- Someone else: 1%
- Don't know: 27%
Attentiveness to news about gubernatorial candidates

How closely are you following news about candidates for the governor’s election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

% saying very/fairly closely

- May 06: 68%
- May 10: 67%
- Dec 13: 22%
- Jan 14: 28%
- Mar 14: 37%
- May 14: 46%
Satisfaction with gubernatorial choices

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

- **All primary likely voters**
  - Satisfied: 53%
  - Not satisfied: 32%

- **Dem**
  - Satisfied: 65%
  - Not satisfied: 23%

- **Rep**
  - Satisfied: 43%
  - Not satisfied: 37%

- **Ind**
  - Satisfied: 48%
  - Not satisfied: 40%
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President Obama
U.S. Congress

%
Trust in federal government

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

- Don't know: 1%
- Just about always: 5%
- Most of the time: 21%
- Only some/none of the time (vol.): 72%

All adults
Federal government waste

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>% Waste a Lot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>58 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>67 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>81 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>60 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>54 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Health care reform

As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?
California’s health insurance exchange

Just your impression, how well has California’s health insurance exchange called “Covered California” been working—very well, fairly well, not too well, or not at all well?

- **All adults**: 54% very/fairly well, 35% not too/not at all well
- **Dem**: 71% very/fairly well, 24% not too/not at all well
- **Rep**: 51% very/fairly well, 31% not too/not at all well
- **Ind**: 49% very/fairly well, 38% not too/not at all well
- **Uninsured**: 48% very/fairly well, 46% not too/not at all well
Perceived threat of climate change

Do you think that global warming will pose a serious threat to you or your way of life in your lifetime?

- Yes: 61%
- No: 35%
- Don't know: 3%

All adults
Do you favor or oppose increased use of hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, a drilling method that uses high-pressure water and chemicals to extract oil and natural gas from underground rock formations?
Building the Keystone XL pipeline

Do you favor or oppose building the Keystone XL pipeline that would transport oil from Canada’s oil sands region through the Midwest to refineries in Texas?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Favor</th>
<th>Oppose</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>38</td>
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<td>Dem</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How big a problem is poverty in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

Seriousness of poverty

Jan 2006: 30% somewhat of a problem, 57% big problem
May 2014: 25% somewhat of a problem, 68% big problem
Ability of government policies to reduce poverty

How much do you think government policies and programs can do to reduce poverty in this country—a lot, some, not much, or nothing at all?

- All adults: 46% saying a lot
- Likely voters: 40% saying a lot
- Dem: 54% saying a lot
- Ind: 39% saying a lot
- Rep: 29% saying a lot
Perceptions of political parties

Please tell me if you think each of the following phrases better describes the Republican Party and its leaders or the Democratic Party and its leaders.

- Governs in a more honest and ethical way.
- Is more concerned with the needs of people like me.
- Is more extreme in its positions.
- Is more influenced by lobbyists and special interests.
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Conclusions

- Three in four Californians say voters should make some budget decisions at the ballot box
- Californians are divided on the use of budget surplus
- Three in four favor the governor’s revised budget proposal and the rainy day fund plan
- Record-high share say the water supply is a big problem in their region
- Californians are still divided over health care reform
- A slim majority oppose the increased use of fracking
- Two in three view poverty as a big societal problem
Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

surveys@ppic.org

Thank you for your interest in this work.
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