PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

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May 2012
Outline

- PPIC Statewide Surveys
- 2012 Elections
- State and National Issues
- Conclusions
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
  - 266,000+ Californians since 1998
  - 125+ general, issue, and regional surveys
Californians and Their Government

- General series funded by The Irvine Foundation
- 2012 elections
  - Presidential candidates, June 5 state primary, governor’s tax initiative
- State and national issues
  - Approval ratings, state budget, raising taxes, government waste
- Telephone interviews, May 14–20
  - 2,002 adults / 894 likely voters
    - ± 3.4% margin of error for adults
    - ± 4.2% for likely voters
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Satisfaction with Presidential Candidates

Likely voters

Democrats
Republicans
Independents

%

Dec 11 Jan 12 March 12 May 12

57 67 65 75
47 44 45 48
33 39 43 46
Candidate Favorability Ratings

Please say if you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of the following presidential candidates. How about ________?

Barack Obama

- Favorable: 52
- Unfavorable: 45
- Don't know/Never heard of him: 4

Mitt Romney

- Favorable: 52
- Unfavorable: 40
- Don't know/Never heard of him: 9

Likely voters
Obama’s Support for Same-Sex Marriage

Did President Obama expressing his support for gay marriage make you think more favorably of him, less favorably of him, or did it not affect your opinion of Barack Obama?

- More favorably: 49
- Less favorably: 25
- Did not affect opinion: 25
- Don't know: 1

Likely voters
Presidential Race

If the November 6th presidential election were being held today, would you vote for Barack Obama, the Democrat or Mitt Romney, the Republican?

- Barack Obama, the Democrat: 50
- Mitt Romney, the Republican: 39
- Someone else (vol): 3
- Don't know: 8

Likely voters
What is your preference for the outcome of this year’s congressional elections: a Congress controlled by Republicans or a Congress controlled by Democrats?
Importance of Top-two Primary System

How important to you is having the top-two primary system? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Somewhat important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All likely voters</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you think that having the top-two primary system is a good thing or a bad thing for California elections, or does it make no difference for California elections?

- Good thing: 43
- Bad thing: 22
- No difference: 27
- Don't know: 9

Likely voters
Vote on Proposition 28: Legislative Term Limits

Proposition 28 is called the “Limits on Legislators’ Terms in Office, Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” ...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 28?

![Bar chart showing likely voters' responses to Proposition 28 over time. In March, 68% of likely voters responded yes, with 24% responding no. In May, 62% responded yes, with 29% responding no.](chart_image)
Importance of Prop. 28 Outcome

How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 28?

- Somewhat important
- Very important

- All likely voters: 47% Somewhat important, 21% Very important
- Vote 'Yes' on Prop. 28: 53% Somewhat important, 23% Very important
- Vote 'No' on Prop. 28: 42% Somewhat important, 18% Very important
The California Legislature has operated under term limits since 1990...Do you think that term limits are a good thing or a bad thing for California, or do they make no difference?
Vote on Proposition 29: Additional Tax on Cigarettes

Proposition 29 is called the “Imposes Additional Tax on Cigarettes for Cancer Research, Initiative Statute.” ...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 29?

- **March:**
  - Yes: 67%
  - No: 30%

- **May:**
  - Yes: 53%
  - No: 42%

Likely voters
Importance of Prop. 29 Outcome

How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 29?

How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 29?

- Somewhat important
- Very important

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Very Important</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All likely voters</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote 'Yes' on Prop 29</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vote 'No' on Prop 29</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Taxing Cigarettes in General

In general, would you favor or oppose increasing taxes on the purchase of cigarettes?

- **All likely voters**: 63% favor, 33% oppose
- **Dem**: 73% favor, 24% oppose
- **Rep**: 52% favor, 44% oppose
- **Ind**: 66% favor, 29% oppose
Governor Brown and others have proposed a tax initiative for the November ballot titled the “Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.”... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on the proposed tax initiative?
If voters reject the proposed tax initiative on the November ballot, Governor Brown’s budget proposes that automatic spending cuts be made to K-12 public schools. Do you favor or oppose these automatic spending cuts to K-12 public schools?
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Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

Governor Brown
Legislature

May 11 | July 11 | Sep 11 | Nov 11 | Jan 12 | Mar 12 | May 12
42    | 42     | 41     | 44     | 46     | 40     | 39
23    | 23     | 26     | 25     | 28     | 25     | 25

% 40  | 60     | 80     | 40     | 60     | 40     | 40
Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

President Obama
Congress

May 09 72
Sep 09 63
May 10 59
Sep 10 52
Mar 11 56
Sep 11 51
May 12 56

May 09 47
Sep 09 39
May 10 31
Sep 10 26
Mar 11 30
Sep 11 27
May 12 22

% 0 20 40 60 80

Economic Conditions

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

Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, moderate, or a mild recession?)
In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more—I’d rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services, or I’d rather pay lower taxes and have a state government that provides fewer services?

Preference for Taxes and Level of Government Services

- All adults: 58% Higher, 37% Lower
- Demo: 73% Higher, 22% Lower
- Rep: 68% Higher, 25% Lower
- Ind: 51% Higher, 45% Lower
- Likely voters: 49% Higher, 46% Lower
Preference for Making Tough Budget Choices

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; that California voters make some of the decisions about spending and taxes at the ballot box?

Likely voters

- 81% prefer the governor and legislature to make all decisions
- 15% prefer California voters to make some decisions
- 3% don't know
Governor Brown recently released a revised budget plan for the next fiscal year to close the state’s projected $15.7 billion dollar budget deficit...In general, do you favor or oppose the governor’s budget plan?

Governor’s Revised Budget Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Oppose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All adults</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dem</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rep</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likely voters</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you favor or oppose Governor Brown’s proposed spending cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care, and other social service programs?

- All adults: Favor 30%, Oppose 65%
- Dem: Favor 21%, Oppose 76%
- Rep: Favor 48%, Oppose 49%
- Ind: Favor 35%, Oppose 58%
- Likely voters: Favor 36%, Oppose 60%
Raising Revenues for Specific Budget Areas

Tax increases could be used to help reduce the state budget deficit. For each of the following areas of state spending, please indicate whether you would be willing to pay higher taxes, or not.

% of likely voters saying yes

- K–12 education: 61%
- Higher education: 55%
- Health and human services: 50%
- Prisons and corrections: 18%
State Revenue Sources

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

- **Raise income tax on wealthy**: Favor - 65%, Oppose - 33%
- **Raise state sales tax**: Favor - 40%, Oppose - 58%
Do you think the people in ... waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don’t waste very much of it?

- Federal government: 67%
- State government: 57%
- Your local government: 38%
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Conclusions

- Obama leads Romney in presidential matchup
- Big decline in support for Prop 29 (taxing cigarettes), slight decline for Prop 28 (term limits) since March
- A majority of likely voters support the governor’s proposed tax initiative
- Half oppose the governor’s revised budget plan
- Vast majority say voters should be involved in making state budget decisions
- Majorities say federal and state government wastes a lot; fewer say this about localities
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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