

## Race and Voting in California

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➤ **California is a majority-minority state, but minority turnout continues to lag.**

According to US Census estimates, California—which became the first large majority-minority state after the 2000 Census—has a Latino plurality. Latinos account for 39% of the state’s total population, while non-Hispanic whites account for 38%. Asian Americans (14%) and African Americans (6%) comprise much smaller shares of California’s population. Non-Hispanic whites make up 43% of California’s adult population, but according to our surveys, they make up 60% of the state’s likely voters. In contrast, Latinos represent 34% of the state’s adult population, but account for only 18% of those most likely to vote. Asian Americans comprise 15% of the adult population and 12% of likely voters. The share of African American likely voters matches their representation in the adult population (6%). Our surveys over the past year indicate that fewer than half of African American (48%), Asian American (48%), and Latino (42%) adult citizens are likely to vote, compared to 64% of white adult citizens.

➤ **Most African American and Latino likely voters are Democrats.**

An overwhelming majority of African American likely voters (82%) and a solid majority of Latino likely voters (62%) are registered as Democrats. Among Asian American likely voters, a plurality (45%) are registered as Democrats, 24% are registered as Republicans, and 30% as independents, also known as “decline to state” or “no party preference” voters. Party registration of white likely voters is more evenly divided, with 38% registered as Democrats, 39% as Republicans, and 19% as independents.

➤ **Within racial/ethnic groups, likely voters are ideologically divided.**

Latino voters are about as likely to identify themselves as politically liberal (34%) as they are to call themselves middle-of-the-road (30%) or conservative (36%). Similarly, white likely voters are about as likely to identify as liberal (34%) as they are to identify as conservative (37%, 28% middle-of-the-road). African American and Asian American likely voters are slightly more likely to be ideologically liberal (41% each) than conservative (33% African Americans, 30% Asian Americans).

➤ **Among likely voters, Asian Americans and Latinos tend to be young; Latinos and African Americans tend to be less educated and less affluent.**

About half of Asian American (52%) and Latino (49%) likely voters are under age 45, compared to fewer African American (31%) and white (26%) likely voters. Indeed, among likely voters, three in ten Asian Americans and Latinos are under age 35, compared to only 17% of African Americans and 12% of whites. Fewer than a third of Latino (24%) and African American (30%) likely voters are college graduates, compared to 42% of white and 69% of Asian American likely voters. Pluralities of Latino (46%) and African American (44%) likely voters have household incomes of less than \$40,000, while about a quarter (25% Latinos, 27% African Americans) earn \$80,000 or more. In contrast, nearly half of white (49%) and a majority of Asian American (59%) likely voters earn \$80,000 or more.

➤ **Majorities of likely voters across racial/ethnic groups view immigrants as a benefit.**

Nearly all African American (97%) and white (94%) likely voters are native-born US citizens, compared to 66% of Latino likely voters; Asian American likely voters are more likely to be naturalized rather than native-born citizens (56% to 44%). When it comes to perceptions of immigrants, solid majorities of Latino (74%), Asian American (71%), and African American (62%) likely voters say immigrants are a benefit to California. White likely voters are more evenly divided (52% benefit, 41% burden). Regarding undocumented immigrants living in the United States, strong majorities across racial/ethnic groups think there should be a way for them to stay legally if certain requirements are met (86% African Americans, 83% Latinos, 79% Asian Americans, 74% whites).



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<i>Likely voters only</i>		African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites	Others
All likely voters		6%	12%	18%	60%	4%
Party registration	Democratic	82	45	62	38	38
	Republican	6	24	17	39	25
	Independent	11	30	18	19	30
	Other	1	1	4	5	8
Political ideology	Liberal	41	41	34	35	36
	Moderate	26	28	30	28	30
	Conservative	33	31	36	37	33
Region	Los Angeles County	45	32	43	19	20
	SF Bay Area	22	32	12	21	27
	Central Valley	11	8	14	19	23
	Orange/San Diego Counties	9	20	13	20	14
	Inland Empire	10	5	10	9	7
	Other	3	4	7	11	9
Age	18 to 34	17	30	31	12	21
	35 to 54	34	42	39	32	37
	55 and older	49	28	30	56	42
Gender	Men	43	53	48	48	52
	Women	57	47	52	52	48
Education	No college	22	11	37	13	12
	Some college	48	20	39	45	45
	College graduate	30	69	24	42	42
Income	Under \$40,000	44	20	46	24	30
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	29	21	29	27	29
	\$80,000 or more	27	59	25	49	40
Own/Rent	Own	45	68	56	76	61
	Rent	55	32	44	24	39
Nativity	US-born	97	44	66	94	93
	Immigrant	3	56	34	6	7
Which statement comes closest to your own view?	Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills	62	71	74	52	48
	Immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services	33	22	20	41	37
	Don't know	5	7	6	8	15
Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are living in the US?	There should be a way for them to stay legally if certain requirements are met	86	79	83	74	68
	They should not be allowed to stay legally	14	20	16	23	30
	Don't know	–	1	–	2	2

**Source:** Seven PPIC Statewide Surveys from September 2015 to July 2016, including 7,306 likely voters. 2000 US Census, 2012 American Community Survey. US Census Bureau, Population Estimates Program (PEP).

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