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Californians & higher education



Mark Baldassare

Dean Bonner

Sonja Petek

Nicole Willcoxon

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

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 111th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 236,000 Californians. This survey is part of a PPIC Statewide Survey series on K–12 and higher education, environment, and population issues, funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This is the fourth PPIC Statewide Survey focusing on higher education.

This survey seeks to inform state policymakers, encourage discussion, and raise public awareness about the state’s public higher education system—the state’s third largest area of spending. Currently, about 3.6 million students use publicly funded higher education, according to data from the three higher education systems: the California Community Colleges, California State University, and University of California. Higher education is guided by a 1960 master plan that calls for making a college education available to every qualified California high school graduate. This past year’s poor economic news brought a renewed focus on higher education issues, with many concerned that neglecting higher education will hurt the state’s future. Students demonstrated repeatedly against tuition and fee increases, the legislature’s joint committee on the master plan met to discuss the issues, and Governor Schwarzenegger highlighted the importance of higher education funding in his state of the state speech. The recently passed 2010-2011 state budget included more money for the three systems but funding levels still remain below those of a few years ago.

This report presents the responses of 2,502 California adults, interviewed in multiple languages on landline and cell phones, on these specific topics:

- Attitudes and policy preferences, including opinions about state funding for public colleges and universities and preferences for state spending in this area; concerns about specific steps already taken to deal with reduced funding; preferences for raising revenues and for government policies to help students afford college; and attitudes about the importance of higher education to California’s future and whether the state will have enough college-educated residents to meet future needs.
- Perceptions and approval ratings, including the perceived importance of a college education and of maintaining universal access to higher education for all qualified Californians; ratings of the three branches and assessments of overall conditions; approval ratings of the governor and legislature on their handling of the system; opinions about affordability and opportunity; perceived importance of racial and economic diversity; views of the role of community colleges; and parental concerns about affording their childrens’ college educations.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and variations in perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding public colleges and universities across five major regions of the state (Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego Counties), among Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites, across socioeconomic and political groups, and among parents.

This report may be downloaded free of charge from our website (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org. Try our PPIC Statewide Survey interactive tools online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PST on Wednesday, November 17, 2010.

Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:
<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Concerns Rise Over Funding of Public Colleges, Universities

MORE FAVOR RAISING OWN TAXES THAN INCREASING STUDENT FEES

SAN FRANCISCO, November 17, 2010—A strong majority of Californians say state funding for higher education is inadequate and most would favor more spending on public colleges and universities even if it means less money for other state programs. These are the findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with support from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

A poor economy and persistent state budget deficit have taken a notable toll on Californians' views about state funding for public higher education in the PPIC survey—taken before the state legislative analyst projected a \$25.4 billion budget shortfall over the next 18 months. Today, 74 percent of residents say the state does not provide enough money for colleges and universities, up 17 points from October 2007 (57%). Most Californians (68%) believe that spending for public higher education should be given a high or very high priority—a 14-point increase from November 2008 (54%)—and 57 percent favor spending more on higher education even at the expense of other programs. Most (62%) are very concerned that the state budget situation will cause significant spending cuts in higher education, up 14 points from November 2008 (48%).

As Californians overall have grown more concerned about funding for higher education, parents' concerns about paying for their children's college education have also increased. Today, 57 percent of parents with children 18 or younger are very worried about being able to afford college (43% October 2007, 46% November 2008, 50% November 2009). Concern is especially high today among Latino parents, with 72 percent very worried about being able to pay for college—up 19 points since 2007.

“Residents see higher education as crucial—to personal success and to California's future,” says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. “They are clearly worried about the state's ability to fund public colleges and universities that are high quality and widely accessible.”

CALIFORNIANS SPLIT ON INCREASING TAXES TO MAINTAIN FUNDING

What steps would residents be willing to take to raise revenue for colleges and universities? They are divided on whether they would pay higher taxes to maintain current funding (49% yes, 49% no), with a strong partisan divide (64% of Democrats yes, 51% of independents and 69% of Republicans no). However, Californians' willingness to pay higher taxes has increased over the last year (41% yes, 56% no in 2009). And they are much more likely to favor raising their own taxes than to raising student fees to maintain current funding (35% yes, 62% no). Opposition to raising student fees holds across party lines (63% Democrats, 60% Republicans, 59% independents). (The PPIC survey was taken before

the University of California proposed, and California State University approved, fee increases earlier this month.)

A majority of adults (57%) support another idea under consideration: admitting more out-of-state students who pay higher tuition. But support drops to 26 percent if doing so would mean that fewer California students would be admitted.

Asked about measures colleges and universities have already taken to deal with decreased state funding, Californians are most likely to be very concerned about increasing tuition and fees for students (65%), followed by admitting fewer students (62%), offering fewer classes (59%), and reducing the pay and hours for college faculty and staff (46%).

Although spared from state budget cuts this year, higher education still receives less funding than in earlier years. Most residents (66%) believe educational quality will suffer if state government makes budget cuts to higher education, while 29 percent say educational quality could be maintained. Asked to choose among approaches that would significantly improve the quality of the system, a majority (54%) choose a combination of using funds more wisely and increasing funds, while 34 percent say just using funds more wisely would significantly improve quality, and just 11 percent say a funding increase alone would do so.

HIGHER EDUCATION VIEWED AS HIGH PRIORITY FOR NEW GOVERNOR

Most adults (75%) nationwide say that a college education is very important (Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, June 2010), and the PPIC survey shows Californians are even more likely to say so (86%). A strong majority (63%) see a college education as necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, while just 35 percent say that there are many ways to succeed without college.

Nearly all Californians say that given all of the issues facing the new governor in 2011, planning for the future of the state's higher education system is very important (76%) or somewhat important (21%). However, confidence in the state government's ability to plan for the future of California higher education is not high: most residents (57%) have very little or no confidence in the government's ability to do so, while 40 percent have some or a great deal of confidence. This is a reversal from 2007, when 57 percent had some or a great deal of confidence in the state's ability to plan for the system's future.

MOST SUPPORT UNIVERSAL ACCESS—AND MOST SAY COST IS A BARRIER

A key principle of California's 1960 master plan for higher education was universal access to college for all qualified state residents, and most Californians today concur with this view. Asked whether they think all Californians who are qualified to attend college should have an opportunity to do so, 85 percent say yes and just 12 percent say admissions should be restricted because of the cost to the state.

But only 26 percent of Californians think that the vast majority of people qualified to go to college are able to do so and 71 percent say many people don't have the opportunity. An overwhelming majority (73%) think the price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated from attending. Strong majorities across political, regional, and demographic groups agree. At the same time, a majority (55%) think that almost anyone who needs financial help can get loans or financial aid, while 40 percent disagree. However 74 percent say students must borrow too much money to pay for a college education.

Given Californians' concerns about college costs, it is not surprising that there is strong support for government programs that make college more affordable. Large majorities favor increasing government funding for work-study opportunities (88%) and for scholarships and grants (84%). To a lesser degree, they also favor having a sliding scale for tuition and fee costs so that students would pay according to income (72%).

UC, CSU, COMMUNITY COLLEGES GET GOOD GRADES

While Californians are most likely to identify the state budget situation (74%) or overall affordability (60%) as a big problem in the higher education system, far fewer see quality as a big problem (22%). And as they have since October 2007, strong majorities of residents say each branch of the system is doing a good or excellent job. They view each similarly, with 62 percent saying the California State University system is doing at least a good job (9% excellent, 53% good) and 64 percent saying the same for the University of California (15% excellent, 49% good) and community college system (13% excellent, 51% good).

Asked specifically about the role of community colleges, a plurality (41%) say the most important goal for this branch of higher education is preparing students to transfer to four-year schools. Fewer say the goal is to provide career technical or vocational education (25%) or courses for lifelong learning or personal enrichment (15%). Even less frequently mentioned: providing associate's degrees (8%) and providing basic skills or remedial education (5%). Nearly all Californians say it is very important (78%) or somewhat important (18%) that community colleges include classes that prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities, and nearly all say it is very (73%) or somewhat important (23%) that community colleges include career technical or vocational education.

MORE KEY FINDINGS

- **Higher education seen as important to future**—page 12

Nearly all Californians say that the state's higher education system is very important (77%) or somewhat important (20%) to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years. And a majority (56%) say that if current trends continue, California will not have enough college-educated workers for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand in 20 years. The share of residents who hold this view is up 7 points since last November (49%).

- **State leaders: low approval ratings overall, low for handling higher education**—page 17

Just one in four Californians (25%) approve of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's job performance, similar to the low ratings he has received all year. Just 19 percent approve of his handling of public colleges and universities. The legislature ranks lower, with 14 percent approval ratings overall—matching the record low—and 15 percent approving of lawmakers' handling of higher education.

- **Economic, racially diverse student body valued**—page 21

Three in four Californians (77%) say it is very or somewhat important for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body. More than eight in 10 (83%) hold this view about economic diversity.

- **Nearly all parents aspire to college for their children**—page 23

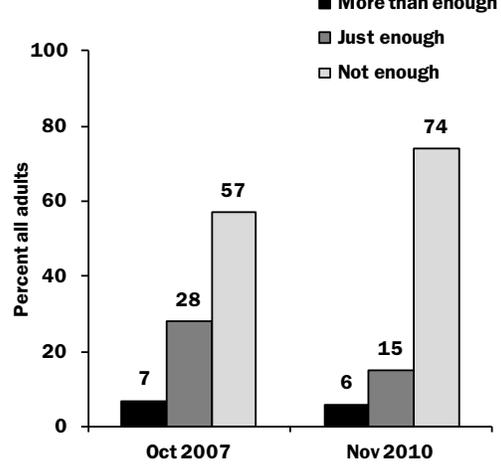
Among parents of children 18 or younger, nearly all hope their youngest child gets a college degree (42%) or post-graduate degree (46%). Among racial/ethnic groups, strong majorities of both white and Latino parents hope their child gets a college degree (37% whites, 52% Latinos) or post-graduate degree (54% whites, 30% Latinos).

ATTITUDES AND POLICY PREFERENCES

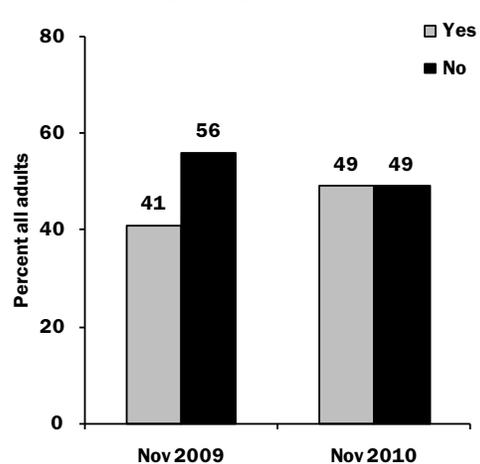
KEY FINDINGS

- Californians' belief that state funding for public colleges and universities is inadequate (74%) has risen 17 points since October 2007. Most (66%) think more cuts will affect educational quality. *(page 7)*
- Two in three Californians say state spending on higher education should be a high or very high priority (up 14 points since 2008). Fifty-seven percent say the state should increase spending in this area even at the expense of other programs. Six in 10 are very concerned the state's budget situation will result in spending cuts (up 14 points since 2008). *(page 8)*
- Majorities of Californians are very concerned about ways to compensate for decreased state funding: increasing tuition (65%), reducing admissions (62%), and offering fewer courses (59%). *(page 9)*
- More Californians favor raising their own taxes (49%) than increasing student fees (35%) to fund higher education. Voters are divided along party lines about taxes, but are similar in opposing higher fees. A majority would consider admitting more out-of-state students, who pay more, but support falls if that means fewer California student admissions. *(page 10)*
- There is strong support for government programs—such as work-study, grants, and a hypothetical sliding tuition scale—to help students afford college. *(page 11)*
- Strong majorities of Californians say the higher education system is very important to the state's future and should be a high priority for the next governor, but a majority lack confidence in the state government's ability to plan for the system's future. *(pages 12, 13)*

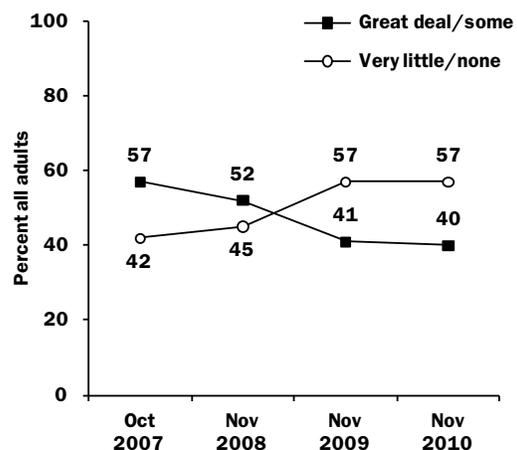
Current Level of State Funding for Higher Education



Willing to Pay Higher Taxes to Maintain Current Funding for Higher Education?



Confidence in State Government to Plan for Future of Higher Education



ADEQUACY AND EFFICIENCY OF STATE FUNDING

Seventy-four percent of Californians say state funding for public colleges and universities is not enough. This is a notable increase since October 2007—before the economic downturn and state budget crisis had deepened—when 57 percent held this view. Today, 84 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of independents say funding is insufficient, compared to 55 percent of Republicans. At least two in three across regions and nearly all demographic groups believe funding falls short. Among those who are currently students in one of California’s public colleges or universities, most (86%) consider funding to be inadequate. Fewer than 14 percent across all groups consider funding to be more than enough.

“Do you think the current level of state funding for California’s public colleges and universities is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More than enough	6%	3%	13%	6%	8%
Just enough	15	11	25	15	17
Not enough	74	84	55	74	70
Don’t know	5	2	7	5	5

Strong majorities of Californians agree that either increasing the amount of funding (74%) or using existing funds more wisely (84%) would lead to major improvements in the state’s higher education system. When then asked which approach would improve the system the most, a majority (54%) say that the state needs to both increase funding and use existing funds more wisely. Thirty-four percent believe that just using funds more wisely would significantly improve quality, while only 11 percent believe that increasing funding alone would significantly improve quality. Despite the economic downturn and persistent state budget deficit, findings have changed little since October 2007 (39% use funds more wisely, 9% increase funding, 50% do both). Voters are divided along partisan lines, with most Republicans (56%) saying existing state funds should be used more wisely and most Democrats (64%) saying funds should be increased and used more wisely; a majority of independents (53%) also prefer this dual approach.

“To significantly improve California’s higher education system, which of the following statements do you agree with the most? We need to use existing state funds more wisely, or, we need to increase the amount of state funding, or, we need to use existing state funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding.”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Use funds more wisely	34%	23%	56%	34%	38%
Increase funding	11	13	6	10	9
Use funds more wisely and increase funding	54	64	37	53	52
Don’t know	1	–	1	3	1

In the 2010-2011 state budget, colleges and universities received slight increases in funding, but are still receiving less than in earlier years. If the state government makes budget cuts in higher education, two in three (66%) believe educational quality will suffer, while three in 10 (29%) believe educational quality could be maintained. Strong majorities of Democrats (73%) and independents (67%) believe quality would suffer; to a lesser extent, Republicans (54%) agree. Among those who are currently attending a California public college or university, 73 percent believe quality would suffer.

STATE BUDGET SITUATION

Most Californians (68%) believe that spending for California’s public colleges and universities should be given a high (32%) or very high (36%) priority, up 14 points since November 2008 (54%: 28% high, 26% very high priority) and up 9 points since November 2009 (59%: 33% high, 26% very high priority). Across parties today, strong majorities of Democrats (79%) and independents (69%) believe a high or very high priority should be placed on spending for higher education; half of Republicans agree.

Strong majorities across regions and demographic groups believe a high or very high priority should be placed on spending for the state’s public colleges and universities. About four in 10 in Los Angeles (41%), the Inland Empire (40%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (38%) say very high priority, compared to 34 percent in the Central Valley and 29 percent in Orange/San Diego Counties. Latinos (49%) and blacks (44%) are more likely than Asians (33%) and whites (29%) to say very high priority. Californians currently attending one of the state’s public institutions (41%) or those with children currently attending (43%) consider such spending a very high priority.

“Given the state’s current budget situation, on a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority—what priority should be given to spending for California’s public colleges and universities?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
High/very high priority	68%	79%	50%	69%	67%
Medium priority	23	16	36	22	24
Low/very low priority	7	4	12	7	8
Don’t know	2	1	2	2	1

A majority of Californians and likely voters (57% each) would favor the state government spending more money on public colleges and universities even if it means less money for other state programs. Two in three Democrats (66%) would favor this idea. Independents (51% favor, 40% oppose) and Republicans (49% favor, 42% oppose) are more likely to favor than oppose the state spending more on higher education even if it means less money for other programs. More than half across regions and nearly all demographic groups favor this idea. Still, about six in 10 Latinos (63%) and Asians (60%) favor this idea compared to 54 percent of whites and 49 percent of blacks. Men (60%) are somewhat more likely than women (53%), and residents aged 55 and older somewhat more likely than younger residents, to agree.

“Do you favor or oppose the state government spending more money on public colleges and universities, even if it means less money for other state programs?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	57%	66%	49%	51%	57%
Oppose	34	26	42	40	34
Don’t know	9	8	9	9	9

Six in 10 Californians (62%) are very concerned that the state’s budget situation will cause significant spending cuts in higher education, a jump of 14 points since November 2008 (48%). Democrats (73%) are much more likely than independents (59%) and Republicans (44%) to be very concerned. Across regions, between 58 percent and 65 percent are very concerned. Blacks (75%) and Latinos (70%) are more likely than Asians (61%) and whites (55%) to be very concerned about potential budget cuts.

CONCERNS ABOUT STATE FUNDING

California’s public colleges and universities have taken a number of specific measures to deal with decreased state funding. Among these, Californians are the most likely to be very concerned about increasing student tuition and fees (65%), followed by admitting fewer college students (62%), offering fewer college classes (59%), and reducing the pay and hours for college faculty and staff (46%). The percentage of Californians who are very concerned is nearly the same as last year for increasing tuition (62% to 65% today), for offering fewer courses (57% to 59% today), and for reducing the pay and hours of faculty and staff (48% to 46%). There has been a slight increase in the percentage very concerned about admitting fewer students (57% to 62% today).

“There are a number of ways California’s public colleges and universities have dealt with decreased funding. Please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each of the following.”

	Increasing tuition and fees for college students	Admitting fewer college students	Offering fewer college classes	Reducing the pay and hours for college faculty and staff
Very concerned	65%	62%	59%	46%
Somewhat concerned	26	25	28	34
Not too concerned	4	7	7	9
Not at all concerned	4	5	4	9
Don’t know	1	1	2	2

Parents of children currently attending one of the state’s public colleges or universities are 8 to 12 points more likely than adults overall to be very concerned about each of these measures. Those who are currently attending one of the schools are also more likely to be very concerned about increasing tuition (73%), reducing admissions (73%), and especially about offering fewer classes (76%), but express similar concern about reducing the pay and hours of faculty and staff (49%). Majorities across racial/ethnic groups are very concerned about increasing tuition and reducing admissions; blacks are the most likely to be very concerned. Blacks and Latinos are far more likely than whites and Asians to be very concerned about offering fewer classes and about reducing the pay and hours of faculty and staff.

<i>Percent saying very concerned</i>	Increasing tuition and fees for college students	Admitting fewer college students	Offering fewer college classes	Reducing the pay and hours for college faculty and staff
All Adults	65%	62%	59%	46%
Likely Voters	63	61	58	41
Parents of Child in California Public College/University	74	70	71	54
Race/ Ethnicity				
Asians	60	54	46	36
Blacks	83	82	71	56
Latinos	71	65	69	57
Whites	61	59	54	40
Region				
Central Valley	67	60	61	41
San Francisco Bay Area	64	66	60	48
Los Angeles	71	65	65	55
Orange/San Diego	58	54	51	37
Inland Empire	66	64	56	48

RAISING REVENUES

Californians are concerned about state budget cuts to higher education and believe public colleges and universities do not receive enough funding from the state, but aside from taking money from other state programs, what steps would they take to raise revenues? Californians and likely voters are evenly divided about paying higher taxes to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities (49% yes, 49% no). There is much greater opposition among Californians (35% yes, 62% no) and likely voters (37% yes, 60% no) toward increasing student fees to maintain current funding levels.

Californians were more opposed to paying higher taxes in 2008 (44% yes, 52% no) and in 2009 (41% yes, 56% no). Most Democrats (64%) today would pay higher taxes and most Republicans (69%) would not; independents are divided. Only in the San Francisco Bay Area would a majority pay higher taxes for higher education. Los Angeles and Inland Empire residents are divided, while majorities in the Central Valley and Orange/San Diego Counties are opposed. Blacks (61%) are willing to pay higher taxes, while Latinos and whites are divided and Asians are opposed. Support drops with age, but rises with education.

The percentage of Californians willing to increase student fees (35%) to maintain funding is up 6 points from last year (29%), but is similar to 2008 (32%). Voters across parties (63% Democrats, 60% Republicans, 59% independents) oppose this idea and majorities across regions and demographic groups agree. Blacks (76%) and Latinos (68%) are more opposed than whites (58%) or Asians (57%). Support for increasing fees is higher among college graduates and upper-income residents than others.

“What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Would you be willing to...?”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Pay higher taxes for this purpose, or not?	Yes	49%	64%	27%	47%	49%
	No	49	34	69	51	49
	Don't know	2	2	4	2	2
Increase student fees for this purpose, or not?	Yes	35	34	38	39	37
	No	62	63	60	59	60
	Don't know	3	3	2	2	3

One idea under consideration is to admit more out-of-state students, who pay higher tuition. A majority of Californians (57%) would support this idea, but support declines to 26 percent if doing so would mean fewer California students being admitted. Nearly four in 10 (38%) are opposed to the idea altogether. About six in 10 across parties would favor the idea in general, but Republicans (32%) are somewhat more likely than independents (26%) or Democrats (25%) to consider it even if it meant fewer in-state students.

“What if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities. Would you be willing to admit more out-of-state students paying higher tuition for this purpose, or not? (if yes: Would you still support this even if it meant admitting fewer in-state students?)”

	All Adults	Region					Parents of Child in High School
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Yes, even if it meant fewer in-state	26%	24%	26%	25%	32%	21%	24%
Yes, but not if it meant fewer in-state	31	26	36	28	27	31	31
No	38	43	33	42	32	44	40
Don't know	5	7	5	5	9	4	5

ROLE OF GOVERNMENT POLICY

Californians continue to favor several ways that the federal and state government can make higher education more affordable. Support is high for increasing government funding available for work-study opportunities (88%) and for scholarships or grants for students (84%), and for having a sliding scale for tuition and fee costs, so that students would pay according to their income (72%).

Nearly nine in 10 Californians and 85 percent of likely voters favor increasing government funding available for work-study opportunities for students to earn money in college. Support among all adults has been similar each of the four times we have asked this question (86% 2007, 88% 2008, 85% 2009, 88% today). Support today is high across partisan groups, with Democrats (95%) the most likely to be in favor, followed by independents (86%) and Republicans (78%). More than eight in 10 across regions and demographic groups favor this idea.

California adults (84%) and likely voters (81%) also favor increasing government funding available for scholarships or grants for students. At least eight in 10 adults have favored this idea each time we asked this question (83% 2007, 83% 2008, 80% 2009, 84% today). There is support again across parties, but Democrats (93%) and independents (85%) are far more supportive than Republicans (68%). At least eight in 10 across regions are in favor, as are more than three in four across demographic groups. Eight in 10 whites favor this proposal, with even higher support among Asians (87%), Latinos (89%), and blacks (96%). Support for increasing funding for scholarships or grants decreases as age and income increase.

Californians (72%) and likely voters (69%) also favor—albeit to a lesser degree—having a sliding scale for tuition and fees so that students pay according to their income. At least two in three Californians have supported this idea each of the three times this question has been asked (70% 2008, 67% 2009, 72% today). Although support is high across parties, Democrats (79%) are again more likely than independents (71%) and Republicans (60%) to be in favor. Two in three or more across regions and at least six in 10 across demographic groups favor this idea. Blacks (85%) and Latinos (81%) are much more likely than Asians and whites (67% each) to favor a sliding scale; support decreases sharply as education level and income increase.

“I am going to read you several ways that the federal and state governments can make California’s higher education system more affordable to students. For each of the following, please say if you favor or oppose the proposal. How about...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Increasing government funding available for work-study opportunities for students to earn money while in college?</i>	Favor	88%	95%	78%	86%	85%
	Oppose	11	4	21	13	14
	Don't know	1	1	1	1	1
<i>Increasing government funding available for scholarships or grants for students?</i>	Favor	84	93	68	85	81
	Oppose	14	6	30	11	17
	Don't know	2	1	2	4	2
<i>Having a sliding scale for tuition and fee costs, so that students pay according to their income status?</i>	Favor	72	79	60	71	69
	Oppose	25	18	38	27	29
	Don't know	3	3	2	2	2

HIGHER EDUCATION AND CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE

Nearly all Californians say that the state's higher education system is very (77%) or somewhat (20%) important to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years. This perception has been similar each of the four times we have asked this question (76% 2007, 72% 2008, 72% 2009, 77% today). Today, Democrats (85%) are much more likely than independents (73%) and far more likely than Republicans (65%) to hold this view.

More than two in three Californians across regions and demographic groups consider the higher education system to be very important to the state's future. Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay Area residents (80% each) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by Inland Empire (76%), Central Valley (75%), and Orange/San Diego County (69%) residents. Blacks (87%) and Latinos (84%) are much more likely than whites (74%) and Asians (67%) to say the higher education system is very important. About eight in 10 of those who have children attending a California public college or university (82%), who are currently attending one themselves (84%), or who are alumni (79%) view the higher education system as very important.

“In general, how important is California’s higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	77%	85%	65%	73%	77%
Somewhat important	20	12	31	23	20
Not too important	2	2	2	2	2
Not at all important	1	–	1	1	1
Don't know	–	1	1	1	–

A majority of Californians (56%) think that if current trends continue, in 20 years California will not have enough college-educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand then. Projections by PPIC researchers indicate that in 15 years, only 35 percent of working-age adults in California will have college degrees, but that 41 percent of jobs will require one.

The perception that California will not have enough college-educated residents has increased 7 points since last November (49%), and a plurality have said not enough each time we have asked this question (52% 2007, 47% 2008, 49% 2009, and 56% today). Today, majorities across parties say the state will not have enough college-educated residents in the future, as do between 55 and 57 percent across regions. Blacks (63%) are the most likely racial/ethnic group to hold this view, followed by Latinos (57%), whites (57%), and Asians (50%). The percentage saying not enough increases somewhat with education.

“In thinking ahead 20 years, if current trends continue, do you think California will have more than enough, not enough, or just enough college-educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More than enough	11%	8%	17%	12%	12%
Not enough	56	62	53	55	55
Just enough	27	26	26	27	28
Don't know	6	4	4	6	5

HIGHER EDUCATION AND CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE (CONTINUED)

Given all of the issues facing the new governor in 2011, nearly all Californians say that planning for the future of California's higher education system is very (76%) or somewhat (21%) important. Majorities across parties consider this very important, but Democrats (86%) are much more likely than independents (72%) or Republicans (63%) to hold this view. More than two in three across regions say planning for higher education is very important.

Blacks (89%) and Latinos (84%) are much more likely than whites (71%) and Asians (64%) to view planning for the future of California's higher education system as very important. Overwhelming majorities of those with children in a California public college (83%) and of those currently attending (89%) say planning is very important.

“Given all of the issues that will be facing the new California governor in 2011, how important is planning for the future of California's higher education system?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	76%	86%	63%	72%	76%
Somewhat important	21	13	32	25	21
Not too important	2	1	3	2	2
Not at all important	1	–	1	–	–
Don't know	–	–	1	1	1

Although most residents say planning for the future of California's higher education system is very important for the next governor, only four in 10 say they have a great deal (7%) or some (33%) confidence in the state government's ability to plan for that future. Confidence today is similar to last November (41% great deal/only some), but much lower than in 2008 (52%) or 2007 (57%). A majority today (57%) have very little or no confidence in the state government's ability to plan for the future of the higher education system. Confidence is much higher among Democrats (45%) and independents (42%) than among Republicans (31%).

Majorities across regions have very little or no confidence in the state government's ability to plan for the future of California's higher education system. Central Valley residents (65%) are the most likely—and Los Angeles residents (52%) the least likely—to hold this view. Whites (64%) are the most negative about the state government's ability to plan, followed by Asians (53%), blacks (52%), and Latinos (51%). Younger and lower-income Californians have more confidence in the state than older and higher-income residents. Nearly half of those currently attending a California public college or university have confidence.

“How much confidence do you have in the state government's ability to plan for the future of California's higher education system?”

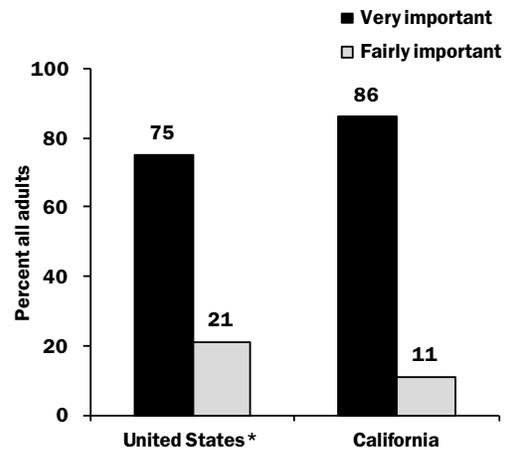
	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
A great deal	7%	8%	3%	5%	5%
Only some	33	37	28	37	33
Very little	38	39	39	35	38
None	19	14	29	22	23
Don't know	3	2	1	1	1

PERCEPTIONS AND APPROVAL RATINGS

KEY FINDINGS

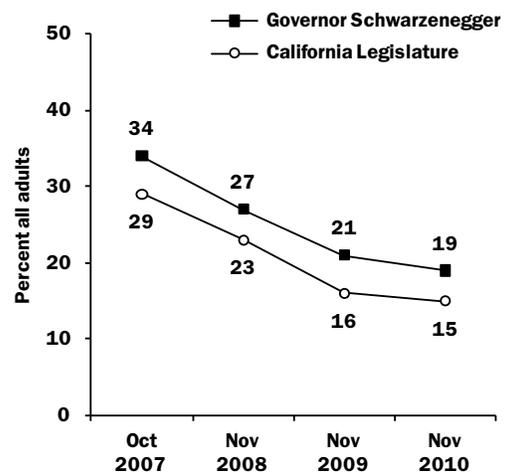
- Most Californians and adults nationwide consider a college education today to be very important, but Californians are even more likely to hold this view. Nearly two in three also believe college is necessary to be successful and 85 percent say all qualified Californians should have the chance to enroll in a public institution despite the cost to the state. *(page 15)*
- Only 22 percent say the overall quality of education in the state's higher education system is a big problem; much higher percentages say affordability (60%) and the state budget situation (74%) are big problems for the system. *(page 16)*
- Californians give low approval ratings to Governor Schwarzenegger and the state legislature overall and for their handling of the higher education system. *(page 17)*
- The three branches (community colleges, state universities, and the University of California) each continue to receive positive marks from residents. *(page 18)*
- Majorities agree that many qualified students lack the opportunity to go to college; most blame the cost of college and say students must borrow too much. Still, a majority believe financial aid is available to those who need it. *(pages 19, 20)*
- A plurality (41%) think the most important goal of community colleges is providing courses to help students transfer to four-year schools; 25 percent say it is providing career technical education. *(page 22)*
- Nearly all parents would like their children to go to college, but a growing share are very worried about affording it. Concern is especially pronounced among Latino and lower-income parents. *(page 23)*

Importance of a College Education Today?

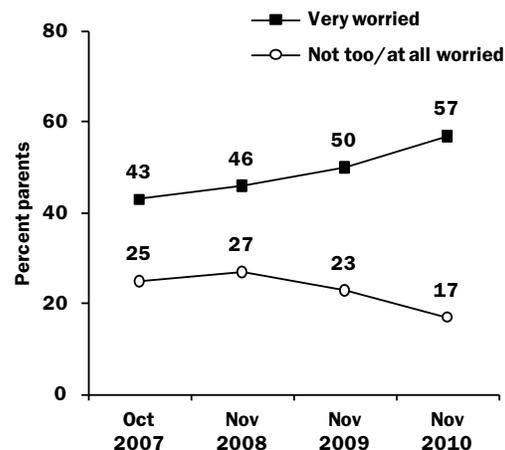


* Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll, June 2010

Approval Ratings on Higher Education



Parental Concerns about Affording College



IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

An overwhelming majority of Californians (86%) view a college education as very important. Seventy-five percent of adults nationwide also hold this view, according to a June Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll. At least three in four Californians across parties, regions, and demographic groups say college is very important.

At the same time, a strong majority (63%) think a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, similar to results in the past (64% October 2007, 68% November 2008, 66% November 2009). According to a Public Agenda poll from December 2009, 55 percent of adults nationwide think college is necessary; 43 percent say there are many ways to succeed without a college education. In California, parents of children 18 or younger (70%) are somewhat more likely than all adults to say college is necessary. Democrats (68%) are the most likely to agree, followed by independents (58%) and Republicans (51%). Differences across racial/ethnic groups are stark: overwhelming majorities of Latinos (80%), blacks (76%), and Asians (71%) think it is necessary, while far fewer whites (50%) say so. Across other groups, the percentage saying that college is necessary is highest among those with a high school degree or less (72%), those earning less than \$40,000 (70%), women (68%), and adults 35 to 54 (68%).

“Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s work world, or do you think that there are many ways to succeed in today’s work world without a college education?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
College is necessary	63%	71%	76%	80%	50%	70%
Many ways to succeed	35	27	22	18	47	28
Don't know	2	2	2	2	3	2

Asked whether they think all Californians who are qualified to attend college should have the opportunity to do so, 85 percent say they should, while just 12 percent say admissions should be restricted because of the cost to the state. Parents of children 18 or younger hold nearly identical views.

One of the founding principles of California's 1960 master plan for higher education was universal access for all qualified Californians. Despite an economic and fiscal crisis facing the state today, universal access is preferred over restricted access by overwhelming majorities across groups. There are some differences within groups: nearly all Democrats (90%) and 85 percent of independents think all Californians should have the opportunity to enroll, compared to 76 percent of Republicans. Three in four Orange/San Diego County residents (76%) hold this view, while at least 84 percent elsewhere do. Nearly all blacks (94%) think those who are qualified should have access; nine in 10 Latinos, 88 percent of Asians, and 81 percent of whites agree. Adults aged 18 to 34 (88%) are somewhat more likely than adults 55 and older (80%), and women (88%) are somewhat more likely than men (81%), to think those qualified should have the opportunity. Results are similar across education and income levels.

“Do you think that all Californians who are qualified to attend college should have the opportunity to enroll in one of the state’s public colleges or universities, or should college student admissions be restricted because of the cost to the state?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
All Californians should have the opportunity	85%	88%	94%	90%	81%	86%
Admissions should be restricted	12	10	5	9	13	12
Don't know	3	2	1	1	6	2

OVERALL CONDITIONS

Although spared from state budget cuts this year, the California higher education system is still facing shortfalls; this is reflected in the majority of respondents who identify fiscal issues—affordability or student costs (37%), or lack of government funding or state budget cuts (20%)—as the most important ones facing higher education today. Given this concern—and after a tumultuous year for California institutions that saw protests against tuition increases and instructor furloughs—how problematic do Californians view the state’s higher education system today?

Seventy-four percent say the overall state budget situation is a big problem, similar to November 2009 (70%). Six in 10 also say overall affordability is a big problem, similar to last year (57%), but up seven points since October 2007. Meanwhile, far fewer say quality is a big problem (22%), similar to the past (18% 2007 and 2008, 21% 2009). Still, the belief that quality is at least somewhat of a problem (58%) has risen somewhat since October 2007 (52%). By comparison, 53 percent in our April K–12 survey said they considered K–12 education quality to be a big problem.

“I’m going to read you a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about California’s higher education system today. For each one, please tell me if you think ... is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem.”

	Overall Quality	Overall Affordability	Overall State Budget Situation
Big problem	22%	60%	74%
Somewhat of a problem	36	27	18
Not much of a problem	38	11	5
Don’t know	4	2	3

Democrats are more likely than Republicans and independents call the state budget situation a big problem for higher education. About eight in 10 blacks and whites hold this view, compared to about two in three Asians and Latinos. The percentage calling the budget situation a big problem rises as education and household income rise. When it comes to overall affordability, majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups say it is a big problem. Three-fourths of blacks say this, compared to six in 10 Latinos and whites, and just over half of Asians. On the overall quality of education, one-third or less across groups call it a big problem. Blacks are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to agree; college graduates are less likely than others to consider quality a big problem.

<i>Percent saying big problem</i>		Overall Quality	Overall Affordability	Overall State Budget Situation
All Adults		22%	60%	74%
Likely Voters		21	59	79
Parents of Children 18 or Younger		19	58	73
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	13	54	67
	Blacks	33	75	82
	Latinos	23	61	68
	Whites	20	59	78
Household Income	Under \$40,000	24	62	69
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	21	65	75
	\$80,000 or more	18	53	81

APPROVAL RATINGS OF STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

As Arnold Schwarzenegger enters his final weeks as governor, just one in four Californians (25%) express approval of his overall job performance, similar to the low ratings he’s received all year; six in 10 (62%) disapprove. Since July 2009, fewer than one in three Californians have approved of his overall job performance. Although majorities across parties disapprove of the governor’s job performance, Democrats (72%) are much more likely than independents (61%) and Republicans (56%) to disapprove.

Low ratings of the governor extend to his handling of the state’s public college and university system as well: just 19 percent approve and 63 percent disapprove. Findings were similar last November, but were less negative in November 2008 (27% approve, 47% disapprove) and October 2007 (34% approve, 39% disapprove). While 79 percent of Democrats and 58 percent of independents disapprove, fewer than half of Republicans agree (30% approve, 46% disapprove). Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (84%) are far more likely than Latinos (69%), Asians (61%), and whites (57%) to disapprove.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling...?”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>His job as governor of California</i>	Approve	25%	20%	30%	28%	27%
	Disapprove	62	72	56	61	63
	Don't know	13	8	14	11	10
<i>California's public college and university system</i>	Approve	19	12	30	24	21
	Disapprove	63	79	46	58	63
	Don't know	18	9	24	18	16

Californians give very low job approval ratings to the state legislature (14%), matching the record low from March. Approval among likely voters also matches the record-low 9 percent from that time. About eight in 10 Republicans (81%) and Democrats (78%) disapprove of the legislature; 69 percent of independents agree. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (80%) and blacks (79%) are the most likely to disapprove, followed by Latinos (61%) and Asians (55%). Disapproval rises with age, education, and income.

Just 15 percent of Californians approve of the legislature’s handling of the state’s public college and university system. Approval is similar to last year, but disapproval is up 5 points. Ratings were less negative in November 2008 (23% approve, 50% disapprove) and October 2007 (29% approve, 47% disapprove). Across parties, regions, and demographic groups, fewer than one in four approve of the legislature’s handling of the higher education system.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling...?”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Its job</i>	Approve	14%	13%	8%	15%	9%
	Disapprove	72	78	81	69	82
	Don't know	14	9	11	16	9
<i>California's public college and university system</i>	Approve	15	12	13	15	11
	Disapprove	71	79	70	68	77
	Don't know	14	9	17	17	12

RATINGS OF THE THREE BRANCHES

Despite budget cuts that have led to program reductions and fee hikes, strong majorities say each branch of California’s higher education system does a good or excellent job. Adults view each similarly: 62 percent say the Cal State system is doing at least a good job, and 64 percent also say this about the community college and University of California systems. Results have been similar since October 2007.

“Overall, is the ... doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job?”

	California Community College system	California State University system	University of California system
Excellent	13%	9%	15%
Good	51	53	49
Not so good	23	21	19
Poor	7	5	6
Don’t know	6	12	11

Solid majorities across groups think the California community college system is doing at least a good job. About two in three across parties give it positive ratings. Whites (67%) give the highest rating across racial/ethnic groups. Ratings are highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (68%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (59%). The view that this system is doing at least a good job rises with education and income.

Majorities across groups also think the California State University system is doing at least a good job. Sixty-five percent of Democrats and similar percentages of independents (64%) and Republicans (63%) say this. Inland Empire residents (55%) are least likely and San Francisco Bay Area (66%) residents most likely to agree. Asians are most likely to hold this view, followed by whites, Latinos, and blacks. The percentage giving excellent or good ratings rises sharply with education and income.

Over half across groups think the University of California system is doing a good or excellent job. Over six in 10 across parties agree. San Francisco Bay Area residents (71%) are the most likely and Central Valley (57%) residents the least likely to say this. Asians (73%) are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to rate this system highly. The percentage saying so rises sharply with education and income.

<i>Percent saying excellent/good</i>		California Community College system	California State University system	University of California system
All Adults		64%	62%	64%
Likely Voters		66	64	68
Parents of Children 18 or Younger		63	62	62
Race/Ethnicity	Asians	62	69	73
	Blacks	62	56	58
	Latinos	59	60	60
	Whites	67	64	67
Region	Central Valley	63	60	57
	San Francisco Bay Area	68	66	71
	Los Angeles	62	62	63
	Orange/San Diego	66	65	69
	Inland Empire	59	55	61

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Although overwhelming majorities believe all qualified Californians should have access to the state's higher education system, only 26 percent think that the vast majority of those qualified to go to college have the opportunity to do so. Seven in 10 think many people don't have the opportunity. These findings are similar to views held by adults nationwide, according to a December 2009 Public Agenda poll (28% have opportunity, 69% don't). The percentage saying that a majority have the opportunity has decreased somewhat since the question was first asked in October 2007 (32%).

Across parties, there are stark differences: one in five Democrats (21%) and 27 percent of independents think the majority of those qualified have access, compared to four in 10 Republicans (40%). Views differ somewhat across regions, with San Francisco Bay Area (33%) and Orange/San Diego County residents (30%) saying the opportunity exists for the majority of those qualified, compared to 25 percent in the Central Valley, 22 percent in Los Angeles, and 44 percent in the Inland Empire. While three in 10 Asians (31%) and whites (30%) say the majority have the opportunity, fewer Latinos (18%) and blacks (16%) agree. Men (32%) are much more likely than women (21%) to hold this view. The percentage saying the majority of those qualified have the opportunity to attend college increases as age, education, and income increase.

“Do you think that currently, the vast majority of people who are qualified to go to college have the opportunity to do so, or do you think there are many people who are qualified to go but don't have the opportunity to do so?”

	All Adults	Household Income			Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Majority have the opportunity	26%	17%	23%	37%	25%
Many people don't have the opportunity	71	81	75	60	72
Don't know	3	2	2	3	3

An overwhelming majority of Californians think the price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so. As the economic crisis has worsened, the percentage saying this has increased somewhat (66% 2007, 69% 2009, 73% today). Parents of children 18 or younger (74%) hold nearly identical views to all adults; those with children currently attending a California college (72%), and those who are currently attending one (75%) also hold similar views.

Strong majorities across political, regional, and demographic groups think the price of a college education keeps students from attending. Democrats (79%) and independents (75%) hold similar views; Republicans (64%) are much less likely to think the price of college deters students from attending. Blacks (84%) are the most likely racial/ethnic group to say this, compared to 76 percent of Latinos and Asians and 71 percent of whites. College graduates are less likely than others to agree that expense bars some from going to college, and upper-income earners are much less likely than others to agree.

“The price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Agree	73%	76%	84%	76%	71%	74%
Disagree	25	23	14	23	27	24
Don't know	2	1	2	1	2	2

AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION (CONTINUED)

Despite these perceived barriers, a majority of Californians (55%) think that almost anyone who needs financial help to go to college can get loans or financial aid; 40 percent disagree. Findings were fairly similar last November (51% agree, 43% disagree). In the December 2009 Public Agenda survey, 62 percent of adults nationwide said almost anyone who needs it can get financial help.

In California, findings are similar across parties, with just over half agreeing that financial aid is available to those who need it (55% Republicans, 52% independents, 51% Democrats). Majorities across regions hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (64%) are the most likely to say students can get financial help through loans and aid, followed by Asians (58%) and whites (50%); a majority of blacks (55%) disagree. Agreement declines as education levels rise. Those with annual household incomes under \$40,000 (62%) believe financial aid is available to those who need it, compared to about half of those with incomes of \$40,000 or more. Nearly two in three (64%) currently attending a California public college or university believe financial help is available to those who need it. Among those who agree that the price of college keeps many students out, 51 percent also agree that anyone can get loans or financial aid. Among those who disagree that the price of college keeps many students out, 67 percent think financial help is available to almost anyone who needs it.

“Almost anyone who needs financial help to go to college can get loans or financial aid. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Agree	55%	58%	43%	64%	50%	53%
Disagree	40	34	55	33	43	41
Don't know	5	8	2	3	7	6

Three in four Californians (74%) believe students must borrow too much money to pay for a college education. Findings were nearly identical in October 2007 (74%), November 2008 (73%), and November 2009 (76%). In Public Agenda’s survey, adults nationwide (83%) were even more likely than Californians to agree with this statement.

In California, more than two in three across parties, regions, and nearly all demographic groups agree students have to borrow too much to pay for college. Democrats (81%) are more likely than independents (74%) and Republicans (72%) to hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, nine in 10 blacks (89%) say students must borrow too much, followed by three in four whites (77%) and Asians (76%), and two in three Latinos (65%). Eighty percent of those currently attending one of California’s higher education institutions think students have to borrow too much. Among those who say financial aid is available to anyone who needs it, 66 percent believe students must borrow too much and among those who say the price of college is a barrier for some, 83 percent also say students have to borrow too much.

“Students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education. Do you agree or disagree with this statement?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Agree	74%	76%	89%	65%	77%	69%
Disagree	23	18	10	34	19	29
Don't know	3	6	1	1	4	2

IMPORTANCE OF STUDENT DIVERSITY

About three in four Californians think it is very (54%) or somewhat (23%) important for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body. Results have been almost identical each time we have asked this question (55% very, 23% somewhat 2008; 54% very, 23% somewhat 2009). Today, as in the past, blacks (82%) and Latinos (64%) are much more likely than Asians (53%) and whites (44%) to say racial diversity is very important. Democrats (67%) are much more likely than independents (55%) and more than twice as likely as Republicans (31%) to say diversity is very important.

San Francisco Bay Area residents (62%) are the most likely—and Orange/San Diego County residents (41%) the least likely—to say racial diversity is very important. The perception that racial diversity is very important declines somewhat as income rises, while it is similar across age groups. Among those currently attending a California public college or university, 58 percent consider racial diversity very important.

“How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body—that is, a mix of blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics and other minorities?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Very important	54%	53%	82%	64%	44%	59%	53%	50%
Somewhat important	23	22	13	17	28	19	24	24
Not too important	11	17	4	10	11	9	12	11
Not at all important	11	7	1	9	14	11	8	14
Don't know	1	1	–	–	3	2	3	1

More than eight in 10 Californians also view economic diversity for public colleges and universities as very (57%) or somewhat (26%) important. Results were nearly identical in 2008 (57% very, 25% somewhat) and 2009 (54% very, 26% somewhat). Today, blacks (77%) and Latinos (66%) are far more likely than whites (50%) and Asians (44%) to say economic diversity is very important. The perception that economic diversity is very important declines as income rises.

Partisan differences are also present—Democrats (65%) and independents (57%) are far more likely than Republicans (36%) to view economic diversity as very important. Among those currently attending a California public college or university, 63 percent consider economic diversity very important.

“How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have an economically diverse student body—that is, a mix of students from lower-, middle-, and upper-income backgrounds?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Household Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Very important	57%	44%	77%	66%	50%	63%	56%	50%
Somewhat important	26	36	17	22	30	24	28	29
Not too important	9	10	5	6	10	8	9	9
Not at all important	8	8	1	5	9	5	5	11
Don't know	–	2	–	1	1	–	2	1

ROLE OF COMMUNITY COLLEGES

When asked what they think is the most important goal for California's community colleges, a plurality of Californians say it is to prepare students to transfer to four-year schools (41%). Fewer say the goal should be providing career technical or vocational education (25%) or providing courses for lifelong learning or personal enrichment (15%). Fewer than one in 10 mention providing associate's degrees (8%) or basic skills or remedial education (5%). Pluralities of Democrats and independents say preparing students to transfer is the most important goal, while Republicans are divided between transfer preparation (37%) and career technical education (34%). Pluralities across regions and demographic groups say four-year college transfer is the most important goal. Latinos (50%) are much more likely than blacks (39%), whites (38%), or Asians (36%) to hold this view. The percentage who view career technical education as most important rises as age, education, and income rise. Half of Californians (51%) who are currently attending a California college view transfer preparation as the most important goal.

“California’s community colleges have several important goals. From among the following, which do you think is the most important goal?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Preparing students to transfer to four-year schools	41%	36%	39%	50%	38%	42%
Providing career technical or vocational education	25	29	13	19	29	27
Providing courses for lifelong learning/personal enrichment	15	18	22	18	13	15
Providing associate's degrees	8	3	13	5	9	7
Providing basic skills or remedial education	5	10	6	6	4	4
Don't know	6	4	7	2	7	5

Nearly all Californians say that it is very (78%) or somewhat (18%) important that community colleges include classes that prepare student to transfer to four-year colleges and universities. A similar percentage also thought that this was important in 2007 (81% very, 15% somewhat). Today, about three in four or more across parties and regions, and more than seven in 10 across nearly all demographic groups, think that preparing students to transfer is very important. Blacks (86%) and Latinos (85%) are more likely than whites (76%) and Asians (64%) to hold this view.

“How important to you is it that community colleges include classes that prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Parents of Children 18 or Younger
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Very important	78%	64%	86%	85%	76%	80%
Somewhat important	18	26	13	12	20	17
Not too important	2	7	1	2	2	2
Not at all important	1	1	–	1	1	1
Don't know	1	2	–	–	1	–

Nearly all Californians say it is very (73%) or somewhat (23%) important that community colleges include career technical or vocational education. At least seven in 10 across parties and regions say career technical or vocational education is very important. Blacks (81%), Latinos (75%), whites (73%), and Asians (68%) all say it is very important. Across demographic groups, more than seven in 10 agree.

PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND CONCERNS

Nearly all California parents of children 18 or younger say they hope their youngest child achieves a college (42%) or post-graduate degree (46%). Five percent hope their child achieves some college or career technical training and 5 percent hope they get a high school education. Findings have been similar since the question was first asked in April 2005. Strong majorities of both white and Latino parents hope their child goes to college, but white parents are much more likely than Latino parents (54% to 30%) to want their child to get a graduate degree after college. (Sample sizes for Asian and black parents are too small for separate analysis.) Findings among Latino parents are nearly identical to April 2005, while the percentage of white parents hoping their children achieve post-graduate degrees has risen 9 points. The percentage who would like their child to achieve a post-graduate degree rises sharply with higher income and education levels.

“What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve?”

Parents of Children 18 or Younger	Parents	Race/Ethnicity		Household Income		
		Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
High school graduate	5%	9%	3%	6%	3%	5%
Some college or career technical training	5	7	5	7	6	2
College graduate	42	52	37	51	45	32
Graduate degree after college	46	30	54	35	43	61
Don't know	2	2	1	1	3	–

The share of parents who are very worried about affording college for their children has grown steadily since October 2007 (43% October 2007, 46% November 2008, 50% November 2009, 57% today). Latino parents (72%, up 19 points since 2007) are far more likely than white parents (46%, up 11 points) to be very worried about this. Those with household incomes under \$40,000 (76%) or \$40,000 to under \$80,000 (61%) are far more likely than those with incomes of \$80,000 or more (38%) to be very worried.

Six in 10 parents also think they are already behind in saving for their child's college education, up 7 points since October 2007 (from 55% to 62% today). Just 8 percent feel they are ahead, similar to 2007, while 26 percent believe they are about where they should be, down 7 points since 2007. A majority of both white and Latino parents feel they are behind, although Latinos are more likely to say this (69% to 56%). The percentage who say they are behind drops sharply as household income rises.

“How do you feel about the progress, if any, that you have made so far in saving to help pay for your child's college education—do you feel you are ahead, behind, or just about where you should be at this point?”

Parents of Children 18 or Younger	Parents	Race/Ethnicity		Household Income		
		Latinos	Whites	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Ahead	8%	6%	10%	3%	3%	16%
Behind	62	69	56	76	64	49
Just about where you should be	26	23	31	16	27	35
Haven't started yet (volunteered)/Don't know	4	2	3	5	6	–

Among all Californians, a resounding 85 percent say they worry that the current financial crisis will make it more difficult for their children or grandchildren to go to college. More than three in four across all parties, regions, and demographic groups foresee adverse affects on future generations due to the current crisis.

REGIONAL MAP



METHODOLOGY

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner and Nicole Willcoxon. This survey was conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a three-year grant on K–12 and higher education, environment, and population issues. We benefited from discussions with Hewlett program staff and others; however, the survey methods, questions, and content of the report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

Findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents, including 2,251 interviewed on landline telephones and 251 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took place on weekday nights and weekend days from October 19 to November 2, 2010 and took an average of 19 minutes to complete.

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 and the sample telephone numbers 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.

Cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These 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 and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was 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 potential 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 and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. translated the survey into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, and conducted all interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI, we used recent U.S. Census and state figures 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. Abt SRBI used data from the 2008 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2005–2007 American Community Survey for California, both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare it against landline and cell phone service reported in the survey. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any differences in demographics and telephone service.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 2.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total sample of 2,502 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California

were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 2,080 registered voters, it is ± 2.9 percent; for the 1,551 likely voters, it is ± 3.2 percent; for the 947 parents of children 18 or younger it is ± 4.1 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.

Throughout the report, we refer to five geographic regions that account 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 from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, likely voters, and parents, but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately in tables and text.

We present specific results for respondents in four self-identified racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Latino, and non-Hispanic white. We also compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (i.e., those registered as “decline to state”). We also analyze the responses of likely voters—those who are the most likely to participate in the state’s elections.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys and to results from surveys conducted by Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup and Public Agenda.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

CALIFORNIANS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

October 19–November 2, 2010

2,502 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 2.5\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

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

25% approve
62 disapprove
13 don't know

2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling California's public college and university system?

19% approve
63 disapprove
18 don't know

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

14% approve
72 disapprove
14 don't know

4. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling California's public college and university system?

15% approve
71 disapprove
14 don't know

5. Next, what do you think is the most important issue facing California's public colleges and universities today?

[code, don't read]

37% student costs, affordability, tuition, fees
20 not enough government funding, state budget cuts
4 administrative costs, salaries, waste
4 financial aid
4 immigrants
3 access to education, reduced admissions
3 class size, overcrowding, student-teacher ratio
3 reduced course offerings, courses full
2 teacher/professor shortage
2 quality of education overall
10 other
8 don't know

I'm going to read you a list of issues people have mentioned when talking about California's higher education system today. For each one, please tell me if you think it is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem. First...

[rotate questions 6 to 8]

6. How about the overall quality of education in California's public colleges and universities today?

22% big problem
 36 somewhat of a problem
 38 not much of a problem
 4 don't know

7. How about the overall affordability of education for students in California's public colleges and universities today?

60% big problem
 27 somewhat of a problem
 11 not much of a problem
 2 don't know

8. How about the overall state budget situation for California's public colleges and universities today?

74% big problem
 18 somewhat of a problem
 5 not much of a problem
 3 don't know

9. Next, do you think the current level of state funding for California's public colleges and universities is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

6% more than enough
 15 just enough
 74 not enough
 5 don't know

As you may know, California's higher education system has three branches—the California Community College system, the California State University system, and the University of California system.

[rotate questions 10 to 12]

10. Overall, is the California Community College system doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job?

13% excellent
 51 good
 23 not so good
 7 poor
 6 don't know

11. Overall, is the California State University system doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job?

9% excellent
 53 good
 21 not so good
 5 poor
 12 don't know

12. Overall, is the University of California system doing an excellent, good, not so good, or poor job?

15% excellent
 49 good
 19 not so good
 6 poor
 11 don't know

In general, do you agree or disagree with the following statements? First...

[rotate questions 13 and 14]

13. Additional state funding would lead to major improvements in California's higher education system.

74% agree
 23 disagree
 3 don't know

Next,

14. Better use of existing state funds would lead to major improvements in California's higher education system.

84% agree
 13 disagree
 3 don't know

15. To significantly improve California's higher education system, which of the following statements do you agree with the most?
[rotate 1 and 2] (1) We need to use existing state funds more wisely, **[or]** (2) We need to increase the amount of state funding, **[or]** (3) We need to use existing state funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding.

- 34% use funds more wisely
- 11 increase state funding
- 54 use funds more wisely and increase funding
- 1 don't know

16. Which comes closer to your view? **[rotate]** (1) If the state government makes budget cuts in higher education, the quality of education will suffer, **[or]** (2) The state government could make budget cuts in higher education and still maintain a high quality of education.

- 66% if state makes cuts, quality will suffer
- 29 state could make cuts and maintain quality
- 5 don't know

As you may know, in an effort to close the gap between state spending and revenues over the past few years, the governor and legislature have made cuts in all major budget areas, including higher education. There are a number of ways California's public colleges and universities have dealt with decreased funding. Please tell me if you are very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned about each of the following:

[rotate questions 17 to 20]

17. How about increasing tuition and fees for college students to deal with decreased state funding?

- 65% very concerned
- 26 somewhat concerned
- 4 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

18. How about admitting fewer college students to deal with decreased state funding?

- 62% very concerned
- 25 somewhat concerned
- 7 not too concerned
- 5 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

19. How about offering fewer college classes to deal with decreased state funding?

- 59% very concerned
- 28 somewhat concerned
- 7 not too concerned
- 4 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

20. How about reducing the pay and hours for college faculty and staff to deal with decreased state funding?

- 46% very concerned
- 34 somewhat concerned
- 9 not too concerned
- 9 not at all concerned
- 2 don't know

21. Next, how important is a college education today?

- 86% very important
- 11 fairly important
- 3 not too important

[rotate questions 22 to 24]

22. Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, or do you think that there are many ways to succeed in today's work world without a college education?

- 63% college is necessary
- 35 many ways to succeed without a college education
- 2 don't know

23. Do you think that all Californians who are qualified to attend college should have the opportunity to enroll in one of the state's public colleges or universities, or should college student admissions be restricted because of the cost to the state?

- 85% all qualified Californians should have the opportunity
- 12 college student admissions should be restricted
- 3 don't know

24. Do you think that currently, the vast majority of people who are qualified to go to college have the opportunity to do so, or do you think there are many people who are qualified to go but don't have the opportunity to do so?

- 26% majority have the opportunity
- 71 many people don't have the opportunity
- 3 don't know

Next, please say if you agree or disagree with the following statements.

[rotate questions 25 to 27]

25. The price of a college education keeps students who are qualified and motivated to go to college from doing so.

- 73% agree
- 25 disagree
- 2 don't know

26. Almost anyone who needs financial help to go to college can get loans or financial aid.

- 55% agree
- 40 disagree
- 5 don't know

27. Students have to borrow too much money to pay for their college education.

- 74% agree
- 23 disagree
- 3 don't know

Next,

[rotate questions 28 and 29]

28. How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have a racially diverse student body—that is, a mix of blacks, whites, Asians, Hispanics and other minorities? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 54% very important
- 23 somewhat important
- 11 not too important
- 11 not at all important
- 1 don't know

29. How important do you think it is for public colleges and universities to have an economically diverse student body—that is, a mix of students from lower, middle, and upper-income backgrounds? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 57% very important
- 26 somewhat important
- 9 not too important
- 8 not at all important

30. On another topic, California's community colleges have several important goals. From among the following, which do you think is the most important goal?

[read list, rotate responses]

- 41% preparing students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities
- 25 providing career technical or vocational education
- 15 providing courses for lifelong learning and personal enrichment
- 8 providing associate's degrees
- 5 providing basic skills or remedial education
- 6 don't know

[rotate questions 31 and 32]

31. How important to you is it that community colleges include career technical or vocational education?

- 73% very important
- 23 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- 1 don't know

32. How important to you is it that community colleges include classes that prepare students to transfer to four-year colleges and universities?

- 78% very important
- 18 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- 1 don't know

On another topic, I am going to read you several ways that the federal and state governments can make California's higher education system more affordable to students. For each of the following, please say if you favor or oppose the proposal.

[rotate questions 33 to 35]

33. How about increasing government funding available for work-study opportunities for students to earn money while in college?

- 88% favor
- 11 oppose
- 1 don't know

34. How about increasing government funding available for scholarships or grants for students?

- 84% favor
- 14 oppose
- 2 don't know

35. How about having a sliding scale for tuition and fee costs, so that students pay according to their income status?

- 72% favor
- 25 oppose
- 3 don't know

36. Given the state's current budget situation, on a scale of 1 to 5—with 1 being a very low priority and 5 being a very high priority—what priority should be given to spending for California's public colleges and universities?

- 3% very low priority
- 4 low priority
- 23 medium priority
- 32 high priority
- 36 very high priority
- 2 don't know

37. How concerned are you that the state's budget situation will cause significant spending cuts in higher education?

- 62% very concerned
- 30 somewhat concerned
- 5 not too concerned
- 3 not at all concerned

38. Do you favor or oppose the state government spending more money on public colleges and universities, even if it means less money for other state programs?

- 57% favor
- 34 oppose
- 9 don't know

Next, what if the state said it needed more money just to maintain current funding for public colleges and universities.

[rotate questions 39 and 40]

39. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for this purpose, or not?

- 49% yes
- 49 no
- 2 don't know

40. Would you be willing to increase student fees for this purpose, or not?

- 35% yes
- 62 no
- 3 don't know

41. Would you be willing to admit more out-of-state students paying higher tuition for this purpose, or not? (**if yes:** Would you still support this even if it meant admitting fewer in-state students?)

- 26% yes, even if it meant admitting fewer in-state students
- 31 yes, but not if it meant admitting fewer in-state students
- 38 no
- 5 don't know

42. Next, in general, how important is California's higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years?

- 77% very important
- 20 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important

43. In thinking ahead 20 years, if current trends continue, do you think California will have **[rotate 1 and 2]** (1) more than enough, (2) not enough, **[or]** just enough college-educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand?

- 11% more than enough
- 56 not enough
- 27 just enough
- 6 don't know

44. How much confidence do you have in the state government's ability to plan for the future of California's higher education system?

- 7% a great deal
- 33 only some
- 38 very little
- 19 none
- 3 don't know

45. Given all of the issues that will be facing the new California governor in 2011, how important is planning for the future of California's higher education system?

- 76% very important
- 21 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 1 not at all important

46. Do you worry that the current financial crisis will make it more difficult for your children or grandchildren to afford to go to college, or not? (**if necessary, say:** If this question does not apply to you, please just tell me.)

- 85% yes
- 12 no
- 3 does not apply

47. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 84% yes *[ask q47a]*
- 16 no *[skip to q48b]*

47a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 45% Democrat *[ask q48]*
- 31 Republican *[skip to q48a]*
- 3 another party *(specify) [skip to q49]*
- 21 independent *[skip to q48b]*

48. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 57% strong
- 40 not very strong
- 3 don't know

[skip to q49]

48a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 52% strong
- 42 not very strong
- 6 don't know

[skip to q49]

48b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 20% Republican Party
- 44 Democratic Party
- 29 neither (*volunteered*)
- 7 don't know

49. Would you consider yourself to be politically:

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

- 14% very liberal
- 19 somewhat liberal
- 28 middle-of-the-road
- 22 somewhat conservative
- 14 very conservative
- 3 don't know

50. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 30% great deal
- 40 fair amount
- 24 only a little
- 6 none

d4d. **[parents of children 18 or younger]** What do you hope will be the highest grade level that your youngest child will achieve: some high school; high school graduate; some college or career technical training; college graduate; or a graduate degree after college?

- % some high school
- 5 high school graduate
- 5 some college or career technical training
- 42 college graduate
- 46 a graduate degree after college
- 2 don't know

d4e. **[parents of children 18 or younger]** How worried are you about being able to afford a college education for your youngest child? Are you very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

- 57% very worried
- 25 somewhat worried
- 9 not too worried
- 8 not at all worried
- 1 don't know

d4f. **[parents of children 18 or younger]** How do you feel about the progress, if any, that you have made so far in saving to help pay for your child's college education—do you feel you are ahead, behind, or just about where you should be at this point?

- 8% ahead
- 62 behind
- 26 just about where you should be
- 3 haven't started yet/will not be saving (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

[d1-d4c and d4g-d16: demographic questions]

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Mark Baldassare is President and Chief Executive Officer of PPIC.
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San Francisco, CA

PUBLIC POLICY INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA
500 Washington Street, Suite 600
San Francisco, California 94111
phone: 415.291.4400
fax: 415.291.4401

PPIC SACRAMENTO CENTER
Senator Office Building
1121 L Street, Suite 801
Sacramento, California 95814
phone: 916.440.1120
fax: 916.440.1121

www.ppic.org
survey@ppic.org