

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

MAY 2012

Californians & their government



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in collaboration with
The James Irvine Foundation



PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 126th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database of responses from more than 266,000 Californians.

This survey is the 52nd in the *Californians and Their Government* series, which is conducted periodically to examine the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. The series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. This survey seeks to inform decisionmakers, raise public awareness, and stimulate policy discussions and debate about important state and national issues.

This survey was conducted in the days after Governor Brown released his revised budget proposal and just weeks prior to the June primary. As a result of a larger deficit than was anticipated in the January budget proposal, the governor's revised budget proposal to close a \$15.7 billion deficit has deeper cuts to social service programs as well as cuts to courts and state employee compensation. The budget also relies on voters passing a tax initiative proposed on the November ballot. If voters reject this tax initiative, the governor's budget proposes automatic spending cuts to K–12 schools. In the June primary California voters will be voting on two state propositions and, for the first time, will vote under a top-two primary system approved by voters in 2010. At the national level, President Obama announced his support for same-sex marriage, and with Mitt Romney the presumptive GOP presidential nominee, the 2012 presidential election season is getting into full swing.

This survey presents the responses of 2,002 adult residents throughout the state, interviewed in English or Spanish by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on these topics:

- 2012 elections, including the preference of likely voters in a matchup between President Obama and Mitt Romney, candidate favorability ratings, views of President Obama since his statement supporting same-sex marriage, satisfaction with and attention to news about presidential candidates; preferred outcome in congressional elections; views of the top-two primary system; voting intentions for Proposition 28 (legislative term limit reform) and Proposition 29 (tax increases on cigarettes to fund cancer research) in the June primary; and opinions on the governor's proposed tax initiative and the automatic cuts in K–12 education if this initiative fails.
- State and national issues, including approval ratings of Governor Brown, the legislature, President Obama, and Congress; perceptions of the economy; satisfaction with the governor's revised budget plan and views on spending cuts included in the budget; preferences for dealing with the state budget situation, raising taxes for major budget areas, and raising the state sales tax and the top rate of the state income tax of the wealthy; and perceptions of waste at the federal, state, and local levels of government.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and the extent to which Californians may differ in their perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding the 2012 elections and state and national issues, based on their political party affiliation, likelihood of voting, region of residence, race/ethnicity, and other demographics.

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. PDT on Wednesday, May 23, 2012.

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 THEIR GOVERNMENT

Drop in Support for Cigarette Tax, Most Back Term Limits Change

MAJORITY FAVOR BROWN'S INITIATIVE BUT HALF OPPOSE HIS REVISED BUDGET

SAN FRANCISCO, May 23, 2012—Two weeks before the June primary, just over half of likely voters say they will vote yes on a proposition to impose an additional \$1 tax on cigarettes—a big decline in support from March. Most likely voters say they will vote for a measure to alter legislative term limits. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with support from The James Irvine Foundation.

Support for the cigarette tax, Proposition 29, has dropped 14 points among likely voters since March. Today, 53 percent say they will vote yes, 42 percent say they will vote no, and 5 percent are undecided on the measure, which would tax other tobacco products as well, with revenues going to research on cancer and other tobacco-related diseases. In March—before the active campaign for and against the measure began—67 percent supported it, 30 percent opposed it, and 3 percent were undecided.

When likely voters are asked a more general question about their views on increasing taxes on cigarette purchases, 63 percent say they are in favor and 33 percent are opposed. Responses to this question were similar in March (63% favor, 34% oppose).

“The large drop in support for Proposition 29 speaks loudly about how a well-funded opposition is able to raise voters’ doubts and distrust in state government, even when a tax increase is viewed favorably,” says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Likely voters are more supportive of Proposition 28, which would reduce the number of years a lawmaker can serve in the state legislature from 14 to 12 but allow all years of service in one house. Sixty-two percent say they will vote yes, 29 percent say they will vote no, and 9 percent don’t know. Support for this measure has slipped slightly since March (68% yes, 24% no, 8% undecided). Likely voters continue to have a positive view of the impact of term limits. Most (62%) say term limits are a good thing for California, 12 percent say they are a bad thing, and 21 percent say they make no difference.

INDEPENDENTS MORE LIKELY TO SUPPORT TOP-TWO PRIMARY

Californians will experience a big change this primary election with the advent of the top-two system, approved by voters in 2010. All voters now get a single ballot listing every candidate for their legislative and congressional districts. The two candidates receiving the most votes—regardless of party—will advance to the general election. Asked today about the top-two system, a plurality of likely voters (43%) say it is a good thing for California elections, while 22 percent see it as a bad thing and 27 percent say it makes no difference.

Proponents of this primary reform have argued that it will pave the way for more moderate and independent candidates to succeed. Today, independents are more likely to say the new system is a good thing (49%) than Democrats (43%) or Republicans (39%) are. And while 67 percent of likely voters view the top-two primary as at least somewhat important, independents (41%) are more likely than Republicans (31%) or Democrats (32%) to say it is very important.

OBAMA'S FAVORABILITY RATING TOPS ROMNEY'S

At the national level, California primary voters will have their first chance to weigh in on the presidential race. In the PPIC survey, President Barack Obama gets higher favorability ratings than Republican contender Mitt Romney among likely voters. They are more apt to have a favorable opinion of Obama (52%) than an unfavorable one (45%). The reverse is true of Romney (40% favorable, 52% unfavorable).

Opinions of the candidates are predictably divided along party lines. Independents are more likely to have a favorable opinion of Obama (52%) than an unfavorable one (42%) and are slightly more negative (47%) than positive (40%) about Romney.

Has Obama's announcement supporting same-sex marriage affected likely voters' view of him? About half (49%) say no. A quarter (25%) say the announcement makes them think more favorably of him and another quarter (25%) say it makes them think less favorably of him.

Obama leads Romney by 11 points in a head-to-head matchup among likely voters (50% Obama, 39% Romney, 11% undecided or would vote for someone else). Again, support for each candidate is split along party lines, with independents more likely to favor Obama (45%, Obama, 33% Romney, 22% undecided or someone else).

Satisfaction with the choice of candidates has increased somewhat among likely voters since December (49% December, 53% January, 53% March, 57% today), but Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to be satisfied (75% to 46%).

Obama's job approval rating among likely voters is 54 percent (42% disapprove). Among registered voters, opinion is deeply divided along party lines (82% Democrats approve, 77% Republicans disapprove). Half of independents (51%) approve and 38 percent disapprove.

Likely voters' assessment of the U.S. Congress is much lower. A large majority (78%) disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job, with strong majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents expressing this view. Looking to the congressional elections, the state's likely voters are slightly more likely to prefer that Congress be controlled by Democrats (47%) than by Republicans (40%). Eight percent volunteer that they would prefer neither party to be in control. Among age groups, 65 percent of likely voters age 18 to 34 prefer that Democrats control Congress. Those 35 and older are more divided.

SUPPORT FOR BROWN INITIATIVE HOLDS—SO DOES OPPOSITION TO TRIGGER CUTS

The PPIC survey was taken in the days after Governor Jerry Brown released a revised budget proposal, which relies on a proposed tax initiative that would temporarily raise the state personal income tax on wealthy Californians and the state sales tax for all. The vast majority of likely voters (83%) say the state budget situation is a big problem. Fewer see the governor's plan as the solution.

A majority (56%) say they would vote yes on Brown's tax initiative, with 38 percent saying they would vote no and 7 percent undecided. This is similar to the results of the April survey in which 54 percent said they would vote yes (39% no, 6% undecided). Today, 75 percent of Democrats and 57 percent of independents would vote yes, while 62 percent of Republicans would vote no.

Asked specifically about the two taxes in Brown's initiative, 65 percent of likely voters favor raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians. But 58 percent oppose raising the state sales tax.

The governor's budget calls for automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools if voters reject his proposed tax initiative. Likely voters are overwhelmingly opposed (72%) to these trigger cuts, as they have been in earlier surveys.

Brown's revised budget addresses a growing state deficit. Since January, the state has seen lower-than-expected tax receipts, higher education costs, and federal government and court decisions to block some budget cuts that had already been approved. In response, Brown's current plan calls for deep cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care, and other social service programs, as well as cuts to courts and state employee compensation. When read a brief summary of this plan, 44 percent of likely voters are in favor and 50 percent are opposed. In January, when Brown presented his initial budget plan, 48 percent were in favor and 46 percent were opposed.

Asked for their views specifically on the proposed spending cuts to social service programs, 36 percent of likely voters are in favor and 60 percent are opposed. Opposition to these cuts is 10 points higher than opposition to his plan in general (50%). Most Democrats (76%) and independents (58%) oppose the cuts, while Republicans are divided (48% favor, 49% oppose).

Brown's job performance gets mixed reviews from likely voters: 42 percent approve and 43 disapprove (14% don't know). Most Democrats (58%) approve of the governor's performance, while a similar proportion of Republicans (63%) disapprove and independents are divided (34% approve, 37% disapprove, 29% don't know). By comparison, the legislature's approval rating among likely voters is 17 percent (71% disapprove, 11% don't know).

Baldassare notes: "The governor's proposal for spending cuts to health and social services is resulting in strong opposition, even among Democratic voters who otherwise approve of his job performance."

MOST WANT A ROLE IN BUDGET DECISIONS

Likely voters want to participate in making the tough choices involved in the state budget this year: 81 percent say voters should make some of the decisions about spending and taxes. Just 15 percent say the governor and legislature should make all of the decisions.

How would likely voters deal with the state's budget gap? Forty-four percent prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases—Brown's approach—while 35 percent prefer mostly relying on spending cuts and 13 percent favor mostly tax increases.

To help reduce the budget deficit, most likely voters say they would be willing to pay higher taxes for K–12 education (61%) and higher education (55%). Half (50%) would be willing to pay more taxes for health and human services. Just 18 percent would pay higher taxes to fund prisons and corrections.

PESSIMISM, LACK OF TRUST AMONG VOTERS THIS ELECTION SEASON

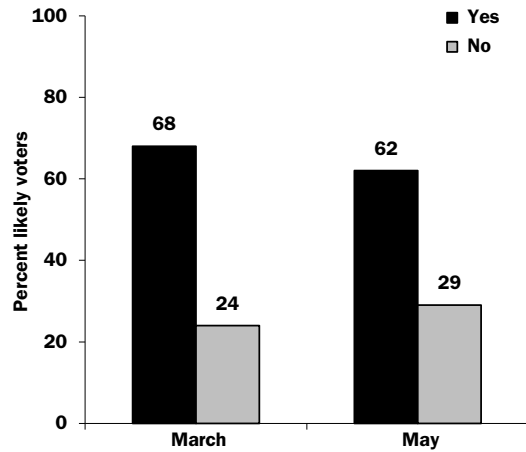
As the elections approach, pessimism about the economy persists among the state's likely voters. An overwhelming majority (83%) say the state is in a recession, with 48 percent calling it a serious one. Most (65%) say the state will have bad times financially in the next year. Likely voters express little trust that government—particularly at the federal and state levels—is spending their tax money wisely: 68 percent say people in federal government waste a lot of tax money and 62 percent say people in state government do so. Far fewer likely voters (37%) think local government wastes a lot of their money.

2012 ELECTIONS

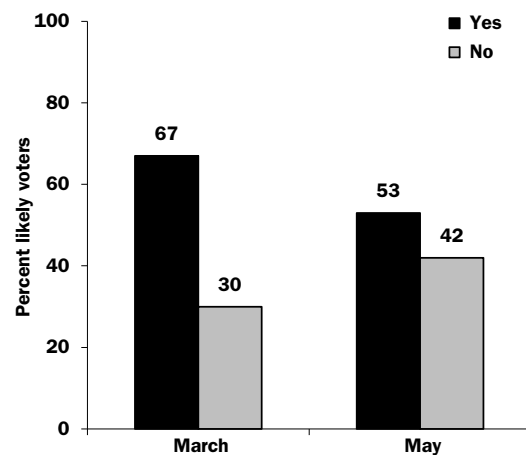
KEY FINDINGS

- President Obama gets higher favorability ratings than Mitt Romney; 49 percent say Obama’s support for same-sex marriage did not affect their opinion of him (25% more favorable, 25% less favorable). *(page 7)*
- In the probable matchup in the presidential race, Obama leads Romney by 11 points (50% to 39%). Likely voters are slightly more likely to prefer Democratic (47%) rather than Republican (40%) control of Congress as the outcome of the 2012 congressional elections. *(page 8)*
- Forty-three percent of likely voters say the new top-two primary system is a good thing, and 32 percent say that having the top-two system is very important to them. *(page 9)*
- Down slightly since March, 62 percent of likely voters would vote yes on Proposition 28 (reducing the maximum time in the state legislature to 12 years). Most likely voters continue to say that legislative term limits are a good thing for California. *(page 10)*
- Fifty-three percent support Proposition 29 (taxing cigarettes to fund cancer research), reflecting a 14-point decline since March. *(page 11)*
- Fifty-six percent of likely voters support a tax initiative that is part of the budget plan proposed for the November ballot (funding education and guaranteeing public safety funding). Seven in 10 oppose trigger cuts to K-12 education if this measure fails. Of those who support the initiative, 58 percent favor a mix of spending cuts and tax increases to reduce the budget deficit; those who oppose the initiative prefer using spending cuts alone (69%). *(pages 12, 13)*

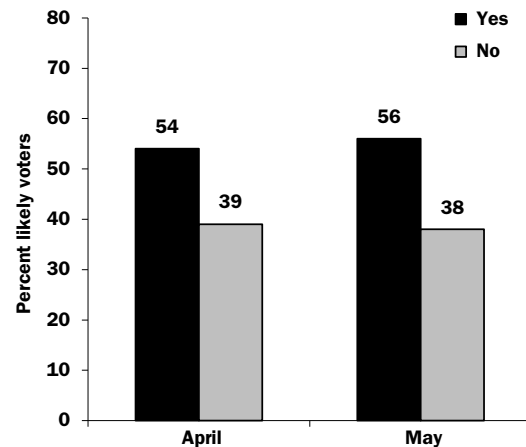
Vote on Prop. 28: Legislative Term Limits



Vote on Prop. 29: Additional Cigarette Tax



Vote on Governor Brown's Proposed Tax Initiative, with Ballot Title and a Summary



PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

With the presidential race effectively down to two candidates—Democratic incumbent President Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney—nearly six in 10 likely voters (57%) express satisfaction with their choice of candidates. Satisfaction among likely voters has grown somewhat since December (49%), January (53%), and March (53%), but Democrats are still far more likely than Republicans to say they are satisfied with their choice (75% to 46%). Independents are divided. While Democrats (up 18 points) and independents (up 15 points) have seen double-digit increases in satisfaction since December, satisfaction among Republicans is unchanged. Likely voters supporting Obama are far more likely than those supporting Romney to say they are satisfied (76% to 47%).

While satisfaction with presidential candidates has grown, attention to news about them is relatively unchanged since last December (aside from a slight dip in January). Today, 42 percent of likely voters say they are following news about presidential candidates very closely and 44 percent say fairly closely. Just 14 percent are following news not too or not at all closely. At a comparable point in time before the 2008 presidential election, attention to the news was similar to today (May 2008: 47% very, 43% fairly closely).

California likely voters are only slightly more likely to say they have a favorable (52%) than unfavorable (45%) opinion of Barack Obama. But they are more likely to have unfavorable (40%) than favorable (52%) views of Mitt Romney. Among all adults nationwide, (not a subset of likely voters), an Associated Press/Gfk poll from early May found favorability of Obama at 58 percent (38% unfavorable) and of Romney at 43 percent (43% unfavorable). Opinions among California’s likely voters are predictably divided along party lines. Independents are more likely to have a favorable than unfavorable opinion of Obama (52% to 42%), and they are slightly more negative (47%) than positive (40%) about Romney. Among those who are satisfied with their choice of candidates, 68 percent have favorable views of Obama and 36 percent have favorable views of Romney. Among those who are not satisfied with their choice, fewer than half are favorable toward either Obama (29%) or Romney (44%). In May 2008, the margin of favorable (59%) to unfavorable (36%) views of Obama was larger than today (23 points compared to 7 points today). Likely voters expressed favorability ratings of the 2008 Republican challenger John McCain (42% favorable, 53% unfavorable) similar to those of Mitt Romney today.

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>		All Likely Voters	Party			Gender	
			Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
...Barack Obama?	Favorable	52%	84%	14%	52%	53%	50%
	Unfavorable	45	13	82	42	44	45
	Don't know/Never heard of him (vol)	4	3	4	6	3	5
...Mitt Romney?	Favorable	40	13	72	40	40	39
	Unfavorable	52	80	20	47	52	51
	Don't know/Never heard of him (vol)	9	7	8	13	7	10

Half of likely voters (49%) in California say President Obama’s announcement earlier in the month that he supports same-sex marriage did not affect their opinion of him. Another 25 percent say the announcement makes them think more favorably of him, while 25 percent say it makes them think less favorably of him. Among Democratic likely voters, 46 percent say their opinion is unchanged, while 40 percent view Obama more favorably. Among Republicans, 45 percent say their opinion is unchanged, while 46 percent view him less favorably. Among independents, 62 percent say their opinion is unchanged, while 21 percent view him more favorably and 15 percent less favorably.

PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

Among likely voters, President Obama currently leads Mitt Romney 50 percent to 39 percent in the presidential race; one in 10 are either undecided (8%) or would vote for someone else (3%). Eighty-six percent of Democrats support Obama while 78 percent of Republicans support Romney. Independents prefer Obama (45% to 33% for Romney) but 20 percent are undecided. An overwhelming majority of liberals (84%) support Obama as do 55 percent of moderates. Among conservatives, 72 percent support Romney. Obama receives solid majority support in both the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, while in the Central Valley and the Other Southern California region about half support Romney, about four in 10 support Obama, and about one in 10 are undecided. Two in three Latinos support Obama while whites are divided. Two in three likely voters under age 35 and 53 percent of those age 35 to 54 support Obama, while those age 55 and older are divided. Both women (51% Obama, 38% Romney) and men (49% Obama, 39% Romney) prefer Obama. Among those who are satisfied with their choice of candidates, two in three support Obama; among those who are not satisfied, 50 percent support Romney, 28 percent support Obama, and 16 percent are undecided. Fifty-eight percent of evangelical Protestants say they would vote for Romney while mainline Protestants are somewhat divided (47% Romney, 41% Obama). Obama is the preferred candidate among Catholic likely voters (59% Obama, 34% Romney) and among those practicing no religion (66% Obama, 22% Romney).

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Barack Obama, the Democrat	50%	86%	12%	45%	84%	55%	18%
Mitt Romney, the Republican	39	8	78	33	7	31	72
Someone else	3	–	4	2	4	1	3
Don't know	8	6	6	20	5	13	7

California likely voters are slightly more likely to prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats than a Congress controlled by Republicans as the outcome of the 2012 congressional elections (47% to 40%). Eight percent volunteer they prefer neither party to control Congress. Eight in 10 Democratic likely voters prefer Congress to be controlled by Democrats, while eight in 10 Republican likely voters prefer their party to be in control. Among independents, 43 percent prefer Democratic control, while 36 percent prefer Republican control. Regionally, majorities of likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles prefer that Democrats control Congress, while 52 percent of likely voters in both the Central Valley and Other Southern California region prefer Republican control. A strong majority of likely voters age 18 to 34 (65%) prefer that Democrats control Congress; those age 35 and older are more divided.

“What is your preference for the outcome of this year's congressional elections: a Congress controlled by Republicans or a Congress controlled by Democrats?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Controlled by Republicans	40%	9%	82%	36%	13%	27%	75%
Controlled by Democrats	47	82	9	43	81	53	16
Neither (volunteered)	8	3	7	14	4	14	6
Don't know	4	5	2	6	3	7	3

TOP-TWO PRIMARY SYSTEM

When Californians go to the polls on June 5 they will experience a change in the primary system. Proposition 14, which was passed by voters in June 2010 (54% yes, 46% no), changed California state primaries from a partially closed system to a top-two primary system in which voters can cast ballots for any candidate regardless of party, and the two candidates receiving the most votes—regardless of party—will advance to the general election. How important is this new system to Californians? Two in three likely voters view the top-two primary system as very (32%) or somewhat important (35%) while about three in 10 say it is not too (15%) or not at all important (14%).

More than six in 10 likely voters across parties view the top-two primary system as at least somewhat important, but independents (41%) are more likely than Republicans (31%) or Democrats (32%) to say it is very important. Across the ideological spectrum, 71 percent of moderates view the system as at least somewhat important; 64 percent of both liberals and conservatives agree. Likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (58%) are somewhat less likely than those elsewhere to view the top-two system as important (65% Los Angeles, 67% Other Southern California region, 69% Central Valley). About seven in 10 Latinos (71%) and whites (67%) see it as important. Among those who say the top-two primary system is a good thing for California elections, 95 percent say it is important (55% very, 40% somewhat).

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Very important	32%	32%	31%	41%	29%	36%	30%
Somewhat important	35	34	33	35	35	35	34
Not too important	15	20	13	10	22	10	15
Not at all important	14	10	18	11	11	14	16
Don't know	4	4	6	3	4	5	5

Forty-three percent of likely voters say that having the top-two primary system is a good thing for California elections, while 22 percent say it is a bad thing and 27 percent say it makes no difference. Across parties, independents (49%) are the most likely to say it is a good thing, followed by Democrats (43%) and Republicans (39%). Similarly, about half of moderate likely voters (48%) think the top-two primary system is a good thing, followed by 44 percent of liberals and 38 percent of conservatives. About four in 10 across regions say the new system is a good thing. Similar shares of Latinos (45%) and whites (44%) view the top-two system as a good thing. Among those who view this new system as very important, 74 percent say it is a good thing.

**“Do you think that having the top-two primary system is a good thing or a bad thing
for California elections, or does it make no difference for California elections?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Ideology		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Liberals	Moderates	Conservatives
Good thing	43%	43%	39%	49%	44%	48%	38%
Bad thing	22	13	31	13	18	19	27
Makes no difference	27	32	22	32	31	25	26
Don't know	9	11	8	6	8	7	10

PROPOSITION 28: LEGISLATIVE TERM LIMITS

Proposition 28 on the June ballot would reduce the total amount of time that a person may serve in the state legislature from 14 to 12 years and allows 12 years’ service in one house. This proposed change to the legislative term limits that have been in effect since 1990 would apply only to legislators first elected after the measure is passed. When read the Proposition 28 ballot title and label, 62 percent of likely voters would vote yes, 29 percent would vote no, and 9 percent are undecided. In our March survey, 68 percent of likely voters said they would vote yes, 24 percent said they would no, and 8 percent were undecided. Today, Proposition 28 has majority support across party and ideological groups, and also across age, education, gender, income, racial/ethnic, and regional groups. Support for Proposition 28 is higher among those who disapprove of the California Legislature’s job performance (63% support) than among those who approve (53% support). Twenty-one percent of likely voters say the outcome of the Proposition 28 vote is very important to them. In our March survey, 22 percent held this view. About one in five of those who plan to vote yes (23% very important) and of those who plan to vote no (18% very important) view the outcome as very important.

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don’t know
All Likely Voters		62%	29%	9%
Party	Democrats	60	31	9
	Republicans	63	28	9
	Independents	66	22	11
Ideology	Liberals	55	36	9
	Moderates	66	26	8
	Conservatives	64	26	10
Education	High school or less	65	24	10
	Some college	66	25	9
	College graduate	56	35	9

**For complete text of proposition question, see p. 28.*

When asked about existing legislative term limits, 62 percent of likely voters say that they are a good thing for California and 12 percent say they are a bad thing. In our March survey, 68 percent of likely voters said that term limits are a good thing for California while 11 percent disagreed. Today, Republicans (71%) and independents (69%) are more likely than Democrats (53%) to say that term limits are a good thing. Those who plan to vote yes are far more likely than those who plan to vote no on Proposition 28 to say that term limits are a good thing (74% to 40%).

“The California Legislature has operated under term limits since 1990, meaning that members of the state senate and state assembly are limited in the number of terms they can hold their elected office. Do you think that term limits are a good thing or a bad thing for California, or do they make no difference?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Vote on Prop. 28	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Good thing	62%	53%	71%	69%	74%	40%
Bad thing	12	18	8	7	6	27
Do not make a difference	21	24	17	19	17	31
Don’t know	4	5	4	4	3	2

PROPOSITION 29: ADDITIONAL CIGARETTE TAX

Proposition 29 on the June ballot would impose an additional \$1 per pack tax on cigarettes and an equivalent tax increase on other tobacco products with revenues funding research for cancer and tobacco-related diseases. When read the Proposition 29 ballot title and label, 53 percent of likely voters would vote yes, 42 percent would vote no, and 5 percent are undecided. In our March survey before the yes- and no-campaigns were in full swing, 67 percent of likely voters said they would vote yes, 30 percent said they would vote no, and 3 percent were undecided. Today, Proposition 29 has majority support among Democrats, independents, liberals, moderates, voters under 55, Latinos, and voters across income groups. There is majority opposition among Republicans and conservatives. Likely voters in Los Angeles (61%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (59%) are more likely to vote yes than voters elsewhere.

Forty-two percent of likely voters say the outcome of the Proposition 29 vote is very important to them and 38 percent say it is somewhat important. In our March survey, 41 percent said the outcome is very important and 37 percent said it is somewhat important. Those who plan to vote yes are no more likely than those who would vote no to say the Proposition 29 outcome is very important to them (45% to 41%).

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don't know
All Likely Voters		53%	42%	5%
Party	Democrats	66	29	6
	Republicans	37	59	4
	Independents	61	37	2
Ideology	Liberals	64	30	6
	Moderates	60	36	4
	Conservatives	40	56	4
Age	18 to 34	76	24	–
	35 to 54	53	42	4
	55 and older	45	48	7

**For complete text of proposition question, see p. 28.*

When asked in general about increasing taxes on the purchase of cigarettes, 63 percent of likely voters are in favor and 33 percent are opposed. In our March survey, majorities of likely voters supported a tax increase on the purchase of cigarettes (63% favor) as in our January 2006 survey (70% in favor). Today, Democrats (73%) and independents (66%) are more likely than Republicans (52%) to favor increasing taxes on cigarette purchases. Majorities across age, education, gender, income, racial/ethnic, and regional groups are in favor of this tax increase. Those who plan to vote yes on Proposition 29 are far more likely than those who plan to vote no to favor tax increases on cigarette purchases (95% to 21%).

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

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Vote on Prop. 29	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Favor	63%	73%	52%	66%	95%	21%
Oppose	33	24	44	29	4	74
Don't know	4	3	4	4	1	5

GOVERNOR BROWN’S PROPOSED TAX INITIATIVE

As did the January budget plan, the governor’s recently revised budget plan proposes a tax initiative for the November ballot that would temporarily increase both the state personal income tax on wealthy Californians and the state sales tax. With signature gathering just completed, it had not at the time of this survey yet qualified for the ballot. When read the ballot title and a brief summary, 56 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes on the proposed tax initiative, 38 percent say they would vote no, and 7 percent say they are undecided. In our April survey, 54 percent of likely voters said they would vote yes, 39 percent said they would vote no, and 6 percent were undecided. While direct comparisons are not possible, likely voters’ support for an earlier version of the tax initiative was about the same in our March survey (52% yes and 40% no) when read the identical ballot title and a similar ballot summary. Support was somewhat higher in our January (68%) and December (60%) surveys that predated the ballot title and summary. Today, 75 percent of Democrats and 57 percent of independents would vote yes on the proposed tax initiative, while 62 percent of Republicans would vote no. Majorities across income groups support the tax initiative, but support is far lower among conservatives (31%) than others (65% moderates, 80% liberals). Whites (52%) are less supportive of the tax initiative than Latinos (68%).

“Governor Brown and others have proposed a tax initiative for the November ballot titled the ‘Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ ...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on the proposed tax initiative?”*

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don’t know
All Likely Voters		56%	38%	7%
Party	Democrats	75	16	8
	Republicans	32	62	6
	Independents	57	36	6
Gender	Men	55	39	6
	Women	56	36	8
Household Income	Under \$40,000	60	33	7
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	55	40	5
	\$80,000 or more	57	37	6

*For complete text of question, see p. 27.

Governor Brown’s budget proposes automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools if the proposed tax initiative is rejected. Seventy-two percent of likely voters and solid majorities across parties are opposed to automatic spending cuts. Among those who would vote yes on the proposed tax initiative, 80 percent oppose the automatic spending cuts, but a majority who would vote no are also opposed to the cuts (58%). Likely voters were also overwhelmingly opposed to this provision of the governor’s proposed budget in earlier surveys (78% April, 72% March, 75% January).

“If voters reject the proposed tax initiative on the November ballot, Governor Brown’s budget proposes that automatic spending cuts be made to K–12 public schools. Do you favor or oppose these automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Vote on governor’s proposed tax initiative	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Favor	23%	14%	31%	29%	17%	34%
Oppose	72	82	64	64	80	58
Don’t know	5	4	5	7	3	8

GOVERNOR’S PROPOSED TAX INITIATIVE AND THE STATE BUDGET SITUATION

Eighty-three percent of likely voters perceive the state budget situation in California as a big problem, similar to findings among likely voters in April (80%), March (78%), January (78%), and last December (83%). Today, strong majorities of likely voters across political and demographic groups say the state budget situation is a big problem. Those who plan to vote no on the governor’s proposed tax initiative are more likely than those who would vote yes to hold this view (93% to 77%). Sixty-six percent of likely voters say that their local government services have been affected a lot by recent state budget cuts, similar to our April (64%), March (66%), January (60%), and December (65%) surveys. Today, majorities of likely voters across party and ideological groups, and also across age, education, gender, income, racial/ethnic, and regional groups, agree. Those who plan to vote yes are more likely than those who plan to vote no on the governor’s proposed tax initiative to say their local government services have been affected a lot by recent state budget cuts (71% to 56%).

“Would you say that your local government services—such as those provided by city and county governments and public schools—have or have not been affected by recent state budget cuts?”
(If they have: “Have they been affected a lot or somewhat?”)

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Vote on governor’s proposed tax initiative	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Affected a lot	66%	74%	56%	65%	71%	56%
Affected somewhat	22	18	25	24	20	26
Not affected	7	6	9	5	6	9
Don’t know	6	2	9	5	4	9

As in the January budget plan, the governor’s recently revised budget plan includes a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Forty-four percent of likely voters prefer this approach to handling the state budget gap, 13 percent prefer relying mostly on tax increases, and 35 percent prefer mostly spending cuts. Seventy-five percent of Democrats favor either a mix of spending cuts and tax increases (53%) or mostly tax increases (22%), and 59 percent of independents prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases (50%) or mostly tax increases (9%). Fifty-eight percent of Republicans prefer mostly spending cuts and 34 percent prefer a mix. Eight in 10 of those who plan to vote yes on the governor’s proposed tax initiative prefer either a mix of spending cuts and tax increases (58%) or mostly tax increases (20%), while 69 percent of those who would vote no say they prefer mostly spending cuts.

“As you may know, the state government currently has an annual general fund budget of around \$85 billion and faces a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues. How would you prefer to deal with the state’s budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?”

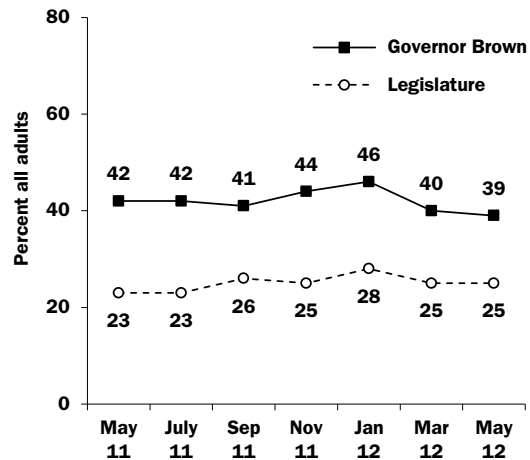
<i>Likely voters only</i>	All Likely Voters	Party			Vote on governor’s proposed tax initiative	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
A mix of spending cuts and tax increases	44%	53%	34%	50%	58%	22%
Mostly through spending cuts	35	17	58	29	14	69
Mostly through tax increases	13	22	2	9	20	2
Okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit	2	2	1	5	2	2
Other	1	1	1	3	1	2
Don’t know	4	5	4	3	5	4

STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

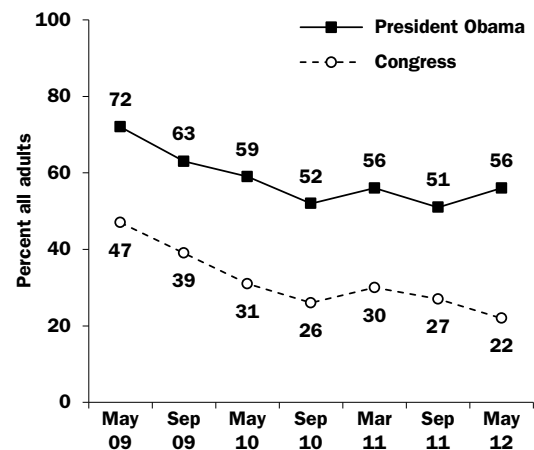
KEY FINDINGS

- Approval of Governor Brown is at 39 percent among all adults, while the state legislature has a 25 percent approval rating. Fifty-six percent approve of President Obama, while approval of the U.S. Congress is at 22 percent. *(page 15)*
- Half of Californians name jobs and the economy as the most important issue today. Four in 10 think the state is in a serious recession and six in 10 say the state will face bad economic times. *(page 16)*
- Fifty-eight percent prefer paying higher taxes and having the state government provide more services; 37 percent prefer paying lower taxes and getting fewer services. When it comes to difficult budget choices this year, a vast majority of Californians (82%) think voters should make some of these decisions at the ballot box. *(page 17)*
- When read a summary of the governor's revised budget proposal, Californians are somewhat more likely to oppose (50%) than favor (41%) the plan. Majorities would pay higher taxes for K-12 education, health and human services, and higher education; only 17 percent would do so for prisons and corrections. *(page 19)*
- Most Californians (69%) and likely voters (65%) favor raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest residents. Most oppose (64% Californians, 58% likely voters) raising the state sales tax. *(page 20)*
- Sixty-seven percent of Californians believe that the federal government wastes a lot of taxpayer money, and 57 percent say the same thing about the state government, while 38 percent say their local government wastes a lot of taxpayer money. *(page 21)*

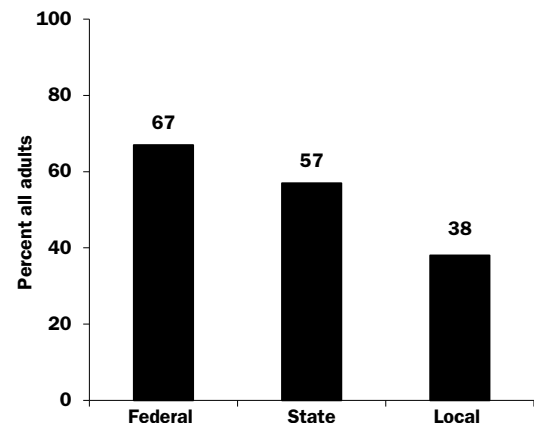
Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



Belief that ... Government Wastes a lot of Taxpayer Money



STATE AND FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

Just after the release of his revised 2012–13 budget proposal and as he seeks support of his proposed tax initiative, Governor Brown's approval ratings remain similar to earlier months. Thirty-nine percent of Californians say they approve of the governor's job performance, while 36 percent disapprove, and 24 percent are unsure. In April, 43 percent expressed approval. Aside from two dips in February and March 2011, approval has remained steady, ranging between 39 and 46 percent since the governor took office in January 2011. Likely voters are divided today, 42 percent approve and 43 percent disapprove. About six in 10 Democrats express approval, while a similar proportion of Republicans express disapproval.

Majorities of Californians (57%) and likely voters (71%) disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job; one in four or fewer in either group approve. Approval is similar to April among all adults (25% April and 25% today) and likely voters (15% April, 17% today). Disapproval is high across party groups, especially among Republicans.

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	39%	58%	22%	34%	42%
	Disapprove	36	26	63	37	43
	Don't know	24	16	15	29	14
<i>...the California Legislature is handling its job?</i>	Approve	25	30	10	16	17
	Disapprove	57	56	79	69	71
	Don't know	18	14	11	15	11

Majorities of Californians (56%) and likely voters (54%) approve of the way President Obama is handling his job. For the last two years approval has ranged between 51 and 59 percent among all adults. Voters are divided along party lines: eight in 10 Democrats express approval and three in four Republicans express disapproval of President Obama. Half of independents (51%) approve and 38 percent disapprove. Among the likely voters supporting Obama in the presidential race, 94 percent approve of his job performance; 89 percent of Romney supporters disapprove. In an ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, 47 percent of adults nationwide approve, and 49 percent disapprove, of Obama's job performance.

Strong majorities of Californians (69%) and likely voters (78%) disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job; fewer than one in four in either group say they approve. Approval among all adults and likely voters is similar to March. Vast majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents disapprove.

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that..."

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	56%	82%	20%	51%	54%
	Disapprove	39	15	77	38	42
	Don't know	5	3	3	10	4
<i>...the U.S. Congress is handling its job?</i>	Approve	22	22	13	14	16
	Disapprove	69	74	82	79	78
	Don't know	8	4	5	7	5

CALIFORNIA'S ECONOMIC SITUATION

Half of Californians mention jobs and the economy (52%) as the most important issue facing the state. Far fewer mention the state budget (14%) or education and schools (9%). Similar shares mentioned jobs and the economy in May 2011 (57%) and March (52%).

Californians continue to believe that the state is in a recession; 41 percent say it is serious, 32 percent moderate, and 8 percent mild. Only 16 percent say that the state is not in a recession. Majorities said the state was in a serious recession from January 2009 to October 2010. Perceptions of the severity of the recession declined in January 2011 (48% serious recession) and half or less have said that the state is in a serious recession in 2011 and this year (43% January, 41% March, 41% today).

Forty-eight percent of likely voters say the recession is serious. Republicans (56%) are much more likely than independents (42%) and Democrats (36%) to say it is a serious recession. Residents in the Central Valley (46%) and the Other Southern California region (44%) are the most likely to believe the recession is serious, followed by those in Los Angeles (39%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (34%). The perception that the state is in a serious recession increases with age and education.

**“Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not?”
(If yes: “Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”)**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Serious recession	41%	36%	56%	42%	48%
Moderate recession	32	32	25	31	28
Mild recession	8	11	6	6	7
Not in a recession	16	19	11	19	15
Don't know	2	2	2	2	2

Californians continue to have a negative economic outlook, with a solid majority (61%) saying the state will have bad times financially during the next 12 months. Pessimism today is similar to last May (58%). Republicans (79%) are more likely than independents (61%) and Democrats (54%) to have negative views. Across regions, pessimism is higher in the Central Valley (70%) than in the Other Southern California region (60%), Los Angeles (58%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (58%). More than half across all demographic groups have a negative outlook.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good times	31%	36%	16%	30%	27%
Bad times	61	54	79	61	65
Don't know	8	9	5	9	9

Pessimism extends to perceptions of the general direction of the state, with 63 percent saying that things in California are generally going in the wrong direction and only 30 percent saying right direction. The share saying wrong direction is similar to last May (61%). Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups share this view.

DEALING WITH THE STATE BUDGET SITUATION

When it comes to the size of government, nearly six in 10 Californians (58%) would prefer to pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services instead of paying lower taxes and having a state government that provides fewer services (37%). The proportion preferring higher taxes and more services is near the record high reached in January 2006 (61%). Partisans are divided, with a strong majority of Democrats (73%) preferring higher taxes and more services and a similar majority of Republicans (68%) preferring lower taxes and fewer services. Independents are divided (51% higher taxes/more services, 45% lower taxes/fewer services). Likely voters are divided on this issue (49% higher taxes/more services, 46% lower taxes/fewer services).

Across California’s regions, majorities of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (66%), Los Angeles (63%), and Central Valley (54%) prefer higher taxes and more services, while residents in the Other Southern California region are divided (49% higher taxes/more services, 43% lower taxes/fewer services). Latinos (71%) prefer higher taxes and more services, while whites are divided (48% higher taxes/more services, 46% lower taxes/fewer services). Preference for higher taxes and more services declines with increases in age, and is much higher among those with a high school education or less, and those with incomes under \$40,000, than among others.

“In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more—I’d rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services, or I’d rather pay lower taxes and have a state government that provides fewer services?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Higher taxes and more services	58%	73%	25%	51%	49%
Lower taxes and fewer services	37	22	68	45	46
Don’t know	5	4	7	4	5

Considering that Californians will likely be asked in November to increase taxes, who do they think should make the tough choices involved in the state budget this year? Eight in 10 Californians (82%) and likely voters (81%) prefer that voters make some of the decision about spending and taxes at the ballot box. Fewer than one in five adults (14%) and likely voters (15%) prefer the governor and legislature make all of the decisions. Findings were similar among adults and likely voters last May. At least eight in 10 across parties and more than seven in 10 across regions (75% San Francisco Bay Area, 80% Los Angeles, 83% Central Valley, 88% Other Southern California region) and demographic groups prefer that voters make some of these decisions. Likely voters who would vote for (77%) and against (88%) the governor’s tax initiative prefer that voters make some of the tough choices involved in the state budget.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
The governor and legislature make all of the decisions	14%	16%	11%	11%	15%
California voters make some of the decisions	82	80	86	86	81
Other/Both (volunteered)	2	1	–	1	–
Don’t know	3	3	2	1	3

GOVERNOR’S BUDGET PROPOSAL

Governor Brown released a revised budget proposal to address a projected state budget deficit that has grown from \$9.2 billion in January to \$15.7 billion due to lower than expected tax receipts, higher costs to fund schools, and decisions by the federal government and courts to block certain social service cuts. The revised budget plan includes further cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care and other social service programs, and cuts to courts and state employee compensation. The budget also relies on tax increases that voters would have to approve through an initiative in the November ballot.

When read a brief summary of the revised budget proposal, 50 percent oppose and 41 percent favor the governor’s budget plan. In January, when the governor first presented his budget plan, 50 percent were in favor and 43 percent were opposed. Half of Democrats (50%), 42 percent of independents, and 32 percent of Republicans favor the revised plan. Those with incomes under \$80,000 (54% under \$40,000, 52% \$40,000 to under \$80,000) are more likely to oppose the plan than those with incomes of \$80,000 or more (41%). Opposition to the budget plan declines with education. About half across regions oppose the plan, except in the San Francisco Bay Area where residents are divided (44% favor, 44% oppose).

Among likely voters, 44 percent favor and 50 percent oppose the plan. Among likely voters who would vote yes on the tax initiative, 64 percent favor and 29 percent oppose the revised budget plan.

“Governor Brown recently revised his budget plan for the next fiscal year to close the state’s projected \$15.7 billion budget deficit. It includes spending cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care and other social service programs and to courts and state employee compensation. It increases funding for K–12 public education. The proposal includes tax increases that would have to be approved by voters through an initiative on the November ballot. In general, do you favor or oppose the governor’s budget plan?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	41%	50%	34%	42%	44%
Oppose	50	45	61	48	50
Haven’t heard anything about the budget (volunteered)	3	1	2	2	2
Don’t know	6	4	4	8	5

Spending cuts to social service programs have been increased in the revised budget plan. Opposition to cuts to social service programs (65%) is higher than opposition to the plan in general (50%). In January, 58 percent opposed these cuts. Likely voters (60%) oppose cutting spending in social service programs. Solid majorities of Democrats (76%) oppose these cuts, as do a majority of independents (58%). Republicans are divided (48% favor, 49% oppose). Majorities across regions and demographic groups oppose these cuts, although opposition declines with rising income and education levels.

Among those who favor the governor’s revised budget plan in general, 42 percent favor and 54 percent oppose the cuts to social service programs included in the budget plan. Those who oppose the governor’s budget plan are strongly opposed to these cuts (22% favor, 75% oppose).

“Do you favor or oppose Governor Brown’s proposed spending cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care, and other social service programs?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	30%	21%	48%	35%	36%
Oppose	65	76	49	58	60
Don’t know	5	3	3	6	5

RAISING STATE REVENUES FOR SPECIFIC BUDGET AREAS

We asked if Californians would be willing to pay higher taxes for each of four major spending areas to help reduce the state budget deficit. Majorities of Californians are willing to pay higher taxes for K–12 education (64%), higher education (57%), and health and human services (54%). Only 17 percent would pay higher taxes for prisons and corrections. Findings are similar among likely voters. When we asked a similar question in January about paying higher taxes to maintain current funding for the major budget areas, 72 percent said they would pay higher taxes for K–12 education. Findings for other spending areas were similar to today.

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

	K–12 public education	Higher education	Health and human services	Prisons and corrections
Yes	64%	57%	54%	17%
No	34	42	44	81
Don't know	2	2	2	2

Strong majorities of Democrats (79%) and independents (63%) would pay higher taxes for K–12 education, while Republicans would not (42% yes, 56% no). There is majority support across regions and demographic groups for paying higher taxes for K–12 education. Governor Brown and others are proposing to raise taxes for this budget area through the initiative process.

A strong majority of Democrats (72%) and 57 percent of independents would pay higher taxes for higher education, while most Republicans would not (32% yes, 67% no). Majorities across regions are willing to pay higher taxes for higher education. Half or more across income and education levels would pay higher taxes for this area. Support declines with rising age (71% 18 to 34, 53% 35 to 54, 46% 55 and older).

Majorities of Democrats (70%) and independents (50%) are willing to pay higher taxes for health and human services, while seven in 10 Republicans (70%) would not. At least half across income groups would pay higher taxes for this purpose, and support is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (65%).

When asked about paying higher taxes for prisons and corrections, no more than 20 percent of adults, likely voters, and Californians across regions and demographic groups say they would do so.

<i>Percent willing to pay higher taxes</i>		K–12 public education	Higher education	Health and human services	Prisons and corrections
All Adults		64%	57%	54%	17%
All Likely Voters		61	55	50	18
Party	Democrats	79	72	70	20
	Republicans	42	32	28	17
	Independents	63	57	50	19
Region	Central Valley	64	53	50	19
	San Francisco Bay Area	72	62	65	14
	Los Angeles	63	61	56	16
	Other Southern California	59	53	50	16
Household Income	Under \$40,000	67	60	59	18
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	62	51	51	13
	\$80,000 or more	68	61	52	18

STATE REVENUE SOURCES

Given that Californians will probably go to the polls in November to vote on the governor’s tax initiative, how do they feel about the two types of taxes included in the initiative? Solid majorities of adults (69%) and likely voters (65%) favor raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians, and solid majorities (64% adults, 58% likely voters) are opposed to raising the state sales tax.

Since we first asked this question in January 2004, at least 65 percent have favored raising the tax rate of the wealthiest Californians (71% January 2004, 69% January 2005, 68% May 2005, 65% January 2006, 73% January 2008, 69% May 2008, 72% January 2009, 67% May 2010, 74% January 2012, 69% today). Today, there is a wide partisan divide, with 86 percent of Democrats in favor and nearly six in 10 Republicans (58%) opposed. Seven in 10 independents (71%) favor raising income taxes on wealthy Californians. Residents in Los Angeles (77%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (75%) are more likely to be in favor than those in the Central Valley (65%) or the Other Southern California region (61%). Support for increasing taxes on the state’s wealthiest residents is similar across income groups (73% under \$40,000, 68% \$40,000–\$79,999, 67% \$80,000 or more). Adults under 35 (74%), and 35 to 54 (72%) are more likely to express support than those age 55 and older (60%). Seven in 10 across education levels support this idea. Among likely voters who plan to vote yes on the governor’s tax initiative, 89 percent favor this tax increase, while 71 percent of those who plan to vote no are opposed to it.

“Do you favor or oppose raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	69%	86%	39%	71%	65%
Oppose	28	12	58	27	33
Don’t know	3	1	2	3	2

Only 33 percent of Californians favor raising the state sales tax, while 64 percent are opposed. Since January 2004, at least six in 10 Californians have opposed the idea of raising the state sales tax to reduce the state’s deficit (60% January 2004, 64% January 2005, 71% May 2005, 64% January 2008, 61% May 2008, 69% January 2011, 73% May 2011, 69% January 2012, 64% today).

Republicans (71%) and independents (65%) oppose raising the state sales tax; Democrats are slightly more likely to oppose (52%) than favor (45%) this idea. Majorities across regions are opposed (59% San Francisco Bay Area, 60% Central Valley, 63% Los Angeles, 72% Other Southern California region). Opposition to raising the state sales tax is similar across income levels (65% \$40,000 or less, 62% \$40,000–\$79,999, 64% \$80,000 and higher). More than six in 10 across education, age, gender, and racial/ethnic groups oppose raising the state sales tax. Among likely voters who plan to vote yes on the governor’s tax initiative, 58 percent favor raising the state sales tax, while 84 percent of those voting against the initiative oppose such an increase.

“Do you favor or oppose raising the state sales tax?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	33%	45%	28%	33%	40%
Oppose	64	52	71	65	58
Don’t know	3	3	1	2	2

TRUST IN GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Most Californians think that the people in government, regardless of the level, waste at least some of the money paid in taxes. The belief that government wastes a lot is more pervasive about the federal (67%) and state (57%) level than the local level (38%). Fewer than one in four think that government doesn't waste very much taxpayer money.

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

	Federal government	State government	Local government
A lot	67%	57%	38%
Some	24	31	36
Don't waste very much	6	8	21
Don't know	3	4	5

Two in three Californians (67%) and likely voters (68%) think the federal government wastes a lot of taxpayer money. At least 57 percent of Californians have held this view since we first asked this question in February 2004. Though majorities across parties think that the federal government is wasteful today, Republicans (81%) and independents (68%) are much more likely than Democrats (57%) to hold this view. Residents of the Central Valley (74%) and the Other Southern California region (72%) are the most likely to say the federal government wastes a lot, and at least 58 percent across demographic groups agree.

Six in 10 Californians (57%) and likely voters (62%) think the state government wastes a lot of the money paid in taxes. Since February 2003, more than half of Californians have held this view. The belief that the state government wastes a lot is more common among Republicans (74%) and independents (62%) than among Democrats (51%). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (47%) are the least likely to say the state wastes a lot of taxpayer money. About half or more across demographic groups think the state government wastes a lot of taxpayer money.

Fewer Californians (38%) and likely voters (37%) think that their local government wastes a lot of the money paid in taxes. About four in 10 across parties hold this view. There are some regional differences: 25 percent of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area say there is a lot of waste, compared to about four in 10 elsewhere. Fewer than half across demographic groups say their local government wastes a lot.

<i>Percent saying government wastes a lot</i>		Federal government	State government	Local government
All Adults		67%	57%	38%
All Likely Voters		68	62	37
Party	Democrats	57	51	38
	Republicans	81	74	40
	Independents	68	62	36
Region	Central Valley	74	63	41
	San Francisco Bay Area	65	47	25
	Los Angeles	60	55	39
	Other Southern California	72	62	41
Household Income	Under \$40,000	61	50	37
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	75	63	43
	\$80,000 or more	68	61	30

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 Jui Shrestha, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner and Sonja Petek. The *Californians and Their Government* series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. We benefit from discussions with PPIC staff, foundation staff, and other policy experts, but the methods, questions, and content of this report were determined solely by Mark Baldassare and the survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 2,002 California adult residents, including 1,602 interviewed on landline telephones and 400 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from May 14 to 20, 2012.

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 phones 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 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.

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

With assistance from Abt SRBI we used recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau’s 2007–2009 American Community Survey (ACS) through the University of Minnesota’s Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2008 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2007–2009 ACS for California both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare the data against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for any differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 3.4 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total sample of 2,002 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the

results will be within 3.4 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,322 registered voters, it is ± 3.8 percent; for the 894 likely voters, it is ± 4.2 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.

We present results for four geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, and “Other Southern California” includes Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters; but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present specific results for non-Hispanic whites and for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asians, who make up about 14 percent of the state’s adult population. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as non-Hispanic blacks and Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in another party are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated by their responses to voter registration survey questions, previous election participation, intentions to vote in the June primary, and current interest in politics.

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, the Associated Press/GfK, and the Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

May 14–20, 2012

2,002 California Adult Residents:
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 3.4\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE
PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?

[code, don't read]
52% jobs, economy
14 state budget, deficit, taxes
9 education, schools
3 crime, gangs, drugs
3 government in general
2 gas prices
2 health care, health costs
2 housing costs
2 immigration, illegal immigration
8 other
3 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?

39% approve
36 disapprove
24 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

25% approve
57 disapprove
18 don't know
4. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

30% right direction
63 wrong direction
7 don't know
5. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

31% good times
61 bad times
8 don't know
6. Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (*if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?*)

41% yes, serious recession
32 yes, moderate recession
8 yes, mild recession
16 no
2 don't know
7. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

67% yes [*ask q7a*]
33 no [*skip to q8d*]

7a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 44% Democrat *[ask q8]*
- 31 Republican *[skip to q8a]*
- 4 another party *(specify) [skip to q9]*
- 21 independent *[skip to q8b]*

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

- 55% strong
- 44 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[skip to q9]

8a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 52% strong
- 41 not very strong
- 7 don't know

[skip to q9]

8b. ***[independents only]*** Would you join a political party if it was a good reflection of your political views or do you prefer to be unaffiliated with any specific party?

- 25% join a political party
- 72 remain unaffiliated
- 2 don't know

8c. ***[independents only]*** And, were you previously registered with a major party or have you always been a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 38% previously registered
- 60 always an independent
- 2 don't know

8d. ***[independents and those not registered to vote]*** Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 24% Republican Party
- 40 Democratic Party
- 27 neither *(volunteered)*
- 9 don't know

[questions 9–27 reported for likely voters only]

9. ***[likely voters only]*** Next, do you think the state budget situation in California—that is, the balance between government spending and revenues—is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem for the people of California today?

- 83% big problem
- 14 somewhat of a problem
- 2 not a problem
- 2 don't know

10. ***[likely voters only]*** Would you say that your local government services—such as those provided by city and county governments and public schools—have or have not been affected by recent state budget cuts? ***(if they have, ask: Have they been affected a lot or somewhat?)***

- 66% affected a lot
- 22 affected somewhat
- 7 not affected
- 6 don't know

11. ***[likely voters only]*** As you may know, the state government currently has an annual general fund budget of around \$85 billion and faces a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues. How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?

- 35% mostly through spending cuts
- 13 mostly through tax increases
- 44 through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases
- 2 okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit
- 1 other *(specify)*
- 4 don't know

12. **[likely voters only]** Governor Brown and others have proposed a tax initiative for the November ballot titled the “Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It increases the personal income tax on annual earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and increases the sales and use tax by a quarter cent for four years. It allocates temporary tax revenues, 89 percent to K–12 schools, and 11 percent to community colleges. It guarantees funding for public safety services realigned from state to local governments. Increased state revenues of about \$5.4 to \$9 billion annually would be available to pay for the state’s school and community college funding requirements, as increased by this measure, and to address the state’s budgetary problem by paying for other spending commitments. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on the proposed tax initiative?

- 56% yes
- 38 no
- 7 don’t know

13. **[likely voters only]** If voters reject the proposed tax initiative on the November ballot, Governor Brown’s budget proposes that automatic spending cuts be made to K–12 public schools. Do you favor or oppose these automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools?

- 23% favor
- 72 oppose
- 5 don’t know

14. **[likely voters only]** Next, if the November 6th presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: **[rotate names]** (1) Barack Obama, the Democrat, **[or]** (2) Mitt Romney, the Republican?

- 50% Barack Obama, the Democrat
- 39 Mitt Romney, the Republican
- 3 someone else (*specify*)
- 8 don’t know

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

[rotate questions 15 and 16]

15. **[likely voters only]** How about Barack Obama?

- 52% favorable
- 45 unfavorable
- 4 don’t know/never heard of him

16. **[likely voters only]** How about Mitt Romney?

- 40% favorable
- 52 unfavorable
- 9 don’t know/never heard of him

17. **[likely voters only]** In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. President in 2012?

- 57% satisfied
- 40 not satisfied
- 3 don’t know

18. **[likely voters only]** How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2012 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

- 42% very closely
- 44 fairly closely
- 12 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely
- don’t know

19. **[likely voters only]** Next, what is your preference for the outcome of this year’s congressional elections: **[rotate]** (1) a Congress controlled by Republicans, **[or]** (2) a Congress controlled by Democrats?

- 40% controlled by Republicans
- 47 controlled by Democrats
- 8 neither (*volunteered*)
- 4 don’t know

Next, the June 5th statewide primary election includes two statewide ballot initiatives.

20. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 28 is called the “Limits on Legislators’ Terms in Office, Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It reduces the total amount of time a person may serve in the state legislature from 14 years to 12 years and allows 12 years’ service in one house. It applies only to legislators first elected after the measure is passed. There would be no direct fiscal effect on state or local governments. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 28?

- 62% yes
- 29 no
- 9 don’t know

21. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 28—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 21% very important
- 47 somewhat important
- 23 not too important
- 7 not at all important
- 3 don’t know

22. **[likely voters only]** The California Legislature has operated under term limits since 1990, meaning that members of the state senate and state assembly are limited in the number of terms they can hold their elected office. Do you think that term limits are a good thing or a bad thing for California, or do they make no difference?

- 62% good thing
- 12 bad thing
- 21 no difference
- 4 don’t know

23. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 29 is called the “Imposes Additional Tax on Cigarettes for Cancer Research, Initiative Statute.” It imposes an additional one dollar per pack tax on cigarettes and an equivalent tax increase on other tobacco products. Revenues fund research for cancer and tobacco-related diseases. Fiscal impacts include a net increase in cigarette excise tax revenues of about \$735 million annually by 2013–14 for certain research and tobacco prevention and cessation programs and other state and local revenue increases amounting to tens of millions of dollars annually. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 29?

- 53% yes
- 42 no
- 5 don’t know

24. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 29—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 42% very important
- 38 somewhat important
- 15 not too important
- 4 not at all important
- 1 don’t know

25. **[likely voters only]** In general, would you favor or oppose increasing taxes on the purchase of cigarettes?

- 63% favor
- 33 oppose
- 4 don’t know

Next, this June, California state primaries will change from a partially closed system to a top-two primary system in which voters can cast ballots for any candidate regardless of party, and the two candidates receiving the most votes—regardless of party—will advance to the general election.

26. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is having the top-two primary system? Is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 32% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 15 not too important
- 14 not at all important
- 4 don't know

27. **[likely voters only]** Do you think that having the top-two primary system is a good thing or a bad thing for California elections, or does it make no difference for California elections?

- 43% good thing
- 22 bad thing
- 27 no difference
- 9 don't know

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

[rotate questions 28 to 31]

28. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for K–12 public education, or not?

- 64% yes
- 34 no
- 2 don't know

29. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for higher education, or not?

- 57% yes
- 42 no
- 2 don't know

30. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for health and human services, or not?

- 54% yes
- 44 no
- 2 don't know

31. Would you be willing to pay higher taxes for prisons and corrections, or not?

- 17% yes
- 81 no
- 2 don't know

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

[rotate questions 32 and 33]

32. Do you favor or oppose raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians?

- 69% favor
- 28 oppose
- 3 don't know

33. Do you favor or oppose raising the state sales tax?

- 33% favor
- 64 oppose
- 3 don't know

34. On another topic, Governor Brown recently released a revised budget plan for the next fiscal year to close the state's projected \$15.7 billion budget deficit. It includes spending cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care and other social service programs and to courts and state employee compensation. It increases funding for K–12 public education. The proposal includes tax increases that would have to be approved by voters through an initiative on the November ballot. In general, do you favor or oppose the governor's budget plan?

- 41% favor
- 50 oppose
- 3 haven't heard anything about the budget (*volunteered*)
- 6 don't know

35. Do you favor or oppose Governor Brown's proposed spending cuts to Medi-Cal, welfare, child care, and other social service programs?

- 30% favor
- 65 oppose
- 5 don't know

36. In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more—**[rotate]** (1) I'd rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services, **[or]** (2) I'd rather pay lower taxes and have a state government that provides fewer services?

- 58% higher taxes and more services
- 37 lower taxes and fewer services
- 5 don't know

37. And when it comes to the tough choices involved in the state budget this year, would you prefer—**[rotate]** (1) that the governor and legislature make all of the decisions about spending and taxes, **[or]** (2) that California voters make some of the decisions about spending and taxes at the ballot box?

- 14% governor and legislature make all of the decisions
- 82 California voters make some of the decisions
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 1 both (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

38. Changing topics, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

- 56% approve
- 39 disapprove
- 5 don't know

39. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?

- 22% approve
- 69 disapprove
- 8 don't know

40. Next, do you think the people in federal government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?

- 67% a lot
- 24 some
- 6 don't waste very much
- 3 don't know

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

- 57% a lot
- 31 some
- 8 don't waste very much
- 4 don't know

42. Do you think the people in your local government waste a lot of the money paid in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?

- 38% a lot
- 36 some
- 21 don't waste very much
- 5 don't know

[questions 42a and 42b asked starting May 15, reported for likely voters only]

On another topic,

42a. **[likely voters only]** Do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married?

- 56% favor
- 37 oppose
- 7 don't know

42b. **[likely voters only]** Did President Obama expressing his support for gay marriage make you think **[rotate]** (1) more favorably of him, (2) less favorably of him, or did it not affect your opinion of Barack Obama?

- 25% more favorably of him
- 25 less favorably of him
- 49 did not affect opinion
- 1 don't know

43. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: **[read list, rotate order top to bottom]**

- 10% very liberal
- 22 somewhat liberal
- 33 middle-of-the-road
- 21 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 2 don't know

44. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

23%	great deal
38	fair amount
33	only a little
5	none
1	don't know

[d1-d18: demographic questions]

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