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Californians & their government



Mark Baldassare

Dean Bonner

David Kordus

Lunna Lopes

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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. This is the 152nd PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that was inaugurated in April 1998 and has generated a database of responses from more than 316,000 Californians.

This is the 68th in the *Californians and Their Government* series. The survey is conducted periodically to examine the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. Supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation, the series seeks to inform decisionmakers, raise public awareness, and stimulate policy discussion and debate about important state and national issues.

This survey began as the regular session and two special sessions of the California Legislature came to a close. The special sessions left transportation and healthcare funding shortfalls unresolved. Looking ahead, tax proposals and pension reform could be headed for the 2016 ballot. September also marked the four-year anniversary of California's prison realignment plan, which has shifted inmates from state prisons to county jails. Another important issue: the state's ongoing drought. Nationally, the 2016 presidential race has drawn attention to social issues, including abortion, immigration, and income inequality.

The survey presents the responses of 1,708 adult residents throughout California, interviewed in English or Spanish by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on the following topics:

- State government, including approval ratings of elected officials; overall outlook; opinions on tax proposals, including an extension of Proposition 30 taxes; views on the current water supply, and whether people are doing enough in response to the drought; attitudes toward pension reform; assessments of crime levels and confidence in local government's handling of the transfer of state prisoners to local jails; and perceptions of the state's public higher education system, including whether the state will have enough college-educated residents in the future.
- Federal government, including approval ratings of state and federal elected officials; overall outlook; opinions about immigration and policy options for undocumented immigrants; views on access to abortion; opinions on gun control; and attitudes toward income inequality and the government's role in reducing it.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and the extent to which Californians may differ in their perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding state and federal government based on 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). If you have questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org. Try our PPIC Statewide Survey interactive tools online at www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp.

NEWS RELEASE

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PDT on Wednesday, September 30, 2015.

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

Likely Voters Divided on Temporary Extension of Proposition 30— Most Support Cigarette Tax

LARGE MAJORITY SAY VOTERS SHOULD HAVE VOICE IN PUBLIC EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

SAN FRANCISCO, September 30, 2015—Half of California’s likely voters favor extending Proposition 30’s temporary tax increases. But support declines when those in favor of an extension are asked about making the increases permanent. Support is considerably higher for raising taxes on the purchase of cigarettes, with a strong majority in favor.

These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with funding from The James Irvine Foundation.

The survey began amid discussions about turning a number of tax proposals into citizens’ initiatives for the 2016 ballot. Two ballot measures have been proposed to extend aspects of Proposition 30, which temporarily raised taxes on sales and on high earners to fund schools and public safety realignment. One of the proposals would make tax increases permanent.

When likely voters are asked if they favor extending the tax increases—set to fully expire in 2018—in their current form, 49 percent are in favor and 46 percent are opposed. Democrats (64%) are more likely than independents (49%) and nearly twice as likely as Republicans (33%) to be in favor. Only 32 percent of likely voters prefer making the increases permanent.

A proposal to tax the extraction of oil and gas also falls short of majority support, with 49 percent of likely voters in favor. Support is higher for two other tax proposals being discussed. A majority of likely voters (55%) favor changing Proposition 13 so that commercial properties are taxed according to their current market value. Most Democrats (65%) and independents (56%) favor this “split roll” approach to Proposition 13, and most Republicans (55%) oppose it. Support is stronger for the idea of increasing cigarette taxes—66 percent of likely voters are in favor, and majorities across party lines support it.

Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO, noted: “As the legislature and proponents of tax initiatives search for new revenue sources, the proposal to increase cigarette taxes stands out because it has majority support across party lines.”

MAJORITY SUPPORT CHANGING PENSION SYSTEM FOR NEW PUBLIC EMPLOYEES

Changes to public employee pensions may also be headed for the ballot. Today, 72 percent of likely voters say the amount of money spent on public employee pensions is a problem. When they are asked who they prefer making decisions about retirement benefits for public employees, 70 percent say voters

should make some of these decisions at the ballot box. Just 24 percent say state and local governments should make all the decisions.

One proposed change to the current public employee pension system is to place new employees in a defined contribution system, similar to a 401(k) plan, rather than a defined benefits system. Most likely voters (70%) favor this change, while 20 percent oppose it. Strong majorities across parties (74% Republicans, 69% independents, 65% Democrats) are in favor. Californians age 55 and older (61%) are somewhat less likely to support the proposal than those age 18 to 34 (70%).

“Most Californians want to expand their already formidable powers in ballot-box budgeting by having a greater say in public employee pensions,” Baldassare said.

WORRIED ABOUT DROUGHT, FEELING BETTER ABOUT NEIGHBORS’ RESPONSE TO IT

The survey finds that about half of Californians (48%) say things in the state are generally going in the right direction and half (48%) say the state will have good economic times in the next year. What is the most important issue facing Californians today? Residents are more likely to name water and drought (32%) than other issues, followed by jobs and the economy (20%). Less than 10 percent of adults name any other issue.

A record-high 70 percent of adults say the supply of water in their part of the state is a big problem. With data from June and July indicating that California has met the goal of reducing statewide water use by 25 percent, residents are less likely today than they were earlier this year to say that their neighbors are doing too little to respond to the drought. Although nearly half (48%) say that people in their part of the state are not doing enough, this share has declined 18 points since March (66% March, 60% May, 52% July). About half of Californians in Los Angeles (54%), the Central Valley (52%), the Inland Empire (49%), and Orange/San Diego (48%) say people are not doing enough, while half of San Francisco Bay Area residents (51%) say people are doing the right amount to respond to the drought.

BROWN’S JOB APPROVAL HOLDS STEADY, LEGISLATURE’S IS UP SLIGHTLY

As the state’s elected leaders finish their work for the session, majorities of Californians and likely voters approve of Governor Brown’s job performance (52% adults, 55% likely voters). The legislature’s job approval rating is 45 percent among adults and 39 percent of likely voters—up slightly from last September (37% adults, 32% likely voters). Asked to assess the job performance of their own representatives in the state assembly and senate, 47 percent of adults and likely voters approve.

RESIDENTS RATE OWN REPRESENTATIVE MUCH HIGHER THAN CONGRESS

President Obama’s approval rating stands at 60 percent among California adults and 53 percent among likely voters. Californians give Congress a much lower approval rating (32% adults, 17% likely voters). But they hold a more favorable view of their own representative in the House of Representatives (51% adults, 51% likely voters). California’s two US senators get similar ratings: 52 percent of adults and 53 percent of likely voters approve of Senator Dianne Feinstein’s job performance, while 49 percent of adults and 47 percent of likely voters approve of Senator Barbara Boxer’s.

MAJORITIES CONCUR ON UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS, ABORTION, POVERTY, GUN LAWS

The survey asked about a number of issues that have already surfaced in the 2016 presidential campaigns.

- **Immigration.** Asked about undocumented immigrants living in the US, 75 percent of Californians say they should be allowed to live and work here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements. Large majorities of Democrats (83%) and independents (70%) and a majority of Republicans (53%)

express this view. Adults nationwide (60%) are less likely than Californians to say that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay legally, according to a July ABC News/Washington Post poll.

In addition, a solid majority of adults (65%) say immigrants are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills, while 28 percent say immigrants are a burden because they use public services. Across racial/ethnic groups, strong majorities of Latinos (86%) and Asians (69%) say immigrants are a benefit, while 53 percent of blacks and half of whites (49%) say so.

- **Abortion.** Most Californians (69%) say the government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion, a view shared by solid majorities of Democrats (80%), independents (74%), and Republicans (62%). Majorities of men and women and majorities across regional, age, income, education, and racial/ethnic groups express this view. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (56%) are the least likely to say the government should not interfere with access (87% blacks, 77% whites, 69% Asians).

Among religiously affiliated Californians, 75 percent of mainline Protestants and 60 percent of Catholics say the government should not interfere with abortion access. Evangelical Protestants (48%) are the most likely to favor more laws restricting abortion access.

- **Poverty and income inequality.** An overwhelming 92 percent of Californians believe that poverty is either a big problem (62%) or somewhat of one (30%). Across all regions, parties, and demographic groups, overwhelming majorities view poverty as at least somewhat of a problem. A solid majority (68%) say the government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor—a slight increase from March of this year, when 61 percent expressed this view. Just 29 percent say this is not something the government should be doing. There is a strong partisan split on this question: 84 percent of Democrats and 64 percent of independents today say the government should do more, while 32 percent of Republicans say so.

Baldassare noted: “As issues are taking shape in the presidential primaries, Californians of all political stripes are concerned about poverty, but they are deeply split on the government’s role.”

- **Gun laws.** A solid majority of adults (65%) say that laws covering the sale of guns should be stricter than they are now. Californians are more likely than adults nationwide (52%) to favor stricter laws, according to an August CBS News poll (65%). Among adults with a gun, rifle, or pistol in their home, 83 percent favor keeping laws the same (38%) or making them stricter (45%).

Most adults (57%) say that controlling gun ownership is more important than protecting the right of Americans to own guns, while 40 percent say protecting gun ownership is more important. There are sharp partisan differences, with 74 percent of Republicans and 52 percent of independents saying that protecting gun ownership is more important, compared to just 26 percent of Democrats. Among adults with a gun, rifle, or pistol in their home, 58 percent favor protecting gun ownership.

MORE KEY FINDINGS

- **Half view crime as a big problem**—[page 12](#)

Nearly a year after Proposition 47 reclassified some drug and property felonies as misdemeanors, 52 percent of adults say crime in California is a big problem; perceptions were similar in October 2014 (50%), just before the measure passed.

- **Most are confident that state can plan for future of higher education**—[page 13](#)

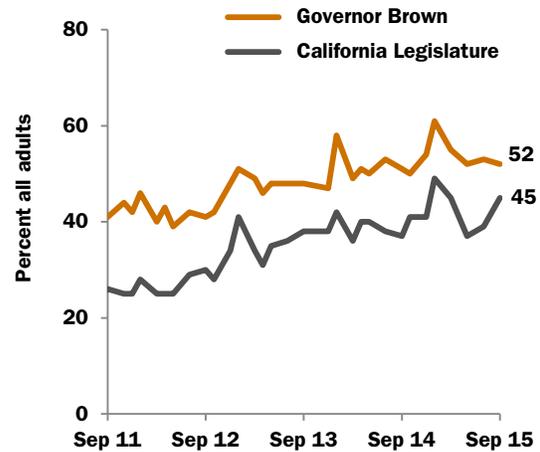
Half of Californians expect the state to have a shortage of college-educated workers in 20 years, and 55 percent are at least somewhat confident in state government’s ability to plan for the future of the higher education system.

STATE GOVERNMENT

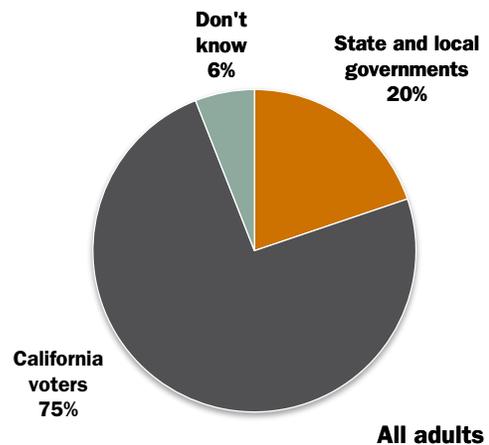
KEY FINDINGS

- Fifty-two percent of Californians approve of Governor Brown's job performance. Forty-five percent approve of the California Legislature and 47 percent approve of their individual legislators. *(page 7)*
- Californians continue to name water as the most important issue facing the state. About half say the state is heading in the right direction and about half expect good economic times. *(page 8)*
- Seven in 10 Californians say the water supply in their part of California is a big problem. The share of residents who think people are doing the right amount to respond to the current drought has increased 17 points since March. *(page 9)*
- Fifty-five percent of Californians and 49 percent of likely voters are in favor of extending the Proposition 30 tax increases. There is bipartisan support for increasing taxes on cigarettes. *(page 10)*
- One in three Californians think the amount of money that is being spent on public employee pensions is a big problem; three in four say voters should make some of the decisions about retirement benefits for public employees. *(page 11)*
- Half of Californians say that crime in California today is a big problem. Fifty-one percent are confident that their local government can handle the added responsibility of prison realignment. *(page 12)*
- An overwhelming majority of Californians view the state's public higher education system as very important; half say the state will not have enough college-educated residents in 20 years. Fifty-five percent are confident about the state's ability to plan for the future of the system. *(page 13)*

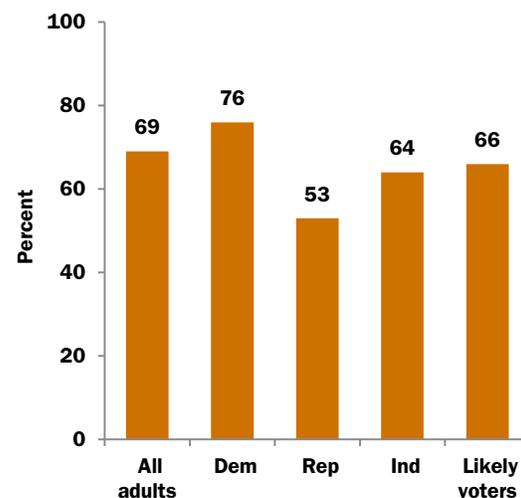
Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Who should make decisions about public employee retirement benefits?



Support for increasing taxes on cigarettes



APPROVAL RATINGS OF STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

Majorities of Californians (52%) and likely voters (55%) approve of Governor Brown’s job performance. Approval today is similar to July (53% adults, 55% likely voters) and last September (51% adults, 55% likely voters). In fact, at least half of Californians have approved of the governor since April 2014. Today, a strong majority of Democrats (72%) approve, as do half of independents (51%); one in four Republicans (25%) approve. Approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (63%), followed by those in the Inland Empire (53%), Los Angeles (50%), Orange/San Diego (47%), and the Central Valley (43%). Approval of the governor is highest among Latinos (55%), followed by blacks (54%), whites (51%), and Asians (49%).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	52%	72%	25%	51%	55%
Disapprove	29	17	59	31	35
Don't know	19	11	17	18	10

Forty-five percent of Californians and 39 percent of likely voters approve of the way the California Legislature is handling its job. Approval was slightly lower in July (39% adults, 32% likely voters) and last September (37% adults, 32% likely voters). Today, more than half of Democrats (56%) approve, compared to 40 percent of independents and only 17 percent of Republicans. Approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (51%) and Los Angeles (50%), while it is lower in the Central Valley (42%), Orange/San Diego (39%), and the Inland Empire (33%). Approval of the legislature is higher among Latinos (55%) and Asians (49%) than among blacks (38%) and whites (37%).

Forty-seven percent of Californians and likely voters approve of the job state legislators representing their assembly and senate districts are doing. Approval was similar in January (53% adults, 48% likely voters)—a recent high mark—but prior to that it had not reached 50 percent since December 2007 (51% adults, 50% likely voters). Today, nearly six in 10 Democrats (59%) approve, compared to 47 percent of independents and 25 percent of Republicans. Across regions, approval of state legislators ranges from 50 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area to 42 percent in the Inland Empire. Latinos (55%) are more likely than Asians (45%), blacks (45%), and whites (44%) to approve.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way...?”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
the California Legislature is handling its job	Approve	45%	56%	17%	40%	39%
	Disapprove	38	28	62	44	47
	Don't know	17	16	21	16	15
state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time	Approve	47	59	25	47	47
	Disapprove	33	25	57	34	38
	Don't know	20	16	18	19	15

OVERALL MOOD

One in three Californians name water and the drought (32%) as the most important issue facing the state while one in five mention jobs and the economy (20%). Fewer than one in 10 name any other issue. This marks the second time that water and the drought is the top issue mentioned, but fewer people today are mentioning it than in May (39% May, 32% today). Water is the top mentioned issue across almost all parties, regions, and demographic groups—the exceptions are Republicans (21% water, 22% economy) and blacks (23% water, 27% economy).

“Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?”

Top five issues mentioned	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Water, drought	32%	44%	36%	25%	28%	30%	32%
Jobs, economy	20	15	13	24	24	22	22
Immigration, illegal immigration	6	4	5	7	7	11	7
Education, schools, teachers	5	4	5	7	3	4	7
Environment, pollution, global warming	5	6	5	5	3	1	4

When it comes to the state of the state, 48 percent of Californians and 43 percent of likely voters say things in California are going in the right direction. Positive perceptions were similar in May (45% adults, 40% likely voters) and last September (43% adults, 43% likely voters). Today, Democrats (58%) are more optimistic than independents (43%) and far more optimistic than Republicans (23%). Across regions, optimism is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (38%). Optimism is higher among Asians (60%) and Latinos (54%) than among blacks (46%) and whites (42%).

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	48%	58%	23%	43%	43%
Wrong direction	46	35	69	50	52
Don't know	6	6	7	7	6

Forty-eight percent of Californians and 46 percent of likely voters think that the state will experience good economic times in the next 12 months. Positive perceptions of the economy were similar in May (48% adults, 44% likely voters) and last September (44% adults, 44% likely voters). Today, about half of Democrats (52%) and independents (50%) expect good times, while one in three Republicans (32%) expect good economic times. Optimism is highest in Los Angeles (52%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (44%).

“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	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Good times	48%	47%	48%	52%	48%	44%	46%
Bad times	42	46	40	39	44	47	44
Don't know	9	7	13	8	8	9	10

WATER POLICY

As the drought continues and talk of the potential impact of El Niño swirls, seven in 10 Californians think the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California. This marks a new high point since we began asking this question in 2009—but today’s finding is similar to recent months (66% March, 69% May, 68% July, 70% today) and to last fall (65% September 2014, 68% October 2014).

More than two in three residents across the state’s regions think their local water supply is a big problem, but this perception is most common in the Central Valley (82%). Inland residents (77%) are more likely than those living along the coast (67%) to say it is a big problem. More than seven in 10 across parties think their local water supply is a big problem, as do more than six in 10 across demographic groups.

“Would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?”

	All adults	Region					Inland/Coastal	
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Inland	Coastal
Big problem	70%	82%	69%	69%	67%	71%	77%	67%
Somewhat of a problem	19	12	20	20	19	18	15	20
Not much of a problem	10	5	10	11	14	10	7	12
Don’t know	1	1	–	1	–	1	1	–

In response to the drought, this spring the governor directed the State Water Resources Control Board to implement water restrictions in cities and towns across the state to reduce statewide usage by 25 percent. With data from June and July indicating that the state has met this goal in each month thus far, how do Californians perceive the actions being taken by people in their part of the state? While nearly half of Californians think people in their part of the state are not doing enough (48%), this share has declined by 18 points since March (66% March, 60% May, 52% July, 48% today). Also, the share of residents who think that people are doing the right amount has increased 17 points since March (24% March, 28% May, 35% July, 41% today).

About half of Californians in Los Angeles (54%), the Central Valley (52%), the Inland Empire (49%), and Orange/San Diego (48%) think people are not doing enough, while half of San Francisco Bay Area residents (51%) say people are doing the right amount. Residents in inland and coastal regions hold similar opinions. About half of Democrats (51%) and independents (53%) think people are not doing enough, while half of Republicans (49%) say people are doing the right amount. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (65%) are the most likely to say that people are not doing enough, followed by Latinos (48%), whites (46%), and Asians (43%). The belief that not enough is being done declines with rising age.

“Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?”

	All adults	Region					Inland/Coastal	
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Inland	Coastal
Too much	8%	9%	7%	7%	12%	5%	7%	8%
Right amount	41	34	51	36	37	41	39	42
Not enough	48	52	38	54	48	49	50	47
Don’t know	4	4	3	4	3	5	4	3

TAX POLICY

Proposition 30 was passed by voters in November 2012 and there have been ongoing discussions about extending these temporary tax increases, which are set to fully expire in 2018. In recent weeks two ballot measures have been proposed to extend elements of Proposition 30—one of which would be permanent. Fifty-five percent of Californians and 49 percent of likely voters are in favor of extending the Proposition 30 tax increases. Since we first asked this question in December 2014, findings have been similar among both all adults and likely voters. Currently, Democrats (64%) are more likely than independents (49%) and nearly twice as likely as Republicans (33%) to be in favor. Support is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (63%) and lowest in the Central Valley (50%). Support declines as age increases and is similar across income groups. As we have found in the past, support declines when those who are in favor of extending the tax increases are asked if they support making them permanent (38% adults, 32% likely voters).

“As you may know, voters passed Proposition 30 in November 2012. It increased taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by one quarter cent for four years, to fund schools and guarantee public safety realignment funding. Do you favor or oppose extending the Proposition 30 tax increases which are set to fully expire in 2018? (If favor: And would you favor or oppose making the Proposition 30 tax increases permanent?)”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor (total)	55%	64%	33%	49%	49%
<i>Favor, even if it is permanent</i>	38	45	19	31	32
<i>Favor, but oppose if it is permanent</i>	17	19	14	18	17
Oppose	37	29	60	46	46
Don't know	7	6	6	5	6

There have also been discussions in Sacramento about using the citizens' initiative process to make changes to Proposition 13's property tax limits. When asked about having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value, half of adults (51%) and 55 percent of likely voters are in favor of this proposal. Since we first asked this question in January 2012, between 50 and 60 percent of adults and likely voters have supported this change to Proposition 13. Today, a majority of Democrats (65%) and independents (56%) favor this proposal, while a majority of Republicans (55%) oppose it.

“Under Proposition 13, residential and commercial property taxes are both strictly limited. What do you think about having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	51%	65%	36%	56%	55%
Oppose	42	28	55	40	39
Don't know	7	7	9	4	6

Two more tax proposals that have been discussed are increasing taxes on the purchase of cigarettes and taxing the extraction of oil and natural gas in California. Sixty-nine percent of adults and 66 percent of likely voters—and majorities across parties—favor increasing taxes on cigarettes. Fewer than half favor a tax on the extraction of oil and natural gas (42% adults, 49% likely voters). Support for this proposal is above 50 percent only among Democrats (58%), liberals (59%), San Francisco Bay Area residents (53%), Asians (52%), college graduates (58%), and those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more (57%).

PUBLIC EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Today, sixty-eight percent of Californians say the amount of money spent on public employee pension or retirement systems is a big problem (33%) or somewhat of problem (35%) for state and local government budgets. This marks a record low saying this issue is a problem (72% January 2005, 76% January 2010, 79% March 2011, 83% December 2011, 82% January 2014, 68% today). While half of Republicans (50%) say the amount of money being spent on pensions is a big problem, fewer independents (36%) and Democrats (27%) say the same.

A citizens' initiative may be headed for the ballot involving voter approval for public employee pensions. When Californians were asked who they prefer to make decisions on the retirement benefits offered to public employees, a strong majority of Californians (75%) and likely voters (70%) say that voters should make some of the decisions at the ballot box. Fewer than one in four adults (20%) and likely voters (24%) say the state and local governments should make all of the decisions. Strong majorities across parties say that California voters should make some of the decisions, with Republicans the most likely to hold this view (79%). Across regions and demographic groups, at least two in three Californians say voters should make some of the decisions when it comes to retirement benefits offered to public employees.

“When it comes to the retirement benefits offered to public employees, would you prefer that the state and local governments make all of the decisions, or that California voters make some of the decisions at the ballot box?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
State and local governments make all of the decisions	20%	25%	16%	18%	24%
California voters make some of the decisions	75	68	79	77	70
Don't know	6	6	5	5	6

One proposed change to the current public employee pension system is for new employees to be placed in a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan instead of a defined benefits system. About two in three Californians (67%) and likely voters (70%) favor changing the pension system for new public employees to a defined contribution system, while one in five (20% each) oppose it. At least six in 10 Californians have favored this idea since we began asking this question in 2005. While strong majorities across parties support this plan, Republicans (74%) are more likely than Democrats (65%) to favor this proposal. More than six in 10 Californians across all regions and demographic groups favor changing the pension system for new public employees from a defined benefits to a defined contribution system. Nonetheless, Californians age 55 and older (61%) are somewhat less likely to favor this proposal than Californians age 18 to 34 (70%). Across income groups, those with a household income under \$40,000 (64%) are somewhat less likely to favor this proposal than Californians with a household income of \$80,000 or more (74%). Among those who say the public employee pensions are a big problem, 79 percent favor changing the system for new employees to a defined contribution system.

“Would you favor or oppose changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	67%	65%	74%	69%	70%
Oppose	20	23	15	19	20
Don't know	14	13	11	12	10

CORRECTIONS AND PUBLIC SAFETY

Nearly a year ago, California voters passed Proposition 47, which reclassified certain drug and property offenses from felonies to misdemeanors. Since the passage of Proposition 47, how do Californians view crime in the state? Today, half of Californians (52%) say that crime is a big problem in California. A further 38 percent say that it is somewhat of a problem. Opinions today are similar to those in October 2014 (50% big problem), though there has been a notable decrease in the share of Californians who say crime is a big problem since we first asked this question in May 1998 (66%). Regionally, residents in the Inland Empire (67%) are the most likely to view crime as a big problem while those in the San Francisco Bay Area (44%) are the least likely to say the same. There are partisan differences: Republicans (59%) are more likely than Democrats (47%) and independents (43%) to say crime is a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (76%) and Latinos (63%) are more likely than whites (45%) or Asians (34%) to say crime is a big problem. Women (59%) are more likely than men (45%) to hold this view. Californians age 55 and older (61%) are much more likely than Californians age 18 to 34 (41%) to view crime as a big problem. Californians with household incomes of less than \$40,000 (61%) are more likely to say that crime is a big problem than those with higher incomes (45% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 43% \$80,000 or more).

**“In your opinion, how much of a problem is crime in California today?
Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Big problem	52%	57%	44%	52%	48%	67%	50%
Somewhat of a problem	38	35	46	37	37	25	40
Not much of a problem	9	7	9	11	14	5	9
Don't know	1	–	1	1	–	3	1

Four years after the beginning of California’s corrections realignment, which shifted some lower-risk offenders from state prisons to county jails, how much confidence do Californians have in their local government’s ability to take on these responsibilities? Californians are divided: 51 percent say they are very (12%) or somewhat confident (39%), and 46 percent say they are not too confident (24%) or not at all confident (22%). Confidence was similar last October (46%) and four years ago (48% September 2011). Today, Democrats (56%) are more likely than independents (40%) and Republicans (37%) to say they are very or somewhat confident that their local government is able to take on this responsibility. Confidence is highest in Los Angeles (54%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (46%). Californians age 18 to 34 (63%) are much more likely to have confidence in their local government on this issue than those age 55 or older (42%).

“As you may know, state funding is being provided to shift some of the lower-risk inmates from state prisons to county jails to reduce prison overcrowding and lower state costs. How confident are you that your local government is able to take on this responsibility?”

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Very confident	12%	8%	9%	13%	17%	10%	9%
Somewhat confident	39	40	40	41	35	36	34
Not too confident	24	25	29	23	21	19	31
Not at all confident	22	24	20	19	25	29	23
Don't know	3	3	1	3	2	7	2

HIGHER EDUCATION

Most Californians say that the state’s public higher education system is very (80%) or somewhat (15%) important to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state. Since we began asking this question in 2007, more than seven in 10 Californians have said the state’s public higher education system is very important. Strong majorities across parties see the public higher education system as very important (63% Republicans, 80% independents, 88% Democrats). More than seven in 10 Californians across regions and demographic groups say public higher education is very important for the future of the state.

PPIC research has estimated that the state will have a shortage of 1 million college-educated workers by 2025. Today, half of Californians (50%) think that if current trends continue the state will not have enough college-educated residents for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand in 20 years. Twenty-nine percent of Californians say there will be just enough and 15 percent say there will be more than enough college-educated residents in the state. Pluralities of Californians have said there will be a shortage in periodic surveys since we first asked this question in October 2007. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (61%) are the most likely to say there will not be enough college-educated residents, followed by whites (52%), Latinos (46%), and Asians (45%). Californians with college degrees (56%) are more likely than those with a high school education or less (46%) to say there will be a shortage of college-educated workers.

“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	Education			Race/Ethnicity			
		High school or less	Some college	College graduates	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Not enough	50%	46%	50%	56%	45%	61%	46%	52%
Just enough	29	30	32	24	27	25	32	28
More than enough	15	16	15	15	23	10	14	15
Don’t know	6	8	3	5	5	3	7	4

Given their views on a possible future shortage of college-educated workers, how confident are Californians in the state government’s ability to plan for the future of California’s public higher education system? Today, 55 percent of Californians express at least some confidence in the state’s ability to plan for the future of the public higher education system. Forty-two percent of Californians express very little (29%) or no confidence (13%). Confidence today is near the record high level of 60 percent in December 2014. Across parties, Democrats (62%) are more likely than independents (53%) and far more likely than Republicans (40%) to express confidence in the state’s ability to handle this issue. Across racial/ethnic groups, Asians (77%) are the most likely to express confidence, while whites (49%) are the least likely.

“How much confidence do you have in the state government’s ability to plan for the future of California’s public higher education system—a great deal, only some, very little, or none?”

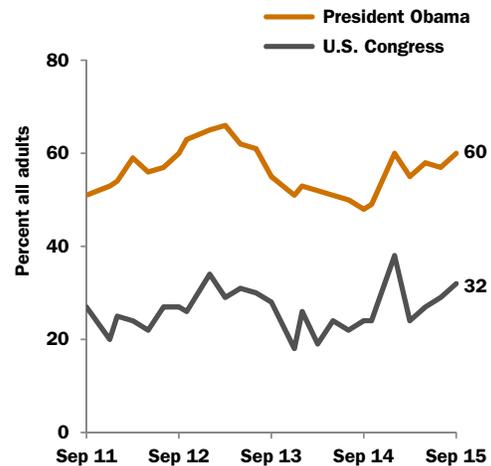
	All adults	Education			Race/Ethnicity			
		High school or less	Some college	College graduates	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
A great deal	13%	18%	10%	9%	16%	16%	18%	8%
Only some	42	35	45	49	61	41	40	41
Very little	29	34	26	27	18	20	32	32
None	13	11	16	13	5	22	7	17
Don’t know	2	3	2	2	–	1	3	3

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

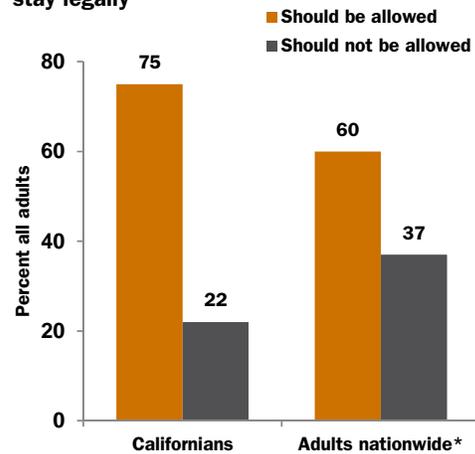
KEY FINDINGS

- President Obama's approval rating is 60 percent. It has been steady this year and is higher than a year ago. While half of adults approve of their own representative to the U.S. House, only a third approve of the U.S. Congress overall. *(page 15)*
- Senator Feinstein has the approval of 52 percent of California adults, while Senator Boxer has the approval of 49 percent. *(page 16)*
- Half of Californians say the country is headed in the wrong direction and 45 percent expect bad financial times in the U.S. over the next 12 months. *(page 17)*
- More than six in 10 Californians across parties say that the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion. *(page 18)*
- Sixty-five percent of Californians say immigrants are a benefit to the state, and three in four say that current undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay if they pay a fine and meet other requirements. *(page 19)*
- Opinions on gun laws are sharply split among partisans, with 82 percent of Democrats in favor of stricter laws, in contrast to 54 percent of independents and 36 percent of Republicans. *(page 20)*
- More than six in 10 Californians say that poverty is a big problem in our society. But there is a partisan divide over whether government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor. *(page 21)*

Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

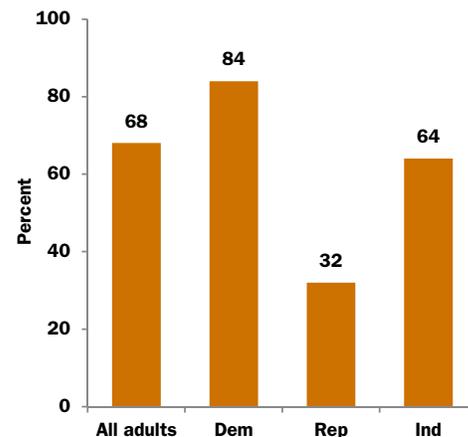


Allow current undocumented immigrants to stay legally



*ABC News/Washington Post Poll, July 2015

Belief that government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and poor



APPROVAL RATINGS OF FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

President Obama’s approval rating today stands at 60 percent for California adults and 53 percent for likely voters. The president’s current approval rating is similar to findings in our July poll (57% adults, 51% likely voters) and higher than in our September 2014 poll (48% adults, 46% likely voters). The president’s approval rating today is 85 percent among Democrats, 49 percent among independents, and 17 percent among Republicans. Majorities across regions approve of the president (66% Los Angeles, 66% San Francisco Bay Area, 58% Orange/San Diego, 55% Inland Empire, 54% Central Valley). Solid majorities of blacks (84%), Latinos (69%), and Asians (61%) approve; half of whites (50%) do so. Men (58%), women (62%), and majorities across age, education, and income groups approve of the president. In a CNN/ORC national poll in September, 44 percent of adults approved of President Obama.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	60%	85%	17%	49%	53%
Disapprove	36	12	81	47	44
Don’t know	4	4	2	4	3

The approval rating of the U.S. Congress stands at 32 percent for California adults and 17 percent of likely voters. Approval of Congress was similar in our July poll (29% adults, 17% likely voters). In September 2014, approval was lower for adults and similar for likely voters (24% adults, 16% likely voters). Today, similar shares of Democrats (22%), Republicans (22%), and independents (26%) approve of Congress. The approval ratings of Congress fall within a narrow range across the state’s regions (36% Los Angeles, 33% Orange/San Diego, 31% Central Valley, 31% San Francisco Bay Area, 29% Inland Empire). Latinos (45%) give Congress higher approval ratings than Asians (34%), blacks (26%) and whites (21%) do. Men (33%) and women (30%) give similar approval ratings. In a Gallup national poll in August, 14 percent of adults approved of Congress.

In contrast, 51 percent of California adults and likely voters approve of their own representative to the U.S. House of Representatives. Approval ratings were similar in our January poll (56% adults, 51% likely voters) and in our October 2014 poll (48% adults, 47% likely voters). Today, Democrats (60%) and independents (52%) are much more likely than Republicans (37%) to express approval. Approval is higher in the San Francisco Bay Area (60%) than elsewhere (51% Orange/San Diego, 49% Los Angeles, 47% Inland Empire, 44% Central Valley). Majorities of Latinos (55%) and Asians (54%) and almost half of whites (49%) and blacks (48%) express approval. Half of men (52%) and women (50%) say they approve of their own representative to the U.S. House.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way...?”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>the U.S. Congress is handling its job</i>	Approve	32%	22%	22%	26%	17%
	Disapprove	62	73	72	67	79
	Don’t know	7	6	6	7	4
<i>your own representative to the U.S. House of Representatives is handling his or her job</i>	Approve	51	60	37	52	51
	Disapprove	34	31	49	35	38
	Don’t know	15	9	14	13	11

APPROVAL RATINGS OF CALIFORNIA’S U.S. SENATORS

Senator Dianne Feinstein’s approval rating is 52 percent for California adults and 53 percent for likely voters. Approval was similar in January (54% adults, 54% likely voters) and in September 2014 (47% adults, 55% likely voters). Today, 76 percent of Democrats approve of Senator Feinstein, compared to 42 percent of independents and 26 percent of Republicans. Senator Feinstein’s approval is higher in Los Angeles (58%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) than elsewhere (51% Orange/San Diego, 44% Inland Empire, 43% Central Valley). Blacks (68%) are more likely than Asians (56%), Latinos (54%), or whites (48%) to approve. Men (51%) and women (52%) express similar approval of Senator Feinstein.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		52%	30%	18%
All likely voters		53	37	9
Party	Democrats	76	14	11
	Republicans	26	66	8
	Independents	42	40	18
Region	Central Valley	43	36	20
	San Francisco Bay Area	57	26	18
	Los Angeles	58	25	17
	Orange/San Diego	51	31	18
	Inland Empire	44	36	19

Senator Barbara Boxer’s approval rating is 49 percent for California adults and 47 percent for likely voters. Approval ratings were also around 50 percent in our January poll (53% adults, 51% likely voters) and lower in our September 2014 poll (41% adults, 45% likely voters). Today, 73 percent of Democrats, 44 percent of independents, and 17 percent of Republicans approve. Approval is higher in the San Francisco Bay Area (59%) than in other regions. Senator Boxer’s approval is higher among blacks (61%), Asians (56%), and Latinos (56%) than whites (43%). Men (48%) and women (51%) express similar views.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		49%	33%	18%
All likely voters		47	43	9
Party	Democrats	73	15	11
	Republicans	17	73	10
	Independents	44	40	16
Region	Central Valley	39	40	21
	San Francisco Bay Area	59	26	15
	Los Angeles	51	28	21
	Orange/San Diego	48	32	20
	Inland Empire	46	44	10

NATIONAL OUTLOOK

Majorities of Californians (51%) and likely voters (61%) say things in the United States are going in the wrong direction. The current level of negative perceptions for the nation is similar to findings in our March poll (54% adults, 61% likely voters) and our March 2014 poll (56% adults, 61% likely voters). Today, solid majorities of Republicans (77%) and independents (60%) think the nation is headed the wrong way, compared to fewer than half of Democrats (44%). Across regions, Inland Empire (62%) and Central Valley (59%) residents are the most likely to say the nation is going in the wrong direction. Whites (60%) are more likely than blacks (46%), Latinos (43%), or Asians (42%) to hold this negative view.

“Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”

	Right direction	Wrong direction	Don't know
All adults	44%	51%	5%
All likely voters	35	61	4
Party	Democrats	44	4
	Republicans	77	5
	Independents	60	2
Region	Central Valley	59	5
	San Francisco Bay Area	50	4
	Los Angeles	44	7
	Orange/San Diego	48	6
	Inland Empire	62	2

When asked about national economic conditions during the next 12 months, about half of California adults (45%) and likely voters (50%) expect bad times financially. Today, pessimism is higher than in our March poll among likely voters (41% adults, 42% likely voters) but it was similar in March 2014 (48% adults, 51% likely voters). More Republicans (61%) and independents (51%) than Democrats (40%) expect bad times. Across regions, Central Valley (49%) and Orange/San Diego (49%) residents are the most pessimistic about the U.S. economy. More whites (49%) and blacks (47%) than Asians (40%) and Latinos (39%) expect bad times.

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

	Good times	Bad times	Don't know
All adults	48%	45%	7%
All likely voters	43	50	7
Party	Democrats	40	6
	Republicans	61	8
	Independents	51	5
Region	Central Valley	49	8
	San Francisco Bay Area	45	4
	Los Angeles	41	8
	Orange/San Diego	49	6
	Inland Empire	44	10

IMMIGRATION

Candidates for the 2016 presidential nomination have been discussing immigration, including options for the country’s undocumented immigrant population. In California, a solid majority of adults (65%) say that immigrants are a benefit to the state because of their hard work and job skills. In periodic surveys since 2000, a majority have called immigrants a benefit to California. Notably, at least six in 10 have held this opinion since January 2013. Today, majorities of Democrats (72%) and independents (61%) say immigrants are a benefit, while 35 percent of Republicans hold this view. Across regions, solid majorities of residents in Los Angeles (72%), the San Francisco Bay Area (68%), Orange/San Diego (62%), and the Central Valley (61%) and a majority of Inland Empire residents (54%) say immigrants are a benefit. Across racial/ethnic groups, strong majorities of Latinos (86%) and Asians (69%) say immigrants are a benefit, while about half of blacks (53%) and whites (49%) hold this view.

“Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view—even if neither is exactly right. Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills; or immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services.”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Immigrants are a benefit to California	65%	72%	35%	61%	69%	53%	86%	49%
Immigrants are a burden to California	28	22	57	31	17	42	10	43
Don't know	7	6	8	8	14	4	4	8

When asked about undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States, 75 percent of Californians say they should be allowed to live and work here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements, and 22 percent say they should not. Adults nationwide are less likely than Californians in our survey to say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay legally (60% should be allowed, 37% should not), according to a July ABC News/Washington Post poll. In California, overwhelming majorities of Democrats (83%) and independents (70%) and a majority of Republicans (53%) say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay. Solid majorities across racial/ethnic groups think undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay, with Latinos (92%) most likely to have this opinion. More than six in 10 across regions and age, education, and income groups say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay.

Ninety percent of Californians who think immigrants are a benefit to the state also say that undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay legally, while 9 percent say they should not. Among those who call immigrants a burden, opinion on whether undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay is more divided: 43 percent say they should be allowed and 53 percent say they should not.

“Do you think undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States should or should not be allowed to live and work here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Should be allowed	75%	83%	53%	70%	76%	68%	92%	63%
Should not be allowed	22	15	43	26	18	30	7	32
Don't know	3	2	3	4	6	1	1	4

ABORTION

Nearly seven in 10 California adults (69%) say that the government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion, while about three in ten (28%) say the government should pass more laws restricting its availability. In periodic surveys since 2000, more than six in 10 Californians have said that the government should not interfere with access to abortion. Today, solid majorities of Democrats (80%), and independents (74%), and Republicans (62%), say the government should not interfere with access. Majorities of men and women and majorities across regional, age, income, education, and racial/ethnic groups share this view. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (56%) are least likely to say the government should not interfere with access (69% Asians, 77% whites, 87% blacks).

Among Californians with no religious affiliation, over nine in 10 (92%) say the government should not interfere with access, and majorities of mainline Protestants (75%) and Catholics (60%) say the same. Among the religiously affiliated, Evangelical Protestants (48%) are most likely to favor more laws restricting access. Those who attend religious services more frequently are also more likely to favor restrictions than those who attend services less frequently (45% of those who attend once or more per week, 33% once or twice per month, 19% a few times a year/seldom, 12% never).

“Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right. The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion; or the government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion.”

	All adults	Party			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Evangelical Protestants	Mainline Protestants	Catholics	No religion
Pass more laws	28%	16%	34%	24%	48%	20%	34%	7%
Not interfere with access	69	80	62	74	51	75	60	92
Don’t know	4	4	4	3	1	5	5	1

Half of Californians say that abortion should be legal either under any circumstances (31%) or in most circumstances (20%), while another 32 percent say that it should be legal only in a few circumstances. Fifteen percent of Californians say that abortion should be illegal in all circumstances. In a May Gallup poll, 42 percent of adults nationwide said abortion should be legal either under any circumstances (29%) or in most circumstances (13%, 36% legal in a few, 19% illegal in all).

Democrats (42%) and independents (36%) are most likely to say that abortion should be legal under any circumstances, while a plurality of Republicans say that abortion should be legal in only a few circumstances (44%). Evangelical Protestants (43%) and Catholics (38%) are most likely to say that abortion should be legal only in a few circumstances, while mainline Protestants (36%) and those with no religion (48%) are most likely to say that abortion should be legal under any circumstances.

“Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances? (If legal under certain circumstances: Do you think abortion should be legal in most circumstances or only in a few circumstances?)”

	All adults	Party			Religion			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Evangelical Protestants	Mainline Protestants	Catholics	No religion
Legal under any circumstances	31%	42%	20%	36%	17%	36%	22%	48%
Legal in most circumstances	20	24	20	24	15	22	15	27
Legal only in a few circumstances	32	23	44	27	43	32	38	20
Illegal in all circumstances	15	9	16	9	24	8	22	5
Don’t know	2	2	1	3	1	3	3	–

POVERTY AND INCOME INEQUALITY

As presidential candidates from both parties continue to discuss the issue of poverty and income inequality, an overwhelming majority of Californians (92%) believe that poverty is either a big problem (62%) or somewhat of a problem (30%) in our society today. Findings are similar to those in May 2014 when 93 percent of Californians said poverty was either a big problem (68%) or somewhat of a problem (25%). Across all regions, parties, and demographic groups, overwhelming majorities of Californians view poverty as at least somewhat of a problem. However, there are differences when assessing the severity of the problem. Across parties, Democrats (74%) are more likely than independents (64%) or Republicans (57%) to say poverty is a big problem. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (80%) are the most likely to say that poverty is a big problem while Asians (40%) are the least likely to do so. Regionally, those in the Inland Empire (75%) are the most likely to say it is a big problem, followed by residents in the Central Valley (72%), Los Angeles (63%), the San Francisco Bay Area (57%), and Orange/San Diego (53%). Women are more likely than men (69% to 55%) to view poverty as a big problem in our society.

“How big a problem is poverty in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Big problem	62%	63%	61%	61%	40%	80%	59%	69%
Somewhat of a problem	30	28	33	33	50	15	32	25
Not much of a problem	6	7	5	6	7	4	8	4
Don't know	2	2	1	–	3	1	1	2

A solid majority of Californians (68%) say that government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor, while 29 percent say this is not something the government should be doing. Six in 10 likely voters (60%) say the government should do more, while 37 say this is something government should not be doing. Since March of this year, there has been a slight increase in the share of Californians who say the government should do more (from 61% to 68%). While solid majorities of Democrats (84%) and independents (64%) today say that government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor, only 32 percent of Republicans say the government should do so. Californians with annual household incomes under \$40,000 (74%) are more likely than those with higher income (62% \$40,000 to \$80,000, 61% \$80,000 or more) to say the government should do more. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (82%) and Latinos (80%) are the most likely to say that the government should do more while whites (56%) are the least likely to do so. Renters (74%) are more likely than homeowners (61%), and women (73%) are more likely than men (62%) to say that the government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor. The likelihood of saying government should do more decreases as age increases.

“Should the government do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in this country, or is this something the government should not be doing?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Government should do more	68%	74%	62%	61%	70%	82%	80%	56%
Government should not be doing	29	21	33	38	25	14	16	40
Don't know	4	5	5	2	5	4	4	3

GUN LAWS

With recent high-profile shooting incidents and the persistence of gun violence as a national issue, how do Californians feel about gun ownership rights and gun laws? More than half of Californians (57%) say that controlling gun ownership is more important than protecting the right of Americans to own guns, while 40 percent of Californians say protecting the rights of gun owners is more important. Our findings were similar when we asked this question in March 2013 (56% control gun ownership, 41% protect gun owner rights). There are sharp partisan differences, with three in four Republicans (74%) and more than half of independents (52%) saying protecting the right of Americans to own guns is more important, compared to one in four Democrats (26%). There are also differences across regions: residents of Los Angeles (63%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (61%) are most likely to say controlling gun ownership is more important, followed by residents of Orange/San Diego (56%), the Inland Empire (55%), and the Central Valley (47%). Latinos (70%) and Asians (67%) are more likely than blacks (59%) and whites (46%) to say controlling gun ownership is more important. Women (63%) are much more likely than men (50%) to say that controlling gun ownership is more important. Fifty-eight percent of adults with a gun, rifle, or pistol in their home say protecting the right to own guns is more important.

“What do you think is more important—to protect the right of Americans to own guns, or to control gun ownership?”

	All adults	Party			Have gun, rifle, or pistol in home	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Protect the right to own guns	40%	26%	74%	52%	58%	33%
Control gun ownership	57	71	24	46	38	64
Don't know	3	3	3	2	4	3

A solid majority (65%) of Californians say that laws covering the sale of guns should be more strict than they are now. Californians are more likely than adults nationwide (52%) to favor stricter laws, according to an August CBS News poll. In California, an overwhelming majority of Democrats (82%) and a majority of independents (54%) favor stricter gun laws, while a plurality of Republicans (44%) say gun laws should be kept as they are now. Majorities in all regions favor stricter gun laws, with residents of Los Angeles (74%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (71%) most likely to favor stricter gun laws. Overwhelming majorities of Latinos (75%), blacks (74%), and Asians (70%), and a majority of whites (54%) favor stricter laws. Women (75%) are far more likely than men (55%) to favor stricter gun laws.

Among Californians who say that protecting the right to own guns is more important than controlling gun ownership, about three quarters favor either keeping laws as they are now (43%) or making them more strict (34%); 22 percent favor making gun laws less strict. Among adults who have a gun, rifle, or pistol in their home, 83 percent favor keeping laws the same (38%) or making them more strict (45%).

“In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?”

	All adults	Party			Have gun, rifle, or pistol in home	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
More strict	65%	82%	36%	54%	45%	72%
Less strict	10	4	19	13	15	8
Kept as they are now	23	11	44	30	38	18
Don't know	2	2	1	3	2	1

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 associate survey director Dean Bonner and survey research associate David Kordus, co-project managers for this survey, and survey research associate Lunna Lopes. The *Californians and Their Government* series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC's survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,708 California adult residents, including 1,023 interviewed on landline telephones and 685 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from September 13–22, 2015.

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 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 new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

Abt SRBI uses the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011–2013 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from 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. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt SRBI used 2013 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS—and 2014 estimates for the West Census Region in the latest NHIS report. The estimates for California were then compared 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 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 ± 3.6 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,708 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.6 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,391 registered voters, the sampling error is ± 3.9 percent; for the 1,066 likely voters, it is ± 4.4 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 five 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, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange 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 populous areas are not large enough to report separately. In several places, we refer to coastal and inland counties. The coastal region refers to the counties along the California coast from Del Norte County to San Diego County and includes all of the San Francisco Bay Area counties. All other counties are included in the inland region.

We present specific results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 43 percent of the state’s adult population, and also 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 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic blacks, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as 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 present specific results for Evangelical Protestants, mainline Protestants, Catholics, and those with no religious affiliation. Results for other religious affiliations 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 other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to voter registration survey questions, previous election participation, 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, Gallup, CBS News, and CNN/ORC. 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

September 13–22, 2015

1,708 California Adult Residents:
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 3.6\%$ 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]
 - 32% water, drought
 - 20 jobs, economy
 - 6 immigration, illegal immigration
 - 5 education, schools, teachers
 - 5 environment, pollution, global warming
 - 4 crime, gangs, drugs
 - 4 state budget, deficit, taxes
 - 3 housing costs, availability
 - 2 government in general
 - 2 infrastructure
 - 13 other (*specify*)
 - 4 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?
 - 52% approve
 - 29 disapprove
 - 19 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?
 - 45% approve
 - 38 disapprove
 - 17 don't know
4. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job that the state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time?
 - 47% approve
 - 33 disapprove
 - 20 don't know
5. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
 - 48% right direction
 - 46 wrong direction
 - 6 don't know
6. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?
 - 48% good times
 - 42 bad times
 - 9 don't know

7. As you may know, voters passed Proposition 30 in November 2012. It increased taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by one quarter cent for four years, to fund schools and guarantee public safety realignment funding. Do you favor or oppose extending the Proposition 30 tax increases which are set to fully expire in 2018 (**if favor, ask:** And would you favor or oppose making the Proposition 30 tax increases permanent?)

- 38% favor, even if it is permanent
- 17 favor, but oppose if it is permanent
- 37 oppose
- 7 don't know

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

[rotate questions 8 and 9]

8. How about taxing the extraction of oil and natural gas in California?

- 42% favor
- 52 oppose
- 6 don't know

9. How about increasing state taxes on the purchase of cigarettes?

- 69% favor
- 29 oppose
- 2 don't know

10. Under Proposition 13, residential and commercial property taxes are both strictly limited. What do you think about having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 51% favor
- 42 oppose
- 7 don't know

11. On another topic, would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?

- 70% big problem
- 19 somewhat of a problem
- 10 not much of a problem
- 1 don't know

12. Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?

- 8% too much
- 41 the right amount
- 48 not enough
- 4 don't know

Changing topics,

13. At this time, how much of a problem for state and local government budgets is the amount of money that is being spent on their public employee pension or retirement systems? Is this a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in California today?

- 33% big problem
- 35 somewhat of a problem
- 18 not a problem
- 14 don't know

14. When it comes to the retirement benefits offered to public employees, would you prefer—**[rotate]** (1) that the state and local governments make all of the decisions, **[or]** (2) that California voters make some of the decisions at the ballot box?

- 20% state and local governments make all of the decisions
- 75 California voters make some of the decisions
- 6 don't know

14a. Would you favor or oppose changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan?

- 67% favor
- 20 oppose
- 14 don't know

On another topic,

15. In general, how important is California's public higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 80% very important
- 15 somewhat important
- 2 not too important
- 2 not at all important
- 1 don't know

16. 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?

- 15% more than enough
- 50 not enough
- 29 just enough
- 6 don't know

17. How much confidence do you have in the state government's ability to plan for the future of California's public higher education system—a great deal, only some, very little, or none?

- 13% a great deal
- 42 only some
- 29 very little
- 13 none
- 2 don't know

Next,

18. In your opinion, how much of a problem is crime in California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

- 52% big problem
- 38 somewhat of a problem
- 9 not much of a problem
- 1 don't know

19. As you may know, state funding is being provided to shift some of the lower-risk inmates from state prisons to county jails to reduce prison overcrowding and lower state costs. How confident are you that your local government is able to take on this responsibility? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

- 12% very confident
- 39 somewhat confident
- 24 not too confident
- 22 not at all confident
- 3 don't know

Changing topics,

20. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

- 60% approve
- 36 disapprove
- 4 don't know

[rotate questions 21 and 22]

21. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. senator?

- 52% approve
- 30 disapprove
- 18 don't know

22. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. senator?

- 49% approve
- 33 disapprove
- 18 don't know

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

- 32% approve
- 62 disapprove
- 7 don't know

24. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way your own representative to the U.S. House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job?

- 51% approve
- 34 disapprove
- 15 don't know

25. Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

- 44% right direction
- 51 wrong direction
- 5 don't know

26. Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?

- 48% good times
- 45 bad times
- 7 don't know

27. On another topic, please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view—even if neither is exactly right. **[rotate]** (1) Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills **[or]** (2) Immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services.

- 65% immigrants are a benefit to California
- 28 immigrants are a burden to California
- 7 don't know

28. Do you think undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States should or should not be allowed to live and work here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?

- 75% should be allowed to live and work here legally
- 22 should not be allowed to live and work here legally
- 3 don't know

On another topic,

29. Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right **[rotate]** (1) The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion; **[or]** (2) the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion.

- 28% government should pass more laws
- 69 government should not interfere with access
- 4 don't know

30. Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances? **(If legal under certain circumstances, ask: Do you think abortion should be legal in most circumstances or only in a few circumstances?)**

- 31% legal under any circumstances
- 20 legal under most circumstances
- 32 legal only in a few circumstances
- 15 illegal in all circumstances
- 2 don't know

Changing topics,

31. In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?

- 65% more strict
- 10 less strict
- 23 kept as they are now
- 2 don't know

32. What do you think is more important—
[rotate] (1) to protect the right of Americans to own guns, *[or]* (2) to control gun ownership?
- 40% protect the right of Americans to own guns
 - 57 control gun ownership
 - 3 don't know

On another topic,

33. How big a problem is poverty in our society today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?
- 62% big problem
 - 30 somewhat of a problem
 - 6 not much of a problem
 - 2 don't know
34. Should the government do more to reduce the gap between the rich and poor in this country, or is this something the government should not be doing?
- 68% should do more
 - 29 should not be doing
 - 4 don't know

- 34a. If you were asked to use one of these commonly used names for the social classes, which would you say you belong in? The upper class, upper-middle class, middle class, lower-middle class, or lower class?
- 3% upper class
 - 13 upper-middle class
 - 42 middle class
 - 29 lower-middle class
 - 11 lower class
 - 2 don't know

35. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?
- 66% yes *[ask q35a]*
 - 34 no *[skip to q36b]*

- 35a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?
- 45% Democrat *[ask q36]*
 - 29 Republican *[ask q36a]*
 - 1 another party (specify) *[skip to q37]*
 - 25 independent *[ask q36b]*

36. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?
- 56% strong
 - 42 not very strong
 - 2 don't know

[skip to q37]

- 36a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?
- 51% strong
 - 46 not very strong
 - 3 don't know

[skip to q37]

- 36b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?
- 21% Republican Party
 - 47 Democratic Party
 - 21 neither (volunteered)
 - 10 don't know

37. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: *[read list, rotate order top to bottom]*
- 11% very liberal
 - 21 somewhat liberal
 - 27 middle-of-the-road
 - 25 somewhat conservative
 - 13 very conservative
 - 4 don't know

38. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?
- 21% great deal
 - 36 fair amount
 - 31 only a little
 - 11 none
 - 1 don't know

[d1–d16: demographic questions]

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The institute's research focuses on the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including economic development, education, environment and resources, governance, population, public finance, and social and health policy.

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Donna Lucas is Chair of the Board of Directors.

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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