

California's Likely Voters

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➤ **Eight in ten are registered to vote; independent registration continues to increase.**

As of May 2018, 19 million of California's 25.1 million eligible adults were registered to vote. At 75.7% of eligible adults, this is a slight increase from the registration rate in 2014 (73.3%), the year of the last gubernatorial election. The share of registered voters who are Democrats (44.4%) is up slightly from 2014 (43.4%), while the share of Republicans (25.1%) has declined since 2014 (28.4%). At the same time, the share of voters who say they are independent (also known as "decline to state" or "no party preference") has been increasing and is now 25.5%, up from 21.2% in 2014.

➤ **Likely voters and unregistered adults lean Democratic and are ideologically mixed.**

Among likely voters in our surveys over the past year, 47% are Democrats, 28% are Republicans, 21% are independents, and 4% are registered with other parties. Of those we consider infrequent voters, 41% are Democrats, 32% are independents, 21% are Republicans, and 5% are registered with other parties. Among independent likely voters, 42% lean toward the Democratic Party, compared to 29% who lean toward the Republican Party and 29% who volunteer that they lean toward neither major party or are unsure. Among unregistered adults, 47% lean toward the Democratic Party and 18% toward the Republican Party; 36% lean toward neither party or are unsure. Ideologically, 38% of likely voters are politically liberal, 28% are moderate, and 34% are conservative. Among infrequent voters, 35% consider themselves liberal, 33% consider themselves moderate, and 32% consider themselves conservative. Unregistered adults are also ideologically mixed: 35% are conservative, 33% are liberal, and 32% are moderate.

➤ **Likely voters are disproportionately white.**

Whites make up only 42% of California's adult population but 59% of the state's likely voters. In contrast, Latinos comprise 34% of the adult population but just 21% of likely voters. Asian Americans make up 15% of adults and 11% of likely voters, while 6% of both adults and likely voters are African American. "Other race" and multiracial adults make up 3% of the adult population and 3% of likely voters. Four in ten (39%) infrequent voters are white, and 30% are Latino. Nearly six in ten unregistered adults are Latino (56%); fewer are white (22%), Asian American (18%), or African American (3%).

➤ **Likely voters tend to be older, more educated and affluent, homeowners, and US-born.**

Californians ages 55 and older make up 32% of the state's adult population but constitute 48% of likely voters. Young adults (ages 18 to 34) make up 33% of adults but only 18% of likely voters, while adults ages 35 to 54 are proportionally represented. Eight in ten likely voters either have some college education (42%) or are college graduates (39%); 19% have no college education. Forty-four percent of likely voters have annual household incomes of \$80,000 or more, while 27% earn between \$40,000 and \$80,000 and 29% earn \$40,000 or less. A strong majority of likely voters (67%) are homeowners, while one-third (33%) are renters. In contrast, 70% of unregistered adults and 63% of infrequent voters are renters. Eighty-three percent of likely voters were born in the United States (17% are immigrants). Women (54%) and men (46%) make up similar shares of California's likely voters.

➤ **The regional distribution of likely voters matches the state's adult population.**

The share of likely voters in each region mirrors the region's share of the state's overall adult population: Los Angeles County (26% of adults, 26% of likely voters), the San Francisco Bay Area (20% of adults, 23% of likely voters), Orange/San Diego Counties (17% of adults, 17% of likely voters), the Central Valley (17% of adults, 16% of likely voters), and the Inland Empire (11% of adults, 9% of likely voters). The largest shares of infrequent voters (29%) and unregistered adults (25%) live in Los Angeles County.



California's likely voters

		Registered voters		Not registered
		Likely voters	Infrequent voters	
Party registration	Democratic	47%	41%	–
	Republican	28	21	–
	Independent	21	32	–
	Other	4	5	–
Major party leanings among independents and those not registered	Democratic Party	42	42	47%
	Republican Party	29	23	18
	Neither/Don't know	29	34	36
Political ideology	Liberal	38	35	33
	Moderate	28	33	32
	Conservative	34	32	35
Race/Ethnicity	African American	6	9	3
	Asian American	11	18	18
	Latino	21	30	56
	White	59	39	22
	Other/Multiracial	3	4	1
Region	Central Valley	16	19	17
	Inland Empire	9	11	13
	Los Angeles County	26	29	25
	Orange/San Diego Counties	17	16	17
	San Francisco Bay Area	23	17	19
	Other	9	8	7
Gender	Men	46	51	54
	Women	54	49	46
Age	18 to 34	18	46	42
	35 to 54	34	32	40
	55 and older	48	22	18
Education	No college	19	44	63
	Some college	42	33	20
	College graduate	39	23	17
Income	Under \$40,000	29	48	64
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	27	22	19
	\$80,000 or more	44	30	16
Own/rent	Own	67	37	30
	Rent	33	63	70
Nativity	US-born	83	80	34
	Immigrant	17	20	66

Notes: “Likely voters” are registered voters meeting criteria on interest in politics, attention to issues, voting behavior, and intention to vote; “infrequent voters” are registered voters who do not meet these criteria. For a full description of these criteria and regional definitions, visit www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf. For race and ethnicity, results are presented for non-Hispanic whites, non-Hispanic Asian Americans, non-Hispanic African Americans, and non-Hispanic “other race” and multiracial adults.

Sources: Eight PPIC Statewide Surveys from September 2017 to July 2018, including 7,999 likely voters, 3,134 infrequent voters, and 2,402 unregistered adults. California Secretary of State, Report of Registration, May 2018. US Census Bureau, 2012–2016 American Community Survey.

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