

Millennial Voters and California Politics

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➤ **Millennials are less likely to register and vote than older Californians.**

Millennials (ages 22–37), generation Xers (ages 38–53), and baby boomers (ages 54–72) each account for about three in ten California adults, while the silent generation (ages 73–90) comprises a much smaller share. Six in ten millennials and gen Xers are registered to vote, compared to 80% of baby boomers and 88% of silents. The likelihood of voting also increases with age: only one in four millennials are likely voters, compared to three in four silents. Notably, baby boomers (39%) make up the biggest share of the state's likely voters, followed by gen Xers (28%), millennials (19%), and silents (13%).

➤ **Millennial voters are more liberal than older Californians and less likely to be Republican.**

Across age groups, millennials are the most likely to say they are very liberal or somewhat liberal (52%, 36% gen X, 34% boomer, 29% silent) and the least likely to call themselves very or somewhat conservative (25%, 33% gen X, 38% boomer, 43% silent). About one in four millennials (23%) and three in ten in other groups consider themselves to be politically moderate. Across age groups, at least four in ten likely voters are Democrats, with Republican registration more common among older voters (16% millennial, 28% gen X, 30% boomer, 39% silent). The share of independent likely voters (also known as “decline to state” or “no party preference” voters) decreases with age (26% millennial, 24% gen X, 19% boomer, 14% silent).

➤ **Millennial voters have more favorable views on immigration than older Californians.**

More than four in five millennial likely voters (84%) say immigrants in California are a benefit to the state because of their hard work and job skills, while less than three-quarters in other age groups say the same (72% gen X, 64% boomer, 60% silent). Millennials (67%) are also the most likely to favor California making its own policies—separate from the federal government—to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in the state (54% gen X, 54% boomer, 52% silent). An overwhelming majority of millennial likely voters (77%) oppose building a wall along the entire border with Mexico (60% gen X, 64% boomer, 56% silent).

➤ **Most millennial voters want California to set its own course on climate change.**

Millennial (78%) and gen X (73%) likely voters are most likely to say the effects of global warming have already begun (67% boomers, 64% silents). Two in three millennial likely voters say global warming is a very serious threat to California's future economy and quality of life, and eight in ten favor SB 32's greenhouse gas emission-reduction goal. Across age groups, millennials are the most likely to favor California making its own policies—separate from the federal government—to address global warming (72%). Approval of President Trump is lowest among millennials: in our 2018 surveys, 26% approve (36% gen X, 38% boomer, 42% silent).

➤ **Millennial voters support health reform efforts at the state and federal levels.**

Millennial likely voters (69%) are more likely to support single-payer state health care than older Californians (54% gen X, 52% boomer, 43% silent). Solid majorities of millennials (64%) have a generally favorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act, while fewer older Californians hold this view (50% gen X, 51% boomer, 43% silent). Further, most millennial likely voters (72%) think it is the responsibility of the federal government to make sure all Americans have health care coverage (55% gen X, 56% boomer, 52% silent).

➤ **Millennials are more likely to be non-white.**

White likely voters outnumber non-whites across all age groups, and the share of whites in each group increases with age (44% millennials, 54% gen Xers, 67% boomer, 77% silent). In contrast, the share of Latino likely voters is highest among millennials (31%) and decreases with rising age (23% gen Xers, 16% boomer, 10% silent). Asian American likely voters make up a larger share of millennials (16%) than silents (5%). Home ownership among likely voters increases with age, and the share of likely voters without any college education is highest among the silent generation.



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| <i>Likely voters only</i> | | Millennial (ages 22–37) | Generation X (ages 38–53) | Baby boomer (ages 54–72) | Silent (ages 73–90) |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Party registration | Democratic | 51% | 42% | 48% | 45% |
| | Republican | 16 | 28 | 30 | 39 |
| | Independent | 26 | 24 | 19 | 14 |
| | Other | 7 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Political ideology | Liberal | 52 | 36 | 34 | 29 |
| | Middle-of-the-road | 23 | 31 | 27 | 29 |
| | Conservative | 25 | 33 | 38 | 43 |
| Interest in politics | Great deal | 33 | 38 | 41 | 42 |
| | Fair amount | 53 | 45 | 44 | 43 |
| | Only a little/none | 14 | 17 | 15 | 15 |
| Education | No college | 12 | 17 | 21 | 28 |
| | Some college | 43 | 38 | 41 | 42 |
| | College graduate | 45 | 45 | 39 | 30 |
| Income | Under \$40,000 | 34 | 18 | 27 | 40 |
| | \$40,000 to under \$80,000 | 30 | 24 | 28 | 33 |
| | \$80,000 or more | 36 | 57 | 46 | 28 |
| Gender | Men | 52 | 50 | 44 | 44 |
| | Women | 48 | 50 | 56 | 56 |
| Own/Rent | Own | 36 | 66 | 78 | 86 |
| | Rent | 64 | 34 | 22 | 14 |
| Race/Ethnicity | African Americans | 7 | 6 | 6 | 5 |
| | Asian Americans | 16 | 13 | 68 | 5 |
| | Latinos | 31 | 23 | 16 | 10 |
| | Whites | 44 | 54 | 67 | 77 |
| | Other | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Nativity | US-born | 86 | 80 | 82 | 87 |
| | Immigrant | 14 | 20 | 18 | 13 |
| Support for California making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address global warming (July 2018) | Favor | 72 | 61 | 58 | 62 |
| | Oppose | 27 | 33 | 39 | 35 |
| | Don't know | 1 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| Job approval for President Trump (in 2018 surveys) | Approve | 26 | 36 | 38 | 42 |
| | Disapprove | 72 | 62 | 60 | 55 |
| | Don't know | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Percent of likely voters | | 19 | 28 | 39 | 13 |

Notes: “Likely voters” are registered voters meeting criteria on interest in politics, attention to issues, voting behavior, and intention to vote. For a full description of these criteria and regional definitions, visit www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf. There is no prevailing consensus among researchers concerning the definitions for each of these generational groups. Our definitions are informed by the US Census Bureau and are as follows: millennial (ages 22–37), generation X (ages 38–53), baby boomer (ages 54–72), and the silent generation (ages 73–90).

Sources: Eight PPIC Statewide Surveys from September 2017 to July 2018, including 13,668 adults and 7,999 likely voters.

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