

PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

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October 2000

**Public
Policy
Institute
of
California**

Preface

California is in the midst of historic changes that will profoundly affect its future. To understand these changes and how they influence voters' choices at the ballot box, PPIC is conducting a series of comprehensive statewide surveys on the theme of "Californians and Their Government." This report presents the results of the tenth of these statewide surveys, which will continue up through the November 2000 election. The first nine surveys in this series were conducted in September, November, and December of 1999 and in January, February, June, July, August, and September of 2000. Several of these surveys were special editions, focusing on particular regions and themes (November 1999 on the Central Valley, June 2000 on the environment, and July 2000 on San Diego County).

The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and public policy preferences. The surveys are intended to provide the public, the media, and policymakers with relevant, non-partisan, advocacy-free information on the following:

- What Californians know about government at all levels, how they rate elected officials and public services, and what government actions they prefer.
- The public's interest in civic affairs and politics, their current and preferred information sources, their attention to state political news, and their ratings of the media.
- How growing regions and groups—such as the Central Valley, suburban regions, Latinos, and independent voters—affect the state's elections and policy debates.
- The political attitudes and perceptions that are tied to "voter distrust" of government, and the social, economic, and political factors that explain low voter turnout in state elections.
- The role of political, social, and economic attitudes in public support for citizens' initiatives and government reform proposals.

Copies of earlier survey reports or additional copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail (order@ppic.org) or phone (415-291-4400). The reports are also posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org).

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Press Release

PRESIDENTIAL RACE TIGHTENS IN CALIFORNIA Debates Change Few Minds; Residents Less Optimistic About Economic Prospects

SAN FRANCISCO, California, October 24, 2000 — One man's loss is not necessarily another man's gain. Although Al Gore has seen his lead in California halved in the past month, his decline has not translated into increased support for George W. Bush, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC). Gore also faces new challenges that could affect his bid to strike electoral gold in the state: Voters see economic trouble on the horizon and have added another issue—foreign policy—to their basket of concerns.

Vice President Gore now leads Texas Governor George W. Bush by a 5-point margin in California (44% to 39%), down from nine points in PPIC's September survey. Interestingly, while Gore's support has slid four points (48% to 44%), Bush has failed to pick up additional backing, remaining steady at 39 percent. Instead, Gore's decline has led to small increases for Green Party candidate Ralph Nader (4% to 6%), other third party candidates (2% to 3%), and undecided voters (7% to 8%). A similar story emerges among voters outside the major parties: Gore support among this critical group has dropped significantly, from 42% to 29%, while Bush hasn't budged (28%), and third party candidates have gained (18% to 28%). Although Gore maintains his strong advantage over Bush among women (54% to 38%), Bush has expanded his lead among men (48% to 40%). Gore now leads Bush by an even wider margin among Latinos (64% to 25%), while support for Bush is greater among non-Hispanic whites (44% to 39%).

"The race in California is less stable than anyone expected," said PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. "It is here that Nader could most affect Gore's chances for victory. But Gore and Bush have an opportunity in these final days: Voters here are remarkably engaged and looking for a connection to the candidates that they didn't find during the presidential debates."

Indeed, half of California's likely voters say the debates were not much help to them in deciding whom to vote for in November. The survey — which began on the evening of the second debate and ended the day after the third and final debate — reveals that only 14 percent of voters think the debates helped a lot, while 32 percent found them somewhat helpful. From the debates, voters say they learned the most about the candidates' stands on the issues (33%) and character (29%), followed by their intelligence (16%) and experience (7%). Gore is favored over Bush by those who say they learned the most about the candidates' positions on issues (46% to 38%), intelligence (59% to 23%), and experience (71% to 23%). Bush is the strong favorite among those who say they learned about the candidates' character (55% to 30%).

Election Issues

In the final weeks of the campaign, California voters are focused on five key issues — education (17%), foreign policy and national defense (13%), health care (11%), taxes (10%), and Social Security and Medicare (10%). Since the September survey, turmoil in the Middle East has altered voters' focus somewhat from domestic to international concerns. While education remains the top issue after dropping slightly from 19% to 17%, voters are now more eager to hear the candidates discuss

foreign policy and defense issues (rising from 5% to 13%) rather than health care (sliding from 15% to 11%) and Social Security and Medicare (falling from 14% to 10%). “Gore may have some cause for concern here,” noted Baldassare. “Foreign policy is widely viewed as an issue that bolsters Republicans.”

Gore still leads Bush when voters are asked who would do a better job of handling issues related to education (51% to 39%), health care (54% to 35%), and Social Security and Medicare (52% to 37%). Bush remains ahead of Gore on the issues of tax cuts (53% to 35%) and the military (57% to 34%).

On two issues that have been much-debated in the presidential race — big government and tax cuts — Californians stand a bit apart from the rest of the nation. State residents are more likely than the nation as a whole to want a larger government with more services (39% to 33%), although majorities in both cases say they would prefer a smaller government with fewer services. And while slight majorities also say they would prefer to see tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families (Gore’s proposal), Californians are more likely than the nation as a whole to support Bush’s plan for across-the-board tax cuts (48% to 40%).

Trouble in Paradise?

The tightening of the race in California might also be related to rising concern about the state’s economic prospects. While most Californians still believe that the state is headed in the right direction, the number of residents sharing this view has been declining gradually. Today, 59% of Californians say that things are headed in the right direction, a seven-point decline from January of this year.

Specifically, Californians are concerned about the possible economic effects of rising energy costs. Eighty percent believe that higher prices for things such as gasoline, utilities, and electricity will hurt the state’s economy in the next year or so. Half of the state’s residents think that rising energy costs will hurt the economy a great deal, while 30 percent say higher prices will have only somewhat of an effect. A majority of Californians say they are very closely (29%) or fairly closely (31%) following news stories about utility deregulation and higher energy bills.

Education Initiatives Static

Although education remains a top priority for state voters, this concern has not translated into increased support for Proposition 38, the school vouchers initiative. Similar to last month’s findings, a majority of voters (55%) say they would vote no, 36 percent would vote yes, and 9 percent are undecided. Despite a flurry of television commercials by both sides — and the fact that 71 percent of voters say they are closely following news coverage of the initiative — only 26 percent of voters feel that they have learned a lot about how a voucher system would work. However, 57 percent believe that passage of the voucher initiative would not help the public school system.

Governor Gray Davis, whose education record has been challenged in recent advertisements funded by proponents of Prop. 38, has seen some decline in his overall approval ratings since September (66% to 60%) but still enjoys strong support from state residents.

Support for Proposition 39 — which would make it possible to approve local school bonds with a 55 percent majority rather than a two-thirds vote — has inched higher, with 50 percent supporting the measure, 37 percent opposing it, and 13 percent undecided. Even though Prop. 39 lowers the threshold for passing local bond measures, only 38 percent of voters think its passage would make it easier to approve local school construction bonds in their area, while 15 percent say it would be more

difficult, and 30 percent think it would make no difference. Most voters (64%) say they would support a local bond measure by their local school district if it appeared on the ballot in November.

Power to the People

While they may be divided about the content of specific propositions, Californians are devoted to the state's initiative process. In fact, they appear to have greater faith in voters than in their elected officials when it comes to making public policy decisions. Nearly 70 percent of state residents think it is a good thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives.

A majority (56%) supports the right of voters to make permanent changes to the state constitution through the initiative process. Fifty-six percent of Californians also say that public policy decisions made by state voters are probably better than decisions made by their elected representatives in state government. Surprisingly, Latinos — who represent a minority of state voters — are more positive than the state as a whole about the winner-take-all initiative process.

Supportive as they are, Californians are also aware that the process is not perfect. Only ten percent of the state's residents say they are very satisfied with the way the initiative process is working today, while a majority (58%) say they are only somewhat satisfied. Indeed, three in four residents think that the system needs changes and only one in five says that the system is fine the way it is. Thirty-two percent of Californians say they would like to see major changes in the process, while 43 percent believe that any changes should be minor in nature.

Other Key Findings

- ***U.S. Senate Race*** (page 5)

Senator Dianne Feinstein maintains a strong lead over Republican challenger Congressman Tom Campbell (48% to 31%).

- ***Congressional Elections*** (page 6)

Democrats have a seven-point edge over Republicans when voters are asked about their preferences in local Congressional races (47% to 40%).

- ***Clinton Job Approval*** (page 17)

President Clinton remains popular in California, with 59% saying he is doing an excellent or good job.

- ***Trust in Government*** (page 20)

Californians (58%) — especially the state's Latinos (64%) — are more likely than the nation as a whole (51%) to have at least some confidence in Washington's ability to solve problems.

- ***Digital Divide*** (page 27)

More Latinos report using a computer at home, work, or school (70%) and accessing the Internet (56%) than one year ago, resulting in a narrowing of the technology gap.

- ***Internet Use*** (page 28)

More Californians than ever before say they go online to get news and information on current events (51%), job information (50%), or to purchase goods and services (40%).

About the Survey

The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and public policy preferences. PPIC has conducted

large-scale public opinion surveys on a regular basis leading up to the November 2000 election. Findings of the current survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,007 California adult residents interviewed from October 11 to October 18, 2000. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for the 1,646 registered voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 1,096 likely voters is +/- 3.5%. For additional information on survey methodology, see page 29.

[Dr. Mark Baldassare](#) is a senior fellow and program director at PPIC. He is founder and director of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has conducted since 1998. For over two decades, he has directed surveys for the University of California, Irvine and major state news organizations. Dr. Baldassare is the author of numerous books, including *California in the New Millennium: The Changing Social and Political Landscape* (University of California Press, 2000).

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to objective, nonpartisan research on economic, social, and political issues that affect the lives of Californians. The Institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett.

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California 2000 Election

Presidential Election

As the presidential campaign enters its final phase, and national polls show the candidates running neck-and-neck, Vice President Al Gore's lead over Texas Governor George W. Bush in California has shrunk to five points (44% to 39%). To put this result in context, this current survey began on the evening of the second debate, concluded on the day after the third and final debate, and also encompassed a week that included Wall Street turbulence and Middle East turmoil. Since PPIC's survey last month, Gore's support has dropped four points (48% to 44%), while Bush's support has held steady. The decline for Gore corresponds to small increases for Ralph Nader, other third-party candidates, and undecided voters.

The presidential race is close in California because, although Democrats outnumber Republicans in the state, Bush has more support among Republicans (84%) than Gore has among Democrats (78%), and voters outside of the major parties are evenly divided between Bush and Gore. Support for Nader probably contributes to Gore's weaker showing among Democrats. In the urban coastal regions of Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, a majority of the voters support Gore, while Bush leads by a less than 10-point margin in the rest of Southern California and the Central Valley. Given that non-Hispanic whites favor Bush over Gore (44% to 39%), Gore's candidacy is helped considerably by how strongly Latinos favor him over Bush (64% to 25%). Women also support Gore over Bush by a big margin (54% to 38%), while men favor Bush over Gore by a narrower margin (48% to 40%).

"If the election for president were held today, who would you vote for?"

	<u>Likely Voters</u>		
	Aug 00	Sept 00	Oct 00
Democratic ticket of Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman	40%	48%	44%
Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Richard Cheney	37	39	39
Green Party ticket of Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke	8	4	6
Others*	1	2	3
Don't know	14	7	8

* Includes listed candidates Harry Browne (1%) and Patrick Buchanan (1%) and other volunteered responses.

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>							
	<u>Party</u>			<u>Region</u>				<u>Latino</u>
	Dem	Rep	Other Voters	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Al Gore	78%	8%	29%	37%	56%	51%	39%	64%
George W. Bush	9	84	28	45	24	34	48	25
Ralph Nader	6	0	16	4	10	6	4	4
Others	0	1	12	4	3	2	2	2
Don't know	7	7	15	10	7	7	7	5

Importance of Debates

For half the likely voters, the debates did not provide much help in deciding who will get their votes in November. Fourteen percent of likely voters thought the debates helped them a lot in making up their minds, while one in three found the debates somewhat helpful. Among the small group of voters who say the debates helped a lot, Gore leads Bush by a 12-point margin (47% to 35%). However, Gore is the more narrow favorite among those who found the debates somewhat helpful (46% to 43%) or not much help (44% to 38%).

What did the voters learn most about the candidates from the debates? They were more likely to say they learned the most about the candidates' stands on issues (33%) and about their character (29%) than about their intelligence (16%) or experience (7%). Among those who learned the most about the candidates' character, Bush has more support than Gore (55% to 30%). Gore has more support than Bush among those who say they learned the most about stands on the issues (46% to 38%), intelligence (59% to 23%), and experience (71% to 23%).

There are no partisan differences in how helpful likely voters found the debates in making decisions. However, in the matter of what was learned, Republicans were more likely than others to say they learned about the candidates' character. Latinos were much more likely than non-Hispanic whites to say the debates helped a lot in deciding their presidential vote (25% to 11%), and to say they learned about stands on issues (38% to 30%).

"Have the debates helped you a lot, some, or not much in deciding who to vote for in the presidential election?"

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>				
	<u>All Likely Voters</u>	<u>Party</u>			<u>Latino</u>
		<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	
A lot	14%	15%	13%	15%	25%
Some	32	30	33	32	37
Not much	49	50	48	48	32
Don't know; haven't seen, read, heard debates	5	5	6	5	6

"Overall, would you say you learned most about the candidates'..."

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>				
	<u>All Likely Voters</u>	<u>Party</u>			<u>Latino</u>
		<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	
Stands on the issues	33%	31%	32%	37%	38%
Character	29	23	37	27	28
Intelligence	16	21	11	15	13
Experience	7	10	4	5	14
Other	3	3	3	4	2
Don't know	12	12	13	12	5

Ranking of Candidates on Issues

The presidential debates also had little apparent effect on how voters rank the candidates on handling major issues. Gore still leads Bush when voters are asked who would do the best job in handling education (51% to 39%), health care (54% to 35%), and Social Security and Medicare (52% to 37%), while Bush leads Gore on cutting taxes (53% to 35%) and the military (57% to 34%).

Gore's large lead over Bush in handling education and health care has declined, while Gore's support has held steady in the area of Social Security. In contrast, Gore has made no progress in convincing voters that he is better suited than Bush to take care of the military or cutting taxes.

"Regardless of your choice for president, do you think Bush or Gore would do a better job handling each of these issues?"

	<u>Likely Voters</u>	
	Sept 00	Oct 00
<i>Education</i>		
Bush	36%	39%
Gore	55	51
Neither, both	2	3
Don't know	7	7
<i>Health care</i>		
Bush	32%	35%
Gore	58	54
Neither, both	3	4
Don't know	7	7
<i>Social Security</i>		
Bush	36%	37%
Gore	54	52
Neither, both	3	3
Don't know	7	8
<i>Cutting taxes</i>		
Bush	53%	53%
Gore	35	35
Neither, both	4	3
Don't know	8	9
<i>The military</i>		
Bush	55%	57%
Gore	32	34
Neither, both	3	2
Don't know	10	7

Campaign Issues

In the remaining weeks of the campaign, voters are most interested in hearing what the candidates have to say about five issues—schools (17%); foreign policy, national security, and defense (13%); health care (11%); Social Security and Medicare (10%); and taxes (10%). However, amidst turmoil in the Middle East, the focus of some voters has shifted from the domestic to the international scene. Since the September survey, voters are more inclined to mention foreign policy and defense issues (5% to 13%), and less inclined to name health care (15% to 11%) and Social Security and Medicare (14% to 10%).

Democrats and independent voters rank schools, while Republicans rank tax cuts, as their top issue. The next most pressing issue among Democrats is health care, but it is foreign policy and defense among Republicans and independent voters.

Gore is favored over Bush by voters who want to hear about schools (63% to 27%) and health care (62% to 19%). However, Bush has more support than Gore among people who are most interested in foreign policy and defense (56% to 31%) and tax cuts (55% to 34%).

The undecided voters in the presidential race say they are most interested in the candidates' views on Social Security and Medicare (21%), health care (14%), and schools (13%). Latinos want the candidates to focus mostly on schools (30%) and health care (15%). Non-Hispanic whites are fairly evenly divided among foreign policy and defense (14%), schools (13%), and tax cuts, health care, and social security and Medicare (10% each).

"Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 7th election?"

	<u>All Likely Voters</u>	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>			
		<u>Party</u>			<u>Latino</u>
		<u>Democrat</u>	<u>Republican</u>	<u>Other</u>	
Schools, education	17%	21%	11%	18%	30%
Foreign policy, national security, defense	13	10	14	15	8
Health care, HMO reform	11	16	7	10	15
Social Security, Medicare	10	10	10	10	7
Taxes, cutting taxes	10	7	16	6	9
Jobs, the economy,	5	5	5	4	6
Abortion	4	4	3	4	2
Morals, family values	4	2	6	2	1
Environment, pollution	3	4	2	5	1
Crime, gangs	2	3	1	3	4
Federal budget, spending surplus	2	2	3	1	2
Guns, gun control	2	2	3	1	3
Campaign finance reform	1	1	1	2	0
Immigration, illegal immigration	1	1	1	2	2
Other	6	4	6	9	2
Don't know	9	8	11	8	8

U.S. Senate Election

In the race for the U.S. Senate seat, Senator Dianne Feinstein has the same large lead over Republican challenger Congressman Tom Campbell that she had in the September survey: 48 percent of likely voters support Feinstein, 31 percent would vote for Campbell, 7 percent for third-party candidates, and 14 percent are undecided.

Feinstein enjoys the overwhelming support of Democrats (77%) and is strongly favored over Campbell among voters outside of the major parties (37% to 20%). Two in three Republicans say they will vote for Campbell. The senator has a large lead over Campbell in the San Francisco Bay area and Los Angeles and a smaller lead in the rest of Southern California, while the two candidates are currently tied in the Central Valley.

Non-Hispanic whites favor Feinstein over Campbell (43% to 36%), and Latinos give her an even larger margin of support (60% to 18%). Both women and men favor Feinstein over Campbell, but the margin is much larger among women (52% to 25%) than among men (43% to 37%).

"If the November election for the U.S. Senate were held today, who would you vote for?"

	<u>Likely Voters</u>		
	Aug 00	Sept 00	Oct 00
Dianne Feinstein, Democrat	52%	48%	48%
Tom Campbell, Republican	33	31	31
Medea Susan Benjamin, Green Party*	–	3	3
Gail Katherine Lightfoot, Libertarian Party*	–	2	3
Joe Camahort, Reform Party*	–	1	1
Don't know	15	15	14

* Not given as an option in August 2000 survey

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>							
	<u>Party</u>			<u>Region</u>				<u>Latino</u>
	Dem	Rep	Other Voters	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Dianne Feinstein	77%	16%	37%	41%	59%	53%	44%	60%
Tom Campbell	7	67	20	41	21	24	37	18
Medea Susan Benjamin	3	0	9	2	5	4	1	1
Gail Katherine Lightfoot	1	2	9	3	4	3	2	4
Joe Camahort	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	1
Don't know	12	14	23	13	11	15	15	16

Congressional Elections

In local congressional races, voters give Democrats a seven-point edge over Republicans. Last month, the Democrats were ahead of the Republicans in the local congressional races by a 9-point margin (48% to 39%). As in September, eight in 10 Republicans and eight in 10 Democrats now say they would vote along party lines. Voters outside of the major parties favor the Democrats over the Republicans but by a slim margin (38% to 34%).

Likely voters favor Democratic candidates over Republican candidates in Los Angeles (56% to 34%) and the San Francisco Bay area (60% to 23%). Republicans get the nod in the Southern California counties outside of Los Angeles (47% to 38%) and in the Central Valley (49% to 37%).

Latinos strongly back Democrats over Republicans (68% to 26%), while non-Hispanic whites are divided between Republicans (44%) and Democrats (41%) running for Congress.

Women support the Democrat over the Republican in the congressional races by a 17-point margin (53% to 36%), while men are evenly divided (43% to 41%).

"If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate for the House in your district?"

	<u>Likely Voters</u>	
	Sept 00	Oct 00
Republican	39%	40%
Democrat	48	47
Other	3	2
Don't know	10	11

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>							
	<u>Party</u>			<u>Region</u>				<u>Latino</u>
	Dem	Rep	Other Voters	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Republican	9%	83%	34%	49%	23%	34%	47%	26%
Democrat	82	6	38	37	60	56	38	68
Other	1	2	7	2	4	2	2	1
Don't know	9	9	21	12	13	8	13	6

Proposition 38: School Vouchers

A majority of voters oppose Proposition 38, the school vouchers initiative that would require the state to provide payments for students to attend private and religious schools. Fifty-five percent would vote no, 36 percent would vote yes, and 9 percent are undecided. These results are very similar to the likely voters' responses in the September survey.

Support for Proposition 38 varies across party lines: 68 percent of Democrats and 58 percent of voters outside the major parties would vote no, while 55 percent of Republicans would vote yes.

Majorities in all regions oppose Proposition 38. However, opposition is greatest in the San Francisco Bay area. Latinos (52% to 37%) and non-Hispanic whites (57% to 36%) both oppose Proposition 38 by large margins.

Opposition to Proposition 38 is greater than support among both women (59% to 32%) and men (52% to 40%). It is also greater among parents of public school children (53% to 39%).

Despite a flurry of television commercials by the proponents and opponents of Proposition 38, only 26 percent of the voters feel that they have learned a lot about how a school voucher system would work in California. Of those, 64 percent would vote against school vouchers. As was the case in the September survey, most voters (57%) are convinced that the passage of the voucher initiative would not help the public school system, and 86 percent of these voters say they will vote no.

"Proposition 38 – the school vouchers initiative on the November ballot – authorizes annual state payments of at least \$4,000 per pupil for private and religious schools. It permits replacement of the current constitutional public school spending formula. The fiscal impacts include near-term state costs from zero to \$1.1 billion annually. The long-term state impact is from \$2 billion in annual costs to \$3 billion in annual savings, depending on how many public school students shift to private schools. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on proposition 38?"

<u>Likely Voters</u>			
	Aug 00*	Sept 00	Oct 00
Yes	45%	37%	36%
No	44	53	55
Don't know	11	10	9

*Question wording for August is from official title and summary. Wording for September and October is from ballot label.

	<u>Likely Voters (October 2000)</u>							
	<u>Party</u>			<u>Region</u>				<u>Latino</u>
	Dem	Rep	Other Voters	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	23%	55%	32%	40%	32%	37%	34%	37%
No	68	37	58	53	62	56	52	52
Don't know	9	8	10	7	6	7	14	10

"During this election, do you think that you have learned a lot, some, or not much about how a school voucher system would work if Proposition 38 passes?"

Likely Voters	
A lot	26%
Some	33
Not much	37
Don't know	4

"If the voucher initiative passes, do you think that it will or will not help the public school system in California?"

Likely Voters	
Will	32%
Will not	57
Don't know	11

Proposition 39: 55 Percent Majority

A bare majority of voters (50%) say they will vote yes on Proposition 39, which would require the approval of local school bonds with a 55 percent majority vote instead of the current two-thirds vote. These results are similar to results of the September survey, in which a near-majority said they were inclined to vote yes on Proposition 39, after they were read the official ballot label.

Democrats strongly favor Proposition 39 (61%), while a slim majority of Republicans oppose it (50%) and a similarly slim majority of voters outside of the major parties (51%) support it. Voters in the Central Valley are evenly divided on this measure, but a small majority in the other three regions support it. Latinos overwhelmingly favor Proposition 39 (63% to 27%), while less than a majority of non-Hispanic whites (48% to 39%) support it. The measure is strongly supported by parents of public school children (59% to 29%).

Even though Proposition 39 lowers the majority needed to pass local school bonds from two-thirds to 55 percent, fewer than four in 10 California voters believe that the measure will make it easier to pass local school bonds in their area. Three in 10 believe the measure's approval will have no effect, while 15 percent think it will be more difficult to pass local school bonds. These results could reflect the fact that the ballot wording does not state that Proposition 39 would *change* the current vote threshold. Those who think that passage of Proposition 39 will make it easier to pass local school bonds overwhelmingly support the measure (64% to 32%), while those who think it will make no difference narrowly support it (50% to 44%).

Most voters (64%) say they would vote in favor of a local school construction bond if it were on their local ballot this November. Still, the level of statewide support falls just short of the two-thirds majority needed to pass local school bonds. Those who would vote for local school bonds are overwhelmingly in favor of Proposition 39 (72% to 16%).

"Proposition 39 – the 'school facilities, 55 percent local vote, bonds, taxes, accountability requirements' initiative on the November ballot – authorizes bonds for repair, construction, or replacement of school facilities and classrooms, if approved by 55 percent local vote. The fiscal impacts include increased bond debt for many school districts. Long-term costs statewide could total in the hundreds of millions annually, with potential longer-term state savings to the extent school districts assume greater responsibility for funding school facilities. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on proposition 39?"

Likely Voters			
	Aug 00*	Sept 00	Oct 00
Yes	35%	49%	50%
No	55	37	37
Don't know	10	14	13

*Question wording for August is from official title and summary. Wording for September and October is from ballot label.

	Likely Voters (October 2000)							
	Party			Region				Latino
	Dem	Rep	Other Voters	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	61%	36%	51%	46%	52%	51%	51%	63%
No	26	50	39	46	31	38	37	27
Don't know	13	14	10	8	17	11	12	10

"If Proposition 39 passes, do you think it will be easier or more difficult to pass local school construction bonds in your area, or will it make no difference?"

Likely Voters	
Easier	38%
More difficult	15
No difference	30
Don't know	17

"If your local school district had a bond measure on the November ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?"

Likely Voters	
Yes	64%
No	27
Don't know	9

California Policy Issues

Governor's Report Card

Governor Gray Davis continues to receive high approval ratings from Californians. Six in 10 residents say they like the way he is handling his job, while fewer than three in 10 do not.

Democrats (73%) are overwhelmingly positive about the job that Governor Davis is doing. A majority of voters outside of the major parties (54%) and nearly half of the Republicans (48%) also rate Davis in favorable terms. The governor's approval ratings are uniformly positive across the state's major regions: 67 percent in the San Francisco Bay area, 62 percent in Los Angeles, 56 percent in the Central Valley, and 55 percent in the Southern California region outside of Los Angeles. Most Latinos (64%) and non-Hispanic whites (58%) approve of the job that Governor Davis is doing.

One of the more controversial decisions made by the governor was his recent veto of a bill passed by the state legislature that required a sales tax on all Internet sales by companies with stores in California. The majority of residents (56%) side with Governor Davis on this issue. There were no partisan differences in support of the governor's decision to veto the Internet sales tax. A majority of residents in all income groups, and across regions, approved of the governor's action. Also, a majority of Latinos (52%) and non-Hispanic whites (59%) support the governor's veto. Californians who shop on the Internet (69%) are more likely than those who do not (48%) to approve of Governor Davis' veto of the Internet sales tax.

	All Adults	Party Registration				Latino
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor of California?</i>						
Approve	60%	73%	48%	54%	59%	64%
Disapprove	28	18	42	29	20	23
Don't know	12	9	10	17	21	13
<i>Governor Davis vetoed a bill requiring a sales tax on the Internet sales of all retailers with California stores. Do you approve or disapprove?</i>						
Approve	56%	56%	57%	60%	53%	52%
Disapprove	33	32	32	31	39	37
Don't know	11	12	11	9	8	11

The Role of Citizens' Initiatives

Californians give the state's initiative process glowing reviews, and they appear to have greater trust in the state's voters than in their elected officials when it comes to making public policy decisions.

Seven in 10 residents think it is a good thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives, while less than one in four see it as a bad thing. Most Californians (56%) also think it is a good thing that a majority of voters can permanently change the state constitution by passing initiatives, while one in three believe this is a bad thing. A majority of Republicans and Democrats have positive impressions of the citizens' initiative process, while voters outside of the major parties hold the most favorable views. There are no differences across regions, and both Latinos and non-Hispanic whites hold the initiative process in high regard.

Most residents (56%) believe that public policy decisions made by voters through the initiative process are probably better than the public policy decisions made by the governor and legislature. Only one in four see the voters' decisions as "probably worse." Democrats, Republicans, and voters outside of the major parties, and Latinos and non-Hispanic whites alike, have more faith in the decisions made by voters than in those made by their elected representatives in state government.

	All Adults	Party Registration				Latino
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
<i>In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives?</i>						
Good thing	69%	66%	69%	73%	73%	69%
Bad thing	23	25	23	21	18	22
Don't know	8	9	8	6	9	9
<i>Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make permanent changes to the state constitution by passing initiatives?</i>						
Good thing	56%	51%	56%	63%	63%	62%
Bad thing	33	38	32	28	27	31
Don't know	11	11	12	9	10	7
<i>Overall, do you think public policy decisions made through the initiative process by California voters are probably better or probably worse than public policy decisions made by the governor and state legislature?</i>						
Better	56%	50%	56%	60%	64%	64%
Worse	24	27	22	22	19	22
Same (volunteered)	5	7	6	5	3	2
Don't know	15	16	16	13	14	12

Reforming the Citizens' Initiative Process

While Californians have a lot of respect for the initiative process, most are also aware that it is not perfect. Only 10 percent of the state's residents say they are “very” satisfied with the way the initiative process is working today. Most (58%) say they are “somewhat” satisfied with the process, while only one in four say they are not satisfied with the way the state’s system of direct democracy is working.

However, three in four residents say that changes are needed in the California initiative process—only one in five considers the current system just fine the way it is. One in three would like to see major changes, while four in 10 believe that the changes should be only minor in nature.

Even among those who think it is a good thing that voters can make public policies by passing initiatives, most are only somewhat satisfied (62%) with the way the initiative process is working today, and most think that the process is in need of major or minor changes (73%). Similarly, 62 percent of those who think that the initiative process is better than having the governor and legislature make public policy decisions are only somewhat satisfied with the way the initiative process is working, and 75 percent think that the process is in need of major or minor changes.

There are no significant differences across voter groups in satisfaction with the way the initiative process is working today, or in general impressions about the need to reform the initiative process. There is also little variation across regions or between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites. Future surveys will explore specific areas of discontent with the initiative process and examine support for reforms.

	All Adults	Party Registration				Latino
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
<i>Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?</i>						
Very satisfied	10%	10%	9%	6%	13%	16%
Somewhat satisfied	58	59	59	56	57	64
Not satisfied	26	25	26	31	22	17
Don't know	6	6	6	7	8	3
<i>Do you think that the initiative process in California is in need of major changes or minor changes or that it is basically fine the way it is at this time?</i>						
Major changes	32%	31%	27%	33%	40%	36%
Minor changes	43	43	48	41	35	44
Fine the way it is	19	19	19	20	19	16
Don't know	6	7	6	6	6	4

The Role of Public Opinion Polls

Should the governor and state legislature pay attention to public opinion polls? Yes, according to the overwhelming majority (85%) of Californians. Some politicians and pundits may criticize elected officials for being “poll driven,” but most of the public are comfortable with their representatives taking this approach. Indeed, only 11 percent of Californians think the state’s elected officials should not pay attention to public opinion polls when they are deciding on new laws and public policies.

Democrats, Republicans, and other voters in the state are all in agreement that politicians should pay attention to public opinion polls. Likewise, the vast majority across regions, among Latinos and non-Hispanic whites, and in all age, income, education, and gender categories want the governor and legislature to consider public opinion polls when they make decisions.

"Do you think state-elected officials – such as the governor and state legislators – should or should not pay attention to public opinion polls on the issues when deciding on new laws and public policies?"

	All Adults	Party Registration				Latino
		Democrat	Republican	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
Should	85%	86%	81%	84%	92%	91%
Should not	11	10	16	12	5	5
Don't know	4	4	3	4	3	4

News Attentiveness

Have Californians been following some of the more significant news stories in the state? Eight in 10 have been very or fairly closely following news about the presidential election (79%). Six in 10 have been attentive to news stories about the school vouchers initiative on the November ballot (61%), utility deregulation and higher electricity bills (60%), and the release of the new test scores for students (59%). Fewer than half of the state’s residents, though, have been closely following the news stories about the public transit and county employee strikes in Los Angeles (47%).

Across the geographic regions, there is a fairly uniform level of interest in the news stories about the 2000 presidential election, the school vouchers initiative, and student test scores. While three in four Los Angeles residents closely followed the news about the public employee strikes in their region, only half of the residents in the Southern California area outside of Los Angeles (51%) were as attentive, and only one in four in the northern California regions paid close attention to this news story. While at least half of the residents in every region followed news stories about utility deregulation and higher electricity bills, those living in the Southern California area outside of Los Angeles (71%)—which includes San Diego—were more attentive than other residents.

Among likely voters in California elections, almost all are now very or fairly closely following news about the presidential election (90%), while 71 percent are closely following news about the school vouchers initiative. Two in three likely voters are attentive to news stories about student test scores (67%) and utility deregulation and higher electricity bills (68%), while 50 percent are very or fairly closely following news stories about the public employee strikes in Los Angeles.

News attentiveness was higher for non-Hispanic whites than Latinos with regard to the presidential election (83% to 69%) and utility deregulation and higher electricity bills (61% to 54%), and similar between non-Hispanic whites and Latinos for stories about the vouchers initiative (63% to 59%) and student test scores (59% to 57%). Latinos (57%) were more attentive than non-Hispanic whites (42%) to news stories about the public transit strike and county employee strike in Los Angeles.

Californians who read a newspaper every day are more likely than others to very or fairly closely follow news stories about the presidential election (85%), utility deregulation (74%), the school vouchers initiative (68%), and student test scores (69%), but not the public transit and county employee strikes in Los Angeles (51%).

"Tell me if you followed this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely ..."

	All Adults	Region				Latino
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Candidates for the 2000 presidential election						
Very closely	41%	38%	42%	41%	42%	39%
Fairly closely	38	37	41	37	38	30
Not too closely	15	17	13	17	15	24
Not at all closely	6	8	4	5	5	7
Proposition 38, the school vouchers initiative						
Very closely	26%	25%	24%	29%	27%	29%
Fairly closely	35	32	37	32	38	30
Not too closely	26	28	26	26	24	29
Not at all closely	13	15	13	13	11	12
Utility deregulation and higher electricity bills						
Very closely	29%	27%	24%	26%	41%	32%
Fairly closely	31	34	36	25	30	22
Not too closely	23	21	23	29	17	29
Not at all closely	17	18	17	20	12	17
The academic performance index (API) test scores for California's public schools						
Very closely	27%	27%	28%	29%	27%	30%
Fairly closely	32	32	31	28	34	27
Not too closely	25	23	24	29	23	27
Not at all closely	16	18	17	14	16	16
The Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and county worker strikes in Los Angeles						
Very closely	21%	9%	10%	42%	17%	34%
Fairly closely	26	17	18	31	34	23
Not too closely	27	34	30	19	29	26
Not at all closely	26	40	42	8	20	17

Political Trends

Job Performance Ratings for Federal Officials

President Bill Clinton's job performance ratings have been remarkably stable over time. Today, 59 percent of Californians say Clinton is doing an excellent or good job, compared to 61 percent two months ago. These numbers are also virtually unchanged from surveys conducted from October 1998 to December 1999.

However, opinions of President Clinton differ strongly across party lines. Democrats offer by far the most positive assessment (81% good or excellent), followed by voters outside of the major parties (60%). Republicans are much less approving: Only 27 percent say that Clinton is doing a good or excellent job. Latinos (70%) are more likely to approve of Clinton's job performance than are non-Hispanic whites (52%).

In contrast, just 38 percent of Californians give the U.S. Congress either excellent or good ratings (the October ratings are virtually identical to the ratings in the August survey). The approval ratings for Congress were higher in the two most recent surveys than they have been since October 1998. Partisan differences are not evident in these ratings: 38 percent of Democrats feel Congress is doing an excellent or good job, compared to 37 percent of Republicans and 30 percent of other voters. More Latinos (51%) than non-Hispanic whites (33%) give Congress high marks for job performance.

Californians look with slightly more favor on their own representative in Congress than on the Congress as a whole. Forty-four percent say their representative is doing an excellent or good job, 36 percent a fair job, and 7 percent a poor job, while 13 percent are unsure. These ratings of the local Congressperson are also almost identical to those reported in the August survey.

"How do you rate the job performance of President Bill Clinton at this time – excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

<u>All Adults</u>						
	Oct 98	Dec 98	Sep 99	Dec 99	Aug 00	Oct 00
Excellent	26%	26%	16%	18%	22%	25%
Good	34	33	39	37	39	34
Fair	19	20	27	25	22	21
Poor	21	20	18	19	16	20
Don't know	0	1	0	1	1	0

"How do you rate the job performance of the U.S. Congress at this time – excellent, good, fair, or poor?"

<u>All Adults</u>						
	Oct 98	Dec 98	Sep 99	Dec 99	Aug 00	Oct 00
Excellent	5%	4%	2%	5%	4%	5%
Good	34	29	24	30	34	33
Fair	40	42	48	44	45	46
Poor	19	22	21	18	14	13
Don't know	2	3	5	3	3	3

Trust in Federal Government: Overall Leadership

Californians (34%) are a little more likely than Americans as a whole (30%) to express trust in the federal government's leadership. One in three Californians believes the government can be trusted most of the time, while two in three believe it can be trusted only some of the time.

The higher California trust level at least partly reflects the fact that Latinos (42%) are more trusting of government than non-Hispanic whites (30%). Democrats (41%) are more likely than Republicans (25%) and voters outside of the major parties (31%) to say the federal government can always or mostly be trusted. Older, more educated, and wealthier residents have less trust in government than others. There are no differences in overall trust across the regions of the state.

"How much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right – just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time? "

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
Just about always	4%	4%
Most of the time	26	30
Only some of the time	64	62
Never (volunteered)	5	4

* Source: ABC News / Washington Post Poll, April 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
Just about always	4%	6%	2%	3%	5%	8%
Most of the time	30	35	23	28	34	34
Only some of the time	62	57	70	63	58	56
Never (volunteered)	4	2	5	6	3	2

Trust in Federal Government: Role of Special Interests

Californians (64%) are a little less likely than Americans as a whole (70%) to believe that government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves.

Once again, Californians are slightly less negative overall partly because Hispanics (53%) are much less likely than non-Hispanic whites (68%) to believe the government is run by big interests. Republicans (68%) and voters outside of the major parties (69%) are somewhat more likely than Democrats (62%) to have a cynical view of government. Older and college educated residents are also more cynical. There are no differences across regions of the state.

"Would you say that government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?"

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
Few big interests	70%	64%
Benefit of all of the people	25	29
Don't know	5	7

* Source: Gallup Poll, July 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
Few big interests	64%	62%	68%	69%	54%	53%
Benefit of all of the people	29	32	23	25	40	40
Don't know	7	6	9	6	6	7

Trust in Federal Government: Problem Solving

Californians (58%) are also more likely than Americans as a whole (51%) to have at least some confidence that the federal government can solve problems.

The same pattern persists as with the other trust questions: Latinos (64%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (55%) to believe the federal government can solve a problem when it wants to, and this lifts overall trust in government in the state.

Again the responses differ by party registration: Democrats (64%) are more likely than Republicans (50%) and voters outside of the major parties (53%) to put at least some faith in government. People with lower incomes, people with no college education, younger adults, and women are more optimistic than others about the ability of government to solve problems. There are no differences across regions of the state.

"When the government in Washington decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem will actually be solved – a lot, some, just a little, or none at all? "

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
A lot	8%	9%
Some	43	49
Just a little	35	31
None at all	13	10
Don't know	1	1

* Source: NPR / Kaiser Family Foundation / Kennedy School poll, June 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
A lot	9%	10%	4%	9%	16%	18%
Some	49	54	46	44	45	46
Just a little	31	28	35	34	30	28
None at all	10	7	14	12	8	6
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	1

Impact of Federal Government on Daily Life

Most Californians (79%), like most U.S. adults (79%), believe that the federal government has at least some impact on their daily lives. Forty-three percent of state residents say the federal government has a lot of influence. There are no partisan differences.

Residents of the Central Valley (46%) and the Southern California region outside of Los Angeles (47%) are slightly more likely than those in the urban coastal regions of the San Francisco Bay Area (40%) and Los Angeles (41%) to say the federal government has a lot of influence on their lives. Latinos (45%) and non-Hispanic whites (42%) are almost equally likely to agree with that perception. Younger adults, higher income residents, and college graduates are the least likely to think that the federal government has a big effect on their daily lives. There are no differences between men and women in the perception of the federal government's effect.

"How much impact do you think the federal government has on your daily life – a lot, some, just a little, or no impact at all?"

	All Adults	
	U.S.*	California
A lot	41%	43%
Some	38	36
Just a little	15	16
No impact at all	5	4
Don't know	1	1

* Source: NPR / Kaiser Family Foundation / Kennedy School poll, June 2000

	All Adults	Party Registration				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
A lot	43%	44%	44%	41%	37%	45%
Some	36	38	37	36	30	30
Just a little	16	14	15	17	20	18
No impact at all	5	4	3	5	10	5
Don't know	1	0	1	1	3	2

Smaller or Larger Government?

A majority of Californians (54%) wants a smaller government with fewer services, while 39 percent prefer a larger government with more services. Californians are more likely than the nation as a whole to want a larger government.

There is a significant partisan split on this issue: 54 percent of Democrats want a larger government, while 78 percent of Republicans and 63 percent of other voters prefer smaller government.

The desire for a smaller government with fewer services is strongest in the Central Valley (60%) and in Southern California outside of Los Angeles (58%). In contrast, about half in the San Francisco Bay area (51%) and Los Angeles (48%) want a smaller government.

There is a dramatic difference between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites: Most Latinos (58%) want a larger government, while most non-Hispanic whites (62%) want a smaller government. Smaller government is preferred by college graduates (58%), men (61%), those 55 and older (63%), and those with annual household incomes of \$80,000 or more (64%). Younger residents, the less affluent and less educated, and women are the most likely to prefer a larger government with more services.

"People have different ideas about the government in Washington. These ideas don't refer to Democrats or Republicans in particular, but just to government in general. Would you say you favor smaller government with fewer services or larger government with many services?"

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
Smaller government, fewer services	58%	54%
Larger government, many services	33	39
Don't know	9	7

* Source: ABC News / Washington Post poll, September 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
Smaller government, fewer services	54%	37%	78%	63%	39%	35%
Larger government, many services	39	54	17	34	52	58
Don't know	7	9	5	3	9	7

Federal Taxes

When asked to consider the amount they pay in taxes relative to what they get from the federal government, most Californians (54%) believe they pay more than their fair share. This mirrors response to a recent national survey, which found that 55 percent of Americans believe that they pay more than their fare share in taxes.

There are strong partisan differences: Only 45 percent of Democrats feel they pay more than their fair share in federal income taxes, compared with 66 percent of Republicans and 56 percent of other voters.

There are no differences in perceptions of federal income taxes across the regions of the state, between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites, across education levels, or between men and women. However, there are age and income differences: People who are 35 to 54 years old (60%) are more likely than younger (53%) or older (47%) residents to say they pay more than their fair share in taxes. People with incomes of \$80,000 or more (62%) are more likely than those with incomes of \$40,000 to \$80,000 (56%) or lower incomes (48%) to feel they are paying more than is fair.

Most Californians (62%) who prefer a smaller government with fewer services believe that they are paying their fair share in taxes, while those who favor a larger government with many services are divided between thinking they pay about their fair share (50%) and more than their fair share (45%) in taxes.

"Considering what you get from the federal government, do you think you pay more than your fair share in taxes, less than your fair share, or about your fair share?"

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
More than fair share	55%	54%
Less than fair share	2	3
About a fair share	42	41
Don't know	1	2

* Source: NPR / Kaiser Family Foundation / Kennedy School poll, June 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
More than fair share	54%	45%	66%	56%	54%	53%
Less than fair share	3	4	1	2	4	4
About a fair share	41	50	32	40	40	41
Don't know	2	1	1	2	2	2

Cutting Taxes

In the recent presidential debates, Al Gore and George Bush have made a point of distinguishing between their tax plans: Gore has emphasized that his plan targets the middle class; Bush has emphasized that his cuts taxes for everyone. When asked to choose between these options, Californians are evenly divided, with about half supporting each option. Californians give stronger support to an across-the-board cut than Americans as a whole gave in a national survey in April.

Party registration correlates strongly with preferences for a tax cut proposal: 64 percent of Democrats favor targeted tax cuts for certain economic groups, while 69 percent of Republicans support cutting taxes for everyone. Other voters, meanwhile, are ambivalent, roughly half supporting tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families (48%) and half (51%) favoring a tax cut for everyone.

As might be expected, 51 percent of those who want an across-the-board cut support Bush, and 57 percent of those who favor targeted cuts support Gore for president. Among those who think they pay more than their fair share in taxes, 54 percent want a tax cut for everyone. However, among those who say they pay about their fair share, only 42 percent want across-the-board tax cuts.

Latinos (55%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (47%) to favor targeted cuts. There are also regional differences: 46 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area, 47 percent in Los Angeles, 50 percent in Southern California outside of Los Angeles, and 53 percent in the Central Valley favor a tax cut for everyone. Men favor a general tax cut (51% to 46%), while women want a targeted tax cut (53% to 45%). Support for a broad tax cut increases with age and income, but not with education.

Most Californians (61%) who prefer a smaller government with fewer services favor an across-the-board tax cut, while most (64%) who favor a larger government with many services support a targeted tax cut. Those who think they are paying more than their fair share of taxes favor cutting taxes for everyone (54%) rather than targeted tax relief for lower- and middle-income families (43%).

"Which do you favor more: cutting taxes for people in all income brackets or tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families?"

	<u>All Adults</u>	
	U.S.*	California
Cutting taxes for all	40%	48%
Tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families	58	50
Don't know	2	2

* Source: Pew Center for the People and the Press, April 2000

	All Adults	<u>Party Registration</u>				Latino
		Democrats	Republicans	Other Voters	Not Registered to Vote	
Cutting taxes for all	48%	33%	69%	51%	42%	43%
Tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families	50	64	28	48	56	55
Don't know	2	3	3	1	2	2

Social and Economic Trends

Overall Mood

Most Californians still express optimism about the direction of their state, although this number has been shrinking slowly. Today, 59% of Californians feel that things are going in the right direction, roughly the same number as in August but a seven-point decline from January of this year. This erosion may reflect concerns about such things as the rise in energy prices.

Majorities across regions of the state say they think things are going in the right direction. However, these figures are slightly higher among residents of the San Francisco Bay area (62%) and Los Angeles (61%) than among residents of the Southern California region outside of Los Angeles (58%) and of the Central Valley (56%). Latinos (73%) are more confident than non-Hispanic whites (55%) that the state is headed in the right direction. There are no significant differences across income groups.

Looking to the future, 80 percent of Californians think higher energy prices will hurt the state's economy in the coming year. Fifty percent believe that increased energy prices will hurt the economy a great deal; 30 percent think they will hurt it only somewhat. Latinos (57%) are more likely than non-Hispanic whites (47%) to say the economy will be hurt a great deal. There are also regional differences: 55 percent of Central Valley residents and 54 percent of those living in the Southern California region outside of Los Angeles say that the state's economy will be hurt a great deal by rising energy prices, compared to 51 percent of Los Angeles residents and 41 percent of residents of the residents in the San Francisco Bay Area.

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

<u>All Adults</u>										
	May 98	Sep 98	Oct 98	Dec 98	Sep 99	Dec 99	Jan 00	Feb 00	Aug 00	Oct 00
Right direction	56%	57%	62%	63%	61%	62%	66%	65%	62%	59%
Wrong direction	34	34	30	28	34	31	26	27	30	32
Don't know	10	9	8	9	5	7	8	8	8	9

"Do you think higher energy prices for things such as gasoline, utilities, and electricity will hurt the California economy in the next year or so?"

	All Adults	<u>Region</u>				Latino
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes, a great deal	50%	55%	41%	51%	54%	57%
Yes, only somewhat	30	29	32	27	30	26
No	17	13	23	18	14	15
Don't know	3	3	4	4	2	2

Where and How Often Californians Get Their News

Four in ten Californians report reading the local newspaper every day, while about half report watching local news on television every day. However, where Californians get their news, and how regularly, varies by education, income, ethnicity, and region.

College graduates (49%) read the newspaper on a daily basis more often than people who have some college experience (41%) or those with a high school diploma or less (31%). Three in ten people who earn less than \$40,000 per year read the newspaper every day, compared to 44 percent of residents earning between \$40,000 and \$79,999 per year and 51 percent of those earning more than \$80,000 per year. Twenty-six percent of Latinos say they read the local newspaper daily, compared to 46 percent of non-Hispanic whites.

Daily newspaper reading also varies by region, Bay Area residents (49%) are more likely than residents of the Central Valley (44%), of Southern California outside of Los Angeles (41%), and of Los Angeles (34%) to say they read the local newspaper every day.

Fifty-five percent of all California adults surveyed report watching local television news every day, and there is virtually no difference between Latinos (56%) and non-Hispanic whites (54%) in this respect. There are differences across education and income levels: College graduates are less likely than people with less education to watch television news every day. Fewer people (49%) who earn more than \$80,000 per year watch local television news daily than do people who earn between \$40,000 and \$79,999 per year (56%) or who make less than \$40,000 per year (54%). There are no differences in watching television news across regions.

"How often do you read the local newspaper?"

	All Adults	Education			Latino
		High School or Less	Some College	College Grad	
Every day	41%	31%	41%	49%	26%
A few times a week	23	25	22	23	31
Once a week	14	15	15	13	17
Less than once a week	9	11	8	7	10
Never	13	18	14	8	16

"How often do you watch local news on television?"

	All Adults	Education			Latino
		High School or Less	Some College	College Grad	
Every day	55%	56%	58%	50%	56%
A few times a week	28	30	25	28	31
Once a week	7	7	7	8	6
Less than once a week	5	4	5	7	3
Never	5	3	5	7	4

Is the Digital Divide Shrinking?

Computer and Internet use reached its highest point ever among California residents in the September 2000 survey and remains there now: 78 percent of Californians surveyed report ever using a computer at home, work, or school, and 68 percent report going online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail.

This year, computer usage rates among Latinos increased from 61 percent in January to 70 percent in October, while usage rates among non-Hispanic whites remained constant (81% to 80%). Although a significant gap in overall computer usage remains between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites, the "digital divide" has shrunk from 14 to 10 points.

The digital divide has also shrunk from 30 to 15 points when it comes to Internet use. Today, 56 percent of Latinos report that they go online, compared to 40 percent in January. At the same time, Internet usage among non-Hispanic whites has hovered around 70 percent. Despite this increase in Internet usage among Latinos, the digital divide is far from closed: A 15-point difference in online use remains between Latinos and non-Hispanic whites.

<u>All Adults</u>							
	Sept 99	Dec 99	Jan 00	Feb 00	Aug 00	Sept 00	Oct 00
"Do you ever use a computer at home, at work, or at school?"	74%	76%	78%	72%	76%	78%	78%
"Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail?"	60	61	64	60	66	68	68

"Do you ever use a computer at home, at work, or at school?"

	Sept 99	Dec 99	Jan 00	Feb 00	Aug 00	Sept 00	Oct 00
Latinos	62%	67%	61%	55%	66%	68%	70%
Non-Hispanic whites	77	77	81	76	79	80	80

"Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail?"

	Sept 99	Dec 99	Jan 00	Feb 00	Aug 00	Sept 00	Oct 00
Latinos	39%	42%	40%	39%	50%	51%	56%
Non-Hispanic whites	65	66	70	66	70	73	71

Use of the Internet

More Californians than ever before report going online to look for information for their job (50%), to get news and information about current events and politics (51%), and to purchase goods or services (40%). For the last two activities in particular, use of the Internet has increased markedly since these questions were last asked in the September 1999 PPIC Statewide Survey

Today, 40 percent of Californians say they go online to purchase goods or services, an increase of 10 points since September of last year. Similarly, the number who say they go online to get news and information on current events, public issues or politics has increased by 8 percentage points, to 51 percent, since September 1999. Half of Californians surveyed also report going online to get information for their jobs.

The highest rates of Internet use occur in the San Francisco Bay Area, where 51 percent of residents go online to purchase goods and services, 55 percent to get news and information, and 57 percent to look for work information. In comparison, the Central Valley is farthest behind in Internet use, with only 32 percent of residents going online to shop, 48 percent to get news and information on current events, and 45 percent to look for work information.

Men are more likely than women to use the Internet for purchasing goods and services (45% to 36%), gathering news (54% to 47%), and collecting information for their jobs (56% to 45%).

Even though the digital divide may be closing, Latinos lag behind non-Hispanic whites in Internet use for shopping (25% to 45%), gathering news (40% to 54%), and getting work information (42% to 52%).

“Do you ever go online to ...”

	Sept 99	Oct 00
<i>Purchase goods or services?</i>		
Yes	30%	40%
No	30	28
No Internet	40	32
<i>Get news and information on current events, public issues, or politics?</i>		
Yes	43%	51%
No	17	17
No Internet	40	32
<i>Look for Information for your job?</i>		
Yes	45%	50%
No	15	18
No Internet	40	32

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, a senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research assistance from Eric McGhee and Mina Yaroslavsky. The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,007 California adult residents interviewed from October 11 to October 18, 2000. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to five times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Maria Tello translated the survey into Spanish.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to U.S. Census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,007 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. The sampling error for the 1,646 registered voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 1,096 likely voters is +/- 3.5%. Sampling error is just one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to four geographic regions. "Central Valley" includes Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. "SF Bay Area" includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. "Los Angeles" refers to Los Angeles County, and "Other Southern California" includes the mostly suburban regions of Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. These four regions were chosen for analysis because they are the major population centers of the state, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population; moreover, the growth of the Central Valley and "Other Southern California" regions have given them increasing political significance.

We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 24 percent of the state's adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. For likely voters, the sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. We contrast the opinions of Democrats and Republicans with "other" or "independent" registered voters. This third category includes those who are registered to vote as "decline to state" as well as a fewer number who say they are members of other political parties.

In some cases, we compare PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted in 2000 by ABC/*The Washington Post*, NPR/Kaiser Family Foundation/Kennedy School, and the Pew Center for the People and the Press. We used 1998, 1999, and 2000 PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in California.

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

OCTOBER 11 – 18, 2000

2,007 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH

MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

[Responses recorded for first 17 questions are from likely voters. All other responses are from all adults.]

1. First, I have a few questions about the November 7th general election. If the election for president were held today, who would you vote for? (*rotate names, then ask, "or someone else?"*)

44%	the Democratic ticket of Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman
39	the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Richard Cheney
6	the Green Party ticket of Ralph Nader and Winona LaDuke
1	the Reform Party ticket of Patrick Buchanan and Ezola Foster
1	the Libertarian Party ticket of Harry Browne and Art Olivier
1	other
8	don't know

2. The Democratic and Republican candidates are having a series of debates. Some people learn about the debates from news reports as well as seeing or hearing them. So far, have the debates helped you a lot, some, or not much in deciding who to vote for in the presidential election?

14%	a lot
32	some
49	not much
2	don't know
3	haven't seen, read, heard debates

3. People have different ideas about what they learn from presidential debates. Overall, would you say you learned most about the candidates' ... (*rotate*)

33%	stands on the issues
29	character
16	intelligence
7	experience
3	other (<i>specify</i>)
12	don't know

4. Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 7th election? (*code, don't read*)

17%	schools, education
13	foreign policy, national security, defense
11	health care, HMO reform
10	Social Security, Medicare
10	taxes, cutting taxes
5	jobs, the economy, unemployment
4	abortion
4	morals, family values
3	environment, pollution
2%	crime, gangs
2	federal budget, spending surplus
2	guns, gun control
1	campaign finance reform
1	immigration, illegal immigration
6	other (<i>specify</i>)
9	don't know

Regardless of your choice for president, which of these candidates would do the better job on each of these issues—George W. Bush or Al Gore? First . . .

(*rotate q. 5 to 9*)

5. How about education?

39%	Bush
51	Gore
3	other answer
7	don't know

6. How about Social Security?

37%	Bush
52	Gore
3	other answer
8	don't know

7. How about cutting taxes?

53%	Bush
35	Gore
3	other answer
9	don't know

8. How about health care?

35%	Bush
54	Gore
4	other answer
7	don't know

9. How about the military?

57%	Bush
34	Gore
2	other answer
7	don't know

10. If the November election for the U.S. Senate were held today, who would you vote for? (*rotate names, then ask, "or someone else?"*)

48%	Dianne Feinstein, Democrat
31	Tom Campbell, Republican
3	Medea Susan Benjamin, Green Party
3	Gail Katherine Lightfoot, Libertarian
1	Joe Camahort, Reform Party
14	don't know

11. If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican Party's candidate or the Democratic Party's candidate for the House in your district?

40%	Republican
47	Democrat
2	other
11	don't know

12. Proposition 38—the school vouchers initiative on the November ballot—authorizes annual state payments of at least \$4,000 per pupil for private and religious schools. It permits replacement of the current constitutional public school spending formula. The fiscal impacts include near-term state costs from zero to \$1.1 billion annually. The long-term state impact is from \$2 billion in annual costs to \$3 billion in annual savings, depending on how many public school students shift to private schools. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 38?

36% yes
55 no
9 don't know

13. During this election, do you think that you have learned a lot, some, or not much about how a school voucher system would work if Proposition 38 passes?

26% a lot
33 some
37 not much
4 don't know

14. If the voucher initiative passes, do you think that it will or will not help the public school system in California?

32% will
57 will not
11 don't know

15. Proposition 39—the “school facilities, 55 percent local vote, bonds, taxes, accountability requirements” initiative on the November ballot—authorizes bonds for repair, construction, or replacement of school facilities and classrooms, if approved by 55 percent local vote. The fiscal impacts include increased bond debt for many school districts. Long-term costs statewide could total in the hundreds of millions annually, with potential longer-term state savings to the extent school districts assume greater responsibility for funding school facilities. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 39?

50% yes
37 no
13 don't know

16. If Proposition 39 passes, do you think it will be easier or more difficult to pass local school construction bonds in your area, or will it make no difference?

38% easier
15 more difficult
30 no difference
17 don't know

17. If your local school district had a bond measure on the November ballot to pay for school construction projects, would you vote yes or no?

64% yes
27 no
9 don't know

On a related topic, California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have an issue put on the ballot—as a state proposition—for voter approval or rejection.

18. In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives?

69% good thing
23 bad thing
1 other (*volunteered*)
7 don't know

19. Do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make permanent changes to the state constitution by passing initiatives?

56% good thing
33 bad thing
1 other (*volunteered*)
10 don't know

20. Overall, do you think public policy decisions made through the initiative process by California voters are probably better or probably worse than public policy decisions made by the governor and state legislature?

56% better
24 worse
5 same (*volunteered*)
15 don't know

21. Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?

10% very satisfied
58 somewhat satisfied
26 not satisfied
6 don't know

22. Do you think that the initiative process in California is in need of major changes or minor changes or that it is basically fine the way it is at this time?

32% major changes
43 minor changes
19 fine the way it is
6 don't know

23. On another topic, do you think state-elected officials—such as the governor and state legislators—should or should not pay attention to public opinion polls on the issues when deciding on new laws and public policies?

85% should
11 should not
4 don't know

I will read a list of some recent news stories covered by news organizations. As I read each one, tell me if you followed this news story very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely. (*rotate q. 24-28*)

24. News about candidates for the 2000 presidential election.

41% very closely
38 fairly closely
15 not too closely
6 not at all closely

25. News about Proposition 38, the school vouchers initiative.
- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 26% | very closely |
| 35 | fairly closely |
| 26 | not too closely |
| 13 | not at all closely |
26. News about the Academic Performance Index (API) test scores for California's public schools.
- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 27% | very closely |
| 32 | fairly closely |
| 25 | not too closely |
| 16 | not at all closely |
27. News about the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) and county worker strikes in Los Angeles.
- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 21% | very closely |
| 26 | fairly closely |
| 27 | not too closely |
| 26 | not at all closely |
28. News about utility deregulation and higher electricity bills.
- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 29% | very closely |
| 31 | fairly closely |
| 23 | not too closely |
| 17 | not at all closely |
29. On another topic, do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
- | | |
|-----|-----------------|
| 59% | right direction |
| 32 | wrong direction |
| 9 | don't know |
30. Do you think higher energy prices for things such as gasoline, utilities, and electricity will hurt the California economy in the next year or so? (*if yes: Do you think they will hurt the California economy a great deal or only somewhat?*)
- | | |
|-----|--------------------|
| 50% | yes, a great deal |
| 30 | yes, only somewhat |
| 17 | no |
| 3 | don't know |
31. On another topic—overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor of California?
- | | |
|-----|------------|
| 60% | approve |
| 28 | disapprove |
| 12 | don't know |
32. Governor Davis vetoed a bill requiring a sales tax on the Internet sales of all retailers with California stores. Do you approve or disapprove?
- | | |
|-----|------------|
| 56% | approve |
| 33 | disapprove |
| 11 | don't know |
33. How do you rate the job performance of President Bill Clinton at this time—excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- | | |
|-----|------------|
| 25% | excellent |
| 34 | good |
| 21 | fair |
| 20 | poor |
| 0 | don't know |
34. How do you rate the job performance of the U.S. Congress at this time—excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- | | |
|----|------------|
| 5% | excellent |
| 33 | good |
| 46 | fair |
| 13 | poor |
| 3 | don't know |
35. What about the representative to the U.S. House of Representatives from your congressional district—how do you rate his or her job performance at this time—excellent, good, fair, or poor?
- | | |
|----|------------|
| 8% | excellent |
| 36 | good |
| 36 | fair |
| 7 | poor |
| 13 | don't know |
36. On another topic, people have different ideas about the government in Washington. These ideas don't refer to Democrats or Republicans in particular, but just to government in general. Would you say you favor smaller government with fewer services, or larger government with many services?
- | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|
| 54% | smaller government, fewer services |
| 39 | larger government, many services |
| 7 | don't know |
37. Considering what you get from the federal government, do you think you pay more than your fair share in taxes, less than your fair share, or about your fair share?
- | | |
|-----|----------------------|
| 54% | more than fair share |
| 3 | less than fair share |
| 41 | about a fair share |
| 2 | don't know |
38. Which do you favor more: cutting taxes for people in all income brackets or tax cuts targeted to lower- and middle-income families?
- | | |
|-----|-----------------------|
| 48% | cutting taxes for all |
| 50 | targeted tax cuts |
| 2 | don't know |
39. On another topic, how much of the time do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
- | | |
|----|---|
| 4% | just about always |
| 30 | most of the time |
| 62 | only some of the time |
| 4 | none of the time (<i>volunteered</i>) |

40. Would you say that government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves or that it is run for the benefit of all of the people?

64% few big interests
29 benefit of all the people
7 don't know

41. When the government in Washington decides to solve a problem, how much confidence do you have that the problem will actually be solved—a lot, some, just a little, or none at all?

9% a lot
49 some
31 just a little
10 none at all
1 don't know

42. How much impact do you think the federal government has on your daily life—a lot, some, just a little, or no impact at all?

43% a lot
36 some
16 just a little
4 no impact at all
1 don't know

43. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain you are registered to vote? (*if yes: Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?*)

39% yes, Democrat (*skip to q. 45*)
31 yes, Republican (*skip to q. 45*)
3 yes, other party (*skip to q. 45*)
12 yes, independent (*ask q. 44*)
15 no, not registered (*skip to q. 46*)

44. (*Independents only*) Do you think of yourself as closer to the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

47% Democratic
32 Republican
19 neither
2 don't know

45. Some people who plan to vote can't always get around to it on election day. Have you already voted by absentee ballot, will you definitely vote by absentee ballot, will you definitely vote on election day at the polls, or is there some chance you will not vote in the November election?

4% already voted by absentee ballot
20 definitely will vote by absentee ballot
71 definitely will vote at the polls
4 some chance [respondent] will not vote
1 don't know

46. Would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

9% very liberal
20 somewhat liberal
31 middle-of-the-road
27 somewhat conservative
11 very conservative
2 don't know

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

22% great deal
47 fair amount
25 only a little
6 none
0 don't know

48. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?

55% always
22 nearly always
9 part of the time
5 seldom
8 never
1 other, don't know

49. On another topic, how often do you watch local news on television—every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or never?

55% every day
28 few times a week
7 once a week
5 less than once a week
5 never

50. How often do you read the local newspaper—every day, a few times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or never?

41% every day
23 few times a week
14 once a week
9 less than once a week
13 never

51. On another topic, do you yourself ever use a computer at home, at work, or at school? (*if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?*)

63% yes, often (*ask q. 52*)
15 yes, sometimes (*ask q. 52*)
22 no (*skip to q. 56*)
0 don't know (*skip to q. 56*)

52. Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send or receive e-mail? (*if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?*)

53% yes, often (*ask q. 53*)
15 yes, sometimes (*ask q. 53*)
10 no (*skip to q. 56*)
22 don't use computers (*skip to q. 56*)

53. Do you ever go online to purchase goods and services? (*if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?*)

12% yes, often
28 yes, sometimes
28 no
32 don't use computers

54. Do you ever go online to get news and information on current events, public issues, or politics? (if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?)

24%	yes, often
27	yes, sometimes
17	no
32	don't use Internet

55. Do you ever go online to look for information for your work or job? (if yes: Do you do this often or only sometimes?)

30%	yes, often
20	yes, sometimes
18	no
32	don't use Internet

[Questions 56–64: demographic questions]

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

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