

# PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

OCTOBER 2012

# Californians & their government



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in collaboration with  
The James Irvine Foundation



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

# ABOUT THE SURVEY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. This is the 129th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that was inaugurated in April 1998 and has generated a database of responses from more than 272,000 Californians.

This is the 54th survey in the Californians and Their Government series. The survey is conducted periodically to examine the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. Supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation, the series seeks to inform decisionmakers, raise public awareness, and stimulate policy discussions and debate about important state and national issues.

This survey took place during the week of the second presidential debate. For California voters, the November 6 election features 11 ballot propositions, including two tax measures to fund education (Propositions 30 and 38). The recently enacted state budget is tied to the vote on Proposition 30. If the measure fails, automatic cuts will be made to K–12 education to balance the budget. Voters will also decide on governance issues, including changes to campaign finance, the state budget process, and redistricting.

This survey presents the responses of 2,006 adult residents throughout the state, interviewed in English or Spanish by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on these topics:

- The November election, including preferences of likely voters in the presidential election, enthusiasm about voting in the presidential election, attention paid to news about and satisfaction with presidential candidates; preferred outcome in congressional elections; voting intentions and importance of the outcome on two measures for funding education (Proposition 30, temporary taxes for education, public safety; and Proposition 38, tax for education, early childhood programs); and support for and importance of the outcome of Proposition 31 (state budget, state and local government) and Proposition 32 (prohibits political contributions by payroll deduction).
- State and national issues, including approval ratings of Governor Brown and the state legislature; approval ratings of President Obama and Congress; perceptions of the economy and direction of the state and the nation; views of the state budget, including preferred approaches for closing a possible state budget deficit; support for raising personal income taxes, corporate taxes, the state sales tax, and income taxes on the wealthy; trust at the state and federal government levels; attitudes toward reforms to the citizens' initiative process; and perceptions of political parties, including whether a third party is needed.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and the extent to which Californians may differ in their perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding the 2012 elections and state and national issues, based on political party affiliation, likelihood of voting, region of residence, race/ethnicity, and other demographics.

This report may be downloaded free of charge from our website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org). Try our PPIC Statewide Survey interactive tools online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PDT on Wednesday, October 24, 2012.

**Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:**  
**<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>**

### **PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT**

## **Voters Split on Proposition 30—Propositions 31, 32, 38 Lag**

CALIFORNIANS DECIDE STATE ISSUES AMID ENTHUSIASM ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL RACE

SAN FRANCISCO, October 24, 2012—Likely voters are divided over Proposition 30, Governor Jerry Brown's tax measure to fund education, with just under half supporting it. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with support from The James Irvine Foundation.

When read the ballot title and label for Proposition 30, 48 percent would vote yes, 44 percent would vote no, and 8 percent are undecided. The margin has narrowed since September (52% yes, 40% no, 8% undecided). Proposition 30 would fund schools by increasing taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and the sales tax by ¼ cent for four years, and would also guarantee public safety realignment funding.

Support is lower for Proposition 38, attorney Molly Munger's tax measure to fund education: 39 percent would vote yes, 53 percent would vote no, and 9 percent are undecided. Voters were evenly divided in September (45% yes, 45% no). Proposition 38 would increase taxes on earnings for 12 years, using a sliding scale, with revenues going to K–12 schools and early childhood programs and also, for four years, to repaying state debt.

Californians are making their decisions about these and nine other statewide initiatives during a hard-fought presidential campaign that has sparked enthusiasm among the state's likely voters. Sixty-one percent say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting in the presidential election. While President Obama and Joe Biden hold a 12-point lead over challengers Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan among likely voters, a larger share of Romney supporters (70%) than Obama supporters (60%) say they are more enthusiastic than usual. Before the 2008 presidential election, a majority of likely voters (65%) also expressed this view, but enthusiasm was more widespread among Democrats (76% of Obama supporters, 59% of supporters of John McCain). Excitement about the race at the top of the ballot has implications for other election issues, says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

"The enthusiasm of voters about the presidential election will affect who turns out to vote," he says. "And that may well make a difference in the outcomes of the statewide propositions."

Proposition 30 draws strong support from these groups of likely voters:

- **Democrats.** A strong majority of Democrats (70%) favor the measure; an equally strong majority of Republicans (70%) oppose it. Independents are more divided (43% yes, 50% no).
- **Younger voters.** Voters age 18–34 (70%) are far more likely to support it than are older voters (41% of voters age 35–54, 43% of voters over age 55).
- **Latinos.** Support among Latinos (68%) is far higher than among white voters (40%).

- **Those who approve of Governor Brown.** The governor's job approval rating is 45 percent among likely voters. Most who approve of the governor (71%) support Proposition 30. Most who disapprove (70%) oppose the measure.
- **Supporters of President Obama.** A strong majority (72%) would vote yes, while a strong majority of Romney supporters (74%) would vote no.

Likely voters with household incomes of \$40,000 and over, public school parents, and both women and men are divided on the initiative. Most likely voters (58%) say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 30 is very important to them—a belief held by more than half across parties. This view is more widely held by those who would vote yes (65%) than by those who would vote no (55%).

Proposition 30 is linked to the state budget, which calls for automatic cuts to public schools if the ballot measure fails. Asked about these trigger cuts, a strong majority of likely voters (74%) oppose them. If Proposition 30 fails, how would likely voters prefer to close the resulting multibillion-dollar deficit? They are divided, with 43 percent favoring a mix of spending cuts and tax increases and 40 percent favoring mostly spending cuts. Another 11 percent favor closing the budget gap mainly with tax increases.

### **PROPOSITION 38 DRAWS LESS SUPPORT FROM DEMOCRATS**

Proposition 38 has less support than Proposition 30 from Democratic likely voters (53% yes). A strong majority of Republicans (71%) are opposed, as are just over half of independents (53%). Public school parents are divided (44% yes, 46% no). Most men (57%) are opposed, while women are slightly more likely to oppose (48%) than favor the initiative (41%). Those with household incomes of less than \$40,000 are far more likely than voters with higher incomes to be in favor. Half of likely voters (50%) say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 38 is very important to them.

Among Proposition 30 supporters, 57 percent would vote for Proposition 38, while 74 percent of Proposition 30 opponents would vote no on Proposition 38. Overall, 28 percent would vote yes on both measures and 32 percent would vote no on both.

### **PROPOSITIONS 31, 32 TRAIL**

Proposition 31 would establish a two-year budget, set rules for offsetting new state expenditures and budget cuts by the governor, and allow local governments to change the application of laws governing state-funded programs. Just 24 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes on this initiative (48% no, 28% undecided). These results are similar to September (25% yes, 42% no, 32% undecided). The measure lacks majority support from any party or demographic group. Just 24 percent of likely voters say the outcome of the vote on this measure is very important to them.

Proposition 32 would bar unions, corporations, and government contractors from using money from payroll deductions for political purposes. It would also prohibit union and corporate contributions to candidates and their committees, and bar government contractors from contributing to elected officials or their committees. While 39 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes on the initiative, 53 percent say they would vote no (7% undecided). Voters were more closely divided in September (42% yes, 49% no). Today, a strong majority of Democrats (68%) would vote no, a majority of Republicans would vote yes (56%), and independents are more divided (42% yes, 49% no). How important is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 32? Very important, say 51 percent. Just over half of "yes" voters (56%) and "no" voters (51%) consider it very important—an increase of 11 points on the "no" side since September.

### **WITH TAX INCREASES ON BALLOT, TRUST IN SACRAMENTO IS LOW**

With initiatives that would raise taxes on the November ballot, the PPIC survey asked about four types of taxes. Just 25 percent of likely voters favor raising state personal income taxes—an element of both Propositions 30 and 38. Just 32 percent favor raising the state sales tax—an element of Proposition 30.

However, 64 percent favor raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians. Proposition 30 would temporarily increase taxes on residents earning over \$250,000 annually. Asked about raising the state taxes paid by California corporations, 55 percent of likely voters are in favor.

California voters are considering raising their own taxes at a time when most distrust the government in Sacramento. Only 22 percent say they trust the state government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, and 60 percent say that people in state government waste a lot of taxpayer money. Among those who express this view, 56 percent say they would vote no on Proposition 30. Trust in Washington is no higher: only 25 percent of likely voters say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, and 60 percent say it wastes a lot of taxpayer money.

## **OBAMA HOLDS 12-POINT LEAD**

The Obama-Biden ticket leads Romney-Ryan 53 percent to 41 percent among likely voters, similar to last month and July. Overwhelming majorities of Democratic and Republican likely voters support their party's candidate, while independent voters are closely divided (44% Obama, 43% Romney). Obama led Romney by a much wider margin among independents in September (13 points) and July (16 points).

Satisfaction with the choice of candidates in the presidential election has increased steadily, from 49 percent last December to 69 percent today. This is much higher than the 56 percent who said they were satisfied with the candidates in October 2008. Although Democrats are more likely than either Republicans or independents to say they are satisfied with their choice of candidates, satisfaction has increased sharply among Republicans since May (46% May, 69% today), as their party coalesced around Romney. Satisfaction among independents is up 19 points since December (33% to 52%).

Less than two weeks before the election, 54 percent of California likely voters approve of President Obama's job performance (45% disapprove). His approval rating has declined from a high of 66 percent in May 2009, shortly after he took office. The approval rating of the U.S. Congress remains low, at 15 percent (81% disapprove). When it comes to the outcome of the congressional elections, California likely voters prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats (52%) to one controlled by Republicans (39%).

## **MORE KEY FINDINGS**

### ■ **Brown's job approval holds steady**—page 14

While Governor Brown's approval rating among likely voters is similar to what it has been since he took office, disapproval has grown from 20 percent in January 2011 to 35 percent in September 2011 and 43 percent today. The state legislature's approval rating remains low, at 21 percent.

### ■ **Fewer see state headed in wrong direction**—page 15

Although jobs and the economy continues to be named the most important issue facing Californians and most likely voters continue to believe the state is in a recession, pessimism about the direction of the state has declined from 77 percent in October 2010 to 60 percent today.

### ■ **Overwhelming support for two initiative reforms** —page 20

Most likely voters say the initiative process is in need of changes—40 percent say major changes and 30 percent say minor changes—while 23 percent say it is fine as it is. They support two changes suggested to reform the process.

### ■ **Favorable impressions of Democratic Party hit record high**—page 21

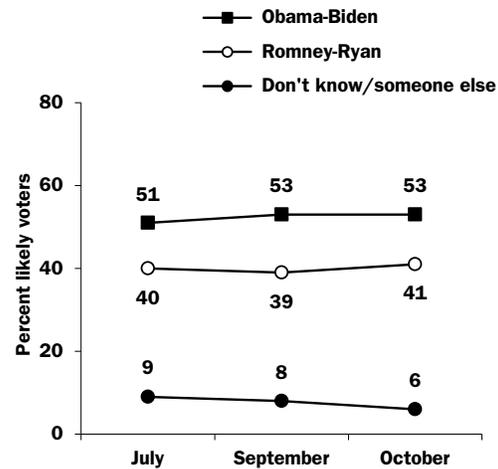
In a bitter partisan campaign year, 53 percent of likely voters have a favorable impression of the Democratic Party, up from 44 percent in September 2011. Fewer view the Republican Party (38%) or Tea Party movement (32%) favorably.

# NOVEMBER 2012 ELECTION

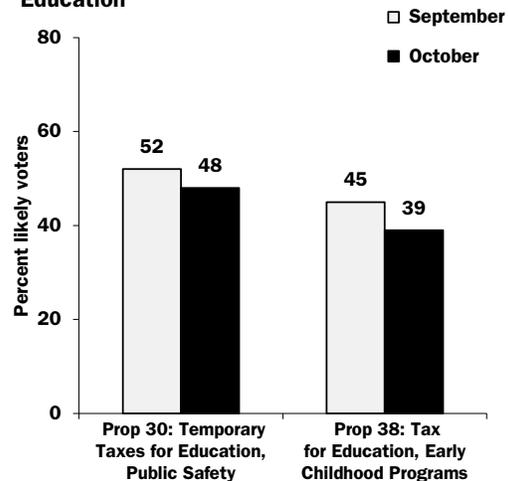
## KEY FINDINGS

- Obama and Biden lead Romney and Ryan by 12 points in the presidential race. Six in 10 likely voters are more enthusiastic than usual about voting in the November election and seven in 10 are satisfied with their choices of candidates. (pages 7, 8)
- About half of likely voters prefer Congress to be controlled by Democrats, and 39 percent prefer Republican control. (page 7)
- Just under half of likely voters (48%) favor Proposition 30 (temporary taxes for education, public safety); four in 10 (39%) support Proposition 38 (tax for education, early childhood programs). Twenty-eight percent would vote yes on both Proposition 30 and Proposition 38. Strong majorities (74%) oppose the automatic cuts to education that would occur if Proposition 30 fails. Nearly six in 10 say the outcome of Proposition 30 is very important, while half say the same about Proposition 38. (pages 9, 10)
- Twenty-four percent of likely voters would vote yes on Proposition 31 (changes to the state budget process and state and local government), 48 percent would vote no, and 28 percent are unsure. Twenty-four percent say the outcome of Proposition 31 is very important. (page 11)
- Four in 10 likely voters (39%) favor Proposition 32 (prohibiting political contributions by payroll deduction), while 53 percent would vote no. Fifty-one percent of likely voters say the outcome of Proposition 32 is very important to them. (page 12)

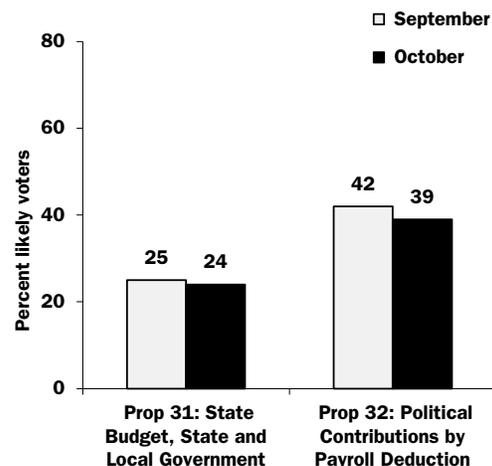
2012 Presidential Election



Percent Yes for Tax Measures to Fund Education



Percent Yes for Governance Measures



## PRESIDENTIAL AND CONGRESSIONAL ELECTIONS

President Obama and Vice President Joe Biden maintain a lead over Republican challengers Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan (53% to 41%) among California likely voters in the upcoming presidential election. Findings were similar last month and in July. The second presidential debate occurred while the survey was being conducted. Likely voters nationwide remain closely divided (47% Obama, 47% Romney), according to an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll conducted at about the same time as our survey.

Overwhelming majorities of Democratic and Republican likely voters support their party's candidate, while independent likely voters are divided (44% Obama, 43% Romney). Obama led Romney by a wider margin among independents in September (13 points) and July (16 points). While both men (50% Obama, 43% Romney) and women (57% Obama, 38% Romney) prefer Obama, women do so by a larger margin. Latinos (74%) overwhelmingly support Obama, while half of whites (42% Obama, 52% Romney) support Romney. The youth vote played an important role in Obama's 2008 victory; in California, likely voters under 35 still support him by a wide margin (69% to 23% for Romney). A similar share of young voters supported Obama in October 2008 (65%). Voters 35 to 54 are divided (47% Obama, 46% Romney), while voters age 55 and older have a slight preference for Obama (51% Obama, 44% Romney). Obama has a solid lead among those with lower household incomes (63% less than \$40,000), while about half of those earning more support Obama. Majorities of likely voters in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area prefer Obama, while a majority of Other Southern California voters (53%) prefer Romney. Voters in the Central Valley are divided. Majorities of evangelical Protestants (58%) and mainline Protestants (53%) support Romney; Catholics prefer Obama. Those with no religion strongly support Obama.

### **"If the November 6th presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden or the Republican ticket of Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan?"**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
<b>Obama-Biden</b>	53%	90%	10%	44%	50%	57%
<b>Romney-Ryan</b>	41	6	86	43	43	38
<b>Someone else (volunteered)</b>	2	2	1	3	3	2
<b>Don't know</b>	4	2	3	10	4	3

California likely voters prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats (52%) over one controlled by Republicans (39%). Since March, likely voters have expressed this preference, but the margin has shifted slightly over time (15-point preference for Democrats in March, 7-point preference in May, 14-point preference in September, 13-point preference today). In the month before the 2010 mid-term elections, likely voters were more closely divided (45% preferred Democrats, 43% Republicans). Strong majorities of Democratic and Republican likely voters prefer a Congress controlled by their party, while independents are divided. Last month, a majority of independents (54%) said they favored Democratic control.

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

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
<b>Controlled by Republicans</b>	39%	8%	79%	43%	43%	35%
<b>Controlled by Democrats</b>	52	87	10	39	50	53
<b>Neither (volunteered)</b>	5	2	7	11	4	6
<b>Don't know</b>	4	2	4	7	3	5

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ATTITUDES

Six in 10 likely voters say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting in the presidential election, while 27 percent are less enthusiastic and 11 percent volunteer they feel no different about voting this November. A greater share of Republican likely voters and Romney-Ryan supporters (70% each) are more enthusiastic compared with Democrats (61%) and Obama-Biden supporters (60%). Just under half of independents (47%) say they are more enthusiastic, four in 10 are less so, and 12 percent feel the same. About six in 10 across most demographic groups say they are more enthusiastic than usual about voting. Seven in 10 likely voters in the Other Southern California region (typically a more conservative area) say they are more enthusiastic, as do two in three in the more liberal-leaning Los Angeles. In September 2008, 65 percent of likely voters said they were more enthusiastic about voting than usual, but there was more excitement on the Democratic side (76% among Obama supporters, 59% among McCain supporters).

**“Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual, or less enthusiastic?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Presidential election choice	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Obama–Biden	Romney–Ryan
<b>More enthusiastic</b>	61%	61%	70%	47%	60%	70%
<b>Less enthusiastic</b>	27	26	21	41	25	22
<b>Same/neither (volunteered)</b>	11	11	9	12	13	8
<b>Don't know</b>	1	2	–	–	2	–

A strong majority of likely voters (69%) are satisfied with their choices of candidates in the presidential election. Satisfaction is much higher than in October 2008 (56%). Satisfaction has risen steadily over the course of this election cycle, from 49 percent last December to 69 percent today. Although Democrats remain more likely than either Republicans or independents to say they are satisfied, satisfaction has increased sharply among Republicans since May, as support coalesced around Romney. Satisfaction has increased 19 points among independents since December. Strong majorities of both Obama (76%) and Romney (68%) supporters say they are satisfied with their candidate choices. Solid majorities across regions and demographic groups are satisfied. Two in three among Latinos (68%) and whites (67%) are satisfied.

**“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. president in 2012?”**

Likely voters only Percent satisfied	Dec 11	Jan 12	Mar 12	May 12	Sep 12	Oct 12
<b>All likely voters</b>	49%	53%	53%	57%	66%	69%
<b>Democrats</b>	57	67	65	75	78	77
<b>Republicans</b>	47	44	45	46	65	69
<b>Independents</b>	33	39	43	48	49	52

With the election just around the corner, nearly all likely voters are following news about the presidential candidates: 58 percent very closely and 35 percent fairly closely. The percentage of likely voters following candidate news very closely was similar last month and has increased 18 points since July. It is similar to October 2008 (54%) before the last presidential election. The percentage following news very closely increases with age and is higher among whites (62%) than Latinos (45%) and among men (65%) than women (52%).

**PROPOSITION 30: TEMPORARY TAXES FOR EDUCATION, PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING**

Proposition 30 is an initiative placed on the November ballot by Governor Brown and others to increase taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by ¼ cent for four years to fund schools and to guarantee public safety realignment funding. When read the ballot title and label for Proposition 30, 48 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes, 44 percent would vote no, and 8 percent are undecided. The margin has narrowed since September (52% yes, 40% no). Proposition 30 has strong majority support from Democrats, while a strong majority of Republicans would vote no. Independents are more divided, with half opposed to the measure. Women, men, those with incomes of \$40,000 or more, and public school parents are divided. Support among Latino likely voters (68%) is far higher than among white voters (40%), and voters age 18 to 34 (70%) are far more likely than older voters to say they would vote yes. Likely voters who approve of Governor Brown’s job performance support Proposition 30 (71% yes), while strong majorities of those who disapprove are opposed (70% no). A strong majority of Obama supporters (72%) would vote yes, while a strong majority of Romney supporters (74%) would vote no. Strong majorities (74%) oppose the automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools that would be implemented if Proposition 30 fails, including 89 percent of yes voters and 58 percent of those who would vote no.

**“Proposition 30 is called the ‘Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’  
...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 30?!”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don’t know</b>
<b>All likely voters</b>		48%	44%	8%
<b>Public school parents</b>		45	46	9
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	70	22	8
	<b>Republicans</b>	20	70	11
	<b>Independents</b>	43	50	7
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	48	45	7
	<b>Women</b>	48	42	10
<b>Household income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	54	38	7
	<b>\$40,000 to under \$80,000</b>	48	42	10
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	45	48	7

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

Six in 10 likely voters say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 30 is very important to them. The belief that the outcome is very important is held by more than half across parties, but more widely held among those who would vote yes than who would vote no. Findings among likely voters were similar in September (60% very important, 28% somewhat important, 9% not too/not at all important).

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 30—  
is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All likely voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Prop. 30</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	58%	62%	56%	53%	65%	55%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	30	28	30	34	30	30
<b>Not too/not at all important</b>	8	6	10	11	4	14
<b>Don’t know</b>	3	4	3	2	–	1

**PROPOSITION 38: TAX FOR EDUCATION AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS**

Proposition 38 is an initiative placed on the November ballot by attorney Molly Munger that would increase taxes on earnings for 12 years, using a sliding scale, with revenues going to K–12 schools and early childhood programs and also, for four years, to repaying state debt. When read the Proposition 38 ballot title and label, 39 percent say they would vote yes, while 53 percent would vote no, and 9 percent are undecided. Voters were more divided in September (45% yes, 45% no). Just over half of Democrats support Proposition 38, while seven in 10 Republicans and just over half of independents are opposed. Public school parents are divided. A majority of men are opposed to Proposition 38, while women are slightly more likely to be opposed than in favor. Those with household incomes of less than \$40,000 are far more likely than more-affluent voters to support it. Younger voters (age 18 to 34) are far more likely than older voters to support Proposition 38, and Latinos are twice as likely as whites to support it (61% to 30%). Among those who would vote yes on Proposition 30, 57 percent support Proposition 38. Among those who would vote no on Proposition 30, 74 percent would also vote no on Proposition 38. In all, 28 percent would vote yes on both Proposition 30 and Proposition 38, while 32 percent would vote no on both propositions.

**“Proposition 38 is called the ‘Tax for Education and Early Childhood Programs. Initiative Statute.’... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 38?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>All likely voters</b>		39%	53%	9%
<b>Public school parents</b>		44	46	10
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	53	37	9
	<b>Republicans</b>	21	71	7
	<b>Independents</b>	39	53	9
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	36	57	7
	<b>Women</b>	41	48	11
<b>Household income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	56	39	6
	<b>\$40,000 to under \$80,000</b>	36	52	12
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	31	62	7

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

When it comes to the importance of the outcome on Proposition 38, half of likely voters say the outcome is very important to them. This perception is more widely held by Republicans (57%) than among Democrats (48%) or independents (44%). Likely voters who would vote yes are slightly more likely than those who would vote no to call the outcome very important. Findings among likely voters were similar in September (50% very important, 37% somewhat important, 9% not too/not at all important).

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 38— is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All likely voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Prop. 38</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	50%	48%	57%	44%	56%	50%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	35	35	29	43	34	37
<b>Not too/not at all important</b>	12	14	12	11	11	12
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	3	2	–	–

**PROPOSITION 31: STATE BUDGET, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

Proposition 31 is an initiative on the November ballot that would establish a two-year budget, set rules for offsetting new expenditures and for governor-enacted budget cuts in fiscal emergencies, and allow local governments to alter the application of laws governing state-funded programs. When read the ballot title and label, 24 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes, 48 percent would vote no, and 28 percent are undecided. In September, 25 percent said they would vote yes, 42 percent would vote no, and 32 percent were undecided. Proposition 31 does not have majority support from any party or ideological group or from any age, education, income, gender, racial/ethnic, or regional group. In fact, across most of these groups about one in five or more are undecided.

Eighty percent of likely voters call the state budget situation a big problem and 57 percent say that local government services have been affected a lot by state budget cuts, but how does this relate to support for Proposition 31? Among likely voters who called the budget situation a big problem, 24 percent would vote yes, 47 percent would vote no, and 29 percent are undecided. Among those who say their local government services have been affected a lot by state budget cuts, 24 percent would vote yes, 47 percent would vote no, and 30 percent are undecided.

**“Proposition 31 is called the ‘State Budget. State and Local Government. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.’...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 31?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>All likely voters</b>		24%	48%	28%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	25	45	30
	<b>Republicans</b>	24	50	26
	<b>Independents</b>	22	50	28
<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Liberals</b>	24	45	31
	<b>Moderates</b>	21	47	32
	<b>Conservatives</b>	25	52	23
<b>Household income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	26	49	24
	<b>\$40,000 to under \$80,000</b>	23	47	30
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	24	47	28

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

Regarding the importance of the outcome of the vote on Proposition 31, 24 percent of likely voters say the outcome is very important to them. Three in 10 or fewer across party groups and among yes and no voters say the outcome is very important. Findings among likely voters were similar in September (29% very important, 37% somewhat important, 19% not too/not at all important).

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 31— is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All likely voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Prop. 31</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	24%	24%	27%	23%	30%	26%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	43	42	40	47	55	49
<b>Not too/not at all important</b>	18	16	21	21	12	23
<b>Don't know</b>	14	18	13	10	2	1

**PROPOSITION 32: POLITICAL CONTRIBUTIONS BY PAYROLL DEDUCTION**

Proposition 32 is an initiative on the November ballot that would prohibit unions, corporations, and government contractors from using payroll-deducted funds for political purposes. Proposition 32 also prohibits union and corporate contributions to candidates and their committees and prohibits government contractor contributions to elected officers or their committees. When read the ballot title and label for Proposition 32, 39 percent say they would vote yes, 53 percent would vote no, and 7 percent are undecided. In September, 42 percent said they would vote yes and 49 percent would vote no. Today, a strong majority of Democrats (68%) would vote no and a majority of Republicans (56%) would vote yes. Independents are more divided (42% yes, 49% no). Similar to party findings, strong majorities of liberals (74%) are opposed, while a majority of conservatives (55%) would vote yes. Strong majorities of Latino likely voters (71%) are opposed, while whites are divided (44% yes, 47% no). More than half across age groups say they would vote no and a plurality of likely voters across income groups are opposed. Men (41% yes, 53% no) and women (38% yes, 54% no) have similar opinions of Proposition 32. Opposition to Proposition 32 is higher among college graduates than others.

**“Proposition 32 is called the ‘Political Contributions by Payroll Deduction. Contributions to Candidates. Initiative Statute.’ ...If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 32?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>All likely voters</b>		39%	53%	7%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	27	68	5
	<b>Republicans</b>	56	34	10
	<b>Independents</b>	42	49	9
<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Liberals</b>	21	74	5
	<b>Moderates</b>	39	51	10
	<b>Conservatives</b>	55	38	7
<b>Household income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	36	59	6
	<b>\$40,000 to under \$80,000</b>	44	49	7
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	38	54	7

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

Fifty-one percent of likely voters—including about half or more across parties—view the outcome of the vote on Proposition 32 as very important. Just over half of yes (56%) and no voters (51%) consider it very important, but this is up 11 points among no voters since September (from 40% to 51%). Likely voters in September were somewhat less likely to view the outcome as important (43% very important, 37% somewhat important, 16% not too/not at all important).

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 32— is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?”**

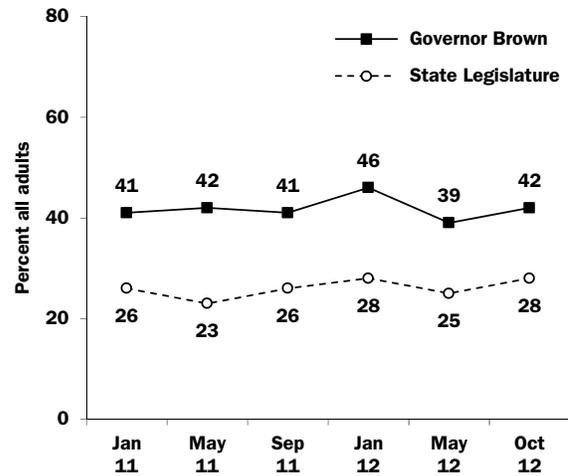
<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All likely voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Prop. 32</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	51%	48%	55%	48%	56%	51%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	35	41	30	36	35	37
<b>Not too/not at all important</b>	11	9	12	13	9	12
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	4	3	–	1

# STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

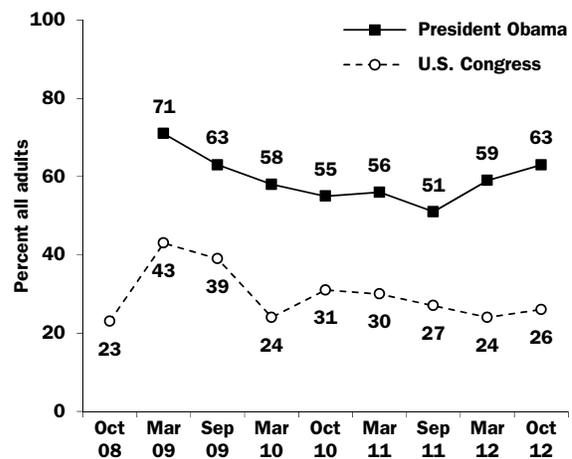
## KEY FINDINGS

- Four in 10 Californians (42%) approve of Governor Brown and 28 percent approve of the California Legislature. As President Obama approaches Election Day he has the approval of 63 percent of Californians, his highest level since September 2009; one in four approve of Congress. *(page 14)*
- Most Californians (56%) continue to name jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state. Just over half of Californians say the state is headed in the wrong direction and faces bad economic times. Meanwhile, pessimism about the direction and economic outlook of the nation as a whole has dropped markedly since 2008. *(page 15)*
- Nearly all Californians say the state budget situation is a problem and say their local government services have been affected by recent state budget cuts. *(page 16)*
- Seven in 10 Californians generally oppose raising state personal income taxes and the state sales tax; majorities favor raising state income taxes on the wealthy and taxes on corporations. *(page 17)*
- Majorities of Californians express distrust of both state and federal government. They also say that both waste a lot of taxpayer money and are pretty much run by special interests. *(pages 18, 19)*
- Strong majorities of Californians say the citizens' initiative process needs change and favor reforms to the system. *(page 20)*
- Favorable impressions of the Democratic Party are at a record high (58%). Far fewer view the Republican Party (35%) or the Tea Party movement (27%) favorably. *(page 21)*

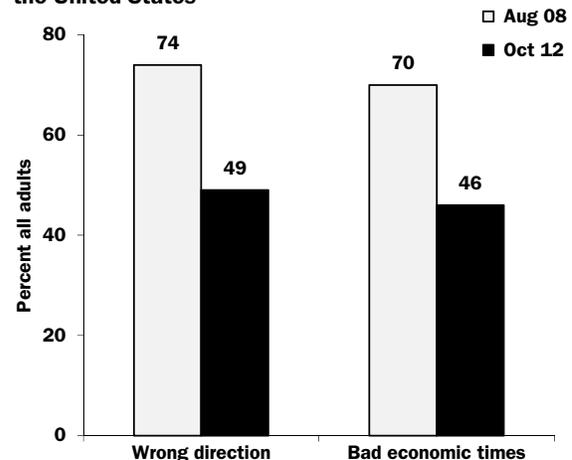
Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



Pessimism about Direction and Economic Outlook of the United States



## ELECTED OFFICIALS' APPROVAL RATINGS

Governor Brown's approval rating is at 42 percent among all adults; 37 percent disapprove and 21 percent are unsure about his job performance. Among likely voters, 45 percent approve, 43 percent disapprove, and 12 percent are unsure. Approval of Governor Brown has remained steady since he took office in January 2011; disapproval grew 9 points between January and September 2011 (19% to 28%) and is at 37 percent today. The California Legislature continues to get low approval ratings (28%). Approval is similar to last month (30%) and has not surpassed 30 percent since January 2008 (34%). Majorities across parties disapprove, with Republicans (79%) and independents (61%) being much more disapproving than Democrats (55%).

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

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	42%	61%	20%	37%	45%
	Disapprove	37	22	72	37	43
	Don't know	21	17	8	26	12
<i>The California Legislature is handling its job?</i>	Approve	28	32	12	21	21
	Disapprove	55	55	79	61	68
	Don't know	17	13	9	17	11

Less than two weeks before the general election, 63 percent of Californians approve and 35 percent disapprove of President Obama. Among likely voters, 54 percent approve and 45 percent disapprove. In February 2009 just after taking office, the president's approval rating was at 70 percent among Californians, but declined to 55 percent in October 2010 before the mid-term elections. It reached a low of 51 percent in September 2011 and has climbed steadily since then. Majorities across regions and demographic groups approve of the president (with the exception of whites at 45%). Approval is higher in the San Francisco Bay Area (76%) and Los Angeles (68%) than in the Central Valley (59%) and the Other Southern California region (52%). Approval declines as age increases. Those earning less than \$40,000 (71%) are more likely to approve of Obama than those with higher incomes.

Approval ratings of the U.S. Congress among all adults remain low at 26 percent. Fifteen percent of likely voters approve of the U.S. Congress. About one in four Californians have expressed approval of Congress in each survey this year. Approval was slightly higher in October 2010 (31%), while ratings in October 2008 (23%) were similar to today. Strong majorities across parties disapprove of Congress. Across regions and demographic groups, at least half disapprove of the U.S. Congress.

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

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	63%	86%	12%	59%	54%
	Disapprove	35	13	86	39	45
	Don't know	2	2	2	2	1
<i>The U.S. Congress is handling its job?</i>	Approve	26	21	10	17	15
	Disapprove	67	75	84	75	81
	Don't know	7	5	6	8	4

## OVERALL MOOD

Jobs and the economy (56%) continues to be named as the most important issue facing Californians today. Only 10 percent mention the state budget or deficit, while 9 percent name education and schools.

Pessimism about the direction of the state has declined somewhat since last month (60% to 53% today). Today the share of Californians having a negative outlook for the state is much lower than in other times just before a general election, October 2010 (73%) and October 2008 (71%). Californians have a somewhat more positive outlook for the nation compared to the state: 46 percent say it is headed in the right direction while 49 percent say wrong direction. Pessimism about the direction of the nation was at 74 percent in August 2008, but declined to 58 percent by October 2010 and to 49 percent today.

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

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>California</b>	<b>Right direction</b>	39%	55%	11%	28%	34%
	<b>Wrong direction</b>	53	38	85	63	60
	<b>Don't know</b>	8	7	3	9	6
<b>United States</b>	<b>Right direction</b>	46	65	10	40	42
	<b>Wrong direction</b>	49	31	88	53	55
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	2	7	3

Eight in 10 Californians believe that the state is in a recession (40% serious, 32% moderate, 8% mild). Only 18 percent say the state is not in a recession.

With jobs and the economy as their main concern and most saying the state is in a recession, how do Californians view future economic conditions? Fifty-three percent say the state will have bad times financially in the next 12 months and 37 percent say it will have good times. The share with a negative economic outlook declined 12 points between October 2008 (74%) and October 2010 (62%). It has declined another 9 points to today (53%).

Californians are divided when it comes to their assessment of the nation’s economic outlook (45% good times, 46% bad times). Seventy percent had a negative outlook for the nation in August 2008, which declined to 58 percent by September 2010, and has further declined to 46 percent today. Democrats (60% good times) are far more optimistic than independents (40%) or Republicans (18%).

### “Turning to economic conditions...”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>...in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?</b>	<b>Good times</b>	37%	48%	18%	33%	34%
	<b>Bad times</b>	53	38	73	58	53
	<b>Don't know</b>	11	14	9	9	12
<b>...do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?</b>	<b>Good times</b>	45	60	18	40	42
	<b>Bad times</b>	46	30	71	51	48
	<b>Don't know</b>	10	10	12	9	10

## STATE BUDGET SITUATION

Most Californians say that the state’s budget situation (the balance between spending and revenues) is a big (70%) or somewhat (25%) of a problem, continuing what has become a long-term trend. Since January 2008, more than six in 10 Californians have said the budget situation is a big problem. By comparison, 44 percent held that view in May 2007 before the onset of the Great Recession. Among likely voters, 80 percent consider the budget situation a big problem and 18 percent somewhat of a problem. More than seven in 10 across parties say it is a big problem, with Republicans (89%) especially likely to hold this view. The percentage saying the budget situation is a big problem increases as education and income levels rise. Whites (82%) are much more likely than Asians (63%) or Latinos (55%) to hold this view.

Nearly nine in 10 Californians say their local government services have been affected (59% a lot, 29% somewhat) by recent state budget cuts. Democrats are more likely than Republicans and independents to say local services have been affected a lot. Los Angeles residents (65%) are the most likely to hold this view, but majorities in other regions have also noticed large effects. This perception decreases as income and education levels rise. Women (64%) and Latinos (71%) are more likely than men (54%), whites (53%), and Asians (43%) to have noticed large cuts.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Affected a lot</b>	59%	64%	45%	53%	57%
<b>Affected somewhat</b>	29	28	35	30	31
<b>Not affected</b>	8	6	14	12	9
<b>Don’t know</b>	4	2	6	5	3

The balanced budget enacted in July relies on voters passing Proposition 30 to avoid automatic spending cuts, primarily to K–12 schools. If the ballot measure fails, how do Californians prefer to resolve the ensuing deficit? Four in 10 prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases (39%) while four in 10 (37%) prefer mostly spending cuts. Just one in 10 prefer mostly tax increases. Findings are similar among likely voters. While Republicans (63%) prefer mostly spending cuts, majorities of Democrats (51% mix of cuts and taxes, 14% mostly tax increases) and independents (45% mix of cuts and taxes, 10% mostly tax increases) prefer a solution that includes taxes. Findings among all adults were similar last month.

**“As you may know, the state government currently has an annual general fund budget of around \$91 billion and will face a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues if a ballot initiative to raise taxes does not pass in November. How would you prefer to deal with the state’s potential budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>A mix of spending cuts and tax increases</b>	39%	51%	29%	45%	43%
<b>Mostly through spending cuts</b>	37	24	63	36	40
<b>Mostly through tax increases</b>	11	14	3	10	11
<b>Okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit</b>	7	5	1	2	3
<b>Other</b>	1	1	2	3	2
<b>Don’t know</b>	6	5	2	4	3

## RAISING REVENUES

Several measures that would raise taxes are on the November ballot, but how do Californians feel about raising taxes more generally? Among four types of taxes we find majority support for increasing income taxes on the wealthy and for raising corporate taxes, and strong opposition to raising either the state sales tax or state personal income taxes.

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

<i>All adults</i>	<b>Raising state personal income taxes</b>	<b>Raising the top rate of the state income tax paid by the wealthiest Californians</b>	<b>Raising the state sales tax</b>	<b>Raising the state taxes paid by California corporations</b>
<b>Favor</b>	24%	66%	28%	59%
<b>Oppose</b>	72	29	69	35
<b>Don't know</b>	3	4	3	5

Proposition 38 on the November ballot would temporarily increase state personal income taxes on a sliding scale for nearly all residents to raise revenues for schools, early childhood programs, and initially to pay some state debt obligations. Just one in four Californians and likely voters support the idea of raising income taxes in general. Fewer than 35 percent across parties, regions, and demographic groups support this idea.

Nevertheless, two in three Californians and likely voters do support the idea, in general, of increasing income taxes on the wealthy. Proposition 30, promoted by Governor Brown, would temporarily increase taxes on residents earning over \$250,000 annually to raise revenues for schools. While Republicans oppose the general idea of raising taxes on the wealthiest residents, majorities of Democrats, independents, and Californians across regions and demographic groups favor this idea.

Proposition 30 would also temporarily raise the state sales tax by ¼ cent. When it comes to the general idea of raising the sales tax, about three in 10 Californians and likely voters express support. Democrats are more likely to favor the idea than independents and Republicans, but support falls short of a majority even among Democrats. It also falls short across all regions and demographic groups.

Proposition 39, to fund clean energy projects, would seek a single sales factor for multi-state corporations, which could lead to tax increases for many businesses. In general, a majority of Californians and likely voters favor increasing corporate taxes, but the idea sharply divides voters along party lines.

<i>Percent in favor of tax increase</i>		<b>Personal income taxes</b>	<b>Tax on the wealthy</b>	<b>Sales tax</b>	<b>Corporate tax</b>
<b>All adults</b>		24%	66%	28%	59%
<b>Likely voters</b>		25	64	32	55
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	34	87	38	78
	<b>Republicans</b>	8	33	16	29
	<b>Independents</b>	26	59	28	54
<b>Region</b>	<b>Central Valley</b>	26	61	28	54
	<b>San Francisco Bay Area</b>	30	78	42	63
	<b>Los Angeles</b>	21	73	26	66
	<b>Other Southern California</b>	21	56	20	52
<b>Household income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	25	72	26	69
	<b>\$40,000 to under \$80,000</b>	25	65	29	58
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	24	64	30	49

## TRUST IN STATE GOVERNMENT

Californians are considering the option of raising taxes through state propositions on the November ballot, but most do not trust the state government in Sacramento. Today, just 27 percent of all adults and 22 percent of likely voters say they trust the state government to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Before the statewide general election two years ago, even fewer adults (18%) and likely voters (15%) expressed these levels of trust. Today, strong majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents say that they can trust the state government to do what is right only some of the time or they volunteer a response of “none of the time.”

In addition, strong majorities of adults (67%) and likely voters (71%) say that the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves. In October 2010, a somewhat higher 75 percent of adults and 79 percent of likely voters also expressed this view. Today, Republicans (83%) and independents (74%) are more likely than Democrats (63%) to have this view of state government.

### “How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Just about always</b>	4%	3%	1%	1%	2%
<b>Most of the time</b>	23	27	8	24	20
<b>Only some of the time</b>	63	66	73	57	68
<b>None of the time (volunteered)</b>	8	2	17	17	10
<b>Don't know</b>	2	1	1	1	1

Six in 10 adults and likely voters (60% each) also say that the people in the state government waste a lot of taxpayer money. In October 2010, a slightly higher proportion of adults (66%) and likely voters (67%) held this view. Similarly, independents today are much less likely than they were two years ago to perceive a lot of waste (51% today, 69% 2010). Republicans' views are similar (74% today, 80% 2010) and Democrats' views are unchanged (53% today, 54% 2010).

Among the likely voters that say the state government wastes a lot of taxpayer money, 35 percent would vote yes on Proposition 30, while 56 percent would vote no.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>A lot</b>	60%	53%	74%	51%	60%
<b>Some</b>	32	36	23	43	33
<b>Don't waste very much</b>	6	8	1	5	6
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	1	1	2

## TRUST IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Californians are preparing to go to the polls in a national election, but most do not express trust in the federal government. Today, just 31 percent of adults and 25 percent of likely voters say they trust the federal government to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Four years ago during the month before the national election, slightly fewer adults (22%) and a similar 20 percent of likely voters expressed these views. Today, majorities across all parties and demographic groups say they can trust the federal government only some or none of the time. Democratic voters are much more likely than Republicans or independents—and Latinos (44%) and Asians (38%) are more likely than whites (21%)—to say they trust the federal government just about always or most of the time.

Majorities of adults (57%) and likely voters (60%) also say that the people in the federal government waste a lot taxpayer money. In October 2008, a much higher proportion of adults (74%) and likely voters (77%) said this. What accounts for the change? Democratic (73% 2008, 49% today) and independent voters (72% 2008, 54% today) are much less likely—and Republicans (80% 2008, 74% today) slightly less likely—to perceive a lot of waste in federal spending.

**“How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington today to do what is right?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Just about always</b>	7%	8%	3%	2%	5%
<b>Most of the time</b>	24	25	11	19	20
<b>Only some of the time</b>	63	63	76	67	68
<b>None of the time (volunteered)</b>	5	2	10	11	6
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	–	1	–

Strong majorities of adults (67%) and likely voters (73%) say that the federal government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking after themselves. In October 2008, a somewhat higher 74 percent of adults and a similar 78 percent of likely voters expressed this view. Today, Republicans (83%) are more likely than independents (71%) and Democrats (69%) to hold this view. Latinos (56%) and Asians (60%) are much less likely than whites (77%) to say the federal government is run by a few big interests. Among those who say the federal government is pretty much run by a few big interests, likely voters are evenly divided in their preferences for president (47% Obama, 47% Romney) and control of Congress (45% controlled by Republicans, 46% controlled by Democrats).

**“Would you say the federal 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?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>A few big interests</b>	67%	69%	83%	71%	73%
<b>Benefit of all the people</b>	28	26	13	25	23
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	4	4	5

## INITIATIVE PROCESS AND REFORMS

Voters will be deciding the outcome of 11 state propositions in November, including tax measures, all placed on the ballot through the initiative process. What do Californians think of this process? More than four in 10 (46%) say it is in need of major changes, one in four (26%) say minor changes, and 21 percent say it is fine the way it is. The share saying major changes are needed is 10 points higher today than in September 2008 (36%), and was at a high of 52 percent in October 2010. Democrats (50%) are more likely than independents (38%) and Republicans (35%) to say major changes are needed. Latinos (60%) are much more likely than whites (40%) and Asians (29%) to hold this view. The share saying major changes are needed to the process declines as income rises and is higher among those with a high school education only (54%) than among those with higher education levels (41% some college, 39% college graduate).

### “Do you think the citizens’ initiative process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Major changes</b>	46%	50%	35%	38%	40%
<b>Minor changes</b>	26	26	29	38	30
<b>Fine the way it is</b>	21	17	28	19	23
<b>Don't know</b>	7	6	7	5	7

Overwhelming majorities express support for two potential reforms to the initiative process. The first reform involves having a period of time in which the initiative sponsor and the legislature could meet to see if a compromise solution is possible before initiatives go to the ballot. Eight in 10 adults and likely voters favor this idea. Since we first asked this question in October 2005, 75 percent or more have favored it. Across parties, support is slightly higher among Democrats (85%) than among independents and Republicans (76% each). Across regions and demographic groups, more than three in four favor this reform.

The second reform involves increasing public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns. Three in four adults (77%) and 84 percent of likely voters favor this idea. Over 70 percent of Californians have supported it in each of the six times we have asked this question. The level of support is nearly identical across parties, with eight in 10 saying they favor this idea. More than two in three across regions and demographic groups express support.

### “Reforms have been suggested to address issues that arise in the initiative process. Please say whether you would favor or oppose each of the following reform proposals. How about...”

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...having a period of time in which the initiative sponsor and the legislature could meet to see if there is a compromise solution before initiatives go to the ballot?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	81%	85%	76%	76%	79%
	<b>Oppose</b>	14	12	20	18	17
	<b>Don't know</b>	5	3	4	6	4
<i>...increasing public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	77	81	81	80	84
	<b>Oppose</b>	16	13	15	14	12
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	6	3	6	4

**PARTY PERCEPTIONS**

Have Californians’ perceptions of the major political parties changed in the course of a bitter partisan campaign this year? Today, 58 percent of all adults and 53 percent of likely voters hold favorable impressions of the Democratic Party, up from 47 percent among all adults and 44 percent among likely voters last September and in October 2010. Favorable impressions of the Democratic Party are at a record high today. Favorable impressions of the Republican Party have improved slightly since 2010 among adults (28% October 2010, 32% September 2011, 35% today) and likely voters (31% 2010, 30% 2011, 38% today). Following past trends, Democrats today have more favorable views of their party than Republicans have of their party. While a solid majority of independents have an unfavorable view of the Republican Party (62%), they are divided about the Democratic Party (46% favorable, 46% unfavorable).

Meanwhile, favorable perceptions of the Tea Party movement among adults (27%) and likely voters (32%) are slightly lower than favorable ratings of the Republican Party. Compared to last September, favorable impressions of the Tea Party are similar for all adults (24% to 27% today) and unchanged among likely voters (32% to 32%). Favorable perceptions among adults and likely voters were also similar in October 2010 (27% adults, 35% likely voters). As in past surveys, majorities of Republicans today have favorable impressions of the Tea Party movement, while majorities of Democrats and independents have unfavorable impressions.

**“Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the...”**

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Democratic Party?</b>	<b>Favorable</b>	58%	86%	16%	46%	53%
	<b>Unfavorable</b>	35	11	81	46	44
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	3	3	8	3
<b>Republican Party?</b>	<b>Favorable</b>	35	14	72	29	38
	<b>Unfavorable</b>	56	82	24	62	58
	<b>Don't know</b>	9	4	5	9	4
<b>The political movement known as the Tea Party?</b>	<b>Favorable</b>	27	10	63	24	32
	<b>Unfavorable</b>	49	74	26	58	56
	<b>Don't know</b>	24	16	11	18	12

When asked whether the major parties do an adequate job of representing the American people, 44 percent of all adults and 42 percent of likely voters say they do. About half of adults and likely voters say a third party is needed, including 59 percent of independents, 48 percent of Democrats, and 45 percent of Republicans. Californians are about as likely to say a third party is needed today (48%) as they were in September 2008 (52%).

**“In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Adequate job</b>	44%	45%	49%	35%	42%
<b>Third party is needed</b>	48	48	45	59	52
<b>Don't know</b>	8	6	6	6	7

# REGIONAL MAP

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# METHODOLOGY

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

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 2,006 California adult residents, including 1,605 interviewed on landline telephones and 401 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from October 14 to 21, 2012.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phones were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving).

Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement to help defray the cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

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

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

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 3.2$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total sample of 2,006 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100,

the results will be within 3.2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,320 registered voters, it is  $\pm 3.6$  percent; for the 993 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.0$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

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

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

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in a national survey by NBC/Wall Street Journal. Additional details about our methodology can be found at [www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf) and are available upon request through [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org).

# QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

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## CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

October 14–21, 2012

2,006 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 3.2\%$  AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
**PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING**

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?  
  
*[code, don't read]*  
56% jobs, economy  
10 state budget, deficit, taxes  
9 education, schools  
4 gas prices  
3 immigration, illegal immigration  
2 crime, gangs, drugs  
2 government in general  
2 health care, health costs  
9 other  
3 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?  
42% approve  
37 disapprove  
21 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?  
28% approve  
55 disapprove  
17 don't know
4. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?  
39% right direction  
53 wrong direction  
8 don't know
5. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?  
37% good times  
53 bad times  
11 don't know
6. Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (*if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?*)  
40% yes, serious recession  
32 yes, moderate recession  
8 yes, mild recession  
18 no  
2 don't know
7. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?  
66% yes *[ask q7a]*  
34 no *[skip to q8b]*

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

- 45% Democrat *[ask q8]*
- 32 Republican *[ask q8a]*
- 3 another party *(specify) [skip to q9]*
- 21 independent *[skip to q8b]*

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

- 65% strong
- 34 not very strong
- 1 don't know

***[skip to q9]***

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

- 65% strong
- 33 not very strong
- 2 don't know

***[skip to q9]***

8b. ***[independents and those not registered to vote]***

Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 24% Republican Party
- 47 Democratic Party
- 21 neither *(volunteered)*
- 8 don't know

***[questions 9-22 reported for likely voters only]***

9. ***[likely voters only]*** Next, if the November 6th presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: ***[rotate]*** (1) the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden ***[or]*** (2) the Republican ticket of Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan?

- 53% Barack Obama and Joe Biden
- 41 Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan
- 2 someone else *(specify)*
- 4 don't know

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

- 69% satisfied
- 29 not satisfied
- 2 don't know

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

- 58% very closely
- 35 fairly closely
- 6 not too closely
- 1 not at all closely
- don't know

12. ***[likely voters only]*** Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual, or less enthusiastic?

- 61% more enthusiastic
- 27 less enthusiastic
- 11 same/neither *(volunteered)*
- 1 don't know

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

- 39% controlled by Republicans
- 52 controlled by Democrats
- 5 neither *(volunteered)*
- 4 don't know

Next, we have a few questions to ask you about some of the propositions on the November ballot.

14. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 30 is called the “Temporary Taxes to Fund Education. Guaranteed Local Public Safety Funding. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It increases taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by ¼ cent for four years, to fund schools. It guarantees public safety realignment funding. Fiscal impact is increased state tax revenues through 2018–19, averaging about \$6 billion annually over the next few years, revenues available for funding state budget, and in 2012–13, planned spending reductions, primarily to education programs, would not occur. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 30?

48% yes  
44 no  
8 don't know

15. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 30—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

58% very important  
30 somewhat important  
7 not too important  
1 not at all important  
3 don't know

16. **[likely voters only]** If voters reject Proposition 30, automatic spending cuts would be made to K–12 public schools. Do you favor or oppose these automatic spending cuts to K–12 public schools?

21% favor  
74 oppose  
5 don't know

17. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 31 is called the “State Budget. State and Local Government. Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.” It establishes a two-year state budget, sets rules for offsetting new expenditures, and governor budget cuts in fiscal emergencies. Local governments can alter application of laws governing state-funded programs. Fiscal impact is decreased state sales tax revenues of \$200 million annually, with corresponding increases of funding to local governments. Other, potentially more significant changes in state and local budgets, depending on future decisions by public officials. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 31?

24% yes  
48 no  
28 don't know

18. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 31—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

24% very important  
43 somewhat important  
14 not too important  
4 not at all important  
14 don't know

19. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 32 is called the “Political Contributions by Payroll Deduction. Contributions to Candidates. Initiative Statute.” It prohibits unions from using payroll-deducted funds for political purposes, and applies same use prohibition to payroll deductions, if any, by corporations or government contractors. It prohibits union and corporate contributions to candidates and their committees and prohibits government contractor contributions to elected officers or their committees. Fiscal impact is increased costs to state and local government, potentially exceeding \$1 million annually, to implement and enforce the measure’s requirements. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 32?

- 39% yes
- 53 no
- 7 don’t know

20. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 32—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 51% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 9 not too important
- 2 not at all important
- 3 don’t know

21. **[likely voters only]** Proposition 38 is called the “Tax for Education and Early Childhood Programs. Initiative Statute.” It increases taxes on earnings using a sliding scale, for twelve years. Revenues go to K–12 schools and early childhood programs, and for four years to repaying state debt. Fiscal impact is increased state tax revenues for 12 years—roughly \$10 billion annually in initial years, tending to grow over time. Funds used for schools, child care, and preschool, as well as providing savings on state debt payments. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 38?

- 39% yes
- 53 no
- 9 don’t know

22. **[likely voters only]** How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 38—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

- 50% very important
- 35 somewhat important
- 10 not too important
- 2 not at all important
- 3 don’t know

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

- 70% big problem
- 25 somewhat of a problem
- 2 not a problem
- 2 don’t know

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

- 59% affected a lot
- 29 affected somewhat
- 8 not affected
- 4 don’t know

25. As you may know, the state government currently has an annual general fund budget of around \$91 billion and will face a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues if a ballot initiative to raise taxes does not pass in November. How would you prefer to deal with the state's potential budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?

- 37% mostly through spending cuts
- 11 mostly through tax increases
- 39 through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases
- 7 okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

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

**[rotate questions 26 to 29]**

26. Do you favor or oppose raising state personal income taxes?

- 24% favor
- 72 oppose
- 3 don't know

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

- 66% favor
- 29 oppose
- 4 don't know

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

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

29. Do you favor or oppose raising the state taxes paid by California corporations?

- 59% favor
- 35 oppose
- 5 don't know

Changing topics,

30. How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- 4% just about always
- 23 most of the time
- 63 only some of the time
- 8 none of the time (*volunteered*)
- 2 don't know

31. Would you say the state 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?

- 67% a few big interests
- 26 benefit of all of the people
- 7 don't know

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

- 60% a lot
- 32 some
- 6 don't waste very much
- 3 don't know

On another topic, California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have issues put on the ballot—as state propositions—for voter approval or rejection.

33. Do you think the citizens' initiative process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or that it is basically fine the way it is?

- 46% major changes
- 26 minor changes
- 21 fine the way it is
- 7 don't know

Reforms have been suggested to address issues that arise in the initiative process. Please say whether you would favor or oppose each of the following reform proposals.

**[rotate questions 34 and 35]**

34. How about increasing public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns?

- 77% favor
- 16 oppose
- 7 don't know

35. How about having a period of time in which the initiative sponsor and the legislature could meet to see if there is a compromise solution before initiatives go to the ballot?

- 81% favor
- 14 oppose
- 5 don't know

On another topic,

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

- 63% approve
- 35 disapprove
- 2 don't know

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

- 26% approve
- 67 disapprove
- 7 don't know

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

- 46% right direction
- 49 wrong direction
- 5 don't know

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

- 45% good times
- 46 bad times
- 10 don't know

40. Next, how much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington today to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- 7% just about always
- 24 most of the time
- 63 only some of the time
- 5 none of the time (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

41. Would you say the federal 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?

- 67% a few big interests
- 28 benefit of all of the people
- 5 don't know

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

- 57% a lot
- 35 some
- 7 don't waste very much
- 2 don't know

Changing topics,

**[rotate questions 43 and 44]**

43. Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Democratic Party?

- 58% favorable
- 35 unfavorable
- 7 don't know

44. Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Republican Party?

- 35% favorable
- 56 unfavorable
- 9 don't know

45. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the political movement known as the Tea Party?

- 27% favorable
- 49 unfavorable
- 24 don't know

46. In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?

- 44% adequate job
- 48 third party is needed
- 8 don't know

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

- 12% very liberal
- 20 somewhat liberal
- 30 middle-of-the-road
- 22 somewhat conservative
- 14 very conservative
- 3 don't know

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

- 26% great deal
- 39 fair amount
- 29 only a little
- 6 none
- don't know

***[d1–d19: demographic questions]***

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

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