

# PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

DECEMBER 2011

# 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. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 122nd PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database of responses from more than 258,000 Californians.

This survey is the 49th in the *Californians and Their Government* series, which is conducted periodically to examine the social, economic, and political trends that influence public policy preferences and ballot choices. The series is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. This survey seeks to inform decisionmakers, raise public awareness, and stimulate policy discussions and debate about important state and national issues, with a particular focus on the economy and budget issues.

Economic uncertainty—fueled by double-digit unemployment in California, state and federal budget deficits, and the European financial crisis—serves as the backdrop for this survey. At the state level, potential automatic spending cuts to K–12 education, higher education, health and human services, and public safety loom large. To deal with the state budget deficit, Governor Jerry Brown recently introduced a pension reform plan and re-introduced the idea of raising new revenues to reduce the state’s budget gap. Nationally, the failure of the Congressional supercommittee to reach agreement on a deficit reduction package may mean substantial, automatic budget cuts in 2013. President Barack Obama continues to promote his American Jobs Act while Congress tries to find a way to extend a temporary reduction in employees’ share of the Social Security payroll tax. Meanwhile, the Occupy movement has the media’s attention daily.

This survey presents the responses of 2,003 adult residents throughout the state, interviewed in English or Spanish and contacted by landline or cell phone. It includes findings on these topics:

- State issues, including approval ratings of Governor Brown and the state legislature; overall mood, perceptions of current and future economic conditions, concern about job loss, and assessments of current and future personal finances; trust in state government; attitudes toward the state’s budget situation and support for the governor’s newly introduced tax plan; perceptions of the state and local relationship and corrections realignment; and preferences for possible reforms to the state and local pension system.
- National issues, including presidential candidate preference in the Republican primary, preference in a hypothetical matchup of the Republican candidate and President Obama, satisfaction with choices of candidates, and attention to election news; approval of President Obama and Congress; political trust at the federal level; perceptions of which political party could better handle jobs and the economy and the federal budget and taxes, and which party is responsible for the failure of the supercommittee; preferences for reducing the federal budget deficit; attitudes toward the Occupy and Tea Party movements; and perceptions of income inequality and preferences for government involvement in economic mobility.
- Time trends, national comparisons, and the extent to which Californians may differ in their perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding state and national issues, based on their political party affiliation, 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. PST on Monday, December 12, 2011.

**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**

#### **Most Favor Governor's Tax Proposal**

##### **'TRIGGER CUTS' RAISE CONCERNS, PENSION REFORMS GET SUPPORT**

SAN FRANCISCO, December 12, 2011—Most Californians favor Governor Jerry Brown's proposal to temporarily increase the state sales tax and the income taxes of high earners, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. Sixty-five percent of all adults and 60 percent of likely voters favor the proposal, while 28 percent of adults and 36 percent of likely voters oppose it.

The survey offers an early look at Californians' views of the plan the governor hopes to put before voters in November to help close the budget deficit. It would raise \$7 billion a year by increasing the sales tax a half-cent for four years and the income taxes of individuals earning more than \$250,000 for five years.

Brown's proposal—and competing tax plans being offered by others—comes at a time when nearly all Californians (93%) say the state's budget situation is a problem. Most residents (62%) say their local government services—those provided by cities, counties, and public schools—have been affected a lot by recent budget cuts.

In Brown's plan, money from the tax increases would go to K–12 schools. When Californians are asked a follow-up question about how they view his proposal if new revenue were to go directly to schools, 70 percent of all adults and 58 percent of likely voters favor it (27% all adults, 37% likely voters opposed).

"The governor's plan includes some of the most popular ideas for raising taxes—higher taxes on the wealthy and more money for schools," says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. "At the same time, the major challenges in asking Californians to pass state tax increases are the low approval ratings of state elected officials and high levels of distrust in government."

California faces automatic spending cuts in January to make up the state's budget gap if—as expected—projected revenues fall short. Cuts would be made to K–12 schools, higher education, health and human services, and public safety. When residents are read a description of possible cuts, a plurality (41%) prefer to close the budget gap with a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Fewer—30 percent—prefer to close it mainly with spending cuts (11% say mostly tax increases and 9% say it is okay to run a deficit).

With K–12 education making up a large share of the expected "trigger cuts," a strong majority (85%) of Californians are concerned (53% very, 32% somewhat) about the potential effects on public schools.

#### **BROWN'S APPROVAL RATING AT 42 PERCENT—46 PERCENT AMONG LIKELY VOTERS**

Californians couple their concerns about the impact of cuts with a widespread distrust of state government: 74 percent say they trust the state government to do what is right only some of the time

or never, 57 percent say the people in state government waste a lot of taxpayer money, and 67 percent say the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves and not for the benefit of all of the people.

Asked about their elected officials, 42 percent Californians approve of the job the governor is doing (30% disapprove, 28% don't know), similar to ratings they have given him all year, except for declines in approval in February and March (34% each). Among likely voters, 46 percent approve, 36 percent disapprove, and 17 percent don't know. About half of Democrats (55%) approve of the governor and the same proportion of Republicans (55%) disapprove.

The legislature's approval rating is once again lower than Brown's (25% adults, 16% likely voters).

## **RESIDENTS—INCLUDING PUBLIC EMPLOYEES—SUPPORT PENSION REFORMS**

The amount of money that state and local governments spend on public employee pensions or retirement systems is a concern for Californians, with a strong majority (83%) saying it is a problem (44% big problem, 39% somewhat of a problem). Brown has offered a pension reform plan, and there may be others on the November ballot. The PPIC survey asked about three key ideas in the governor's plan and found support for all three among all adults and current public employees. Both groups favor:

- Increasing the amount that new and current public employees contribute to the annual cost of their pensions so that they pay a share equal to what employers contribute (70% adults, 62% public employees);
- Changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan (68% adults, 64% public employees); and
- Basing a new public employee's pension benefits on the highest average annual compensation over a three-year period rather than on a single year of employment (60% adults, 66% public employees).

## **PESSIMISTIC ABOUT STATE'S FISCAL FUTURE, MORE HOPE FOR THEIR OWN**

Pessimism about the state's economy persists, with most Californians naming jobs and the economy the most important issue facing the state (63%) and saying that the state faces bad times in the next year (60%). Nearly half of Californians are concerned (27% very concerned, 20% somewhat concerned) about job loss in their families in the next year. However, while 43 percent of residents say the state is in a serious recession, the share of Californians who hold this view is down from a high of 63 percent in March 2009 and is at its lowest point since October 2008 (39%).

When it comes to their personal financial situations, strong majorities of Californians say they are only in fair shape (41%) or poor shape (25%). Far fewer say they are in excellent (6%) or good (27%) shape. About half (49%) say their financial situations are just about the same today as a year ago, while 35 percent say they are worse off and 15 percent say they are better off.

Looking ahead, Californians see better times ahead for themselves in the coming year than they do for the state's economy. Over half (53%) say their financial situations will improve a lot (7%) or some (46%).

## **MORE LIKELY TO SEE THEMSELVES AS 'HAVE-NOTS' THAN 'HAVES'**

With income inequality the focus of discussion nationwide, a solid majority of Californians (63%) say their own state is divided into the haves and have-nots—a similar result to September 2002 (61%). Across parties, 70 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of independents say the state is divided this way, while Republicans are split (48% divided, 46% not divided). When asked to categorize themselves, 48 percent say they belong to the have-nots, 39 percent of residents say are among the haves, and 8 percent volunteer that they are in neither group. By comparison, a national survey by the Pew Research Center/*Washington Post* found that more adults saw themselves as haves (48%) than have-nots (34%).

These findings are reflected in a significant shift among Californians: today, more than half (54%) believe that the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to get ahead, and 37 percent say people already have equal opportunity. In 2002, the reverse was true (52% equal opportunity, 43% government should do more).

### **SUPPORT HIGHER FOR OCCUPY THAN FOR TEA PARTY MOVEMENT**

Californians are more likely to support (46%) than oppose (37%) the Occupy Wall Street movement, and they are more likely to oppose (42%) than support (35%) the Tea Party movement. Nationwide, adults surveyed in a November ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, had similar views of the Occupy movement (44% support, 41% oppose) but were more divided on the Tea Party (43% support, 44% oppose).

Californians are divided about the influence of Wall Street on the U.S. economy, with 40 percent saying Wall Street helps more than it hurts and 44 percent saying it hurts more than helps.

### **OBAMA APPROVAL NEAR RECORD LOW, BUT HE IS FAVORED OVER GOP**

Heading into an election year, just over half of Californians (53%) approve of President Barack Obama's job performance, with likely voters more divided (48% approve, 47% disapprove). This is similar to Obama's record-low approval rating in September (51% all adults, 47% likely voters).

In the Republican presidential race, Newt Gingrich (33%) leads among GOP likely voters, followed by Mitt Romney (25%). There is far less support for Ron Paul (9%), Michelle Bachmann (7%), Rick Perry (4%), Rick Santorum (4%), and Jon Huntsman (2%). In a matchup of Obama and a hypothetical GOP candidate, the president leads by 12 points (50% to 38%) among all likely voters (11% unsure).

How do likely voters feel about their choice of candidates? They are divided, with 49 percent satisfied and 45 percent unsatisfied. Most Democrats (57%) are satisfied, while Republicans are as likely to be satisfied (47%) as not (47%). Most independents (58%) are not satisfied.

### **TRUST IN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DROPS**

In the aftermath of the congressional supercommittee's failure to reach an agreement on reducing the federal deficit, a record-low 20 percent of Californians approve of the way Congress is handling its job. Just 9 percent of likely voters approve.

Distrust of the federal government more broadly has increased 10 points since October 2010: today, 79 percent say they trust the federal government only some of the time or never (69% 2010). And 73 percent say the federal government is pretty much run by a few big interests, rather than for the benefit of all the people (21%). Likely voters are even more negative (85% few big interests, 11% benefit of all). Does the federal government waste a lot of tax money? Most Californians (63%) think so.

Californians are more likely to blame Republicans in Congress (44%) than Democrats (21%) for the supercommittee's failure to reach agreement. Twenty-two percent volunteer that they blame both parties.

How should the federal deficit be reduced? Most Californians say closing tax loopholes for large businesses (69%) and increasing taxes on wealthy Americans (57%) should play a major role. Less than half say that reducing defense (46%) or Medicare (26%) spending should play a major role.

### **MORE KEY FINDINGS**

#### ■ **Most confident county can handle new responsibilities**—page 14

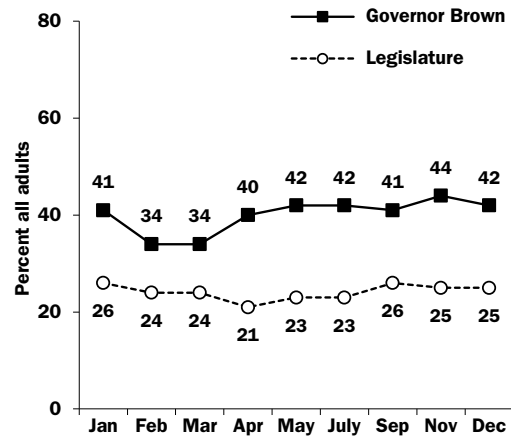
State-local government realignment has strong support (69% in favor), and 63 percent express confidence that their counties can handle the shift in responsibility from the state. Fewer (53%) are confident their counties can handle the ongoing shift of state prisoners to county jails.

# STATE ISSUES

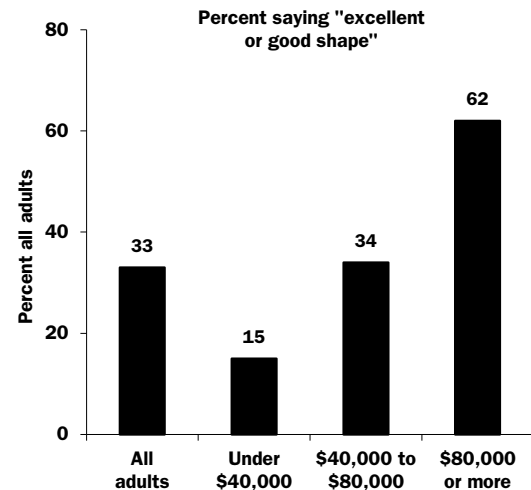
## KEY FINDINGS

- Four in 10 Californians approve of Governor Brown's job performance, while one in four approve of the state legislature's. (page 7)
- Most Californians name jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state, and they expect bad economic times. Eight in 10 say the state is in an economic recession. (page 8)
- One in three adults rate their own personal financial situation as excellent or good and half say it is about the same as a year ago. Looking forward a year, just over half expect their financial situation to improve a lot (7%) or some (46%). (page 9)
- Three in four Californians say that state government can be trusted to do what is right only some of the time or never. Two in three say the state is pretty much run by a few big interests and 57 percent say the state government wastes a lot of taxpayer money. (page 10)
- Seven in 10 Californians call the state budget situation a big problem and 53 percent are very concerned about the potential effects of automatic spending cuts on K-12 education. Solid majorities support Governor Brown's recent tax proposal. To resolve the state budget deficit, a plurality prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases (41%). (pages 11-13)
- A strong majority (69%) continue to favor the idea of state and local realignment. Fifty-three percent express confidence in their local government to handle the shift of state prisoners to county jails. (page 14)
- Forty-four percent of Californians say the amount of money spent on public employee pensions is a big problem and majorities support reforms to the system. (page 15)

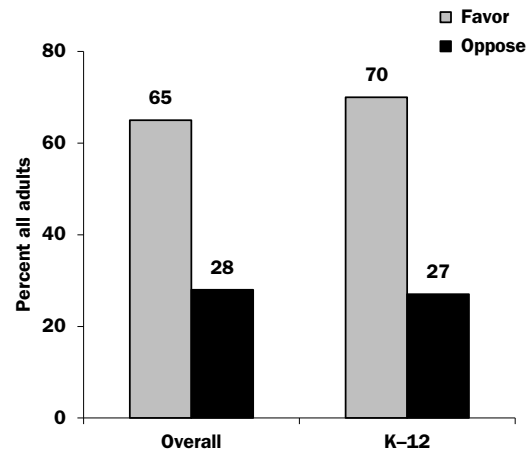
2011 Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Personal Financial Situation, by Income



Support For Governor Brown's Tax Plan Overall and if New Revenues Went Directly to K-12 Schools



## APPROVAL RATINGS OF STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS

A solid majority of Californians (61%) say things in California are generally going in the wrong direction; 30 percent say they're going in the right direction. The share saying wrong direction has grown somewhat since January (54%), and has been at least 60 percent since May (61% May, 60% June, 61% September, 61% today). Majorities have been pessimistic about the state's direction since December 2007.

Four in 10 residents (42%) approve of the way Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California. Except in February and March (34% each), the share approving of the governor has been about 42 percent in 2011. Today, residents are as likely to disapprove (30%) as they are to be unsure (28%) of his performance. Since the governor took office in January, the percentage who are unsure of his performance has declined (from 39% in January to 28% today), while the share who disapprove has grown (from 19% in January to 30% today).

Likely voters are slightly more likely than all adults to disapprove (36%) but are less likely to be unsure (17%). More than half of Democrats (55%) approve of the governor; the same proportion of Republicans (55%) disapprove. Independents are divided, with 41 percent approving and 36 percent disapproving. One in four across parties (23% each) are unsure of the governor's performance. Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area residents are most approving (51%), followed by those in Los Angeles (41%), the Other Southern California region (38%), and the Central Valley (34%).

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Approve</b>	42%	55%	22%	41%	46%
<b>Disapprove</b>	30	21	55	36	36
<b>Don't know</b>	28	23	23	23	17

Californians' approval of the state legislature remains lower than that of the governor's. One in four (25%) approve, more than half disapprove (55%), and 20 percent are unsure of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job. More than half have disapproved of the legislature all year. Disapproval of the legislature was higher in 2010, when more than two in three expressed disapproval. Likely voters (69%) are much more likely than adults (55%) to disapprove. Strong majorities of independents (75%) and Republicans (71%) disapprove, compared to 54 percent of Democrats. Disapproval is highest among Central Valley residents (68%) and lowest in Los Angeles (48%), while just over half of San Francisco Bay Area (54%) and Other Southern California (53%) residents disapprove. Whites (67%) are far more likely than Asians (48%) and nearly twice as likely as Latinos (35%) to disapprove of the legislature's job performance.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Approve</b>	25%	22%	17%	13%	16%
<b>Disapprove</b>	55	54	71	75	69
<b>Don't know</b>	20	24	12	13	15

## STATE ECONOMY

Six in 10 Californians (63%) name jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing California today. Far fewer mention education and schools (8%), immigration (6%), or the state budget, deficit, and taxes (6%). Mention of jobs and the economy is similar to September (67%) and slightly higher than May (57%), March (53%), and February (57%). Jobs and the economy has topped the list of most important issues since March 2008 (35%), and the share mentioning it has grown significantly since then.

Californians remain pessimistic about future economic conditions, with six in 10 saying that during the next 12 months the state will have bad times financially. The share expecting bad times was 56 percent at the beginning of the year, grew to 67 percent in September, and has decreased to 60 percent today. Since September 2007 majorities have expected bad times; the share holding this view peaked in June and July 2008 (78% each). Those with household incomes under \$40,000 (51%) are much less likely than higher income groups (67% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 66% \$80,000 or more) to say the state will face bad times. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (80%) say the state will face bad times, compared to fewer independents (67%) and Democrats (53%). Central Valley (64%) and Other Southern California (67%) residents are more pessimistic than San Francisco Bay Area (58%) and Los Angeles (53%) residents. Whites (68%) are more likely than Asians (57%) and Latinos (49%) to say bad times.

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

	All Adults	Household Income			Likely Voters
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Good times</b>	31%	39%	25%	25%	22%
<b>Bad times</b>	60	51	67	66	68
<b>Don't know</b>	9	10	8	8	10

Eight in 10 residents (82%) say California is in an economic recession (43% serious, 31% moderate, 8% mild). The share of likely voters (53%) believing that the recession is serious is higher than the share of all adults (43%). When this question was first asked in March 2008, 26 percent said the state was in a serious recession. This grew to 63 percent by March 2009 and today (43%) is at its lowest point since October 2008 (39%). Perceptions that California is in a recession are similar across regions.

**“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?”)**

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
<b>Serious recession</b>	43%	48%	41%	43%	44%	53%
<b>Moderate recession</b>	31	26	33	32	30	29
<b>Mild recession</b>	8	7	6	10	9	4
<b>Not in a recession</b>	14	14	16	14	12	12
<b>Don't know</b>	4	5	4	1	4	2

Nearly half of Californians are concerned about job loss in their family in the next year (27% very, 20% somewhat); 43 percent are not concerned and 8 percent volunteer that someone in their family has already lost a job. Concern has been similar throughout the year. Concern over job loss is higher among lower-income Californians (57%) than among middle- (43%) and upper-income (40%) Californians. Concern is highest in the Other Southern California Region (54%) and Central Valley (53%), followed by Los Angeles (47%), and is lowest in the San Francisco Bay Area (37%).



## PERSONAL FINANCES

Strong majorities of Californians say that their personal financial situation is in only fair (41%) or poor shape (25%), while one in three say it is in excellent (6%) or good shape (27%). Results were similar in December 2009 (6% excellent, 29% good, 39% fair, 25% poor). There are vast disparities across income and education groups and between Latinos (20% excellent/good) and others (41% whites, 51% Asians).

About half of Californians (49%) say that their financial situation is just about the same today as it was a year ago, 35 percent say they are worse off and 15 percent say they are better off. In December 2009, 36 percent said their situation was the same as the previous year, while 53 percent reported being worse off and 9 percent better off. In earlier surveys (beginning in April 1998), Californians have been most likely to say their finances were about the same compared to the previous year. Across regions and demographic groups, they are most likely to say their financial situation is about the same. Those earning \$80,000 or more (57%) are more likely than others to say their financial situations are unchanged; the perception that they are worse off today decreases with rising income.

**“Would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as you were a year ago?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Likely Voters
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Better off</b>	15%	11%	18%	18%	11%
<b>Worse off</b>	35	42	33	25	36
<b>Just about the same</b>	49	46	49	57	53
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	–	–	–

Californians share a more optimistic outlook for their own financial situation than they do for the state economy in the upcoming year. Over half (53%) say their financial situation will improve a lot (7%) or some (46%), while one in four say it will get a little (20%) or a lot (6%) worse. Fifteen percent volunteer that it will stay the same. In December 2009, residents held similar views, with 53 percent expecting improvements (6% a lot, 47% some), 29 percent expecting losses (22% little, 7% lot worse), and 13 percent volunteering that their finances would remain the same. Today, residents aged 18 to 34 (66%) are much more likely those between ages 35 and 54 (51%) and those 55 and older (42%) to say their financial situation will improve either a lot or some over the course of the next year. Latinos (64%) and Asians (56%) are more likely than whites (43%) to say they expect improvements to their finances, while whites are the most likely to volunteer that their situation will stay the same. Just over half across income groups are optimistic and renters (61%) are more optimistic than homeowners (47%).

**“Over the course of the next year, do you think the financial situation of you and your family will improve a lot, improve some, get a little worse, or get a lot worse?”**

	All Adults	Age			Likely Voters
		18–34	35–54	55 and older	
<b>Improve a lot</b>	7%	9%	9%	3%	4%
<b>Improve some</b>	46	57	42	39	43
<b>Get a little worse</b>	20	17	22	21	20
<b>Get a lot worse</b>	6	3	7	8	8
<b>Stay the same (volunteered)</b>	15	10	16	21	19
<b>Don't know</b>	5	4	5	7	5

**POLITICAL TRUST AT THE STATE LEVEL**

As the governor and legislature move into a new year that will involve negotiations to close a current-year multibillion-dollar budget deficit and a projected multibillion-dollar deficit for the upcoming fiscal year, most Californians—74 percent—say they trust the state government to do what is right only some of the time (65%) or volunteer they can never trust it (9%). Since May 2009, more than seven in 10 Californians have said they trust the state government only some of the time or never (74% May 2009, 76% September 2009, 79% October 2010, 72% May 2011, 74% today). There is a widespread lack of trust across political parties, although Republicans and independents (88% each) are much more likely than Democrats (74%) to express this view. Majorities across regions and demographic groups say they trust the state government only some of the time or never; whites (84%) and Asians (74%) are much more likely than Latinos (58%) to express these low levels of trust.

One important component of Californians’ distrust of state government is the perception that a lot of taxpayer money is being wasted. Nearly six in 10 (57%) hold this view and another 32 percent say the people in state government waste some of the money they pay in taxes. The perception that a lot of taxpayer money is wasted was similar in May (54%), but somewhat higher in October 2010 (66%). Since February 2003, majorities have said those in state government waste a lot of taxpayer money. Among likely voters, 63 percent say a lot is wasted and 30 percent say some is wasted. Perceptions differ across parties (although majorities agree that there is a lot of government waste): 75 percent of Republicans hold this view compared with 59 percent of independents and 54 percent of Democrats.

**“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>	57%	54%	75%	59%	63%
<b>Some</b>	32	37	20	32	30
<b>Don’t waste very much</b>	7	6	3	7	5
<b>Don’t know</b>	4	3	1	3	2

Another element of distrust among Californians is the perception that the state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves. Two in three (67%) say it is run for a few big interests, while only one in four (25%) say it is run for the benefit of all Californians. Since this question was first asked in January 1999, majorities of Californians have said state government is pretty much run by a few big interests; this perception peaked in October 2010 at 75 percent. Today, three in four likely voters express this negative view and at least seven in 10 across parties say the same (70% Democrats, 75% independents, 78% Republicans). Residents in the Other Southern California region (75%) and the Central Valley (73%) are much more likely than those in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area (60% each) to say state government is run by and for a few big interests.

**“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?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>A few big interests</b>	67%	70%	78%	75%	75%
<b>Benefit of all the people</b>	25	21	14	17	15
<b>Don’t know</b>	9	9	8	8	10

## STATE BUDGET

Nearly all Californians (93%) believe the state's budget situation is a problem today: 69 percent say it is a big problem and 24 percent call it somewhat of a problem. Only 3 percent say it is not a problem. Results have been similar all year; since January 2008, when the state faced a \$14 billion deficit, more than six in 10 have said the budget situation is a big problem. By comparison, 45 percent said the budget situation was a big problem in January 2007, when there were surplus revenues and 50 percent of Californians expected the state to have good financial times in the coming year.

Among likely voters today, 83 percent consider the state budget situation to be a big problem. More than seven in 10 across parties say it is a big problem (74% Democrats, 78% independents, 82% Republicans) and majorities across regions and demographic groups agree. Still, whites (80%) are much more likely than Asians (68%) and far more likely than Latinos (54%) to consider the budget situation to be a big problem. The percentage holding this view increases as income and education levels rise.

**“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?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Big problem</b>	69%	74%	82%	78%	83%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	24	21	16	19	14
<b>Not a problem</b>	3	2	–	3	2
<b>Don't know</b>	4	2	2	1	2

When Californians are read a brief description of the possible cuts to K–12 and higher education, health and human services, and public safety that will be automatically triggered in January 2012 if revenues are less than expected (a scenario prearranged in last June's budget negotiations), a plurality (41%) say that a mix of spending cuts and tax increases should be used to deal with the budget gap. Thirty percent say that mostly spending cuts should be used, while 11 percent say mostly tax increases should be used and 9 percent say that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit. Preferences for dealing with the budget deficit divide voters along party lines: most Democrats (51%) prefer using a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, while most Republicans (58%) prefer using mostly spending cuts. Most independents (49%) believe that both spending cuts and tax increases are needed. In May, when residents were asked this question more generally and not in the context of automatic cuts, a similar four in 10 (40%) preferred a mix of cuts and taxes and 36 percent preferred mostly spending cuts.

**“How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap if revenue is below expectations—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>	41%	51%	29%	49%	45%
<b>Mostly through spending cuts</b>	30	15	58	29	33
<b>Mostly through tax increases</b>	11	17	3	11	11
<b>Okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit</b>	9	8	4	5	5
<b>Other</b>	3	3	5	2	3
<b>Don't know</b>	6	6	2	4	3

\* For full text, please see question 16 on page 29.

**STATE BUDGET (CONTINUED)**

Spending reductions in K–12 education make up a large share of the possible 2012 cuts. More than eight in 10 Californians are very (53%) or somewhat (32%) concerned about the potential effects of automatic spending cuts in K–12 education; among likely voters, 59 percent are very concerned and 28 percent are somewhat concerned. Across parties, Democrats (70%) are much more likely than independents (53%) and Republicans (43%) to be very concerned about the effects of automatic spending cuts in K–12 education.

Pluralities across regions and demographic groups are very concerned. Women (58%) are more likely to be very concerned than men (47%); college graduates (61%) are more likely to express this high level of concern than those with only some college education (52%) or those with a high school education or less (48%). Parents of children 18 and younger (62%) are more likely than others (47%) to be very concerned; 65 percent of parents of public school children are very concerned.

**“How concerned are you about the potential effects of automatic spending cuts in K–12 public education?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Very concerned</b>	53%	70%	43%	53%	59%
<b>Somewhat concerned</b>	32	23	36	27	28
<b>Not too concerned</b>	9	3	13	11	6
<b>Not at all concerned</b>	6	3	8	8	6
<b>Don't know</b>	1	–	1	–	–

Although K–12 education would make up the largest share of automatic cuts, other services such as higher education and health and social programs would also be affected. Most Californians already believe their local government services, including those provided by city and county governments and public schools, have been affected a lot (62%) or somewhat (27%) by recent state budget cuts. In September, 67 percent said local services had been affected a lot and 25 percent said somewhat. Today, more than six in 10 across parties say local services have been affected a lot, with Democrats the most likely to express this view (71% Democrats, 63% independents, 61% Republicans). Majorities across regions also believe their local government services have been affected a lot by recent state budget cuts (56% Los Angeles, 62% San Francisco Bay Area, 65% Central Valley, 67% Other Southern California). Parents of children 18 or younger (68%) and public school parents (69%) are more likely than others to hold this view.

**“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?”)**

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
<b>Affected a lot</b>	62%	65%	62%	56%	67%	65%
<b>Affected somewhat</b>	27	27	25	32	24	23
<b>Not affected</b>	7	6	7	7	6	8
<b>Don't know</b>	4	2	6	5	4	5

## GOVERNOR'S TAX PLAN

Governor Brown recently announced a revenue-raising proposal that he hopes to put to voters on the November 2012 ballot. (We began asking about this plan on December 2, midway through our interview period; findings are based on interviews with 1,012 adults.) The plan would raise \$7 billion annually over the next five years through a temporary, five-year income tax increase on upper-income households and a temporary, four-year, half-cent increase in the state sales tax. Two in three Californians (65%) and 60 percent of likely voters say they favor his proposal to temporarily raise income and sales taxes. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans (78% to 39%) to support the plan (54% of Republicans oppose it). (The sample sizes for independents and Asians were too small for separate analysis.) Majorities across regions and demographic groups favor the governor's proposal, but support is higher in the San Francisco Bay Area (73%) and Los Angeles (69%) than in the Central Valley and the Other Southern California Region (59% each). Those under 55 (68% 18–54) are more supportive than those 55 and older (58%) and Latinos are more likely to favor the tax plan than whites (71% to 58%). Among those who prefer using a mix of spending cuts and tax increases to close the budget deficit, 79 percent favor the governor's tax proposal.

**“Governor Brown has proposed a plan to help close the state’s budget deficit over the next five years. The plan, which would be put before voters in November, would raise \$7 billion annually through a temporary, four-year, half-cent sales tax increase and a temporary, five-year income tax increase on those earning more than \$250,000. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?”**

	All Adults	Party		Likely Voters	Race/Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep		Latinos	Whites
<b>Favor</b>	65%	78%	39%	60%	71%	58%
<b>Oppose</b>	28	16	54	36	20	36
<b>Don't know</b>	7	6	7	4	9	6

In the governor's plan, new revenues generated from the tax increases would go to K–12 schools. Seven in 10 Californians (70%) and six in 10 likely voters (58%) favor this proposal if new revenues went to K–12 schools. Among those who previously opposed the plan, 39 percent would favor it if revenues went to K–12 schools (and 59% would continue to oppose it). Among those who previously favored the plan, 84 percent would continue to favor it if schools were the sole beneficiary (and 14% would oppose it). Democrats are far more likely than Republicans (78% to 43%) to favor this plan if revenues went directly to schools. Latinos are far more likely than whites (83% to 59%) to express support. Among public school parents, 72 percent support the governor's tax plan and 80 percent support it if revenues were dedicated to K–12 schools. Among those who are very concerned about the potential effects of automatic spending reductions in K–12 education, 76 percent favor the governor's tax plan and 81 percent favor it if revenues went directly to schools.

**“What if these new revenues went directly to K–12 schools, would you favor or oppose this proposal?”**

	All Adults	Party		Likely Voters	Race/Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep		Latinos	Whites
<b>Favor</b>	70%	78%	43%	58%	83%	59%
<b>Oppose</b>	27	18	50	37	16	35
<b>Don't know</b>	4	5	7	5	1	5

## STATE AND LOCAL RELATIONSHIP

Over the past year, the idea of realigning certain state responsibilities to local governments has gained momentum, with the most tangible example so far being the shift of certain low-risk state prison inmates to county jails, which began October 1. Seven in 10 Californians (69%) continue to favor the general idea of shifting some tax dollars and fees from the state government to local governments in order for local governments to take on the responsibility of certain state programs and services. Support was similar in January (71%), but dipped slightly in September (61%). Strong majorities across parties favor this realignment (72% Republicans, 67% Democrats, 65% independents). Not only do Californians support realignment, but 63 percent are very (11%) or somewhat (52%) confident that their local governments can handle these new responsibilities; one in three are not too (21%) or not at all confident (11%). The share expressing at least some confidence was similar in January (63%) and September (59%). Across parties and regions, between 62 and 69 percent are very or somewhat confident.

Forty-five percent of Californians say they are following news about the shift of some inmates from state prisons to county jails very (19%) or fairly (26%) closely; 53 percent say they are following this news not too (27%) or not at all (26%) closely. At least half across parties are following news about this issue very or fairly closely (50% Democrats, 54% independents, 55% Republicans). Across regions, Central Valley (27%) residents are the most likely to be following news very closely.

### “How closely are you following news about the shift of some inmates from state prisons to county jails?”

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Very closely	19%	27%	17%	18%	18%	23%
Fairly closely	26	23	24	26	29	36
Not too closely	27	30	33	23	24	25
Not at all closely	26	19	24	32	28	15
Don't know	1	1	2	1	1	–

Just over half of Californians (53%) are very (10%) or somewhat confident (43%) that their local governments can take on the responsibility for the prison inmates. This is 10 points lower than the 63 percent who are very or somewhat confident in their local governments to handle realignment responsibilities in general. In September, 48 percent expressed at least some confidence in their local governments to handle the shift of inmates to county jails. Democrats (56%) are more likely than Republicans and independents (48% each) to express confidence. Across parties, confidence in local governments' ability to handle realignment in general is higher than confidence in their ability to handle the prisoner shift (Democrats: 64% to 56%; Republicans: 65% to 48%; independents: 69% to 48%).

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

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Very confident	10%	10%	8%	9%	11%	10%
Somewhat confident	43	42	46	43	47	43
Not too confident	25	25	24	26	21	27
Not at all confident	18	20	16	19	18	16
Don't know	5	4	7	4	4	4

## PUBLIC EMPLOYEE PENSIONS

When it comes to the amount of money that state and local governments spend on their public employee pension or retirement systems, more than eight in 10 Californians say this is a big problem (44%) or somewhat of a problem (39%); just one in 10 (11%) do not consider this a problem. When this question was first asked in January 2005, only 31 percent said pensions were a big problem; this grew by 10 points in January 2010 (41%), by 16 points in March 2011 (47%), and is at 44 percent today. Across parties, Republicans (62%) are much more likely than independents (50%) or Democrats (40%) to consider state and local pension costs a big problem. Among public employees themselves, only 26 percent say public pensions are a big problem.

In October, Governor Brown released a 12-point pension reform plan designed to ease the growing burden of pension costs for state and local governments. There are also initiative proposals pending review that would address pension reform. Although the governor’s plan would have to be passed by the state legislature and may face numerous legal challenges, we asked about three of the key ideas in his reform plan, and found widespread support for all three.

Seventy percent of Californians and 76 percent of likely voters favor increasing the amount that new and current employees contribute to the annual cost of their pensions so that they pay an amount equal to what employers pay. More than seven in 10 across parties favor this proposal; 62 percent of public employees express support.

About seven in 10 Californians (68%) and likely voters (72%) favor changing pension systems for new employees from a defined benefits system to a defined contributions system similar to a 401(k) plan. PPIC Statewide Surveys have tracked opinions about this idea for nearly seven years. Support was similarly high this past March (71%) and in January 2010 (67%), and somewhat lower in January 2005 (61%). Although there is strong majority support across parties, Republicans (81%) are most likely to favor this proposal (73% independents, 68% Democrats); 64 percent of public employees support it.

Sixty percent of Californians and 63 percent of likely voters favor basing a new employee’s pension benefits on the highest average annual compensation over a three-year period rather than on a single year of compensation. New state employee pensions and many local employee pension benefits are already calculated this way. Although support for this idea is lower across parties than it is for the other two ideas, it still enjoys majority support (57% independents, 61% Democrats, 64% Republicans). Among public employees, 66 percent favor this idea.

**“To address the cost of state and local public employee pensions, reforms have been suggested. Please say whether you would favor or oppose each of the following proposals. How about...”**

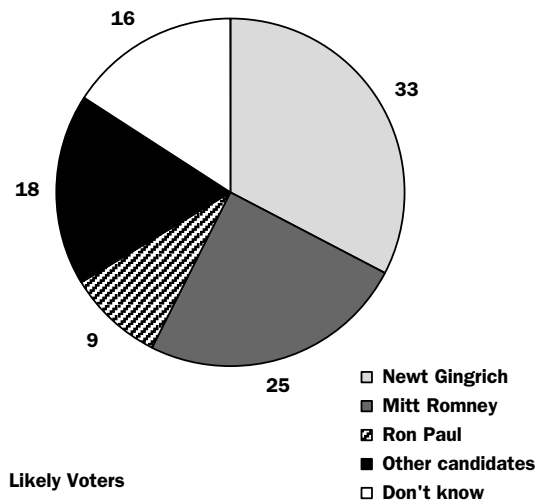
		All Adults	Party			Public Employees
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>...increasing the amount new and current public employees contribute to the annual cost of their pensions so that they pay a share equal to what employers contribute?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	70%	71%	77%	75%	62%
	<b>Oppose</b>	22	22	18	18	31
	<b>Don't know</b>	8	7	5	7	7
<i>...changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	68	68	81	73	64
	<b>Oppose</b>	20	23	10	18	28
	<b>Don't know</b>	12	9	9	9	8
<i>...basing a new public employee's pension benefits on the highest average annual compensation over a three-year period, rather than basing it on compensation from a single year of employment?</i>	<b>Favor</b>	60	61	64	57	66
	<b>Oppose</b>	27	27	22	28	25
	<b>Don't know</b>	13	12	15	15	10

# NATIONAL ISSUES

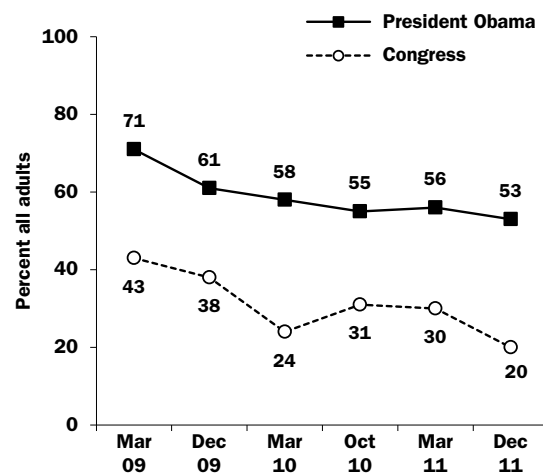
## KEY FINDINGS

- Newt Gingrich leads Mitt Romney and others in the Republican presidential primary. When it comes to the general election, likely voters prefer President Obama over a Republican candidate. Half of likely voters are satisfied with their choice of candidates, with Democrats more satisfied than Republicans. *(page 17)*
- Just over half of Californians approve of President Obama, while a record-low 20 percent approve of Congress. Eight in 10 Californians say they trust the federal government only some of the time or never. Three in four say the federal government is run by and for a few big interests and six in 10 say the federal government wastes a lot of taxpayer money. *(pages 18, 19)*
- Californians have more trust in Democrats than Republicans when it comes to handling jobs and the economy or the federal budget and taxes. *(page 20)*
- A plurality of Californians (44%) blame Republicans for the failure of the congressional supercommittee to come up with a federal deficit-reduction plan. To reduce the deficit, most Californians think closing tax loopholes for large businesses (69%) and raising taxes on the wealthy (57%) should play major roles; fewer see a major role for reducing defense (46%) or Medicare (26%) spending. *(pages 20, 21)*
- Californians are more likely to support the Occupy Wall Street movement than the Tea Party movement. *(page 22)*
- Most Californians think the state is divided into haves and have-nots and they are more likely to say they belong to the have-nots (48%) than to the haves (39%). *(page 23)*

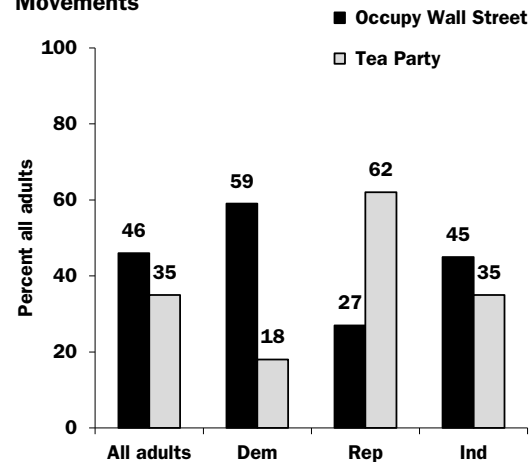
2012 Republican Primary



Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials



Support for Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party Movements





## 2012 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

With Republican candidates for president in the news and participating in numerous debates over the last few months, which candidate do California Republicans prefer? Among Republican primary likely voters, Newt Gingrich (33%) leads, followed by Mitt Romney (25%). Far fewer choose Ron Paul (9%), Michelle Bachmann (7%), Rick Perry (4%), Rick Santorum (4%), or Jon Huntsman (2%).

However, President Obama leads a Republican candidate among likely voters by 12 points (50% to 38%), with 11 percent unsure how they would vote. Eight in 10 Democratic likely voters (81%) prefer Obama, while eight in 10 Republican likely voters (81%) prefer the Republican candidate. Among independent likely voters, 55 percent would vote for President Obama, while 30 percent prefer the Republican candidate and 14 percent are unsure.

Among likely voters, women prefer Obama over the Republican candidate (54% to 35%), while men are divided (45% to 41%). White likely voters somewhat prefer a Republican over Obama (40% Obama, 47% Republican), but likely voters of other racial/ethnic groups prefer Obama over the Republican (66% to 22%). Likely voters under 55 prefer Obama over the Republican candidate (51% to 35%), while those 55 and older are divided (47% to 42%). Likely voters with a college degree (58%) and those in households making less than \$40,000 annually (60%) are more likely than others to prefer Obama. Among likely voters who approve of the president’s job performance, 88 percent would vote for him, while 75 percent of likely voters who disapprove of his job performance would vote for the Republican candidate.

According to a November Gallup poll of registered voters, Americans nationwide are divided (48% Obama, 45% Republican candidate).

**“If the 2012 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: Barack Obama, the Democrat, or the Republican candidate?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Gender</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Barack Obama</b>	50%	81%	9%	55%	45%	54%
<b>Republican candidate</b>	38	9	81	30	41	35
<b>Someone else (volunteered)</b>	2	1	2	2	4	–
<b>Don't know</b>	11	10	9	14	11	11

Likely voters in California are split when it comes to satisfaction with their choice of candidates in the 2012 presidential election—49 percent are satisfied and 45 percent are dissatisfied. Most Democrats (57%) are satisfied, while Republicans are as likely to be satisfied (47%) as dissatisfied (47%); most independents are dissatisfied (58%). Satisfaction with choices is similar among liberals (55%) and conservatives (51%), while moderates are more likely to be dissatisfied (51%) than satisfied (41%). In June 2007, seven months before California’s 2008 primary election, 74 percent of Democratic likely voters were satisfied, while 57 percent of Republican likely voters were.

Eight in 10 likely voters are very (40%) or fairly closely (42%) following news about candidates in the 2012 presidential election. About four in 10 across parties report following news very closely (41% Democrats, 41% Republicans, and 36% independents). In June 2007, seven months before the February 2008 primary election, just one in five Democratic (21%), Republican (22%), and independent (20%) likely voters were following news very closely. Men (45%) are more likely than women (35%) to report following news very closely as are older and more educated likely voters compared to others.

## APPROVAL RATINGS OF FEDERAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

As President Obama heads into a re-election campaign, just over half of Californians (53%) approve of his job performance, while 43 percent disapprove. Likely voters are divided (48% approve, 47% disapprove). Approval today among all adults is similar to his record low in September (51%) and is 8 points lower than in December 2009 (61%). Adults nationwide are more likely to disapprove than approve, according to a November poll by CNN/Opinion Research Corporation (54% disapprove, 44% approve).

There is a wide partisan divide among Californians when it comes to President Obama and his job performance: 73 percent of Democrats approve, 83 percent of Republicans disapprove. Independents are more likely to approve than disapprove (55% to 40%). Across regions, approval is highest in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area (58% each), followed by the Other Southern California region (52%) and the Central Valley (40%). Majorities of Asians (64%) and Latinos (58%) approve of the president’s job performance, while just over half of whites disapprove (53% disapprove, 44% approve).

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Approve</b>	53%	73%	15%	55%	48%
<b>Disapprove</b>	43	22	83	40	47
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	2	5	5

On the heels of the congressional supercommittee’s failure to reach agreement on reducing the federal deficit, a record-low 20 percent of Californians approve of the way Congress is handling its job; a record-high 75 percent disapprove. Approval has dropped 7 points since September (27%) and 18 points since December 2009 (38%). Ratings among likely voters also reach record levels—just 9 percent approve and 88 percent disapprove. Compared to Californians in our survey (20%), adults nationwide are even less approving of Congress in a November CBS News poll (9% approve, 83% disapprove).

Overwhelming majorities across political groups disapprove (87% independents, 87% Republicans, 79% Democrats) of congressional job performance, as do more than two in three across regions. About six in 10 or more across demographic groups disapprove, but some differences do emerge. Whites (86%) are much more likely than Asians (69%) and far more likely than Latinos (59%) to disapprove. Disapproval increases with income; younger and less-educated adults are less likely than others to disapprove.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Approve</b>	20%	17%	9%	11%	9%
<b>Disapprove</b>	75	79	87	87	88
<b>Don't know</b>	5	4	5	2	3

## POLITICAL TRUST AT FEDERAL LEVEL

With record disapproval of Congress, how much trust do Californians have in the federal government? Eight in 10 Californians say they trust the government in Washington only some of the time (69%) or volunteer that they never can (10%), while 20 percent say they trust the federal government just about always (6%) or most of the time (14%). Distrust has increased 10 points since October 2010 (60% only some of the time, 9% none of the time). Compared with all adults, likely voters are even more negative (1% just about always, 8% most of the time, 77% only some of the time, 13% none of the time). At least two in three across parties, regions, and demographic groups trust the federal government only some of the time or never. Adults nationwide are even more critical, according to an October CBS News/*New York Times* poll (1% just about always, 9% most of the time, 77% only some of the time, 12% never).

More than seven in 10 Californians (73%) also think that the federal government is pretty much run by and for a few big interests, rather than for the benefit of everybody (21%). Likely voters are even more negative (85% big interests). Compared to October 2010, findings among all adults are similar (68% October 2010, 73% today), but likely voters today are more critical (73% October 2010, 85% today).

Eight in 10 across parties and more than two in three across regions say the federal government is run by a few big interests. Six in 10 or more across demographic groups hold this view, but some differences emerge. Whites (82%) are much more likely than Asians (65%) and Latinos (60%) to hold this view and the belief that a few big interests run the federal government increases as income rises.

**“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>	73%	79%	82%	80%	85%
<b>Benefit of all the people</b>	21	16	13	14	11
<b>Don't know</b>	6	5	5	6	5

Californians also think that the people in federal government are inefficient—more than nine in 10 say they waste a lot (63%) or some (30%) taxpayer money. Likely voters are even more negative (70% waste a lot, 26% waste some). Findings among all adults and likely voters were similar in October 2010. The belief that the federal government wastes a lot of taxpayer money is widely held across parties, but Republicans (83%) and independents (70%) are more likely than Democrats (59%) to hold this view. Residents in the Central Valley (77%) are the most likely to say a lot is wasted, followed by residents in the Other Southern California region (66%), Los Angeles (58%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (55%). Whites (68%) are more likely than Latinos (57%) and Asians (55%) to hold this view. Among those who disapprove of President Obama, 80 percent say a lot of taxpayer money is wasted; 71 percent of those who disapprove of Congress hold this view.

**“Do you think the people in federal 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>	63%	59%	83%	70%	70%
<b>Some</b>	30	35	14	26	26
<b>Don't waste very much</b>	5	4	2	4	3
<b>Don't know</b>	2	2	1	–	1

## PARTY PERCEPTIONS

When it comes to two important issues facing the nation over the next few years, Californians place more trust in Democrats than Republicans. Forty-six percent of Californians and 49 percent of likely voters say they trust Democrats to do a better job in handling jobs and the economy, while fewer say they trust Republicans to do so (33% adults, 36% likely voters). Preferences among all adults were similar in September 2003 (47% Democrats, 37% Republicans). Today there is a wide partisan divide, with eight in 10 Democrats (83%) trusting Democrats and eight in 10 Republicans (81%) trusting their own party. Independents are divided and one in five trust neither party (37% Democrats, 33% Republicans, 21% neither). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (53%) and Los Angeles (51%) trust the Democrats over Republicans to handle jobs and the economy, while residents in the Central Valley (42% Democrats, 38% Republicans) and the Other Southern California region (38% Democrats, 39% Republicans) are divided. Asians and Latinos are more likely to trust Democrats than Republicans (Asians: 53% to 26%; Latinos: 51% to 30%), while whites are divided (38% Democrats, 42% Republicans).

On handling the federal budget and taxes, more Californians again trust Democrats (47%) than Republicans (32%). Likely voters hold similar views. Partisans are once again divided—eight in 10 Democrats (79%) trust their own party and three in four Republicans (76%) trust theirs. Regional differences are evident on this issue, with just over half of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) and Los Angeles (53%) placing trust in Democrats, while Central Valley (40% Democrats, 36% Republicans) and Other Southern California (38% Democrats, 37% Republicans) residents are divided. Once again, Asians and Latinos are more likely to trust Democrats than Republicans (Asians: 56% to 21%; Latinos: 51% to 29%), while whites are divided (38% Democrats, 40% Republicans).

**“Regardless of how you usually vote, overall, which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the following issues that the nation will face over the next few years? How about...”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>...jobs and the economy?</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	46%	83%	7%	37%	49%
	<b>Republicans</b>	33	7	81	33	36
	<b>Both (volunteered)</b>	2	1	1	1	1
	<b>Neither (volunteered)</b>	12	8	9	21	12
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	2	3	8	3
	<b>Democrats</b>	47	79	10	39	47
<b>...the federal budget and taxes?</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	32	7	76	31	36
	<b>Both (volunteered)</b>	2	1	2	2	1
	<b>Neither (volunteered)</b>	12	11	9	19	14
	<b>Don't know</b>	7	1	3	10	3

## FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICIT

The 12-member congressional supercommittee created to draft a bipartisan plan to reduce the federal budget deficit failed to reach an agreement by its November 23rd deadline. When asked who is to blame for this failure, Californians place more blame on Republicans in Congress (44%) than on Democrats (21%); 22 percent volunteer that they blame both parties. Likely voters hold similar opinions. Seven in 10 Democrats (69%) blame Republicans in Congress, while Republicans divide their blame between Democrats in Congress (36%) and both parties (29%). A plurality of independents blame Republicans (45%), while fewer blame both parties (28%) or Democrats (16%).

**FEDERAL BUDGET DEFICIT (CONTINUED)**

When asked about different approaches to reducing the federal budget deficit, seven in 10 Californians (69%) say closing tax loopholes for large businesses should play a major role in an overall deficit reduction strategy; a majority (57%) also view increasing taxes on wealthy Americans as having a major role. Likely voters hold similar opinions. Overwhelming majorities of Democrats say closing loopholes (80%) and increasing taxes on the wealthy (77%) should play major roles. Republicans are much more keen on closing tax loopholes for large businesses (57%) than they are on increasing taxes on wealthy Americans (30%). Majorities of independents say closing loopholes (76%) and increasing taxes on the wealthy (58%) should play major roles in deficit reduction. In a September Kaiser Family Foundation survey, adults nationwide were less likely than Californians in our survey to say these two approaches should play major roles (59% closing loopholes, 48% increasing taxes on wealthy).

**“Thinking about different approaches to reduce the federal budget deficit, I’d like to know how big a role you think each of the following should play in an overall deficit reduction strategy.”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Should closing tax loopholes for large businesses play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?</b>	Major role	69%	80%	57%	76%	72%
	Minor role	20	14	26	18	18
	No role at all	6	3	11	4	5
	Don't know	6	3	6	2	4
<b>Should increasing taxes on wealthy Americans play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?</b>	Major role	57	77	30	58	55
	Minor role	26	18	39	29	27
	No role at all	13	4	29	12	16
	Don't know	4	1	3	1	1

Fewer than half of adults say that reducing defense (46%) or Medicare (26%) spending should play a major role in deficit reduction. Thirty-six percent of Californians say reducing Medicare should play no role at all. Democrats (60%) are twice as likely as Republicans (29%) to say reduced defense spending should play a major role, and Democrats (45%) are more likely than Republicans (35%) to say Medicare cuts should play no role. In similar questions in the Kaiser Family Foundation poll, adults nationwide were more likely than Californians to say these two areas should not be cut (defense: 28% major reductions, 39% minor reductions, 28% no reductions; Medicare: 13% major, 35% minor, 51% no reductions).

**“Thinking about different approaches to reduce the federal budget deficit, I’d like to know how big a role you think each of the following should play in an overall deficit reduction strategy.”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Should reducing defense spending play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?</b>	Major role	46%	60%	29%	44%	44%
	Minor role	35	32	37	41	39
	No role at all	15	6	31	14	15
	Don't know	4	3	3	1	3
<b>Should reducing Medicare spending play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?</b>	Major role	26	21	18	25	18
	Minor role	34	33	43	43	40
	No role at all	36	45	35	31	40
	Don't know	3	1	5	2	2

## OCCUPY WALL STREET, TEA PARTY MOVEMENTS

Californians are more likely to support (46%) than oppose (37%) the Occupy Wall Street movement but are more likely to oppose (42%) than support (35%) the Tea Party movement. In a November ABC News/*Washington Post* poll, adults nationwide had similar views of the Occupy movement (44% support, 41% oppose), but were more divided than Californians on the Tea Party movement (43% support, 44% oppose). A majority of Democrats (59%) support the Occupy movement, while 66 percent oppose the Tea Party movement. Conversely, six in 10 Republicans (61%) oppose the Occupy movement, while an equal share (61%) support the Tea Party movement. Independents are divided on the Occupy movement (45% support, 47% oppose), but are more likely to oppose (50%) than favor (35%) the Tea Party movement. Among likely voters, 49 percent support the Occupy movement, and 42 percent are opposed. Likely voters are more likely to oppose (53%) than support (39%) the Tea Party movement.

**“From what you’ve read and heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the...”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters	
		Dem	Rep	Ind		
<b>...Occupy Wall Street movement?</b>	<b>Strongly support</b>	17%	25%	8%	19%	20%
	<b>Somewhat support</b>	29	34	19	26	29
	<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	17	13	20	25	16
	<b>Strongly oppose</b>	20	14	41	22	26
	<b>Neither/don't know</b>	17	15	11	8	9
<b>...Tea Party movement?</b>	<b>Strongly support</b>	14	4	34	9	17
	<b>Somewhat support</b>	21	14	28	26	22
	<b>Somewhat oppose</b>	17	22	19	19	20
	<b>Strongly oppose</b>	25	44	7	31	33
	<b>Neither/don't know</b>	23	17	12	14	9

Californians are divided about Wall Street’s influence on the economy, with 40 percent saying Wall Street helps the American economy more than it hurts and 44 percent saying Wall Street hurts the economy more than it helps; 12 percent are unsure. More likely voters say Wall Street hurts (51%) rather than helps (40%). Democrats (57%) are more likely to say Wall Street hurts the economy, Republicans (51%) are more likely to say it helps, and independents are divided (45% helps, 47% hurts). Across income groups opinions are mixed (under \$40,000: 39% helps, 43% hurts; \$40,000–\$80,000: 39% helps, 47% hurts; \$80,000 or more: 46% helps, 45% hurts). Californians have opinions similar to adults nationwide in a March Pew Research Center survey (38% helps, 47% hurts, 15% neither/don’t know).

**“Next, which of the following statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right? Wall Street helps the American economy more than it hurts; or, Wall Street hurts the American economy more than it helps.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Wall Street helps the American economy</b>	40%	32%	51%	45%	40%
<b>Wall Street hurts the American economy</b>	44	57	34	47	51
<b>Neither (volunteered)</b>	4	2	4	3	3
<b>Don't know</b>	12	9	11	5	7

## INCOME INEQUALITY IN CALIFORNIA

With recent focus on the nation's income inequality, a solid majority of Californians (63%) believe the state is divided into haves and have-nots while one in three (34%) say it is not divided this way. Results were similar in September 2002, (61% divided, 34% not divided); the gap was narrower in January 1999 (56% divided, 41% not divided). In a September 2011 survey by the Pew Research Center/*Washington Post*, 45 percent of adults nationwide said America is divided into haves and have-nots, while 52 percent said the country is not divided this way. In California, 70 percent of Democrats and 60 percent of independents say the state is divided into haves and have-nots. Republicans are split (48% divided, 46% not divided). Majorities across regions and demographic groups say the state is divided into haves and have-nots.

**“Some people think that California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think it is not divided that way. Do you think that California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think that California is not divided that way?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Latinos
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
<b>Divided into haves and have-nots</b>	63%	65%	65%	59%	62%
<b>Not divided this way</b>	34	31	32	39	34
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	3	2	3

When asked to categorize themselves, 39 percent of Californians say they belong to the haves, 48 percent to the have-nots, and 8 percent volunteer that they belong to neither group. In January 1999 (57% haves, 35% have-nots) and September 2002 (60% haves, 32% have-nots), residents were much more likely to say that they belonged to the haves. (The volunteered “neither” response was not accepted in these earlier surveys). In the Pew Research Center/*Washington Post* survey more adults nationwide saw themselves as haves (48%) than have-nots (34%). Californians earning \$80,000 or more (65%) are more likely to say they belong to the haves, while most of those earning under \$40,000 (65%) say they belong to the have-nots. Middle-income Californians are much more likely to say they belong to the have-nots (51%) than the haves (38%). Asians (54%) are more likely to consider themselves haves, compared to whites (43%) and Latinos (31%).

**“If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or have-nots?”**

	All Adults	Household Income			Latinos
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
<b>The haves</b>	39%	25%	38%	65%	31%
<b>The have-nots</b>	48	65	51	20	61
<b>Neither (volunteered)</b>	8	6	6	11	7
<b>Don't know</b>	4	4	5	3	1

More than half of Californians (54%) believe that the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to get ahead; 37 percent say people already have equal opportunity. In 1999 and 2002, the opposite was true (1999: 52% equal opportunity, 45% government should do more; 2002: 52% equal opportunity, 43% government should do more). Today, Democrats (67%) say the government should do more, while Republicans are more likely to say there is equal opportunity (52% to 34% government should do more). Independents are divided (44% equal opportunity, 47% government should do more). Solid majorities of Latinos (65%) and Asians (60%) say government should do more, while whites are divided (44% equal opportunity, 41% government should do more).

# 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 and Jui Shrestha, co-project managers for this survey, and survey research associate Sonja Petek. 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 2,003 California adult residents, including 1,602 interviewed on landline telephones and 401 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from November 29 to December 5, 2011. Beginning December 2, we asked two additional questions of 1,012 respondents about Governor Brown's tax plan.

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

Cell phone interviews were 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 potential 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 the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

With assistance from Abt SRBI we used recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006–2008 American Community Survey (ACS) 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 2006–2008 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 any 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  $\pm 3.6$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total sample of 2,003 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100,

the results will be within 3.6 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,316 registered voters, it is  $\pm 4.0$  percent; for the 901 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.5$  percent; for the 286 Republican primary likely voters, it is  $\pm 8.1$  percent; for the 1,012 adults interviewed starting December 2, it is  $\pm 5$  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 from 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 another party are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated by their responses to survey questions on voter registration, previous election participation, and current interest in politics.

For the Republican primary election question, we included Herman Cain as a choice, but because there were indications he might end his campaign we also asked his supporters for their second choice. The results reflect these second choices.

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by ABC News/*Washington Post*, CBS News, CBS News/*New York Times*, CNN/Opinion Research Corporation, Kaiser Family Foundation, Pew Research Center, Pew Research Center/*Washington Post*. Additional details about our methodology can be found at <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

**November 29–December 5, 2011**  
**2,003 California Adult Residents:**  
**English, Spanish**

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 3.6\%$  AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
**PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING**

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?  
*[code, don't read]*
  - 63% jobs, economy
  - 8 education, schools
  - 6 immigration, illegal immigration
  - 6 state budget, deficit, taxes
  - 2 crime, gangs, drugs
  - 2 government in general
  - 9 other
  - 4 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?
  - 42% approve
  - 30 disapprove
  - 28 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?
  - 25% approve
  - 55 disapprove
  - 20 don't know
4. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
  - 30% right direction
  - 61 wrong direction
  - 9 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?
  - 31% good times
  - 60 bad times
  - 9 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?*)
  - 43% yes, serious recession
  - 31 yes, moderate recession
  - 8 yes, mild recession
  - 14 no
  - 4 don't know
7. Are you concerned that you or someone in your family will lose their job in the next year, or not? (*if yes: Are you very concerned or somewhat concerned?*)
  - 27% yes, very concerned
  - 20 yes, somewhat
  - 43 no
  - 8 have lost job already (*volunteered*)
  - 1 don't know

Now, thinking about your own personal finances,

8. How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?

6% excellent shape  
 27 good shape  
 41 only fair shape  
 25 poor shape  
 1 don't know

9. Would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as you were a year ago?

15% better off  
 35 worse off  
 49 same  
 1 don't know

10. Over the course of the next year, do you think the financial situation of you and your family will improve a lot, improve some, get a little worse, or get a lot worse?

7% improve a lot  
 46 improve some  
 20 get a little worse  
 6 get a lot worse  
 15 stay the same (*volunteered*)  
 5 don't know

11. Some people think that California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think it is not divided that way. Do you think that California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think that California is not divided that way?

63% divided into haves and have-nots  
 34 not divided that way  
 4 don't know

12. If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or have-nots?

39% haves  
 48 have-nots  
 8 neither (*volunteered*)  
 4 don't know

13. Do you think that in California today [*rotate*] (1) all people have an equal opportunity to get ahead, [*or*] (2) the government should do more to make sure that all Californians have an equal opportunity to get ahead?

37% people have equal opportunity  
 54 government should do more  
 2 both (*volunteered*)  
 4 neither (*volunteered*)  
 3 don't know

On another topic,

14. 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?

69% big problem  
 24 somewhat of a problem  
 3 not a problem  
 4 don't know

15. 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?*)

62% affected a lot  
 27 affected somewhat  
 7 not affected  
 4 don't know

16. As you may know, automatic spending cuts to higher education, health and human services, public safety and K–12 public education could occur in January 2012 if revenue projections fall below targets. How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap if revenue is below expectations—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?

- 30% mostly through spending cuts
- 11 mostly through tax increases
- 41 through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases
- 9 okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit
- 3 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

17. How concerned are you about the potential effects of automatic spending cuts in K–12 public education? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 53% very concerned
- 32 somewhat concerned
- 9 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

17a. [*asked starting December 2*] Governor Brown has proposed a plan to help close the state's budget deficit over the next five years. The plan, which would be put before voters in November, would raise \$7 billion annually through a temporary four-year half-cent sales tax increase and a temporary five-year income tax increase on those earning more than \$250,000. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 65% favor
- 28 oppose
- 7 don't know

17b. [*asked starting December 2*] What if these new revenues went directly to K–12 schools—would you favor or oppose this proposal?

- 70% favor
- 27 oppose
- 4 don't know

Changing topics,

18. 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
- 19 most of the time
- 65 only some of the time
- 9 none of the time (*volunteered*)
- 2 don't know

19. 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
- 25 benefit of all of the people
- 9 don't know

20. 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?

- 57% a lot
- 32 some
- 7 don't waste very much
- 4 don't know

21. Next, would you favor or oppose a shift of some tax dollars and fees from the state government to local governments, in order for local governments to take on the responsibility of running certain programs currently run by the state?

- 69% favor
- 19 oppose
- 12 don't know

22. If the state were to shift some tax dollars and fees to local governments, how confident are you that local governments would be able to take on the responsibilities of running certain programs currently run by the state? Are you very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

- 11% very confident
- 52 somewhat confident
- 21 not too confident
- 11 not at all confident
- 4 don't know

23. How closely are you following news about the shift of some inmates from state prisons to county jails—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

- 19% very closely
- 26 fairly closely
- 27 not too closely
- 26 not at all closely
- 1 don't know

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

- 10% very confident
- 43 somewhat confident
- 25 not too confident
- 18 not at all confident
- 5 don't know

Changing topics,

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

- 44% big problem
- 39 somewhat of a problem
- 11 not a problem
- 6 don't know

**[rotate questions 26 to 28]**

To address the cost of state and local public employee pensions, reforms have been suggested. Please say whether you would favor or oppose each of the following proposals.

26. How about changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan?

- 68% favor
- 20 oppose
- 12 don't know

27. How about basing a new public employee's pension benefits on the highest average annual compensation over a three-year period, rather than basing it on compensation from a single year of employment?

- 60% favor
- 27 oppose
- 13 don't know

28. How about increasing the amount new and current public employees contribute to the annual cost of their pensions so that they pay a share equal to what employers contribute?

- 70% favor
- 22 oppose
- 8 don't know

On another topic,

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

- 53% approve
- 43 disapprove
- 5 don't know

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

- 20% approve
- 75 disapprove
- 5 don't know

31. People have different ideas about the government in Washington. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington today to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- 6% just about always
- 14 most of the time
- 69 only some of the time
- 10 none of the time (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

32. 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?

- 73% a few big interests
- 21 benefit of all of the people
- 6 don't know

33. 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?

- 63% a lot
- 30 some
- 5 don't waste very much
- 2 don't know

Regardless of how you usually vote, overall, which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the following issues that the nation will face over the next few years?

**[rotate questions 34 and 35]**

34. How about jobs and the economy?

- 46% the Democrats
- 33 the Republicans
- 2 both (*volunteered*)
- 12 neither (*volunteered*)
- 7 don't know

35. How about the federal budget and taxes?

- 47% the Democrats
- 32 the Republicans
- 2 both (*volunteered*)
- 12 neither (*volunteered*)
- 7 don't know

36. Next, as you may know, the 12-member supercommittee in Congress did not reach an agreement on deficit reduction by its November 23rd deadline. Who do you think is more responsible for the supercommittee not being able to agree on a deficit reduction plan? **[rotate]** (1) the Democrats in Congress, **[or]** (2) the Republicans in Congress.

- 21% the Democrats in Congress
- 44 the Republicans in Congress
- 22 both (*volunteered*)
- 2 neither (*volunteered*)
- 11 don't know

Thinking about different approaches to reduce the federal budget deficit, I'd like to know how big a role you think each of the following should play in an overall deficit reduction strategy.

**[rotate questions 37 to 40]**

37. Should closing tax loopholes for large businesses play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?

- 69% major role
- 20 minor role
- 6 no role at all
- 6 don't know

38. Should increasing taxes on wealthy Americans play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?

- 57% major role
- 26 minor role
- 13 no role at all
- 4 don't know

39. Should reducing defense spending play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?

- 46% major role
- 35 minor role
- 15 no role at all
- 4 don't know

40. Should reducing Medicare spending play a major role, a minor role, or no role at all in reducing the federal budget deficit?

- 26% major role
- 34 minor role
- 36 no role at all
- 3 don't know

41. Next, which of the following statements comes closer to your own view, even if neither is exactly right? **[rotate]** (1) Wall Street helps the American economy more than it hurts, **[or]** (2) Wall Street hurts the American economy more than it helps.

- 40% Wall Street helps the American economy more than hurts
- 44 Wall Street hurts the American economy more than helps
- 4 neither (*volunteered*)
- 12 don't know

**[rotate questions 42 and 43]**

42. From what you've read and heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Occupy Wall Street movement?

- 17% strongly support
- 29 somewhat support
- 17 somewhat oppose
- 20 strongly oppose
- 3 neither (*volunteered*)
- 14 don't know

43. From what you've read and heard, do you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose the Tea Party movement?

- 14% strongly support
- 21 somewhat support
- 17 somewhat oppose
- 25 strongly oppose
- 3 neither (*volunteered*)
- 20 don't know

44. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 67% yes [*ask q44a*]
- 33 no [*skip to q45b*]

44a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?

- 44% Democrat [*ask q45*]
- 31 Republican [*skip to q45a*]
- 4 another party (*specify*) [*skip to q47*]
- 20 independent [*skip to q45b*]

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

- 49% strong
- 49 not very strong
- 2 don't know

**[skip to q47]**

45a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 54% strong
- 44 not very strong
- 2 don't know

**[skip to q46]**

45b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 26% Republican Party
- 50 Democratic Party
- 19 neither (*volunteered*)
- 5 don't know

**[skip to q47]**



Changing topics,

46. **[Republican primary likely voters only]** If the 2012 Republican primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? **[rotate names and then ask “or someone else?”]**

- 30% Newt Gingrich
- 24 Mitt Romney
- 8 Herman Cain
- 8 Ron Paul
- 4 Rick Perry
- 4 Rick Santorum
- 3 Michele Bachmann
- 2 Jon Huntsman
- 1 someone else (specify)
- 16 don't know

46a. **[Republican primary likely voters; Herman Cain supporters allocated based on their 2nd choice]**

If the 2012 Republican primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? **[rotate names and then ask “or someone else?”]**

- 33% Newt Gingrich
- 25 Mitt Romney
- 9 Ron Paul
- 7 Michele Bachmann
- 4 Rick Perry
- 4 Rick Santorum
- 2 Jon Huntsman
- 1 someone else (specify)
- 16 don't know

47. **[likely voters only]** If the 2012 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: **[rotate]** Barack Obama, the Democrat, **[or]** the Republican candidate?

- 50% Barack Obama
- 38 Republican candidate
- 2 someone else (specify)
- 11 don't know

48. **[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?

- 49% satisfied
- 45 not satisfied
- 6 don't know

49. **[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?

- 40% very closely
- 42 fairly closely
- 14 not too closely
- 3 not at all closely
- don't know

50. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

**[read list, rotate order top to bottom]**

- 8% very liberal
- 19 somewhat liberal
- 34 middle-of-the-road
- 24 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 2 don't know

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

- 21% great deal
- 35 fair amount
- 36 only a little
- 8 none
- 1 don't know

**[d1–d17: demographic questions]**

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