

AUGUST 2008

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

CALIFORNIA

# Californians & their government

in collaboration with  
The James Irvine Foundation

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PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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

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# ABOUT THE SURVEY

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The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 89<sup>th</sup> PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 189,000 Californians. This survey is the 30<sup>th</sup> 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. It is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation.

The current survey seeks to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers, and stimulate public discussion on state and national issues and the November general election. The context for this survey includes the presidential election, a downturn in the national economy, and a multi-billion dollar gap between spending and revenues in the state budget. We examine issues in the fall general election, such as voters' satisfaction with and preference for presidential candidates, the issues most important to them, and their support for three of the state propositions on the November ballot. The survey also examines Californians' opinions of state and national issues, including the economy, trust in government, their perceptions of elected officials who represent them in Sacramento and Washington, and perceptions and policy preferences regarding the state budget, the war in Iraq, homeland security, immigration policy, health care, and the role of government.

This report presents the responses of 2,001 California adult residents, including 1,047 likely voters, on these specific topics:

- The November election, including preferences in the presidential election, satisfaction with the choices of candidates in the presidential election, views on the most important issues, and attention to news about the presidential candidates; support for Proposition 4 (parental notification of a minor child's abortion), Proposition 8 (eliminating same-sex couples' right to marry), and the importance of the outcome of each of those votes; and support for Proposition 11 (redistricting reform), whether changes are needed to the redistricting process, and whether an independent citizens' commission for redistricting would result in state legislators who more effectively represent their districts.
- State and national issues, including overall approval ratings for Governor Schwarzenegger and the California Legislature, and for President Bush and the U.S. Congress; the general direction of the state and nation, the outlook for the California and U.S. economies, and trust in state government; attitudes toward the state budget, the war in Iraq, homeland security, immigration policy, health care policy, and same-sex marriage; perceptions of the role of government in issues of gun control, poverty, business regulation, and abortion.
- The extent to which Californians—based on their political party affiliation, region of residence, race/ethnicity, and other demographics—may differ with regard to perceptions, attitudes, and preferences involving state and national issues.

Copies of this report may be ordered online ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) or by phone (415-291-4400). For questions about the survey, please contact [survey@ppic.org](mailto:survey@ppic.org). View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.



# PRESS RELEASE

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

### **Ban on Gay Marriage Trails – Voters Split on Teen Abortion Constraints, Redistricting**

ECONOMIC ANGST, A PARTISAN DIVIDE, SOFTENING SUPPORT FOR OBAMA  
MARK START OF ELECTION SEASON

SAN FRANCISCO, California, August 27, 2008 — A majority of California's likely voters oppose Proposition 8, the November ballot measure that would eliminate gay marriage, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. Likely voters are divided on two other closely watched measures – one that would require a parent to be notified before a teenager has an abortion and one that would take the power to draw legislative district lines away from the legislature.

As the fall campaign season begins, Californians are united in their pessimism about the direction of the state and nation and in their worries about the economy. But they are split sharply on key issues ranging from the state budget to health care and the war in Iraq. Their views on the three state ballot issues— Propositions 4, 8, and 11—reveal the fault lines among voters.

Proposition 8, which would amend the state constitution to eliminate same-sex marriage, is favored by 40 percent and opposed by 54 percent of the state's likely voters. Democratic (66%) and independent likely voters (59%) are against it, and Republican likely voters are in favor (60%). The last time voters decided this issue—in 2000—they approved a ban on same-sex marriages by a wide margin (61% yes, 39% no). After the state Supreme Court ruled that ban unconstitutional, supporters of Proposition 8 qualified the initiative for the 2008 ballot.

Opposition to Proposition 8 this year is not an indication of a dramatic shift in voters' opinions. Asked whether they favor letting gay and lesbian couples marry, likely voters are evenly split (47% in favor, 47% opposed) and have been since August 2005. Also playing a role in the November outcome is how strongly voters feel about the issue. A majority of likely voters (57%) in favor of Proposition 8 say it is a very important issue to them, while less than half (44%) of those opposed to the measure consider it a very important issue.

"It's early in the campaign season, and in the end, the vote on this measure, like the other two, could be hard to predict," says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. "Overall views on gay marriage have not budged in a year. Californians who plan to vote for Proposition 8 appear to hold that view with greater intensity than the opposition – which means they are very motivated to vote."

### **PROPOSITION 4 REVEALS PARTISAN SPLIT, PROPOSITION 11 LAGS AMONG ALL GROUPS**

Likely voters are divided over Proposition 4, which would amend the state Constitution to require that a parent be notified at least 48 hours before a minor has an abortion: 47 percent are in favor and 44 percent are opposed. Most Republicans (62%) favor the initiative, most Democrats (56%) are opposed, and independents are divided (48% yes, 44% no). Californians defeated a similar measure in 2005

(47% yes, 53% no) and in 2006 (46% yes, 54% no). These views on Proposition 4's parental notification requirement do not signal a shift in opinion on abortion: Seven in 10 likely voters (71%) think the government should not interfere with a women's access to abortion, similar to their response in February 2004 (74%).

Proposition 11, which would give a commission of registered voters the authority to determine state legislative districts, has split California's likely voters as well (39% yes, 36% no, 25% undecided). Republicans (47%) are somewhat more likely than independents (39%) and far more likely than Democrats (31%) to support the measure, which is championed by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. In 2005, a measure that would have turned redistricting over to a panel of retired judges was trounced (40% yes, 60% no).

Likely voters' apparent lack of support for Proposition 11 does not indicate satisfaction with the current system: Seven in 10 say the redistricting process needs major (42%) or minor (27%) changes, and more than half (56%) say state legislators would more effectively represent their districts if an independent commission of citizens redrew district lines.

### **VOTERS PREDICT MORE CLOUDS OVER CALIFORNIA**

Worried about the state's future and distrustful of their leaders in Sacramento, Californians are in a grim mood. A record-high percentage of likely voters (39%) name jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state. Other concerns expressed by residents include the state budget situation (14%), education (7%), immigration (7%), and gas prices (5%). Most likely voters (75%) say California is already in an economic recession, and most (68%) say the state is headed in the wrong direction.

With the state's leaders locked in a stalemate over an overdue budget, the governor's approval rating has dropped among likely voters from 49 percent in July to 43 percent. The legislature fares even worse, with only 20 percent of likely voters approving of the lawmakers' performance.

Most likely voters (84%) consider the budget impasse a big problem – the highest percentage since May 2004, when voters agreed to close the state's budget gap by borrowing money in a multibillion-dollar bond sale. How would they deal with the budget shortfall this year? A plurality (44%) opts for a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. Fewer (38%) would fill the gap mostly by cutting spending, and far fewer would do so mostly by increasing taxes (8%) or by borrowing money and running a deficit (4%).

### **OBAMA'S LEAD SHRINKS, PARTICULARLY AMONG INDEPENDENTS**

The PPIC survey—taken before the conventions and announcements of vice presidential candidates—finds that Sen. Barack Obama's lead over Sen. John McCain among likely voters (48% Obama, 39% McCain) has declined by 6 points since July (50% Obama, 35% McCain).

The most significant shift is among independent likely voters, with Obama's share of their vote dropping 9 points (from 57% to 48%), while McCain's share has increased 12 points (21% to 33%). Obama has the overwhelming support of Democratic likely voters (81%), and McCain's support among Republicans is similarly strong (77%). Among other groups, female likely voters prefer Obama to McCain (53% to 32%), while men are divided (42% Obama, 46% McCain). Latino likely voters overwhelmingly prefer Obama (71% Obama, 16% McCain), and whites prefer McCain (38% Obama, 47% McCain). Likely voters under age 35 strongly favor Obama over McCain (65% Obama, 21% McCain), while support among likely voters age 55 and older is divided (43% Obama, 45% McCain).

In a worrisome sign for both candidates, likely voters are not especially satisfied with their choices for president. Just 48 percent say they are satisfied with their choices, and 49 percent are not. Now that the field has been winnowed, satisfaction with the candidates is much lower than it was during the

primary season in January, when 64 percent were satisfied and 31 percent were not. Across parties today, more Democrats are satisfied (68%) than independents (40%) or Republicans (35%).

## **VOTERS TO CANDIDATES: IT'S THE ECONOMY, SENATOR**

When asked what they would like the presidential candidates to talk about, the issue that California's likely voters mention most often is the economy (34%), followed by the war in Iraq (12%), energy (8%), and foreign policy, health care, and immigration (6% each). The economy tops the list of issues among registered voters regardless of party (38% Democrats, 35% independents, 32% Republicans). It is also the top issue among Latinos (39%), followed by the war in Iraq (15%) and immigration (8%).

While united in their concern about the economy, California's registered voters are split along partisan lines in their opinions about the government's role in regulating it. In the aftermath of the subprime mortgage collapse, solid majorities of Democrats (67%) and independents (58%) think government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest, while less than half (41%) of Republicans hold this view.

Similar divisions show up on other issues likely to be discussed in the presidential campaign:

- **War in Iraq:** More than four in 10 likely voters (45%) say things are going somewhat well or very well for the United States in Iraq, a 26 point improvement since June 2007. But there are strong divisions across party lines in the views of registered voters: While 71 percent of Republicans feel this way, only 39 percent of independents and 20 percent of Democrats do. There are also vast partisan differences among registered voters about when to bring the troops home. While 76 percent of Democrats think the troops should be brought home as soon as possible, just 24 percent of Republicans share this view. Seventy-three percent of Republicans think the U.S. should keep troops in Iraq until the situation is stabilized, compared to 20 percent of Democrats.
- **U.S. security:** Half of likely voters (51%) doubt the positive effects of the Iraq war on the long-term security of the United States. But among registered voters, Democrats (68%) and independents (55%) are far more likely to hold this view than Republicans (27%).
- **Immigration:** California's likely voters are divided in their perceptions of whether immigrants are a benefit (48%) or burden (45%) to the state. Once more, a closer look reveals a partisan split among registered voters, with 63 percent of Democrats viewing immigrants as a benefit and 66 percent of Republicans viewing them as a burden. Independents are more likely to say immigrants are a benefit (53%) than a burden (38%). When asked their views about immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years, 65 percent of likely voters say they should be given a chance to keep their jobs and apply for legal status, while 31 percent say they should be deported. Solid majorities of Democrats (77%) and independents (63%) favor a pathway to citizenship for immigrants, while Republicans are split (49% favor a pathway to citizenship, 45% favor deportation).
- **Health care:** A majority of likely voters (54%) favor a universal health care system run by the government and financed by taxpayers, compared to nearly four in 10 (39%) who prefer the current system. Among registered voters, Democrats (76%) and independents (62%) are more likely than Republicans (31%) to favor universal health care. Just over half of likely voters (54%) would be willing to pay higher health insurance premiums or taxes to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance. Among political groups of registered voters, most Democrats (66%) and independents (59%) would be willing to pay more, while most Republicans (59%) would not.

## **MORE KEY FINDINGS:**

### **Californians say state government wastes a lot of money – Page 18**

Six in 10 likely voters (63%) say the state government wastes a lot of the money they pay in taxes.

### **Approval of Congress drops to record low – Page 15**

Approval rating of Congress hits a new low of 22 percent, while President Bush's approval rating dips to 27 percent among likely voters, near his all-time low of 25 percent in July 2007.

### **Homeland security seven years after 9/11 – Page 21**

A quarter of likely voters (24%) say terrorism and homeland security are big problems in California, nearly identical to perceptions before the last presidential election in 2004 and somewhat lower than the percentage in 2001 in the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

## **ABOUT THE SURVEY**

This survey is the 30<sup>th</sup> in the *Californians and Their Government* series and is supported with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. It seeks to raise public awareness, inform decisionmakers, and stimulate public discussion on state and national issues and the November general election. This is the 89<sup>th</sup> PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 189,000 Californians. Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,001 California adult residents interviewed from August 12–19, 2008. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2% and for the 1,047 likely voters is +/- 3%. For more information on methodology, see page 25.

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998.

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This report will appear on PPIC's website ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)) after 10 p.m. on August 27, 2008.

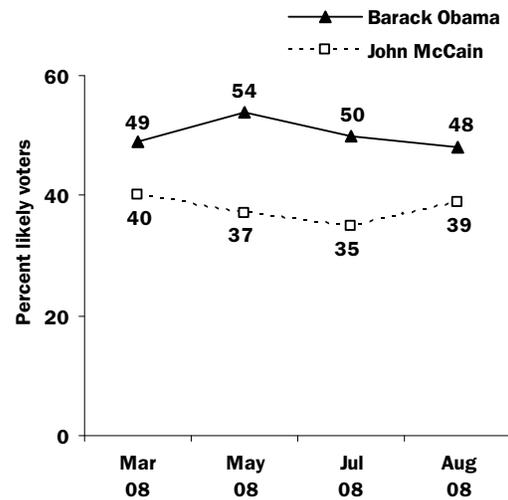
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# NOVEMBER ELECTION

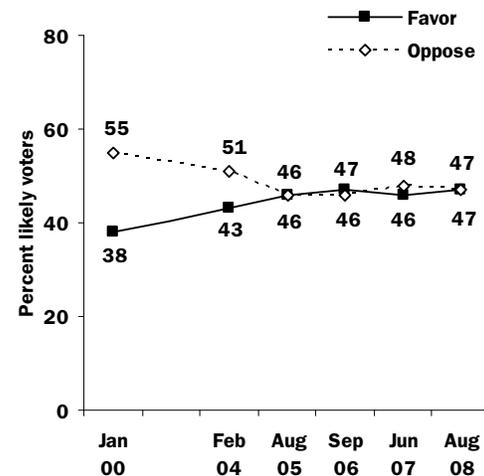
## KEY FINDINGS

- Among California's likely voters, Barack Obama continues to lead John McCain (48% to 39%) in the presidential race, but the margin has narrowed since last month. About half of likely voters are satisfied with their choice of candidates in the presidential election, with Democrats more satisfied than others. (page 8)
- The economy is the top issue that most California likely voters would like to hear presidential candidates talk about during the campaign. Nine in 10 likely voters say they are following news about candidates very or somewhat closely. (page 9)
- California's likely voters are divided on Proposition 4, a constitutional amendment requiring parental notification before a minor's abortion (47% yes, 44% no); one in 10 are undecided. Eight in 10 likely voters think the outcome of Proposition 4 is important. (page 10)
- Likely voters continue to be divided when asked if they favor allowing same-sex marriages in general (47% favor, 47% oppose). On Proposition 8, a constitutional amendment that would prohibit same-sex marriage, a majority would vote no (54% no, 40% yes). Eight in 10 likely voters think the outcome of Proposition 8 is important. (page 11)
- Likely voters are divided on Proposition 11, which would give legislative redistricting authority to an independent citizens' commission (39% yes, 36% no); one in four are undecided. Seven in 10 likely voters think changes are needed in the redistricting process and 56 percent think state legislators would more effectively represent their districts if district lines were redrawn by an independent citizens' commission. (page 12)

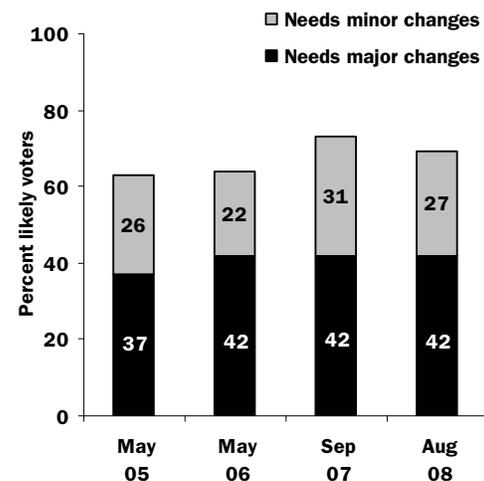
Presidential Election



Attitudes Toward Same-Sex Marriage



Attitudes Toward Redistricting Process



## 2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

In the calm before the storm of the presidential campaign season—the August survey was conducted before the national party conventions, the announcement of vice-presidential candidates, and the debates—California’s likely voters prefer Senator Barack Obama over Senator John McCain by 9 points (48% to 39%). Obama’s lead over McCain today has decreased 6 points since July (50% to 35%), and is half of what it was in May (54% to 37%). Registered voters in California are more likely than registered voters nationwide to support Obama over McCain, according to a recent national *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll (45% Obama, 43% McCain).

Today, Obama enjoys overwhelming support from Democrats (81%) and McCain enjoys similarly high levels of support from Republicans (77%). Independents favor Obama (48%) over McCain (33%) and 16 percent are undecided. However, since July, Obama’s share of the independent vote has dropped 9 points, while McCain’s share has increased 12 points. Among likely voters, women prefer Obama to McCain, and men remain divided. Among Latino likely voters, Obama enjoys overwhelming support, while whites prefer McCain. Likely voters under age 35 strongly favor Obama over McCain (65% to 21%), while support among likely voters age 55 and older is divided (43% Obama, 45% McCain). Among likely voters who say the economy is the top issue they want to hear candidates talk about, half favor Obama (53% Obama, 31% McCain).

**“If the November 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election were being held today, would you vote for Barack Obama, the Democrat, or John McCain, the Republican?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>		<b>Barack Obama, the Democrat</b>	<b>John McCain, the Republican</b>	<b>Someone else</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		48%	39%	3%	10%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	81	10	2	7
	<b>Republican</b>	11	77	1	11
	<b>Independent</b>	48	33	3	16
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	42	46	2	10
	<b>Women</b>	53	32	5	10
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	71	16	2	11
	<b>Whites</b>	38	47	4	11

Just 48 percent of likely voters say they are satisfied with their choice of presidential candidates, and 49 percent say they are not satisfied. Satisfaction with the choice of presidential candidate is much lower than was satisfaction with the choice of presidential primary candidates in January (64% satisfied, 31% not satisfied). Across parties today, two in three Democrats (68%) say they are satisfied with their presidential candidate choices, while just 40 percent of independents and 35 percent of Republicans report the same level of satisfaction. In January, both Democrats (77%) and Republicans (52%) were more likely to report satisfaction with their presidential primary candidate choices.

**“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. President on November 4<sup>th</sup>?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>Satisfied</b>	48%	68%	35%	40%	51%
<b>Not satisfied</b>	49	28	64	56	44
<b>Don't know</b>	3	4	1	4	5

**2008 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION (CONTINUED)**

Among the state's likely voters, the economy is the issue they would most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the general election (34%). Next on the list of priorities for likely voters are the war in Iraq (12%), energy supply (8%), foreign policy (6%), health care (6%), and immigration (6%). In August 2004, likely voters in California named the economy (26%) and the war in Iraq (21%) as their top issues. Today, across parties, the economy also tops the list. The next highest priority among Democrats and independents is the war in Iraq, while Republicans' next priorities are energy supply and immigration (11% each). Thirty-nine percent of Latinos say the economy is the issue they would most like to hear discussed among presidential candidates, followed by the war in Iraq (15%), and immigration and illegal immigration (8%).

**“Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 4<sup>th</sup> election?”**

<i>Top six issues mentioned Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>Economy</b>	34%	38%	32%	35%	39%
<b>War in Iraq</b>	12	16	8	14	15
<b>Energy, energy supply</b>	8	6	11	7	4
<b>Foreign policy</b>	6	3	4	7	2
<b>Health care, health costs</b>	6	7	3	6	4
<b>Immigration, illegal immigration</b>	6	4	11	5	8

With the presidential campaigns about to kick into high gear, Californians are paying attention to news about them. Eighty-eight percent of likely voters say they are following news about the candidates at least somewhat closely, with 39 percent saying they are following the news very closely. Findings today are similar to last month's (42% very closely, 44% fairly closely), and similar to the level of attention that likely voters were paying to news in August 2004, after that year's Democratic convention, but before the Republican convention. More Californians at that time said they were very closely following the news (48% very closely, 41% fairly closely). Across parties, more than eight in 10 likely voters say they are paying at least fairly close attention. Eighty-three percent of Latino likely voters say they are closely following news about the presidential candidates, with 34 percent paying very close attention.

**“How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2008 presidential election?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Latinos</b>
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	
<b>Very closely</b>	39%	41%	38%	37%	34%
<b>Fairly closely</b>	49	44	50	56	49
<b>Not too closely</b>	10	12	10	5	14
<b>Not at all closely</b>	2	3	2	1	2
<b>Don't know</b>	–	–	–	1	1

**PROPOSITION 4—PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

Likely voters today are divided over Proposition 4 (47% yes, 44% no), a citizens’ initiative that would amend the California Constitution to prohibit the termination of an unemancipated minor’s pregnancy until 48 hours after notification of the minor’s parent or guardian. Nine percent are undecided on Proposition 4. In 2005 and 2006, Californians rejected similar propositions by slim margins (2005: 47% yes, 53% no; 2006: 46% yes, 54% no).

Republicans (62%) are most likely to favor the initiative, while more than half of Democrats are opposed (56%), and independents are divided (48% yes, 44% no). At least half of likely voters in Los Angeles, the Central Valley, and the Other Southern California region say they would vote yes on Proposition 4, while 57 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area would vote no. Likely voters with children (52% yes, 41% no) are more likely than those without children (44% yes, 45% no) to support Proposition 4, while women (46%) and men (48%), and whites (46%) and Latinos (48%) share similar levels of support.

**“Proposition 4 is called the ‘Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor’s Pregnancy Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 4?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don’t know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		47%	44%	9%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	35	56	9
	<b>Republican</b>	62	28	10
	<b>Independent</b>	48	44	8
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	48	41	11
	<b>Women</b>	46	46	8
<b>Parents of Children under 18</b>	<b>Yes</b>	52	41	7
	<b>No</b>	44	45	11

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 29.

Eight in 10 likely voters—including Democrats, Republicans, and independents—say that the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4 is important to them, but independents (37%) are much less likely than Democrats (48%) and Republicans (50%) to say the outcome is very important. Forty-eight percent of both yes and no voters on Proposition 4 say that the outcome of the vote is very important to them. Latinos (62%) are much more likely than whites (43%) to say the outcome is very important. Women (56%) are more likely than men (37%) and those with children (51%) are more likely than those without children (43%) to say the outcome is very important.

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 4</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	46%	48%	50%	37%	48%	48%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	34	34	31	43	36	33
<b>Not too important</b>	14	12	13	15	13	14
<b>Not at all important</b>	4	4	4	4	3	4
<b>Don’t know</b>	2	2	2	1	–	1

## PROPOSITION 8—SAME-SEX MARRIAGE

Proposition 8 would amend the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry, and recognize marriage only between a man and a woman as valid in California. More than half of California likely voters oppose Proposition 8 (54% no, 40% yes). In 2000, California voters approved by a wide margin (61% to 39%) a ballot initiative that prevented the state from recognizing same-sex marriages. After a recent state Supreme Court decision that found the same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional, Proposition 8 qualified for the November 2008 ballot.

Today, Democratic (66%) and independent likely voters (59%) oppose Proposition 8, while Republican likely voters (60%) are in favor. Half in the Central Valley (51%) support Proposition 8, while two in three in the San Francisco Bay Area (65%), and at least half in Los Angeles (54%) and in the Other Southern California (51%) region oppose it. Likely voters who have never married (66%) are more likely to oppose this initiative than those who are married (51%).

Likely voters are divided when asked if they generally favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married (47% favor, 47% oppose). Of those who favor same-sex marriage, 83 percent would vote no on Proposition 8; of those opposed to same-sex marriage, 69 percent support the proposition.

### “Proposition 8 is called the ‘Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?”\*

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don't know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		40%	54%	6%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	29	66	5
	<b>Republican</b>	60	34	6
	<b>Independent</b>	36	59	5
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	45	49	6
	<b>Women</b>	35	58	7
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	41	54	5
	<b>Whites</b>	39	55	6

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 29.

Nearly eight in 10 likely voters (78%) think the outcome of Proposition 8 is either very (48%) or somewhat (30%) important. About half of Democrats (50%) and Republicans (52%) report that the outcome is very important, while 41 percent of independents say the same. Similarly, 53 percent of liberals and 56 percent of conservatives think that the vote on Proposition 8 is very important, while far fewer moderates (34%) think so. Those who plan to vote yes (57%) on Proposition 8 are more likely than those planning to vote no (44%) to say the outcome is very important. Married Californians (49%) are slightly more likely than those who have never married (42%) to say that the outcome is very important.

### “How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 8?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 8</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Very important</b>	48%	50%	52%	41%	57%	44%
<b>Somewhat important</b>	30	31	26	34	29	31
<b>Not too important</b>	14	11	14	17	10	16
<b>Not at all important</b>	7	7	6	5	4	7
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	2	3	–	2

**PROPOSITION 11—REDISTRICTING**

California’s likely voters today are divided on Proposition 11 (39% yes, 36% no, 25% undecided), an initiative that would amend the California Constitution to take the authority to draw legislative districts away from elected officials and give it to a commission of registered voters. In 2005, a similar proposition that would have given redistricting authority to a panel of retired judges was rejected (40% yes, 60% no). While this proposition does not enjoy majority support within any political group today, Republicans (47%) are more likely than independents (39%) and far more likely than Democrats (31%) to support Proposition 11; fewer than half of conservatives (42%), moderates (39%), and liberals (37%) support this measure.

Seven in 10 likely voters think the redistricting process in California is in need of major (42%) or minor (27%) changes. Of those who think the redistricting process needs major changes, 56 percent say they would vote yes on Proposition 11; far fewer (36%) of those who say minor changes are needed would vote yes.

**“Proposition 11 is called the ‘Redistricting Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 11?”\***

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Yes	No	Don’t know
<b>All Likely Voters</b>		39%	36%	25%
<b>Party</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	31	40	29
	<b>Republican</b>	47	33	20
	<b>Independent</b>	39	36	25
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	44	36	20
	<b>Women</b>	34	36	30
<b>Race/Ethnicity</b>	<b>Latinos</b>	33	47	20
	<b>Whites</b>	42	32	26

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 30.

More than half (56%) of California likely voters think that if state voting districts were redrawn by an independent commission of citizens, the state would have legislators who more effectively represent their districts. An overwhelming eight in ten (81%) of those planning to vote yes on Proposition 11 think districts would be more effectively represented, while those planning to vote no are divided (40% would be, 45%, would not be). Republicans (60%) and independents (58%) are more likely than Democrats (50%) to think that having a commission of citizens redraw districts would result in more representative legislators; conservatives (60%) and moderates (56%) are more likely than liberals (50%) to say the same. At least half of likely voters across all demographic groups think that legislators would more effectively represent their districts if an independent citizens’ commission redrew state office boundaries.

**“If voting districts were redrawn by an independent commission of citizens, do you think California would generally have state legislators who more effectively represent their districts than legislators do today, or not?”**

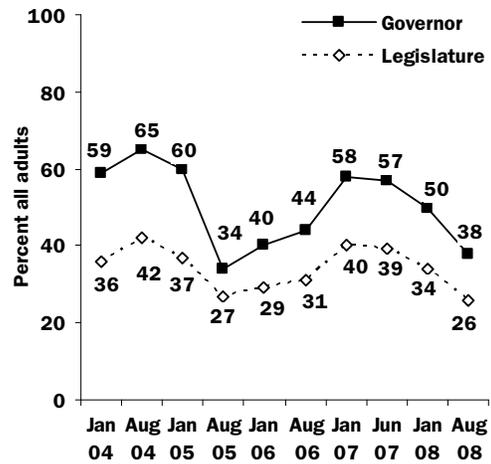
<i>Likely voters only</i>	<b>All Likely Voters</b>	<b>Party</b>			<b>Vote on Proposition 11</b>	
		<b>Dem</b>	<b>Rep</b>	<b>Ind</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Yes, would</b>	56%	50%	60%	58%	81%	40%
<b>No, would not</b>	26	30	23	24	11	45
<b>Don’t know</b>	18	20	17	18	8	15

# STATE AND NATIONAL ISSUES

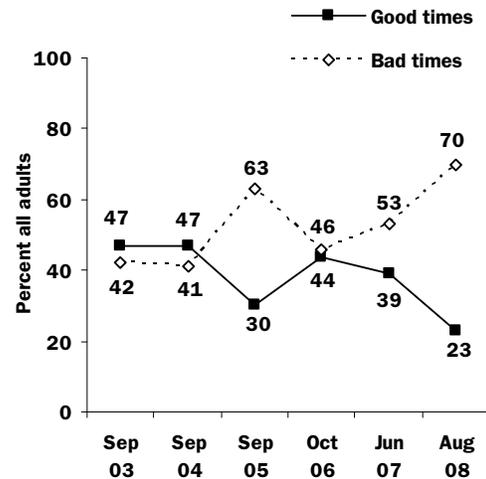
## KEY FINDINGS

- A record percentage of Californians name the economy (42%) as the most important issue facing the state. Fewer than one in four adult residents say that things in California (23%) or the United States (21%) are going in the right direction. (page 14)
- About four in 10 approve of the governor's job performance, while about one in four approve of the state legislature, the president, and the U.S. Congress. (page 15)
- Most Californians express highly negative views about future economic conditions in California and the U.S. Nearly eight in 10 say California is currently in an economic recession. (page 16)
- Californians are increasingly saying the state's budget situation is a big problem and major changes are needed. Most Californians would prefer to deal with the budget gap through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases. (page 17)
- Nearly six in 10 Californians think the government does not do enough to regulate access to guns, and say that government regulation of business is necessary to protect public interest. (page 19)
- Six in 10 Californians think the U.S. should bring troops home from Iraq as soon as possible, half think the war in Iraq has not contributed to the security of the United States, and one in four say terrorism and homeland security is a big problem in California today. (pages 20, 21)
- Republicans and Democrats differ strongly in their perceptions of immigration's effects and in their policy preferences regarding universal health insurance. (pages 22, 23)

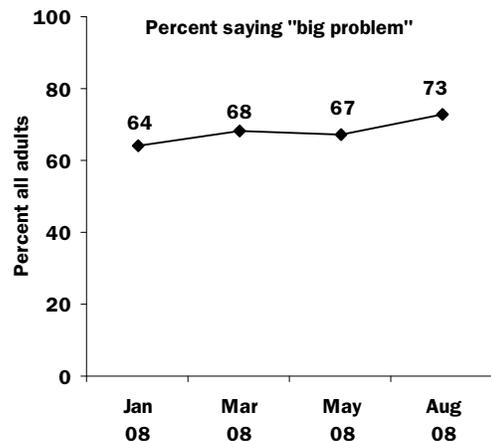
Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials



Economic Outlook of Nation



Seriousness of Budget Situation



**OVERALL MOOD**

Californians are increasingly concerned about jobs and the economy: a record 42 percent say this is the most important issue facing the state, up from 36 percent in May. Throughout this year, Californians have consistently rated jobs and the economy as the most important issue facing the state. Despite a grim fiscal situation in which lawmakers seem unable to come to agreement on state spending, only 10 percent of residents regard the state budget situation as the most important issue facing the state, and even fewer name gasoline prices (8%), education (6%) or immigration (5%). Mention of immigration has declined 13 points since last September when Californians viewed it as the most important state issue (18% September 2007, 5% today). Across regions, the economy also tops the list, with far fewer mentioning any other issue, and at least one in three residents across all demographic and political groups mention jobs and the economy as the most critical issue facing the state. Latinos (59%) are far more likely than whites (35%) to mention this issue. The opinions of likely voters differ little from those of Californians in general on the relative importance of these issues.

**“Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?”**

Top five issues mentioned	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
<b>Jobs, economy</b>	42%	42%	37%	44%	44%	39%
<b>State budget, deficit, taxes</b>	10	8	10	9	10	14
<b>Gasoline prices</b>	8	11	5	8	8	5
<b>Education, schools</b>	6	8	8	5	5	7
<b>Immigration, illegal immigration</b>	5	4	3	7	7	7

Residents’ views on the direction of the state are also extremely negative: 23 percent of all residents and 24 percent of likely voters say the state is headed in the right direction, while 68 percent of residents and likely voters say it is headed in the wrong direction. Strong majorities across all political and demographic groups believe the state is headed in the wrong direction. For nearly a full year (since September 2007), at least half, and often more, of the state’s residents have said the state is headed in the wrong direction.

Californians are equally pessimistic about the direction of the country: 74 percent say the nation is headed in the wrong direction and opinions are similar among likely voters. Californians’ opinions are in line with those of adults nationwide, according to a similar question asked this month in a *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll (76% say the United States is on the wrong track). Strong majorities of Californians across all political and demographic groups say the nation is headed in the wrong direction.

**“Do you think things in \_\_\_\_\_ are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”**

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>California</b>	<b>Right direction</b>	23%	22%	23%	27%	24%
	<b>Wrong direction</b>	68	71	69	64	68
	<b>Don’t know</b>	9	7	8	9	8
<b>the United States</b>	<b>Right direction</b>	21	12	31	22	22
	<b>Wrong direction</b>	74	85	63	73	73
	<b>Don’t know</b>	5	3	6	5	5

## APPROVAL RATINGS OF ELECTED OFFICIALS

Whether it's the uncertain economy or the budget impasse, Governor Schwarzenegger's job approval ratings continue to decline: 38 percent of residents approve of his job performance, 56 percent disapprove. The governor's approval ratings have declined 5 points since July and 12 points since January. Likely voters (43%) are somewhat more approving of the governor's performance. Across parties, Republicans and independents (51% each) are more likely to approve of the governor's job performance, while Democrats (66%) are more likely to disapprove.

The California Legislature fares even worse than the governor in its job approval ratings, with 63 percent of residents saying they disapprove of the job the legislature is doing. Majority disapproval of the legislature has been consistent since January. Large majorities across demographic and political groups disapprove of the legislature's job performance.

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

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	38%	29%	51%	51%	43%
	Disapprove	56	66	42	46	52
	Don't know	6	5	7	3	5
<i>... the California Legislature is handling its job?</i>	Approve	26	24	17	31	20
	Disapprove	63	66	76	63	74
	Don't know	11	10	7	6	6

At the federal level, President Bush again reaches his record low level of job approval (24% approve, 72% disapprove), first recorded in March. Likely voters are similar in their assessments. Half of Republicans (54%) approve of the president's performance, while most independents (74%) and Democrats (92%) disapprove. January 2004 was the last time the president received majority approval in California. Californians today are similar to adults nationwide in their negative assessment of the president's job performance, according to the recent *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll (25% approve, 71% disapprove).

The U.S. Congress reaches a new low in its job approval rating this month: 27 percent of residents approve of the job Congress is doing, 64 percent disapprove. This marks a 6-point decline since March (33% approval, 55% disapproval). Likely voters are somewhat more negative than all Californians in their assessment. Across parties, strong majorities disapprove of Congress, with Republicans (74%) expressing the most disapproval. However, Californians are not as negative as adults nationwide in their ratings of Congress, according to the *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg poll (17% approve, 73% disapprove).

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

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	24%	7%	54%	22%	27%
	Disapprove	72	92	40	74	70
	Don't know	4	1	6	4	3
<i>... the U.S. Congress is handling its job?</i>	Approve	27	28	19	25	22
	Disapprove	64	65	74	65	72
	Don't know	9	7	7	10	6

## THE ECONOMY

With four in 10 Californians (42%) saying the economy is the most important issue facing the state today, what do they expect in the next year? Seven in 10 residents (71%) and three in four likely voters (75%) think California will experience bad times financially. Expectations of bad times ahead have remained high over the past six months (72% January, 76% March, 73% May, 78% June, 78% July, 71% today).

At least two in three Californians today across party, region, age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups say the state is facing bad times financially. Democrats (77%) are somewhat more likely than Republicans (71%) to say bad times lie ahead. Women (77%) are much more likely than men (66%), and homeowners (74%) are somewhat more likely than renters (68%), to expect hard times.

Californians are just as pessimistic about the nation’s economy during the next year, with seven in 10 residents (70%) and three in four likely voters (74%) saying they expect bad economic times. Strong majorities across party, region, gender, age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups expect the nation to face a tough economic future. While strong majorities hold this pessimistic view, Democrats (79%) and independents (75%) are much more likely than Republicans (64%), and whites (72%) are more likely than Latinos (66%), to expect 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	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good times	21%	16%	20%	20%	17%
Bad times	71	77	71	73	75
Don't know	8	7	9	7	8

Coincident with their overwhelming belief that California is heading into bad economic times, most residents think the state is already in trouble. Nearly eight in 10 Californians (78%) say the state is in a serious (34%), moderate (32%), or mild (12%) recession. This perception has grown since March, when 72 percent thought the state was in a recession (26% serious, 32% moderate, 14% mild). The belief that California is in a serious recession has increased 8 points since March.

Although perceptions of an economic recession are similar among likely voters and residents in general, Democrats (40%) are more likely than Republicans (22%) or independents (29%), and Latinos (49%) are far more likely than whites (26%), to say that California is in a serious economic recession. Strong majorities of residents across demographic groups believe that the state is in a recession, but belief that it is a serious recession declines with higher education and income.

**“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	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, serious recession	34%	40%	22%	29%	30%
Yes, moderate recession	32	34	37	31	35
Yes, mild recession	12	10	12	13	10
No	17	12	26	19	20
Don't know	5	4	3	8	5

## STATE BUDGET

With the budget impasse nearing its third month, overwhelming majorities of likely voters (84%) and residents in general (73%) think that the state budget situation in California is a big problem. These percentages are the highest we've seen since May 2004, when California voters had just passed Proposition 57, the Economic Recovery Bond Act, to help the state close a multibillion dollar budget gap then. The perception that the state's budget is a big problem has increased 6 points since May (67%) and 9 points since January (64%). The perception that the budget situation is a big problem is prevalent across all demographic groups and political parties (83% Democrats, 85% Republicans, 74% independents).

And so how do Californians want to deal with the multibillion dollar budget deficit facing the state this fiscal year? A plurality of residents (41%) and likely voters (44%) favor a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, while fewer say the gap should be addressed mostly through spending cuts (35% adults, 38% likely voters). Fewer still prefer to deal with the deficit mostly through tax increases alone or through borrowing money and running a budget deficit. Support for a mix of spending cuts and tax increases has hovered around 40 percent all year (41% January, 42% March, 43% May, 41% today).

At least half of Democrats (51%) and independents (54%) favor a mix, while six in 10 Republicans (59%) prefer to deal with the budget gap mostly through spending cuts. Across regions, residents from the Central Valley (41%) are the most likely to prefer spending cuts, while residents of San Francisco Bay Area (47%) are the most likely to prefer a mix of spending cuts and tax increases.

### "How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap?"

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Mostly through spending cuts	35%	21%	59%	31%	38%
Mostly through tax increases	8	12	4	6	8
Through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases	41	51	29	54	44
Okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit	8	7	4	5	4
Other	3	3	1	2	2
Don't know	5	6	3	2	4

As might be expected—given their negative perceptions of the budget situation—nine in 10 Californians think major (74%) or minor (19%) changes are needed in the state budget process. The opinion that major changes are needed has increased by 9 points since May (65%). At least seven in 10 residents across party, region, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups hold this view. This prevalence of this view increases with age and is higher among likely voters than among all adults.

### "Overall, do you think the state budget process in California, in terms of both revenues and spending, is in need of major changes, minor changes, or do you think it is fine the way it is?"

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Major changes	74%	76%	80%	71%	80%
Minor changes	19	18	17	24	16
Fine the way it is	4	4	1	1	2
Don't know	3	2	2	4	2

## TRUST IN GOVERNMENT

Californians continue to express low levels of trust in their state government. Today, only 32 percent say they trust the state government to do what is right just about always (5%) or most of the time (27%), while 65 percent say they trust the government only some of the time (58%) or volunteer the answer that they trust it none of the time (7%). At least six in 10 residents across party, region, age, education, income and racial/ethnic groups express this lack of trust. Today’s level of distrust is about the same as in March but slightly lower than in September 2007 (64% only some of the time, 5% none of the time).

Californians’ distrust extends to the state government’s fiscal efficiency as well. Six in 10 Californians (60%) and likely voters (63%) think the people in state government waste a lot of taxpayer money. This perception has increased by 7 points since September 2007 (53%).

The perception that state government wastes a lot of money is widely held across parties and regions. Republicans (70%) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by Democrats (58%) and independents (56%). Across regions, residents of Los Angeles (65%) and the Central Valley (64%) are more likely than those in the Other Southern California region (59%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (52%) to hold the view that the state wastes a lot of taxpayer money. Latinos (59%), whites (62%), women (58%), and men (61%) all hold this view, and the prevalence of this opinion increases as age increases.

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

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>A lot</b>	60%	58%	70%	56%	63%
<b>Some</b>	32	34	24	37	31
<b>Don’t waste very much of it</b>	6	5	4	4	4
<b>Don’t know</b>	2	3	2	3	2

Residents also believe that interest groups have a great deal of influence in state government. Two in three Californians (67%) and seven in 10 likely voters (71%) say that state government is pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, while far fewer say that it is run for the benefit of all the people. This distrust is apparent across party lines (seven in 10 believe that the influence of special interests is pervasive in state government) and across regions; seven in 10 residents in Los Angeles, two in three residents in the Central Valley and the Other Southern California region, and 63 percent of those living in the San Francisco Bay Area hold this view. A strong majority of Latinos (66%) and whites (69%) as well as men (66%) and women (69%) say the state government is run by a few big interests, an opinion more prevalent as age increases.

**“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%	70%	68%	71%
<b>Benefit of all the people</b>	24	21	23	22	20
<b>Don’t know</b>	9	9	7	10	9

## ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

As Californians prepare to vote on Proposition 4 (a constitutional amendment on parental notification of abortion), how do they feel more generally about the role of government when it comes to abortion? Two in three Californians (65%) and seven in 10 likely voters (71%) think the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion. Today, Democrats (79%) and independents (72%) are more likely than Republicans (52%) to hold this view. The belief among residents that government should not interfere has declined slightly since February 2004 (69%).

Another area where the role of government is often debated is gun control. A majority of Californians and likely voters (58% each) say that government does not do enough to regulate access to guns. Democrats (71%) and independents (61%) are far more likely to hold this view than Republicans (38%). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (64%), Los Angeles (64%), and Other Southern California region (57%) are more likely to say there is not enough regulation, while Central Valley residents are divided (43% not enough regulation, 45% too much regulation). Californians' belief that there is not enough gun regulation is slightly lower than in February 2004 (62%).

**“For each of the following issues, please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>The government goes too far in restricting the rights of citizens to own guns</b>	33%	23%	50%	32%	33%
<b>The government does not do enough to regulate access to guns</b>	58	71	38	61	58
<b>Don't know</b>	9	6	12	7	9

In the wake of the sub-prime mortgage crisis, how do Californians feel about government regulation of business? A majority of Californians (57%) and likely voters (56%) think government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest. Californians' opinions are similar to those of September 2004 (54%). The view that government regulation is necessary is more widely held among Democrats (67%) and independents (58%) than among Republicans (41%). At least half across all regions hold this view, with residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (61%) the most likely to support government regulation. Latinos (65%) are much more likely than whites (53%), and women (61%) are more likely than men (53%), to hold this view. Support for regulation declines with older age.

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest</b>	57%	67%	41%	58%	56%
<b>Government regulation of business does more harm than good</b>	34	25	52	36	38
<b>Don't know</b>	9	8	7	6	6

With the economy on many Californians' minds, how do they feel about government benefits for those economically less fortunate? A majority of Californians (56%) think poor people have hard lives because government benefits do not go far enough to help them live decently, while 33 percent say poor people have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return. The opinion that poor people lead hard lives is similar to the opinion expressed in June 2007 (59%), and at least half of Californians have given this response each of the five times we have asked this question since 2000. Democrats (70%) are the most likely to believe that poor people have lead difficult lives. Only 49 percent of independents and 29 percent of Republicans share this view.

## WAR IN IRAQ

A majority of Californians (61%) believe things are not going well for the United States in Iraq (26% not too well, 35% not at all well). However, negative perceptions of progress in Iraq have dropped 18 points since June 2007, when 79 percent said things were going not too well (26%) or not at all well (53%). Since that time, the perception that things are going at least somewhat well has doubled (18% June 2007, 36% today). Nevertheless, Californians remain more negative than the rest of the country: In a June survey by the Pew Research Center, 44 percent of adults nationwide said the U.S. military effort in Iraq was going well and 52 percent said it was not going well.

The state's likely voters (45%) are more optimistic than Californians overall about U.S. progress in Iraq. Residents are sharply divided along partisan lines: While 78 percent of Democrats believe things are not going well in Iraq (33% not too well, 45% not at all well), 71 percent of Republicans hold the opposite view (23% very well, 48% somewhat well). And although 58 percent of independents are pessimistic (30% not too well, 28% not at all well), the proportion expressing this view has declined 10 points since March. Majorities across regions believe things are not going well for the U.S. in Iraq, with San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles residents expressing the most negative views. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites are divided about progress in Iraq (48% going well, 49% not going well), while an overwhelming majority of Latinos (78%) believe things are not going well.

**“In general, how would you say things are going for the U.S. in Iraq?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Very well</b>	9%	3%	23%	8%	12%
<b>Somewhat well</b>	27	17	48	31	33
<b>Not too well</b>	26	33	20	30	28
<b>Not at all well</b>	35	45	8	28	25
<b>Don't know</b>	3	2	1	3	2

Despite declining pessimism about the situation in Iraq, most residents continue to think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible (60% in December 2007, 58% in March 2008, 60% today) rather than keep them there until the situation has stabilized. In a Pew Research Center June survey, 52 percent of Americans nationwide said the U.S. should bring troops home as soon as possible, while 43 percent said the U.S. should keep troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized. Unlike residents overall, likely voters are divided on this issue (47% keep troops in Iraq, 49% bring troops home). Deep partisan differences are evident: 76 percent of Democrats want troops brought home as soon as possible, 73 percent of Republicans want troops kept in Iraq until the situation has stabilized. A majority of independents (54%) think the U.S. should bring its troops home. Likely voters supporting Barack Obama for president overwhelmingly want the U.S. to bring troops home as soon as possible (78%), while those supporting John McCain overwhelmingly want troops kept in Iraq until things have stabilized (82%).

**“Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Keep troops in Iraq until situation has stabilized</b>	37%	20%	73%	41%	47%
<b>Bring troops home as soon as possible</b>	60	76	24	54	49
<b>Don't know</b>	3	4	3	5	4

## U.S. SECURITY

Residents hold mixed views about whether the Iraq war has contributed to the long-term security of the United States. While half (50%) say the war has not contributed to long-term security, 45 percent say it has (22% a great deal, 20% some, 3% not sure how much). The perception that the war has not contributed to long-term security has increased over time (34% in August 2003, 44% in August 2004, 50% today). Across parties, a strong majority of Democrats (68%) hold this negative view, while 69 percent of Republicans hold a positive view. Independents are more likely to say that the war has not contributed to U.S. security (55% has not contributed, 41% has contributed). Among likely voters supporting Obama for president, 75 percent say the war has not contributed to the security of the nation, while among those who support McCain, 73 percent believe the war has promoted U.S. security.

Across regions, a majority of San Francisco Bay Area residents (60%) believe the Iraq war has not helped security efforts, while residents in other regions are divided. Opinions are also divided across age, gender, and income groups, as well as along racial/ethnic lines. For example, 51 percent of Latinos say the war has contributed to our security, 46 percent say it has not; 45 percent of whites say it has, 50 percent say it has not.

**“Do you think the war in Iraq has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States?”  
(if contributed: “Is that a great deal or some?”)**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Contributed a great deal</b>	22%	13%	36%	19%	23%
<b>Contributed some</b>	20	11	31	21	20
<b>Contributed, don't know how much (volunteered)</b>	3	3	2	1	2
<b>Has not contributed</b>	50	68	27	55	51
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	4	4	4

Nearly seven years after the September 11<sup>th</sup> terrorist attacks, how do residents feel about terrorism and homeland security in California? Two in three consider this issue a big problem (26%) or somewhat of a problem (40%), while 31 percent say it is not a problem. In the aftermath of September 11<sup>th</sup>, our December 2001 survey found that a slightly higher percentage of residents considered terrorism and homeland security a problem in California (31% a big problem, 42% somewhat of a problem), but the views today are nearly identical to those expressed in August 2004, prior to the presidential election.

Majorities across political parties today believe terrorism and homeland security is at least somewhat of a problem in California, although Republicans are the most likely to consider it a big problem (31%). Democrats and independents (35% each) are more likely than Republicans (24%) to say this is not a problem. At least six in 10 residents across demographic groups believe terrorism represents at least somewhat of a problem for California.

**“How much of a problem is terrorism and homeland security in California today?  
Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not much of a problem?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Big problem</b>	26%	22%	31%	21%	24%
<b>Somewhat of a problem</b>	40	40	41	42	41
<b>Not much of a problem</b>	31	35	24	35	32
<b>Don't know</b>	3	3	4	2	3

## IMMIGRATION POLICY

Most Californians today continue to consider immigrants a benefit to the state because of their hard work and job skills (58%), rather than a burden because they use public services (36%). The percentage of residents who consider immigrants a benefit has hovered around 60 percent since February 2004. However, likely voters are more divided in their opinions (48% consider immigrants a benefit, 45% a burden) and registered voters are split along party lines (63% of Democrats consider immigrants a benefit, 66% of Republicans consider immigrants a burden). Independents are far more likely to view them as a benefit, not a burden (53% to 38%). Across ideological groups, liberals (72%) are far more likely than moderates (55%) or conservatives (49%) to consider immigrants a benefit.

Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (68%) are the most likely to say immigrants benefit the state because of their hard work and job skills, followed by residents in Los Angeles (61%), the Central Valley (55%), and the Other Southern California region (51%). Latinos are twice as likely as whites to hold this view (87% to 42%), while men (57%) and women (58%) are similar in their opinion that immigrants are a benefit. Older residents are much more likely than younger residents to say immigrants are a burden to the state (47% of those age 55 and older, 35% of those ages 35–54, 27% of those ages 18–34). Among those who believe the state faces bad times financially in the next 12 months, 56 percent believe immigrants are a benefit to California. Among those who name the economy as the most important state issue, 66 percent view immigrants as a benefit to California.

**“...which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?  
Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills, or  
Immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services.”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>Immigrants today are a benefit to California</b>	58%	63%	25%	53%	48%
<b>Immigrants today are a burden to California</b>	36	30	66	38	45
<b>Don't know</b>	6	7	9	9	7

Strong majorities of residents (71%) and likely voters (65%) believe that illegal immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years should be given the chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status. Twenty-four percent of adults and 31 percent of likely voters believe they should be deported back to their native countries. Since we first began asking this question in June 2007, about seven in 10 residents have said they believe in giving undocumented workers an eventual pathway to citizenship. Today, solid majorities of Democrats (77%) and independents (63%) favor a pathway to citizenship, while Republicans are divided (49% pathway, 45% deported). Among likely voters supporting Obama, 80 percent favor the pathway to citizenship, while McCain supporters are divided (49% pathway, 46% deported). More than six in 10 residents across demographic groups favor giving illegal workers a chance to keep their jobs and apply for legal status, but support is overwhelmingly higher among Latinos than among whites (92% to 62%). Support declines as age and income increase.

**“If you had to choose, what do you think should happen to most illegal immigrants  
who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
<b>They should be given a chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status</b>	71%	77%	49%	63%	65%
<b>They should be deported back to their native country</b>	24	18	45	32	31
<b>Don't know</b>	5	5	6	5	4

## HEALTH CARE

As Senators Obama and McCain debate the best way to expand health care coverage in the nation, how do Californians view the issue? Majorities of residents (63%) and likely voters (54%) would prefer a universal health insurance system run by the government and financed by taxpayers over the current health insurance system, in which most people have private insurance but some are not covered. In earlier PPIC surveys, six in 10 residents supported a universal health care system (60% in September 2004, 59% in September 2005, 61% in January 2007).

Today, 76 percent of Democrats and 62 percent of independents favor a universal health care system, while 62 percent of Republicans favor the current system. Among likely voters supporting Obama for president, 81 percent favor a universal government-run health care system, while McCain supporters favor the current system of private insurance (68%).

Support for a universal system is highest in Los Angeles (69%), followed by the Central Valley (64%), San Francisco Bay Area (61%), and Other Southern California region (58%). At least half of residents across other demographic groups support a universal system, although this view is more widely held by Latinos than whites (79% to 53%), by women than men (67% to 60%), and by younger, less educated, and lower-income residents. Among those reporting that they have health insurance, 59 percent support universal coverage; among those without insurance, 81 percent support universal coverage.

**“Which would you prefer: the current health insurance system in the United States, in which most people get their health insurance from private employers but some people have no insurance, or a universal health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Current system	30%	17%	62%	33%	39%
Universal health insurance system	63	76	31	62	54
Don't know	7	7	7	5	7

A little more than half of residents (52%) and likely voters (54%) would be willing to pay higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance. Along party lines, Democrats (66%) and independents (59%) would be willing to pay more, while Republicans (59%) would not. At least half of the residents in Los Angeles (51%), the Central Valley (52%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (58%) would be willing to pay more to expand coverage. Willingness to pay more declines slightly with older age, but increases with higher education and is similar across income groups. Among those who support universal health care, 66 percent would pay more to expand coverage. Among those with health insurance, 53 percent would pay more to insure more Americans, and among those without insurance, 49 percent would pay more.

**“Would you be willing to pay more – either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes – in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?”**

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, willing to pay more	52%	66%	36%	59%	54%
No, not willing to pay more	43	30	59	35	42
Don't know	5	4	5	6	4



# 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 in research and writing from Dean Bonner, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Jennifer Paluch and Sonja Petek, and survey intern Nicole Fox. This survey was conducted with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. We benefited from discussions about the current issues with PPIC staff, foundation staff and grantees, and other policy experts; however the methods, questions, and content of this report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,001 California adult residents interviewed from August 12–19, 2008. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, 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. Telephone numbers in the survey sample 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. Each interview took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

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

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,001 adults is  $\pm 2$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,461 registered voters, it is  $\pm 2.5$  percent; for the 1,047 likely voters, it is  $\pm 3$  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. Sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately. We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 30 percent of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. Sample sizes for African Americans and Asian Americans are not large enough for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (those who are registered as “decline to state”). We also include the responses of “likely voters”— those who are most likely to vote in the state’s elections based on past voting, current interest, and voting intentions. We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by the *Los Angeles Times*/Bloomberg and the Pew Research Center.



# QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

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## CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

August 12–19, 2008

2,001 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

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

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]*

- 42% jobs, economy
  - 10 state budget, deficit, taxes
  - 8 gasoline prices
  - 6 education, schools
  - 5 immigration, illegal immigration
  - 4 health care, health costs
  - 4 housing costs, housing availability, subprime housing crisis
  - 3 crime, gangs, drugs
  - 3 environment, pollution
  - 2 energy, energy supply
  - 11 other
  - 2 don't know
2. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
- 23% right direction
  - 68 wrong direction
  - 9 don't know
3. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?
- 21% good times
  - 71 bad times
  - 8 don't know

- 3a. 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?)

- 34% yes, serious recession
- 32 yes, moderate recession
- 12 yes, mild recession
- 17 no
- 5 don't know

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

- 73% yes *[ask q4a]*
- 27 no *[skip to q5b]*

- 4a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 42% Democrat *[ask q5]*
- 31 Republican *[skip to q5a]*
- 5 another party (specify) *[skip to q6]*
- 22 independent *[skip to q5b]*

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

- 63% strong
- 34 not very strong
- 3 don't know

*[skip to q6]*

5a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 56% strong
- 41 not very strong
- 3 don't know

**[skip to q6]**

5b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 21% Republican Party
- 44 Democratic Party
- 28 neither (*volunteered*)
- 7 don't know

**[delayed skip: if q4=no skip to q17]**

**[responses recorded for questions 6 to 16 are for likely voters only]**

6. If the November 4<sup>th</sup> presidential election were being held today, would you vote for **[rotate names]** [1] Barack Obama, the Democrat, **[or]** [2] John McCain, the Republican?

- 48% Barack Obama, the Democrat
- 39 John McCain, the Republican
- 3 someone else (*specify*)
- 10 don't know

7. In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. President on November 4<sup>th</sup>?

- 48% satisfied
- 49 not satisfied
- 3 don't know

8. Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 4<sup>th</sup> election? **[code, don't read]**

- 34% economy, jobs
- 12 Iraq situation, war in Iraq
- 8 energy, energy supply
- 6 foreign policy
- 6 health care, health costs
- 6 immigration, illegal immigration
- 3 education, schools
- 3 environment, pollution
- 3 federal budget, deficit spending, taxes
- 3 gasoline prices, oil prices
- 3 terrorism, security issues
- 9 other
- 4 don't know

9. How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2008 presidential election?

- 39% very closely
- 49 fairly closely
- 10 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely

**[rotate blocks: 10, 11; 12, 13; 14, 15, 16]**

10. Proposition 4 is called the “Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor’s Pregnancy Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It changes the California Constitution, prohibiting abortion for unemancipated minors until 48 hours after physician notifies minor’s parent, legal guardian, or in limited cases, substitute adult relative. It provides an exception for medical emergency or parental waiver. Fiscal impact is potential unknown net state costs of several million dollars annually for health and social services programs, court administration, and state health agency administration combined. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 4?

47% yes  
44 no  
9 don’t know

11. How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 4—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

46% very important  
34 somewhat important  
14 not too important  
4 not at all important  
2 don’t know

12. Proposition 8 is called the “Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It changes the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. It provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. Fiscal impact over the next few years includes potential revenue loss, mainly sales taxes, totaling in the several tens of millions of dollars, to state and local governments. In the long run, it will likely have little fiscal impact on state and local governments. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

40% yes  
54 no  
6 don’t know

13. How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 8—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

48% very important  
30 somewhat important  
14 not too important  
7 not at all important  
1 don’t know

14. Proposition 11 is called the “Redistricting Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.” It changes authority for establishing state office boundaries from elected representatives to a commission. It establishes a multilevel process to select commissioners from the registered voter pool. The Commission will be comprised of Democrats, Republicans, and representatives of neither party. Fiscal impact is potential increase in state redistricting costs once every ten years due to two entities performing redistricting. Any increase in costs probably would not be significant. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 11?

39% yes  
36 no  
25 don't know

15. Do you think the way the governor and legislature go about the redistricting process in California is in need of major changes, minor changes, or is it fine the way it is?

42% major changes  
27 minor changes  
14 fine the way it is  
17 don't know

16. If voting districts were redrawn by an independent commission of citizens, do you think California would generally have state legislators who more effectively represent their districts than legislators do today, or not?

56% yes, would  
26 no, would not  
18 don't know

17. Next, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

38% approve  
56 disapprove  
6 don't know

18. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?

26% approve  
63 disapprove  
11 don't know

19. On another topic, 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?

73% big problem  
21 somewhat of a problem  
4 not a problem  
2 don't know

20. As you may know, the state government has an annual budget of around \$100 billion dollars and currently faces a multibillion dollar gap between spending and revenues. How would you prefer to deal with the state's budget gap—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, or do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?

35% mostly through spending cuts  
8 mostly through tax increases  
41 through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases  
8 okay to borrow money and run a budget deficit  
3 other (*specify*)  
5 don't know

21. Overall, do you think the state budget process in California, in terms of both revenues and spending, is in need of major changes, minor changes, or do you think it is fine the way it is?

74% major changes  
19 minor changes  
4 fine the way it is  
3 don't know

22. Changing topics, how much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right?
- 5% just about always
  - 27 most of the time
  - 58 only some of the time
  - 7 none of the time (*volunteered*)
  - 3 don't know
23. 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
  - 24 benefit of all of the people
  - 9 don't know
24. Do you think the people in state government waste a lot of the money we pay in taxes, waste some of it, or don't waste very much of it?
- 60% a lot
  - 32 some
  - 6 don't waste very much
  - 2 don't know
25. Changing topics, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?
- 24% approve
  - 72 disapprove
  - 4 don't know
26. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?
- 27% approve
  - 64 disapprove
  - 9 don't know
27. Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
- 21% right direction
  - 74 wrong direction
  - 5 don't know
28. Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?
- 23% good times
  - 70 bad times
  - 7 don't know
- [questions 29-31 not asked]**
32. Changing topics, in general, how would you say things are going for the U.S. in Iraq?
- 9% very well
  - 27 somewhat well
  - 26 not too well
  - 35 not at all well
  - 3 don't know
33. Do you think the U.S. should keep military troops in Iraq until the situation has stabilized, or do you think the U.S. should bring its troops home as soon as possible?
- 37% keep in Iraq until stabilized
  - 60 bring home as soon as possible
  - 3 don't know
34. Do you think the war in Iraq has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States? (*if contributed: is that a great deal or some?*)
- 22% contributed a great deal
  - 20 contributed some
  - 3 contributed, don't know how much (*volunteered*)
  - 50 has not contributed
  - 5 don't know
35. How much of a problem is terrorism and homeland security in California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem or not much of a problem?
- 26% big problem
  - 40 somewhat of a problem
  - 31 not much of a problem
  - 3 don't know

36. On another topic, please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view—even if neither is exactly right. **[rotate]** [1] Immigrants today are a benefit to California because of their hard work and job skills **[or]** [2] Immigrants today are a burden to California because they use public services.

- 58% immigrants are a benefit to California
- 36 immigrants are a burden to California
- 6 don't know

37. If you had to choose, what do you think should happen to most illegal immigrants who have lived and worked in the United States for at least two years? **[rotate]** [1] They should be given a chance to keep their jobs and eventually apply for legal status; **[or]** [2] They should be deported back to their native country.

- 71% chance to keep jobs
- 24 deported
- 5 don't know

**[rotate questions 38 to 41]**

For each of the following issues, please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right.

38. **[rotate]** [1] The government goes too far in restricting the rights of citizens to own guns; **[or]** [2] The government does not do enough to regulate access to guns.

- 33% government goes too far
- 58 government does not do enough
- 9 don't know

39. **[rotate]** [1] Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest; **[or]** [2] Government regulation of business does more harm than good.

- 57% government regulation is necessary
- 34 government regulation does more harm than good
- 9 don't know

40. **[rotate]** [1] The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion; **[or]** [2] The government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion.

- 30% government should pass more laws
- 65 government should not interfere with access
- 5 don't know

41. **[rotate]** [1] Poor people have it easy because they can get government benefits without doing anything in return; **[or]** [2] Poor people have hard lives because government benefits don't go far enough to help them live decently.

- 33% poor people have it easy
- 56 poor people have hard lives
- 11 don't know

42. Next, do you favor or oppose allowing gay and lesbian couples to be legally married?

- 45% favor
- 48 oppose
- 7 don't know

43. Which would you prefer: **[rotate]** [1] the current health insurance system in the United States, in which most people get their health insurance from private employers, but some people have no insurance; **[or]** [2] a universal health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that is run by the government and financed by taxpayers?

- 30% current system
- 63 universal health insurance system
- 7 don't know

44. Would you be willing to pay more—either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes—in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?

- 52% yes, willing to pay more
- 43 no, not willing to pay more
- 5 don't know

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

- 10% very liberal
- 19 somewhat liberal
- 32 middle-of-the-road
- 24 somewhat conservative
- 13 very conservative
- 2 don't know

46. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 24% great deal
- 40 fair amount
- 28 only a little
- 7 none
- 1 don't know

*[d1-d14: demographic questions]*



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