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## Preface

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California is now in the midst of historic changes that will profoundly affect the future of the state. To improve understanding of these changes and their effect on the political status quo, PPIC will conduct a series of large-scale public opinion surveys during the 1998 election cycle. This report presents the results of the third of these statewide surveys. The first was conducted in April and the second in May, 1998. The purpose of the surveys is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces at work in California elections and in shaping the state's public policies. The surveys are intended to provide the public and policymakers with relevant—advocacy-free—information on the following:

- Californians' overall impressions and concerns about the economy, population growth, governance, and quality of life and about key issues such as education, welfare, and immigration.
- Differences in social and political attitudes among different demographic, age, and economic groups and across different regions of the state.
- The characteristics of groups that are shaping the state's elections and policy debates.
- The political attitudes underlying "voter distrust" of government and low voter turnout and how both affect the outcomes of elections and the success of ballot initiatives.

Copies of the April or May reports or additional copies of this report may be ordered by calling (800) 232-5343 [mainland U.S.] or (415) 291-4415 [Canada, Hawaii, overseas]. The reports are also posted on the PPIC web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)).



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**ISSUES, NOT CHARACTER, WILL DECIDE ELECTION, SURVEY FINDS  
Governor Wilson, Legislature Rewarded for Tax Cut;  
Despite Growing Concern Over Global Economic Crisis, Californians Are Confident**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, September 14, 1998 — Despite the penchant of campaign insiders to focus on questions of character and trust in the major statewide races, California voters don't consider character the most important factor in choosing among candidates. According to a statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California, voters rank the candidate's positions on the issues as their top concern by a wide margin (61%), followed distantly by character (18%) and experience (14%).

These findings reflect the fundamental distrust that Californians have of people in elected office as well as a sense that government is simply not working in their best interests. Indeed, four in 10 Californians say that "quite a few" people in government are "crooked." Sixty-three percent believe that they can trust the federal government to do what is right only some of the time.

"Voters seem to look upon any character-related pitch with great suspicion for the simple reason that they are conditioned to view politicians as ethically-challenged," said Mark Baldassare, director of the PPIC Statewide Survey. "Voters seem to be saying, 'Don't brag about your sterling character, just tell me what you plan to do.' They seem to view their relationship with elected officials as merely transactional."

**Tax Cuts Boost Politicians' Approval Ratings**

This transactional relationship between voters and elected officials is suggested by the link between the recent state tax cut and rising approval ratings for Governor Wilson and the State Legislature. Forty-two percent of Californians say the Governor is doing an excellent or good job, an eight-point jump since May. The State Legislature has seen a six-point increase in that time, with 36% giving the Senate and Assembly excellent or good marks.

Nearly eighty percent of Californians describe the recent \$1.4 billion tax cut as important to them, with 41% calling the reduction very important. Of those who now give the Governor and Legislature excellent or good marks, 85% say the tax cut is important to them.

### **Education Worries Driving Huge Support for Bond Measure**

Californians still view crime and education as the most serious public policy challenges facing the state. Crime tops the list — 30% say it is the most serious problem. Twenty percent believe that education is the top concern. Nearly 50% of Latinos view crime and drugs as California's most serious problems.

Among likely voters, there is overwhelming support for Proposition 1A, a \$9.2 billion school bond recently placed on the November ballot by the State Legislature. Seventy percent say they will vote in favor of the measure, which will finance new construction and repairs to older buildings for the state's K-12 public schools, community colleges, and public universities. Public enthusiasm for Proposition 1A cuts across political parties, regions, and racial and ethnic groups.

Support for the bond measure is being fueled by the perception that the current level of state funding for public schools is inadequate. Two-thirds of likely voters believe that K-12 education does not receive enough funding from the state. Only 10% say the current allocation is more than enough. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to see state education funding as inadequate (78% to 46%).

### **Davis Leads, Senate Race a Dead Heat**

Democrat Gray Davis leads Republican Dan Lungren in the race for Governor by a nine-point margin among likely voters (47% to 38%). Davis is being buoyed by strong support from Democrats, Latinos, and the coastal regions of the state. Among Latinos, Davis enjoys a two-to-one edge over Lungren. However, Lungren's lead over Davis in the Central Valley is substantial (49% to 37%). Sixteen percent of likely Republican voters say they will "cross-over" to vote for Davis in November, while 8% of Democrats support Lungren. Neither candidate currently has a lock on the crucial block of independent and other party voters.

The U.S. Senate race is a statistical dead heat between Democrat Barbara Boxer and Republican challenger Matt Fong. Among likely voters, Boxer receives 45% and Fong 43%. While Boxer maintains an advantage among Latinos and voters in the Los Angeles and San Francisco Bay areas, Fong holds a commanding 20-point lead in the Central Valley.

### **Californians Generally Upbeat, Despite the Asian Meltdown**

Californians are increasingly disturbed about the potential impact of the Asian financial crisis on the state's economy. Sixty-six percent now expect there to be some negative fallout from the crisis, a 16-point increase since April. San Francisco Bay Area residents — perhaps because of

the region's dependence on high technology exports — are the most concerned: Seventy-five percent believe that problems in Asia will affect the state's economy.

At the same time, Californians continue to be upbeat about the state's prospects. Fifty-seven percent believe that the state is headed in the right direction, compared to 34% who feel it is moving in the wrong direction. These statewide numbers are virtually unchanged from the April and May surveys. However, while the percentage of those who believe the state is headed in the right direction was identical across California in the Spring surveys, the current survey reveals that the mood is now distinctly different in the three major regions of the state. Residents of the Los Angeles metropolitan area are the most positive (63%), followed by the San Francisco Bay Area (53%) and the Central Valley (48%).

### **About the Survey**

The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces at work in California elections and in shaping the state's public policies. Surveys are intended to provide the public and policymakers with relevant information on the following: Californians' overall impressions of key policy issues and of quality of life; differences in social and political attitudes among demographic groups and across different regions of the state; the characteristics of groups that are shaping the state's elections and policy debates; and the political attitudes underlying "voter distrust" of government and low voter turnout. A total of five surveys will be conducted and released during the 1998 election cycle. The first two surveys were conducted in April and May of this year.

Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,000 California adult residents interviewed from September 1 to September 7, 1998. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for the 1,613 voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 1,046 likely voters is +/- 3%. For additional information on survey methodology, see page 27.

Dr. Mark Baldassare is a senior fellow at PPIC. He is founder and director of the Orange County Annual Survey at UC Irvine. For over two decades, he has conducted surveys for major news organizations, including the Orange County Edition of the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Orange County Register*, KCAL-TV, KRON-TV, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

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

This report appears in full on PPIC's Web site ([www.ppic.org](http://www.ppic.org)).

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## California General Election

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### Governor's Race

As the fall campaign for Governor begins, no candidate enjoys the support of a majority of California voters. Strong support from Democrats, Latinos, and the coastal region has given Gray Davis a nine point lead, while Dan Lungren has kept the gap narrow with a good showing among Republicans and Central Valley voters. Neither of the major party candidates has a lock on the crucial block of independent and other party voters.

Among voters most likely to go to the polls in November, Gray Davis has 47 percent, while Dan Lungren receives 38 percent. Two percent are supporting other candidates and 13 percent of likely voters are undecided.

Davis is leading by the widest margin in the San Francisco Bay area and he is also ahead of Lungren in the Los Angeles region. Lungren, however, currently leads Davis in the Central Valley. Among Latino voters, Davis has better than a two-to-one edge over Lungren. Other voters, who are predominantly white and not Hispanic, are fairly evenly divided between Lungren and Davis, with one in eight still undecided.

Democratic men (81% to 8% ) and Democratic women (81% to 7%) support Davis over Lungren by similar margins. Republican men (70% to 17%) and Republican women (75% to 15%) favor Lungren over Davis by almost equal amounts. Male independent and other party voters are equally divided between Lungren and Davis (33% to 31%), while female independent and other party voters favor Davis over Lungren (45% to 29%).

**"If the election for Governor were being held today, who would you vote for?"**

(Likely Voters)	September
<b>Gray Davis</b>	47%
<b>Dan Lungren</b>	38
<b>Someone else</b>	2
<b>Don't know</b>	13

(Likely Voters) (September)	<u>Party</u>			<u>Region</u>			<u>Ethnicity</u>	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
<b>Gray Davis</b>	81%	16%	37%	49%	55%	37%	62%	45%
<b>Dan Lungren</b>	8	72	31	38	27	49	26	40
<b>Someone else</b>	1	0	8	1	2	0	1	2
<b>Don't know</b>	10	12	24	12	16	14	11	13

## Television Advertising for the Governor's Race

Overall, television commercials are not an important factor in the Governor's race to date. Awareness of television advertising is low, with six in 10 of the likely voters saying that they have not seen any commercials from either of the candidates in the past month. The one regional exception is the Central Valley: Two in three voters there recall seeing television commercials and are somewhat more likely to recall the ads by Davis than the ads by Lungren (31% to 21%). By comparison, before the June Primary, three out of four respondents to the PPIC Statewide Surveys said they had seen television advertisements.

**"In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements by the candidates for Governor?"  
(If yes, "whose ads have you seen the most?")**

(Likely Voters)	September
<b>YES</b>	
Gray Davis	18%
Dan Lungren	14
Other answer	6
<b>NO</b>	62

## Debates Between Candidates for Governor

The two gubernatorial debates have had little effect on support for the candidates. Even among those most likely to go to the polls, only 7 percent said that the debates have made a great deal of difference and 22 percent said they have made some difference in deciding who to vote for in the Governor's race. The debates have had little or no effect on seven in 10 likely voters--with the least on voters in the San Francisco Bay area and the most effect on Latino voters, who are the most likely to say they are influenced a great deal or somewhat by the debates (37%).

**"The Democratic and Republican candidates for Governor are having a series of debates. Some people learn about the debates from news reports as well as seeing or hearing them. So far, have the debates helped you a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all in deciding who to vote for in the Governor's race?"**

(Likely Voters)	September
Great deal	7%
Somewhat	22
Very little	19
Not at all	37
Don't know / Haven't seen, read, heard debates	15

## U.S. Senate Race

Incumbent U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer and State Treasurer Matt Fong are locked in a statistical dead heat in the race for the U.S. Senate seat.

Among voters most likely to go to the polls in November, Boxer has 45 percent, while Fong receives 43 percent. One percent are supporting other candidates and 11 percent of likely voters are still undecided.

Three in four Democrats support Boxer; three in four Republicans favor Fong. Independents' and other party members' votes are fairly evenly divided between Boxer and Fong. The large number of undecideds in this voting block could make the difference in this close race.

Fong has a 20-point lead over Boxer in the Central Valley. However, Boxer has a 14-point lead over Fong in the San Francisco Bay area, a 10-point margin in the Los Angeles metropolitan area, and a 16-point margin among Latinos.

Democratic men (77% to 15% ) and Democratic women (76% to 11%) support Boxer over Fong by similar margins. Republican men (78% to 15%) and Republican women (75% to 13%) favor Fong over Boxer by about the same amounts. Male independent and other party voters slightly favor Fong over Boxer (43% to 39%), while female independent and other party voters strongly support Boxer over Fong (52% to 29%).

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

(Likely Voters)	September
Barbara Boxer	45%
Matt Fong	43
Someone else	1
Don't know	11

(Likely Voters) (September)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Barbara Boxer	76%	14%	44%	51%	51%	32%	61%	43%
Matt Fong	13	77	37	41	37	52	35	45
Someone else	0	0	5	1	1	1	0	1
Don't know	11	9	14	7	11	15	4	11

## Debate Between Candidates for U.S. Senate

The one debate thus far between the two major party candidates for the U.S. Senate seat apparently had little effect on likely voters. Of the likely voters in November, only six percent say that the debate has helped them a great deal and 16 percent said it helped them somewhat in deciding who to vote for in this race. Eight in 10 likely voters said the debate has little or no effect on their decision. The debate had the least impact in the Central Valley, where only one in six voters said it helped them at least somewhat in choosing a candidate to support. There are no party or ethnic-group differences.

**"The Democratic and Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate also had a debate. Some people learn about debates from news reports as well as seeing or hearing them. Has the debate helped you a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all in deciding who to vote for in the U.S. Senate race?"**

<b>(Likely Voters)</b>	<b>September</b>
<b>Great deal</b>	6%
<b>Somewhat</b>	16
<b>Very little</b>	14
<b>Not at all</b>	45
<b>Don't know / Haven't seen, read, heard the debate</b>	19



## Candidate Qualifications

For California voters, a candidate's stand on the issues is the qualification most likely to influence their voting decision, not the candidate's character, despite the attention given to this topic in both the Governor's race and U.S. Senate campaign.

Six in 10 of the likely voters say that it is the candidate's position on the issues that matters the most to them in choosing a candidate to support. Eighteen percent cite the candidate's character, 14 percent the candidate's experience and 5 percent the candidate's party affiliation.

The majority rating for stands on the issues holds across parties, regions, and ethnic and racial groups. Republicans are more likely than others to mention character as their top concern. Latinos are more likely than others to mention experience as most important to them in deciding who to vote for in the state elections.

**"People have different ideas about the qualifications they want when they vote for candidates for statewide office, such as Governor or U.S. Senator. Which of these is most important to you: (a) the candidate's experience, (b) the candidate's character, (c) the candidate's political party, or (d) the candidate's stands on the issues?"**

(Likely Voters)	September
Experience	14%
Character	18
Political party	5
Stands on the issues	61
Don't know	2

(Likely Voters) (September)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Experience	17%	10%	14%	17%	10%	9%	26%	11%
Character	9	28	15	18	14	20	14	18
Political party	6	6	3	5	6	8	6	5
Stands on the issues	66	54	68	59	68	59	53	63
Don't know	2	2	0	1	2	4	1	3

## Proposition 1A: School Bond Issue

The \$9.2 billion school bond recently placed on the November ballot by the state Legislature enjoys wide support in the early going. Seventy percent of likely voters say they will vote for the bond measure for new school construction and building repairs, while only 21 percent say they would vote against it.

The public's favor for the massive bond measure to pay for construction costs in kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public schools, community colleges and public universities currently cuts across political parties, regions and racial and ethnic groups. Support is strongest in the coastal regions, among Democrats, and among Latinos. Still, a majority of Republicans, independent and other party voters, and Central Valley voters favor Proposition 1A.

This strong support is fueled by the perception that the current level of state funding for public schools is inadequate. Two in three likely voters say that K-12 public education is not getting enough funding from the state. Only one in 10 say the current level of funding is more than enough, while one in five say the public schools receive just enough money. Democrats are much more likely than Republicans (78% to 46%) and Latinos are more likely than other voters (72% to 61%) to say the current level of state funding for K-12 public schools is inadequate.

The bond measure could lose some of its initial strong support as some of the more controversial elements of the proposed legislation become widely known, for instance, the provision that calls for placing a cap on the local government fees that are charged to housing developers to build new schools in growing communities. Less than half of the likely voters (Democrat and Republican) favor that provision and one in three likely voters opposes the cap.

"If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 1A?"

(Likely Voters)	September
Yes	70%
No	21
Don't know	9

(Likely Voters) (September)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	82%	56%	73%	70%	76%	62%	81%	68%
No	11	33	19	21	14	30	15	23
Don't know	7	11	8	9	10	8	4	9

"Do you think that the current level of state funding for California's kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?"

(Likely Voters)	September
More than enough	10%
Just enough	21
Not enough	63
Don't know	6

"Proposition 1A would impose limits on local government fees charged to housing developers to pay for building new schools. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 1A?"

(Likely Voters)	September
Favor	48%
Oppose	32
Don't know	20

## Proposition 8: The Public Schools Initiative

California voters strongly support Proposition 8, the initiative that would ensure state funding so that public school classes in K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade will have no more than 20 students per class. Seventy-two percent of likely voters would vote yes on the measure, while only 19 percent would vote no and 9 percent are undecided.

The highly positive response reflects the widespread public perception that class size reductions make a significant difference in student performance. Two in three believe that smaller class sizes will make a big difference in helping children learn reading, writing and arithmetic. A majority in all groups have this perception.

Proposition 8 also calls for a series of education reforms, including new credential requirements for teachers and teacher evaluations based on student performances. The public is less impressed with these features of Proposition 8 aimed at improving teacher quality than they are with smaller class sizes. Still, almost half of the likely voters see these reforms as making a big difference in helping children with reading, writing and arithmetic. Only one in 9 believes they make no difference.

Proposition 8 currently has strong support across parties, in all of the major regions of the state and among Latinos and other voters. It should be noted that the fiscal implications of Proposition 8 were not mentioned in the wording of this question, and this information may affect the level of support for this November ballot measure.

" If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?"

(Likely Voters)	September
Yes	72%
No	19
Don't know	9

(Likely Voters) (September)	Party			Region			Ethnicity	
	Dem	Rep	Other	LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	73%	70%	76%	75%	63%	72%	84%	70%
No	18	20	20	17	26	19	12	20
Don't know	9	10	4	8	11	9	4	10

"Class sizes in California public schools are now being reduced to a maximum of 20 students in most kindergarten to third grade classes. Do you think the smaller classes will make a big difference, a moderate difference, or no difference in helping children learn reading, writing, and arithmetic?"

(Likely Voters)	September
Big difference	65%
Moderate difference	26
No difference	7
Don't know	2

"Do you think that Proposition 8's efforts to improve teacher quality, that is, establishing stricter credential requirements and basing teacher evaluations on student performances, would make a big difference, a moderate difference, or no difference in helping children learn reading, writing, and arithmetic?"

(Likely Voters)	September
Big difference	48%
Moderate difference	38
No difference	11
Don't know	3

## Media Watch

Although the statewide elections are less than two months away, Californians are not very focussed on them. Even among the likely voters, fewer than one in 10 are following the news stories very closely, while 45 percent are following the news stories fairly closely. About half of the likely voters are barely, if at all, tuned in to the election news coverage.

The public's attention to the state's election news today is comparable to what it was in our April survey, having slid back from the levels that were evident with about one month to go before the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary.

Only about one in three of the likely voters are giving the news organizations either excellent or good marks on reporting about the 1998 California elections. Four in 10 perceive them as doing a fair job, while about one in six give them poor marks. Positive ratings of news coverage are about the same as they were in the May survey. The ratings for news organizations in both May and September have improved by 10 points since the April survey.

**"How closely have you been following the news stories about the upcoming 1998 California elections?"**

(Likely Voters)	April	May	Sept
Very closely	9%	13%	9%
Fairly closely	43	48	45
Not too closely	39	32	36
Not at all closely	9	7	10

**"How would you rate the job that news organizations are doing in reporting about the upcoming 1998 California elections?"**

(Likely Voters)	April	May	Sept
Excellent	3%	4%	4%
Good	22	31	31
Fair	46	42	43
Poor	24	18	17
Don't know	5	5	5

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## California Policy Issues

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### Most Serious Problem

Crime and education continue to top the list of policy issues for Californians. Thirty percent name crime and 20 percent cite education as their top concern, percentages nearly identical to the results in the April survey. Evidently, the policy agenda has not changed for voters during this election year.

No other single public policy issue is mentioned by as many as one in 10 residents. Drugs were named by 7 percent, followed by immigration at 5 percent, the economy at 4 percent, and state government, poverty, and values each at 3 percent and the environment, growth, traffic, and taxes each at 2 percent.

Crime was the number one issue in the Los Angeles metropolitan area and the Central Valley, while education was mentioned more often than any other topic in the San Francisco Bay area. Drugs were named more often in the Central Valley than in any other region. The combined mentions of traffic, growth, and the environment reached 10 percent in the San Francisco Bay area, compared to 6 percent in the Los Angeles metropolitan region and 4 percent in the Central Valley. Latinos are more likely than other residents to say that crime and drugs are the top public policy issues in the state and they are less likely to name immigration, values, the environment, and growth.

**"Thinking about the public policy issues in California, what do you think is the most serious problem today?"**

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
<b>Crime</b>	30%	33%	21%	31%	38%	27%
<b>Education</b>	20	19	24	17	19	20
<b>Drugs</b>	7	6	5	11	10	6
<b>Immigration</b>	5	5	6	4	2	6
<b>Economy</b>	4	4	4	4	5	4
<b>State government</b>	3	2	2	2	2	3
<b>Poverty</b>	3	3	3	4	3	3
<b>Values</b>	3	3	2	4	1	3
<b>Environment</b>	2	2	3	2	1	3
<b>Growth</b>	2	2	3	1	0	2
<b>Traffic</b>	2	2	4	1	1	2
<b>Taxes</b>	2	2	2	3	1	2
<b>Other</b>	8	7	12	9	7	10
<b>Don't know</b>	9	10	9	7	10	9

## Mood of the State

The mood of the state continues upbeat. In the survey, 57 percent said that things are going in the right direction while 34 percent think that things are going in the wrong direction in California. This percentage of positive sentiments is statistically unchanged from the April survey (56%) and the May survey (56%).

However, the mood is no longer consistent across the state's major regions or ethnic groups. Los Angeles metropolitan area residents are the most positive (63%), followed by the San Francisco Bay area residents (53%), and the Central Valley residents (48%). In the April and May surveys, the numbers saying that the state was headed in the right direction were similar across the three regions. Today, Latinos are more likely than other residents to express optimism. In the two surveys earlier this year, there were no differences across ethnic and racial groups.

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

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Right direction	57%	63%	53%	48%	63%	56%
Wrong direction	34	30	38	43	31	35
Don't know	9	7	9	9	6	9

## The Asian Crisis

Californians are increasingly concerned about the impact of the Asian financial crisis.

Two in three now expect the financial situation in Asia to hurt the California economy in the next year or so. In the April survey, 50 percent expected some negative fallout from the problems in Asia. There has thus been a 16-point increase in worries about the Asian financial crisis since the early Spring. Still, fewer than one in four expect the economic consequences to be very bad.

Those living in the San Francisco Bay area are the most convinced that the Asian financial crisis will have at least some impact on the state's economy. Their growing concern may reflect reports about crisis' effects on Bay Area hi-tech firms. There are no differences across racial and ethnic groups.

**"Do you think the current financial situation in Asia will hurt the California economy in the next year or so? (If yes, do you think it will hurt the California economy a great deal or only somewhat?)"**

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes, a great deal	22%	22%	23%	20%	22%	22%
Yes, only somewhat	44	43	52	39	40	46
No	22	25	15	22	29	20
Don't know	12	10	10	19	9	12

## Proposition 13: Local Impacts

Californians evidently still strongly support Proposition 13 and its perceived effects. Twenty years ago, Proposition 13 constrained the ability of local governments to raise local revenues. It limited the property tax rate to one percent and the growth of property tax increases to two percent annually until the property is sold. Some local government officials claim this constraint on tax revenues limits their abilities to provide residents with public services. The results of the survey suggest that California residents don't share this perception.

Only one in four Californians believes that the tax limitations imposed by Proposition 13 have negatively affected the services provided by their local governments. The vast majority, two in three residents, say that this tax limiting feature has had no effects or positive effects. San Francisco Bay area residents are the most likely to say there have been negative effects, but six in 10 in this region view the overall effects as either neutral or positive. Republicans (47%) are much more likely than Democrats (37%) to say that the tax limitations have had a good effect on local government services. There are no differences between homeowners and renters.

Proposition 13 also gave the state government the responsibility of dividing the property tax funds among the local governments that provide services. Some local government officials say this has taken away important local powers and has created a system that lacks fiscal accountability and responsibility.

In contrast, a majority of California residents favor this arrangement; only one in three is opposed to the current system of state and local financial relationships. San Francisco Bay area residents are evenly divided on this issue, while residents of other regions are strongly in favor of this fiscal arrangement. There are no differences by party or between homeowners and renters.

" Overall, do you think the property tax limitations imposed by Proposition 13 have had a good effect or a bad effect or no effect on local government services provided to residents in the state of California?"

	All Adults	Region			Housing	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Own	Rent
Good effect	38%	40%	36%	39%	40%	36%
Bad effect	23	21	30	21	25	19
No effect	27	28	22	29	26	28
Don't know	12	11	12	11	9	17

"Under Proposition 13, property taxes are collected at the local level, and the State Legislature and Governor are responsible for dividing the property tax money among the local governments that provide services to residents. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 13?"

	All Adults	Region			Housing	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Own	Rent
Favor	55%	58%	44%	51%	55%	55%
Oppose	34	31	41	37	34	33
Don't know	11	11	15	12	11	12



### Proposition 13: The Supermajority Vote

Proposition 13 further limited the abilities of local governments to raise revenues by requiring that all new special taxes are passed by two thirds of the voters instead of a simple majority. Some local government officials argue that this high hurdle makes it virtually impossible to pass local taxes and raise the revenues needed to provide local services to their residents.

However, two thirds of Californians believe that the supermajority vote for local taxes has had a neutral or positive effect on the services provided to local residents, while about one in five say it has had a bad effect. San Francisco Bay area residents are more negative than others, but a strong majority in that region also perceives the supermajority vote as having no effects or positive consequences. Republicans (47%) are more likely than Democrats (33%) and independent voters (34%) to say that the supermajority vote has had a good effect on local government services. There are no differences between homeowners and renters.

Some have called for changing the supermajority vote requirement so that local governments can have more control over their source of new revenues. Given the widespread perception of its neutral or positive impacts on local government services, it is not surprising to learn that Californians strongly oppose changing the supermajority vote. Fewer than four in 10 favor lowering the threshold for new local taxes to a simple majority. There are no differences across regions of the state. Homeowners are somewhat more opposed than renters; however, both groups strongly object to changing this feature of Proposition 13.

**"Under Proposition 13, a two-thirds vote at the ballot box is required to pass any new local special taxes. Overall, do you think the supermajority vote requirement imposed by Proposition 13 has had a good effect or a bad effect or no effect on local government services provided to residents in the state of California?"**

	All Adults	Region			Housing	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Own	Rent
Good effect	38%	39%	34%	37%	36%	39%
Bad effect	22	20	28	21	20	23
No effect	28	29	27	29	32	27
Don't know	12	12	11	13	12	11

**"Do you favor or oppose allowing local special taxes to pass with a simple majority instead of a two-thirds vote?"**

	All Adults	Region			Housing	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Own	Rent
Favor	38%	37%	39%	39%	32%	39%
Oppose	58	59	58	55	64	57
Don't know	4	4	3	6	4	4

### Proposition 13: Impacts on Homeowners

Despite the general approval of Proposition 13, a majority of California residents do oppose one feature. Under Proposition 13, local governments cannot increase the property taxes on a home to reflect its current market value until that home is resold. Since housing prices have escalated sharply, long-term homeowners often pay much less in property taxes than recent homebuyers in the same neighborhood. For this reason, new homebuyers in older neighborhoods have complained that Proposition 13 is unfair to them.

Six in 10 say they are opposed to this particular outcome of Proposition 13. Only about one in three are in favor of the way property taxes are now calculated. A negative view of the current property tax inequities is shared across all regions of California. Democrats (63%) and independent voters (59%) are strongly opposed to this feature, while Republicans (46%) are divided. A narrow majority of homeowners (51%) oppose this aspect of the property tax system, while renters (72%) are strongly opposed. Those who bought their homes in the past five years (61%) are more opposed to this feature than those who bought within 5-to-19 years (53%) and twenty years or more (38%).

**"As a result of Proposition 13 and increases in home prices in California, a homeowner who recently purchased a home will pay much higher property taxes than a homeowner who purchased a similar home several years ago in the same neighborhood. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 13?"**

	All Adults	Region			Housing	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Own	Rent
Favor	35%	34%	37%	33%	44%	21%
Oppose	59	61	57	58	51	72
Don't know	6	5	6	9	5	7

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## Political Trends

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### Job Performance

As of September 7<sup>th</sup>, a majority of Californians were continuing to give President Clinton positive job performance ratings, even after his televised admission of an inappropriate relationship with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky. For Governor Wilson and the California Legislature, job performance ratings have improved since last Spring.

Six in 10 say Clinton is doing an excellent or good job as President, while one in five say he is doing a fair job. The number giving Clinton excellent and good ratings is identical to the results in the May survey. One in five rates his performance as poor, a slightly higher percentage than in May.

Clinton's ratings vary by party affiliation. Three in four Democrats (79%) and about half of the independent voters give him excellent or good marks (53%), while far fewer Republicans (31%) have a positive image of President Clinton's performance in office. Among the Democrats, men (82%) and women (77%) both give mostly positive grades to President Clinton. There are no differences among Republican men (29%) and Republican women (33%). Male independents (58%) are more likely than female independents (46%) to give Clinton excellent or good grades.

There has been an 8-point increase in the number of excellent and good ratings for Governor Wilson since the May survey. Four in 10 Californians give Pete Wilson either excellent or good scores for his performance as Governor. Three in 10 say he is doing a fair job, while about one in four give him poor marks.

The Governor's marks also vary by party affiliation. A solid majority of Republicans (61%) now give the Governor excellent or good grades, compared to fewer than four in 10 Democrats (33%) and independent voters (37%). Wilson's ratings are similar among Republican men and women, among Democratic men and Democratic women, and among men and women who are independent voters.

For the California Legislature, the number of positive responses has increased by six points since the May survey. Thirty-six percent of Californians give the Legislature excellent or good evaluations. About half give the state Assembly and state Senate a fair grade, while one in eight says they are doing a poor job.

Democrats (36%) and Republicans (38%) are equally likely to give the California Legislature either excellent or good grades. Independent voters (28%) are decidedly less positive about the job performance of the state Legislature. Among independent voters, women give more positive ratings (38%) than men (21%); however, there are no differences between men and women Republicans or men and women Democrats.

"How do you rate the job performance of ..."

(All Adults)	President Clinton		Governor Wilson		California Legislature	
	May	Sept	May	Sept	May	Sept
Excellent	21%	22%	6%	7%	2%	3%
Good	37	36	28	35	28	33
Fair	25	21	34	30	52	46
Poor	16	20	29	26	13	12
Don't know	1	1	3	2	5	6

**State Tax Cuts**

The tax cuts recently approved by the Governor and the California Legislature were highly popular. This popularity may help explain the rise in the job performance ratings for Wilson and the Legislature. Eight in 10 Californians say the \$1.4 billion state tax cut that was passed in Sacramento last month, including the reduction in the state vehicle license fee, was important to them. Four in ten describe the state tax cut as very important.

The tax cut was viewed more favorably in the Los Angeles metropolitan region and the Central Valley than in the San Francisco Bay area. Still, the views throughout the state were overwhelmingly positive. More than half of the Latinos describe the state tax reduction as very important to them. Democrats (74%), Republicans (83%) and independent voters (79%) all agree that the 1.4 billion dollar tax cut is something they personally value. State elected officials seem to have benefited from the favorable reaction to the tax cut. Most of those giving excellent or good ratings to the Governor (85%) and the California Legislature (85%) say that the tax cut was important to them.

"The Governor and the State Legislature recently approved a \$1.4 billion tax cut for the 1998-1999 fiscal year, including a reduction in the state vehicle license fee. How important is this state tax cut to you?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Very important	41%	44%	32%	45%	54%	38%
Somewhat important	37	37	38	39	32	39
Not important	20	18	30	14	14	22
Don't know	2	1	0	2	0	1

## Trust in Government: Fiscal Issues

Californians do not trust the government when it comes to fiscal issues. This distrust is consistent with the strong support for tax cuts in the state. Two in three believe that the government wastes a lot of the money we pay in taxes, while three in 10 say it wastes some. Given the results of a 1996 national survey, Californians distrust the government somewhat more than the rest of the nation when it comes to taxing and spending. A strong majority of Republicans (69%), independent voters (69%) and Democrats (62%) believe that the government wastes a lot of money. Latinos (62%) are as likely as others to hold this fiscally conservative perspective.

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

	<b>All Adults</b>		
	<b>U.S.*</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>California Latinos</b>
<b>A lot</b>	59%	65%	62%
<b>Some</b>	39	31	33
<b>Don't waste very much</b>	1	3	5
<b>Don't know</b>	1	1	0

\*Source: National survey conducted by University of Michigan: National Elections Survey, 1996

## Trust in Government: Overall Leadership

Californians profoundly distrust the federal government's abilities to act in the best interest of all of the people. This distrust is consistent with recent trends in national surveys.

Only one in three Californians think that the federal government can be trusted to do what is right either all of the time or most of the time. Democrats (38%) are more likely than Republicans (24%) and independent voters (28%) to hold this view. Latinos (48%) are much more likely to have a positive view than others, but even this group falls short of a majority with trust in government.

Seven in 10 Californians think that government is run by a few big interests looking out for themselves, while only one in four see the government today as benefiting all of the people. The Democrats (72%), Republicans (70%) and independent voters (77%) all think that the government is run by a few big interests. Most Latinos also hold this view.

About four in 10 Californians went so far as to say that quite a few people running the government are crooked. There were no differences between Republicans (36%) and Democrats (38%), while half of the independent voters held this negative view of their government leaders. Thirty-four percent of Latinos believe that quite a few of the people running the government are dishonest.

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

	<u>All Adults</u>		
	U.S.*	California	California Latinos
<b>Just about always</b>	5%	5%	10%
<b>Most of the time</b>	29	28	38
<b>Some of the time</b>	61	63	50
<b>None of the time</b>	4	4	2
<b>Don't know</b>	1	0	0

\*Source: National survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 1998.

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

	<u>All Adults</u>		
	U.S.*	California	California Latinos
<b>Few big interests</b>	74%	70%	72%
<b>Benefit of all the people</b>	22	25	25
<b>Don't know</b>	4	5	3

\*Source: National survey conducted by Gallup in 1997.

## Government Assistance Programs

Even in the wake of welfare reform and declining welfare rolls, many Californians continue to believe that the poor are too dependent on government assistance programs and that the government is spending too much to help the poor. Nevertheless, most believe that the government has a responsibility to take care of the poor.

Three in four agree that poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs, while only one in four disagree. This is similar to national trends. Republicans (89%) hold this view more than the Democrats (71%) and independent voters (76%). Latinos have this perception of the poor as much as others.

Nearly half of Californians agree that the government is spending too much money on programs to help the poor. This statewide trend is nine points higher than in a national survey conducted by Gallup in 1996. Republicans (59%) agree with this perspective much more than Democrats (33%) and independent voters (41%). Four in 10 Latinos think that the government is spending too much on poverty programs.

Despite these views, two in three Californians say the government has a responsibility to take care of those who cannot take care of themselves. This is similar to national trends. Latinos also hold this view. Seven in 10 Democrats (71%), six in 10 independent voters (60%) and half of Republicans (53%) see a role for government in caring for the poor.

"Poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs. Do you ..."

	<b>All Adults</b>		
	<b>U.S.*</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>California Latinos</b>
<b>Completely agree</b>	35%	29%	25%
<b>Mostly agree</b>	44	48	54
<b>Mostly disagree</b>	14	18	14
<b>Completely disagree</b>	4	4	5
<b>Don't know</b>	3	1	2

\*Source: National survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 1997.

"The government is spending too much money on programs to help the poor. Do you ..."

	<b>All Adults</b>		
	<b>U.S.*</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>California Latinos</b>
<b>Completely agree</b>	12%	13%	12%
<b>Mostly agree</b>	23	31	28
<b>Mostly disagree</b>	31	37	38
<b>Completely disagree</b>	29	17	21
<b>Don't know</b>	5	2	1

\*Source: National survey conducted by Gallup in 1996.

"It is the responsibility of government to take care of people who can't take care of themselves. Do you ..."

	<b>All Adults</b>		
	<b>U.S.*</b>	<b>California</b>	<b>California Latinos</b>
<b>Completely agree</b>	23%	21%	20%
<b>Mostly agree</b>	38	42	39
<b>Mostly disagree</b>	26	24	28
<b>Completely disagree</b>	11	12	13
<b>Don't know</b>	2	1	0

\*Source: National survey conducted by Pew Research Center in 1997.

## Political Involvement

Many Californians describe themselves as disengaged from government and politics, stating that a lack of time and knowledge keeps them from voting in elections.

As for interest in politics, only one in six Californians has a great deal, about half have a fair amount, and one in three has little or no interest.

Four in 10 follow the news about government and public affairs most of the time and 37 percent are tuned into these civic issues some of the time. One in four infrequently or never follow these topics.

Even among registered voters, only 20 percent say they have a great deal of interest in politics and 42 percent say they follow government and public affairs most of the time. Moreover, while Latinos have been registering to vote and participating in elections in increasing numbers, they still lag behind other groups in political involvement.

Those who do not always participate in elections were asked to give their main reason for not voting. Californians are most likely to say that they do not know enough about the choices they are being asked to make at the ballot box. One in four say they are too busy to vote. One in six say that voting doesn't change things. Latinos gave similar responses. Independent voters were the most likely to say that voting doesn't change things (24%).

**"Which of these is the main reason you do not always vote?"**

(of those who do not always vote)	<u>All Adults</u>	
	California	California Latinos
Voting doesn't change things	16%	16%
I'm not interested in politics	9	11
There are fewer major problems today	3	5
I'm too busy to vote	24	22
I don't know enough about the choices	36	32
Other answer	9	9
Don't know	3	5



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## Social and Economic Trends

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### Consumer Confidence

Although consumers remain confident about their personal finances, there are some signs that the mood is a little less exuberant than it was in Spring. The recent setbacks in the stock market and the financial turmoil in Asia and Russia are evidently taking their toll.

In this survey, 33 percent report being better off financially than they were a year ago, 12 percent are worse off, and 54 percent are in about the same situation. The percentage of people who believe they are better off than they were a year ago is down 4 points since April and 3 points since May. Central Valley residents are less likely and Latinos a little more likely than others to feel that their household finances have improved.

Looking ahead a year, 40 percent think they will be better off, 7 percent worse off, and 51 percent the same. The number of Californians who expect to be better off has dropped by 4 points since April. Latinos are the most optimistic about their future financial prospects.

One in four Californians describe themselves as very satisfied with their current finances, half are somewhat satisfied, and one in four are not satisfied. San Francisco Bay area residents are the most likely to say they are satisfied with their finances. There are no differences between Latinos and others.

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

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Better off	33%	34%	37%	29%	37%	32%
Worse off	12	11	11	15	9	13
Same	54	54	52	56	54	54
Don't know	1	1	0	0	0	1

**"Do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?"**

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Better off	40%	43%	37%	34%	49%	37%
Worse off	7	5	8	9	5	7
Same	51	49	52	54	43	53
Don't know	2	3	3	3	3	3

## Regional Problems

While population growth is rarely mentioned as the top issue in the state today, it is clearly on the minds of residents when they think about the future of their regions. Six in 10 expect their regional population to grow rapidly in the next 10 years, while another two in 10 believe their region will grow slowly.

More than half think that the water supply available today will be inadequate for their region's needs in a decade. About one in four see the current water supply as very inadequate for the future.

Seven in 10 believe that the current transportation infrastructure will be inadequate for their region's needs ten years from now. Nearly half see today's freeways, roads and regional transportation system as very inadequate. San Francisco Bay area residents have the grimmest view of their transportation future.

**"In the next ten years, do you think that the population in your region will grow rapidly, grow slowly, stay about the same, or decline?"**

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Grow rapidly	62%	61%	68%	63%	58%	64%
Grow slowly	20	19	17	21	20	20
Stay about the same	15	16	13	11	17	14
Decline	2	2	2	2	2	2
Don't know	1	2	0	3	3	0

**"Do you think that the water supply that is available for your region today will be adequate or inadequate for your region's needs ten years from now?" (If inadequate, is that somewhat or very?)**

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Adequate	41%	42%	40%	42%	45%	40%
Somewhat inadequate	30	31	29	30	28	30
Very inadequate	23	21	25	23	21	23
Don't know	6	6	6	5	6	7

"Do you think that the freeways, roads, and transportation system in your region today will be adequate or inadequate for your region's needs ten years from now? (If inadequate, is that somewhat or very?)

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Adequate	28%	30%	19%	29%	42%	24%
Somewhat inadequate	25	26	21	30	24	26
Very inadequate	45	42	60	39	31	49
Don't know	2	2	0	2	3	1

## Religion and Politics

Californians are less religious than the rest of the nation. Many do not want to hear about religious values from their politicians and very few take their political cues from religious leaders.

Forty-nine percent say that religion is "very important" in their lives. In a national survey by the Pew Center Survey in 1996, 59 percent of Americans said that religion was very important to them. San Francisco Bay area residents are the most likely to say that religion is not important to them. Latinos are more likely than others to say that religion is very important in their lives.

About a third of Californians attend religious services at least once a week. Thirty percent say they seldom or never worship. In a national survey by the Pew Center in 1996, only 20 percent of Americans said they seldom or never went to religious services. San Francisco Bay area residents are somewhat less likely to attend religious services. Latinos are more likely than others to attend services.

Four in 10 say they approved of political candidates talking about religious values when they are campaigning for office, while nearly six in 10 disapprove. Central Valley residents are fairly evenly split on this issue. San Francisco Bay area residents react the most negatively to mixing religion with politics. Latinos were similar to other residents on this issue. Republicans (50% to 45%) are about evenly divided on this issue, while Democrats (34% to 60%) and independent and other party voters (32% to 64%) are strongly opposed to having political candidates talking about religious values.

One in nine in the current statewide survey recall being urged by clergy at their place of worship or by other religious groups to vote in a particular way. This practice was mentioned slightly more often among Los Angeles metropolitan area residents and also in the Latino population. There are few Democrats (13%), Republicans (9%) and independent and other party voters (13%) who recall being urged to vote in a particular way by either clergy or a religious group.

"How important would you say religion is in your own life? Would you say it is very important, fairly important, or not important?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Very important	49%	53%	41%	56%	60%	46%
Fairly important	32	30	33	30	31	32
Not important	19	17	26	14	9	22

"Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
More than once a week	11%	11%	9%	13%	13%	10%
Once a week	23	25	23	24	26	22
Once or twice a month	18	19	16	16	24	16
A few times a year	18	17	20	20	17	19
Seldom	16	15	15	15	12	17
Never	14	13	17	12	8	16

"What is your opinion about political candidates who talk about religious values when they are campaigning for office? Do you approve or disapprove?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Approve	39%	40%	32%	45%	37%	39%
Disapprove	56	55	62	49	57	55
Don't know	5	5	6	6	6	6

"Thinking back to recent elections, have the clergy at your place of worship or any other religious groups urged you to vote in a particular way?"

	All Adults	Region			Ethnicity	
		LA Metro	SF Bay Area	Central Valley	Latino	Other
Yes	11%	13%	10%	9%	14%	10%
No	89	87	90	91	86	90

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## Survey Methodology

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The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, senior fellow at the Public Policy Institute of California. The findings of this survey, the third in the series, are based on a telephone survey of 2,000 California adult residents interviewed from September 1 to September 7, 1998. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers, ensuring that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to four times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish, as needed.

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

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,000 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. The sampling error for the 1,613 voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 1,046 likely voters is +/- 3%. Sampling error is just one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to three geographic regions. "LA Metro" includes Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and Ventura counties. "SF Bay Area" includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma counties. "Central Valley" includes Butte, Colusa, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba counties. These three regions were chosen for analysis because they account for approximately 85 percent of the state population; moreover, the growth of the Central Valley has given it increasing political significance.

We contrast the results for Latinos with results for "other" ethnic and racial groups. Latinos account for about 24 percent of the state's adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. The sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. Most of the "other" responses are non-Hispanic whites. We also contrast the opinions of Democrats and Republicans with "other" registered voters. The "other" category includes nonaffiliated voters and members of other political parties.

In some cases we compare the PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center in 1997 and 1998, by Gallup in 1996 and 1997, and by the University of Michigan (National Elections Survey) in 1996. In other cases we discuss differences between 1994 and 1998; the earlier data come from surveys of California voters conducted during the 1994 election cycle by Mark Baldassare for KCAL-TV News in Los Angeles and the California Business Roundtable.

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: THE CHANGING POLITICAL LANDSCAPE OF CALIFORNIA**  
**SEPTEMBER 1-7, 1998**  
**2,000 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH**  
**MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE**

*[Responses recorded for first 15 questions are from likely voters. All other responses are from all adults.]*

First, I have a few questions about the November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election.

1. If the election for Governor were being held today, who would you vote for? (*rotate names, then ask "or someone else?"*)

47% Gray Davis, a Democrat  
 38 Dan Lungren, a Republican  
 2 or someone else (specify)  
 13 don't know

2. In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements by the candidates for Governor? (*if yes: whose ads have you seen the most?*)

18% yes, Gray Davis  
 14 yes, Dan Lungren  
 6 yes, other answer  
 62 no

3. The Democratic and Republican candidates for Governor are having a series of debates. Some people learn about debates from news reports as well as seeing or hearing them. So far, have the debates helped you a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all in deciding who to vote for in the Governor's race?

7% great deal  
 22 somewhat  
 19 very little  
 37 not at all  
 15 don't know/ haven't seen, read, or heard debates

4. Next, if the election for the U.S. Senate were being held today, who would you vote for? (*rotate names, then ask "or someone else?"*)

45% Barbara Boxer, a Democrat  
 43 Matt Fong, a Republican  
 1 or someone else (specify)  
 11 don't know

5. In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements by the candidates for the U.S. Senate? (*if yes: whose ads have you seen the most?*)

11% yes, Barbara Boxer  
 7 yes, Matt Fong  
 2 yes, other answer  
 80 no

6. The Democratic and Republican candidates for the U.S. Senate also had a debate. Some people learn about debates from news reports as well as seeing or hearing them. Has the debate helped you a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all in deciding who to vote for in the U.S. Senate race?

6% great deal  
 16 somewhat  
 14 very little  
 45 not at all  
 19 don't know / haven't seen, read, or heard debate

7. On another topic, people have different ideas about the qualifications they want when they vote for candidates for statewide office, such as Governor or U.S. Senator. Which of these is most important to you? Would it be... (*rotate*)?

14% the candidate's experience  
 18 the candidate's character  
 5 the candidate's political party  
 61 the candidate's stands on the issues  
 2 don't know, it depends

8. On another topic, Proposition 1A on the November ballot is a \$9.2 billion bond issue to finance construction of new buildings and to repair older buildings over the next four years for California's kindergarten through 12th grade public schools, community colleges, and public universities. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 1A?

70% yes  
 21 no  
 9 don't know

9. Proposition 1A would impose limits on local government fees charged to housing developers to pay for building new schools. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 1A?

48% favor  
 32 oppose  
 20 don't know

10. Do you think that the current level of state funding for California's kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade public schools is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

10% more than enough  
21 just enough  
63 not enough  
6 don't know

11. Proposition 8, the public schools initiative on the November ballot, would authorize state funds to ensure that public school classes in kindergarten through the third grade have no more than 20 students per class. It would also establish school-site governing councils of parents and teachers, provide for teacher evaluations based on student performances, impose a new credential requirement for teachers, authorize a principal to expel a student for possessing illegal drugs, and create a statewide Chief Inspector of Public Schools. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 8?

72% yes  
19 no  
9 don't know

12. Class sizes in California public schools are now being reduced to a maximum of 20 students in most kindergarten to third grade classes. Do you think the smaller classes will make a big difference, a moderate difference, or no difference in helping children learn reading, writing, and arithmetic?

65% big difference  
26 moderate difference  
7 no difference  
2 don't know

13. Do you think that Proposition 8's efforts to improve teacher quality, that is, establishing stricter credential requirements and basing teacher evaluations on student performances, would make a big difference, a moderate difference, or no difference in helping children learn reading, writing, and arithmetic?

48% big difference  
38 moderate difference  
11 no difference  
3 don't know

14. On another topic, so far, how closely have you been following the news stories about the 1998 California elections?

9% very closely  
45 fairly closely  
36 not too closely  
10 not at all closely

15. How would you rate the job that news organizations are doing in reporting about the 1998 California elections?

4% excellent  
31 good  
43 fair  
17 poor  
5 don't know

16. Next, some questions about the state. Thinking about the public policy issues in California, what do you think is the most serious problem today? (*code don't read*)

30% crime, gangs  
20 schools, education  
7 drugs  
5 immigration, illegal immigration  
4 jobs, the economy  
3 state government, governor, legislature  
3 poverty, the poor, homeless, welfare  
3 morality, values  
2 environment, pollution  
2 growth, overpopulation  
2 traffic and transportation  
2 taxes  
8 other  
9 don't know

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

57% right direction  
34 wrong direction  
9 don't know

18. Do you think the current financial situation in Asia will hurt the California economy in the next year or so? (*if yes: do you think it will hurt the California economy a great deal or only somewhat?*)

22% yes, a great deal  
44 yes, only somewhat  
22 no  
12 don't know

On another topic, we have a few questions about Proposition 13, the citizen's initiative that reformed the property tax system in California. Proposition 13 was passed by the voters in 1978.

19. Proposition 13 limits the tax rate to 1 percent of the sales price of the property when it is purchased and also limits the growth of property tax increases to 2 percent annually until the property is sold. Overall, do you think the property tax limitations imposed by Proposition 13 have had a good effect or a bad effect or no effect on local government services provided to residents in the state of California?

38% good effect  
23 bad effect  
27 no effect  
12 don't know

20. Under Proposition 13, property taxes are collected at the local level, and the State Legislature and Governor are responsible for dividing the property tax money among the local governments that provide services to residents. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 13?

55% favor  
34 oppose  
11 don't know

21. As a result of Proposition 13 and increases in home prices in California, a homeowner who recently purchased a home will pay much higher property taxes than a homeowner who purchased a similar home several years ago in the same neighborhood. Do you favor or oppose this feature of Proposition 13?

35% favor  
59 oppose  
6 don't know

22. Under Proposition 13, a two-thirds vote at the ballot box is required to pass any new local special taxes. Overall, do you think the supermajority vote requirement imposed by Proposition 13 has had a good effect or a bad effect or no effect on local government services provided to residents in the state of California?

38% good effect  
22 bad effect  
28 no effect  
12 don't know

23. Do you favor or oppose allowing local special taxes to pass with a simple majority instead of a two-thirds vote?

38% favor  
58 oppose  
4 don't know

24. On another topic, how do you rate the job performance of President Bill Clinton at this time?

22% excellent  
36 good  
21 fair  
20 poor  
1 don't know

25. How do you rate the job performance of California Governor Pete Wilson at this time?

7% excellent  
35 good  
30 fair  
26 poor  
2 don't know

26. How do you rate the job performance of the California Legislature at this time, including the State Senate and Assembly?

3% excellent  
33 good  
46 fair  
12 poor  
6 don't know

27. The Governor and the State Legislature recently approved a \$1.4 billion tax cut for the 1998-1999 fiscal year, including a reduction in the state vehicle license fee. How important is this state tax cut to you? Is it...

41% very important  
37 somewhat important  
20 not important  
2 don't know

28. On another topic, people have different ideas about the government in Washington. These ideas don't refer to Democrats or Republicans in particular, but just to government in general. We want to see how you feel about these ideas. How much of the time do you think you can trust the government in Washington to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

5% just about always  
28 most of the time  
63 some of the time  
4 none of the time (*code don't read*)



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

65% a lot  
31 some  
3 don't waste very much  
1 don't know

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

70% few big interests  
25 benefit of all the people  
5 don't know

31. Would you say that quite a few of the people running the government are crooked, not very many are, or do you think hardly any of them are crooked?

39% quite a few  
45 not many  
14 hardly any  
2 don't know

Now, I'm going to read to you a few statements that will help us understand how people feel about a number of things. For each statement, please tell me if you completely agree, mostly agree, mostly disagree, or completely disagree.

32. Poor people have become too dependent on government assistance programs. Do you...

29% completely agree  
48 mostly agree  
18 mostly disagree, or  
4 completely disagree  
1 don't know

33. It is the responsibility of government to take care of people who can't take care of themselves. Do you...

21% completely agree  
42 mostly agree  
24 mostly disagree, or  
12 completely disagree  
1 don't know

34. The government is spending too much money on programs to help the poor. Do you...

13% completely agree  
31 mostly agree  
37 mostly disagree, or  
17 completely disagree  
2 don't know

35. On another topic, are you currently registered to vote as a Democrat, a Republican, another party or independent, or are you not registered to vote?

37% Democrat  
31 Republican  
13 independent or other party  
19 not registered

36. Would you consider yourself to be politically...

8% very liberal  
20 somewhat liberal  
34 middle-of-the-road  
26 somewhat conservative  
10 very conservative  
2 don't know

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

18% a great deal  
48 fair amount  
29 only a little  
5 none

38. Would you say you follow what's going on in government and public affairs...

39% most of the time  
37 some of the time  
17 only now and then  
5 hardly at all  
2 never

39. How often would you say you vote?

51% always (*skip question 40*)  
22 nearly always  
11 part of the time  
5 seldom  
11 never  
0 other

40. Here are some reasons people give for not always voting. Which of these is the main reason you do not always vote? (*rotate*)

16% voting doesn't change things  
9 I'm not interested in politics  
3 there are fewer major problems today  
24 I'm too busy to vote  
36 I don't know enough about the choices  
9 other answer  
3 don't know

41. On another topic, as far as your own situation, would you say you and your family are financially better off or worse off or just about the same as you were a year ago?

33% better off  
12 worse off  
54 same  
1 don't know

42. Now, looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be financially better off or worse off or just about the same as now?

40% better off  
7 worse off  
51 same  
2 don't know

43. How satisfied are you with your current financial situation? Are you...

21% very satisfied  
54 somewhat satisfied  
25 not satisfied

Next, a few questions about population trends in your region.

44. In the next ten years, do you think that the population in your region will grow rapidly, grow slowly, stay about the same, or decline?

62% grow rapidly  
20 grow slowly  
15 stay about the same  
2 decline  
1 don't know

45. Do you think that the water supply that is available for your region today will be adequate or inadequate for your region's needs ten years from now? (*if inadequate, is that somewhat or very?*)

41% adequate  
30 somewhat inadequate  
23 very inadequate  
6 don't know

46. Do you think that the freeways, roads, and transportation system in your region today will be adequate or inadequate for your region's needs ten years from now? (*if inadequate, is that somewhat or very?*)

28% adequate  
25 somewhat inadequate  
45 very inadequate  
2 don't know

Now, I'd like to ask you some questions about religion.

47. How important would you say religion is in your own life? Would you say it is very important, fairly important, or not important?

49% very important  
32 fairly important  
19 not important

48. Aside from weddings and funerals, how often do you attend religious services?

11% more than once a week  
23 once a week  
18 once or twice a month  
18 a few times a year  
16 seldom  
14 never

49. Thinking back to recent elections, have the clergy at your place of worship or any other religious groups urged you to vote in a particular way?

11% yes  
89 no

50. And what is your opinion about political candidates who talk about religious values when they are campaigning for office? Do you approve or disapprove?

39% approve  
56 disapprove  
5 don't know

[51-61. Demographic Questions]

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