

# PPIC Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government

September 2015

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Supported with funding from  
The James Irvine Foundation



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

# Outline

- PPIC Statewide Surveys
- State government
- Federal government
- Conclusions

# PPIC Statewide Survey mission

- Provide timely, relevant, nonpartisan data on political, social, and economic opinions
- Inform and improve state policymaking, raise awareness, encourage discussion
- Provide a voice for all Californians in important state policy debates
  - 316,000+ Californians since 1998
  - 150+ general, issue, and regional surveys

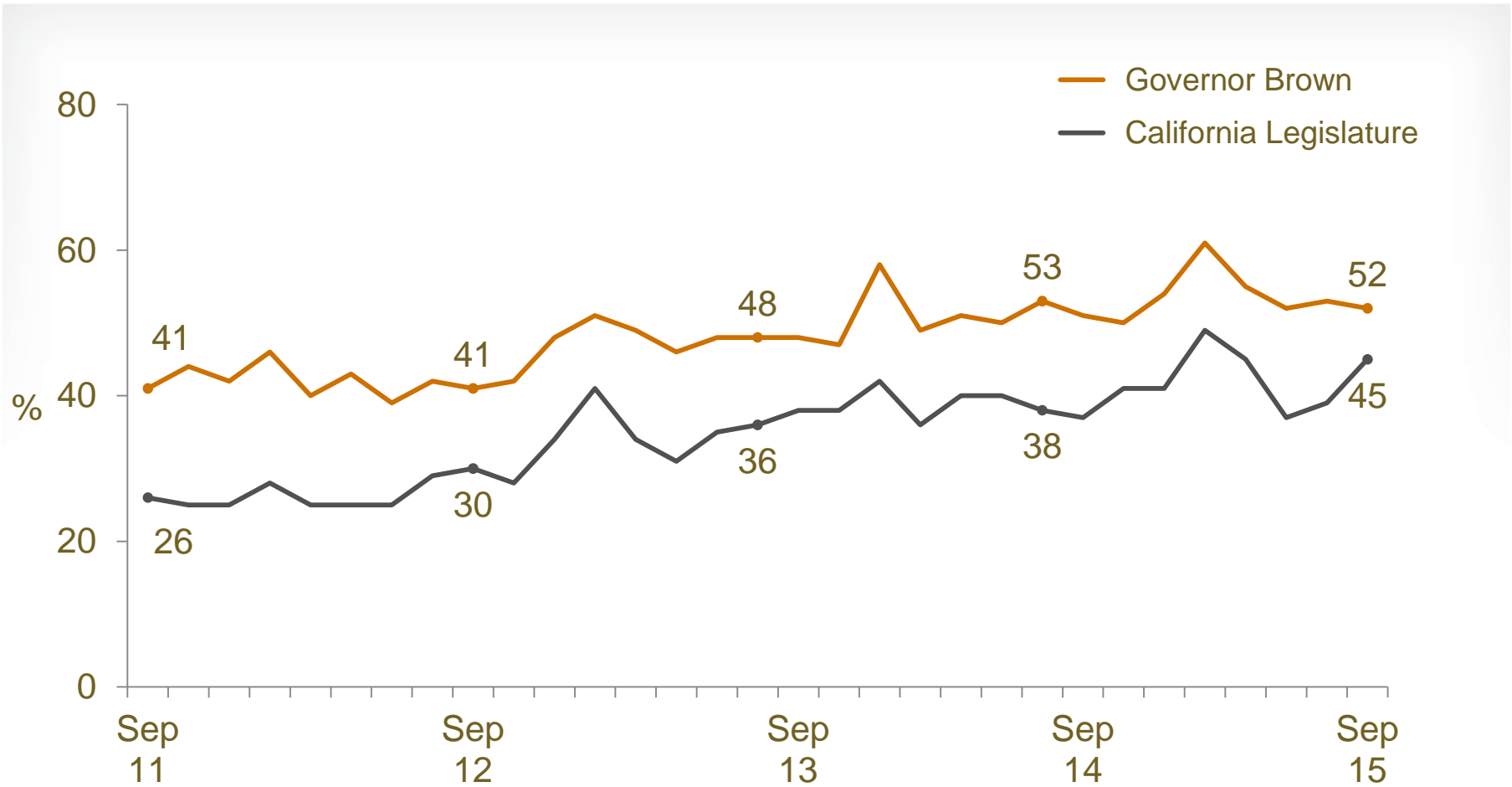
# Californians and Their Government

- General series funded by The James Irvine Foundation
- State government
  - Approval ratings and overall mood
  - Tax proposals, pension reform, public safety, higher education
- Federal government
  - Approval ratings and overall mood
  - Immigration, abortion, income inequality, gun laws
- Telephone interviews, September 13–22
  - 60% landline, 40% cell phone
  - 1,708 adults,  $\pm 3.6\%$  margin of error
  - 1,066 likely voters,  $\pm 4.4\%$  margin of error

# Outline

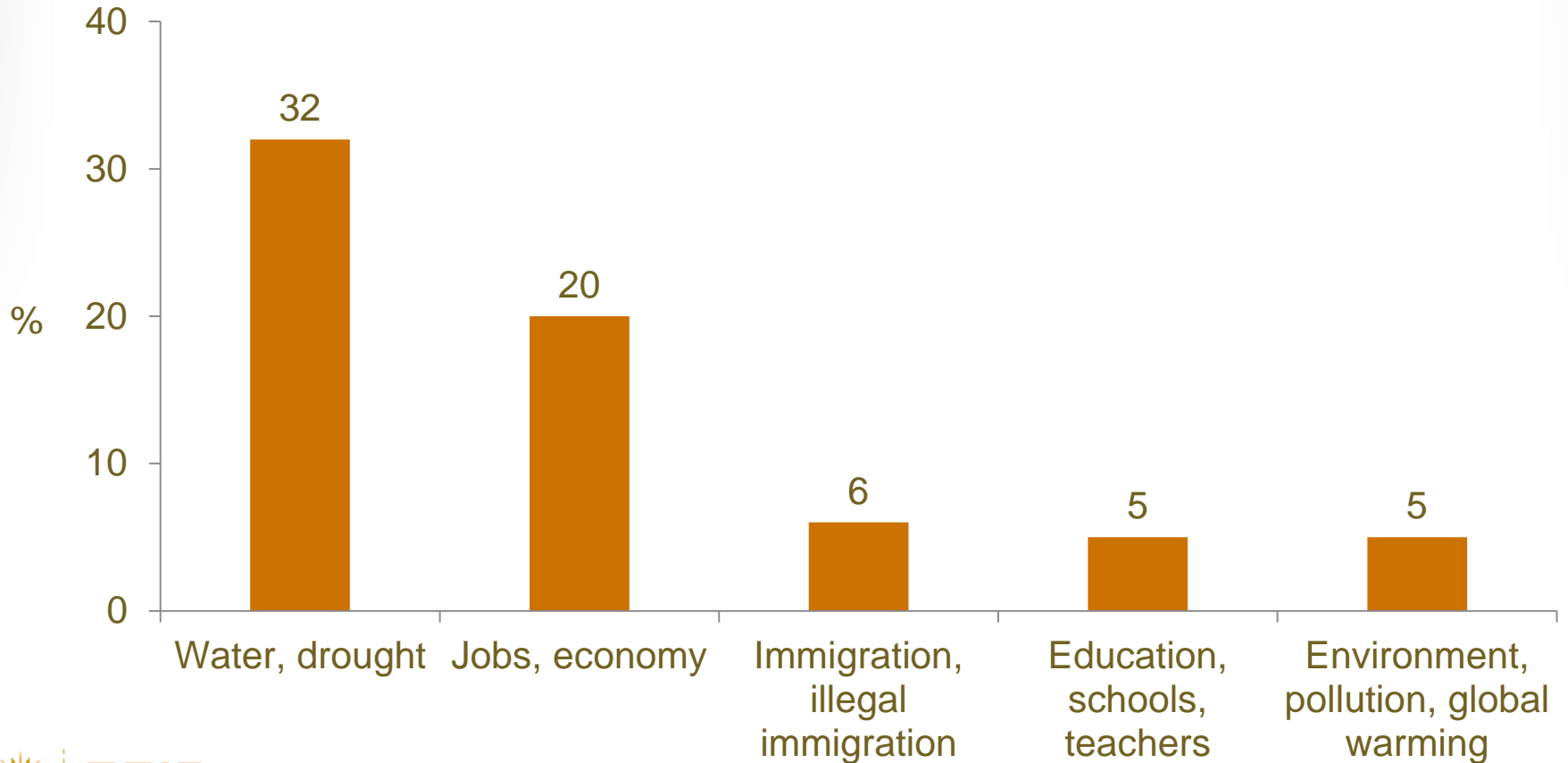
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# Approval of state elected officials



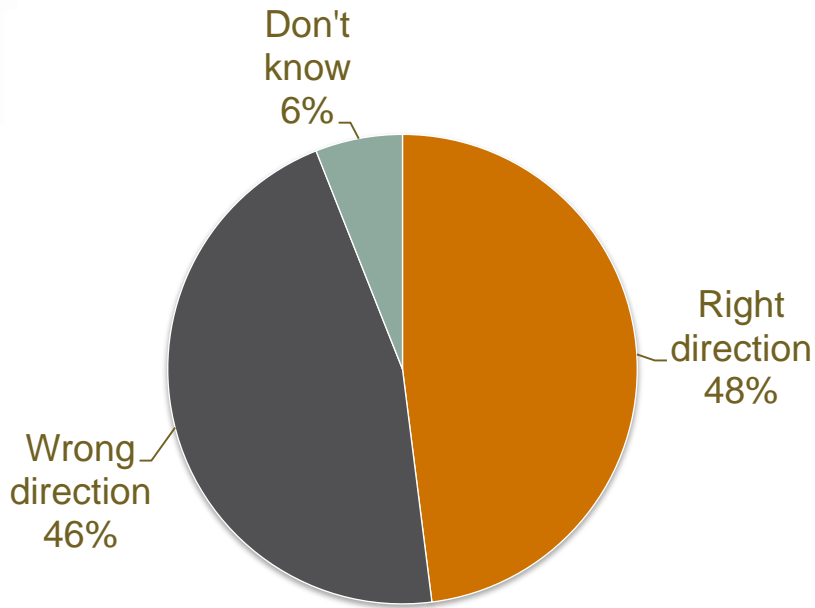
# Most important issue today

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

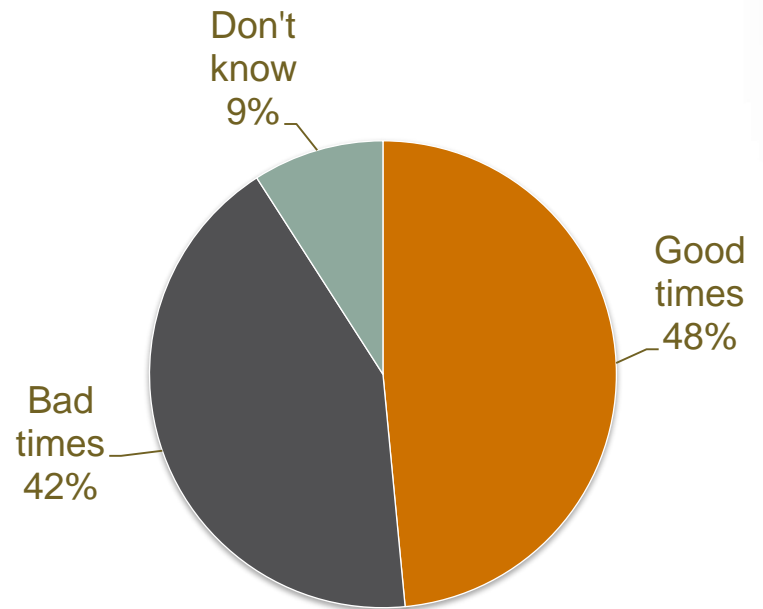


# Outlook for the state

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



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

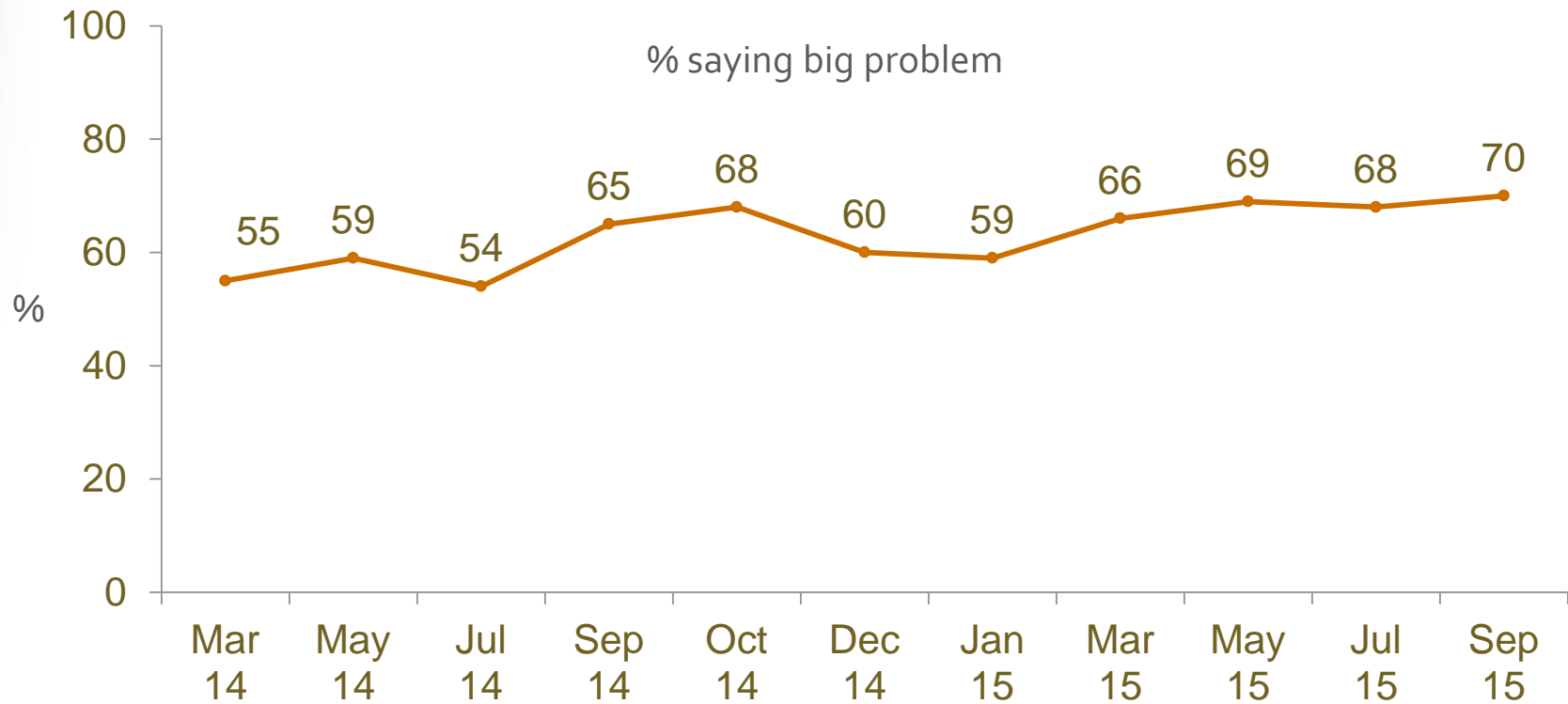


All adults



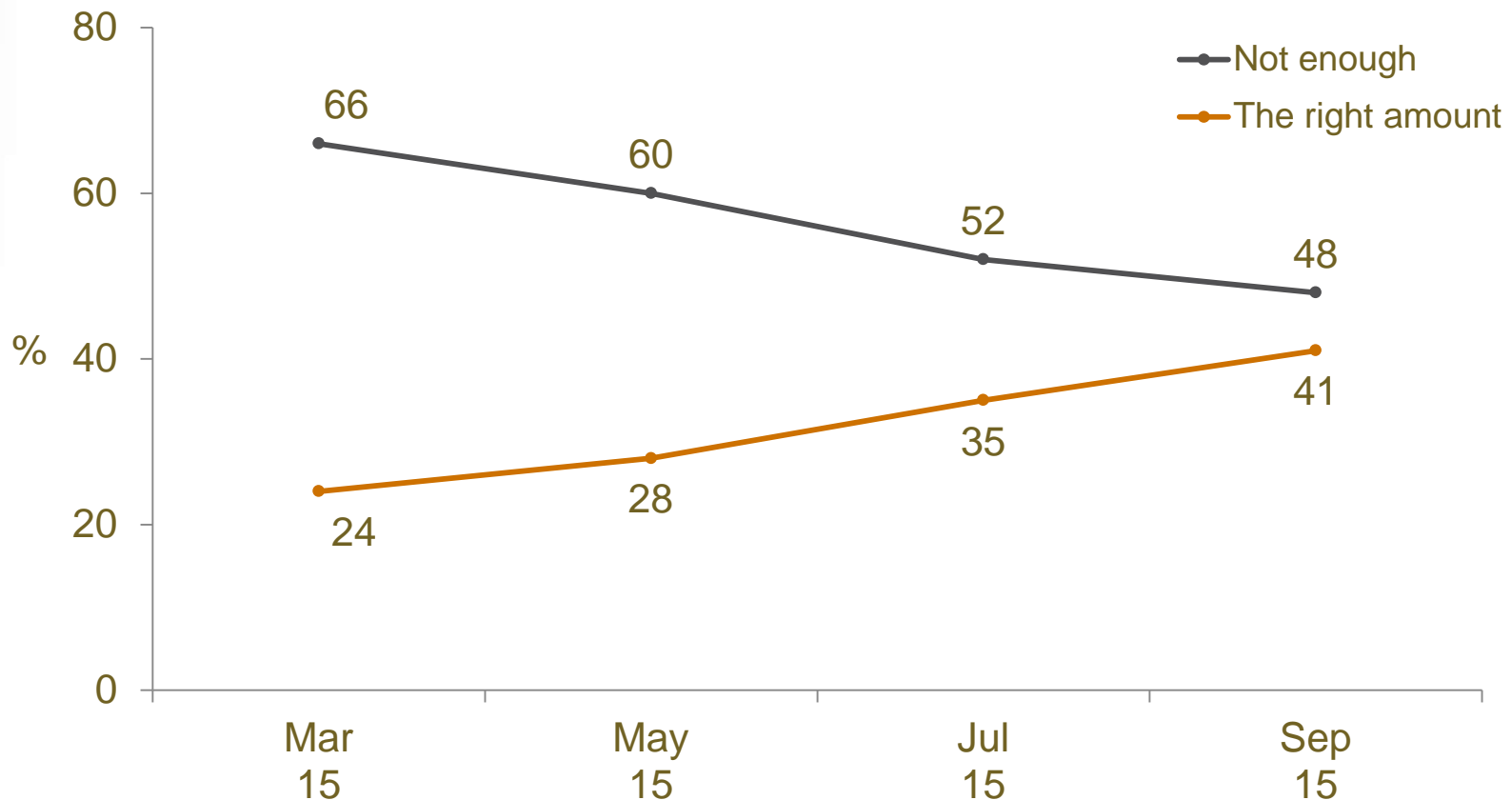
# Local water supply

Would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?



# Drought response

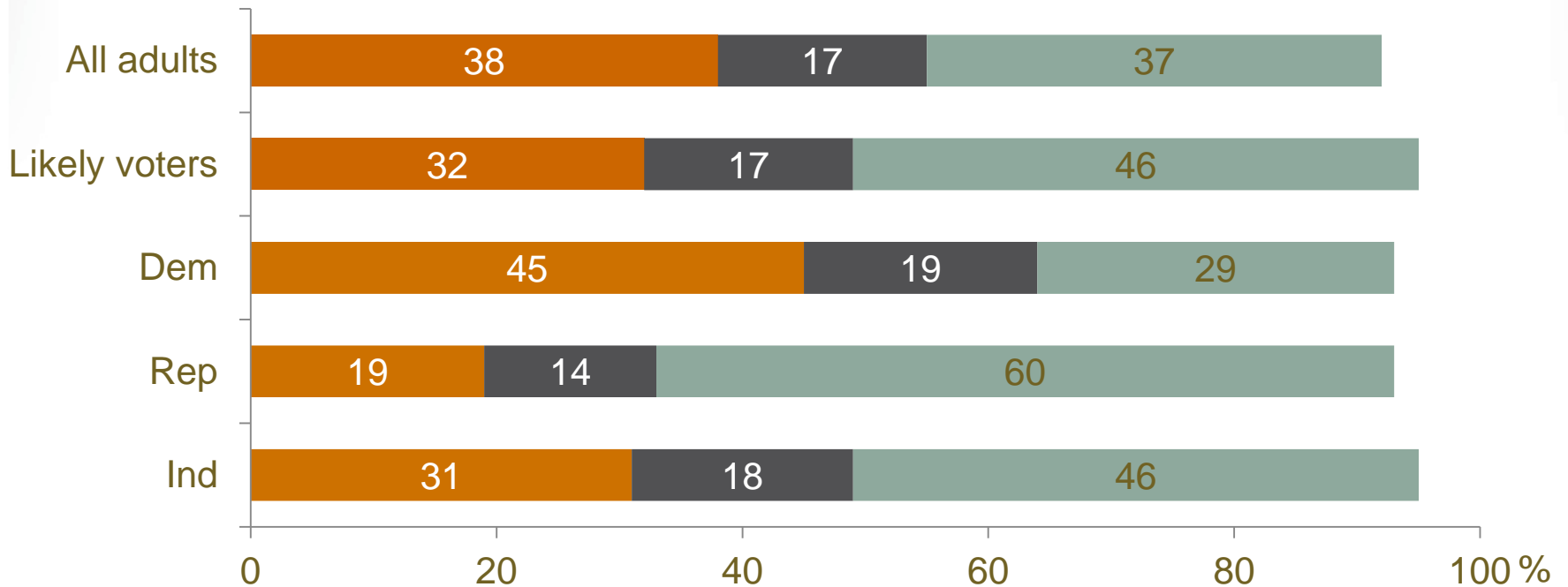
Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?



# Extension of Proposition 30 taxes

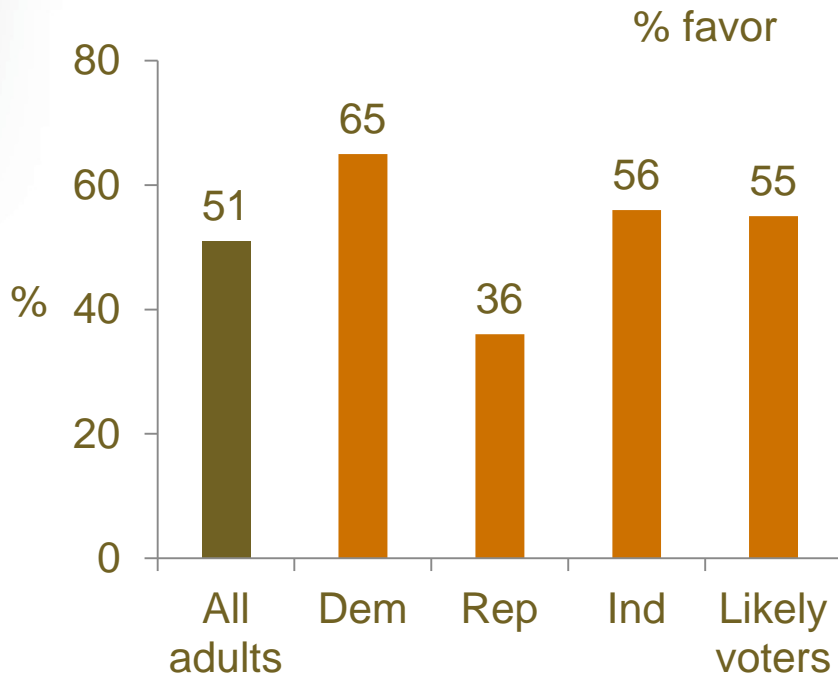
...voters passed Proposition 30 in November 2012. It increased taxes on earnings over \$250,000 for seven years and sales taxes by one quarter cent for four years, to fund schools and guarantee public safety realignment funding.  
Do you favor or oppose extending the Proposition 30 tax increases ...?

■ Favor, even if permanent   ■ Favor, but oppose if permanent   ■ Oppose

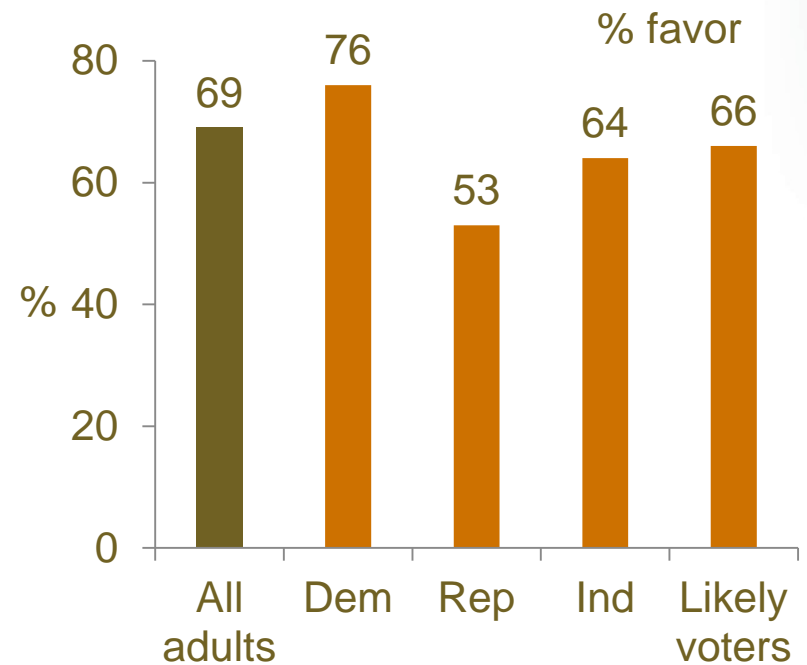


# Proposition 13 and cigarette tax proposals

What do you think about having commercial properties taxed according to their current market value? Do you favor or oppose this proposal?



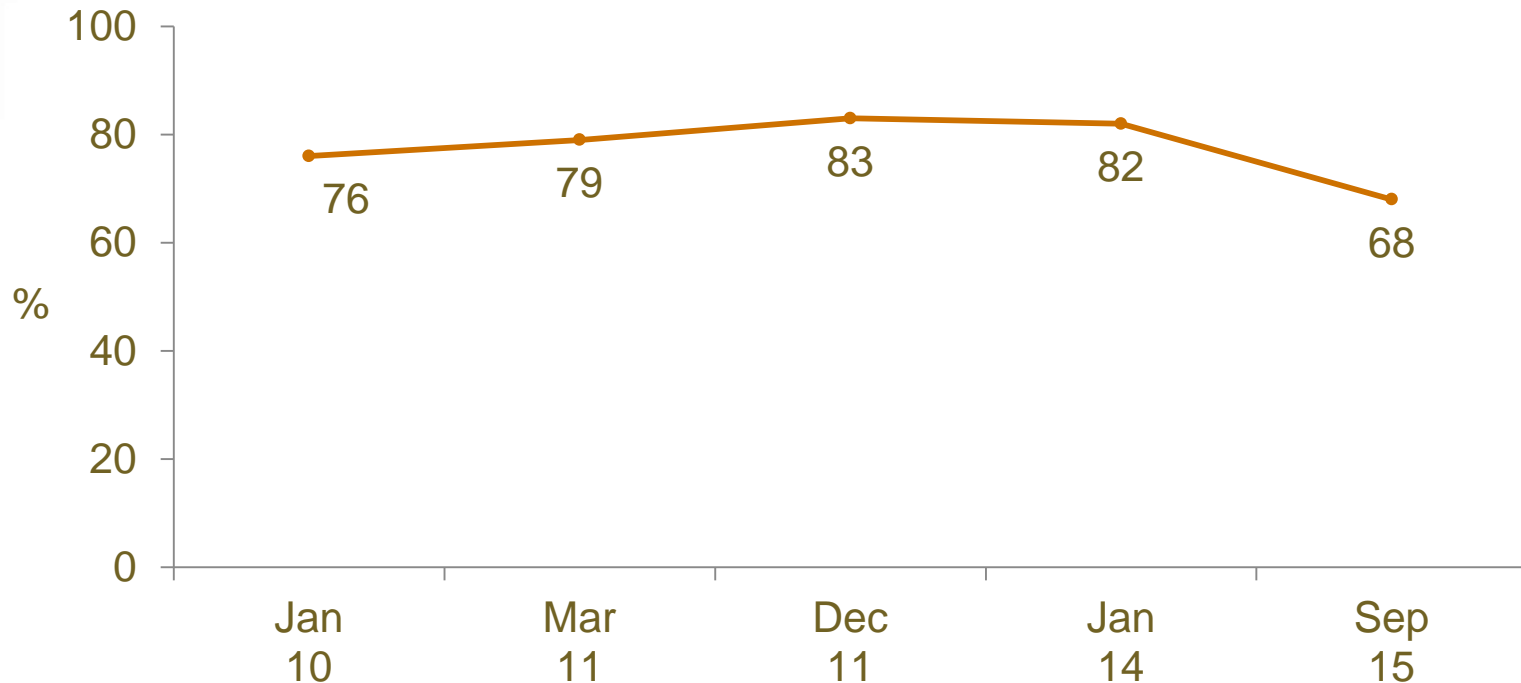
How about increasing state taxes on the purchase of cigarettes? (Do you favor or oppose this proposal?)



# Public employee retirement benefits

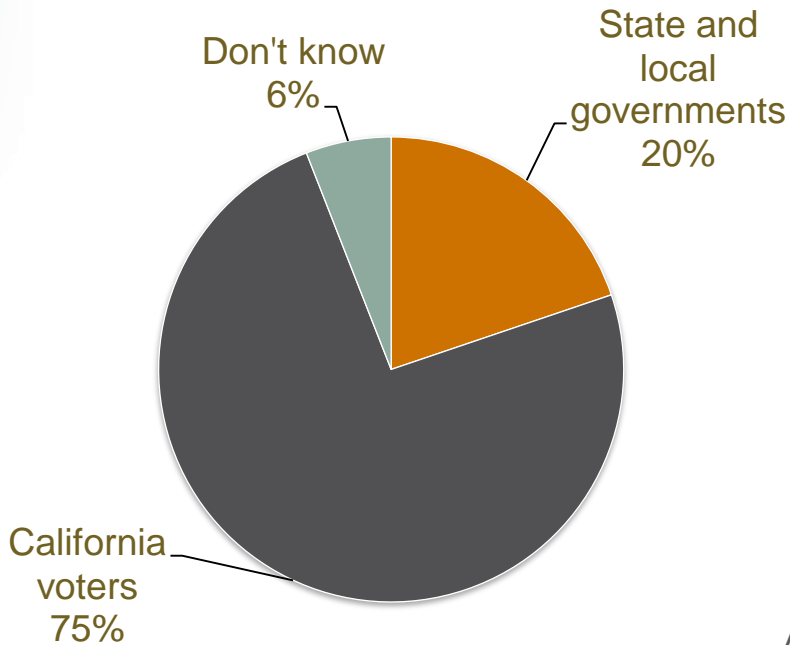
At this time, how much of a problem for state and local government budgets is the amount of money that is being spent on their public employee pension or retirement systems? Is this a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in California today?

% saying big or somewhat of a problem

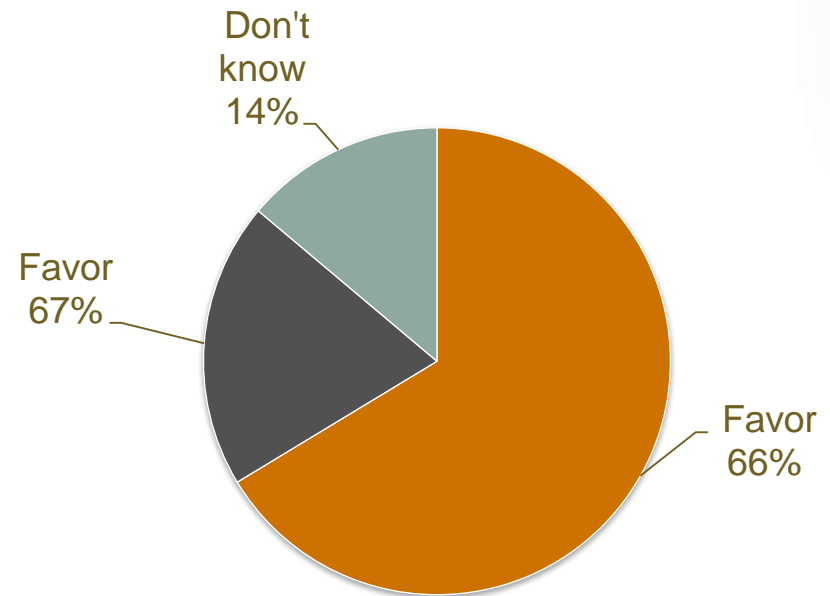


# Public employee retirement benefits

When it comes to the retirement benefits offered to public employees, would you prefer that the state and local governments make all of the decisions, that California voters make some of the decisions at the ballot box?



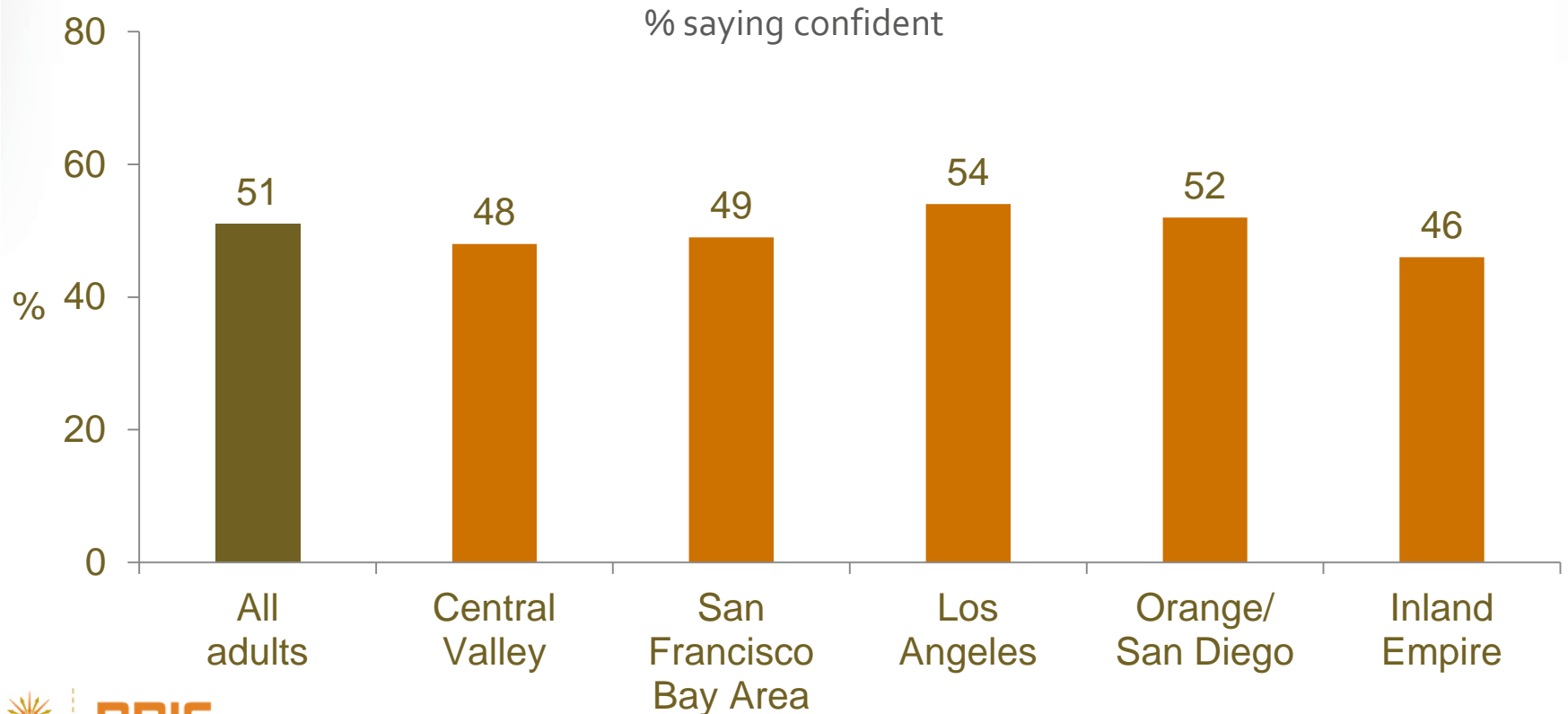
Would you favor or oppose changing the pension systems for new public employees from defined benefits to a defined contribution system similar to a 401(k) plan?



All adults

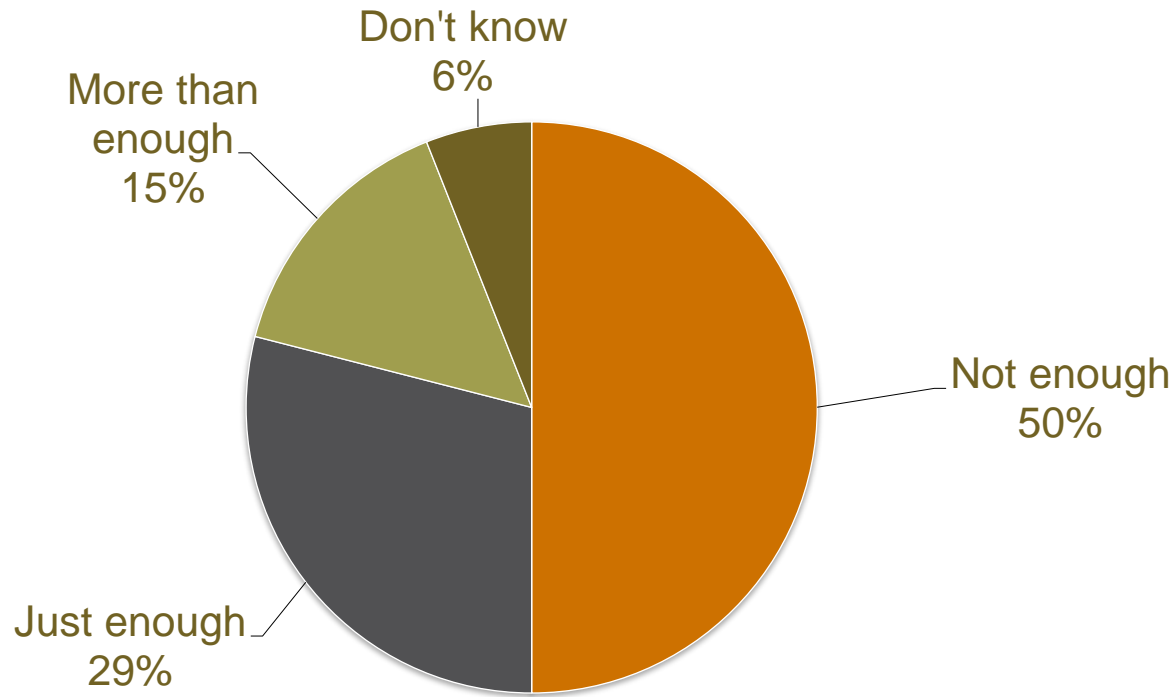
# Corrections realignment

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



# Future demand for higher education

In thinking ahead 20 years, if current trends continue, do you think California will have more than enough, not enough, or just enough college-educated residents needed for the jobs and skills likely to be in demand?



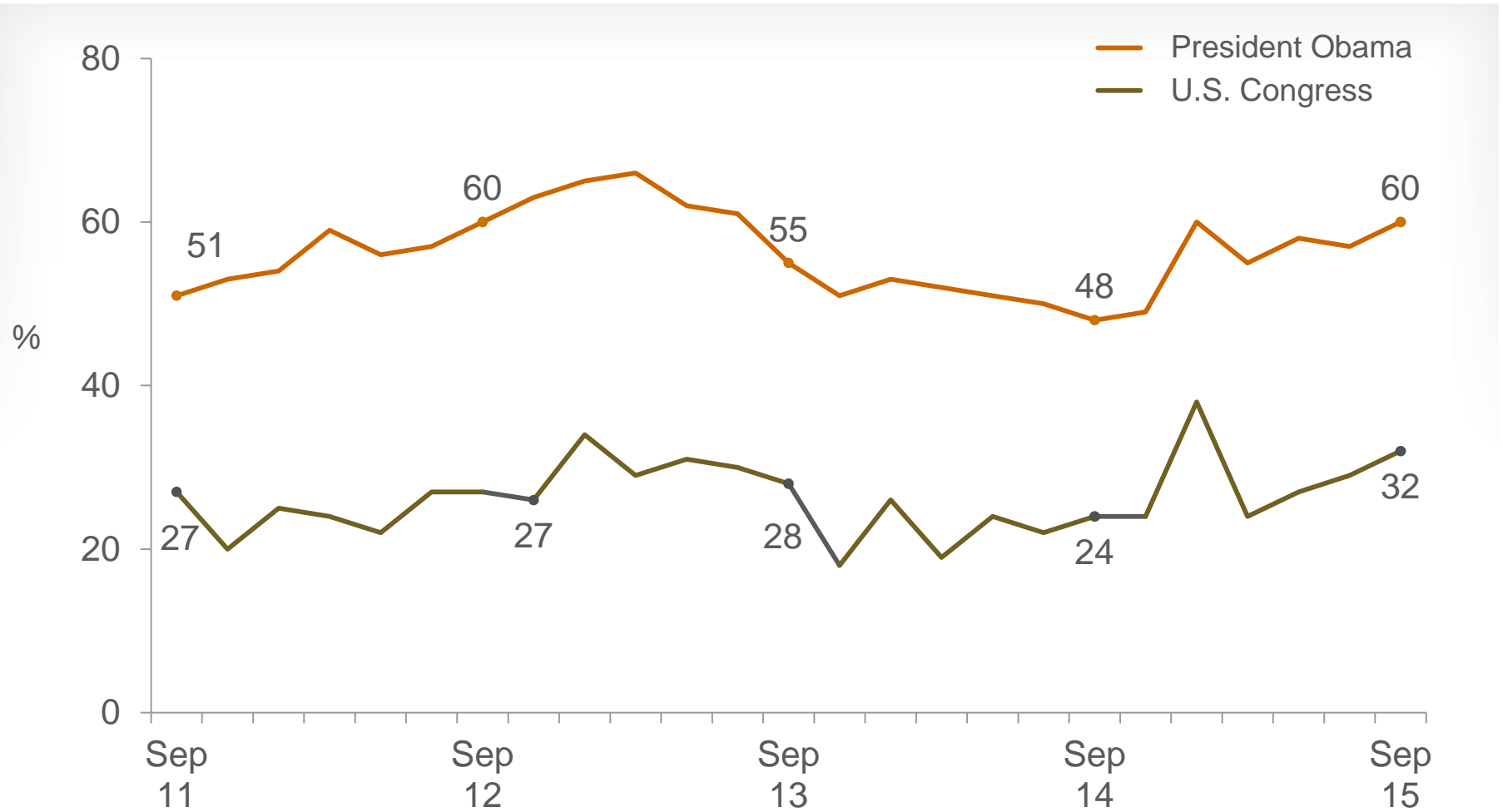
All adults



# Outline

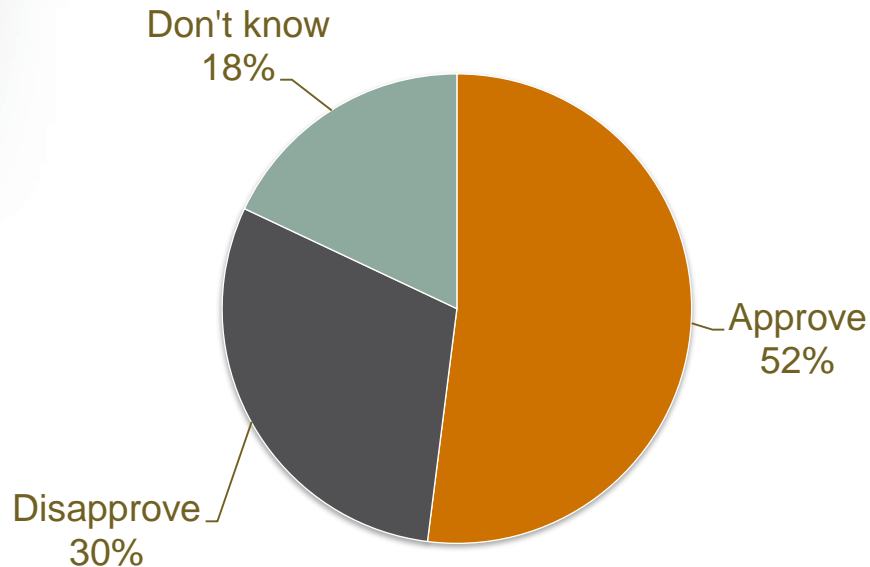
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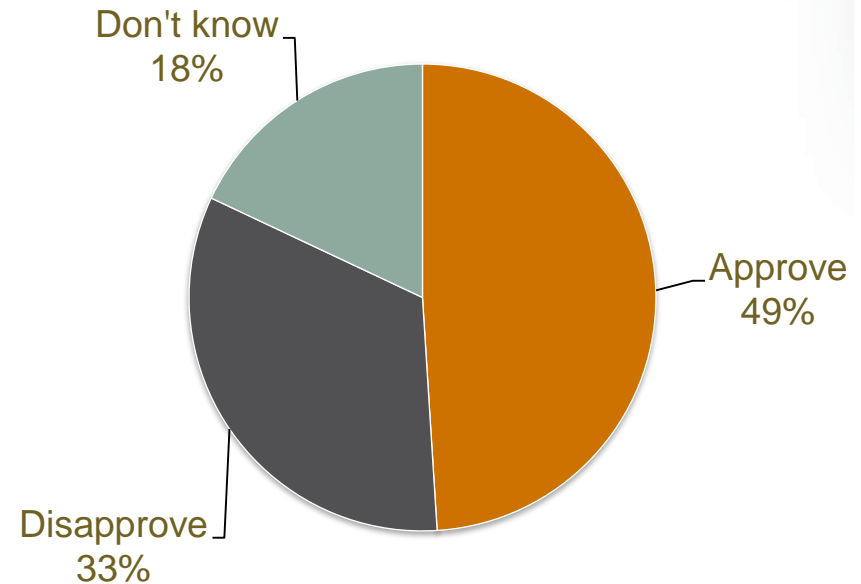


# Approval of California's U.S. senators

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?



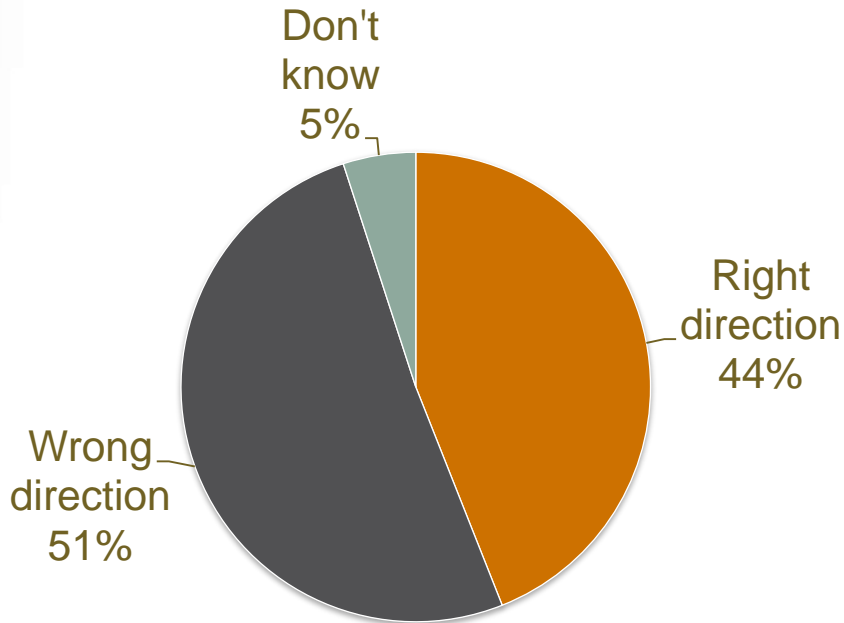
Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?



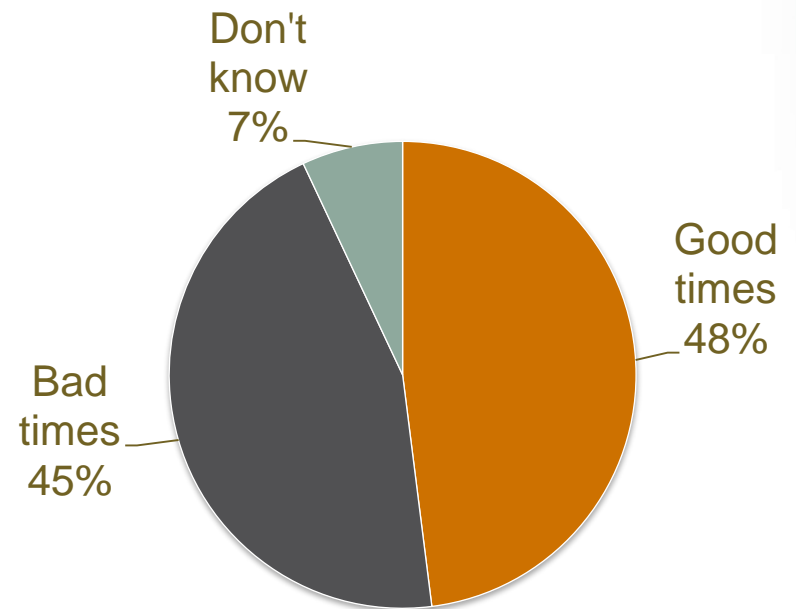
All adults

# National outlook

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



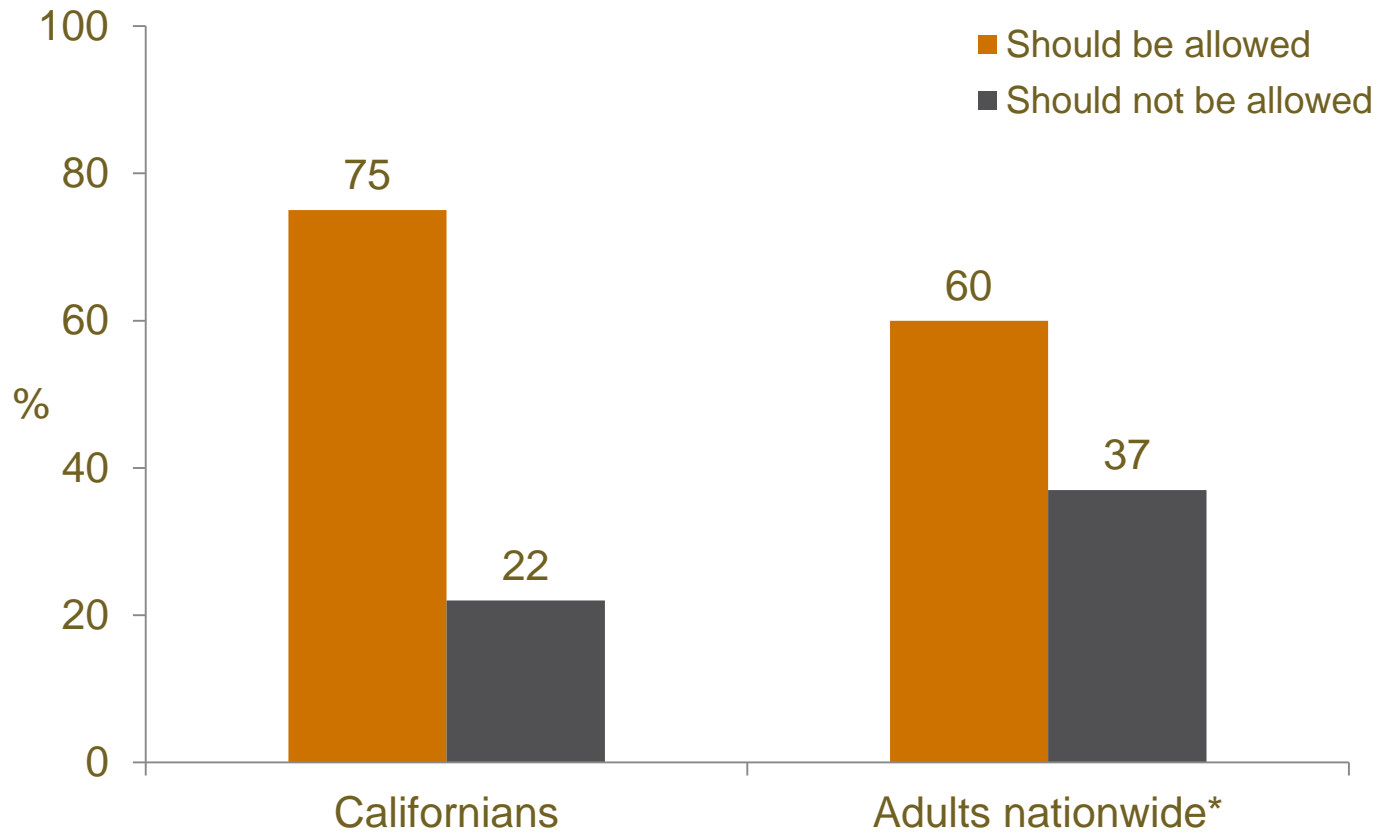
Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?



All adults

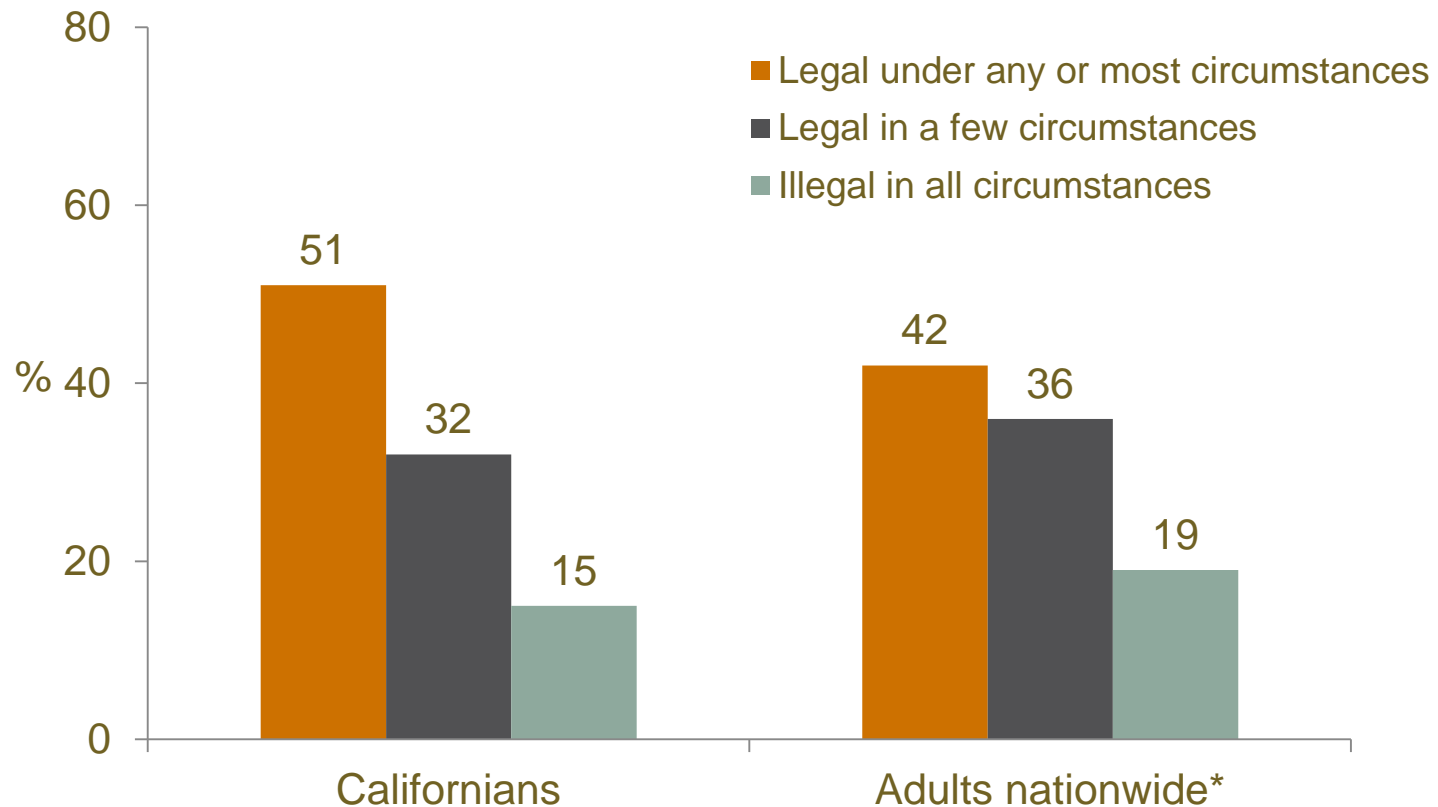
# Undocumented immigrants

Do you think undocumented immigrants currently living in the United States should or should not be allowed to live and work here legally if they pay a fine and meet other requirements?



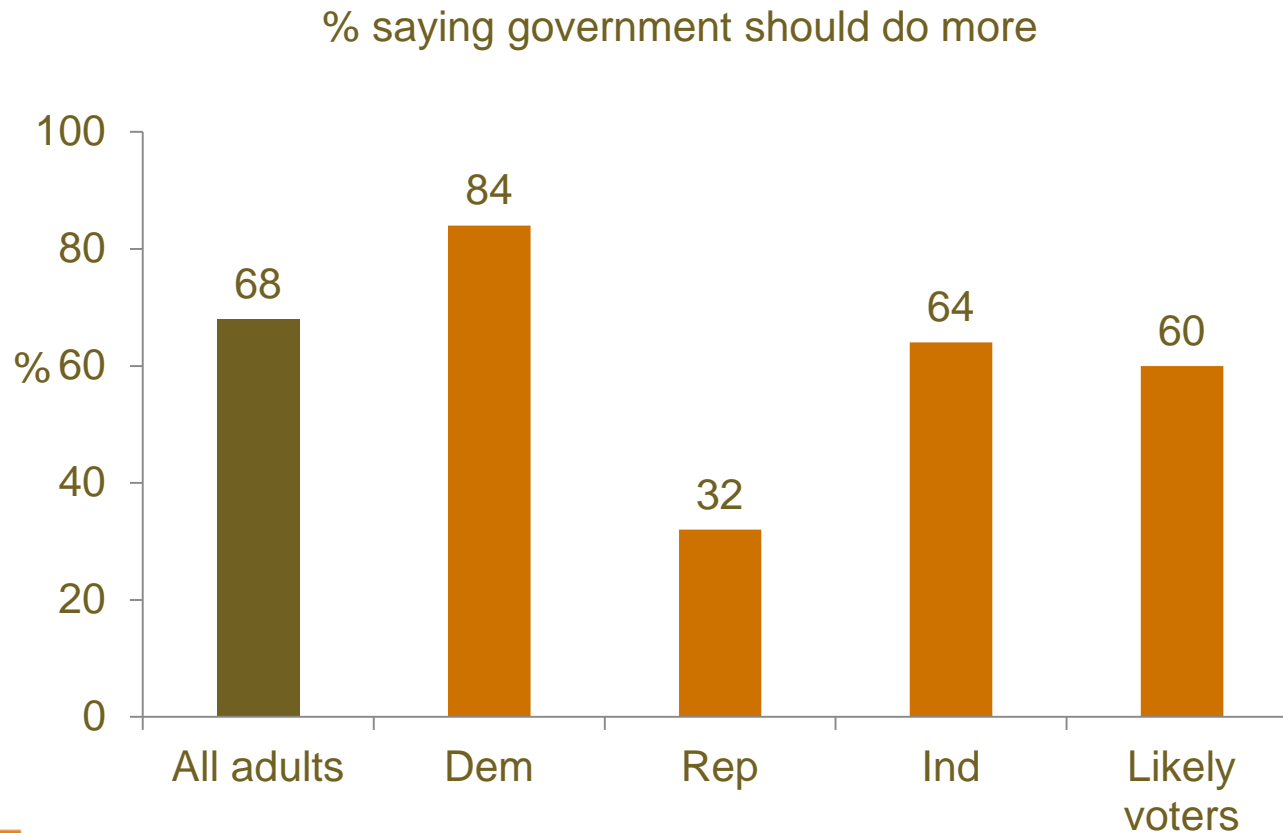
# Abortion laws

Do you think abortions should be legal under any circumstances, legal only under certain circumstances, or illegal in all circumstances? (If legal under certain circumstances: Do you think abortion should be legal in most circumstances or only in a few circumstances?)



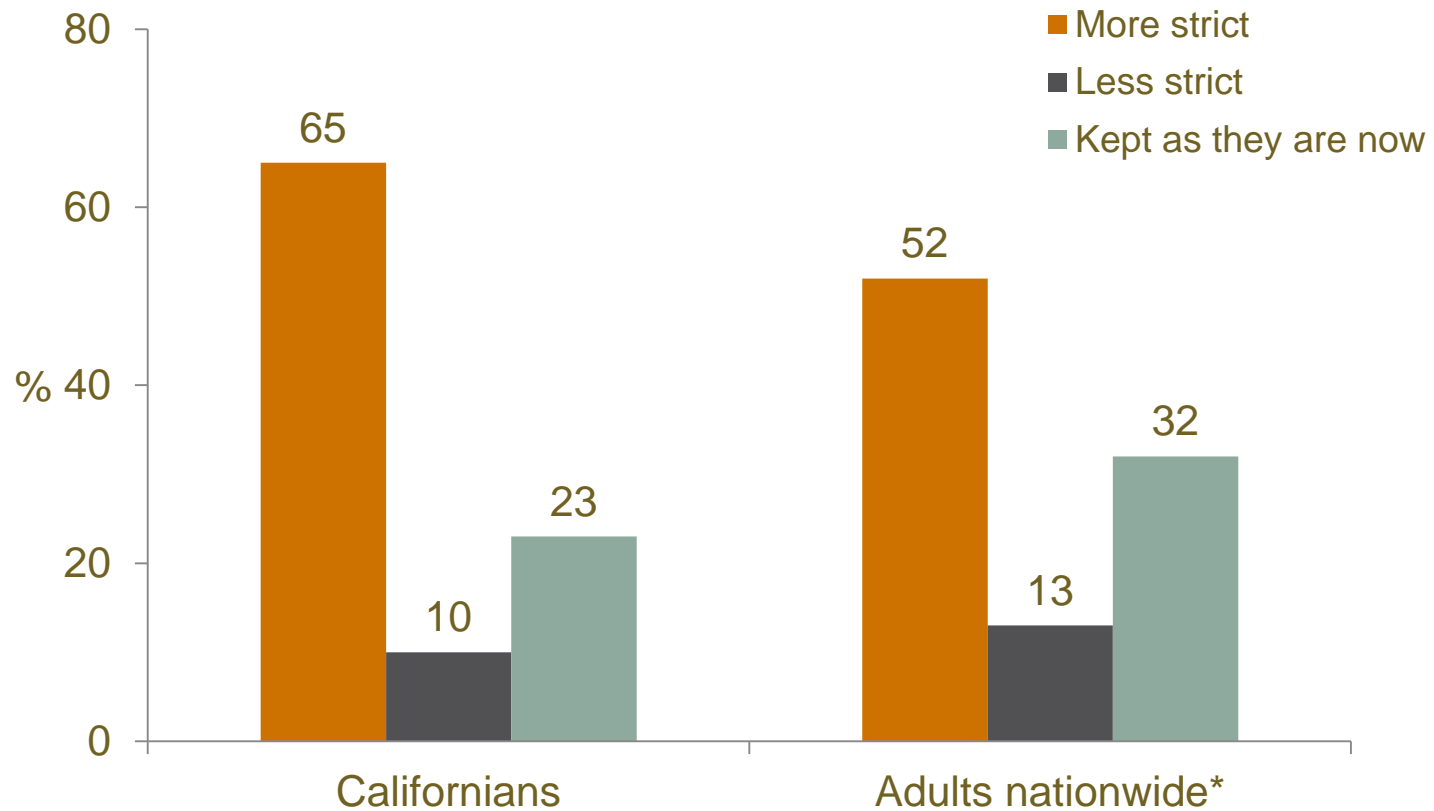
# Income inequality

Should the government do more to reduce the gap between the rich and poor in this country, or is this something the government should not be doing?



# Gun laws

In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?





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# Conclusions

- Half of likely voters favor a temporary extension of Proposition 30—only a third support making the tax increases permanent
- Drought remains the top concern, but an increasing share say residents' response is the right amount
- Half view crime in California as a big problem, express confidence in local government to handle prison realignment
- Californians are much more likely to approve of their own representatives than to approve of Congress overall
- Two in three Californians—including majorities across parties—prefer legal status for undocumented immigrants
- Half think abortion should be legal in any or most circumstances

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# Notes on the use of these slides

These slides were created to accompany a presentation. They do not include full documentation of sources, data samples, methods, and interpretations. To avoid misinterpretations, please contact:

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Thank you for your interest in this work.