

---

## PARTICIPANTS

**Mark Baldassare** is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he also holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy and directs the PPIC Statewide Survey. Before he assumed his current position, he was PPIC's director of research. He has authored ten books, including *The Coming Age of Direct Democracy: California's Recall and Beyond*. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine. He has conducted surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a Ph.D. in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

**Matthew Cate** is executive director of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC). He is also a law and policy fellow at Stanford University School of Law, working with local leaders to assess and address post-realignment challenges. Before he joined CSAC in 2012 he was secretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). Before that, he served as the state inspector general, responsible for CDCR oversight. From 1996 to 2004, he was deputy attorney general at the California Department of Justice. From 1994 to 1996, he was a deputy district attorney for Sacramento County. Before he joined the public sector, he was a business litigation attorney with Downey, Brand, Seymour & Rohwer. He is regional president of the Association of State Correctional Administrators and serves on the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board. He holds a J.D. from the University of Oregon School of Law.

**Melissa Melendez** represents the 67th District in the California State Assembly. Before she joined the Assembly in 2012, she was a member of the Lake Elsinore City Council; during her tenure she served as both mayor pro tem and mayor. Before that, she ran her own transcription company, providing services to the Secretary of the Navy and other top-level Pentagon officials. She entered the United States Navy after graduating from high school and served for many years. After gaining fluency in Russian at the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, she was a translator for ten years. She flew covert missions during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, and was one of the first women to fly aboard EP-3 reconnaissance aircraft overseas, conducting intelligence gathering operations in partnership with U.S. allies. She holds an M.B.A. from the University of Phoenix and a B.A. from Chaminade University in Honolulu, Hawaii.

**Steve Merksamer** is the senior partner in the law firm of Nielsen, Merksamer, Parrinello, Gross & Leoni, LLP. He served as chief of staff to Governor George Deukmejian from 1982 to 1987. Before that he was the special assistant attorney general of California. He has also served as a California deputy attorney general, assistant to the lieutenant governor, and assistant to the Speaker of the California State Assembly. He is a member of the board of directors of the California Chamber of Commerce and the Stevenson School and a past chairman of State Law Resources, Inc. He holds a J.D. from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, and a B.A. from Claremont McKenna College.

**Darrell Steinberg** is president pro tempore of the California State Senate. He represents the 6th District, which includes Sacramento and surrounding areas. He was first elected to the Senate in 2006 and became president pro tem in 2008. He served in the Assembly from 1999 to 2004. Before that, he was an employee rights attorney for the California State Employees Association, an administrative law judge and mediator, and a member of the Sacramento City Council. He holds a J.D. from the University of California, Davis, and a B.A. from the University of California, Los Angeles.