

# The Political Views of Young Californians

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**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
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# California's political path has changed in the past 50 years

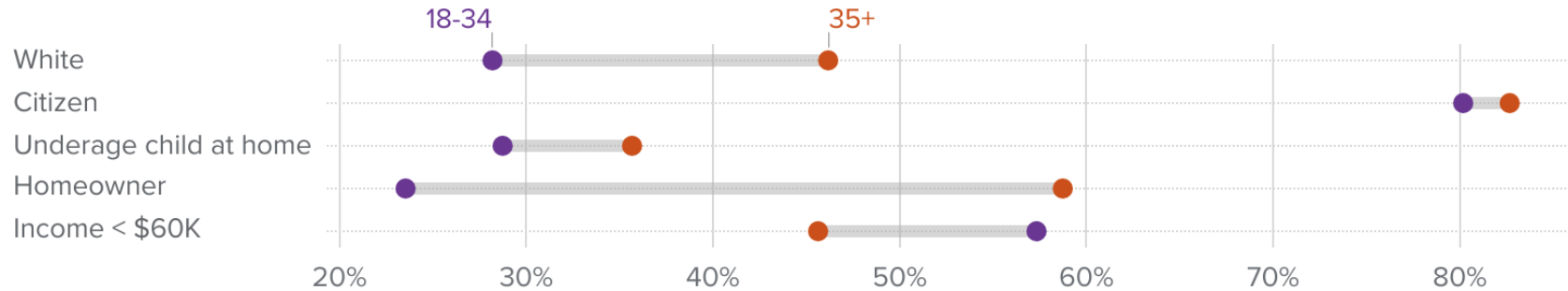
- Mid-20th Century: Competitive to Republican-leaning
- Now: Strongly Democratic with liberal reputation
- Where is the state headed?

# California's younger residents may see their future differently than older residents

- Age gap on issues, ideology, and partisanship
- Are gaps larger or smaller than in other states?
- How fast and how much will California's politics change?
  
- PPIC Statewide Survey 2004–2023
- Cooperative Election Study 2006–2023

# The demographic generation gap

# The demographics of young Californians are different from older Californians

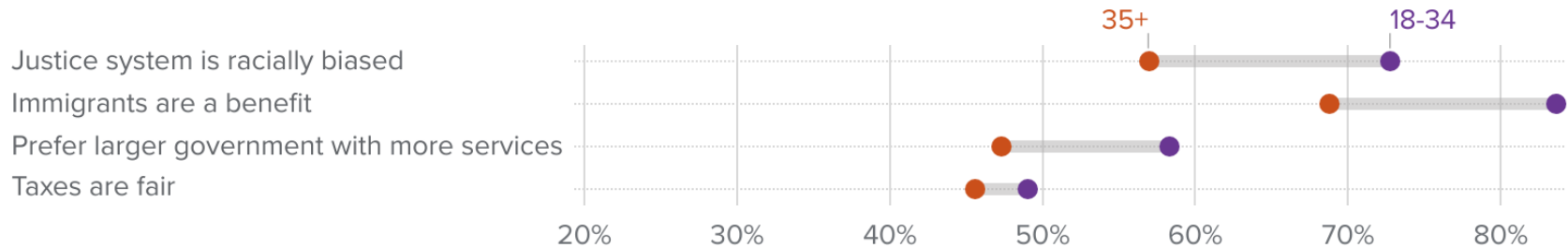


Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys 2016–2023.

# Opinions on policy issues



# The largest age gaps occur around issues related to race and ethnicity



Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys 2016–2023.

# Race and ethnicity account for little of the differences in opinions

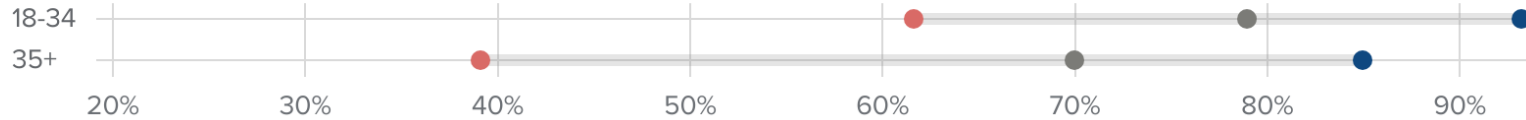
- Regardless of race/ethnicity, younger Californians are more liberal than their older counterparts
- Age gaps are often larger for white Californians than for POC
- Age gaps by race:
  - Black: smaller overall
  - Latino: smaller on immigration, larger on social issues
  - Asian American: similar to whites



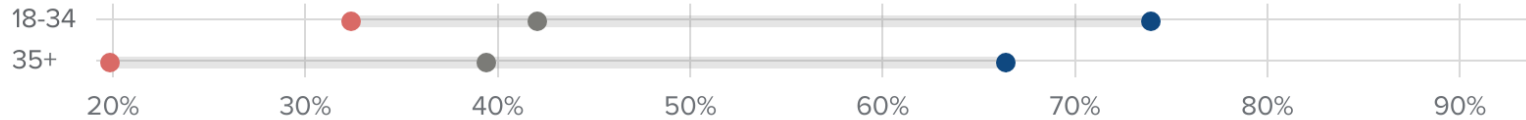
# Party polarization is lower among young Californians

● Democratic ● Independent ● Republican

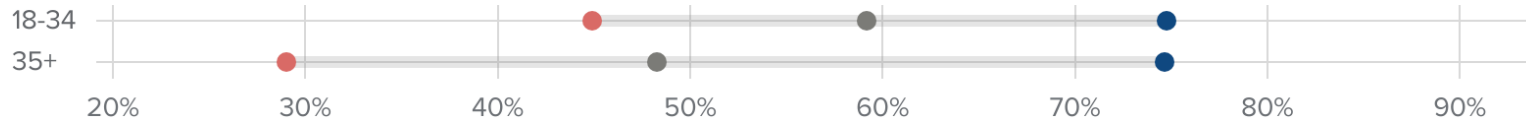
## Immigrants are a benefit



## Prefer larger government with more services



## Environmental regulations are worth the cost

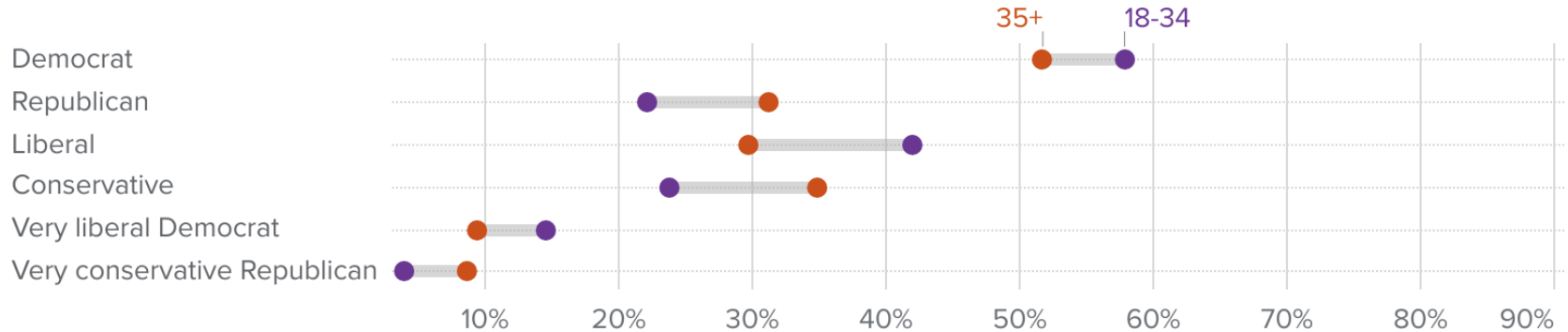


Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys 2016–2023.

# Broader political views



# Age gaps around party and ideology can be significant

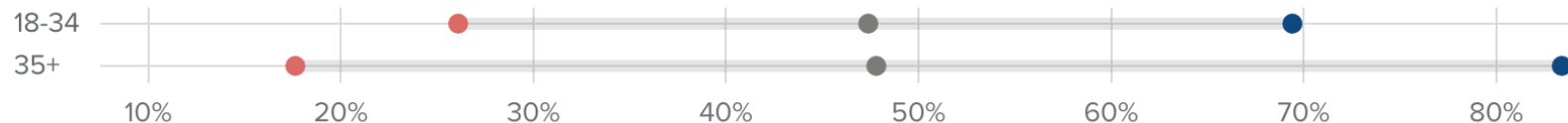


- Similar age gaps around vote choice
- No age gaps around satisfaction with candidates

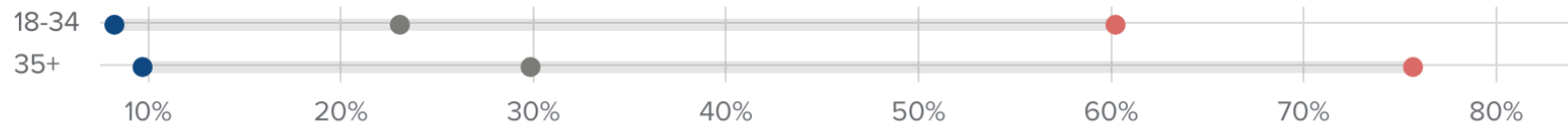
# Young people are less polarized about US presidents

● Democratic ● Independent ● Republican

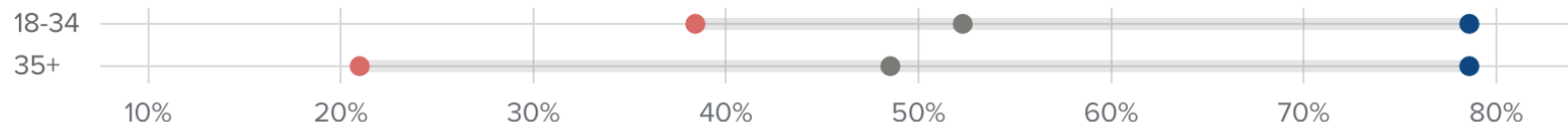
## Biden approval



## Trump approval



## Obama approval

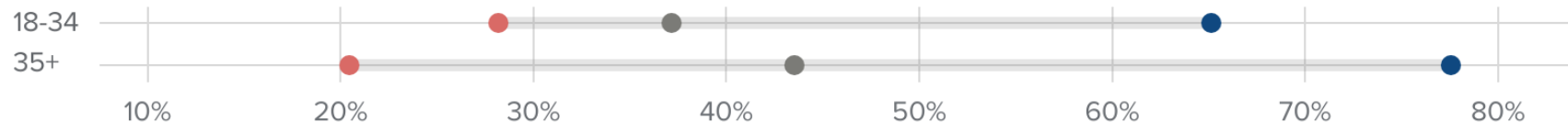


Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys 2016–2023.

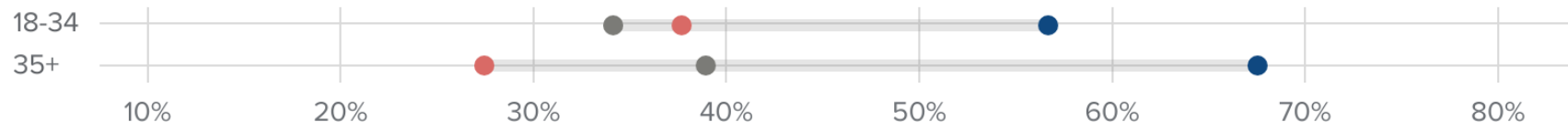
# Young people are less polarized about California's governor

● Democratic ● Independent ● Republican

## Newsom approval



## Brown approval



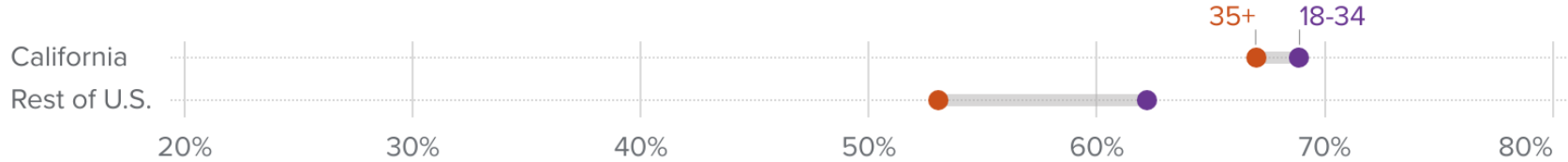
Source: PPIC Statewide Surveys 2016–2023.

# The national context



# California mostly has smaller age gaps than other states

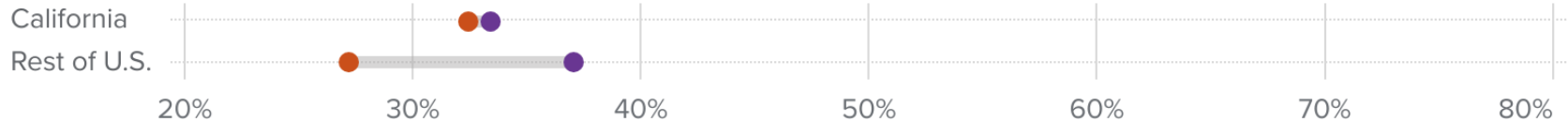
## Abortion should always be available



## Oppose closing the border



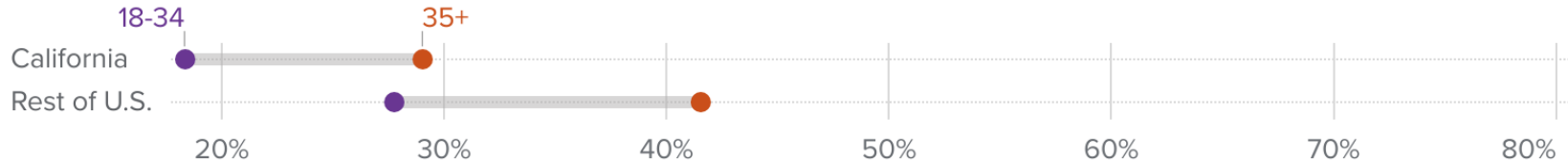
## Prefer taxes to spending cuts



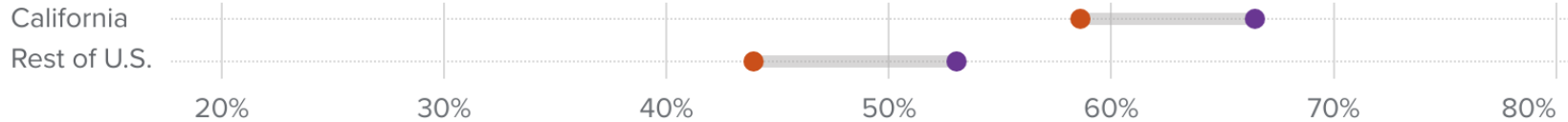
Source: Cooperative Election Study, 2016–2023.

# Gaps are more comparable for broader political views

## Republican



## Vote Democratic for president



## Conservative



Source: Cooperative Election Study, 2016–2023.



# How much change and how fast?



# How much change and how fast?

- How fast: are Californians over 54 more conservative than 35-54?
  - Not really
  - Exception: race and immigration
- How much change: do Californians become more conservative as they age?
  - Not really
  - Nationally, most generations have become more Republican (though not always more conservative)

# Conclusions and recommendations

# Change to politics and elections is likely

- Young people are more liberal and less polarized on issues and on political questions like party choice and ideology
- Candidates and parties will need to adapt
  - Taking new positions?
  - Communicating existing positions more effectively?

# More should be done to promote turnout among young people

- Look for ways to promote more new registrations
  - Expand California New Motor Voter to more agencies where unregistered populations may be higher
    - e.g., Covered California, Medi-Cal, CalWORKs, Cal EITC
- Targeted outreach to California New Motor Voter registrants
- Leverage “pre-registration” to mesh civics education and California New Motor Voter outreach

## 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.