

PARTICIPANTS

Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of the Public Policy Institute of California, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is a leading expert on public opinion and survey methodology, and has directed the [PPIC Statewide Survey](#) since 1998. He is an authority on elections, voter behavior, and political and fiscal reform, authoring ten books and numerous reports on these topics. PPIC's Speaker Series, a public forum featuring in-depth interviews with state and national leaders. Previously, he served as PPIC's director of research. Before joining PPIC, he was a professor of urban and regional planning at the University of California, Irvine, where he held the Johnson Chair in Civic Governance. He has conducted surveys for the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and the California Business Roundtable. He holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Alex Padilla is California's junior US Senator, appointed by Governor Gavin Newsom to finish the term of Vice President Kamala Harris. Senator Padilla is the proud son of immigrants from Mexico, his father a short-order cook and his mother a housekeeper. Padilla attended Los Angeles public schools and is a graduate of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) where he earned a bachelor's of science degree in mechanical engineering. He serves as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship and Border Safety. He is a member of the Senate Committees on Budget, Environment and Public Works, Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, Judiciary, and Rules. Padilla formerly served as California's first Latino Secretary of State, where he worked to make elections more accessible and inclusive, while fighting to protect the integrity of voting systems. Senator Padilla lives in the San Fernando Valley with his wife Angela and their three sons: Roman, Alex, and Diego.