

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. He often provides testimony before legislative committees and state commissions, and regularly hosts 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.

Dr. Shirley Weber is the California Secretary of State. She is California's first Black Secretary of State, and only the fifth African American to serve as a state constitutional officer. Before her appointment, she served four terms representing California's 79th Assembly District in the San Diego region. She chaired the Assembly Committee on Elections, Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Public Safety, and Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Health. From 2019–2020, she served as chair of the California Legislative Black Caucus, which promotes equal opportunity for the African American community. She was also a member of the Standing Committees on Education, Higher Education, elections, Banking and Finance. In addition, she chaired the Select Committee on Campus Climate, created to examine and mitigate hate crimes on college and university campuses and explore student hunger, sexual assaults, homelessness, and freedom of expression. She has been a member and chair of the San Diego Unified School District and has twice served as a California elector, including chairing the California College of Presidential Electors. Before her political career, she was a professor of Africana Studies at San Diego State University and taught at California State University at Los Angeles and Los Angeles City College. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees and PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles.