
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—a large-scale public opinion project designed to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces at work in California elections and in shaping the state’s public policies. Before assuming his current position, he was PPIC’s director of research. He is the author of 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 holds a PhD in sociology from the University of California, Berkeley.

Chief Justice Tani G. Cantil-Sakauye was sworn into office in January 2011 as the 28th Chief Justice of California—the first Asian-Filipina American and the second woman to serve in this capacity. During her tenure, she has fought for reform of court funding models and procedures that unfairly impact the poor, such as fines, fees, and the bail system. She was the first chief justice in the country to ask federal authorities to protect the integrity of the state court system by not arresting undocumented residents at courthouses. She has been recognized for her work on civics and for advancing the role of women and minorities in the legal profession.

Steven 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 JD from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law, and a BA from Claremont McKenna College.