



# Californians & Their Government

Mark Baldassare Dean Bonner Rachel Lawler Deja Thomas

## CONTENTS

Press Release	3
State Issues	6
National Issues	13
Regional Map	20
Methodology	21
Questionnaire and Results	23

*Supported with funding from the Arjay and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the PPIC Donor Circle*



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides a voice for the public and likely voters—informing policymakers, encouraging discussion, and raising awareness on critical issues of the day.

© 2021 Public Policy Institute of California

The Public Policy Institute of California is dedicated to informing and improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC is a public charity. It does not take or support positions on any ballot measures or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

Short sections of text, not to exceed three paragraphs, may be quoted without written permission provided that full attribution is given to the source.

Research publications reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of our funders or of the staff, officers, advisory councils, or board of directors of the Public Policy Institute of California.

## CONTACT

Steven Bliss 415-291-4412  
Abby Cook 415-291-4436

## News Release

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PT on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.

Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:  
[www.ppic.org/press-release/](http://www.ppic.org/press-release/)

### PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

## Support for Governor's Recall Still Falls Short; Outlook on COVID-19 Improves, though Some Groups Lag in Vaccines

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS AGREE THAT THE GAP BETWEEN RICH AND POOR IS WIDENING, BUT DIFFER ON WHETHER THE STATE SHOULD DO MORE

SAN FRANCISCO, May 25, 2021—With Governor Newsom likely facing a recall election this year, four in ten likely voters say they would vote yes to remove the governor, with views breaking along party lines. When it comes to the pandemic, an overwhelming majority of Californians say the worst is behind us, though some groups—African Americans and Latinos—are less likely than others to have received the vaccine. There is bipartisan agreement that inequality is growing in California, but views diverge on whether the state should be doing more to address this. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

(Note: As a companion piece to the new survey, PPIC is publishing a blog post by president and CEO Mark Baldassare, “Are Voters in the Mood to Recall Their Governor?”)

If the recall election were held today, 40 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes to remove Newsom from office, while 57 percent would vote no and 3 percent don't know. Support for the recall is unchanged from March (40%). Views on the recall break along partisan lines, with Republicans (78%) far more likely than independents (47%) and Democrats (11%) to say they would vote to remove Newsom. Support for the recall is higher in inland regions (56% Inland Empire, 49% Central Valley) than coastal areas (42% Orange/San Diego, 32% Los Angeles, 32% San Francisco Bay Area).

“The remarkably stable opposition to the recall of Gavin Newsom is driven by a large and consistent partisan divide that favors the Democratic governor,” said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Fifty-five percent of adults and 54 percent of likely voters approve of the governor's job performance, similar to March (54% adults, 53% likely voters) and January (54% adults, 52% likely voters). Newsom continues to have majority approval for his handling of the pandemic (64% adults, 61% likely voters).

## Vaccinations Continue to Increase but Lag among African Americans and Latinos

Californians give the state government high marks on distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine. Three in four say the state is doing an excellent (26%) or good (49%) job distributing vaccines, while 17 percent say it is doing a fair job and 6 percent say a poor job. The share of Californians saying excellent or good has increased 39 points since January (7% excellent, 29% good, 31% fair, 26% poor).

The share of Californians saying either that they have already gotten the vaccine or that they definitely will get it continues to increase. An overwhelming majority say they have already received the vaccine

(67%) or will definitely do so (6%), up from nearly half in January (5% already received, 43% definitely will get it). While the state is making vaccine gains overall, African Americans (56%) and Latinos (60%) are much less likely than whites (72%) and Asian Americans (80%) to have already received the vaccine.

“Most Californians say the state government is doing an excellent or good job with COVID vaccines, but African Americans and Latinos lag behind in getting shots,” Baldassare said.

## **Eight in Ten Say the Worst of the Pandemic Is Behind Us, but Some Groups Have More Concerns about Getting COVID-19**

An overwhelming majority (86%) say that when it comes to the United States and the pandemic, the worst is behind us. The share saying the worst is behind us is up from 74 percent in March and 46 percent last May. Less than three in ten Californians say they are very (10%) or somewhat (18%) concerned that they will get COVID-19 and need to be hospitalized. This represents a 19-point drop from March (18% very, 29% somewhat) and a 30-point drop since last May (24% very, 34% somewhat).

“Californians overwhelmingly believe the worst of the COVID crisis is behind us, and the share who fear getting sick and hospitalized from COVID has plummeted,” Baldassare said.

Despite a decline in the overall share concerned about getting the coronavirus, some groups have a higher level of concern than others. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (17%), African Americans (14%), and Asian Americans (13%) are more likely than whites (2%) to say they are very concerned.

## **Recession Concerns Decline, but Three in Ten Lower-Income Residents Report Being Worse Off Financially than a Year Ago**

About half of Californians (53% adults, 52% likely voters) say the state is in an economic recession. The share saying the state is not in a recession is higher today (41% adults, 43% likely voters) than in January (23% adults, 22% likely voters).

Asked about their own financial situation compared to a year ago, most Californians have seen little change: 20 percent say they are better off than a year ago, 56 percent say they are the same, and 24 percent say they are worse off. However, three in ten lower-income residents (29%)—those with annual incomes under \$40,000—say they are worse off financially than a year ago (22% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 18% \$80,000 or more).

“The share of Californians who think we are in a recession is shrinking, but three in ten lower-income residents say they are financially worse off than a year ago,” Baldassare said.

## **Most Approve of Key Budget Proposals to Provide Financial Assistance**

The survey asks about two budget proposals from the governor aimed at providing financial assistance as the state recovers from the pandemic. An overwhelming majority of adults (70%) and fewer likely voters (61%) approve of providing Californians with another round of stimulus checks (\$600 for those with incomes under \$75,000 and an additional \$500 for those with children). Overwhelming majorities of adults (81%) and likely voters (77%)—including majorities across party lines—approve of assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills.

“Majorities approve of the governor’s proposals for stimulus checks and help with overdue rent and utility bills as a part of the state’s economic recovery plans,” Baldassare said.

## **Majorities across Party Lines Say Inequality Is Widening, but Views Differ on Whether the State Should Do More to Address It**

Amid the ongoing economic effects of the pandemic, solid majorities of Californians (62% adults, 71%

likely voters) say the gap between rich and poor in their part of the state is getting larger. This includes at least six in ten across partisan groups: 72 percent of Democrats, 67 percent of independents, and 62 percent of Republicans. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (48%) are far less likely than other groups to say the economic divide is growing (74% whites, 64% Asian Americans, 63% African Americans).

Majorities of Californians (65% adults, 58% likely voters) say the state government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor in California. Views break along party lines, with an overwhelming majority of Democrats (83%) saying the state should do more, compared to 56 percent of independents and 34 percent of Republicans.

"Democrats and Republicans agree the gap between rich and poor is getting larger but disagree on the state government doing more to reduce income inequality," Baldassare said.

## Overwhelming Majorities Favor Extending Civil Rights Laws to Include Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In the wake of last year's Supreme Court ruling that protections against discrimination on the basis of sex in the 1964 Civil Rights Act extend to lesbian, gay, and transgender Americans, Democratic lawmakers in Washington introduced the 2021 Equality Act. This bill—which would amend the Civil Rights Act to explicitly prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity—passed the House of Representatives and now awaits action in the Senate.

Asked about the 2021 Equality Act, overwhelming majorities of Californians (71% adults, 70% likely voters) support its passage, with around one in four opposing (22% adults, 25% likely voters). Across party affiliations, 88 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of independents, and 41 percent of Republicans support the act. Women (76%) are more likely than men (65%) to approve.

When asked about society accepting people who are transgender, 37 percent (43% likely voters) say society has not gone far enough, while 21 percent (21% likely voters) say society has gone too far; 38 percent of adults (34% likely voters) say society has been about right in terms of accepting people who are transgender. Views vary widely across party lines, with 61 percent of Democrats saying society has not gone far enough, while 35 percent of independents and 13 percent of Republicans say this.

"Californians support the 2021 Equality Act, while Democrats and Republicans differ on whether society has done enough in accepting people who are transgender," Baldassare said.

## Solid Majorities Approve of Biden and His Handling of the Pandemic; Most Are Optimistic about the Nation's Economy

Nearly four months into his presidency, Joe Biden has the approval of solid majorities of Californians: 66 percent of adults and 60 percent of likely voters approve of how he's handling his job. Views break along party lines, with 88 percent of Democrats, 59 percent of independents, and 21 percent of Republicans approving. In a recent Gallup poll, 54 percent of adults nationwide approved of Biden's performance—a smaller share than in California. PPIC's survey finds that overwhelming majorities of Californians (75% adults, 71% likely voters) approve of how Biden is handling the coronavirus outbreak.

Most Californians (55% adults, 51% likely voters) think the United States will have good times financially in the next 12 months. This is higher than this past January (45% adults, 40% likely voters) and far higher than last May (23% adults, 20% likely voters). Majorities across regions—with the exception of the Inland Empire (39%)—expect the country to have good times financially over the next year (64% Los Angeles, 56% San Francisco Bay Area, 55% Orange/San Diego, 54% Central Valley).

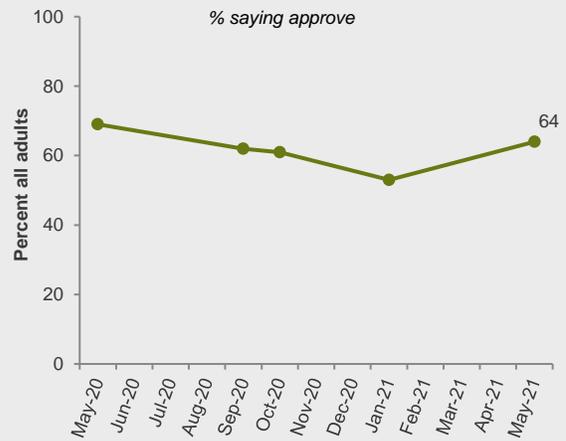
"Majorities approve of President Biden and his handling of the COVID crisis and have a positive outlook on the nation's economy," Baldassare said.

# State Issues

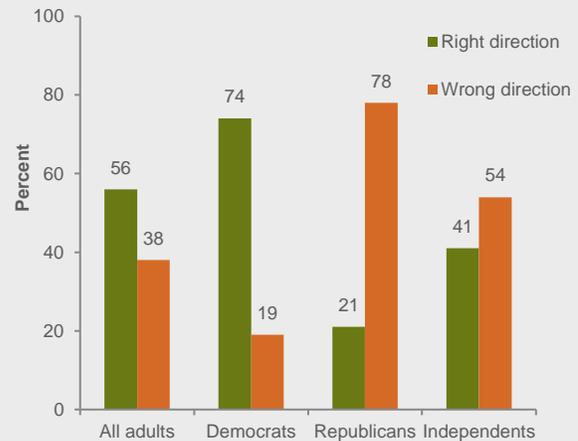
## Key Findings

- Fifty-five percent of Californians approve of the way that Governor Gavin Newsom is handling his job overall, and 64 percent approve of his handling of COVID; 49 percent approve of the legislature. *(page 7)*
- Among California likely voters, 40 percent would vote yes to remove Newsom if a special election to recall the governor were held today, with Republicans far more likely than others to vote yes. *(page 8)*
- Californians name jobs and the economy and COVID as the top issues facing the state today. Fifty-six percent of adults say California is going in the right direction; however, 53 percent say the state is in an economic recession. *(page 9)*
- Fewer than half of adults rate their personal financial situation as excellent (11%) or good (36%). Thinking about their finances now compared to a year ago, 20 percent say they are better off, 24 percent say they are worse off, and 56 percent say they are about the same. *(page 10)*
- Sixty-two percent of Californians say the gap between the rich and the poor in their part of California is getting larger. A similar share (65%) say the state government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in California. *(page 11)*
- Thirty-six percent of adults say the state budget situation is a big problem today—an all-time low since the first time PPIC asked this question in 2006. Overwhelming majorities favor assisting Californians with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills (81%) and providing another round of stimulus checks (70%). *(page 12)*

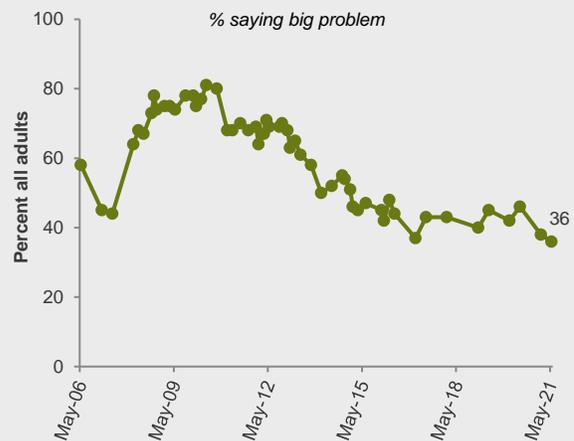
Approval of Newsom's handling of the coronavirus



Views on the general direction of California



Seriousness of the state budget situation



## Approval of State Elected Officials

With a likely recall election later this year, Governor Newsom has an approval rating of 55 percent among adults and 54 percent among likely voters. Approval was similar in March (54% adults, 53% likely voters) and January (54% adults, 52% likely voters). Today, Newsom’s approval rating is 77 percent among Democrats, 44 percent among independents, and 20 percent among Republicans. Majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (62%), Los Angeles (59%), Orange/San Diego (54%), and the Central Valley (51%) approve, while 37 percent in the Inland Empire approve. Majorities of African Americans (69%), Latinos (66%), and Asian Americans (57%) approve, compared to 46 percent of whites. Newsom continues to have majority approval for his handling of COVID (64% adults, 61% likely voters).

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gavin Newsom is handling his job as governor of California?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		55%	35%	10%
Likely voters		54	42	4
Party	Democrats	77	16	7
	Republicans	20	76	3
	Independents	44	47	9
Region	Central Valley	51	40	9
	Inland Empire	37	53	10
	Los Angeles	59	28	13
	Orange/San Diego	54	35	11
	San Francisco Bay Area	62	29	9

As California legislators turn their attention to passing a state budget, 49 percent of adults and 43 percent of likely voters approve of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job. Approval ratings were similar in March (52% adults, 48% likely voters) and in January (51% adults, 46% likely voters). Today, 63 percent of Democrats say they approve, compared to 39 percent of independents and 23 percent of Republicans. Approval is highest in Orange/San Diego (52%) and lowest in the Central Valley (45%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (63%) are the most likely to approve (51% Asian Americans, 47% African Americans, 39% whites).

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		49%	36%	16%
Likely voters		43	46	11
Party	Democrats	63	22	15
	Republicans	23	69	8
	Independents	39	46	15
Region	Central Valley	45	43	12
	Inland Empire	46	44	10
	Los Angeles	50	32	19
	Orange/San Diego	52	32	15
	San Francisco Bay Area	50	31	19

## Recall of Governor Newsom

The Secretary of State announced in late April that there are enough signatures to trigger a recall election of Governor Newsom. About six in ten California likely voters are closely (21% very, 41% fairly) following the news about the effort to recall Governor Newsom from office. If the recall election were held today, 40 percent of California likely voters say they would vote yes to remove him from office, while 57 percent would vote no to keep him as governor, and 3 percent are unsure. The share of likely voters supporting the recall of Newsom today (40%) is the same as it was in March (40%).

Today, 78 percent of Republicans would vote yes to remove Newsom as governor, compared to 47 percent of independents and 11 percent of Democrats. Fewer than half across all age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups would vote yes to remove Newsom from office. Support for removing Newsom is higher in inland regions (56% Inland Empire, 49% Central Valley) than in coastal regions (42% Orange/San Diego, 32% Los Angeles, 32% San Francisco Bay Area). Men (48%) are more likely than women (32%) to say they would vote yes to remove Newsom.

**“There is an effort underway to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office in a recall election. If a special election to recall Governor Newsom were held today, would you vote yes to remove Newsom as governor or no to keep Newsom as governor?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Vote yes to remove Newsom	Vote no to keep Newsom	Don't know
All likely voters		40%	57%	3%
Party	Democrats	11	86	3
	Republicans	78	20	1
	Independents	47	49	4
Region	Central Valley	49	49	2
	Inland Empire	56	41	2
	Los Angeles	32	63	4
	Orange/San Diego	42	56	2
	San Francisco Bay Area	32	64	4
Gender	Men	48	48	4
	Women	32	66	2

When asked what would happen if Governor Newsom is recalled from office, 29 percent say things would get better in California, 34 percent say things would get worse, and 28 percent say it would make no difference. Majorities of Democrats (55%) say things would get worse, and majorities of Republicans (55%) say things would get better, while independents are divided. Women are more likely than men to say things would get worse if Governor Newsom is recalled from office (40% to 29%).

**“If Governor Newsom is recalled from office, do you think that things in California would get better, would get worse, or would it make no difference?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All likely voters	Party			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women
Would get better	29%	11%	55%	32%	35%	24%
Would get worse	34	55	10	27	29	40
Would make no difference	28	27	24	30	28	28
Don't know	8	6	10	11	8	8

## Top Issues and State of the State

When asked what is the most important issue facing people in California today, Californians most often name jobs and the economy (20% adults, 18% likely voters) and COVID-19 (16% adults, 14% likely voters). In addition, about one in ten Californians name homelessness (10% adults, 12% likely voters) and housing costs and availability (10% adults, 10% likely voters). Across the state’s regions, jobs and the economy is mentioned more often in the Inland Empire, COVID-19 is named more often in Los Angeles, and housing costs and availability is mentioned more often in the San Francisco Bay Area. Californians were more likely to name COVID-19 as the top issue last October (20% adults, 20% likely voters), and mentions of COVID-19 have declined since last May (36% adults, 35% likely voters).

**“First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?”**

Top 4 issues mentioned	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Jobs, economy	20%	19%	24%	16%	20%	20%	18%
COVID-19, coronavirus	16	14	12	20	14	16	14
Homelessness	10	10	14	14	7	7	12
Housing costs, availability	10	9	6	9	8	15	10

Majorities of Californians say things in the state are generally going in the right direction (56% adults, 51% likely voters). Similar shares held this positive view in January (51% adults, 46% likely voters). Today, Democrats (74%) are much more likely than independents (41%) and Republicans (21%) to have this perception. Majorities in coastal regions (62% Los Angeles, 59% Orange/San Diego, 59% San Francisco Bay Area) and fewer in inland regions (49% Central Valley, 46% Inland Empire) hold this view. Majorities of Asian Americans (70%), Latinos (68%), and African Americans (63%) think things in California are generally going in the right direction, compared to 42 percent of whites.

About half of Californians (53% adults, 52% likely voters) believe that California is in an economic recession, with more saying it is a serious or moderate recession rather than a mild recession. The share saying that the state is not in a recession is higher today (41% adults, 43% likely voters) than in January (23% adults, 22% likely voters). Today, the perception that California is not in a recession varies across racial/ethnic groups (51% Asian Americans, 42% whites, 39% African Americans, 38% Latinos). The share saying California is not in a recession increases with rising income (32% under \$40,000, 42% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 51% \$80,000 or more) and education levels (33% high school or less, 44% some college, 49% college graduate) and is higher in the state’s coastal regions than in inland regions.

**“Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? If yes: do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Yes, serious recession	16%	17%	24%	16%	15%	11%	18%
Yes, moderate recession	24	24	26	22	23	26	23
Yes, mild recession	10	16	5	9	11	10	8
Yes, don’t know (volunteered)	3	1	5	3	1	4	3
Not in a recession	41	35	33	44	44	44	43
Don’t know	6	7	7	6	7	4	6

## Personal Financial Situation

As the coronavirus pandemic continues to affect the economy, about half of Californians say they are in fair (39%) or poor (13%) shape financially; fewer than half say they are in excellent (11%) or good (36%) shape financially. Ratings among all adults have remained similar across January 2021 (10% excellent, 35% good, 37% fair, 16% poor), September 2020 (11% excellent, 35% good, 37% fair, 17% poor), and May 2020 (9% excellent, 36% good, 37% fair, 18% poor).

There are sharp differences across income groups, with lower-income Californians far less likely than those with higher income to say their personal financial situation is excellent or good (29% under \$40,000, 43% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 73% \$80,000 or more). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (58%) and Asian Americans (53%) are much more likely than African Americans (40%) and Latinos (34%) to say they are in excellent or good shape financially. Homeowners (62%) are far more likely than renters (36%) to say they are in excellent or good financial shape. As age and educational attainment increases, the share saying their financial situation is excellent or good rises as well. Across regions, more than half in Orange/San Diego (55%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) say they are in excellent or good shape financially, compared to fewer in the Inland Empire (48%), Central Valley (43%), and Los Angeles (43%).

**“How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?”**

	All adults	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Excellent	11%	6%	7%	20%	10%	12%	6%	15%
Good	36	23	36	53	30	41	28	43
Only fair	39	46	47	24	41	38	50	30
Poor	13	24	10	1	19	8	14	11
Don't know	1	–	–	1	–	1	1	1

A majority of Californians say their personal finances are similar to what they were a year ago: 56 percent say they are about the same financially compared to last year, 24 percent say they are worse off, and 20 percent say that they are better off. Lower-income residents are more likely to say they are worse off financially than a year ago (29% under \$40,000, 22% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 18% \$80,000 or more). Across racial/ethnic groups, Asian Americans (15%) are the least likely to say they are financially better off than a year ago (23% Latinos, 21% African Americans, 19% whites). Across regions, nearly three in ten in the Inland Empire (28%) say they are better off than a year ago, compared to 22 percent in Los Angeles, 19 percent in the Central Valley, 18 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area, and 16 percent in Orange/San Diego.

**“And thinking about your personal finances, would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as a year ago?”**

	All adults	Household Income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Better off	20%	18%	21%	23%	21%	15%	23%	19%
Worse off	24	29	22	18	18	22	21	27
Same	56	52	56	59	62	62	54	54
Don't know	1	1	1	–	–	1	1	–

## Poverty and Income Inequality

Solid majorities of Californians (62%) and likely voters (71%) say the gap between the rich and the poor in their part of California is getting larger. Twenty-nine percent of adults and 24 percent of likely voters say it has stayed about the same, and fewer say that it is getting smaller (5% adults, 3% likely voters). The share saying the gap is getting wider was similar prior to the pandemic in January 2020 (63% adults, 68% likely voters). Majorities of Democrats (72%), independents (67%), and Republicans (62%) say the gap between the rich and the poor is growing. Across income groups, Californians with higher incomes (69% \$80,000 or more, 67% \$40,000 to under \$80,000) are much more likely than lower-income Californians (51% under \$40,000) to say the gap is growing. Looking at racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (48%) are much less likely than other groups to say the gap is growing (74% whites, 64% Asian Americans, 63% African Americans). Across education groups, college graduates (75%) and those with some college education (67%) are much more likely than those with a high school education (48%) to say the gap is getting larger. Majorities across age groups and regions say the gap is growing.

**“Do you think the gap between the rich and the poor in your part of California is getting larger, getting smaller, or has it stayed the same?”**

	All adults	Party			Household Income		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Getting larger	62%	72%	62%	67%	51%	67%	69%
Getting smaller	5	2	5	3	7	2	4
Stayed the same	29	24	30	26	38	27	24
Don't know	4	3	3	5	4	4	3

A solid majority of Californians (65%) and a majority of likely voters (58%) say the state government should do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in California, while 28 percent of adults and 34 percent of likely voters say the state should not do more. Findings were similar in September 2020 (59% adults, 56% likely voters). An overwhelming majority of Democrats (83%) say the state should do more, compared to 56 percent of independents and 34 percent of Republicans. Majorities across regions and age, education, gender, income, and racial/ethnic groups say the state should do more. Across income groups, Californians earning less than \$80,000 (74% under \$40,000, 69% \$40,000 to under \$80,000) are more likely than those earning more than that (54% \$80,000 or more) to say the state government should do more. Women (73%) are much more likely than men (56%) to say the state should do more to reduce the gap. The view that the state government should do more decreases with age (73% 18 to 34, 66% 35 to 54, 57% 55 and older). Across education groups, those with at most a high school education (71%) are more likely than adults with more education to say the state should do more (61% some college education, 63% college graduates). Across racial/ethnic groups, overwhelming majorities of African Americans (86%), Asian Americans (77%), and Latinos (76%), and about half of whites (51%) say that more should be done. Californians in Los Angeles (70%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (69%) are the most likely to say more should be done (63% Orange/San Diego, 59% Central Valley, 57% Inland Empire).

**“Should the state government be doing more to reduce the gap between the rich and poor in California, or is this something the government should not be doing?”**

	All adults	Party			Household Income		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Should do more	65%	83%	34%	56%	74%	69%	54%
Should not do more	28	11	58	38	20	25	39
Don't know	7	5	8	6	6	6	7

## State Budget

Earlier this month, Governor Newsom announced an estimated \$75.7 billion state budget surplus. However, according to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the true surplus that can be spent or saved over two years is \$38 billion. Thirty-six percent of adults and 41 percent of likely voters say the state budget situation is a big problem (somewhat of a problem: 37% adults, 34% likely voters; not a problem: 19% adults, 21% likely voters). The share of adults saying the budget is a big problem is at a record low and has decreased by 10 percentage points since last May (46%). Today, 23 percent of Democrats say the budget situation is a big problem, compared to a majority of Republicans (64%) and 43 percent of independents. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (44%) and African Americans (38%) are somewhat more likely than Latinos (30%) and Asian Americans (27%) to say it is a big problem. Across regions, Californians in the Inland Empire (51%) are the most likely to say the budget is a big problem. Homeowners (43%) are much more likely than renters (31%) to say it is a big problem.

**“Do you think the state budget situation in California—that is, the balance between government spending and revenues—is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem for the people of California today?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Big problem	36%	23%	64%	43%	41%
Somewhat of a problem	37	43	25	37	34
Not a problem	19	28	8	16	21
Don't know	7	5	3	4	5

Starting on May 10, the second day the survey was in the field, we asked two questions on specific policy proposals. When asked about providing another round of stimulus checks to Californians, with \$600 going to those with incomes under \$75,000 and an additional \$500 to those with children, an overwhelming majority of adults (70%) and fewer likely voters (61%) say they are in favor. Partisan views vary, with an overwhelming majority of Democrats (86%), 58 percent of independents, and fewer Republicans (42%) saying they are in favor of another round of stimulus checks. Women (77%) are much more likely than men (63%) to be in favor. Whites (56%) are the least likely across racial/ethnic groups to be in favor (85% African Americans, 83% Latinos, 78% Asian Americans).

Many Californians are still feeling the economic effects of the coronavirus pandemic, including struggling to pay for rent and utilities. Overwhelming majorities of adults (81%) and likely voters (77%) are in favor of assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills. Democrats (92%) and independents (75%) are much more likely than Republicans (57%) to favor assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic.

**“Do you favor or oppose ...?”**

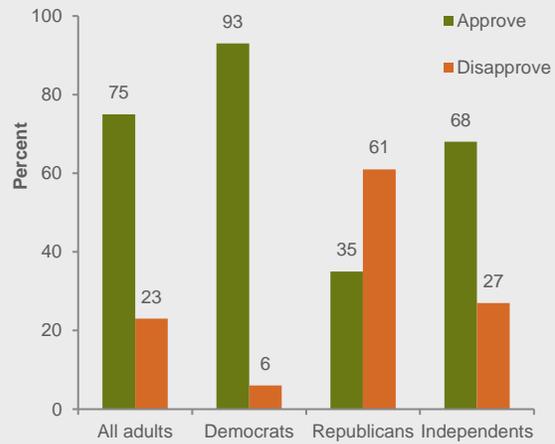
		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Providing another round of stimulus checks with \$600 going to Californians with incomes under \$75,000 and an additional \$500 going to those with children	Favor	70%	86%	42%	58%	61%
	Oppose	28	13	58	39	37
	Don't know	1	1	1	3	1
Assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills	Favor	81	92	57	75	77
	Oppose	17	7	39	22	21
	Don't know	2	1	4	3	3

# National Issues

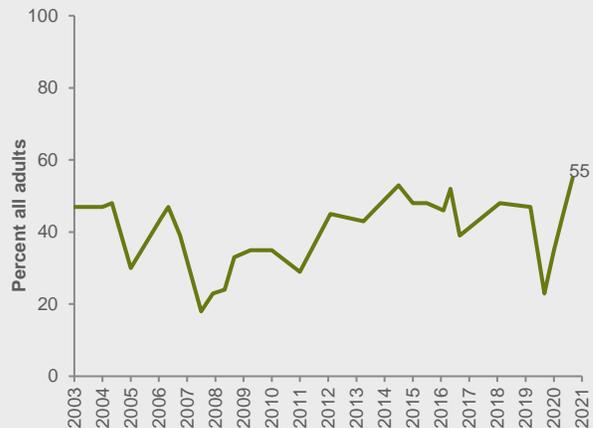
## Key Findings

- Two in three Californians approve of President Biden’s overall job performance, and three in four approve of his handling of COVID. Forty-three percent of adults and 31 percent of likely voters approve of the US Congress. *(page 14)*
- Fifty percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters approve of Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi’s performance. Thirty-two percent of adults and 24 percent of likely voters approve of Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy. *(page 15)*
- About half of Californians (53%) say things in the United States are going in the right direction (43% wrong direction). More than half (55%) think the United States will have good times financially in the next 12 months. *(page 16)*
- About three in ten adults are very (10%) or somewhat (18%) concerned about getting the coronavirus and being hospitalized. When asked about where the United States stands in the coronavirus outbreak, an overwhelming majority (86%) say the worst is behind us. One in six say they will not get the COVID vaccine. *(page 17)*
- Overwhelming majorities of Californians (71%) and likely voters (70%) support the 2021 Equality Act. Thirty-seven percent say society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender (38% been about right, 21% gone too far). *(page 18)*
- Six in ten adults and likely voters have a favorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act. Majorities of adults and likely voters are in favor of having guaranteed health insurance, with about four in ten in favor even if it means raising taxes. *(page 19)*

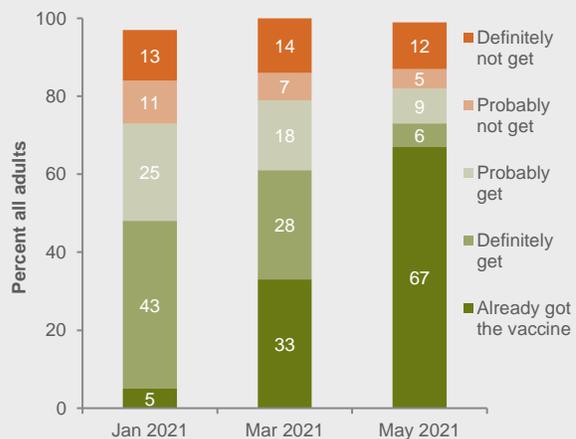
**Approval of Biden’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak**



**Share expecting good financial times in the US during the next 12 months**



**Plans to get vaccinated against COVID-19**



## Approval Ratings of Federal and Elected Officials

About four months into his term as president, Joe Biden has the approval of 66 percent of California adults and 60 percent of likely voters. Approval ratings were similar in March (65% adults, 60% likely voters) and January (70% adults, 65% likely voters). Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats approve, compared to six in ten independents and two in ten Republicans. Majorities across regions approve of the president. Across racial/ethnic groups, overwhelming majorities of African Americans (83%), Latinos (77%), and Asian Americans (73%) approve, as do 54 percent of whites. Majorities across gender, age, education, and homeownership groups approve. As income levels rise, approval declines (73% under \$40,000, 64% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 59% \$80,000 or more). In a recent Gallup poll, 54 percent of adults nationwide approved of President Biden’s job performance and 31% disapproved. In California, overwhelming majorities (75% adults, 71% likely voters) approve of the way that President Biden is handling the coronavirus outbreak.

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Joe Biden is handling his job as president?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		66%	30%	5%
Likely voters		60	37	3
Party	Democrats	88	10	3
	Republicans	21	75	3
	Independents	59	34	7
Region	Central Valley	62	35	3
	Inland Empire	55	40	5
	Los Angeles	73	24	4
	Orange/San Diego	60	34	7
San Francisco Bay Area		70	24	6

Forty-three percent of adults and 31 percent of likely voters approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job. Approval was similar a year ago (38% adults, 31% likely voters). Today, Democrats are much more likely to approve than are independents and Republicans. Regionally, a slim majority in Orange/San Diego (52%) approve, compared to fewer than half elsewhere. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (61%) are the most likely to approve, followed by Asian Americans (45%), African Americans (38%), and whites (29%). Women (47%) are somewhat more likely to approve than men (39%), while approval declines with rising age (52% 18 to 34, 43% 35 to 54, 34% 55 and older) and income levels (53% under \$40,000, 38% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 35% \$80,000 or more). According to a recent Gallup poll, 31% of adults nationwide approve of Congress and 63% disapprove.

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the US Congress is handling its job?”

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		43%	49%	8%
Likely voters		31	64	5
Party	Democrats	47	46	7
	Republicans	19	74	6
	Independents	34	59	7
Region	Central Valley	38	54	8
	Inland Empire	38	54	7
	Los Angeles	46	43	10
	Orange/San Diego	52	39	9
San Francisco Bay Area		36	57	6

## California’s Congressional Leaders

Fifty percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters approve of the way that Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is handling her job. Approval was similar in October (48% adults, 46% likely voters) and at the beginning of her current term as Speaker in January 2019 (48% adults, 50% likely voters). Today, Democrats are far more likely to approve than are independents and Republicans. Majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (54%), Los Angeles (53%), and Orange/San Diego (52%) approve of Speaker Pelosi, compared to fewer in the Inland Empire (45%) and Central Valley (42%). Across racial/ethnic groups, majorities of African Americans (72%), Latinos (63%), and Asian Americans (52%) approve, compared to 39 percent of whites. Women (57%) are much more likely than men (43%) to approve of Speaker Pelosi. Approval increases as age rises (46% 18 to 34, 51% 35 to 54, 55% 55 and older), but decreases as income levels rise (59% under \$40,000, 48% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 43% \$80,000 or more).

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is handling her job?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	50%	73%	13%	39%	45%
Disapprove	38	22	82	49	50
Never heard of her/have not heard enough to have an opinion ( <i>volunteered</i> )	6	1	3	7	1
Don't know	5	4	2	5	3

Thirty-two percent of adults and 24 percent of likely voters approve of the way that House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is handling his job; about one in five adults have never heard of him or have not heard enough to have an opinion. Approval was similar in October (35% adults, 31% likely voters) and at the beginning of his current term as House Minority Leader in January 2019 (32% adults, 28% likely voters). Across partisan groups, Republicans are more likely to approve than are independents or Democrats. Thirty-nine percent in the Inland Empire approve, followed by 35 percent in Los Angeles, 31 percent in Orange/San Diego, 29 percent in the Central Valley, and 26 percent in the San Francisco Bay Area. There are differences in approval among racial/ethnic groups (45% Latinos, 29% African Americans, 24% whites, 23% Asian Americans). About one in three approve across gender (32% men, 31% women) and age groups (32% 18 to 34, 33% 35 to 54, 31% 55 and older). About half of those with only a high school diploma (48%) approve, compared to 21 percent of those with some college education and 23 percent of college graduates. Approval of House Minority Leader McCarthy is higher among lower-income adults (41% under \$40,000, 32% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 22% \$80,000 or more).

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is handling his job?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	32%	23%	37%	27%	24%
Disapprove	37	53	33	41	53
Never heard of him/have not heard enough to have an opinion ( <i>volunteered</i> )	21	17	21	25	16
Don't know	9	7	8	8	7

## State of the Nation

Fifty-three percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction. Views were similar in January (52% adults, 46% likely voters). Today, a strong majority of Democrats say right direction, compared to fewer than half of independents and Republicans. About half or more across the state’s major regions hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, majorities of Latinos (68%), African Americans (60%), and Asian Americans (56%) say right direction, compared to 41 percent of whites. Women (57%) are somewhat more likely than men (49%) and renters (62%) are much more likely than homeowners (44%) to say this. Among education groups, those with a high school diploma only (61%) are the most likely to say right direction (43% some college, 54% college graduate). The shares with this view decline with rising age (59% 18 to 34, 53% 35 to 54, 48% 55 and older) and income levels (62% under \$40,000, 49% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 46% \$80,000 or more).

**“Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”**

		Right direction	Wrong direction	Don't know
All adults		53%	43%	4%
Likely voters		45	52	3
Party	Democrats	68	28	4
	Republicans	17	80	3
	Independents	43	55	2
Region	Central Valley	52	46	2
	Inland Empire	49	50	1
	Los Angeles	57	38	5
	Orange/San Diego	50	46	4
	San Francisco Bay Area	56	40	4

A majority of adults (55%) and likely voters (51%) think the United States will have economically good times during the next 12 months. Fewer held this view in January (45% adults, 40% likely voters) and last May (23% adults, 20% likely voters). A strong majority of Democrats expect good times in the next year, compared to fewer than half of independents and about one in four Republicans. Majorities across regions—with the exception of the Inland Empire—expect good times. Across racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of African Americans (72%), Latinos (67%), and Asian Americans (61%) hold this view, compared to 45 percent of whites. About half or more across gender, age, education, and homeownership groups say the nation will have good times, while the shares with this view decline as income levels rise (63% under \$40,000, 53% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 51% \$80,000 or more).

**“Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?”**

		Good times	Bad times	Don't know
All adults		55%	39%	5%
Likely voters		51	43	6
Party	Democrats	69	26	5
	Republicans	27	69	4
	Independents	45	47	9
Region	Central Valley	54	41	5
	Inland Empire	39	56	5
	Los Angeles	64	32	4
	Orange/San Diego	55	41	4
	San Francisco Bay Area	56	37	7

## Coronavirus Pandemic

With California poised to lift most pandemic restrictions in mid-June, an overwhelming majority of Californians (86%) say the worst of the coronavirus outbreak is behind us, while one in ten (10%) say the worst is yet to come. The share saying the worst is behind us has risen 12 points since March (74% worst behind us, 21% worst yet to come) and 40 points since last May (46% worst behind us, 48% worst yet to come). Today, more than eight in ten across regions and demographic groups say this. Fewer than three in ten Californians are very (10%) or somewhat (18%) concerned that they will get the virus and require hospitalization. This marks a 19-point drop since March (18% very, 29% somewhat) and a 30-point drop since last May (24% very, 34% somewhat). Despite this decline, some groups are more likely than others to be very concerned. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans, Latinos, and Asian Americans are much more likely than whites to say they are very concerned.

**“How concerned, if at all, are you that you will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?”**

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very concerned	10%	15%	9%	5%	14%	13%	17%	2%
Somewhat concerned	18	25	20	10	18	21	25	12
Not too concerned	25	21	25	29	31	33	22	25
Not at all concerned	46	38	46	55	33	33	35	60
Have already been hospitalized (vol)	1	–	1	1	2	–	1	1

Three in four Californians now say the state is doing an excellent (26%) or good (49%) job distributing the vaccine, while about one in four say it is doing a fair (17%) or poor (6%) job. The share rating the state positively has increased 39 points since January (7% excellent, 29% good, 31% fair, 26% poor).

The share of Californians saying they have either already received the vaccine or will definitely get the vaccine continues to increase. Seventy-three percent of Californians say they have already received the vaccine (67%) or will definitely get the vaccine (6%), up from 48 percent in January (43% definitely get it, 5% already received it). While Californians are increasingly getting the vaccine, lower-income residents lag behind upper-income residents, and African Americans (56%) and Latinos (60%) are less likely than whites (72%) and Asian Americans (80%) to have already gotten the vaccine. Republicans remain most likely to say they will probably or definitely not get the vaccine (38%, down from 43%), while fewer Democrats (6%, down from 14%) and independents (21%, down from 26%) say this.

**“When it becomes available to you, will you definitely get the coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it, or definitely not get it?”**

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Definitely not get the vaccine	12%	13%	11%	11%	15%	5%	13%	12%
Probably not get the vaccine	5	5	5	4	9	1	5	6
Probably get the vaccine	9	11	13	3	11	6	12	6
Definitely get the vaccine	6	9	6	1	8	7	8	4
Already got the vaccine	67	59	64	79	56	80	60	72
Don't know	2	2	1	2	1	1	2	1

## 2021 Equality Act and Transgender Attitudes

In the wake of the Supreme Court ruling last year—which stated that the protections guaranteed by the 1964 Civil Rights Act on the basis of sex also extend to discrimination against lesbian, gay, and transgender Americans—Democrats again introduced the 2021 Equality Act, now awaiting a decision from the Senate. This bill would amend the 1964 Civil Rights Act to explicitly prevent discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity. When asked about the 2021 Equality Act, about seven in ten Californians support the act, while about one in five oppose it. Most Democrats and nearly two in three independents are supportive while Republicans are more likely to oppose than support. While at least six in ten across regions and two in three across demographic groups support the act, there are differences in opinion across these groups. Across regions, support is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (77%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (62%). And among racial/ethnic groups, support is highest among Asian Americans (78%) and Latinos (77%), followed by African Americans (71%) and whites (67%). Notably, women are more likely than men to support the 2021 Equality Act. In comparison to the US overall, Californians are somewhat more likely to show support. In a NPR/PBS *News Hour*/Marist poll of adults nationwide, conducted April 7–13 this year, 63% of adults said they support the 2021 Equality Act.

**“Existing civil rights laws currently protect people from discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodation. The 2021 Equality Act would add sexual orientation and gender identity to these laws. Do you support or oppose the 2021 Equality Act?”**

	All adults	Party			Gender		Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women	
Support	71%	88%	41%	64%	65%	76%	70%
Oppose	22	10	48	27	27	18	25
Don't know	7	2	11	10	8	5	5

When asked about society accepting people who are transgender, 37 percent of Californians say society has not gone far enough and 21 percent say it has gone too far. A plurality of Californians say society has been about right (38%). Partisans view this issue much differently, with about six in ten Democrats saying society has not gone far enough, compared to 35 percent of independents and 13 percent of Republicans who hold this view. A plurality of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (43%) say society has not gone far enough, while elsewhere Californians are more divided between society being about right and having not gone far enough. Women are more likely than men to say society has not gone far enough, and this perception increases with rising household income and educational attainment. A plurality of younger Californians age 18 to 34 (45%) think society has not gone far enough, while about one in three older Californians say the same (32% 35 to 54, 34% 55 and older).

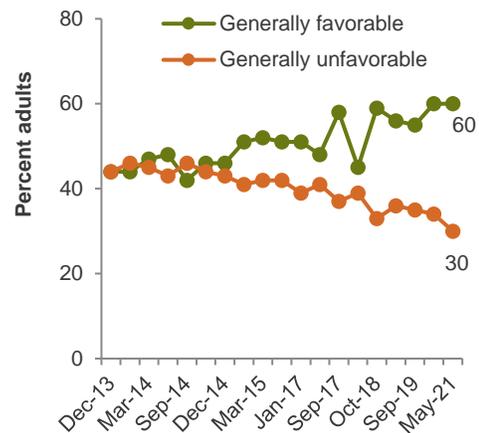
**“Which of the following comes closer to your feelings? Our society has gone too far in accepting people who are transgender, or our society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender, or our society has been about right when it comes to accepting people who are transgender?”**

	All adults	Party			Gender		Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Men	Women	
Gone too far	21%	9%	40%	20%	25%	17%	21%
Not gone far enough	37	61	13	35	30	43	43
Been about right	38	28	42	42	40	36	34
Don't know	5	2	5	4	5	4	2

## Health Care Policy

Last November, the Supreme Court heard arguments on whether the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare, is constitutional in whole or in part. As we await the release of the Supreme Court decision, a solid majority of Californians (60%) and likely voters (60%) continue to have a favorable view of the ACA. Today, favorable views are nearly identical to last October (60% adults, 61% likely voters). Most Democrats (86%) and a majority of independents (59%) hold a favorable view of the ACA, compared to one in five of Republicans (22%). Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (78%) are most likely to have a favorable opinion, followed by Asian Americans (66%), Latinos (65%), and whites (55%). Across regions, positive views are highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (67%) and lowest in the Inland Empire (49%). In a February Kaiser Family Foundation poll, adults nationwide (54% favorable, 39% unfavorable) held views similar to those of Californians.

Opinions on the Affordable Care Act



**“As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of it?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favorable	60%	86%	22%	59%	60%
Unfavorable	30	9	70	34	36
Don't know	10	5	7	7	5

In January 2020 Governor Newsom formed the [Healthy California for All Commission](#) with the goal of developing “a plan to advance progress toward achieving a health care delivery system for California that provides coverage and access through a unified financing system, including, but not limited to a single-payer financing system.” A majority of Californians (62%) and likely voters (53%) favor a single-payer state plan. However, if this plan requires raising taxes, support declines (42% adults still favor, 43% likely voters still favor). Similar shares of adults and likely voters held this view in May 2018 and 2017. Most Democrats favor a single-payer state system—including 63 percent who support it even if it means raising taxes—while an overwhelming majority of Republicans (70%) are opposed. A majority of independents (58%) are in favor, while 38 percent are opposed. Majorities across regions and demographic groups are in favor, but if raising taxes is required, support falls below 50 percent for all groups—with the exception of those in Los Angeles (50%) and those age 18 to 34 (50%).

**“Do you favor or oppose having guaranteed health insurance coverage in which all Californians would get their insurance through a single state government health plan? If favor: Do you favor it even if it means raising taxes?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	62%	77%	25%	58%	53%
<i>Favor, even if it means raising taxes</i>	42	63	18	40	43
<i>Favor, but not if it means raising taxes</i>	20	14	7	18	10
Oppose	32	15	70	38	42
Don't know	6	7	6	4	6

# Regional Map



# Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California. Co-authors of this report include associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner and survey analyst Deja Thomas, who were co-project managers for this survey, and survey analyst Rachel Lawler. The *Californians and Their Government* series is supported with funding from the Arjay and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the PPIC Donor Circle. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC's survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,705 California adult residents, including 1,255 interviewed on cell phones and 450 interviewed on landline telephones. The sample included 520 respondents reached by calling back respondents who had previously completed an interview in PPIC Statewide Surveys in the last six months. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from May 9–18, 2021.

Cell phone interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection. After a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving). Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement to help defray the cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection. After a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender.

For both cell phones and landlines, telephone numbers were called as many as eight times. When no contact with an individual was made, calls to a number were limited to six. Also, to increase our ability to interview Asian American adults, we made up to three additional calls to phone numbers estimated by Survey Sampling International as likely to be associated with Asian American individuals.

Live landline and cell phone interviews were conducted by Abt Associates in English and Spanish, according to respondents' preferences. Accent on Languages, Inc., translated new survey questions into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever.

Abt Associates uses the US Census Bureau's 2015–2019 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt Associates used 2019 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 3.2$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,705 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,394 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.6$  percent; for the 1,074 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.2$  percent; for the 1,566 adults asked questions 15 and 16, it is  $\pm 3.3$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately.

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 41 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 16 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, and current interest in politics.

The percentages presented in the report tables and in the questionnaire may not add to 100 due to rounding.

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by ABC/Washington Post, Gallup, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and NPR/PBS *NewsHour*/Marist. Additional details about our methodology can be found at [www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf) and are available upon request through [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org).

# Questionnaire and Results

## CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

May 9–18, 2021

1,705 California Adult Residents

English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR ±3.2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
 PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

**1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?**

*[code, don't read]*

- 20% jobs, economy
- 16 COVID-19, coronavirus
- 10 homelessness
- 10 housing costs, availability
- 5 government in general, problems with elected officials, political parties
- 4 environment, pollution, global warming
- 4 health care, health insurance
- 4 immigration, illegal immigration
- 4 state budget, deficit, state spending
- 3 race relations, racial and ethnic issues
- 2 education, schools, teachers
- 2 water, water availability, drought
- 13 other (*specify*)
- 5 don't know

**2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gavin Newsom is handling his job as governor of California?**

- 55% approve
- 35 disapprove
- 10 don't know

**3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the coronavirus outbreak?**

- 64% approve
- 32 disapprove
- 4 don't know

On another topic,

**4. *[likely voters only]* There is an effort under way to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office in a recall election. If a special election to recall Governor Newsom were held today, would you vote yes to remove Newsom as governor or no to keep Newsom as governor?**

- 40% yes, remove Newsom
- 57 no, keep Newsom
- 3 don't know

**5. *[likely voters only]* If Governor Newsom is recalled from office, do you think that things in California would get better, would get worse, or would it make no difference?**

- 29% would get better
- 34 would get worse
- 28 would make no difference
- 8 don't know

**6. *[likely voters only]* How closely are you following the news about the effort to recall Governor Newsom from office—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?**

- 21% very closely
- 41 fairly closely
- 27 not too closely
- 11 not at all closely
- don't know

**7. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?**

- 49% approve
- 36 disapprove
- 16 don't know

**8. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?**

- 56% right direction
- 38 wrong direction
- 6 don't know

**9. Would you say that California is in an economic recession, or not? (if yes, ask: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?)**

- 16% yes, serious recession
- 24 yes, moderate recession
- 10 yes, mild recession
- 3 yes, don't know (volunteered)
- 41 no, not in an economic recession
- 6 don't know

Next,

**10. How would you rate your own personal financial situation? Would you say you are in excellent shape, good shape, only fair shape, or poor shape financially?**

- 11% excellent
- 36 good
- 39 only fair
- 13 poor
- 1 don't know

**11. And, thinking about your own personal finances: would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as a year ago?**

- 20% better off
- 24 worse off
- 56 same
- 1 don't know

**12. Do you think the gap between the rich and the poor in your part of California is getting larger, getting smaller, or has it stayed the same?**

- 62% getting larger
- 5 getting smaller
- 29 stayed the same
- 4 don't know

**13. Should the state government be doing more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in California, or is this something that the state government should not be doing?**

- 65% should do more
- 28 should not do more
- 7 don't know

Next,

**14. Do you think the state budget situation in California—that is, the balance between government spending and revenues—is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem for the people of California today?**

- 36% big problem
- 37 somewhat of a problem
- 19 not a problem
- 7 don't know

The governor has recently announced that the state has \$76 billion in surplus budget funds and has proposed using these funds in a number of ways. Please say if you favor or oppose each of the following.

*[rotate questions 15 and 16]*

**15. [asked beginning May 10] Do you favor or oppose providing another round of stimulus checks with \$600 going to Californians with incomes under \$75,000 and an additional \$500 going to those with children?**

- 70% favor
- 28 oppose
- 1 don't know

**16. [asked beginning May 10] Do you favor or oppose assisting Californians who fell behind during the pandemic with money to pay overdue rent and utility bills?**

- 81% favor
- 17 oppose
- 2 don't know

Changing topics,

**17. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Joe Biden is handling his job as president?**

- 66% approve
- 30 disapprove
- 5 don't know

**18. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Biden is handling the coronavirus outbreak?**

- 75% approve
- 23 disapprove
- 3 don't know

*[rotate questions 19 and 20]*

**19. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is handling her job?**

- 50% approve
- 38 disapprove
- 6 never heard of her/have not heard enough to have an opinion *(volunteered)*
- 5 don't know

**20. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is handling his job?**

- 32% approve
- 37 disapprove
- 21 never heard of him/have not heard enough to have an opinion *(volunteered)*
- 9 don't know

**21. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the US Congress is handling its job?**

- 43% approve
- 49 disapprove
- 8 don't know

Next,

**22. Do you think things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?**

- 53% right direction
- 43 wrong direction
- 4 don't know

**23. Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?**

- 55% good times
- 39 bad times
- 5 don't know

On another topic,

**24. How concerned, if at all, are you that you will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?**

- 10% very concerned
- 18 somewhat concerned
- 25 not too concerned
- 46 not at all concerned
- 1 have already been hospitalized due to coronavirus *(volunteered)*
- don't know

**25. Which comes closer to your view about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak: *[rotate]* [1] the worst is behind us *[or]* [2] the worst is yet to come?**

- 86% the worst is behind us
- 10 the worst is yet to come
- 4 don't know

**26. Have you personally received the COVID vaccine, or not? *[if yes ask: Did you receive a single-dose vaccine, the first of two doses, or have you received both doses of a two-dose vaccine?]***

- 7% yes, single-dose vaccine *[skip to q27]*
- 9 yes, first of two doses *[skip to q27]*
- 50 yes, both doses of two doses *[skip to q27]*
- 33 no
- don't know

**26a. When it becomes available to you, will you definitely get the coronavirus vaccine, probably get it, probably not get it, or definitely not get it?**

- 6% definitely get the vaccine
- 9 probably get the vaccine
- 5 probably not get the vaccine
- 12 definitely not get the vaccine
- 67 already got the vaccine *[if q26=yes, code q26a="already got the vaccine"]*
- 2 don't know

**27. Overall, do you think the state government is doing an excellent, good, fair, or poor job of distributing COVID-19 vaccines to people in California?**

- 26% excellent
- 49 good
- 17 fair
- 6 poor
- 3 don't know

On to another topic,

**28. As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010, known commonly as the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a *[rotate]* [1] *[generally favorable]* *[or]* [2] *[generally unfavorable]* opinion of it?**

- 60% generally favorable
- 30 generally unfavorable
- 10 don't know

**29. Do you favor or oppose having guaranteed health insurance coverage in which all Californians would get their insurance through a single state government health plan? *[if favor ask: do you favor it even if it means raising taxes?]***

- 42% favor, even if it means raising taxes
- 20 favor, not if it means raising taxes
- 32 oppose
- 6 don't know

On another topic,

**30. In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?**

- 63% more strict
- 16 less strict
- 19 kept as they are now
- 2 don't know

**31. How concerned are you about the threat of a mass shooting in the area where you live? Are you very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not concerned at all?**

- 24% very concerned
- 26 somewhat concerned
- 26 not very concerned
- 22 not concerned at all
- 1 don't know

Changing topics,

**32. Existing civil rights laws currently protect people from discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and public accommodation based on race, sex, religion, and other characteristics. The 2021 Equality Act would add sexual orientation and gender identity to these laws. Do you support or oppose the 2021 Equality Act?**

- 71% support
- 22 oppose
- 7 don't know

**33. Which of the following comes closer to your feelings: *[rotate 1 and 2]* [1] our society has gone too far in accepting people who are transgender, *[or]* [2] our society has not gone far enough in accepting people who are transgender, *[or]* [3] our society has been about right when it comes to accepting people who are transgender?**

- 21% gone too far
- 37 not gone far enough
- 38 been about right
- 5 don't know

**34. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?**

77% yes [ask q34a]  
23 no [skip to q35b]

**34a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?**

46% Democrat [ask q35]  
24 Republican [skip q35a]  
6 another party (specify) [skip to q36]  
24 decline-to-state/independent [skip to 35b]

**35. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?**

61% strong  
38 not very strong  
1 don't know

[skip to q36]

**35a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

60% strong  
37 not very strong  
3 don't know

[skip to q36]

**35b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

26% Republican Party  
38 Democratic Party  
25 neither (volunteered)  
11 don't know

**36. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:**

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

15% very liberal  
19 somewhat liberal  
30 middle-of-the-road  
19 somewhat conservative  
12 very conservative  
4 don't know

**37. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?**

26% great deal  
35 fair amount  
28 only a little  
9 none  
1 don't know

[d1-d15 demographic questions]

PPIC STATEWIDE  
SURVEY ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

**Ruben Barrales**  
*Senior Vice President, External Relations*  
Wells Fargo

**Angela Glover Blackwell**  
*Founder in Residence*  
PolicyLink

**Mollyann Brodie**  
*Executive Vice President and  
Chief Operating Officer*  
Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

**Bruce E. Cain**  
*Director*  
Bill Lane Center for the American West  
Stanford University

**Jon Cohen**  
*Chief Research Officer*  
SurveyMonkey

**Joshua J. Dyck**  
*Co-Director*  
Center for Public Opinion  
University of Massachusetts, Lowell

**Lisa García Bedolla**  
*Vice Provost for Graduate Studies and  
Dean of the Graduate Division*  
University of California, Berkeley

**Russell Hancock**  
*President and CEO*  
Joint Venture Silicon Valley

**Sherry Bebitch Jeffe**  
*Professor*  
Sol Price School of Public Policy  
University of Southern California

**Robert Lapsley**  
*President*  
California Business Roundtable

**Carol S. Larson**  
*President Emeritus*  
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation

**Donna Lucas**  
*Chief Executive Officer*  
Lucas Public Affairs

**Sonja Petek**  
*Fiscal and Policy Analyst*  
California Legislative Analyst's Office

**Lisa Pitney**  
*Vice President of Government Relations*  
The Walt Disney Company

**Robert K. Ross, MD**  
*President and CEO*  
The California Endowment

**Jui Shrestha**  
*Survey Specialist Consultant*  
World Bank

**Most Reverend Jaime Soto**  
*Bishop of Sacramento*  
Roman Catholic Diocese of Sacramento

**Helen Iris Torres**  
*CEO*  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality

PPIC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

**Steven A. Merksamer, Chair**

*Senior Partner*  
Nielsen Merksamer Parrinello  
Gross & Leoni LLP

**Mark Baldassare**

*President and CEO*  
Public Policy Institute of California

**María Blanco**

*Executive Director*  
University of California  
Immigrant Legal Services Center

**Louise Henry Bryson**

*Chair Emerita, Board of Trustees*  
J. Paul Getty Trust

**A. Marisa Chun**

*Partner*  
Crowell & Moring LLP

**Chet Hewitt**

*President and CEO*  
Sierra Health Foundation

**Phil Isenberg**

*Former Chair*  
Delta Stewardship Council

**Mas Masumoto**

*Author and Farmer*

**Leon E. Panetta**

*Chairman*  
The Panetta Institute for Public Policy

**Gerald L. Parsky**

*Chairman*  
Aurora Capital Group

**Kim Polese**

*Chairman*  
ClearStreet, Inc.

**Helen Iris Torres**

*CEO*  
Hispanas Organized for Political Equality

**Gaddi H. Vasquez**

*Retired Senior Vice President,  
Government Affairs*  
Edison International  
Southern California Edison



Public Policy Institute of California  
500 Washington Street, Suite 600  
San Francisco, CA 94111  
T: 415.291.4400  
F: 415.291.4401  
**PPIC.ORG**

PPIC Sacramento Center  
Senator Office Building  
1121 L Street, Suite 801  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
T: 916.440.1120  
F: 916.440.1121



**PPIC**

**PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA**