



# Californians & Their Government

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*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.

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## News Release

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PT on Wednesday, October 21, 2020.

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### PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

## Voters Remain Divided on “Split Roll” Property Tax; Reinstating Affirmative Action Still Trails

### BIDEN HOLDS WIDE LEAD, WITH ENTHUSIASM HIGH ABOUT VOTING IN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

SAN FRANCISCO, October 21, 2020—With Election Day less than two weeks away, Californians remain divided on a ballot measure that would change how commercial property is taxed. On another closely watched ballot measure, reinstating affirmative action in the public sector has gained slightly since September, but still has less than majority support. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Proposition 15 would change the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property by basing it on current market value instead of purchase price—creating a “split roll” tax. Among likely voters, 49 percent are in favor, 45 percent oppose, and 6 percent are undecided. The margin was somewhat wider in September (51% yes, 40% no, 9% undecided). Democrats (71%) are far more likely to say they would vote yes than independents (42%) or Republicans (18%). Less than half of homeowners (41%) approve, compared with 64 percent of renters. Younger Californians are more likely than older residents to approve (60% ages 18 to 44, 42% 45 and older). Across regions, 55 percent of likely voters in Los Angeles would vote yes, as would about half in Orange/San Diego (53%), the San Francisco Bay Area (50%), and the Inland Empire (48%); 42 percent of likely voters in the Central Valley would vote yes.

“Californians remain closely divided on Proposition 15 as its proponents and opponents make their closing arguments to voters over the next few weeks,” said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Proposition 16 would repeal Proposition 209, a 1996 constitutional amendment that banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in the public sector. Among likely voters, 37 percent would vote yes and 50 percent would vote no, with 12 percent undecided. This is a slight gain from September, when 31 percent said yes, 47 percent said no, and 22 percent were undecided. Today, 61 percent of Democratic likely voters support Proposition 16 (up from 46% in September), compared with 22 percent of independents and 11 percent of Republicans (both similar to September). Support is highest among likely voters in Los Angeles (41%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (40%), followed by the Inland Empire (35%), Central Valley (33%), and Orange/San Diego (32%).

“Proposition 16 support has grown slightly but still falls short of a majority, with Democrats more in favor and most Republicans and independents opposed to the measure,” Baldassare said.

## Views on Confirming Barrett for Supreme Court Break along Partisan Lines, while Majorities across Parties Oppose Overturning *Roe v. Wade*

Last month, President Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the US Supreme Court. About four in ten Californians (41% adults, 41% likely voters) believe the Senate should confirm Barrett, while

47 percent of adults and 54 percent of likely voters believe the Senate should not confirm. Views vary widely by party affiliation, with 84 percent of Republicans, 44 percent of independents, and 16 percent of Democrats saying the Senate should confirm.

Judge Barrett's nomination has resurfaced the issue of whether *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 abortion rights ruling, could be overturned. An overwhelming majority of Californians (70%) say *Roe v. Wade* should not be overturned. Across partisan groups, overwhelming majorities of Democrats (89%) and independents (77%) and a slim majority of Republicans (53%) do not want the ruling overturned.

"Partisans are divided on the Supreme Court nominee, while majorities across party lines say that the Supreme Court should not overturn *Roe v. Wade*," Baldassare said.

Next month, the Supreme Court will hear a case challenging the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the 2010 federal health reform law. A solid majority of Californians (60%) have a favorable view of the ACA, while a third (34%) have an unfavorable view. Across partisan groups, 88 percent of Democrats, 55 percent of independents, and 19 percent of Republicans have a favorable view.

## Two in Three Are Concerned about COVID-19 Vaccine Being Rushed

A number of efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine are underway, with one or more vaccines possibly available by the end of the year. Governor Newsom has announced the launch of an expert scientific panel to independently review federally approved vaccines. Most Californians say they would definitely (26%) or probably (31%) get the vaccine if it were available today, while a smaller share would probably not (20%) or definitely not (20%) get the vaccine. Nationwide, a slim majority of adults say they would definitely (21%) or probably (30%) get a vaccine if available, according to a Pew Research Center poll in September.

At least half of Californians across party lines say they would either definitely or probably get a COVID-19 vaccine if one were available today: 56 percent of both Democrats and independents and 50 percent of Republicans. Across racial/ethnic groups, there are sharp differences: 70 percent of Asian Americans, 62 percent of whites, and 54 percent of Latinos say they would definitely or probably get a vaccine if available today, with 29 percent of African Americans saying definitely or probably.

Asked about vaccine development, two-thirds of Californians (68%) are more concerned about approval of a vaccine moving too fast, without fully ensuring safety and effectiveness, while one in four (26%) are more concerned about approval moving too slowly, delaying access to a vaccine. Views vary across party lines, but majorities are in agreement: 82 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of independents, and 51 percent of Republicans are more concerned about approval moving too fast.

"One-quarter say they will definitely get the COVID-19 vaccine, with reluctance crossing party lines, and two in three fear that approval will move too fast," Baldassare said.

## Biden Maintains Wide Lead over Trump, with Record-High Share of Californians More Enthusiastic about Voting than Usual

As the candidates prepare for the final presidential debate tomorrow, Joe Biden maintains a sizeable lead over Donald Trump, with 58 percent of likely voters favoring Biden/Harris and 32 percent favoring Trump/Pence—very similar to September (60% Biden/Harris; 31% Trump/Pence). Biden leads by wide margins in the San Francisco Bay Area (71% to 21%) and Los Angeles (70% to 22%), with narrower leads in Orange/San Diego (50% to 37%) and the Inland Empire (48% to 42%). Trump has a narrow lead in the Central Valley (44% to 38%).

Asked whether they are more enthusiastic or less enthusiastic than usual about voting in this November's presidential election, 72 percent of likely voters say they are more enthusiastic—a record high in PPIC surveys. By comparison, four years ago in October 2016, 49 percent were more

enthusiastic than usual. Majorities across party lines say they are more enthusiastic than usual this year: 79 percent of Democrats, 74 percent of Republicans, and 59 percent of independents.

“About three out of four say that they are more enthusiastic about voting in this presidential election, with sharp increases across party lines compared to four years ago,” Baldassare said.

If the election for the US House of Representatives were held today, most likely voters (58%) would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate; more than a third (37%) would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. This is similar to September (60% Democratic, 33% Republican). In the eight California House districts considered competitive according to the Cook Political Report (districts 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 48, and 50), likely voters are divided: 49 percent favor the Republican, and 47 percent favor the Democrat. This is similar to September (54% Republican, 42% Democrat).

## Californians See COVID-19 and Jobs and the Economy as Top Issues Facing the State; Outlook for the State Is Brighter than for the US

When asked to identify the most important issue facing the state, COVID-19 (20%) and jobs and the economy (16%) were named by more Californians than other issues. Following these are environment/pollution/global warming (7%), homelessness (6%), housing costs/availability (6%), state budget/deficit/spending (6%), and wildfires/fires (5%).

Amid the pandemic and a damaging wildfire season, Californians are somewhat split on whether the state is going in the right direction or the wrong direction: 55 percent of adults and 50 percent of likely voters say right direction, while 39 percent of adults and 46 percent of likely voters say wrong direction. Democrats (73%) are far more likely than independents (47%) and Republicans (13%) to say right direction. Across racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of Asian Americans (68%), African Americans (65%), and Latinos (60%) say right direction, while whites are divided (48% right direction, 48% wrong direction).

In contrast to generally divided views on the state outlook, solid majorities (62% adults, 72% likely voters) of Californians think the nation is heading in the wrong direction; 33 percent of adults and 25 percent of likely voters say the nation is heading in the right direction.

“California is facing a range of issues, including the COVID-19 and wildfire crises, at a time when residents are much more upbeat about the direction of the state than the nation,” Baldassare said.

## About Two-Thirds Think the State Is Economically Divided

Asked whether they think California is economically divided into “haves” and “have-nots,” solid majorities of Californians (64% adults, 67% likely voters) say it is, while one in three (32% adults, 30% likely voters) say it is not. This is consistent with the shares of adults and likely voters holding these views in various PPIC surveys going back to 2002.

Solid majorities across income groups say the state is divided into haves and have-nots (65% annual household income under \$40,000; 63% \$40,000 to under \$80,000; 69% \$80,000 or more). Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (70%) and Latinos (68%) are most likely to hold this view, followed by whites (61%), and Asian Americans (60%). In addition, majorities across party lines hold this view (76% Democrats, 65% independents, 52% Republicans).

When asked which economic group they are in, 44 percent say haves and 43 percent say have-nots, similar to November 2019 (41% haves, 44% have-nots). Today, there are wide disparities across racial/ethnic groups in the share saying they are have-nots, with Latinos (62%) and African Americans (53%) more likely than whites (32%) and Asian Americans (26%) to say they are have-nots.

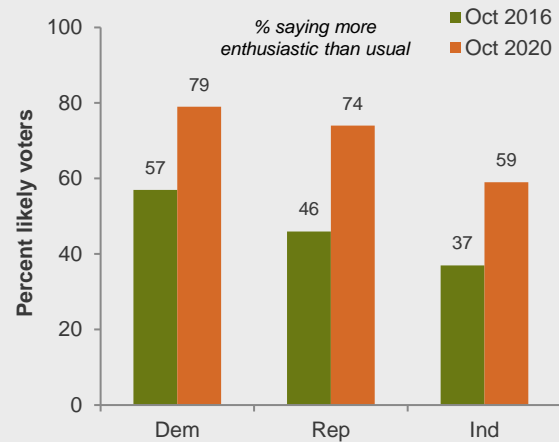
“Two in three Californians say that we are a state of economic haves and have-nots today, with racial disparities among those seeing themselves as have-nots,” Baldassare said.

# November 2020 Election

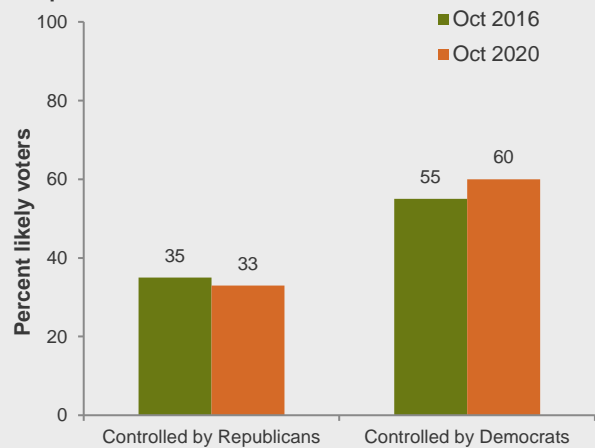
## Key Findings

- Joe Biden leads Donald Trump by a wide margin among likely voters (58% to 32%). Fifty-eight percent of likely voters are following news about candidates for the 2020 election very closely, and 72 percent are more enthusiastic than usual to vote for the president. *(page 7)*
- Among likely voters, 58 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate for the House of Representatives in their district; 37 percent would vote for the Republican candidate. Sixty percent would prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats, while 33 percent would prefer a Republican-controlled Congress. *(page 8)*
- Likely voters are divided (49% yes, 45% no) on Proposition 15 (which changes tax assessment). Forty-four percent of likely voters say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15 is very important, with no voters 11 points more likely than yes voters to say this. *(page 9)*
- Thirty-seven percent of likely voters would vote yes on Proposition 16 (allows diversity as a factor in employment, education, contracting), and 50 percent would vote no. Forty percent of likely voters say the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16 is very important; about four in ten of both yes and no voters say this. *(page 10)*
- Sixty percent of likely voters are satisfied with the way California’s initiative process is working today. Sixty-three percent of likely voters believe special interests have a lot of control over the initiative process. Fifty-five percent of likely voters agree that there are too many propositions on the state ballot, while 82 percent agree that ballot wording is often too complicated and confusing. *(page 11)*

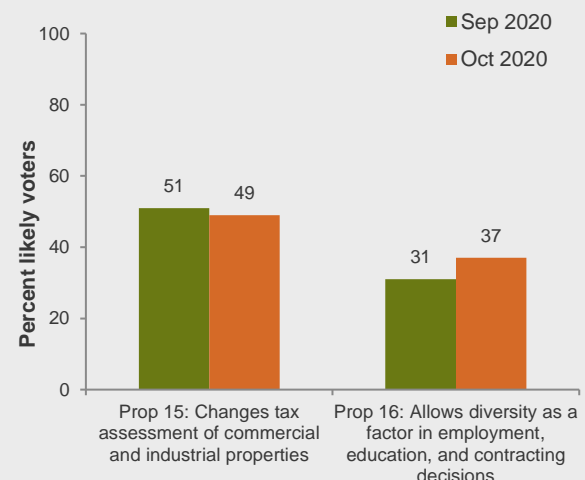
Enthusiasm for voting in the presidential race



Party preference for control of US House of Representatives



Support for November 2020 ballot measures



## Presidential Election

As the presidential race enters the final two weeks before Election Day, nearly all likely voters (92%) are following news about the candidates very (58%) or fairly (34%) closely. Results were similar in October 2016 (60% very, 32% fairly) before the last presidential election. Today, the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris leads over the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence by 26 points (58% to 32%). Findings were nearly identical in our September survey (60% to 31%). Currently, the candidates get overwhelming support from their respective parties: 94 percent of Democrats support Biden, and 82 percent of Republicans support Trump. Biden leads Trump among independents (47% to 35%). Biden leads by wide margins in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, and by narrower margins in the Inland Empire and Orange/San Diego, while Trump holds a slight lead in the Central Valley. Majorities of whites (55%), Latinos (57%), and those in other racial/ethnic groups (71%) support Biden. (Sample sizes for Asian American and African American likely voters are too small for separate analysis.) Biden’s lead over Trump is wider among women (63% to 28%) than among men (52% to 37%), as well as among renters (62% to 21%) than among homeowners (56% to 37%) and younger likely voters (58% to 24% 18 to 44) than among older likely voters (58% to 36% 45 and older). He also has a wider lead among college graduates (67% to 23%) than among those with those with only a high school diploma (45% to 36%) or some college education (54% to 39%).

**“If the November 3 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, the Libertarian ticket of Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen, or the Green Party ticket of Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Biden-Harris	Trump-Pence	Jorgensen-Cohen	Hawkins-Walker	Someone else (vol)	Would not vote for president (vol)	Don't know
All likely voters		58%	32%	3%	2%	–	1%	4%
Party	Democrats	94	4	–	1	1	–	–
	Republicans	10	82	2	1	–	1	4
	Independents	47	35	5	3	–	2	8
Region	Central Valley	38	44	5	5	–	–	7
	Inland Empire	48	42	3	1	–	–	6
	Los Angeles	70	22	1	1	1	1	4
	Orange/San Diego	50	37	5	2	–	–	6
	San Francisco Bay Area	71	21	–	2	1	4	2

In what is sure to be a consequential election, 72 percent of likely voters are more enthusiastic than usual about voting in the presidential race—a record high in PPIC surveys. In October 2016, 49 percent were more enthusiastic. Today, solid majorities across partisan groups are more enthusiastic. This enthusiasm is apparent in the fact that over four million Californians have **already voted**. Solid majorities across regions and demographic groups are more excited than usual to vote.

**“Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual or less enthusiastic?”**

<i>Likely voters only</i>	All likely voters	Party			Age	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	18 to 44	45 and older
More enthusiastic	72%	79%	74%	59%	68%	76%
Less enthusiastic	20	14	18	30	27	15
Same/neither (volunteered)	7	6	8	9	5	8
Don't know	1	1	1	1	–	1

## Congressional Elections

If the 2020 election for the US House of Representatives were held today, 58 percent of likely voters would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 37 percent would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. Similar shares held these views in September (60% Democratic candidate, 33% Republican candidate). Today, an overwhelming majority of partisans support their party’s candidate, while independents are divided. The Democratic candidate is preferred by large margins in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, and by narrower margins in Orange/San Diego; likely voters in the Inland Empire are divided, while a slim majority in the Central Valley prefer the Republican candidate. Majorities across racial/ethnic, age, gender, income, and homeownership groups prefer the Democratic candidate. The shares supporting the Democratic candidate increase as education rises (44% high school only, 54% some college education, 67% college graduate). Among those approving of President Trump’s job performance, 90 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate; among those disapproving, 87 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate. Democratic candidates are preferred by a 27-point margin in Democratic-held districts, while Republican candidates are preferred by a 10-point margin in Republican-held districts. In the eight competitive California districts as defined by the [Cook Political Report](#), likely voters are divided (49% Republican candidate, 47% Democratic candidate).

**“If the 2020 election for US House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district? (If other/unsure: As of today, do you lean more toward the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?)”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Congressional district		Competitive house districts
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Democratic district	Republican district	
Republican/Lean Republican	37%	4%	88%	43%	34%	53%	49%
Democratic/Lean Democratic	58	95	6	46	61	43	47
Don't know	5	1	6	11	5	4	5

Whether or not the balance of power will change in the US Congress is a major subplot in the 2020 election. Sixty percent of likely voters prefer a Congress controlled by Democrats, while 33 percent prefer Republican control. Similar shares held these preferences in October 2016 when Republicans controlled both houses of Congress (55% Democratic control, 35% Republican control). Today, most Democrats and Biden supporters (94% each) prefer Democratic control, while Republicans (83%) and Trump supporters (87%) prefer Republican control; independents are much more likely to prefer Democratic control (53% to 34%). Voters are divided in the Central Valley (47% Republican control, 43% Democratic control) and Orange/San Diego (49% Democratic control, 44% Republican control), while majorities elsewhere prefer Democratic control. Majorities among racial/ethnic, age, gender, income, education, and homeownership groups favor Democratic control by double digits. A solid majority of likely voters in Democrat-held districts prefer Democratic control, while those in Republican-held and competitive districts are divided.

**“What is your preference for the outcome of this year’s congressional elections: a Congress controlled by Republicans or a Congress controlled by Democrats?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Congressional district		Competitive house districts
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Democratic district	Republican district	
Controlled by Republicans	33%	4%	83%	34%	31%	47%	48%
Controlled by Democrats	60	94	10	53	63	48	47
Neither (volunteered)	4	–	4	8	3	4	1
Don't know	3	2	3	5	3	1	4



## Proposition 15: Changes Tax Assessment of Commercial Property

Proposition 15 would change the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property by taxing them based on current market value instead of purchase price—amending Proposition 13, the 1978 landmark citizens’ initiative, and creating a “split roll” tax system. Under Proposition 15, increased property taxes on commercial properties would provide a new funding source to local governments and schools. When read the Proposition 15 ballot title and label, likely voters are divided: 49 percent would vote yes, 45 percent would vote no, and 6 percent are undecided. The gap between yes and no was wider in September at 11 points (51% yes, 40% no, 9% unsure). Today, an overwhelming majority of Democratic likely voters would vote yes, compared to an overwhelming majority of Republicans who would vote no; 55 percent of independents would vote no and 42 percent would vote yes on Prop 15. Across the state’s regions, support is highest in Los Angeles (55%) and Orange/San Diego (53%). Renters are far more likely than homeowners to say they would vote yes, as are college graduates (57%) compared to those with only a high school diploma (42%) or some college education (44%). Younger likely voters (60% 18 to 44) are much more likely than older likely voters (42% 45 and older) to say they would vote yes, while four in ten or more across racial/ethnic, gender, and income groups support this initiative.

**“Proposition 15 is called the ‘Increases Funding Sources for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 15?”\***

Likely voters only		Yes	No	Don't know
All likely voters		49%	45%	6%
Party	Democrats	71	22	7
	Republicans	18	75	8
	Independents	42	55	3
Region	Central Valley	42	54	4
	Inland Empire	48	48	3
	Los Angeles	55	40	5
	Orange/San Diego	53	41	6
	San Francisco Bay Area	50	40	10
Homeownership	Own	41	53	6
	Rent	64	32	4

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 25.

Forty-four percent of likely voters say that the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15 is very important, while 36 percent say it is somewhat important. Views were similar last month (45% very important, 36% somewhat important). Republicans are more likely than Democrats and independents to say it is very important. Among those who would vote yes on Proposition 15, 40 percent say the outcome is very important; among those would vote no, 51 percent hold this view.

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Vote on Proposition 15	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Very important	44%	40%	53%	42%	40%	51%
Somewhat important	36	44	21	40	44	28
Not too important	13	11	18	11	13	13
Not at all important	4	2	4	7	2	7
Don't know	2	2	4	1	1	1

## Proposition 16: Allows Diversity as a Factor in Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions

In 1996, California voters passed Proposition 209, a constitutional amendment that banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in California. This November, Californians will vote on Proposition 16, which would repeal Proposition 209 and restore affirmative action in the state. When read the Proposition 16 ballot title and label, 37 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes, 50 percent would vote no, and 12 percent are undecided. In September, support was lower with more undecided (31% yes, 47% no, 22% unsure), and the gap between yes and no was 16 points. Today, six in ten Democratic likely voters (61%) would vote yes, while majorities of Republicans (77%) and independents (63%) would vote no. Fewer than half of likely voters across regions, as well as across age, education, and income groups would vote yes. Thirty-four percent of whites, 37 percent of Latinos, and 51 percent in other racial/ethnic groups say they would vote yes on Proposition 16. Women (39%) and men (36%) are about as likely to say they would vote yes.

**“Proposition 16 is called the ‘Allows Diversity as a Factor in Public Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.’ If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 16?”\***

Likely voters only		Yes	No	Don't know
All likely voters		37%	50%	12%
Party	Democrats	61	27	12
	Republicans	11	77	12
	Independents	22	63	16
Region	Central Valley	33	59	8
	Inland Empire	35	54	11
	Los Angeles	41	46	12
	Orange/San Diego	32	52	16
	San Francisco Bay Area	40	46	14
Gender	Men	36	54	10
	Women	39	47	14

\*For complete text of proposition question, see p. 25.

Forty percent of likely voters say that the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16 is very important to them; an additional 39 percent say it is somewhat important. The share saying it is very important has increased 6 points since September (34% very important, 39% somewhat important). Republicans (44%) are slightly more likely than Democrats (38%) and independents (38%) to say that the outcome is very important. Latinos (51%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (44%) are more likely than whites (34%) to say that the outcome is very important. Fewer than half of likely voters who would vote yes (40%) or no (43%) say that the outcome of the vote is very important to them.

**“How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Vote on Proposition 16	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Yes	No
Very important	40%	38%	44%	38%	40%	43%
Somewhat important	39	44	30	42	47	37
Not too important	12	12	13	10	11	11
Not at all important	6	4	8	5	2	8
Don't know	4	3	5	5	–	1

## Initiative Process

As Californians prepare to vote on 12 state propositions in November, 60 percent of likely voters are satisfied (12% very, 48% somewhat) with the way the initiative process is working. In 13 PPIC surveys dating back to October 2000, a majority of likely voters have been satisfied with the process, though 15 percent or fewer have been very satisfied. Today, Democrats (71%) are more likely than independents (59%) and Republicans (45%) to be satisfied. Majorities across regions and demographic groups are satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today.

While most likely voters are satisfied with the initiative process, a solid majority of likely voters (63%) say that special interests have a lot of control over the initiative process. A majority of likely voters have said the process is controlled a lot by special interests in nine PPIC surveys dating back to January 2001. While majorities across parties say that special interests have a lot of control, independents (73%) and Republicans (69%) are more likely than Democrats (54%) to hold this view. Majorities across regions and demographic groups say that special interests have a lot of control over the state’s initiative process. Among those who are very satisfied with the initiative process, 44 percent say that special interests have a lot of control; among those who are not satisfied, 85 percent hold this view.

**“Overall, how much would you say that the initiative process in California today is controlled by special interests—a lot, some, or not at all?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Age	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	18 to 44	45 and older
A lot	63%	54%	69%	73%	59%	65%
Some	30	41	19	23	33	29
Not at all	2	1	4	3	3	2
Don't know	5	3	8	2	6	4

Californians are often asked to vote on numerous state propositions—including 12 propositions this November, 11 in November 2018, and 17 in November 2016. When asked about the number of propositions, most likely voters (55%) agree that there are too many propositions on the state ballot (43% disagree). Majorities have felt this way each of the eight times we have asked this question. There is bipartisan agreement on this question, and about half or more across regions and most demographic groups agree. While a majority feel there are too many propositions, an even larger share of likely voters (82%) agree that the wording for citizens’ initiatives is often too complicated and confusing. Majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups hold this view. Overwhelming majorities have said the wording is too complicated and confusing for voters each of the eight times we have asked this question.

**“For the following items, please say if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?”**

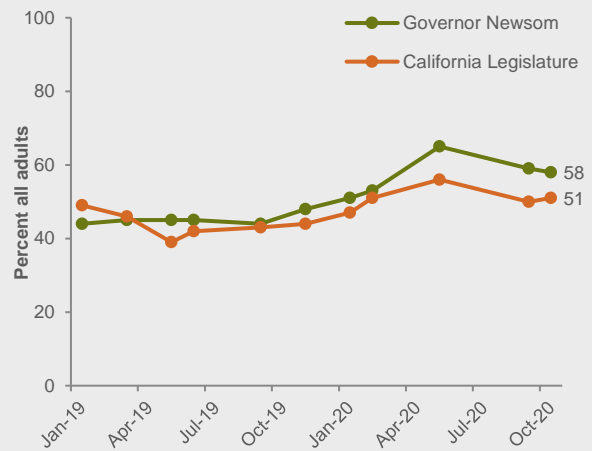
Likely voters only		All likely voters	Party			Age	
			Dem	Rep	Ind	18 to 44	45 and older
There are too many propositions on the state ballot	Agree	55%	56%	57%	57%	40%	64%
	Disagree	43	43	41	41	59	34
	Don't know	2	1	2	3	2	2
The ballot wording for citizens’ initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes	Agree	82	82	81	86	83	81
	Disagree	16	16	15	11	14	16
	Don't know	3	2	4	2	3	3

# State and National Issues

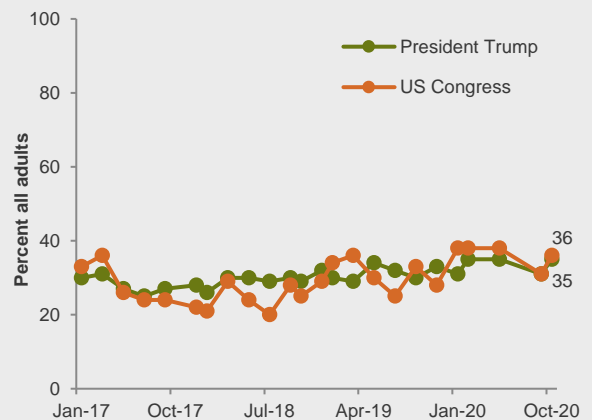
## Key Findings

- Fifty-eight percent of Californians approve of Governor Newsom’s job performance and 61 percent approve of his handling of COVID-19. Fifty-one percent approve of how the legislature is handling its job. *(page 13)*
- Thirty-five percent of adults approve of President Trump and 32 percent approve of his handling of COVID-19. Thirty-six percent approve of the US Congress. *(page 14)*
- Forty-eight percent approve of House Speaker Pelosi and 35 percent approve of House Minority Leader McCarthy. *(page 15)*
- COVID-19 and jobs and the economy are most frequently named as the top issues facing the state today. Fifty-five percent of Californians think things in the state are going in the right direction. Thirty-three percent think things in the US are going in the right direction. *(page 16)*
- Fifty-seven percent of Californians would definitely (26%) or probably (31%) get a vaccine for COVID-19 if it were available today. Sixty-eight percent are worried that approval of a vaccine will move too fast, without fully establishing it is safe and effective. *(page 17)*
- About two in three (64%) adults say that California is divided into haves and have-nots; 32 percent think it is not divided that way. Forty-three percent say they are part of the “have-nots.” *(page 18)*
- Forty-one percent of Californians say the US Senate should confirm Amy Coney Barrett to the US Supreme Court. Seventy percent believe *Roe v. Wade* should not be overturned, and 60 percent have a favorable opinion of the ACA. *(page 19)*

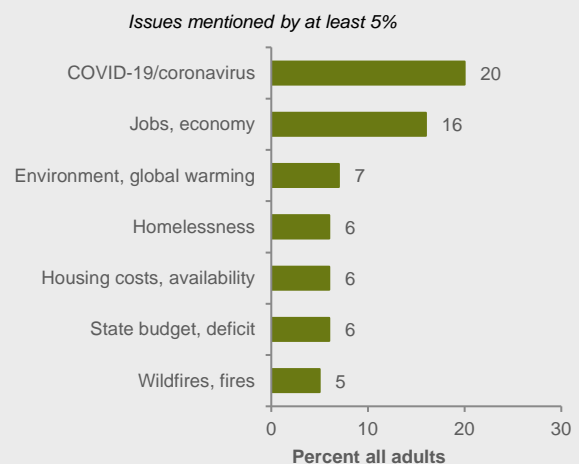
Approval ratings of state elected officials



Approval ratings of federal elected officials



Most important issue facing California today



## Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

Governor Newsom’s approval rating is at 58 percent among adults and 57 percent among likely voters. In our January survey, 51 percent of adults and 49 percent of likely voters approved of the governor. Today, the governor’s approval rating is 83 percent among Democrats, 50 percent among independents, and 18 percent among Republicans. Half or more across regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups approve of the governor.

Majorities of Californians also approve of the governor’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak (61% adults, 59% likely voters). In our May survey, 69 percent of adults and 69 percent of likely voters approved of his handling of this issue. Today, majorities across regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups approve of Newsom’s handling of COVID-19, while partisans are divided (83% Democrats, 53% independents, 20% Republicans).

**“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		58%	33%	9%
Likely voters		57	39	4
Party	Democrats	83	11	6
	Republicans	18	81	2
	Independents	50	43	7
Region	Central Valley	51	39	10
	Inland Empire	53	39	8
	Los Angeles	56	32	12
	Orange/San Diego	53	36	10
San Francisco Bay Area		73	23	4

The California Legislature’s approval rating now stands at 51 percent among adults and 45 percent among likely voters. Approval ratings were similar in January (47% adults, 45% likely voters). Today, 64 percent of Democrats approve, compared to 42 percent of independents and 15 percent of Republicans. About half or more across regions approve. Approval is higher among women (54%) than men (47%) and among renters (59%) than homeowners (44%). Among racial/ethnic groups, majorities of Latinos (61%), African Americans (55%), and Asian Americans (54%), but fewer whites (42%), approve of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		51%	35%	14%
Likely voters		45	42	14
Party	Democrats	64	20	16
	Republicans	15	74	11
	Independents	42	46	13
Region	Central Valley	48	41	11
	Inland Empire	55	40	5
	Los Angeles	52	31	16
	Orange/San Diego	49	34	17
San Francisco Bay Area		49	32	19

## Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

With the election now weeks away, President Trump’s approval rating is 35 percent among adults and 34 percent among likely voters. In our January survey, 31 percent of adults and 38 percent of likely voters approved of the president. Today, the president’s approval rating is 83 percent among Republicans, 33 percent among independents, and 8 percent among Democrats. Approval is higher in the Inland Empire (50%) and the Central Valley (40%) than in the coastal regions (35% Orange/San Diego, 31% Los Angeles, 25% San Francisco Bay Area). Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (39%) are the most likely to approve, followed by Latinos (34%), Asian Americans (25%), and African Americans (16%). Approval is similar among men (36%) and women (33%). In a recent Gallup poll, 46 percent of adults nationwide approved of President Trump’s job performance.

In the wake of the president’s treatment for the coronavirus, 32 percent of adults and 32 percent of likely voters approve of the way he is handling the outbreak. Republicans (80%) are far more likely than independents (29%) and Democrats (8%) to approve. Approval is higher in the Inland Empire (46%), Orange/San Diego (36%), and the Central Valley (35%) than in the San Francisco Bay Area (25%) and Los Angeles (23%). Whites (38%) are more likely than Latinos (28%), Asian Americans (22%) and African Americans (14%) to approve. Thirty-seven percent of adults nationwide approve of the president’s handling of COVID-19, according to a recent CNN/SSRS poll.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president?”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		35%	63%	2%
Likely voters		34	64	3
Party	Democrats	8	92	1
	Republicans	83	15	2
	Independents	33	64	3
Region	Central Valley	40	58	3
	Inland Empire	50	48	2
	Los Angeles	31	66	3
	Orange/San Diego	35	64	1
	San Francisco Bay Area	25	73	2

Thirty-six percent of adults and 26 percent of likely voters approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job. At the start of the year, 38 percent of adults and 30 percent of likely voters approved. Today, similar shares of Democrats (31%), Republicans (28%), and independents (25%) approve. In a recent Gallup poll, 17 percent of Americans approved of the way that Congress was handling its job.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		36%	57%	7%
Likely voters		26	70	3
Party	Democrats	31	65	4
	Republicans	28	68	4
	Independents	25	71	4
Region	Central Valley	41	56	3
	Inland Empire	32	63	4
	Los Angeles	39	53	8
	Orange/San Diego	35	59	6
	San Francisco Bay Area	30	59	11

## California’s Congressional Leaders

Forty-eight percent of adults and 46 percent of likely voters approve of the way that Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is handling her job. Approval was similar in the January PPIC survey (51% adults, 52% likely voters) and in the beginning of her current term as Speaker in January 2019 (48% adults, 50% likely voters). Today, Democrats (70%) are far more likely to approve of Speaker Pelosi than are independents (37%) and Republicans (11%). Majorities approve in the San Francisco Bay Area (53%) and Los Angeles (52%), but fewer do in other regions (47% Inland Empire, 45% Orange/San Diego, 41% Central Valley). Majorities of African Americans (65%), Latinos (55%), and Asian Americans (51%) approve; fewer whites (43%) do. Similar shares of women (51%) and men (45%) approve of Speaker Pelosi. Majorities of older Californians (57% age 55 and older) approve, while fewer younger Californians (43% age 18 to 34, 46% age 35 to 54) do. Of those who disapprove of the president, 63 percent approve of the Speaker; of those who approve of the president, 71 percent disapprove of her.

**“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	48%	70%	11%	37%	46%
Disapprove	44	25	86	58	50
Never heard of her/have not heard enough to have an opinion ( <i>volunteered</i> )	3	3	2	1	2
Don't know	5	2	1	3	2

Thirty-five percent of adults and 31 percent of likely voters approve of the way that House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy is handling his job, while 38% of adults and 46% of likely voters disapprove; about one in six have never heard of him or have not heard enough to have an opinion. Approval was similar in the January PPIC survey (31% adults, 30% likely voters) and beginning his current term as the minority leader in January 2019 (32% adults, 28% likely voters). Today, Republicans (52%) are far more likely to approve of the minority leader than are independents (32%) and Democrats (24%). Forty-six percent in the Inland Empire and 42 percent in the Central Valley approve; fewer approve in other regions (35% Orange/San Diego, 29% Los Angeles, 28% San Francisco Bay Area). Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (45%) are the most likely to say they approve, followed by whites (32%), African Americans (27%), and Asian Americans (27%). Thirty-eight percent of men and 32 percent of women approve of the minority leader. Approval declines as education increases (45% high school only, 30% some college, 26% college graduate), and is similar across age groups (33% 18 to 34, 34% 35 to 54, 38% 55 and older). Of those who approve of the president, 54 percent approve of the minority leader, and of those who disapprove of the president, 48 percent disapprove of the minority leader.

**“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	35%	24%	52%	32%	31%
Disapprove	38	57	25	40	46
Never heard of him/have not heard enough to have an opinion ( <i>volunteered</i> )	17	13	16	20	15
Don't know	10	6	7	8	7

## Overall Mood

Californians are most likely to name either COVID-19 (20% adults, 20% likely voters) or jobs and the economy (16% adults, 16% likely voters) as the most important issue facing people in California today; fewer mention global warming, homelessness, housing costs, the state budget, and wildfires. Fifty-five percent of adults and 50 percent of likely voters think things in California are generally going in the right direction. The share saying the state is heading in the right direction was similar in September (51% adults, 48% likely voters). Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats think the state is heading in the right direction, while most Republicans say it is heading in the wrong direction; independents are divided. Across regions, positive views are highest in the San Francisco Bay Area and lowest in the Inland Empire. Among racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of Asian Americans (68%), African Americans (65%), and Latinos (60%) say things are going in the right direction compared to 48 percent of whites. Positive perceptions are higher among younger (64% 18 to 34, 51% 35 to 54, 52% 55 and older) and lower-income Californians (64% less than \$40,000, 52% \$40,000 to \$79,999, 51% \$80,000 or more).

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

		Right direction	Wrong direction	Don't know
All adults		55%	39%	5%
Likely voters		50	46	4
Party	Democrats	73	22	4
	Republicans	13	84	3
	Independents	47	49	4
Region	Central Valley	51	46	3
	Inland Empire	47	48	5
	Los Angeles	58	35	7
	Orange/San Diego	54	43	2
	San Francisco Bay Area	64	31	5

There is more pessimism on the direction of the country. Sixty-two percent of adults and 72 percent of likely voters think things in the United States are generally going in the wrong direction. About six in ten thought this in November 2019 (61% adults, 63% likely voters). Today, most Democrats and seven in ten independents say things are heading in the wrong direction, while Republicans are divided. Majorities across regions and demographic groups say the nation is headed in the wrong direction.

**“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		33%	62%	5%
Likely voters		25	72	3
Party	Democrats	16	81	3
	Republicans	46	51	3
	Independents	24	71	5
Region	Central Valley	40	55	5
	Inland Empire	37	62	1
	Los Angeles	31	63	5
	Orange/San Diego	29	68	3
	San Francisco Bay Area	27	68	5



## Coronavirus Vaccine

Efforts to develop and test COVID-19 vaccines are underway, with the possibility of one or more becoming available by the end of the year. Fifty-seven percent of Californians say they would definitely (26%) or probably (31%) get a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 if it were available today. Conversely, four in ten say they would definitely (20%) or probably (20%) not get vaccinated at this time. There is partisan agreement on the matter, with at least half or more of Democrats (56%), independents (56%), and Republicans (50%) saying they would definitely or probably get a vaccine if it were available today. Among racial/ethnic groups, there are stark differences: 70 percent of Asian Americans say they would definitely or probably get the vaccine, compared to 62 percent of whites, 54 percent of Latinos, and 29 percent of African Americans. Majorities across demographic groups say they would get the vaccine, with men (65%) much more likely than women (50%), and those 55 and older (62%) slightly more likely than those under 55 (56%) to say this. Regionally, half or more say they would get the vaccine (67% San Francisco Bay Area, 59% Inland Empire, 59% Orange/San Diego, 53% Central Valley, 50% Los Angeles). Similar shares of adults nationwide say they would get the vaccine, according to a Pew Research Center poll from September (21% definitely, 30% probably).

**“If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you definitely get the vaccine, probably get the vaccine, probably not get the vaccine, or definitely not get the vaccine?”**

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Definitely get the vaccine	26%	26%	24%	25%	21%	31%	24%	28%
Probably get the vaccine	31	30	26	31	8	39	30	34
Probably not get the vaccine	20	24	19	20	25	21	21	18
Definitely not get the vaccine	20	18	29	22	44	9	22	17
Don't know	2	3	2	3	2	–	3	3

Amid widespread public concern about the vaccine development process, Governor Newsom announced on October 19 the launch of an expert scientific panel to independently review federally approved vaccines. Californians—prior to the announcement of this panel—expressed concern about the process, with about two in three (68%) saying they are more concerned that the approval process for a COVID-19 vaccine will move too fast rather than too slow (26%). Partisans hold widely different views, with Democrats (82%) and independents (73%) far more likely than Republicans (51%) to say they are more concerned about the process moving too fast. Majorities among racial/ethnic groups hold this view, with African Americans (76%) the most concerned about the process moving too fast. Six in ten or more across regions and demographic groups say they are more concerned about a speedy process. According to a recent Pew Research Center poll, adults nationwide were more likely to say approval of the vaccine will move too fast (78%, 20% too slowly).

**“Thinking about the development of a vaccine for COVID-19, which of the following concerns you more? Approval of the vaccine will move too fast without fully establishing it is safe and effective, or too slowly, creating unnecessary delays in providing access to a vaccine?”**

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Too fast	68%	82%	51%	73%	76%	73%	63%	69%
Too slowly	26	15	38	20	20	20	32	24
Don't know	6	3	11	8	4	7	5	7

## Economic Conditions

Sixty-four percent of Californians say that the state is divided into two economic groups: the “haves” and the “have-nots.” Thirty-two percent do not think it is divided this way. Similar shares of likely voters hold this view (67% divided, 30% not divided). More than six in ten adults and likely voters have held this view in PPIC surveys since 2002. Today, solid majorities across income groups say the state is divided this way. Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (70%) and Latinos (68%) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by whites (61%) and Asian Americans (60%). Regionally, majorities say the state is divided into haves and have-nots, with this view most prevalent among residents in the Inland Empire (74%). Californians ages 18 to 34 (72%) are more likely than those 35 and older (61%) to hold this view; women (71%) are much more likely than men (57%) to say this. Majorities across party lines hold this view, with Democrats (76%) and independents (65%) more likely than Republicans (52%) to say the state is divided into haves and have-nots.

**“Some people think that California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think it is not divided that way. Do you think that California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think that California is not divided that way?”**

	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
Divided into haves and have-nots	64%	65%	63%	69%	70%	60%	68%	61%
Not divided that way	32	33	35	27	28	29	29	36
Don't know	4	3	2	4	1	10	3	3

When asked to choose which of the two economic groups they are in, 44 percent say they are in the haves, and 43 percent say they are in the have-nots. In November 2019, 41 percent of adults said they were in the haves, while 44 percent said the have-nots. Today, 55 percent of likely voters say they are in the haves, while 32 percent say the have-nots. There are wide differences among income groups: those earning \$80,000 or more annually (72%) are more than three times as likely as those earning under \$40,000 (22%) to say they are in the haves. The share of those with annual household incomes above \$80,000 that say they are in the haves has risen by seven points (65% to 72%) since November 2019. Today, there are also racial disparities, as a majority of Asian Americans (63%) and whites (54%) say they are in the haves, while a majority of Latinos (62%) and African Americans (53%) say they are in the have-nots. Residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (56%) are the most likely to say they are in the haves; fewer do so in Orange/San Diego (45%), the Central Valley (41%), Los Angeles (41%), and the Inland Empire (33%). The share saying they are in the haves increases as education levels rise (27% high school only, 46% some college education, 64% college graduate). Notably, homeowners (54%) are much more likely than renters (36%) to say they are in the haves.

**“If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or nots?”**

	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
Haves	44%	22%	43%	72%	39%	63%	26%	54%
Have-nots	43	65	42	19	53	26	62	32
Neither ( <i>volunteered</i> )	10	8	12	7	5	6	9	11
Don't know	4	4	3	3	3	6	3	4

## Supreme Court

In September, President Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to fill the US Supreme Court vacancy left by the death of Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. With the Judiciary Committee recently concluding confirmation hearings for Judge Barrett, do Californians think the Senate should confirm her to the Supreme Court? Forty-one percent of adults say yes, while 47 percent say no. Among likely voters, 41 percent say yes while 54 percent say no. An overwhelming majority of Republicans think Judge Barrett should be confirmed, while similar shares of Democrats say she should not be. Independents are divided. One in three or more across regions and demographic groups say the Senate should not confirm her, with women (52%) somewhat more likely than men (43%) to say this. The shares holding this view increase as education and income levels rise. Among those who approve of Trump, 78 percent say the Senate should confirm Judge Barrett.

**“As you may know, Donald Trump has nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the US Supreme Court. From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think the US Senate should or should not confirm Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Should confirm	41%	16%	84%	44%	41%
Should not confirm	47	79	12	46	54
Have not heard enough to have an opinion ( <i>volunteered</i> )	6	3	3	5	3
Don't know	6	2	1	6	2

In 1973, the Supreme Court ruled that women have a constitutional right to have an abortion (*Roe v. Wade*). Judge Barrett’s nomination to the Supreme Court has resurfaced questions of whether this landmark case could be overturned. Nonetheless, an overwhelming majority of Californians (70%) say *Roe v. Wade* should not be overturned. More than six in ten Californians have held this view in PPIC surveys since 2005. Majorities across partisan groups do not want the ruling overturned. Seven in ten women and men hold this view. Regionally, more than two in three do not want the ruling overturned (79% San Francisco Bay Area, 71% Orange/San Diego, 69% Los Angeles, 67% Inland Empire, 59% Central Valley). Across racial/ethnic groups, Asian Americans (83%) are the most likely to say this, followed by African Americans (74%), whites (74%), and Latinos (60%). Majorities across demographic groups say the Supreme Court should not overturn the ruling. Shares holding this view increase as education and income levels rise.

**“As you may know, the 1973 Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* established a woman’s constitutional right to have an abortion. Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?”**

	All adults	Gender		Party		
		Men	Women	Dem	Rep	Ind
Yes, overturn	25%	22%	28%	8%	41%	17%
No, not overturn	70	70	70	89	53	77
Don't know	5	8	3	3	6	5

In November, the Supreme Court will hear arguments on whether the Affordable Care Act (ACA), also known as Obamacare, is constitutional in whole or in part. A solid majority of Californians (60%) and likely voters (61%) have a favorable view of the ACA. Today, favorable views are slightly higher than in September 2019 (55% adults, 54% likely voters). Overwhelming majorities of Democrats (88%) and a majority of independents (55%) hold a favorable view of the ACA compared to 19 percent of Republicans. Among racial/ethnic groups, majorities hold favorable views (80% African Americans, 70% Asian Americans, 63% Latinos, 54% whites). About half or more across regions and across age, education, and income groups also hold favorable views of the ACA. In a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll, adults nationwide (55% favorable, 39% unfavorable) held views similar to those of Californians.

# 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, with assistance from survey research associate Rachel Lawler, project manager for this survey, and associate survey director and research fellow Dean Bonner, and survey research associate Alyssa Dykman. 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 1,701 California adult residents, including 1,226 interviewed on cell phones and 475 interviewed on landline telephones. The sample included 453 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 October 9–18, 2020.

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 2014–2018 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 2018 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  $\pm 3.5$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,701 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,453 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.8$  percent; for the 1,185 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.3$  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 also present results for congressional districts currently held by Democrats or Republicans, based on residential zip code and party of the local US House member. We analyze the results of those who live in competitive house districts as determined by the [Cook Political Report’s 2020 House Race Ratings](#) updated October 8, 2020. These districts are 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 48, and 50; a map of California’s congressional districts can be [found here](#).

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 15 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, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, 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 CNN/SSRS, Gallup, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Pew Research Center. 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

October 9–18, 2020

1,701 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR ±3.5% 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% COVID-19/coronavirus
- 16 jobs, economy
- 7 environment, pollution, global warming
- 6 homelessness
- 6 housing costs, availability
- 6 state budget, deficit, spending
- 5 wildfires, fires
- 4 government in general, problems with elected officials, political parties
- 4 health care, health insurance
- 3 education, schools, teachers
- 2 crime, gangs, drugs
- 18 other *(specify)*
- 4 don't know

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

- 58% approve
- 33 disapprove
- 9 don't know

**2a. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the coronavirus outbreak?**

- 61% approve
- 33 disapprove
- 7 don't know

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

- 51% approve
- 35 disapprove
- 14 don't know

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

- 55% right direction
- 39 wrong direction
- 5 don't know

Next,

**5. Some people think that California is divided into economic groups, the haves and have-nots, while others think it is not divided that way. Do you think that California is divided into haves and have-nots, or do you think that California is not divided that way?**

- 64% divided into haves and have-nots
- 32 not divided that way
- 4 don't know

**6. If you had to choose, which of these groups are you in—the haves or the have-nots?**

- 44% haves
- 43 have-nots
- 10 neither *(volunteered)*
- 4 don't know

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

- 71% yes *[ask q7a]*
- 29 no *[skip to q8b]*

**7a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?**

- 44% Democrat *[ask q8]*
- 24 Republican *[ask q8a]*
- 6 another party *(specify) [skip to q9]*
- 26 independent *[ask q8b]*

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

- 65% strong
- 34 not very strong
- 2 don't know

*[skip to q9]*

**8a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

- 69% strong
- 27 not very strong
- 4 don't know

*[skip to q9]*

**8b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

- 27% Republican Party
- 44 Democratic Party
- 20 neither *(volunteered)*
- 9 don't know

**9. *[likely voters only]* If the November 3<sup>rd</sup> presidential election were being held today, would you vote for *[rotate]* [1] the Democratic ticket of Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, (2) the Republican ticket of Donald Trump and Mike Pence, (3) the Libertarian ticket of Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen, *[or]* (4) the Green Party ticket of Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker? *[if respondent says, "None of these," ask: "Would you vote for someone else, or would you not vote for president?"]***

- 58% Joe Biden and Kamala Harris
- 32 Donald Trump and Mike Pence
- 3 Jo Jorgensen and Spike Cohen
- 2 Howie Hawkins and Angela Walker
- someone else *(specify) (volunteered)*
- 1 would not vote *(volunteered)*
- 4 don't know

**10. *[likely voters only]* How closely are you following the news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?**

- 58% very closely
- 34 fairly closely
- 6 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely
- don't know

Changing topics,

**11. *[likely voters only]* Thinking about the presidential election that will be held this November, are you more enthusiastic about voting than usual or less enthusiastic?**

- 72% more enthusiastic
- 20 less enthusiastic
- 7 same/neither *(volunteered)*
- 1 don't know

**12. *[likely voters only]* If the 2020 election for US House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for *[rotate]* [1] the Republican candidate *[or]* [2] the Democratic candidate in your district? *[If other/don't know: As of today, do you lean more toward [read in same order as above] [1] the Republican candidate [or] [2] the Democratic candidate?***

- 37% Republican/lean Republican
- 58 Democrat/lean Democrat
- 5 don't know

**13. *[likely voters only]* What is your preference for the outcome of this year's congressional elections: *[rotate]* [1] a Congress controlled by Republicans *[or]* [2] a Congress controlled by Democrats?**

- 33% controlled by Republicans
- 60 controlled by Democrats
- 4 neither *(volunteered)*
- 3 don't know



Next, we have a few questions to ask you about some of the propositions on the November ballot.

**14. [likely voters only] Proposition 15 is called the “Increases Funding Sources for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It taxes commercial and industrial property based on current market value, instead of purchase price. The fiscal impact is increased property taxes on commercial properties worth more than \$3 million providing \$6.5 billion to \$11.5 billion in new funding to local governments and schools. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 15?**

- 49% yes
- 45 no
- 6 don't know

**15. [likely voters only] How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 15— is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 44% very important
- 36 somewhat important
- 13 not too important
- 4 not at all important
- 2 don't know

**16. [likely voters only] Proposition 16 is called the “Allows Diversity as a Factor in Public Employment, Education, and Contracting Decisions. Legislative Constitutional Amendment.” It permits government decision-making policies to consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in order to address diversity by repealing a constitutional provision prohibiting such policies. There would be no direct fiscal effect on state or local governments. The effects of the measure depend on the future choices of state and local government entities and are highly uncertain. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 16?**

- 37% yes
- 50 no
- 12 don't know

**17. [likely voters only] How important to you is the outcome of the vote on Proposition 16— is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 40% very important
- 39 somewhat important
- 12 not too important
- 6 not at all important
- 4 don't know

On another topic, California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have issues put on the ballot—as state propositions—for voter approval or rejection.

**18. [likely voters only] Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?**

- 12% very satisfied
- 48 somewhat satisfied
- 32 not satisfied
- 8 don't know

**19. [likely voters only] Overall, how much would you say that the initiative process in California today is controlled by special interests—a lot, some, or not at all?**

- 63% a lot
- 30 some
- 2 not at all
- 5 don't know

For the following items, please say if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

*[rotate questions 20 and 21]*

**20. [likely voters only] There are too many propositions on the state ballot.**

- 25% strongly agree
- 30 somewhat agree
- 28 somewhat disagree
- 15 strongly disagree
- 2 don't know

**21. [likely voters only] The ballot wording for citizens’ initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes.**

- 45% strongly agree
- 37 somewhat agree
- 11 somewhat disagree
- 5 strongly disagree
- 3 don’t know

Changing topics,

**22. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Donald Trump is handling his job as president?**

- 35% approve
- 63 disapprove
- 2 don’t know

**22a. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Trump is handling the coronavirus outbreak?**

- 32% approve
- 66 disapprove
- 2 don’t know

*(rotate questions 23 and 24)*

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

- 48% approve
- 44 disapprove
- 3 never heard of her/have not heard enough to have an opinion *(volunteered)*
- 5 don’t know

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

- 35% approve
- 38 disapprove
- 17 never heard of him/have not heard enough to have an opinion *(volunteered)*
- 10 don’t know

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

- 36% approve
- 57 disapprove
- 7 don’t know

Next,

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

- 33% right direction
- 62 wrong direction
- 5 don’t know

Changing topics,

**27. If a vaccine to prevent COVID-19 were available today, would you definitely get the vaccine, probably get the vaccine, probably not get the vaccine, or definitely not get the vaccine?**

- 26% definitely get the vaccine
- 31 probably get the vaccine
- 20 probably not get the vaccine
- 20 definitely not get the vaccine
- 2 don’t know

**28. Thinking about the development of a vaccine for COVID-19, which of the following concerns you more: approval of the vaccine will move [rotate] [1] too fast without fully establishing it is safe and effective [or] [2] too slowly, creating unnecessary delays in providing access to a vaccine?**

- 68% too fast without fully establishing it is safe and effective
- 26 too slowly, creating unnecessary delays in providing access to a vaccine
- 6 don’t know

On another topic,

*(rotate questions 29 and 30)*

**29. Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Democratic Party?**

- 47% favorable
- 46 unfavorable
- 7 don't know

**30. Do you have a favorable or an unfavorable impression of the Republican Party?**

- 35% favorable
- 58 unfavorable
- 7 don't know

**31. In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?**

- 35% adequate job
- 57 third party is needed
- 8 don't know

**32. As you may know, Donald Trump has nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to serve on the US Supreme Court. From what you have seen and heard so far, do you think the US Senate should or should not confirm Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court?**

- 41% should confirm
- 47 should not confirm
- 6 have not heard enough to have an opinion *(volunteered)*
- 6 don't know

**33. As you may know, the 1973 Supreme Court case *Roe v. Wade* established a woman's constitutional right to have an abortion. Would you like to see the Supreme Court overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?**

- 25% yes, overturn *Roe versus Wade*
- 70 no, not overturn *Roe versus Wade*
- 5 don't know

**34. 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
- 34 generally unfavorable
- 6 don't know

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

*[read list, rotate order top to bottom]*

- 15% very liberal
- 20 somewhat liberal
- 28 middle-of-the-road
- 21 somewhat conservative
- 13 very conservative
- 4 don't know

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

- 33% great deal
- 33 fair amount
- 26 only a little
- 7 none
- don't know

*[d1–d16 demographic questions]*

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