

Voting in the 1994 General Election

January 1995

Findings in Brief

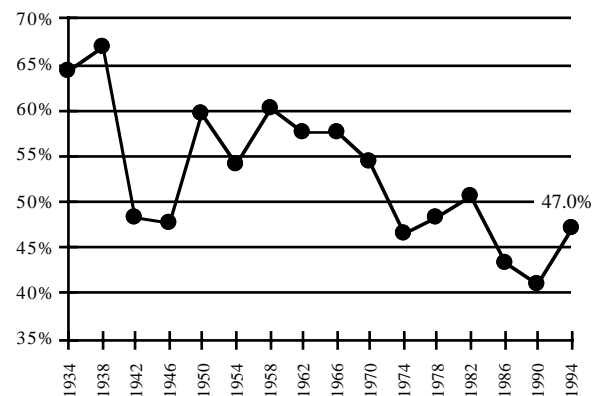
- Voting participation in the 1994 gubernatorial election increased 6 percentage points from the 1990 gubernatorial election, with over 8.9 million Californians voting. This represents a participation rate of 47.0% of all citizen-eligible adults. Nearly 2 million voters, or 22% of the total, voted by absentee ballot, the largest proportion of absentee ballots ever cast in a statewide election.
- The demographic profile of voters in the 1994 election contrasts sharply with the state's larger adult population and its citizen adults who are eligible to vote. As a group, voters in 1994 are older, include more white non-Hispanics, are more conservative, have higher levels of income, are better educated, include fewer residents of Los Angeles County, and are more apt to be affiliated with Protestant religions.
- An analysis of Republican Governor Pete Wilson's 55% to 41% re-election victory over Democrat Kathleen Brown shows that Wilson ran strongest among these voter subgroups: those living in San Diego/Orange, the Inland Empire, and the North Coast/Sierra regions, Republicans, conservatives, white non-Hispanics (especially white men), older voters, those with incomes of \$60,000 or more, Protestants, and supporters of Prop. 187, the illegal alien initiative.
- A regional examination of voter preferences in the U.S. Senate race shows that Democratic incumbent Dianne Feinstein's 2-percentage point victory over Republican Michael Huffington was characterized by her carrying the major Democratic Party strongholds of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County (which represent about half of the state's electorate) by large enough margins to offset vote deficits in other parts of the state.
- Demographically, Feinstein did best among the following subgroups: Democrats, liberals and moderates, females, racial/ethnic minorities, college graduates and those with a post graduate degree, and opponents of Proposition 187.
- Proposition 187, the illegal alien initiative, which passed statewide by a 59% to 41% margin, carried in all major regions of the state except the San Francisco Bay Area. Support for Prop. 187 was extremely high in the Inland Empire (+40 points), the North Coast/Sierras (+36 points), San Diego/Orange (+34 points) and the Central Valley (+32 points).
- White non-Hispanic voters favored Prop. 187 by a 28-percentage point margin, and white men supported it by 38 points. On the other hand, Latinos voted No by a 46-point margin. Blacks and Asians were about evenly divided, with 52% of each group voting Yes and 48% voting No.

Voter turnout up in the 1994 general election

Voting participation in the 1994 gubernatorial election increased 6 percentage points from the last gubernatorial election in 1990. According to the California Secretary of State's official Statement of Vote, a total of 8,900,593 Californians voted in the November 1994 general election, 47.0% of all citizens eligible to vote. This is up from 7.9 million votes cast in 1990, a 41.0% turnout rate.

The participation rate in the 1994 election places it near the mid-point of turnouts of other California gubernatorial elections over the past twenty years, although it remains lower than participation rates seen in the 1950's and 1960's.

Table 1
Proportion of Citizen-Eligible
Adults Participating in
California Gubernatorial Elections
(1934-1994)



Absentee voting continues to increase

Nearly 2 million of the state's 8.9 million voters in the 1994 gubernatorial election voted by absentee ballot. This represents 22.0% of all votes cast, the largest percentage of absentee ballot votes ever cast in a California statewide election.

Absentee ballot voting has grown steadily in popularity since 1978, when a change in state law granted all voters the option of voting in this manner. Previously only those infirmed, disabled or otherwise unable to make it to their precinct voting place on Election Day were permitted to vote using an absentee ballot.

At the time the law was changed typically only 3% – 4% of the state's electorate cast absentee ballot votes. This proportion more than doubled in the eight year period between 1978 and 1986 and has more than doubled again over the past eight years.

Table 2
Precinct and Absentee Voting
in California Gubernatorial Elections since 1978

	Precinct voters	Absentee Voters
1994	6,937,749 (78.0%)	1,962,844 (22.0%)
1990	6,446,992 (81.6%)	1,452,139 (18.4%)
1986	6,931,802 (91.0%)	685,340 (9.0%)
1982	7,539,128 (93.5%)	525,186 (6.5%)
1978	6,817,952 (95.6%)	314,258 (4.4%)

Source: California Secretary of State, Statement of Vote

Profile of voters contrasts sharply with state's adult and citizen-eligible populations

The demographic profile of the 8.9 million Californians who voted in the November 1994 election contrasts sharply with the state's 23.5 million adult population and its nearly 19 million citizen-adults who are eligible to vote. As a group, voters are older, more conservative, include more white non-Hispanics, have higher levels of income, are better educated, include fewer Los Angelenos and are more apt to be affiliated with Protestant religions than the larger population. For example. . .

- While nearly four in five voters (78%) are white non-Hispanic, just 70% of the state's citizen-eligibles and just 59% of all California adults are white. By contrast, just 9% of voters in 1994 were Latino, compared to 15% among all citizen-eligibles and 24% are all adults.
- Greater than four in ten of the voting electorate (43%) are age 50 or older, while just 33% of citizen-eligible adults and just 30% of all California adults are of this age. Conversely, while just 14% of the voters in 1994 were under 30, 26% of citizen-eligibles and 29% of all California adults are under 30.
- While 30% of the state's adult population lives in Los Angeles County, just 24% of the state's electorate in the November 1994 election were Los Angeles County residents.
- Whereas 37% of the state's voters identify themselves as politically conservative, slightly smaller proportions of all adults (34%) and citizen-eligible adults (33%) report this.
- Greater than one in three voters (36%) in 1994 reported an annual household income of more than \$60,000, while just 15% earned less than \$20,000. This is considerably more upscale than either the state's total adult population or its citizen-eligible adults. For example, among all California adults more (26%) report an annual household income of less than \$20,000 than earn more than \$60,000 (21%).

- Over four in ten voters (44%) in 1994 were college graduates or held post graduate degrees. This compares to just 31% among the citizen-eligible population and 28% among all California adults.
- Nearly half of the 1994 electorate (48%) were affiliated with Protestant religions. This is greater than the proportion of Protestants found in the total adult population (40%).

Table 3
Comparing Characteristics of the 1994
California Electorate, Citizen-eligibles and All Adults

	1994 electorate	Citizen eligibles	All adults
Statewide Total (in 000's)	8,901	18,946	23,500
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	24%	28%	30%
San Francisco Bay Area	23	22	21
San Diego/Orange	17	17	17
Central Valley	15	14	14
Inland Empire	8	9	8
Central Coast	7	6	7
North Coast/Sierras	6	4	4
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	37%	33%	34%
Moderate	45	46	46
Liberal	18	21	20
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	14%	26%	29%
30-49	43	41	41
50-59	17	12	11
60 or older	26	21	19
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	49%	49%	50%
Female	51	51	50
<u>Ethnicity</u>			
White (Anglo)	78%	70%	59%
Hispanic	9	15	24
Black	7	7	7
Asian/other	6	8	10
<u>Annual household income</u>			
Under \$20,000	15%	22%	26%
\$20,000-\$40,000	25	32	32
\$40,000-\$60,000	24	23	21
More than \$60,000	36	23	21
<u>Education</u>			
High school or less	22%	31%	35%
Some college	34	39	37
College graduate	27	19	18
Post graduate degree	17	12	10
<u>Religion</u>			
Protestant	48%	44%	40%
Roman Catholic	27	26	31
Jewish	5	3	3
Other	8	8	8
No preference	12	19	18

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages for the 1994 electorate and statewide citizen-eligible totals are from the California Secretary of State. Demographic subgroup percentages for the 1994 electorate are the averages of two independent exit polls conducted by Voter News Service (n=3,050) and the Los Angeles Times (n=5,336) on November 9, 1994 in California. Demographic subgroup percentages for citizen-eligibles and all adults are Field Institute estimates.

Vote support in the 1994 Governor's race

The final vote totals show that Republican incumbent Pete Wilson won re-election over Democrat Kathleen Brown in the Governor's race by a 55% to 41% margin. An examination of voter preferences across regional and demographic characteristics of the electorate highlights these strengths and weaknesses of each candidate's support:

- Wilson outpolled Brown in all regions of the state, except the Bay Area. Wilson's margin was largest in San Diego/Orange, the Inland Empire and the North Coast/Sierra regions, where he bested Brown by over 30 points.
- There was greater loyalty among Republicans than Democrats in supporting their party's standard bearer. Wilson received the support of 91% of Republican voters, while Brown won just 77% of the votes of fellow Democrats. Independent voters favored Wilson 52% to 38%.
- Conservatives were strongly behind Wilson's candidacy (82% support), while liberals were nearly as strongly for Brown (77%). Moderates split about evenly, with 49% supporting Wilson and 46% favoring Brown.
- Wilson was the choice of male voters by a wide margin (23 points), but he also carried the women's vote by 7 points. However, within party, the vote choices of men and women were virtually identical, with 91% of GOP men and women supporting Wilson and over three in four of Democratic men and women favoring Brown.
- There was also a strong correlation between gubernatorial preferences and vote choices on Proposition 187, the illegal alien initiative, which Wilson supported and Brown opposed. Of the 59% of California voters who voted Yes on Prop. 187, 75% supported Wilson, while 65% of Prop. 187 opponents favored Brown.
- Wilson was preferred by 28 percentage points among white non-Hispanic voters, and by 44 points among white men. Brown carried the Latino vote by 46 points and won among blacks by 56 percentage points. Asian voters were more divided and favored Wilson by 5 points.
- Wilson was preferred among voters age 60 or older, by a nearly two to one margin. Wilson's margin among voters age 50-59 was 20 points, and 11 points among voters age 30-49. Brown led by 8 points among voters under age 30.
- Wilson was preferred by majorities of voters of all education levels, except those with a post graduate degree.
- Wilson did best among voters at the high end of the income range (more than \$60,000), carrying their vote by 27 points. Brown was preferred by low income voters earning less than \$20,000 by a 15-point margin.
- Protestants backed Wilson's re-election bid by a wide 36-point margin. Catholics were more divided, favoring Wilson by 7 points. Majorities of Jewish voters, those affiliated with other religions and those with no religious preference supported Brown's candidacy.

Table 4		
Voter Preferences in the 1994 Gubernatorial Race by Selected Demographic Subgroups		
	Wilson	Brown
Statewide Total	55%	41
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	50%	46
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	43%	51
(.17) San Diego/Orange	66%	30
(.15) Central Valley	61%	35
(.08) Inland Empire	64%	32
(.07) Central Coast	57%	39
(.06) North Coast/Sierras	63%	32
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.40) Democrat	21%	77
(.40) Republican	91%	6
(.20) Independent/other	52%	38
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.37) Conservative	82%	14
(.45) Moderate	49%	46
(.18) Liberal	18%	77
<u>Sex</u>		
(.49) Male	59%	36
(.51) Female	51%	44
<u>Gender/party</u>		
(.17) Democratic men	19%	79
(.23) Democratic women	19%	77
(.21) Republican men	91%	6
(.19) Republican women	91%	6
(.11) Independent men	57%	34
(.09) Independent women	54%	39
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
(.78) White (non-Hispanic)	62%	34
(.38) Men	70%	26
(.40) Women	58%	38
(.09) Latino	25%	71
(.07) Black	20%	76
(.06) Asian	51%	46
<u>Age</u>		
(.14) 18-29	43%	51
(.43) 30-49	53%	42
(.17) 50-59	58%	38
(.26) 60 or older	65%	33
<u>Education</u>		
(.22) High school or less	57%	37
(.34) Some college	60%	36
(.27) College graduate	55%	41
(.17) Post graduate degree	44%	52
<u>Household income</u>		
(.15) Under \$20,000	40%	55
(.25) \$20,000-\$40,000	54%	40
(.24) \$40,000-\$60,000	55%	40
(.36) More than \$60,000	62%	35
<u>Religion</u>		
(.48) Protestant	66%	30
(.27) Roman Catholic	52%	45
(.05) Jewish	37%	59
(.08) Other	34%	59
(.12) No preference	38%	54
<u>Vote on Prop. 187</u>		
(.59) Yes	75%	21
(.41) No	31%	65

(Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each candidate equal proportion supporting other candidates)

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are the averages of two independent exit polls conducted by Voter News Service (n=3,050) and the Los Angeles Times (n=5,336) on November 9, 1994 in California.

An analysis of the vote for U.S. Senate

In the U.S. Senate race, incumbent Democrat Dianne Feinstein won re-election over Republican Michael Huffington by a 47% to 45% margin. The following is an analysis of the vote in this race:

- Feinstein carried the two major Democratic Party strongholds of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County (which together represent almost half of the state's electorate) by large enough margins to offset vote deficits to Huffington in other parts of the state. Feinstein was preferred in the Bay Area by greater than a two to one margin and carried Los Angeles County by 12 points.
- Feinstein won 82% of the Democratic vote and Huffington took 80% of the GOP vote. Feinstein edged Huffington among independent voters by 5 points.
- The Democratic incumbent carried 79% of the liberal vote, while Huffington won 74% of the votes of the larger constituency of political conservatives. One of the reasons for Feinstein's victory was her ability to capture a majority (56%) of the votes of political moderates.
- There was a significant "gender gap" in voter preferences in the Senate race, with Feinstein winning by 13 points among female voters and Huffington winning by 9 points among men. Although most of these gender differences related to party affiliation, it is significant that independent women favored Feinstein by 15 points, while independent men supported Huffington by 5 points.
- White non-Hispanics favored Huffington by a 50% to 42% margin, with white males siding with Huffington by 23 percentage points. On the other hand, Feinstein led by 37 points among Latinos, by 65 points among blacks and by 6 points among Asians.
- Huffington was preferred by those with a high school education or less and those with some college training. Feinstein was favored among college graduates and those with a post graduate degree.
- Protestants were strongly behind Huffington, favoring him by 18 points. Feinstein was able to offset this deficit by carrying the Catholic vote by 11 points, the Jewish vote by 50 points, those affiliated with other religions by 37 points and by outpolling Huffington by 21 points among those with no religious preference.
- Preferences in the Senate race were also tied to the vote on Proposition 187, the illegal alien initiative, which Huffington supported and Feinstein opposed. Among supporters of Prop. 187 Huffington was preferred by a 34-point margin. On the other hand, Feinstein was favored among No voters by an even larger 43-point margin.

	Feinstein	Huffington
Statewide Total	<u>47%</u>	<u>45</u>
Region		
(.24) Los Angeles County	52%	40
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	62%	30
(.17) San Diego/Orange	35%	56
(.15) Central Valley	40%	52
(.08) Inland Empire	35%	57
(.07) Central Coast	41%	50
(.06) North Coast/Sierras	44%	49
Party identification		
(.40) Democrat	82%	16
(.40) Republican	14%	80
(.20) Independent/other	44%	39
Political ideology		
(.37) Conservative	19%	74
(.45) Moderate	56%	35
(.18) Liberal	79%	13
Sex		
(.49) Male	42%	51
(.51) Female	52%	39
Gender/party		
(.17) Democratic men	83%	12
(.23) Democratic women	84%	10
(.21) Republican men	12%	83
(.19) Republican women	17%	75
(.11) Independent men	39%	44
(.09) Independent women	51%	36
Ethnicity		
(.78) White (non-Hispanic)	42%	50
(.38) Men	35%	58
(.40) Women	47%	43
(.09) Latino	63%	26
(.07) Black	79%	14
(.06) Asian	49%	43
Age		
(.14) 18-29	46%	51
(.43) 30-49	46%	45
(.17) 50-59	48%	44
(.26) 60 or older	47%	49
Education		
(.22) High school or less	44%	47
(.34) Some college	41%	49
(.27) College graduate	48%	44
(.17) Post graduate degree	58%	35
Household income		
(.15) Under \$20,000	57%	34
(.25) \$20,000-\$40,000	45%	46
(.24) \$40,000-\$60,000	43%	47
(.36) More than \$60,000	46%	47
Religion		
(.48) Protestant	37%	55
(.27) Roman Catholic	52%	41
(.05) Jewish	77%	27
(.08) Other	64%	27
(.12) No preference	54%	33
Vote on Prop. 187		
(.59) Yes	29%	63
(.41) No	66%	23

(Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each candidate equal proportion supporting other candidates)

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are the averages of two independent exit polls conducted by Voter News Service (n=3,050) and the Los Angeles Times (n=5,336) on November 9, 1994 in California.

Vote analysis of Prop. 187, the illegal alien initiative

Proposition 187, the controversial ballot initiative which makes illegal immigrants ineligible to receive public health and education services, was approved by voters by an 18-point margin, 59% to 41%. An analysis of the vote by regional and demographic subgroups shows the following:

- The proposition carried all regions of the state except the Bay Area (where it trailed by 10 points). Support for Prop. 187 was extremely strong in the Inland Empire (+40 points), the North Coast/Sierras (+36 points), San Diego/Orange (+34 points) and the Central Valley (+32 points).
- The vote on Prop. 187 was highly partisan, with Republicans favoring it three to one, and Democrats opposed three to two. Independents favored the initiative by 22 points.
- Political ideology was strongly linked to opinions of the initiative. Conservatives were strongly supportive, favoring Prop. 187 by 52 points. By contrast, liberals opposed the initiative by 36 points. Political moderates were more divided, but favored it by 12 points.
- Support for Prop. 187 was strongest among white non-Hispanic voters (+28 points), and especially white males (+38 points). Latinos, on the other hand, voted No by a 73% to 27% margin. Blacks and Asians divided about evenly, with 52% voting in favor and 48% opposed.
- The initiative carried among both male and female voters, although men supported it by a larger margin — 24 points — versus 12 points among women.
- Voters age 60 or older were strongly supportive of the initiative, favoring it by 32 points, while younger voters under age 30 split about evenly on the measure. Majorities of voters age 30 - 59 supported the initiative.
- Voters with no more than a high school education and those with some college training favored Prop. 187 by wide 28-point margins. College graduates were also supportive, but by a narrower 8-point margin, whereas those with a post-graduate degree were opposed by 4 points.
- Majorities of voters in all income categories supported the initiative.
- Protestants favored Prop. 187 by a greater than two to one margin (69% to 31%). On the other hand, Catholics voted against it by a narrow 2-point margin, Jewish voters opposed it by 10 points and those with no religious preference voted No by a 4-point margin.
- The *Los Angeles Times* exit poll also asked voters whether they were a first generation, second generation or third or more generation U.S. resident. The results show that voters who have resided in the U.S. for three or more generations were more supportive than those who have been here for a shorter period.

Table 6
Voter Preferences on Proposition 187,
the Illegal Alien Initiative

	Yes	No
Statewide Total	<u>59%</u>	<u>41</u>
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	56%	44
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	45%	55
(.17) San Diego/Orange	67%	33
(.15) Central Valley	66%	34
(.08) Inland Empire	70%	30
(.07) Central Coast	60%	40
(.06) North Coast/Sierras	68%	32
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.40) Democrat	40%	60
(.40) Republican	76%	24
(.20) Independent/other	61%	39
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.37) Conservative	76%	24
(.45) Moderate	56%	44
(.18) Liberal	32%	68
<u>Sex</u>		
(.49) Male	62%	38
(.51) Female	56%	44
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
(.78) White (non-Hispanic)	64%	36
(.38) Men	69%	31
(.40) Women	59%	41
(.09) Latino	27%	73
(.07) Black	52%	48
(.06) Asian	52%	48
<u>Age</u>		
(.14) 18-29	49%	51
(.43) 30-49	58%	42
(.17) 50-59	59%	41
(.26) 60 or older	66%	34
<u>Education</u>		
(.22) High school or less	64%	36
(.34) Some college	64%	36
(.27) College graduate	54%	46
(.17) Post graduate degree	48%	52
<u>Household income</u>		
(.15) Under \$20,000	53%	47
(.25) \$20,000-\$40,000	60%	40
(.24) \$40,000-\$60,000	59%	41
(.36) More than \$60,000	58%	42
<u>Religion</u>		
(.48) Protestant	69%	31
(.27) Roman Catholic	49%	51
(.05) Jewish	45%	55
(.08) Other	53%	47
(.12) No preference	48%	52
<u>U.S. residency status</u>		
(.25) 1st or 2nd generation citizen	52%	48
(.75) 3rd generation or more	60%	40

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. All other demographic subgroup percentages are the averages of two independent exit polls conducted by Voter News Service (n=3,050) and the *Los Angeles Times* (n=5,336) on November 9, 1994.

Opposition to Prop. 186 across all subgroups

Prop. 186, an initiative to establish a state-administered single payer health care system in California, lost by a nearly three to one margin. According to *Voter News Service*, opposition to Prop. 186 crossed all major demographic voter subgroups. Republicans and conservatives opposed Prop. 186 by the widest margins, while Democrats and liberals opposed it by somewhat narrower margins.

Table 7

Voter Preferences on Prop. 186, Single Payer Health

	No	Yes
Statewide Total	<u>73%</u>	<u>27</u>
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.40) Democrat	62%	38
(.40) Republican	86%	14
(.20) Independent/other	71%	29
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.37) Conservative	84%	16
(.45) Moderate	74%	26
(.18) Liberal	53%	47

Source: Statewide vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are from a *Voter News Service* exit poll of California voters on November 9, 1994 (n=1,744).

Prop. 188 overwhelmingly rejected by non-smokers

Prop. 188, the smoking regulations initiative sponsored by tobacco interests to pre-empt local smoking laws and replace them with a more limited smoking ban, was defeated 71% to 29% in the November election. The most significant factor relating to vote choice on Prop. 188 concerned whether the voter was currently a smoker. Among the 86% of voters who reported being a non-smoker in the *Voter News Service* exit poll the measure was opposed by a huge 50-point margin, while among the 14% of the electorate who are current smokers, supporters outnumbered opponents by 14 points.

Table 8

Voter Preferences on Prop. 188, Smoking Regulations

	No	Yes
Statewide Total	<u>71%</u>	<u>29</u>
<u>Smoking</u>		
(.14) Current smoker	43%	57
(.86) Non-smoker	75%	25

Source: Statewide vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are from a *Voter News Service* exit poll of California voters on November 9, 1994 (n=1,761).

About The Field Institute

Background

The Field Institute is a non-partisan research organization devoted to the study of public opinion on a variety of social, economic and political issues. The Institute undertakes regularly scheduled opinion and attitude surveys as well as *ad hoc* studies in California, its primary area of focus. Revenue received by The Institute goes entirely toward covering the cost of its operations, in disseminating its reports and in reviewing other socially important subjects. It is a not-for-profit organization.

The Institute's services are available to all sectors of the public. In addition to its own ongoing research programs, it accepts research contracts from public or private organizations or from individuals. All data from Institute studies are archived for use by scholars, policy makers, and other persons or organizations. Archived data sets are available from more than 200 studies conducted by The Field Institute and *The Field Poll* since 1956.

Field Research Corporation Relationship

The Field Institute was established with funds and support from Field Research Corporation. FRC has contributed to The Institute all of the operations of *The Field Poll*, including its data archive going back to 1947. FRC's staff of more than seventy-five full-time professional and operations people, together with its large corps of experienced interviewers and its extensive in-house computer capability, provides basic data gathering and data processing services for The Institute on a sub-contract basis.

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