



# Californians & Their Government

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**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

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### PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

## Trump Leads with 38 Percent, Clinton Has 48 Percent Support among Primary Likely Voters

### HARRIS, SANCHEZ LEAD IN SENATE RACE, BUT NEARLY A THIRD ARE UNDECIDED

SAN FRANCISCO, March 23, 2016—Donald Trump leads his rivals in the presidential race with support from 38 percent of Republican primary likely voters, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from The James Irvine Foundation. Hillary Clinton has 48 percent support and Bernie Sanders has 41 percent among Democratic primary likely voters—a group that includes Democrats and independent voters who say they will vote in the Democratic primary. Another 11 percent favor someone else (7%) or are undecided (4%).

In the survey—which ended March 15, the same evening that Marco Rubio left the Republican presidential race—Trump (38%) is trailed by Ted Cruz (19%), and John Kasich and Rubio (12% each). The survey also asked Republican primary likely voters for their second choices, and when the responses are recalculated to exclude Rubio, Trump maintains his 38 percent support, while Cruz's support increases to 27 percent and Kasich's to 14 percent. Twenty percent favor someone else (11%) or are undecided (9%). Trump leads across age, education, gender, and income groups.

In the Democratic race, most voters age 45 and older support Clinton (63%), while most younger voters support Sanders (63%). Clinton leads among Latino voters (58% to 35%), women (54% to 35%), and those who describe themselves as politically middle of the road (51% to 33%). Sanders leads among those who describe themselves as very liberal (57% to 41%) and among men (48% to 39%).

A solid majority of Democratic likely voters (65%) are satisfied with their choice of candidates. Less than half of Republicans (46%) and a third of independent likely voters (34%) are satisfied.

### Harris Leads Senate Candidates—Latinos Prefer Sanchez

In the race to fill the seat of retiring U.S. senator Barbara Boxer, a third of likely voters (31%) say they are undecided. Among the candidates, Kamala Harris, Democratic state attorney general, has 26 percent support, followed by Loretta Sanchez, Democratic member of Congress, with 17 percent. Tom Del Beccaro, former chairman of the state Republican Party, has 9 percent and Duf Sundheim, also a former Republican Party chair, has 6 percent. Republican Ron Unz entered the race after the survey was completed. The top two vote getters in the June primary will advance to the November election.

Among Democratic likely voters, 38 percent favor Harris, 30 percent favor Sanchez, and 24 percent are undecided. Among Republican likely voters, 41 percent are undecided, while 23 percent favor Del Beccaro and 12 percent favor Sundheim. While 37 percent of independents are undecided, Harris gets the most support (22%). Latino voters are most likely to support Sanchez (36%), while 22 percent would vote for Harris. White voters are most likely to be either undecided (31%) or support Harris (27%). Democrats (64%)

are far more likely than independents (38%) or Republicans (31%) to say they are satisfied with their choice of candidates for Senate.

“The defining characteristic of the California presidential and senate primaries is the striking partisan difference in satisfaction with the candidate choices,” said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

## Majorities Approve of Obama, But Few Approve of Congress

A majority of California adults (59%) and over half of likely voters (53%) approve of President Obama’s job performance. Congress’ approval rating is considerably lower: 24 percent among adults and 14 percent among likely voters. Just 20 percent of Democrats and 18 percent of independents approve of Congress’ job performance. Even fewer Republicans (11%) approve—smaller than the share of Republicans who approve of Obama’s performance (20%).

Baldassare noted: “In election season where deep partisan divisions are surfacing, one area of continuing consensus is overwhelming disapproval of the way that the Congress is handling its job.”

## Divided on Outlook for State, U.S.—and on Government Role on Inequality

As the primary nears, 40 percent of California adults and 34 percent of likely voters say things in the U.S. are going in the right direction. Californians are feeling somewhat more optimistic about the state’s direction (right direction: 50% adults, 45% likely voters). After weeks of turmoil in financial markets, the outlook on the U.S. economy is mixed, with 48 percent of California adults and 45 percent of likely voters saying that the nation will have good times in the next year. Californians are also divided about whether the state will have good times in the year ahead (51% adults, 46% likely voters).

With income inequality an issue in the presidential campaign, solid majorities of Californians (69%) and likely voters (77%) say the gap between the rich and poor in the United States is getting larger—a view that holds across party lines. Should government do more to reduce the gap? Most (68% adults, 58% likely voters) say yes, while fewer (29% adults, 39% likely voters) say this is something government should not be doing. Likely voters are somewhat more likely than adults overall to say the gap between the rich and the poor is growing (77% to 69%), but they are less likely to say that the government should do more to reduce it (58% to 68%). Californians are divided over whether everyone has a fair chance to get ahead in today’s economy. About half (48% adults, 49% likely voters) say everyone does have a fair chance and about half (48% adults, 47% likely voters) say that just a few people at the top have a chance.

Baldassare summed up: “California Republicans and Democrats are deeply divided in their views about the direction of the state and the nation and the government’s role in bridging the economic gap.”

## Most See Business Regulation as Necessary

On another election year issue, Californians are more likely to say that government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest (60% adults, 57% likely voters) than to say that government regulation of business does more harm than good (34% adults, 40% likely voters). Asked whether they prefer a smaller government providing fewer services or a bigger government providing more services, 57 percent of California adults prefer a larger government (39% smaller government). Likely voters are less inclined to prefer larger government (44% larger, 51% smaller).

And most adults (58%) and likely voters (61%) believe that Americans demand more from the government than they are willing to pay for in taxes. Fewer (37% adults, 36% likely voters) say that most Americans are willing to pay the taxes needed to fund services they expect government to provide.

## Majorities Favor Extending Proposition 30 Tax on High Earnings

As the statewide ballot takes shape, the survey asked about one initiative that may be on it: an extension of one of the temporary taxes voters approved in Proposition 30 in 2012. The new initiative would extend for 12 years

the tax on earnings over \$250,000 to fund education and health care. Most adults (61%) and likely voters (58%) are in favor, with sharp divisions along party lines (77% Democrats, 52% independents, 37% Republicans favor). Regardless of how they feel about the initiative, solid majorities of adults (66%), voters across party lines, and likely voters (70%) believe Californians should decide whether to extend Proposition 30 tax increases by voting on an initiative in November.

Asked in the midst of tax season about the fairness of the state and local tax system, a majority of Californians say it is moderately fair (48% adults, 49% likely voters) or very fair (8% adults, 5% likely voters). And most (63% adults, 78% likely voters) believe that compared to other states, California ranks near the top or is above average in its tax burden per capita. This view is in line with fiscal facts: the Tax Policy Center ranked California 11th in November 2015.

## Jobs and Economy Seen as the State's Top Issue

About half of Californians (51% adults, 53% likely voters) approve of Governor Jerry Brown's job performance. The state legislature has a job approval rating of 44 percent among adults and 38 percent among likely voters. Jobs/economy (27% adults, 29% likely voters) edges out water/ drought (20% adults, 23% likely voters) as the most important issue facing Californians today.

As seasonal rainfall has increased and Californians have slowed their conservation efforts, residents are also less likely today (57% adults) to say the supply of water as a big problem in their part of the state than they were in September 2015, when a record-high 70 percent held this view. Half (49% adults) say that the people in their part of California are not doing enough to respond to the drought, while 38 percent say people are doing the right amount.

## Public Higher Education, Road Maintenance Seen as Key for Future

The survey asked how important four major areas of spending are to the future of California:

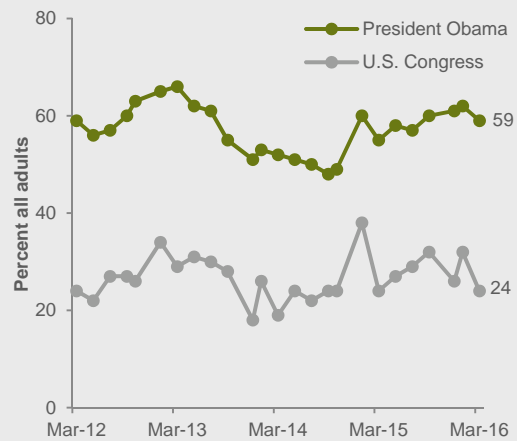
- **Maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges:** Most Californians (58% adults, 64% likely voters) say traffic congestion is a big problem in their region. And most (62% adults, 68% likely voters) say spending more money on the maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges is very important for the future quality of life and economic vitality of the state. Which projects have the highest priority? Residents are divided between public bus and transit (34%) and freeways and highways (33%), with fewer choosing local streets and roads (24%) or carpool lanes (6%). Likely voters are somewhat more likely to prefer spending on freeways and highways (38%) to bus and transit (30%).
- **Tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta:** The governor has proposed building tunnels in the Delta to improve the reliability of water supplies. About half of adults (54%) and 45 percent of likely voters say building the tunnels is very important to the future of California. Residents in Los Angeles (61%) and the Inland Empire (61%) are the most likely to say this is very important, followed by the Central Valley (51%), San Francisco Bay Area (49%), and Orange/San Diego (47%).
- **High-speed rail:** Eight years after state voters passed the \$10 billion bond to build high-speed rail with 53 percent support, 52 percent of adults and 44 percent of likely voters continue to favor building it. When those who are opposed are asked how they would feel if it cost less, overall support increases to 66 percent among adults and 59 percent among likely voters. How important is high-speed rail to the future quality of life and economic vitality of California? A third of adults (34%) and a quarter of likely voters (26%) say it is very important.
- **The public higher education system:** Overwhelming majorities of adults (80%) and likely voters (78%) say California's public higher education system is very important to the state's future.

# Election and National Issues

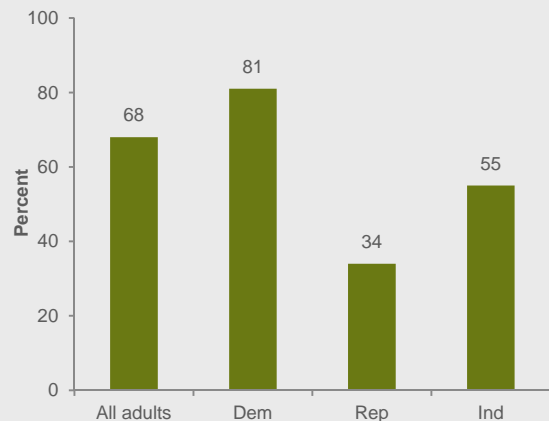
## Key Findings

- Half of likely voters are satisfied with their choice of presidential candidates; Democrats are much more likely than Republicans or independents to be satisfied. Forty-eight percent of Democratic primary likely voters support Hillary Clinton, while 38 percent of Republican primary likely voters support Donald Trump. *(page 7)*
- About half of likely voters are satisfied with their choice of candidates for the open U.S. Senate seat; Democrats are far more likely than Republicans and independents to be satisfied. Nearly a third of likely voters are unsure how they would vote if the primary were held today. Democrats Kamala Harris and Loretta Sanchez would be the top two vote getters. *(page 8)*
- Six in 10 Californians (59%) and about half of likely voters (53%) approve of President Obama; fewer than one in four adults (24%) and likely voters (14%) approve of the U.S. Congress. *(page 9)*
- Fewer than half of California adults and likely voters say the nation is going in the right direction. The outlook on the national economy is mixed, with Democrats much more likely than Republicans to expect the United States will have good economic times in the next 12 months. *(page 10)*
- Strong majorities of Californians say the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States is getting larger and that government should do more to reduce this gap. *(page 11)*
- Californians are more likely to prefer a bigger government providing more services than a smaller government providing fewer services. About six in 10 adults say most Americans demand more from government than they are willing to pay taxes for. *(page 12)*

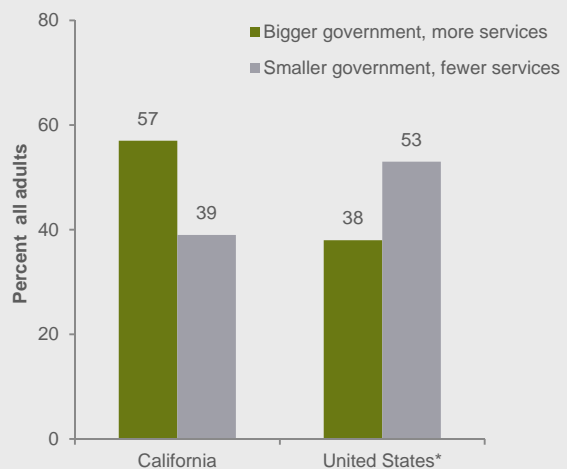
Approval ratings of federal elected officials



Belief that government should do more to address the gap between rich and poor in this country



Preferences for size of government



\* Pew Research Center, September 2015.

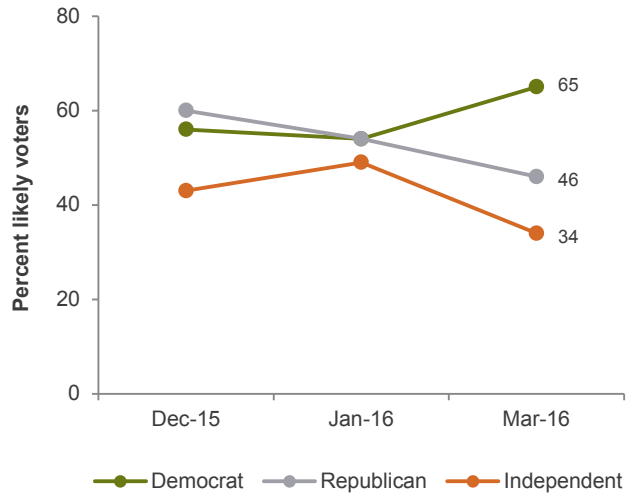
## Presidential Election

On June 7, California voters will have their chance to weigh in on the Republican and Democratic presidential nominations. Today, a solid majority of independent likely voters (63%) say they are following news about the candidates very closely, and about half of Republican (53%) and Democratic (48%) voters say the same. A solid majority of Democratic voters (65%) say they are satisfied with their choices of candidates, while fewer than half of Republicans (46%) and just one in three independents (34%) say they are satisfied. Compared to our recent surveys, Democrats are more likely to say they are satisfied with their choices today, while Republican and independent voters are less likely to say they are satisfied.

Among Democratic primary likely voters (including Democrats and independent voters who say they will vote in the Democratic primary), 48 percent support Hillary Clinton and 41 percent support Bernie Sanders. Eleven percent say either that they would vote for someone else (7%) or that they are undecided (4%).

Among voters age 45 and older, 63 percent support Clinton, and among younger voters, 63 percent support Sanders. Clinton leads among Latino voters (58% to 35%), women (54% to 35%), and those who describe themselves as politically middle-of-the-road (51% to 33%). Sanders leads among those who describe themselves as very liberal (57% to 41%) and also among men (48% to 39%).

**Satisfaction with choices of candidates in the election for U.S. president in 2016**



**“If the 2016 Democratic primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?”**

Democratic primary likely voters only	Likely voters	Age		Race*	
		18 to 44	45 and older	Latino	White
Hillary Clinton	48%	22%	63%	58%	41%
Bernie Sanders	41	63	27	35	46
Someone else	7	11	5	3	9
Don't know	4	4	4	4	4

\*Sample sizes for other groups are too small for analysis

Interviews for our survey concluded on March 15, the same evening that Marco Rubio dropped out of the Republican presidential race. With Rubio included among the candidates, Donald Trump leads the Republican field with support from 38 percent of Republican likely voters, followed by Ted Cruz at 19 percent and both John Kasich and Marco Rubio at 12 percent. With totals recalculated to exclude Rubio and show his supporters’ second choices, Trump, still with 38 percent support, is followed by Cruz at 27 percent and Kasich at 14 percent. One in five likely voters say either that they would support someone else (11%) or that they are undecided (9%). Trump leads all candidates across age, education, gender, and income groups.

**“If the 2016 Republican primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?”**

Republican primary likely voters only	Likely voters		Change when including Rubio supporters' second choices
	Including candidate Rubio	Excluding candidate Rubio*	
Donald Trump	38%	38%	+0
Ted Cruz	19	27	+8
John Kasich	12	14	+2
Marco Rubio	12	–	–
Someone else	10	11	+1
Don't know	9	9	+0

\*Totals recalculated to show Rubio supporters' second choices.

**California U.S. Senate Race**

Senator Barbara Boxer will be retiring after her current term ends. Under California's top-two primary system in place since 2011, the primary race for her replacement will include all candidates, regardless of party and it will be open to all registered voters. The two candidates receiving the most votes will advance to the November general election. At this stage of the campaign, 31 percent of likely voters say they don't know which candidate they would support in the primary. Among the candidates, state attorney general Kamala Harris, a Democrat, leads with support from 26 percent of likely voters, followed by Democratic U.S. representative Loretta Sanchez at 17 percent. Tom Del Beccaro, former chairman of the state Republican Party, gets support from 9 percent of likely voters and Duf Sundheim, also a former chairman of the state Republican Party, gets support from 6 percent. Republican Ron Unz entered the U.S. Senate race the day after our interviewing was completed.

**“If the June primary for U.S. senator were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?”**

All likely voters	Likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites
Kamala Harris, a Democrat	26%	38%	8%	22%	22%	27%
Loretta Sanchez, a Democrat	17	30	4	10	36	11
Tom Del Beccaro, a Republican	9	–	23	9	7	11
Duf Sundheim, a Republican	6	1	12	8	1	8
Someone else	11	6	11	14	12	11
Don't know	31	24	41	37	22	31

Among Democratic likely voters, 38 percent would vote for Harris, 30 percent would vote for Sanchez, and one in four (24%) are undecided. Four in 10 Republican voters say they are undecided, 23 percent would vote for Del Beccaro, and 12 percent would vote for Sundheim. Among independents, 37 percent say they don't know who they would vote for; the candidate who gets the most support is Harris (22%). Latino voters are most likely to support Sanchez (36%), while 22 percent would vote for Harris. White voters are most likely to be undecided (31%) or support Harris (27%).

Democrats (64%) are far more likely than independents (38%) or Republicans (31%) to say they are satisfied with their choice of candidates. Seven in 10 Republican voters say either that they are not satisfied (41%) or that they have no opinion (28%).



## Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

Nearly six in ten Californians (59%) and slightly more than half of likely voters (53%) approve of President Obama’s job performance today. The president’s approval has held steady in recent months, and more than half of Californians have approved of his job performance since January 2015. Californians are slightly more likely to approve of the president than are adults nationwide (51%) in a March ABC News/Washington Post poll.

Among Democrats, 84 percent approve of the president, compared to 51 percent of independents and 20 percent of Republicans. Across regions, the president’s approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (67%) and Los Angeles (67%), and lowest in the Inland Empire (44%). Strong majorities of blacks (83%), Latinos (68%), and Asians (66%) and about half of whites (49%) approve of the president.

Approval of President Obama is similarly overwhelming among likely voters who say they would vote for Hillary Clinton (88%) or Bernie Sanders (89%). Among Republican primary likely voters, just 15 percent approve of the president’s job performance.

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	59%	84%	20%	51%	53%
Disapprove	38	14	79	47	46
Don't know	3	1	1	2	1

Twenty-four percent of adults and 14 percent of likely voters approve of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job. Approval of Congress has been similar over the past year. Californians in our survey are more likely to approve of Congress than are adults nationwide (13%) in a March Gallup poll.

About two in ten Democrats (20%) and independents (18%) approve of Congress, while 11 percent of Republicans approve. Approval of Congress is similarly low among those describing themselves as liberal (22%), middle-of-the-road (27%), and conservative (26%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (38%), Asians (32%), and blacks (24%) are more likely to approve than are whites (12%). Across regions, residents of Los Angeles (35%) are most likely to approve of Congress, followed by residents of the Central Valley (23%), Orange/San Diego (22%), the Inland Empire (21%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (17%). Support for Congress decreases as age and income increase, and it is higher among those with no college education (36%) than among those with more education (17%).

### “Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	24%	20%	11%	18%	14%
Disapprove	70	77	83	77	83
Don't know	6	3	6	5	2

## National Outlook

As the 2016 presidential campaigns continue to ramp up, 40 percent of adults and 34 percent of likely voters say things in the United States are going in the right direction. Findings were similar in September and March of last year. Today, a majority of Democrats (57%) say things in the nation are going in the right direction, compared to far fewer independents (27%) and Republicans (10%).

About four in 10 Californians across regions are optimistic about the direction of the nation (44% Los Angeles, 41% San Francisco Bay Area, 38% Central Valley, 36% Orange/San Diego, 36% Inland Empire). Across racial/ethnic groups, about half of Asians (54%), blacks (50%), and Latinos (49%), compared to 28 percent of whites, say the nation is headed in the right direction. Californians under age 35 are somewhat more likely than adults age 55 and older to be optimistic about the direction of the country (44% to 34%).

Among likely voters, Hillary Clinton supporters (63%) are more likely than supporters of Bernie Sanders (50%) to say things in the United States are heading in the right direction.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	40%	57%	10%	27%	34%
Wrong direction	56	38	85	69	63
Don't know	4	5	5	4	3

Following what some have described as a volatile few months in the financial markets, the outlook on the national economy is decidedly mixed. California adults are slightly more likely to expect good times (48%) than bad times (42%) financially during the next 12 months, while likely voters are divided (45% good times, 47% bad times). Perceptions of the national economy were similar in September and March 2015.

Today, a majority of Democrats (56%) expect the country to experience good times financially in the next 12 months, while fewer independents (38%) and Republicans (29%) do so. Across the state’s regions, about half in Los Angeles (52%), the Inland Empire (51%), the San Francisco Bay Area (50%), and Orange/San Diego (50%) expect good economic times for the nation, compared to 43 percent in the Central Valley. Across racial/ethnic groups, majorities of Latinos (60%) and Asians (55%), but fewer blacks (43%) and whites (40%), say the country will have good times financially in the next 12 months. Expectations for good times financially in the United States during the next 12 months are higher for those under age 35 than for those age 55 and older (53% to 41%).

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good times	48%	56%	29%	38%	45%
Bad times	42	36	60	52	47
Don't know	10	8	11	9	9

## Income Inequality

Solid majorities of Californians (69%) and likely voters (77%) say that the gap between rich and poor in the United States is getting larger. Findings were similar in March 2015 (72% all adults, 80% likely voters) and March 2014 (73% all adults, 81% likely voters). While solid majorities across parties say the gap between rich and poor is getting larger, Democrats (83%) are more likely than independents (75%) and Republicans (62%) to say so. Across racial/ethnic groups, more than seven in 10 whites, Asians, and blacks say that the gap is getting larger, while only 56 percent of Latinos hold this view. Those with annual household incomes of \$80,000 or more (74%) are somewhat more likely than those with incomes under \$40,000 (65%) to say that the gap is getting larger.

Californians remain divided on whether everyone has a fair chance to get ahead in today’s economy (48%) or whether just a few people at the top have a chance (48%). Findings were similar in March 2015 (49% everyone, 48% just a few) and March 2014 (49% everyone, 47% just a few). There are striking partisan differences: a solid majority of Republicans (67%) say everyone has a fair chance to get ahead, and a similar proportion of Democrats (63%) believe that just a few people at the top have a chance. Among independents, half (50%) believe everyone has a fair chance, while 43 percent say only a few have a chance. Notably, men (54%) are more likely than women (42%) and homeowners (55%) are more likely than renters (42%) to say that everyone has a fair chance to get ahead in today’s economy.

**“Which comes closer to your view: In today’s economy, everyone has a fair chance to get ahead in the long run, or in today’s economy, it’s mainly just a few people at the top who have a chance to get ahead.”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Everyone has a fair chance to get ahead	48%	34%	67%	50%	49%
Just a few people at the top have a chance	48	63	29	43	47
Don't know	4	3	4	7	4

When asked if the government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor, 68 percent of Californians say the government should do more, while 29 percent say this is not something the government should be doing. Notably, while likely voters are somewhat more likely than adults overall to say the gap between rich and poor is getting larger (77% to 69%), they are less likely to say that the government should do more to reduce this gap (58% to 68%). There are stark differences across parties on this issue—while an overwhelming majority of Democrats (81%) believe the government should do more, a solid majority of Republicans (63%) believe this is not something the government should be doing. Independents are more likely to say the government should do more (55%) than to say this is not the government’s role (41%). Majorities across age, income, and racial/ethnic groups say government should do more to reduce the gap between rich and poor.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Government should do more to reduce the gap	68%	81%	34%	55%	58%
Government should not be doing this	29	15	63	41	39
Don't know	3	4	2	4	3

## Role of Government

California adults are more likely to prefer a larger government with more services (57%) than a smaller government with fewer services (39%). Support for a bigger government has increased since we last asked this question in February 2002 (47% bigger government, 48% smaller government). Notably, while adults overall prefer a bigger government, likely voters are somewhat more likely to prefer a smaller government with fewer services than a bigger government with more services (51% to 44%). Nationally, 53 percent of all adults support a smaller government with fewer services, according to a September 2015 Pew Research Center poll (38% bigger government).

While nearly eight in 10 California Republicans prefer a smaller government, seven in 10 Democrats prefer a bigger government. Half of independents prefer a smaller government with fewer services while 44 percent prefer a bigger government. While majorities of blacks (78%), Latinos (74%), and Asians (61%) prefer a bigger government that provides more services, a majority of whites (55%) say they prefer a smaller government with fewer services. The likelihood of preferring a smaller government providing fewer services increases with age, homeownership, and income.

**“If you had to choose, would you rather have, a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Smaller government providing fewer services	39%	26%	78%	51%	51%
Bigger government providing more services	57	70	17	44	44
Don't know	4	4	4	5	5

Majorities of Californians (58%) and likely voters (61%) believe that most Americans demand more from the government than they are willing to pay for in taxes. Majorities across all regions and demographic groups hold this view. Indeed, Californians in our survey are slightly more likely than adults nationwide (52% in an October 2015 Pew Research Center poll) to say that most Americans demand more from the government than they are willing to pay for.

Californians are more likely to say that government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public (60%) than to say that government regulation does more harm than good (34%). The proportion of Californians who view government regulation as necessary is at its highest point since we began asking this question in May 1998. Californians are much more likely than adults nationwide (in an October 2015 Pew Research Center poll) to say that government regulation of business is necessary (45% necessary, 50% more harm than good). Democrats (71%) are more likely than independents (55%) and far more likely than Republicans (31%) to say government regulation of business is necessary. Majorities across regions and demographic groups hold this view. Latinos (68%) and Asians (65%) are more likely than blacks (56%) and whites (54%) to say government regulation is necessary.

**“Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right: government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest; or government regulation of business does more harm than good.”**

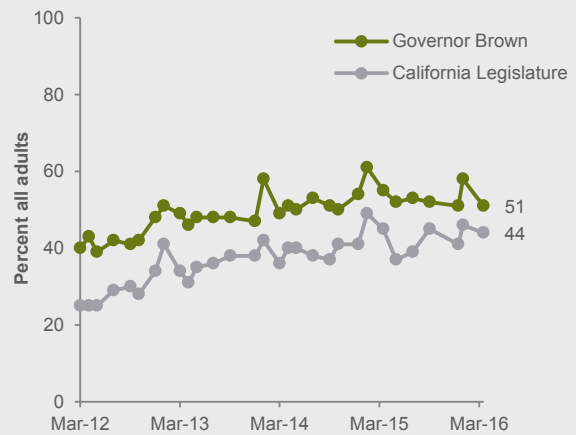
	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Government regulation of business is necessary	60%	71%	31%	55%	57%
Government regulation of business does more harm than good	34	23	66	42	40
Don't know	6	6	3	3	3

# State and Fiscal Issues

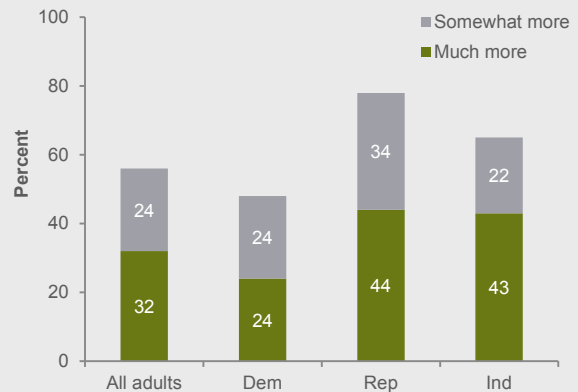
## Key Findings

- About half of Californians continue to approve of Governor Jerry Brown, while 44 percent approve of the California Legislature. *(page 14)*
- A majority of Californians think the state and local tax system is very fair (8%) or moderately fair (48%); a similar share feel they pay more than they should in state and local taxes (56%). *(page 16)*
- Half of Californians think the state budget situation is a big problem. A majority of Californians (61%) and likely voters (58%) favor extending the Proposition 30 tax increase on upper-income Californians to fund education and health care. *(page 17)*
- About six in 10 Californians think traffic congestion in their region is a big problem and that spending more to maintain roads, highways, and bridges is very important for California’s future. *(page 18)*
- Most Californians think the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California. About half say that building tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta is very important for California’s future. *(page 19)*
- Half of Californians and 44 percent of likely voters favor building a high-speed rail system in California. Thirty-four percent of Californians and 26 percent of likely voters think the high-speed rail system is very important to California’s future. *(page 20)*
- An overwhelming majority of Californians think California’s public higher education system is very important to California’s future. Six in 10 Californians view a college education as necessary for success in today’s work world. *(page 21)*

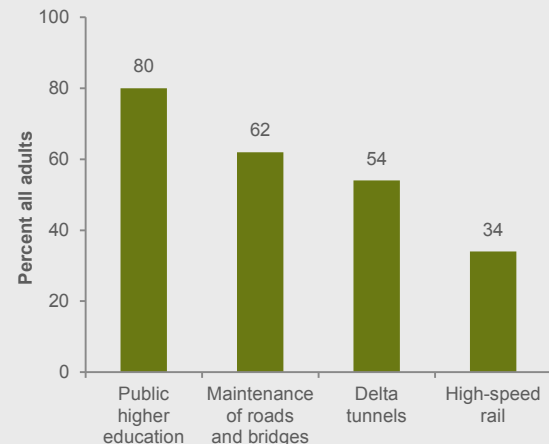
Approval ratings of state elected officials



Shares saying they pay more in state and local taxes than they should



Perception that each is very important to California's future



## Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

Fifty-one percent of adults and 53 percent of likely voters approve of the way Jerry Brown is handling his job as California’s governor. The governor’s approval rating was slightly higher in January (58% adults, 60% likely voters) and it was similar last March (55% adults, 56% likely voters). Today, the governor’s approval rating is much higher among Democrats (69%) than among independents (39%) and Republicans (27%). Approval is higher in the San Francisco Bay Area (58%) than in other regions. Latinos (62%) are more likely than whites (48%), blacks (47%), and Asians (40%) to approve of the governor.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as governor of California?”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		51%	29%	19%
Likely voters		53	36	11
Party	Democrats	69	15	16
	Republicans	27	60	13
	Independents	39	41	20
Region	Central Valley	45	34	21
	San Francisco Bay Area	58	23	19
	Los Angeles	51	28	21
	Orange/San Diego	51	33	17
	Inland Empire	46	30	24

Forty-four percent of adults and 38 percent of likely voters approve of the way the California Legislature is handling its job. Approval of the state legislature was in a similar range in January (46% adults, 41% likely voters) and last March (45% adults, 39% likely voters). Today, a majority of Democrats (58%) approve of the legislature, while fewer independents (35%) and Republicans (16%) hold this view. Approval is slightly higher in Los Angeles (49%) than in other regions. Latinos (56%) are more likely than Asians (39%), whites (39%), and blacks (37%) to approve of the legislature.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		44%	39%	18%
Likely voters		38	50	12
Party	Democrats	58	27	15
	Republicans	16	71	14
	Independents	35	49	16
Region	Central Valley	40	42	17
	San Francisco Bay Area	43	32	25
	Los Angeles	49	35	16
	Orange/San Diego	44	43	14
	Inland Empire	37	48	15

## Overall Mood

Californians are most likely to name jobs and the economy (27%) and water and the drought (20%) as the most important issues facing people in California today; fewer than one in 10 name any other issue. Jobs and the economy (24%) and water and the drought (23%) also topped the issues list in March 2015. Water and the drought (29%) and jobs and the economy (34%) are both named more often today in the Central Valley than in other regions. The top two issues are similar among likely voters and all adults.

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

Top five issues	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Jobs, economy	27%	34%	26%	23%	26%	27%	29%
Water, drought	20	29	21	17	16	18	23
Immigration, illegal immigration	7	5	4	8	9	9	8
Crime, gangs, drugs	5	3	1	5	4	8	2
Education, schools, teachers	5	3	5	6	4	4	5

With an election year underway, what is the mood in California? Fifty percent of all adults and 45 percent of likely voters say that things in California are generally going in the right direction. The view that the state is headed in the right direction was in a similar range in January (54% adults, 49% likely voters) and last March (50% adults, 49% likely voters). Today, Democrats (65%) are far more likely than independents (38%) and Republicans (24%) to say that things are going in the right direction. San Francisco Bay Area residents (56%) are more likely to hold this view than those living in other regions (50% Inland Empire, 50% Los Angeles, 49% Orange/San Diego, 44% Central Valley). Majorities of Latinos (58%) and Asians (57%) and fewer than half of blacks (47%) and whites (44%) say the state is going in the right direction.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	50%	65%	24%	38%	45%
Wrong direction	43	26	72	57	50
Don't know	8	8	5	6	5

Perceptions of the economy’s direction are divided, with 51 percent of all adults and 46 percent of likely voters saying that California will have good times financially in the next 12 months. Expectations for good economic times were similar in January (49% adults, 44% likely voters) and last March (52% adults, 49% likely voters). Today, Democrats (59%) are more likely than independents (43%) and Republicans (33%) to expect good economic times. About half across the state’s regions expect good economic times in California (53% San Francisco Bay Area, 52% Los Angeles, 50% Orange/San Diego, 49% Central Valley, 47% the Inland Empire). Half or more of Latinos (58%) and Asians (52%) compared to fewer whites (46%) and blacks (45%) expect good economic times. Expectations for good economic times decline with age (59% under 35, 53% 35 to 54, 38% 55 and older).

## State and Local Tax System

In the midst of tax season, we asked about the fairness of the state and local tax system. Similar majorities of adults (8% very, 48% moderately) and likely voters (5% very, 49% moderately) view the system as fair. Majorities across income groups hold this view of tax fairness. Still, majorities of adults (56%) and likely voters (61%) say they are paying much more or somewhat more than they feel they should pay in state and local taxes. Half or more across income groups hold this view. Findings were similar last March: similar shares perceived the tax system as very or moderately fair (50% adults, 50% likely voters) and said that they were paying more than they should (57% adults, 58% likely voters). Today, Republicans (43%) are less likely than other voters (52% independents, 63% Democrats) to say the tax system is very fair or moderately fair and more likely than other voters to say they pay much more or somewhat more than they should (78% Republicans, 65% independents, 48% Democrats).

**“Overall, how fair do you think our present state and local tax system is—would you say it is very fair, moderately fair, not too fair, or not at all fair?”**

	All adults	Household income			Likely voters
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Very fair	8%	11%	8%	5%	5%
Moderately fair	48	46	47	53	49
Not too fair	25	27	25	22	24
Not at all fair	16	14	18	18	19
Don't know	3	3	3	2	3

Some leaders and interest groups argue against raising state and local taxes because California already has a high tax burden compared to other states. How do Californians view the relative tax burden? Solid majorities (63% adults, 78% likely voters) say that California ranks near the top or is above average in per capita state and local tax burden compared to other states. The public’s perceptions are in line with the fiscal facts: California’s state and local tax collections per capita in 2013 were ranked 11th highest in the nation (Tax Policy Center, November 2015). Solid majorities said that California is near the top or above average in state and local tax burden last March (62% adults, 71% likely voters). Today, while majorities across income groups hold this perspective, this perception is more common in higher-income groups (51% less than \$40,000, 68% \$40,000 to \$80,000, 81% \$80,000 or more). Majorities across voter groups, although more Republicans (85%) than independents (68%) or Democrats (67%), hold the view that California currently ranks near the top or above average in state and local tax burden per capita.

**“Where do you think California currently ranks in state and local tax burden per capita? Compared to other states, is California's tax burden per capita near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?”**

	All adults	Household income			Likely voters
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Near the top	36%	25%	38%	52%	46%
Above average	27	26	30	29	32
Average	17	23	16	8	13
Below average	5	7	4	2	1
Near the bottom	6	9	5	2	1
Don't know	9	9	8	6	6



## State Spending and Revenues

About half of California adults (48%) and likely voters (55%) say the state budget is a big problem. Republicans (69%) are much more likely to call the budget a big problem than are independents (59%) and Democrats (40%). Slightly smaller shares viewed the budget as a big problem in January (42% adults, 46% likely voters) and the percentages were similar last March (45% adults, 50% likely voters). More than six in 10 called the budget a big problem from 2008 through May 2013.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Big problem	48%	40%	69%	59%	55%
Somewhat of a problem	36	45	23	30	33
Not a problem	11	12	5	8	9
Don't know	5	3	3	2	3

The Proposition 30 tax increase that passed in November 2012 included a one quarter cent sales tax that expires in December 2016 and a tax on higher-income Californians that expires in 2018. An initiative is circulating for the November 2016 ballot that includes a 12-year extension of the tax increase on higher-income Californians to fund education and healthcare. Sixty-one percent of adults and 58 percent of likely voters support this version of a Proposition 30 tax extension. There are sharp divisions along party lines.

**“As you may know, voters passed Proposition 30 in November 2012. It increased taxes on earnings over \$250,000 until 2018 and sales taxes by one quarter cent until 2016. Do you favor or oppose extending for 12 years the tax increase on earnings over \$250,000 to fund education and healthcare?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	61%	77%	37%	52%	58%
Oppose	35	20	58	42	38
Don't know	4	3	4	6	4

Solid majorities of adults (66%), voters across party lines, and likely voters (70%) think California voters should decide whether to extend the Proposition 30 tax increases by voting on a state proposition in November. Support for voters deciding was similar last March (66% adults, 68% likely voters).

**“Regardless of how you feel personally about the issue, do you favor or oppose having California voters decide whether to extend the Proposition 30 tax increases with a state proposition in the November 2016 election?”**

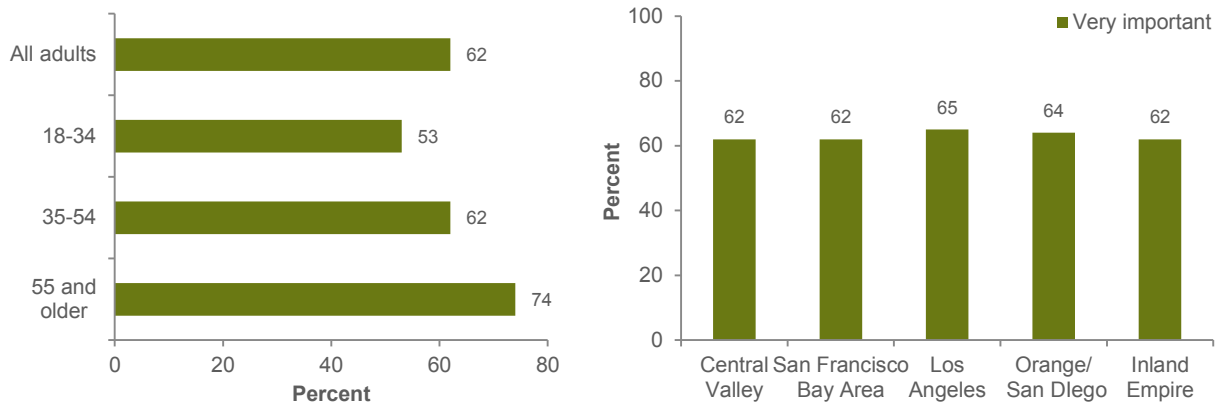
	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	66%	75%	66%	64%	70%
Oppose	26	19	27	31	24
Don't know	8	6	7	6	6

## Surface Transportation System

About six in 10 California adults (58%) and likely voters (64%) say traffic congestion on freeways and major roads is a big problem in their region of California today. Residents in the Central Valley (36%) are by far the least likely to call it a big problem, while majorities in other regions hold this view. About half or more of adults across demographic groups say this is a big problem. When we last asked this question in July 2006, a similar share of adults viewed traffic congestion as a big problem (64%).

Solid majorities of adults (62%) and likely voters (68%) think that spending more money on the maintenance of the state’s roads is very important for the future of California. Solid majorities across regions view the maintenance of roads as very important as do at least six in 10 Democrats (70%), Republicans (61%), and independents (60%). The perception that maintenance is very important increases as age increases and is similar across education and income groups.

**“Thinking ahead, how important is spending more money on the maintenance of California’s roads, highways, and bridges for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California?”**



When asked about which aspects of surface transportation should have the highest priority, Californians are divided between public bus and transit (34%) and freeways and highways (33%), with fewer prioritizing local streets and roads (24%) or carpool lanes (6%). In January 2006, a plurality prioritized freeways and highways (38%), while fewer selected public transit (29%) or local streets (24%). Today, half of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area prioritize public transit, compared to fewer than four in 10 elsewhere in the state. Half of Inland Empire residents prioritize freeways and highways. Public transit is more likely to be prioritized among Asians, younger Californians (age 18 to 34), those with a college degree, and those with household incomes under \$40,000.

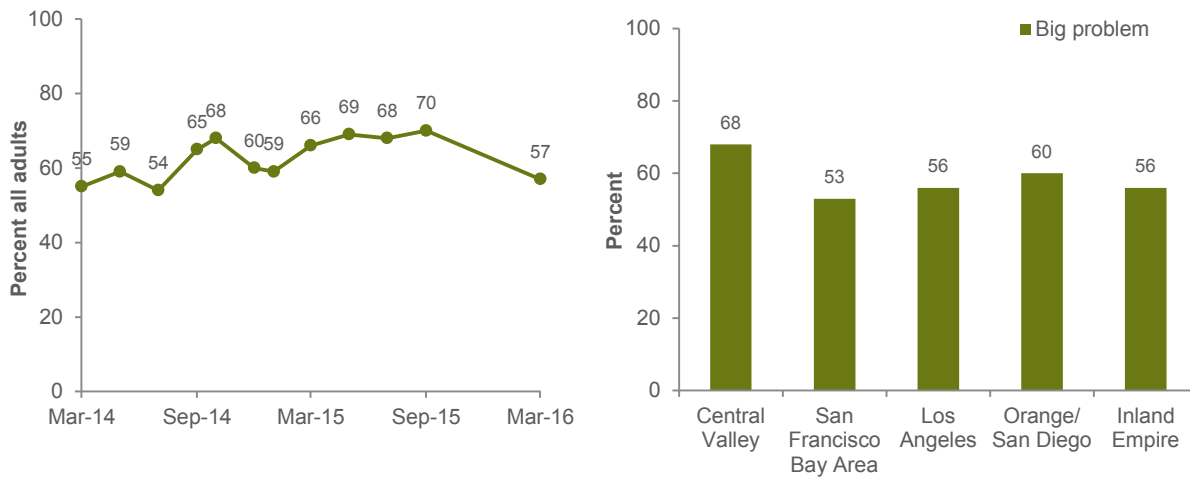
**“Which of the following types of surface transportation projects do you think should have the top priority for additional state funding?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Public bus and transit	34%	23%	50%	38%	30%	21%	30%
Freeways and highways	33	37	25	28	38	51	38
Local streets and roads	24	26	20	23	24	20	24
Carpool lanes	6	10	3	9	7	3	6
Other (volunteered)	1	1	–	1	–	4	1
Don't know	1	3	2	1	–	1	2

## State Water Supply

Today, 57 percent of Californians say that the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California—down from a record high of 70 percent in September 2015, when we last asked this question. This comes as much of California has seen increased seasonal rainfall and the slowing of statewide conservation efforts. Residents in the Central Valley are the most likely to see their regional water supply as a big problem, while residents in the San Francisco Bay Area are the least likely. The share holding this view increases with age and is highest among whites (66%) and lowest among Asians (47%) across racial/ethnic groups.

**“Would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?”**



Half of Californians (49%) think that the people in their part of California are not doing enough to respond to the current drought, while 38 percent think the response is about right. The perception that not enough is being done was similar last September (48%), but it has dropped 17 points since last March (66%). Today, a plurality in the Central Valley say the right amount is being done; pluralities elsewhere say not enough is being done. The view that not enough is being done is more prevalent among blacks (67%) than among Latinos (53%), whites (45%), or Asians (43%); the share holding this view declines sharply as age increases.

**“Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?”**

	All adults	Region					Inland/Coastal	
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Inland	Coastal
Too much	10%	13%	12%	7%	8%	13%	13%	9%
Right amount	38	44	39	34	41	30	39	38
Not enough	49	41	45	56	47	52	46	50
Don't know	3	2	3	3	4	5	3	3

The governor has proposed building tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta to improve the reliability of water supplies. About half of California adults (54%) and 45 percent of likely voters view this as very important for the future of California. Residents in Los Angeles (61%) and the Inland Empire (61%) are the most likely to view this as very important, followed by those in the Central Valley (51%), the San Francisco Bay Area (49%), and Orange/San Diego (47%). Democrats (57%) are more likely than Republicans (41%) and independents (44%) to hold this view.

## High-Speed Rail

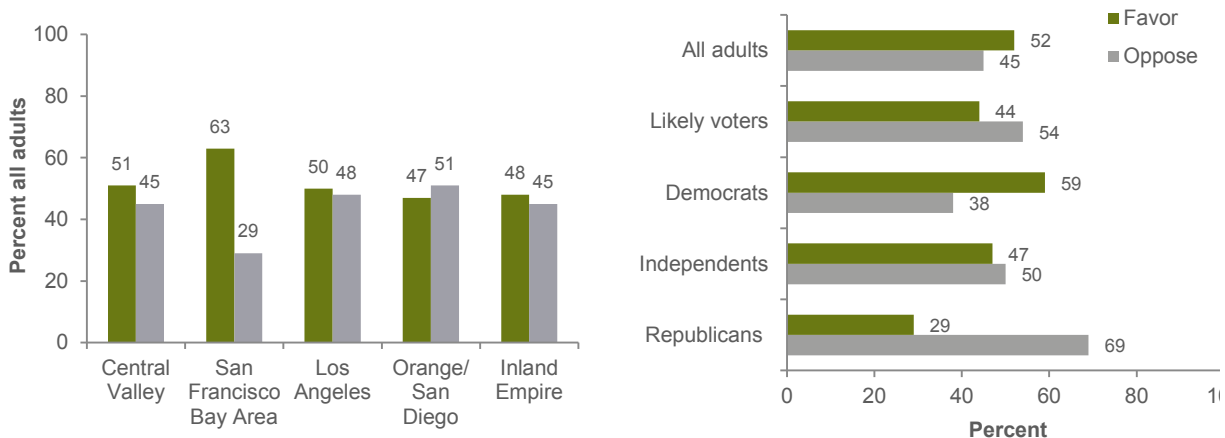
In November 2008 California voters passed Proposition 1A, the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century, with 53 percent support. How do Californians view this project today? Thirty-four percent of California adults and 26 percent of likely voters view the high-speed rail system as very important for the future of California. The perception that the rail system is very important has ranged from a high of 36 percent in March 2013 to a low of 28 percent last March. Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area are the most likely to call the high-speed rail system very important, while about a third in other regions hold this view. Democrats (37%) are more than twice as likely as Republicans (15%) to hold this view. Latinos (45%) are the most likely to call the system very important, followed by Asians (40%), blacks (33%), and whites (25%).

**“Thinking ahead, how important is the high-speed rail system for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Very important	34%	33%	45%	32%	31%	32%	26%
Somewhat important	29	23	27	31	26	37	29
Not too important	17	16	13	19	25	14	17
Not at all important	18	27	13	17	18	18	27
Don't know	1	1	2	1	1	–	1

Fifty-two percent of Californians favor building the high-speed rail system; shares have been similar since we first asked this question in March 2012. Today, 44 percent of likely voters favor the project. Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (63%) are the most likely to favor the project, while residents elsewhere are more divided. There is a wide partisan divide, with six in 10 Democrats and three in 10 Republicans in favor. Support is higher among Asians (66%) and Latinos (58%) than among whites (44%) and blacks (42%), and declines sharply with increasing age. When those who oppose the high-speed rail system are asked how they would feel if it cost less, overall support increases to 66 percent among all adults and 59 percent among likely voters.

**“Next, as you may know, California voters passed a \$10 billion state bond in 2008 for planning and construction of a high-speed rail system from Southern California to the Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area. The estimated costs associated with the high-speed rail system are about \$68 billion over the next 20 years. Do you favor or oppose building a high-speed rail system in California?”**



## Public Higher Education

Overwhelming majorities of California adults (80%) and likely voters (78%) view California’s public higher education system as very important to the state’s future. Since we first asked this question in 2007, more than seven in 10 Californians have said that the public higher education system is very important. Today, Californians are much more likely to say that the public higher education system is very important to the state’s future than to say the same of the maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges (62% very important), the building of the Delta tunnels (54% very important), or the high-speed rail system (34% very important). Indeed, more than seven in 10 Californians across regions and demographic groups say that the public higher education system is very important to the state’s future. Across parties, Democrats (89%) are more likely than independents (69%) and Republicans (67%) to hold this view.

**“In general, how important is California’s public higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years?”**

	All adults	Education			Race/Ethnicity			
		High school or less	Some college	College graduate	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Very important	80%	79%	79%	83%	86%	83%	85%	75%
Somewhat important	14	15	14	13	14	14	12	16
Not too important	3	3	5	2	–	2	2	5
Not at all important	2	1	2	2	–	–	–	3
Don't know	1	2	1	–	–	–	1	1

The perceived importance of public higher education makes sense in the context of 59 percent of Californians believing that a college degree is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s work world. Thirty-nine percent say there are many ways to succeed without a college degree. Findings were similar in November 2011, when we last asked this question (58% college degree is necessary).

There are notable differences across racial/ethnic groups: large majorities of Asians (79%), Latinos (72%), and blacks (67%) think a college education is necessary, while fewer than half of whites (44%) hold this view. Parents of children 18 or younger are more likely to see college as necessary (68%) than are those without children (54%). Democrats (64%) are much more likely than independents (48%) and far more likely than Republicans (38%) to say a college education is necessary for success. Across regions, the belief that a college education is necessary for success is highest in Los Angeles (66%), and lowest in the Central Valley (51%). Solid majorities of college graduates (60%) and Californians with no college education (65%) say a college education is necessary, while 51 percent of those with some college say a college education is necessary for success.

**“Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today’s work world, or do you think that there are many ways to succeed in today’s work world without a college education?”**

	All adults	Education			Race/Ethnicity			
		High school or less	Some college	College graduate	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
College education is necessary	59%	65%	51%	60%	79%	67%	72%	44%
There are many ways to succeed	39	34	46	38	21	33	27	53
Don't know	2	1	2	1	–	–	1	3

# 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 associate survey director Dean Bonner, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates David Kordus and Lunna Lopes. The Californians and Their Government series is supported with funding from 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 1,710 California adult residents, including 852 interviewed on landline telephones and 858 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from March 6–15, 2016.

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, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once 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.

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, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once 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.

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

Abt SRBI uses the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010–2014 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 SRBI used 2014 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS—and 2015 estimates for the West Census Region in the latest NHIS report. 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  $\pm 3.6$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,710 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.6 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California

were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,385 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.9$  percent; for the 1,039 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.4$  percent; for the 529 Democratic Primary likely voters, it is  $\pm 6.2$  percent; for the 321 Republican Primary likely voters, it is  $\pm 7.3$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

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

We present specific results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 43 percent of the state's adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about 34 percent the state's adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asians, who make up about 15 percent of the state's adult population, and non-Hispanic blacks, 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. 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 voter registration survey questions, previous election participation, and current interest in politics. In addition, we analyze the response of Democratic primary likely voters which include registered Democrats and independents who say they will vote in the Democratic primary.

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by ABC News/Washington Post, Gallup, and Pew Research Center. Additional details about our methodology can be found at [www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf](http://www.ppic.org/content/other/SurveyMethodology.pdf) and are available upon request through [surveys@ppic.org](mailto:surveys@ppic.org).



# Questionnaire and Results

## CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

March 6–15, 2016

1,710 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 3.6\%$  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]*

- 27% jobs, economy
- 20 water, drought
- 7 immigration, illegal immigration
- 5 crime, gangs, drugs
- 5 education, schools, teachers
- 4 environment, pollution, global warming
- 4 government in general
- 4 housing costs, housing availability
- 3 health care, health insurance
- 3 homelessness
- 3 infrastructure
- 3 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 2 poverty
- 4 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

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

- 51% approve
- 29 disapprove
- 19 don't know

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

- 44% approve
- 39 disapprove
- 18 don't know

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

- 50% right direction
- 43 wrong direction
- 8 don't know

**5. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?**

- 51% good times
- 40 bad times
- 9 don't know

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

- 63% yes *[ask Q6a]*
- 37 no *[skip to Q7b]*

**6a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or are you registered as a decline-to-state or independent voter?**

- 43% Democrat *[ask Q7]*
- 27 Republican *[skip to Q7a]*
- 5 another party (*specify*) *[skip to Q9]*
- 25 independent *[skip to Q7b]*

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

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

*[skip to Q8a]*

**7a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

- 53% strong
- 41 not very strong
- 6 don't know

*[skip to Q8b]*

**7b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

- 25% Republican Party
- 49 Democratic Party
- 18 neither (*volunteered*)
- 7 don't know

**7c. *[independent voters only]* California voters like you will be able to choose between voting in the Democratic primary, or selecting a nonpartisan ballot on June 7th. Both ballots include state proposition measures. Do you plan to vote in the Democratic primary or on the nonpartisan ballot?**

- 22% Democratic primary *[ask Q8a]*
- 57 nonpartisan ballot *[skip to Q9]*
- 4 not planning to vote (*volunteered*) *[skip to Q9]*
- 17 don't know *[skip to Q9]*

*[questions 8a to 12 reported for primary likely voters]*

**8a. *[Democratic primary likely voters only]* If the 2016 Democratic primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? *[rotate names and then ask "or someone else?"]***

- 48% Hillary Clinton
- 41 Bernie Sanders
- 7 someone else (*specify*)
- 4 don't know

**8b. *[Republican primary likely voters only with candidate Rubio]* If the 2016 Republican primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? *[rotate names and then ask "or someone else?"]***

- 38% Donald Trump
- 19 Ted Cruz
- 12 John Kasich
- 12 Marco Rubio
- 10 someone else (*specify*)
- 10 don't know

**8c. *[Republican primary likely voters only without candidate Rubio]* And who would be your second choice for the Republican nomination for president? *[rotate names and then ask "or someone else?"]***

- 25% Ted Cruz
- 22 John Kasich
- 15 Donald Trump
- 13 Marco Rubio
- 12 someone else (*specify*)
- 12 don't know

**8d. *[Republican primary likely voters only with totals recalculated to show Rubio supporters' second choices]* If the 2016 Republican primary for president were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? *[rotate names and then ask "or someone else?"]***

- 38% Donald Trump
- 27 Ted Cruz
- 14 John Kasich
- 11 someone else (*specify*)
- 9 don't know

**9. *[likely voters only]* In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. President in 2016?**

- 51% satisfied
- 45 not satisfied
- 2 both (*volunteered*)
- 2 don't know

10. *[likely voters only]* How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2016 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

- 52% very closely
- 37 fairly closely
- 9 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely
- 1 don't know

11. *[likely voters only]* As you may know, California now has a top-two primary system for statewide races in which voters can cast ballots for any candidate, regardless of party, and the two candidates receiving the most votes—regardless of party—will advance to the general election. If the June primary for U.S. Senator were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? *[rotate names and then ask "or someone else?"]*

- 26% Kamala Harris, a Democrat
- 17 Loretta Sanchez, a Democrat
- 9 Tom Del Beccaro, a Republican
- 6 Duf Sundheim, a Republican
- 11 someone else *(specify)*
- 31 don't know

12. *[likely voters only]* In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the election for U.S. Senate in 2016?

- 47% satisfied
- 30 not satisfied
- 1 both *(volunteered)*
- 23 don't know

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

- 48% big problem
- 36 somewhat of a problem
- 11 not a problem
- 5 don't know

14. As you may know, voters passed Proposition 30 in November 2012. It increased taxes on earnings over \$250,000 until 2018 and sales taxes by one quarter cent until 2016. Do you favor or oppose extending for 12 years the tax increase on earnings over \$250,000 to fund education and healthcare?

- 61% favor
- 35 oppose
- 4 don't know

15. Regardless of how you feel personally about the issue, do you favor or oppose having California voters decide whether to extend the Proposition 30 tax increases with a state proposition in the November 2016 election?

- 66% favor
- 26 oppose
- 8 don't know

On another topic,

16. Would you say traffic congestion on freeways and major roads is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem in your region of California?

- 58% big problem
- 25 somewhat of a problem
- 17 not a problem
- don't know

17. Thinking ahead, how important is spending more money on the maintenance of California's roads, highways, and bridges for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?

- 62% very important
- 30 somewhat important
- 5 not too important
- 3 not at all important
- don't know

**18. Which of the following types of surface transportation projects do you think should have the top priority for additional state funding—[rotate] (1) freeways and highways, (2) public bus and transit systems, (3) carpool lanes, [or] (4) local streets and roads?**

- 34% public bus and transit systems
- 33 freeways and highways
- 24 local streets and roads
- 6 carpool lanes
- 1 other (*specify*)
- 1 don't know

Next,

**19. Overall, how fair do you think our present state and local tax system is—would you say it is very fair, moderately fair, not too fair, or not at all fair?**

- 8% very fair
- 48 moderately fair
- 25 not too fair
- 16 not at all fair
- 3 don't know

**20. When you combine all of the taxes you pay to state and local governments, do you feel that you pay much more than you should, somewhat more than you should, about the right amount, or less than you should?**

- 32% much more
- 24 somewhat more
- 37 about the right amount
- 4 less than you should
- 3 don't know

**21. Where do you think California currently ranks in state and local tax burden per capita? Compared to other states, is California's tax burden per capita near the top, above average, average, below average, or near the bottom?**

- 36% near the top
- 27 above average
- 17 average
- 5 below average
- 6 near the bottom
- 9 don't know

**22. On another topic, would you say that the supply of water is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem in your part of California?**

- 57% big problem
- 23 somewhat of a problem
- 19 not much of a problem
- don't know

**23. The governor has proposed to improve the reliability of water supplies by building tunnels in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. How important is this proposal for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 54% very important
- 26 somewhat important
- 6 not too important
- 7 not at all important
- 8 don't know

**23a. Overall, do you think that the people in your part of California are doing too much, the right amount, or not enough to respond to the current drought in California?**

- 10% too much
- 38 the right amount
- 49 not enough
- 3 don't know

**24. Next, as you may know, California voters passed a \$10 billion state bond in 2008 for planning and construction of a high-speed rail system from Southern California to the Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area. The estimated costs associated with the high-speed rail system are about \$68 billion over the next 20 years. Do you favor or oppose building a high-speed rail system in California? [if oppose, ask: "What if the high-speed rail system cost less, would you favor or oppose building it?"]**

- 52% favor
- 14 oppose, but would favor if it cost less
- 30 oppose, even if it cost less
- 4 don't know

**25. Thinking ahead, how important is the high-speed rail system for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California—is it very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 34% very important
- 29 somewhat important
- 17 not too important
- 18 not at all important
- 1 don't know

On another topic,

**26. In general, how important is California's public higher education system to the quality of life and economic vitality of the state over the next 20 years—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?**

- 80% very important
- 14 somewhat important
- 3 not too important
- 2 not at all important
- 1 don't know

**27. Do you think that a college education is necessary for a person to be successful in today's work world, or do you think that there are many ways to succeed in today's work world without a college education?**

- 59% college education is necessary to be successful
- 39 succeed without a college education
- 2 don't know

**28. On another topic, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?**

- 59% approve
- 38 disapprove
- 3 don't know

**29. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the U.S. Congress is handling its job?**

- 24% approve
- 70 disapprove
- 6 don't know

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

- 40% right direction
- 56 wrong direction
- 4 don't know

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

- 48% good times
- 42 bad times
- 10 don't know

On another topic,

**32. Do you think the gap between the rich and the poor in the U.S. is getting larger, getting smaller, or has it stayed the same?**

- 69% getting larger
- 3 getting smaller
- 25 stayed the same
- 3 don't know

**33. Should the government do more to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor in this country, or is this something the government should not be doing?**

- 68% should do more
- 29 should not be doing
- 3 don't know

**33a. Which comes closer to your view? [rotate] (1) In today's economy, everyone has a fair chance to get ahead in the long run. [or] (2) In today's economy, it's mainly just a few people at the top who have a chance to get ahead.**

- 48% everyone has a fair chance
- 48 just a few people at the top have a chance
- 4 don't know

On another topic,

*[rotate questions 34 to 35a]*

- 34. If you had to choose, would you rather have, a smaller government providing fewer services, or a bigger government providing more services?**
- 39% smaller government, fewer services
  - 57 bigger government, more services
  - 4 don't know
- 35. Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right *[rotate]* (1) most Americans demand more from the government than they are willing to pay taxes for *[or]* (2) most Americans are willing to pay the taxes needed to fund services they expect government to provide**
- 58% most Americans demand more from the government than they are willing to pay taxes for
  - 37 most Americans are willing to pay the taxes needed to fund services they expect government to provide
  - 5 don't know
- 35a. Please indicate which statement comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right *[rotate]* (1) government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest; *[or]* (2) government regulation of business does more harm than good.**
- 60% government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest
  - 34 government regulation of business does more harm than good
  - 6 don't know

- 36. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: *[read list, rotate order from top to bottom]***

- 15% very liberal
- 22 somewhat liberal
- 28 middle-of-the-road
- 19 somewhat conservative
- 14 very conservative
- 2 don't know

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

- 24% great deal
- 36 fair amount
- 32 only a little
- 7 none
- don't know

*[d1 to d4: demographic questions]*

- d5. *[asked of those employed full- or part-time]* How do you usually commute to work—drive alone, carpool, take public bus or transit, walk, or bicycle?**

- 67% drive alone
- 11 carpool
- 12 take public bus or transit
- 3 walk
- 4 bicycle
- 4 work at home *(volunteered)*
- 1 other *(specify)*

*[d6 to d15: demographic questions]*

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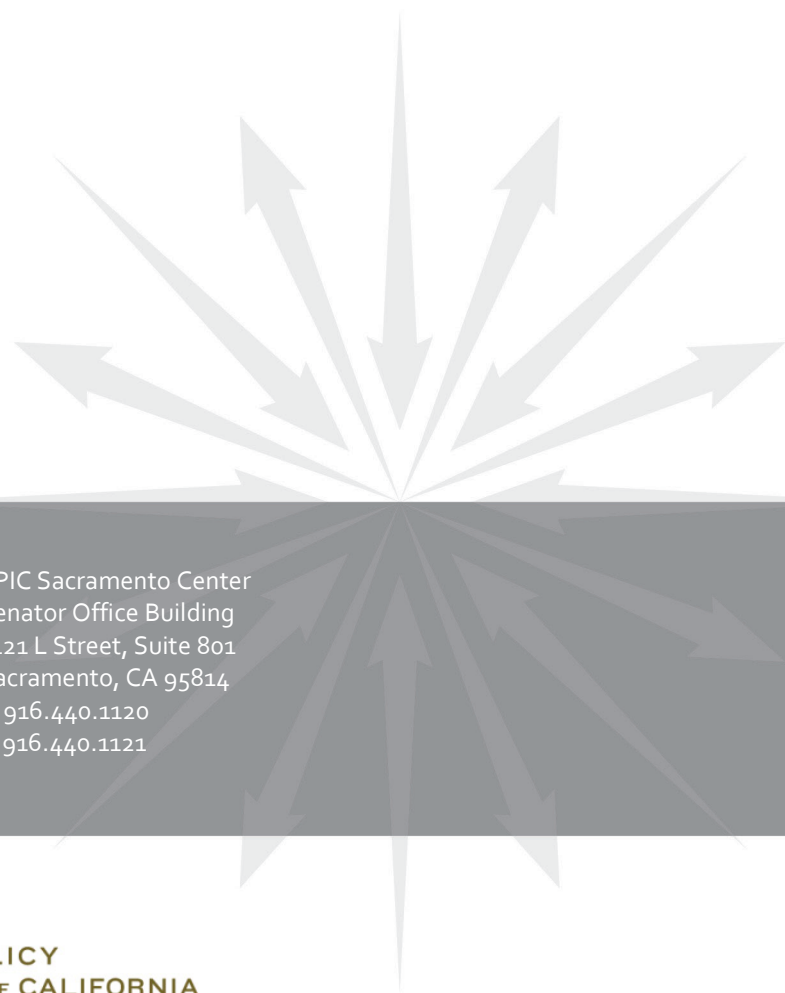
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