



Californians & Their Government

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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

Many in State Say the Worst of COVID-19 Is Ahead for U.S., Most Prefer Caution in Easing Restrictions in Their Area

GOVERNOR'S JOB APPROVAL RISES, BUT VIEWS ARE SPLIT ON HIS BUDGET PLAN

SAN FRANCISCO, June 3, 2020—Many Californians believe that the worst is yet to come for the US with the COVID-19 pandemic, and less than three in ten believe restrictions on physical activity in their area should be decreased. Governor Newsom's job approval has increased since earlier this year—and most Californians approve of his handling of the pandemic—but his recently released budget plan gets mixed reviews. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Asked where they think the US stands with regard to the coronavirus outbreak, 48 percent of Californians say the worst is yet to come, 46 percent say the worst is behind us, and 6 percent say they don't know. Across racial/ethnic groups, 69 percent of African Americans say the worst is yet to come, as do 53 percent of both Asian Americans and Latinos, and 41 percent of whites.

As the issue of gradually lifting "shelter in place" orders continues to generate much discussion, less than three in ten Californians (28%) want restrictions on physical activity reduced in their local area, while 46 percent want about the same number of restrictions and 25 percent want more restrictions. Less than one-third across all regions want fewer restrictions (31% Central Valley, 29% Inland Empire, 28% San Francisco Bay Area, 27% Los Angeles, 27% Orange/San Diego).

Asked about the prospect of state governments easing restrictions, a majority of Californians (58%) say their greater concern is that states lift restrictions on public activity too quickly, while 38 percent say their greater concern is states not lifting restrictions quickly enough.

"Many Californians fear the worst is yet to come in the COVID-19 crisis and favor caution when it comes to their localities and states lifting the current restrictions on public activity," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Many Californians Are Concerned about Getting COVID-19 and Needing Hospitalization, while One in Three Report Job Loss due to COVID-19

A strong majority of Californians are very concerned (24%) or somewhat concerned (34%) about getting COVID-19 and needing hospitalization. The share saying they are very concerned is largest among lower-income Californians (30% annual household income under \$40,000, 22% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 17% \$80,000 or more), and there is also variation across racial/ethnic groups (30% African Americans, 29% Latinos, 23% Asian Americans, 18% whites). Across all regions, at least one in five Californians say they are very concerned about getting COVID-19 and needing to be hospitalized

(26% Inland Empire, 26% Los Angeles, 23% Central Valley, 21% Orange/San Diego, 21% San Francisco Bay Area).

More than one-third of adults (35%) report that they or someone in their household have been laid off or lost their job due to the coronavirus outbreak, and half (51%) report someone in their house having work hours reduced or pay cut. Some groups have been hit harder than others. Those in households with annual incomes under \$40,000 (47%) are much more likely than those making \$40,000 to under \$80,000 (34%) and twice as likely as those making \$80,000 or more (22%) to report a job loss. Also, job loss is higher among Latinos (49%) than among other racial/ethnic groups (35% African Americans, 34% Asian Americans, 24% whites).

“Californians’ perceptions and experiences with the COVID-19 crisis demonstrate the deep fault lines based on income and race and ethnicity in California today,” Baldassare said.

Governor’s Approval Rating Rises

Nearly two-thirds of Californians (65% adults, 64% likely voters) approve of the job Governor Newsom is doing. This is an increase from February (53% adults, 52% likely voters), which had been Newsom’s highest approval rating as governor. Across partisan groups, 86 percent of Democrats, 49 percent of independents, and 27 percent of Republicans approve of the governor’s performance.

Solid majorities approve of how the governor is handling the coronavirus pandemic (69% adults, 69% likely voters), and majorities also approve of his handling of jobs and the economy (59% adults, 57% likely voters). Despite the various challenges presented by the pandemic, most Californians (58% adults, 56% likely voters) say that things in the state are generally going in the right direction.

“Governor Newsom is receiving high marks for his handling of the COVID-19 crisis, and most Californians are surprisingly upbeat about the direction of the state,” Baldassare said.

Californians Are Split on the Governor’s Budget, while Most Oppose Tax Increases

Facing a multibillion-dollar deficit due to a steep decline in projected state revenues, Governor Newsom in mid-May released his revised state budget proposal for 2020–21. Opinion is divided on the revised budget, with 43 percent favoring (40% likely voters), 43 percent opposing (46% likely voters), and 14 percent saying they don’t know or haven’t heard anything about the budget (15% likely voters). Across partisan groups, 48 percent of Democrats, 31 percent of independents, and 26 percent of Republicans approve; 38 percent of Democrats, 52 percent of independents, and 62 percent of Republicans oppose.

Asked whether Governor Newsom should have included tax increases in his budget plan, only one-third of Californians (32% adults, 34% likely voters) say he should have. Solid majorities (60% of both adults and likely voters) say that tax increases should not have been included. Across partisan groups, Democrats (43%) are much more likely than independents (29%) and Republicans (14%) to say tax increases should have been included.

“Governor Newsom’s plan to close a multibillion-dollar state budget gap is receiving mixed reviews, while tax increases are opposed by a two-to-one margin,” Baldassare said.

Overwhelming Majority Supports Expanding Vote-by-Mail

Governor Newsom recently directed county election officials to send vote-by-mail ballots for the November election to all registered voters. An overwhelming majority of likely voters (73%) say this is a good idea, while just 24 percent say it is a bad idea and 2 percent don’t know. Democratic likely voters (94%) are far more likely than independents (63%) or Republicans (37%) to say it is a good idea. Across

regions, support is highest in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area (80% likely voters in both), followed by Orange/San Diego (69%), Central Valley (68%), and the Inland Empire (62%).

Concerns Are High about the State and National Economies

An overwhelming share of Californians (71% adults, 72% likely voters) say that California is in an economic recession, and more than one-third (34% adults, 38% likely voters) believe it is a serious recession rather than a moderate (25% adults, 23% likely voters) or mild (9% adults, 8% likely voters) recession. Across all regions at least 30 percent say California is in a serious recession (40% Orange/San Diego, 34% Los Angeles, 32% Inland Empire and San Francisco Bay Area, 31% Central Valley).

Regarding the national economy, Californians' optimism is low: 23 percent of adults (20% likely voters) expect the nation to have good times financially during the next 12 months. This is a steep decline from the 47 percent of adults saying this in November 2019 and the lowest in PPIC surveys since the Great Recession.

"The overwhelming consensus is that the state has fallen into a recession today, while positive expectations of the US economy for the next year have fallen sharply," Baldassare said.

President's Approval Rating in California Is Low but Stable

President Trump's approval rating is 35 percent among adults and 33 percent among likely voters, very similar to where it stood in February (35% of both adults and likely voters) and in May of last year (34% adults, 38% likely voters). Across partisan groups, 83 percent of Republicans, 41 percent of independents, and 7 percent of Democrats approve. In a recent Gallup poll, 49 percent of adults nationally approved of the president's job performance.

Among Californians who say they approve of President Trump's job performance, an overwhelming majority (70%) say that the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic is behind the US.

Looking ahead to the November election, 57 percent of likely voters in California say they would vote for Joe Biden for president, and 33 percent say Donald Trump. Asked about their preference for the US House of Representatives in November, 59 percent of likely voters would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate in their district, while 34 percent would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. Among likely voters who approve of President Trump's job performance, 84 percent say they would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate in their House district in November. In the seven competitive House races identified by the [Cook Political Report](#) (districts 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 45, and 48), a slim majority of likely voters favor the Democratic candidate (52%) over the Republican (44%).

Currently, 38 percent of California adults and 31 percent of likely voters approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job—similar to the approval ratings for the president.

"President Trump's approval rating has been stable, and it is a powerful predictor of Californians' attitudes towards the COVID-19 crisis now and their vote preferences in November," Baldassare said.

Californians' Trust in the Federal Government Remains Low

As was the case early this year before the coronavirus outbreak, trust in the federal government is low. Asked how often they can trust the federal government to do what is right, 6 percent say just about always and 18 percent say most of the time, while 64 percent say only some of the time and 9 percent say none of the time (volunteered). Findings were similar in January (5% always, 19% most of the time, 66% only some of the time, 8% never).

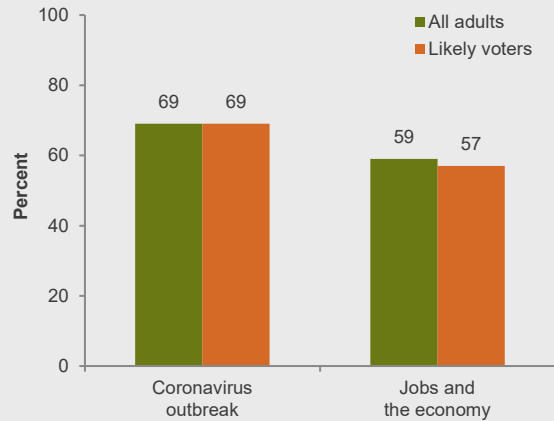
"Californians started the year with low trust in the federal government and this has not changed after months of living with the COVID-19 crisis," Baldassare said.

State Issues

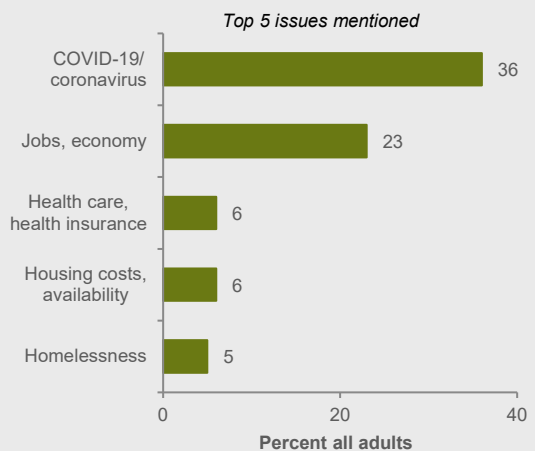
Key Findings

- Sixty-five percent of adults approve of Governor Newsom’s overall job performance; 69 percent approve of his handling of the coronavirus outbreak, and 59 percent approve of his handling of the issue of jobs and the economy. Fifty-six percent approve of the legislature. *(page 7)*
- COVID-19 and jobs and the economy are most frequently named as the top issues facing California today. Fifty-eight percent of adults say California is going in the right direction; however, 71 percent say the state is in an economic recession. *(page 8)*
- Nearly six in ten adults are very (24%) or somewhat (34%) concerned about getting the coronavirus and being hospitalized. Seven in ten say there should be about the same (46%) or more (25%) restrictions on public activity in their area as there are now; 28 percent say there should be fewer restrictions. *(page 9)*
- Thirty-five percent of Californians say they or someone in their household has lost their job due to the coronavirus outbreak; 51 percent have had hours reduced or pay cut, while 27 percent have had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage. *(page 10)*
- Forty-five percent of adults rate their personal finances as excellent (9%) or good (36%); 29 percent say they are worse off financially than they were a year ago, 16 percent say they are better off financially, and 54 percent say they are just about the same financially as a year ago. *(page 11)*
- Forty-six percent of adults say the state budget situation in California is a big problem today. After hearing a brief summary, Californians are divided on the governor’s budget plan (43% favor, 43% oppose); 60 percent say the budget plan should not include a tax increase. *(page 12)*

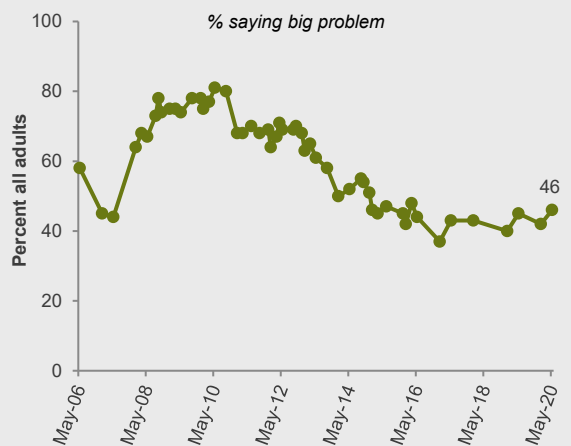
Approval of Governor Newsom’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak and jobs and the economy



Most important issue facing California today



Seriousness of the state budget situation



Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

Governor Newsom’s approval rating is at 65 percent among adults and 64 percent among likely voters. In February, 53 percent of adults and 52 percent of likely voters approved of the way the governor was handling his job—which was a record high at that time. Today, his approval rating is 86 percent among Democrats, 49 percent among independents, and 27 percent among Republicans. Majorities across regions and across age, education, gender, homeownership, income, and racial/ethnic groups approve.

Majorities of Californians also approve of the governor’s handling of the coronavirus outbreak (69% adults, 69% likely voters) and jobs and the economy (59% adults, 57% likely voters). Majorities across the state’s regions and across age, education, and income groups approve of his handling of these issues. Here, too, approval is divided along partisan lines.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		65%	26%	9%
Likely voters		64	31	6
Party	Democrats	86	8	6
	Republicans	27	66	7
	Independents	49	40	11
Region	Central Valley	64	30	7
	Inland Empire	55	31	14
	Los Angeles	71	21	8
	Orange/San Diego	61	30	9
San Francisco Bay Area		71	21	8

As state legislators focus on a massive state budget deficit and other serious consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, 56 percent of adults and 50 percent of likely voters approve of the way the legislature is handling its job. Approval ratings were similar in February (51% adults, 49% likely voters). Today, 70 percent of Democrats approve, compared to 39 percent of independents and 23 percent of Republicans. About six in ten adults approve in the Central Valley, Los Angeles, Orange/San Diego, and the San Francisco Bay Area, compared to 41 percent in the Inland Empire. Latinos (71%) and Asian Americans (64%) are more likely than African Americans (48%) and whites (44%) to approve.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		56%	32%	13%
Likely voters		50	39	11
Party	Democrats	70	17	13
	Republicans	23	65	12
	Independents	39	48	13
Region	Central Valley	58	35	7
	Inland Empire	41	42	16
	Los Angeles	60	28	13
	Orange/San Diego	58	32	9
San Francisco Bay Area		58	26	16

Top Issues and State of the State

Californians are most likely to name either COVID-19 (36% adults, 35% likely voters) or jobs and the economy (23% adults, 25% likely voters) as the most important issue facing people in California today. Other issues with fewer mentions include health care (6% adults, 5% likely voters), housing costs and availability (6% adults, 7% likely voters), and homelessness (5% adults, 4% likely voters). COVID-19 and jobs and the economy are named as top issues across the regions of the state by similar shares of adults. In September 2019, Californians were most likely to name homelessness (15% adults, 16% likely voters) and jobs and the economy (15% adults, 13% likely voters) as the most important issues facing California today.

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

Top 5 issues mentioned	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
COVID-19/coronavirus	36%	36%	36%	33%	34%	39%	35%
Jobs, economy	23	24	24	26	21	24	25
Health care, health insurance	6	6	5	6	7	6	5
Housing costs, availability	6	5	3	8	4	8	7
Homelessness	5	4	7	5	4	4	4

Surprisingly, given the context of the COVID-19 crisis, 58 percent of adults and 56 percent of likely voters say that things in California are generally going in the right direction. In January, 50 percent of adults and 49 percent of likely voters held this view. Today, Democrats (78%) are far more likely than independents (45%) and Republicans (21%) to say that things are going in the right direction. Majorities across age, education, and income groups hold this view. Majorities in Los Angeles (64%), the San Francisco Bay Area (63%), Orange/San Diego (56%), and the Central Valley (54%) hold this view, compared to 49 percent in the Inland Empire. Latinos (70%) and Asian Americans (67%) are much more likely than whites (48%) and African Americans (47%) to say things in California are going in the right direction.

Nonetheless, about seven in ten Californians (71% adults, 72% likely voters) say that California is in an economic recession, and one in three believe it is a serious recession rather than a moderate or a mild one. A plurality in every region, with the exception of the Central Valley, say that California is in a serious recession. The perception that California is in a serious recession varies across partisan groups (41% Republicans, 35% Democrats, 32% independents) and racial/ethnic groups (38% whites, 34% African Americans, 30% Asian Americans, 29% Latinos). The share saying that California is in a serious recession increases with age (26% 18 to 34, 33% 35 to 54, 41% 55 and older) and level of education (29% high school only, 35% some college, 38% college graduate).

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

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Yes, serious recession	34%	31%	32%	34%	40%	32%	38%
Yes, moderate recession	25	33	23	24	18	25	23
Yes, mild recession	9	10	10	12	8	7	8
Yes, don't know (<i>volunteered</i>)	3	3	3	1	2	4	3
Not in a recession	24	18	30	25	27	25	24
Don't know	5	4	2	4	6	6	4

Coronavirus Concerns

As the number of COVID-19 cases in California continues to rise, 58 percent of California adults say that they are concerned (24% very, 34% somewhat) that they will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization. The proportion who say that they are very concerned is highest among lower-income residents (30% under \$40,000, 22% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 17% \$80,000 or more), and it varies across racial/ethnic groups (30% African Americans, 29% Latinos, 23% Asian Americans, 18% whites). Moreover, there are partisan differences in the proportion who say they are very concerned that they will get the coronavirus and require hospitalization (26% Democrats, 20% independents, 15% Republicans). The proportion who say they are very concerned also varies somewhat by age (18% 18 to 34, 27% 35 to 54, 26% 55 and older). Across the state’s regions, at least two in ten adults say they are very concerned about getting the coronavirus and being hospitalized (26% Inland Empire, 26% Los Angeles, 23% Central Valley, 21% Orange/San Diego, 21% San Francisco Bay Area).

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

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very concerned	24%	30%	22%	17%	30%	23%	29%	18%
Somewhat concerned	34	35	29	39	33	41	39	30
Not too concerned	23	19	29	24	16	20	17	29
Not at all concerned	19	15	19	20	21	14	14	23
Don't know	1	1	1	–	–	1	–	1

Earlier in May, the governor’s executive order informed local health jurisdictions and industry sectors that they may gradually reopen with modifications and guidance provided by the state. While there have been political controversies over the gradual lifting of “shelter in place” orders, 46 percent of Californians say that the number of restrictions on public activity should be the same as they have in their area right now, while 25 percent want more restrictions and 28 percent want fewer restrictions. Among likely voters, 47% say there should be the same number of restrictions, 20% say more restrictions, and 32% say fewer restrictions. The proportion who say that there should be fewer restrictions rises with income level (18% under \$40,000, 30% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 36% \$80,000 or more). The share holding this view varies by age (21% 18 to 34, 34% 35 to 54, 29% 55 and older), racial/ethnic groups (17% Latinos, 26% African Americans, 33% Asian Americans, 35% whites), and partisanship (13% Democrats, 43% independents, 56% Republicans). Across the state’s regions, fewer than one in three want fewer restrictions (31% Central Valley, 29% Inland Empire, 28% San Francisco Bay Area, 27% Los Angeles, 27% Orange/San Diego).

“Thinking about the restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak in your area, do you think there should be more restrictions right now, or fewer restrictions right now, or about the same number of restrictions right now?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
More restrictions	25%	36%	17%	16%	27%	21%	37%	15%
Fewer restrictions	28	18	30	36	26	33	17	35
About the same number of restrictions	46	45	51	47	47	47	45	49
Don't know	1	1	2	–	–	–	1	1

Coronavirus Consequences

Many Californians have been financially affected by the coronavirus outbreak. Thirty-five percent of adults report that they have or someone in their household has been laid off or lost their job, and 51 percent report someone in their house having their work hours reduced or their pay cut. Thirty percent of Californians report that they have or someone in their household has been laid off or lost their job and had work hours reduced or pay cut; 43 percent report neither. About a quarter of Californians (27%) report that they or someone in their household have had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage.

“Because of the coronavirus outbreak, have you or anyone in your household...?”

All adults	Been laid off or lost their job	Had work hours reduced or pay cut	Had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage
Yes	35%	51%	27%
No	64	49	72
Don't pay rent/mortgage (volunteered)	n/a	n/a	1
Don't know	1	–	–

While many Californians have felt the impact of COVID-19, some groups have been hit harder than others. Californians living in households with annual incomes under \$40,000 (47%) are much more likely than those making \$40,000 to \$80,000 (34%) and twice as likely as those making \$80,000 or more (22%) to report losing their job. Job loss is highest among Latinos (49%) and is higher among those without a college degree (40% high school only, 38% some college) than those with a degree (27%). Reports of job loss are higher among renters (41%) than homeowners (30%). Across regions, reported job loss is highest in the Inland Empire (42%) and Los Angeles (40%), followed by Orange/San Diego (35%), the San Francisco Bay Area (32%), and the Central Valley (29%).

The share of Californians who report reduced hours or pay cuts declines with income and is higher among Latinos and African Americans than Asian Americans or whites. Reports of hours or pay being reduced decline with rising education (56% high school only, 50% some college, 46% college graduate) and reports are higher among renters (56%) than homeowners (45%).

When it comes to paying rent or mortgages, Californians making less than \$40,000 (42%) are nearly twice as likely as those making \$40,000 to \$80,000 (22%), and three times as likely as those making \$80,000 or more (13%), to report difficulty. Latinos are the most likely to report difficulty—twice as likely as Asian Americans and three times as likely as whites. Renters (36%) are about twice as likely as homeowners (17%) to report difficulty paying their rent or mortgage.

There are also sizable differences across age groups in reported household job losses (41% 18 to 34, 40% 35 to 54, 25% 55 and older), hours being reduced or pay cut (63% 18 to 34, 53% 35 to 54, 37% 55 and older), and difficulty paying rent or mortgage (37% 18 to 34, 27% 35 to 54, 19% 55 and older).

% saying yes		Been laid off or lost their job	Had work hours reduced or pay cut	Had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage
All adults		35%	51%	27%
Household income	Under \$40,000	47	63	42
	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	34	52	22
	\$80,000 or more	22	38	13
Race/Ethnicity	African Americans	35	60	33
	Asian Americans	34	48	21
	Latinos	49	66	44
	Whites	24	39	15

Personal Finances

Californians offer a mixed assessment of their personal finances: 45 percent rate their own personal financial situation as either excellent (9%) or good (36%); 37 percent say their situation is fair; and 18 percent rate their financial situation as poor. Surprisingly, given the impact of the coronavirus crisis, ratings among all adults are nearly identical to survey responses last May (8% excellent, 35% good, 38% fair, 18% poor). Adults nationwide offer a similar assessment in an April Pew Research Center poll (7% excellent, 40% good, 37% fair, 16% poor).

There are stark differences across income groups, with lower income Californians far less likely than those with higher incomes to say their personal financial situation is excellent or good (24% under \$40,000, 45% \$40,000 to \$80,000, 69% \$80,000 or more). There are large differences in the shares saying excellent or good across racial/ethnic groups (30% African Americans, 30% Latinos, 54% whites, 55% Asian Americans). Homeowners (59%) are much more likely than renters (32%) to rate their personal financial situation as excellent or good, and this perception is more prevalent among college graduates (61%) than among those with some college (43%) or a high school degree or less (32%). Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (49%) and Central Valley (47%) are the most likely to say their situation is excellent or good, followed by those in Orange/San Diego (44%), Los Angeles (40%), and the Inland Empire (33%).

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

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Excellent	9%	3%	5%	18%	3%	12%	4%	12%
Good	36	21	40	51	27	43	26	42
Fair	37	43	42	25	47	32	45	31
Poor	18	32	13	6	22	12	24	14

When asked if they and their family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as a year ago, 29 percent of Californians say they are worse off, 16 percent say they are better off, and 54 percent say they are about the same. In our November 2019 survey, fewer said they are worse off and more said they are better off than a year ago (22% worse off, 23% better off, 54% about the same).

Lower-income Californians are more likely than higher-income residents to report being worse off compared to a year ago. Across racial/ethnic groups, about three in ten say they are worse off than a year ago. About one in three renters (33%) and those with a high school education only (33%) report being worse off financially than a year ago. Across regions, more than three in ten in the San Francisco Bay Area (34%) and Los Angeles (32%) say they are worse off financially than they were a year ago, compared to fewer in other regions (28% Inland Empire, 27% Central Valley, 25% Orange/San Diego).

“Thinking about your own personal finances. Would you say that you and your family are financially better off, worse off, or just about the same as a year ago?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Better off	16%	13%	16%	21%	15%	20%	17%	14%
Worse off	29	35	30	22	30	28	32	28
Same	54	51	54	57	56	52	50	58

State Budget

Just a few months ago, the California budget situation was quite rosy, with an estimated multibillion-dollar surplus. Today, there is an estimated multibillion-dollar budget deficit for the current and next fiscal year. When asked about the state budget situation, 46 percent of adults and 52 percent of likely voters say it is a big problem. Surprisingly, the share of Californians who think the state budget situation is a big problem was similar in January (42% adults, 46% likely voters) and to last May (45% adults, 50% likely voters). There is a wide partisan divide, with Republicans more than twice as likely as Democrats to say the budget situation is a big problem. Fewer than half of Californians across regions call the budget situation a big problem. Whites (53%) and African Americans (49%) are more likely than Latinos (40%) or Asian Americans (33%) to say the state budget situation is a big problem, and this perception increases with rising age and income.

“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	46%	35%	76%	52%	52%
Somewhat of a problem	38	44	14	36	33
Not a problem	10	13	3	8	9
Don't know	6	8	8	4	6

After hearing a brief summary of Governor Newsom’s budget plan, Californians are evenly divided on whether they favor or oppose the plan (43% favor, 43% oppose). Likely voters are similarly divided. The plan includes proposed spending cuts to K–12 public education and community colleges, health and human services, and state employee compensation; it also proposes to tap into the state’s reserve funds. Nearly half of Democrats (48%) favor the proposal, compared to fewer independents (31%) and Republicans (26%). Support for the governor’s budget proposal is higher among Asian Americans and Latinos (54% each) than among whites (32%) and African Americans (26%). Notably, support for the governor’s budget ranges from 40 percent to 45 percent across age, income, and education groups. Across regions, support is highest in Los Angeles (49%), the San Francisco Bay Area (47%), and Orange/San Diego (43%), followed by the Central Valley (35%) and the Inland Empire (31%).

“In general, do you favor or oppose the governor’s budget plan?”*

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	43%	48%	26%	31%	40%
Oppose	43	38	62	52	46
Don't know/have not heard anything about the budget (volunteered)	14	14	11	17	15

*For complete question text, see p. 25.

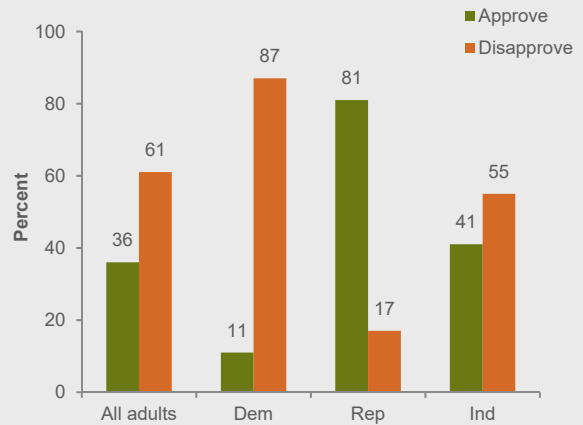
When asked if tax increases should have been included in the governor’s budget plan, just one in three (32% adults, 34% likely voters) say they should have been included, while six in ten Californians and likely voters (60% each) say they should not have been included. Notably, four in ten or fewer across regions of the state, and age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups say taxes should have been included in the governor’s budget plan. Democrats (43%) are more likely than independents (29%) and Republicans (14%) to say that taxes should have been included.

National Issues

Key Findings

- Thirty-five percent of adults approve of President Trump’s overall job performance and 36 percent approve of his handling of the coronavirus outbreak. A similar share approve of Congress (38%). *(page 14)*
- Twenty-three percent of adults—the lowest share since the Great Recession—think the US will have good times financially over the next 12 months. About one in four say the federal government can be trusted just about always (6%) or most of the time (18%). *(page 15)*
- A majority of adults (58%) are more concerned about state governments lifting coronavirus restrictions too quickly than about restrictions not being lifted quickly enough. Californians are divided on whether the worst is behind us (46%) or yet to come (48%). *(page 16)*
- Sixty-two percent of Californians favor a national health plan, sometimes called Medicare-for-all. Two in three adults are very (28%) or somewhat (38%) worried about affording the cost of their health care over the next few years. *(page 17)*
- Among California’s likely voters, 57 percent say they would vote for Joe Biden for president in the November election; 33 percent say they would vote for Donald Trump. Eight in ten likely voters are following news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election very closely (44%) or fairly closely (36%). *(page 18)*
- Among likely voters, 59 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate for the US House of Representatives in their district; 34 percent would vote for the Republican candidate. Three in four likely voters (73%) think it is a good idea to send all registered voters vote-by-mail ballots; 24 percent say it is a bad idea. *(page 19)*

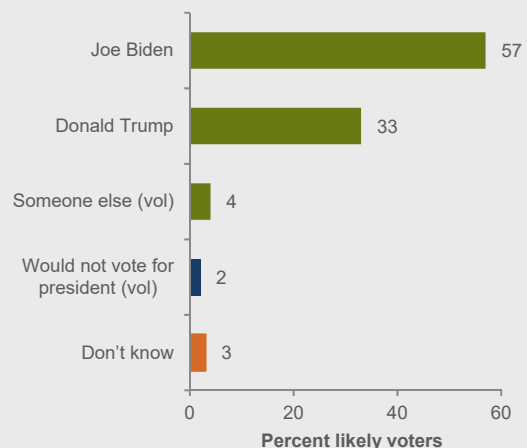
Approval of President Trump’s handling of the coronavirus



Perception that the US will experience good economic times over the next 12 months



Choice for president in November 2020 general election



Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

President Trump’s approval rating is 35 percent among adults and 33 percent among likely voters. The president’s approval was similar in February (35% adults and likely voters) and in May of last year (34% adults, 38% likely voters). Today, about eight in ten Republicans approve, compared to four in ten independents and fewer than one in ten Democrats. Central Valley residents (47%) are the most likely to approve compared to fewer elsewhere. Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (43%) are the most likely to approve, followed by Asian Americans (32%), Latinos (30%), and African Americans (17%). Men (42%) are much more likely than women (29%) to approve. In a recent Gallup poll, 49 percent of adults nationwide approved of President Trump’s job performance.

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic, 36 percent of adults and 34 percent of likely voters approve of the way President Trump is handling the outbreak. Republicans (81%) are far more likely than independents (41%) and Democrats (11%) to approve. More than four in ten in Orange/San Diego (44%) and the Central Valley (42%) approve, compared to fewer elsewhere (37% Inland Empire, 32% Los Angeles, 27% San Francisco Bay Area). Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (44%) are more likely to approve than Latinos (31%), Asian Americans (30%), and African Americans (18%). Men (42%) are more likely than women (30%) to approve. Adults nationwide (42%) are slightly more likely than Californians to approve of the president’s handling of the outbreak, according to a May CNN Poll.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		35%	62%	3%
Likely voters		33	65	2
Party	Democrats	7	91	2
	Republicans	83	15	2
	Independents	41	57	2
Region	Central Valley	47	49	4
	Inland Empire	39	56	5
	Los Angeles	33	64	4
	Orange/San Diego	39	58	2
	San Francisco Bay Area	22	77	1

Thirty-eight percent of adults and 31 percent of likely voters approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job. Approval was similar in February (38% adults, 32% likely voters) but lower last May (30% adults, 22% likely voters). Today, Democrats (38%) are more likely than independents (27%) and Republicans (22%) to approve. With the exception of Los Angeles (41%), approval ratings for congress are below 40 percent across the regions of the state.

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		38%	55%	7%
Likely voters		31	65	4
Party	Democrats	38	57	5
	Republicans	22	73	5
	Independents	27	65	8
Region	Central Valley	38	56	6
	Inland Empire	34	58	8
	Los Angeles	41	53	7
	Orange/San Diego	34	61	5
	San Francisco Bay Area	39	53	8

State of the Nation

As the United States grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, a national economic recession is also looming. Just 23 percent of adults and 20 percent of likely voters expect the US will have good times financially over the next 12 months—the lowest shares in PPIC surveys since the Great Recession—while the overwhelming majority of Californians expect bad economic times (70% adults, 73% likely voters). Since November 2019, there has been a 24-point decline in expectations for good economic times in the next 12 months (47% to 23%). Today, 40 percent of Republicans, 19 percent of independents, and 12 percent of Democrats expect good economic times. Fewer than three in ten across regions expect good economic times, with those in the San Francisco Bay Area (15%) the least likely to hold this view. Fewer than three in ten across racial/ethnic groups expect good times (27% Latinos, 24% whites, 16% Asian Americans, 15% African Americans). Fewer than three in ten across age, education, income, gender, and homeownership groups anticipate good economic times in the next 12 months.

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

		Good times	Bad times	Don't know
All adults		23%	70%	6%
Likely voters		20	73	7
Party	Democrats	12	83	5
	Republicans	40	50	9
	Independents	19	73	8
Region	Central Valley	28	69	3
	Inland Empire	28	63	9
	Los Angeles	25	68	7
	Orange/San Diego	21	72	7
	San Francisco Bay Area	15	78	7

One in four adults say they can trust the federal government to do what is right just about always (6%) or most of the time (18%), while more than seven in ten say it can be trusted some (64%) or none (9%) of the time. Findings were similar in January (5% always, 19% most of the time, 66% only some of the time, 8% never). Today, 16 percent of Democrats and independents say they can trust government just about always or most of the time, compared to 28 percent of Republicans. Fewer than three in ten across regions hold this view—with the exception of those in the Inland Empire (11% always, 23% most of the time). About one in four across age groups say this. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (34%) and Asian Americans (28%) are much more likely than whites (18%) and African Americans (17%) to hold this view. The shares holding this view are larger among those with a high school diploma only (33%) than those with some college (20%) or college graduates (19%) and those with incomes under \$40,000 (29%) than those with incomes of \$40,000 to under \$80,000 (26%) or \$80,000 or more (18%).

“How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington today to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?”

	All adults	Party			Age		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	18 to 34	35 to 54	55 and older
Just about always	6%	3%	4%	3%	6%	7%	7%
Most of the time	18	13	24	13	20	18	17
Only some of the time	64	70	66	73	67	62	64
None of the time (volunteered)	9	12	6	10	5	12	10
Don't know	2	2	1	–	2	2	2

Coronavirus Policy

As the process of reopening begins across the country, states and the federal government are fine-tuning plans to reopen their economies while working to protect public health and avoid a second wave of COVID-19. What do Californians think about state governments lifting restrictions? A majority of Californians (58%) say their greater concern is that state governments will lift coronavirus-related restrictions on public activity too quickly, while 38 percent say their greater concern is that states will not lift restrictions quickly enough. Among partisan groups, 82 percent of Democrats express greater concern over lifting restrictions too quickly, while 70 percent of Republicans express greater concern over not lifting restrictions quickly enough. Independents are more divided (49% too quickly, 46% not quickly enough). About half or more across regions say their greater concern is state governments lifting restrictions too quickly. Among racial/ethnic groups, Asian Americans and African Americans are more likely than whites and Latinos to hold this view. The share concerned over lifting restrictions too quickly increases as education level rises (50% high school diploma only, 61% some college education, 67% college graduate). Younger Californians (66% 18 to 34) are much more likely than older Californians (54% 35 and older) to say they are concerned about lifting restrictions too quickly. Adults nationwide are more likely to say their greater concern is that state governments will lift coronavirus-related restrictions on public activity too quickly (68% to 31%) according to a May Pew Research Center poll.

“Thinking about the decisions by a number of state governments to impose significant restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak, is your greater concern that state governments will lift the restrictions too quickly or not lift the restrictions quickly enough?”

	All adults	Party			Race/ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Too quickly	58%	82%	27%	49%	66%	67%	55%	56%
Not quickly enough	38	16	70	46	30	31	42	41
Don't know	3	2	3	5	4	3	3	3

The World Health Organization warned nations against scaling back coronavirus restrictions too quickly and cautioned that another spike in coronavirus cases may hit countries ahead of a presumed second wave of infections in the autumn and winter months. With more than 1.7 million cases in the US, where do Californians think the nation stands in the coronavirus outbreak? Californians are divided: 46 percent say the worst is behind us and 48 percent say the worst is yet to come. Across partisan groups, 69 percent of Republicans and 54 percent of independents say the worst is behind us, while 63 percent of Democrats say the worst is yet to come. Among those who approve of President Trump, 70 percent say the worst is behind us. Across racial/ethnic groups, whites are the most likely (51%) and African Americans are the least likely (29%) to hold this view. Men (52%) are more likely than women (41%) to say the worst is behind us. Fifty-two percent of adults nationwide think the worst is yet to come according to a May CNN poll (44% say the worst is behind us).

“Which comes closer to your view about where the US stands in the coronavirus outbreak: the worst is behind us or the worst is yet to come?”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Behind us	46%	31%	69%	54%	29%	45%	44%	51%
Yet to come	48	63	23	38	69	53	53	41
Don't know	6	5	8	7	2	2	4	8

Health Care Policy

The coronavirus pandemic has brought the US health care system into the spotlight. When asked about having a national health plan, sometimes called “Medicare-for-all,” a solid majority of Californians (62%) say they are in favor. Among likely voters, 55% say they are in favor and 42% say they are opposed. Democrats are far more likely than Republicans and independents to favor a national health plan. Majorities across regions are in favor (68% Los Angeles, 65% San Francisco Bay Area, 64% Inland Empire, 59% Central Valley, 56% Orange/San Diego). Among racial/ethnic groups, a majority of Latinos, Asian Americans, and African Americans are in favor compared to half of whites. Majorities of women (63%) and men (61%) favor a national health plan as do majorities across education (71% high school only, 57% some college, 59% college graduate) and income groups (74% under \$40,000, 53% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 56% \$80,000 or more). The share in favor declines with rising age (75% 18 to 34, 60% 35 to 54, 53% 55 and older). Among those with health insurance, 62% are in favor; among those without insurance, 70% say they are in favor. In an April Kaiser Family Foundation poll, 54 percent of adults nationwide said they favored a national health plan, while 41 percent said they were opposed.

“Do you favor or oppose having a national health plan, sometimes called Medicare-for-all, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?”

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Favor	62%	76%	23%	48%	56%	68%	80%	49%
Oppose	35	21	75	50	42	31	19	47
Don't know	3	3	2	3	1	1	2	4

Today, 66 percent of adults are very (28%) or somewhat (38%) worried about being able to afford the cost of their health care over the next few years. In September 2019, 70 percent of Californians expressed concern (38% very, 32% somewhat). Today, majorities across income groups say they are worried, while those in lower income groups are the most likely to say they are very worried. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups also say they are worried, with Latinos (41%) and African Americans (39%) much more likely to say they are very worried than Asian Americans (22%) and whites (17%). Six in ten or more across regions say they are very or somewhat worried (72% Los Angeles, 66% Orange/San Diego, 64% Inland Empire, 62% San Francisco Bay Area, 61% Central Valley), as are majorities across age groups (67% 18 to 34, 70% 35 to 54, 59% 55 and older). Half or more of Democrats (65%), independents (62%), and Republicans (50%) say this. Among those with health insurance, 63% say they are very (25%) or somewhat (38%) worried; among those without insurance, 83 percent say they are very (45%) or somewhat worried (38%) about being able to afford the cost of health care.

“What do you think about being able to afford the cost of your health care, including the cost of insurance and your out-of-pocket expenses, over the next few years? Is this something that you are very worried about, somewhat worried, not so worried, or not worried at all?”

	All adults	Household income			Race/Ethnicity			
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Very worried	28%	37%	31%	17%	39%	22%	41%	17%
Somewhat worried	38	38	37	37	23	44	40	36
Not so worried	16	10	17	20	22	16	8	20
Not worried at all	19	14	15	25	15	17	10	26
Don't know	1	–	–	1	1	2	–	–

2020 Presidential Election

In the midst of the COVID-19 crisis, Californians are paying attention to the presidential election. Eighty percent of likely voters say they are following news about the candidates very (44%) or fairly (36%) closely. Similar shares of likely voters said they were following the news about candidates very or fairly closely in February (44% very, 39% fairly), leading up to California’s primary election in March.

“How closely are you following the news about candidates for the 2020 presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Very closely	Fairly closely	Not too closely	Not at all closely
All likely voters		44%	36%	14%	5%
Party	Democrats	44	37	13	5
	Republicans	51	32	11	5
	Independents	35	38	19	7
Region	Central Valley	41	32	19	8
	Inland Empire	49	25	21	6
	Los Angeles	44	39	12	5
	Orange/San Diego	49	33	14	4
	San Francisco Bay Area	43	40	12	4

If the presidential election were held today, 57 percent of likely voters say they would vote for Joe Biden while 33 percent say they would vote for Donald Trump. Democrats overwhelmingly support Biden while Republicans overwhelmingly support Trump; independents are more divided (47% Biden, 41% Trump). Regionally, likely voters in Los Angeles, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Orange/San Diego prefer Biden, while those in the Inland Empire prefer Trump; those in the Central Valley are evenly divided between Biden and Trump (47% each). Majorities across age, education, and income groups support Joe Biden. Strong majorities of Latinos (72%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (68%) support Biden, compared to half of whites (49%). (Sample sizes for Asian American and African American likely voters are too small for separate analysis.) Women (64%) are much more likely than men (50%) to support Biden. In a nationwide CNN survey in May, 51 percent of registered voters said they would vote for Biden and 46 percent said they would vote for Trump.

“If the November 3rd presidential election were being held today, would you vote for Joe Biden, the Democrat, or Donald Trump, the Republican?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Joe Biden	Donald Trump	Someone else (specify) (vol)	Would not vote for president (vol)	Don't know
All likely voters		57%	33%	4%	2%	3%
Party	Democrats	85	8	4	1	2
	Republicans	9	86	2	–	3
	Independents	47	41	1	3	8
Region	Central Valley	47	47	4	1	–
	Inland Empire	43	50	3	1	3
	Los Angeles	70	22	2	1	4
	Orange/ San Diego	50	37	6	2	6
	San Francisco Bay Area	67	20	7	3	2

2020 General Election

If the 2020 election for the US House of Representatives were held today, 59 percent of likely voters would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 34 percent would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. Most partisans would support their own party; independents are more divided, but a plurality favor the Republican candidate. The Democratic candidate is preferred by large margins in Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area, and by narrower margins in the Central Valley, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego. Among racial/ethnic groups, strong majorities of Latinos (76%) and those in other racial ethnic groups (69%) support the Democratic candidate; whites are more divided (49% Democratic candidate, 42% Republican candidate). Women (65%) are much more likely than men (52%) to support the Democratic candidate. Majorities across age, education, income, and homeownership groups say they would vote for the Democratic candidate. Among the likely voters who approve of President Trump’s job performance, 84 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate; among those who disapprove, 85 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate. Democratic candidates are preferred by a 33-point margin (62% to 29%) in Democratic-held districts, while Republican candidates are preferred by a 17-point margin (57% to 40%) in Republican-held districts. In the seven competitive California districts, a slim majority favor the Democratic candidate (52%) over the Republican candidate (44%), according to the [Cook Political Report](#).

“If the 2020 election for U.S. House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Dem/lean Dem	Rep/lean Rep	Don't know
All likely voters		59%	34%	8%
Party	Democrats	90	6	4
	Republicans	6	85	8
	Independents	40	45	15
Region	Central Valley	54	41	5
	Inland Empire	54	43	3
	Los Angeles	70	21	9
	Orange/San Diego	50	43	7
	San Francisco Bay Area	67	27	6

Governor Newsom directed county election officials to send vote-by-mail ballots for the November election to all registered voters. Seventy-three percent of likely voters think this is a good idea while one in four say this is a bad idea. Democrats are much more likely than Republicans and independents to say it is a good idea. Solid majorities across regions and demographic groups say it is a good idea. Among the likely voters who approve of President Trump’s job performance, 34 percent say it is a good idea (63% bad idea); among those who disapprove, 93 percent think it is a good idea (5% bad idea).

“In response to the coronavirus outbreak, Governor Newsom directed each county’s elections officials to send vote-by-mail ballots for the November 3, 2020 General Election to all registered voters. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?”

<i>Likely voters only</i>		Good idea	Bad idea	Don't know
All likely voters		73%	24%	2%
Party	Democrats	94	4	2
	Republicans	37	58	5
	Independents	63	36	1
Region	Central Valley	68	28	4
	Inland Empire	62	37	1
	Los Angeles	80	17	3
	Orange/San Diego	69	30	1
	San Francisco Bay Area	80	18	1

Regional Map



Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance from survey research associate Rachel Lawler, project manager for this survey, associate survey director Dean Bonner, and survey research associate Alyssa Dykman. The Californians and Their Government series is supported with funding from the Arjay and Frances F. Miller Foundation, the James Irvine Foundation, and the PPIC Donor Circle. The PPIC Statewide Survey invites input, comments, and suggestions from policy and public opinion experts and from its own advisory committee, but survey methods, questions, and content are determined solely by PPIC's survey team.

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,706 California adult residents, including 1,278 interviewed on cell phones and 428 interviewed on landline telephones. The sample included 514 respondents reached by calling back respondents who had previously completed an interview in PPIC Statewide Surveys in the last six months. Interviews took an average of 19 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from May 17–26, 2020.

Cell phone interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection. 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.

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. 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.

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

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

Abt Associates uses the US Census Bureau's 2014–2018 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt Associates used 2018 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is ± 3.5 percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,706 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.5 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,326 registered voters, the sampling error is ± 4.1 percent; for the 1,048 likely voters, it is ± 4.6 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

We present results for five geographic regions, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents of other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populous areas are not large enough to report separately. We also present results for congressional districts currently held by Democrats or Republicans, based on residential zip code and party of the local US House member. We analyze the results of those who live in competitive house districts as determined by the [Cook Political Report’s 2020 House Race Ratings](#) updated April 24, 2020. These districts are 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 45, and 48; a map of California’s congressional districts can be [found here](#).

We present results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 42 percent of the state’s adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about a third of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest-growing voter groups. We also present results for non-Hispanic Asian Americans, who make up about 15 percent of the state’s adult population, and non-Hispanic African Americans, who comprise about 6 percent. Results for other racial/ethnic groups—such as Native Americans—are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes are not large enough for separate analysis. Results for African American and Asian American likely voters are combined with those of other racial/ethnic groups because sample sizes for African American and Asian American likely voters are too small for separate analysis. We compare the opinions of those who report they are registered Democrats, registered Republicans, and decline-to-state or independent voters; the results for those who say they are registered to vote in other parties are not large enough for separate analysis. We also analyze the responses of likely voters—so designated per their responses to survey questions about voter registration, previous election participation, intentions to vote this year, attention to election news, and current interest in politics.

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

We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in our earlier surveys and to those in national surveys by CNN, Gallup, the Kaiser Family Foundation, and Pew Research Center. Question 21 was adapted from the Public Religion Research Institute’s (PRRI) California Workers Survey dated August 2018. Additional details about our methodology can be found at www.ppic.org/wp-content/uploads/SurveyMethodology.pdf and are available upon request through surveys@ppic.org.

Questionnaire and Results

CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

May 17–26, 2020

1,706 California Adult Residents:
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 3.5\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE
PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

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

[code, don't read]

- 36% COVID-19/coronavirus
- 23 jobs, economy
- 6 health care, health insurance
- 6 housing costs, availability
- 5 homelessness
- 3 government in general, problems with elected officials, parties
- 3 immigration, illegal immigration
- 3 state budget, deficit
- 2 education, schools, teachers
- 2 environment, pollution, global warming
- 9 other (*specify*)
- 2 don't know

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

- 65% approve
- 26 disapprove
- 9 don't know

[rotate questions 3 and 3a]

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

- 69% approve
- 25 disapprove
- 6 don't know

3a. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Newsom is handling the issue of jobs and the economy?

- 59% approve
- 32 disapprove
- 9 don't know

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

- 56% approve
- 32 disapprove
- 13 don't know

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

- 58% right direction
- 37 wrong direction
- 5 don't know

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

- 34% yes, serious recession
- 25 yes, moderate recession
- 9 yes, mild recession
- 3 yes, don't know (*volunteered*)
- 24 no
- 5 don't know

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

- 70% yes *[ask q7a]*
- 30 no *[skip to Q8b]*

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

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

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

- 62% strong
- 36 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[skip to q9]

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

- 55% strong
- 42 not very strong
- 3 don't know

[skip to q9]

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

- 25% Republican Party
- 41 Democratic Party
- 25 neither *(volunteered)*
- 9 don't know

9. *[likely voters only]* If the November 3rd presidential election were being held today, would you vote for *[rotate]* [1] Joe Biden, the Democrat, *[or]* [2] Donald Trump, the Republican? *[if respondent says, "None of these," ask: "Would you vote for someone else, or would you not vote for president?"]*

- 57% Joe Biden, the Democrat
- 33 Donald Trump, the Republican
- 4 someone else *(specify) volunteered*
- 2 would not vote for president *(volunteered)*
- 3 don't know

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

- 44% very closely
- 36 fairly closely
- 14 not too closely
- 5 not at all closely
- don't know

Changing topics,

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

- 34% Republican/lean Republican
- 59 Democrat/lean Democrat
- 8 don't know

11a. *[likely voters only]* In response to the coronavirus outbreak, Governor Newsom directed each county's elections officials to send vote-by-mail ballots for the November 3, 2020 General Election to all registered voters. Do you think this is a good idea or a bad idea?

- 73% good idea
- 24 bad idea
- 2 don't know

On another topic,

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

- 9% excellent
- 36 good
- 37 only fair
- 18 poor
- don't know

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

- 16% better off
- 29 worse off
- 54 same
- don't know

(question 14 not asked)

Changing topics,

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

- 24% very concerned
- 34 somewhat concerned
- 23 not too concerned
- 19 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

(question 16 not asked)

17. Thinking about the restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak in your area, do you think there should be [rotate] [1] more restrictions right now [or] [2] fewer restrictions right now [or] [3] about the same number of restrictions right now?

- 25% more restrictions right now
- 28 fewer restrictions right now
- 46 about the same number of restrictions right now
- 1 don't know

Because of the coronavirus outbreak...

[rotate questions 18 to 21]

18. Have you or anyone in your household been laid off or lost their job, or not?

- 35% yes
- 64 no
- 1 don't know

19. Have you or anyone in your household had work hours reduced or pay cut, or not?

- 51% yes
- 49 no
- don't know

(question 20 not asked)

21. Have you or anyone in your household had difficulty paying the rent or mortgage?

- 27% yes
- 72 no
- 1 don't know

Next,

22. 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?

- 46% big problem
- 38 somewhat of a problem
- 10 not a problem
- 6 don't know

23. Governor Newsom recently released a revised budget plan for the current and next fiscal year to close an estimated \$54 billion budget deficit. The plan includes proposed spending cuts to K–12 public education and community colleges, health and human services programs, and state employee compensation. It also includes cancelling the proposed expansion of some programs and spending increases since they were not enacted, borrowing from special funds, and tapping into the state's reserve funds, including the entirety of the rainy day fund over the next three years, as well as using federal funds from the CARES Act. In general, do you favor or oppose the governor's budget plan?

- 43% favor
- 43 oppose
- 4 haven't heard anything about the budget (*volunteered*)
- 10 don't know

24. Do you think that tax increases should be included in the governor’s budget plan?

- 32% yes
- 60 no
- 7 don’t know

Changing topics,

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

- 35% approve
- 62 disapprove
- 3 don’t know

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

- 36% approve
- 61 disapprove
- 3 don’t know

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

- 38% approve
- 55 disapprove
- 7 don’t know

Next,

(question 28 not asked)

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

- 23% good times
- 70 bad times
- 6 don’t know

30. How much of the time do you think you can trust the federal government in Washington today to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?

- 6% just about always
- 18 most of the time
- 64 only some of the time
- 9 none of the time *(volunteered)*
- 2 don’t know

On another topic,

31. Thinking about the decisions by a number of state governments to impose significant restrictions on public activity because of the coronavirus outbreak, is your greater concern that state governments will *[rotate]* *[1]* lift the restrictions too quickly *[or]* *[2]* not lift the restrictions quickly enough?

- 58% lift the restrictions too quickly
- 38 not lift the restrictions quickly enough
- 3 don’t know

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

- 46% the worst is behind us
- 48 the worst is yet to come
- 6 don’t know

(question 33 not asked)

Next,

34. Do you *[rotate]* *[1]* favor *[or]* *[2]* oppose having a national health plan, sometimes called Medicare-for-all, in which all Americans would get their insurance from a single government plan?

- 62% favor
- 35 oppose
- 3 don’t know

35. What do you think about being able to afford the cost of your health care, including the cost of insurance and your out-of-pocket expenses, over the next few years? Is this something that you are very worried about, somewhat worried, not so worried, or not worried at all?

- 28% very worried
- 38 somewhat worried
- 16 not so worried
- 19 not worried at all
- 1 don’t know

(questions 36 and 37 not asked)

38. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically:

[read list, rotate order top to bottom]

- 14% very liberal
- 21 somewhat liberal
- 31 middle-of-the-road
- 21 somewhat conservative
- 12 very conservative
- 2 don't know

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

- 28% great deal
- 35 fair amount
- 27 only a little
- 10 none
- don't know

[d1–d16 demographic questions]

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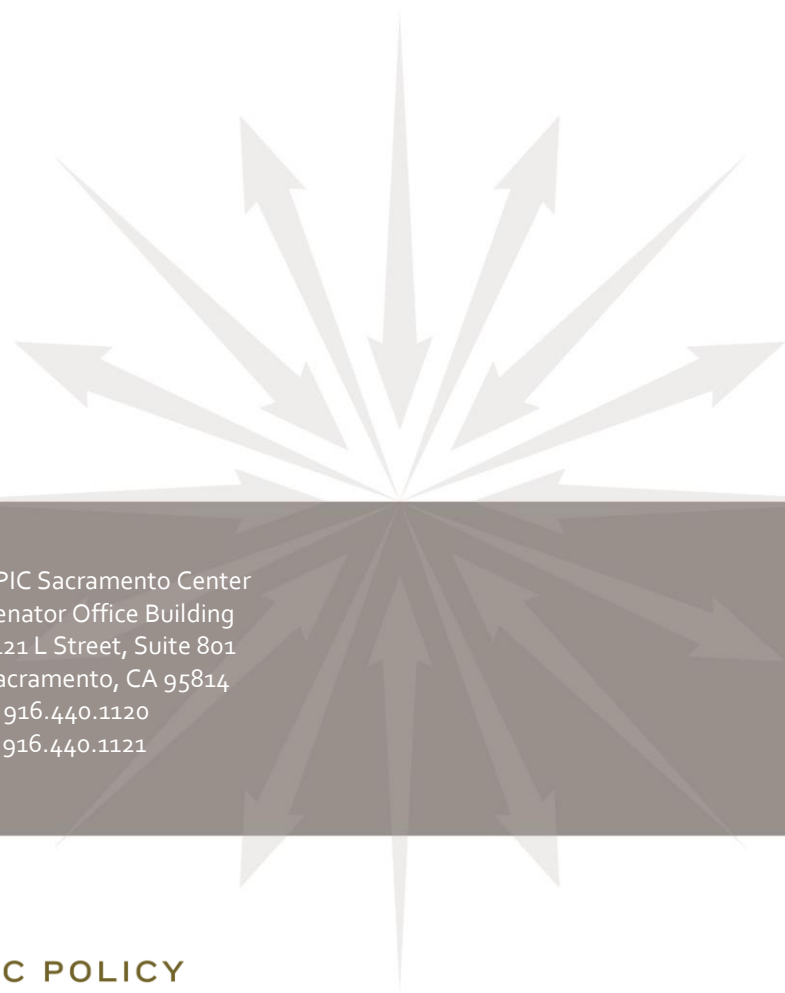
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