



# Californians & Their Government

Mark Baldassare Dean Bonner Alyssa Dykman Lunna Lopes

## CONTENTS

Press Release	3
2018 California Election	6
State and National Issues	11
Regional Map	21
Methodology	22
Questionnaire and Results	24

*Supported with funding from the James Irvine Foundation  
and the PPIC Donor Circle*



**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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

© 2018 Public Policy Institute of California

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

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

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

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

## CONTACT

Susan Gluss 415-291-4412  
Serina Correa 415-291-4417

# News Release

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PDT on Wednesday, March 21, 2018

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

## PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

# Newsom Solidifies Lead, Cox Gains Ground, Feinstein Maintains Edge over de León

### MOST LIKELY VOTERS FAVOR STATE BONDS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING, WATER PROJECTS

SAN FRANCISCO, March 21, 2018—Democrat Gavin Newsom has surged ahead of Antonio Villaraigosa in the state's gubernatorial race, and Republican John Cox has made headway among the state's likely voters. Senator Dianne Feinstein maintains her double-digit lead over fellow Democrat Kevin de León.

These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

Democrat Gavin Newsom (28%) is the top choice among likely voters, followed by Republican John Cox (14%), Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa (12%), Republican Travis Allen (10%), and Democrats John Chiang (6%) and Delaine Eastin (5%). A quarter of likely voters (24%) are still undecided. In the January PPIC poll, Newsom (23%) and Villaraigosa (21%) were in a virtual tie, with 7 percent supporting Cox.

A majority of likely voters (55%) are satisfied with candidate choices in the gubernatorial primary, with Democrats (71%) much more likely than independents (48%) or Republicans (42%) to be satisfied.

Among likely voters, Democrats prefer Newsom to Villaraigosa by 17 points (39% to 22%), with 17 percent unsure. Republicans choose Cox over Allen (33% to 25%), with 30 percent unsure. The top two candidates among independents are Newsom (29%) and Cox (15%). Latinos are more likely to support Villaraigosa (37%), while whites are more likely to support Newsom (31%).

With the June primary less than three months away, nearly half of likely voters are following news about the candidates very (14%) or fairly (34%) closely. Interest in the race has increased 18 points since January and has nearly doubled since last December.

## Feinstein Holds Steady Lead in US Senate Race

Senator Dianne Feinstein continues to lead Kevin de León by double digits (42% to 16%) among likely voters, with 39 percent undecided. Among Democrats, two-thirds (66%) support Feinstein. Most Republicans (71%) are undecided, as are 43 percent of independents. Feinstein leads across racial/ethnic groups, and among men (35% to 21%) and women (48% to 13%).

"Gavin Newsom and Dianne Feinstein have solid leads in the gubernatorial and senate races," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. "Yet many voters remain undecided, raising questions about the outcomes in the top-two primary."

Asked how satisfied they are with their choice of candidates in the US Senate race, likely voters are divided (47% satisfied, 44% not satisfied). A large majority of Democrats (73%) are satisfied and a similar share of Republicans (72%) are not.

Among likely voters, Feinstein's job approval rating is 54 percent. Most Democrats (75%), 42 percent of independents, and 24 percent of Republicans approve of her job performance. California's junior US senator, Kamala Harris, has a 45 percent approval rating among likely voters.

## Immigration Top of Mind

When asked which issue they would most like to hear gubernatorial candidates talk about between now and June, about a quarter of likely voters (23%) say immigration or illegal immigration, with guns, gun control, or school safety the second most frequently named issue (10%). Among those who mention immigration or illegal immigration, 25 percent support Cox, 17 percent support Newsom, 15 percent support Allen, and 13 percent support Villaraigosa.

On March 6—while the PPIC survey was in the field—the US Justice Department announced it was suing California for its sanctuary policies. Asked just after the announcement, a majority of California's likely voters (55%) said they support the state and local governments making policies and taking actions to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants. Among registered voters, a large majority of Democrats (79%) and a majority of independents (54%) are in favor, while most Republicans (78%) are opposed.

About half of likely voters (49%) in California think the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants is mostly a bad thing. Stark partisan differences emerge among registered voters, with 74 percent of Democrats saying it's a bad thing, while 81 percent of Republicans say it's a good thing. Younger adults ages 18 to 34 are more likely than older residents to say the crackdown is bad.

Amid state-federal tension over immigration policy, Governor Jerry Brown's approval rating has held steady, with 54 percent of likely voters approving of his job performance. The legislature's approval rating is 45 percent.

Despite the president's call for a border wall, a solid majority of likely voters (62%) continue to oppose building a wall along the entire Mexican border. Across parties, 90 percent of registered Democrats and 69 percent of independents are opposed, while a large majority of Republicans (71%) are in favor.

"As federal-state tensions rise, Californians still strongly support the state's role in protecting undocumented immigrants' rights and overwhelmingly oppose building a border wall," Baldassare said.

## Half Say Midterms More Important Than in Recent Years

As midterm elections for Congress approach in November, half of likely voters in California view this year's election as more important than in the past, with Democrats (59%) more likely than Republicans (42%) and independents (42%) to say so.

If the election for the US House of Representatives were held today, a majority of likely voters (53%) say they would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 39 percent say they would vote or lean Republican. Independent voters are slightly more likely to prefer the Republican candidate (45% to 37%). Women prefer Democrats by double digits (58% to 34%), while men are divided (47% Democrat, 44% Republican).

A clear partisan divide emerges when likely voters are asked if they would prefer a representative who has experience in—or is new to—politics. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (73%) prefer experience, while a majority of Republicans (56%) prefer someone new to politics.

Just 22 percent of California's likely voters approve of Congress's job performance, but 53 percent approve of their own representative in the US House.

## Bipartisan Support for Water Bond, But Partisan Split on Housing, Rail

With disappointing rainfall and snow pack totals this winter and talk of another possible drought, 53 percent of likely voters say that the supply of water is a big problem in their part of the state. Asked about the governor's proposal to build tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta—starting with one tunnel and later adding a second—42 percent of likely voters say this is very important for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California.

By comparison, fewer likely voters (32%) say the high-speed rail is very important for the state's future. Among registered voters, Democrats (67%) are more likely than independents (48%) and far more likely than Republicans (28%) to be in favor of the high-speed rail.

Californians will vote in June on Proposition 68 to fund water infrastructure projects. Asked if they would vote for such a bond measure, two-thirds of likely voters (66%) say they would vote yes. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (78%) and a strong majority of independents (66%) say they would vote yes, compared to about half of Republicans (51%).

About two-thirds of likely voters (64%) would also vote yes on a bond measure to pay for affordable housing, which will be on the November ballot. Partisans are more divided on an affordable housing bond than on a water measure, with 85 percent of Democratic likely voters and 64 percent of independents saying they would vote yes, compared to 33 percent of Republicans. Still, a majority of likely voters across the state's regions—except in Orange/San Diego (49%)—would vote yes on an affordable housing bond.

## New Tax Law Unpopular, Record Support for More Gun Restrictions

The survey asked about two other issues that are the topic of nationwide debate: the new federal tax law and laws covering the sale of guns. Just 36 percent of likely voters approve of the tax bill signed into law by the president in December (58% disapprove). Asked about the overall effect of the law, 40 percent say it will be mostly negative, 27 percent say it will be mostly positive, and 29 percent say it will not have much of an effect.

Following the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, do Californians think the laws covering gun sales should be more strict, less strict, or kept as they are? Most likely voters (70%) think laws should be stricter, 24 percent say they should be kept as they are now, and only 6 percent think they should be made less strict.

The share of California likely voters who think laws should be made stricter is up 15 points since PPIC last asked this question in May 2017—and is the highest it has been since this question was first asked in 2015. An overwhelming majority of registered Democrats (87%) and a strong majority of independents (68%) say gun laws should be stricter. Notably, almost half of Republicans (48%) now say the laws covering gun sales should be stricter, up from 28 percent in 2017. Strong majorities of adults across all regions and across all age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups hold this view. Notably, strong majorities of Californians in both congressional districts held by Democrats (77%) and districts held by Republicans (63%) support stricter laws. Women (80%) are much more likely than men (65%) to support stricter laws.

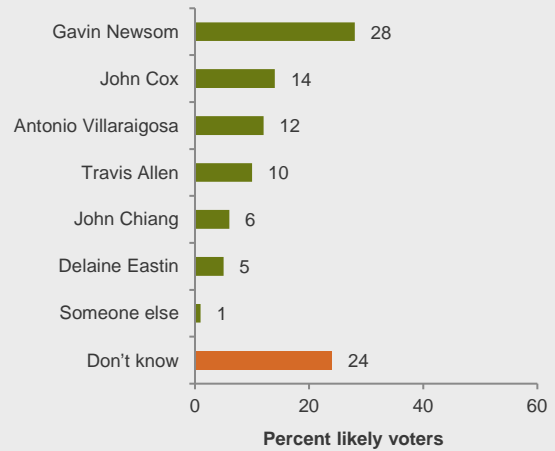
"In the wake of recent mass shootings, Californians have responded with record-high support for stricter gun limits as many Republicans now join Democrats in calls for action," Baldassare said.

# 2018 California Election

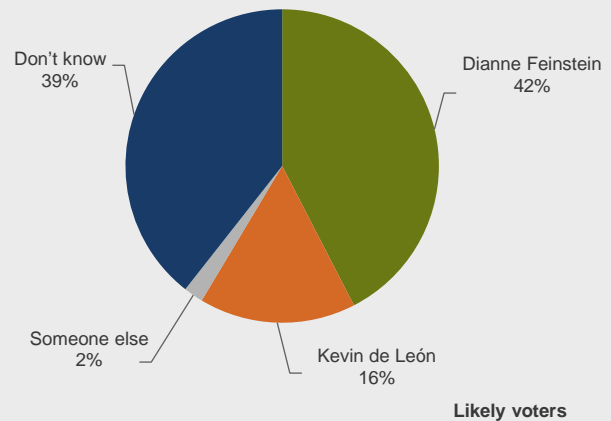
## Key Findings

- Democrat Gavin Newsom currently leads Republican John Cox, Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa, Republican Travis Allen, and others in the gubernatorial primary, with a quarter of likely voters unsure of how they would vote. A majority of likely voters are satisfied with their choices of gubernatorial candidates—with Democrats much more likely than Republicans to be satisfied. Nearly half of likely voters say they are following news about candidates for governor at least fairly closely. [\(page 7\)](#)
- In the US Senate primary race, incumbent Dianne Feinstein has the support of 42 percent of likely voters, while 16 percent support Kevin de León. Four in ten likely voters—including a notable 71 percent of Republicans—are unsure of how they will vote. Among likely voters, 47 percent are satisfied with their choice of candidates (44% not satisfied). There is a stark partisan divide, with more than seven in ten Democrats satisfied and seven in ten Republicans dissatisfied. [\(page 8\)](#)
- Half of likely voters say voting this year is more important to them than in past midterm elections, with Democrats more likely than Republicans to say so; half say they feel about the same. Fifty-three percent of likely voters say they would vote for the Democratic candidate in their local House of Representatives election, but partisans are divided. Likely voters say they prefer to elect a representative with experience in politics rather than someone new to politics. [\(page 9\)](#)
- Solid majorities of likely voters would vote yes on a state bond measure to pay for affordable housing projects (64%) as well as one to pay for water infrastructure projects (66%). In both cases, Democrats are far more likely than Republicans to say they would vote yes. [\(page 10\)](#)

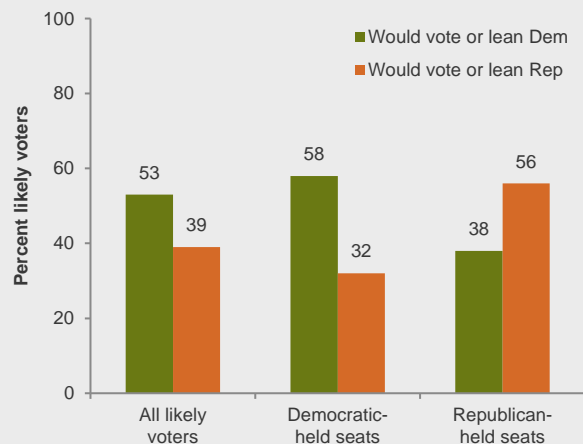
June 2018 gubernatorial primary



June 2018 US Senate primary



November 2018 House races



## June Gubernatorial Primary

With the June primary three months away, interest in the race for governor has grown across parties, with nearly half of likely voters following news about the candidates very (14%) or fairly (34%) closely. This has increased 18 points since January (7% very closely, 23% fairly closely) and has nearly doubled since last December (7% very closely, 18% very closely), although it is still lower than in March 2010 (17% very closely, 46% fairly closely) when California had partisan primaries and an open gubernatorial election.

A majority of likely voters (55%) are satisfied with their choice of candidates in the primary election for governor this June; satisfaction has grown across parties since December. Seven in ten Democrats are now satisfied with their choices, while fewer than half of Republicans or independents are. Satisfaction is similar among Latinos, whites, and members of other racial/ethnic groups (sample sizes for Asian American and African American likely voters are too small for separate analysis). Across regions, likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (65%) are the most satisfied and those in Orange/San Diego (42%) are the least satisfied (56% Los Angeles, 51% Central Valley, 50% Inland Empire).

**“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for governor this June?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Satisfied	55%	71%	42%	48%	58%	54%	60%
Not satisfied	29	15	44	32	30	29	27
Don't know	16	14	13	20	12	17	13

One in four likely voters (24%) remain unsure about who they would vote for in the June primary. Democrat Gavin Newsom (28%) is the top choice among likely voters, followed by Republican John Cox (14%), Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa (12%), Republican Travis Allen (10%), and Democrats John Chiang (6%) and Delaine Eastin (5%). (Only candidates with independently verifiable campaign organizations and resources for statewide campaigning were included.) In January, Newsom (23%) and Villaraigosa (21%) were in a virtual tie, while 7 percent supported Cox and 24 percent were unsure. In our January survey, some candidate ballot designations were not yet available; thus we mentioned names and commonly used job titles in a favorability question before asking a question about voting intention that included candidate names and party affiliations. Today, among Democratic likely voters, Newsom leads Villaraigosa (39% to 22%). Among Republican likely voters, Cox leads Allen (33% to 25%), with 30 percent unsure. Latino likely voters are more likely to support Villaraigosa, while white likely voters are more likely to support Newsom.

**“If the June primary for governor were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?\***

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Gavin Newsom	28%	39%	4%	29%	19%	31%	27%
John Cox	14	3	33	15	11	17	10
Antonio Villaraigosa	12	22	2	8	37	6	11
Travis Allen	10	1	25	13	6	12	8
John Chiang	6	9	4	5	3	6	10
Delaine Eastin	5	9	1	3	8	4	7
Someone else (specify)	1	–	–	2	1	1	–
Don't know	24	17	30	26	15	24	27

\*For complete text of this question, including ballot designations, see p. 25.

## June Gubernatorial Primary *(continued)*

When asked which issue they would most like to hear candidates for governor talk about between now and the June primary, one in four likely voters say immigration or illegal immigration (23%), while about one in ten say guns, gun control, and school safety (10%); education, schools, and teachers (8%), jobs and the economy (8%); or state budget, taxes (8%). Among those who mentioned immigration or illegal immigration, 25 percent support Cox, 17 percent support Newsom, 15 percent support Allen, and 13 percent support Villaraigosa.

## June US Senate Primary

Senator Dianne Feinstein, who is seeking her fifth full term as US senator, continues to lead fellow Democrat and state senator Kevin de León by double digits (42% to 16%) among likely voters. (Only candidates with significant news coverage and resources were included.) Four in ten likely voters (39%) are undecided. Findings were similar in January (46% Feinstein, 17% de León) and December (45% Feinstein, 21% de León). Two in three Democrats support Feinstein (66%), while seven in ten Republicans (71%) and four in ten independents (43%) are unsure. Feinstein leads de León by double digits across racial/ethnic groups and among men (35% to 21%) and women (48% to 13%). While Feinstein fails to garner majority support in any region, she leads de León by at least a two-to-one margin in each region (San Francisco Bay Area 49% to 22%, Los Angeles 44% to 17%, Central Valley 41% to 16%, Orange/San Diego 37% to 10%, Inland Empire 27% to 13%).

**“Keeping in mind that California has the top-two primary system, if the June primary for US Senator were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Dianne Feinstein	42%	66%	15%	35%	41%	39%	55%
Kevin de León	16	20	11	18	22	15	17
Someone else ( <i>specify</i> )	2	1	4	4	4	2	2
Don't know	39	13	71	43	33	44	26

*For complete text of this question, including ballot designations, see p. 25.*

Likely voters are divided on whether they are satisfied with the choice of candidates in the primary election for US senator (47% satisfied, 44% not satisfied). There are stark partisan differences, with seven in ten Democrats satisfied and seven in ten Republicans not satisfied. Satisfaction is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) and lowest in Orange/San Diego (30%). Among likely voters, whites (40%) are much less likely than Latinos (59%) and those in other racial/ethnic groups (63%) to be satisfied. Satisfaction is higher among those with less education and less income. Among those who are satisfied with their choices of candidates, 69 percent support Feinstein (21% de León). Among those who are not satisfied, 66 percent are unsure of who they will vote for.

**“In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for US senator this June?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Satisfied	47%	73%	21%	36%	59%	40%	63%
Not satisfied	44	22	72	48	36	49	30
Don't know	9	6	*7	17	5	11	7



## Congressional Elections

With midterm elections approaching in November, 51 percent of likely voters view this year as more important than past midterm elections; just 1 percent say it is less important and 48% say it is about the same. Democratic likely voters (59%) are more likely than Republican or independent likely voters (42% each) to say voting this year is more important. At least half of Latino and white likely voters view this year as more important than years past. Half of likely voters in Democratic-held and Republican-held districts congressional districts (50% each) view this year as more important than past midterms. Women likely voters (55%) are more likely than men (45%) to view this year as more important.

**“Is voting this year more important to you than in past midterm elections, less important, or about the same?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
More important	51%	59%	42%	42%	56%	52%	44%
Less important	1	1	1	3	3	1	1
About the same	48	41	56	55	41	47	54

If the 2018 election for US House of Representatives were held today, a majority of likely voters (53%) say they would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate, while 39 percent say they would vote or lean toward the Republican candidate. Nearly all partisans say they would vote for their own party, while independent likely voters are slightly more likely to prefer the Republican candidate. Democratic candidates are preferred by a 26-point margin (58% to 32%) in Democratic-held districts while Republican candidates are preferred by an 18-point margin (56% to 38%) in Republican-held districts. White likely voters are divided, while most Latinos and likely voters in other racial/ethnic groups would prefer the Democratic candidate. Women prefer Democrats by double digits (58% to 34%), while men are divided (47% Democrat, 44% Republican). Differences emerge across regions, with a majority of likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area (66%), Los Angeles (60%), and the Inland Empire (51%) preferring Democratic candidates, while fewer elsewhere do so (44% Central Valley, 37% Orange/San Diego). Registered voters in California (58%) hold similar views to those nationwide (54%) in a February CNN poll, which also showed a preference for the Democratic candidate.

**“If the 2018 election for US House of Representatives were being held today, would you vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate in your district? (If other/unsure: As of today, do you lean more toward the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate?)”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Race/Ethnicity		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Republican/Lean Republican	39%	5%	87%	45%	23%	44%	31%
Democratic/Lean Democratic	53	92	6	37	73	46	63
Don't know	8	3	7	18	4	10	6

Likely voters prefer to elect a representative to Congress who has experience in politics (52%) rather than someone who is new to politics (36%). But there are partisan differences, with an overwhelming majority of Democratic likely voters (73%) preferring experience, while a majority of Republicans (56%) prefer someone new to politics. Independents are divided (42% each). Among likely voters, Latinos (72%) overwhelmingly prefer someone with experience, while fewer whites (47%) and likely voters in other racial/ethnic groups (54%) hold this view. Women (57%) prefer a representative with experience, while men are divided (45% experience, 47% new to politics).

## State Bond Measures

Californians will go to the polls in June to vote on a bond measure to fund water infrastructure projects (Proposition 68—the California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access For All Act of 2018), and in November they will vote on a measure to fund affordable housing projects (Veterans and Affordable Housing Bond Act of 2018).

A strong majority of likely voters (66%) say they would vote yes when asked a generic question about a state bond measure to pay for water infrastructure projects. This includes at least half across all of the state’s major regions (76% Los Angeles, 64% San Francisco Bay Area, 61% Central Valley, 61% Orange/San Diego, 50% Inland Empire). An overwhelming majority of Democrats (78%) say they would vote yes, compared to a strong majority of independents (66%) and a slim majority of Republicans (51%). Notably, renters (83%) are far more likely than homeowners (58%) to vote yes. Among likely voters who say they would vote yes, 56 percent say that the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California. Among likely voters who view the supply of water as a big problem, 70 percent would vote yes on a state bond to pay for water infrastructure projects.

**“If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for water infrastructure projects, would you vote yes or no?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Region				
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area
Yes	66%	78%	51%	66%	61%	50%	76%	61%	64%
No	26	13	42	28	32	34	18	32	27
Don't know	8	10	6	6	6	16	6	7	9

Two in three likely voters would vote yes when asked a generic question about a state bond measure to pay for affordable housing projects. While there is bipartisan support for a state bond for water infrastructure projects, partisans are divided on affordable housing, with 85 percent of Democratic likely voters saying they would vote yes compared to 33 percent of Republican likely voters. Solid majorities of likely voters across the state’s regions—except in Orange/San Diego (49%)—would vote yes on a bond to pay for affordable housing projects. White likely voters (57%) are less likely than Latino likely voters (82%) and likely voters in other racial/ethnic groups (71%) to support an affordable housing bond. Women (68%) are more likely than men (58%) to say they would vote yes. Likely voters who are renters (87%) are far more likely than homeowners (54%) to support an affordable housing bond.

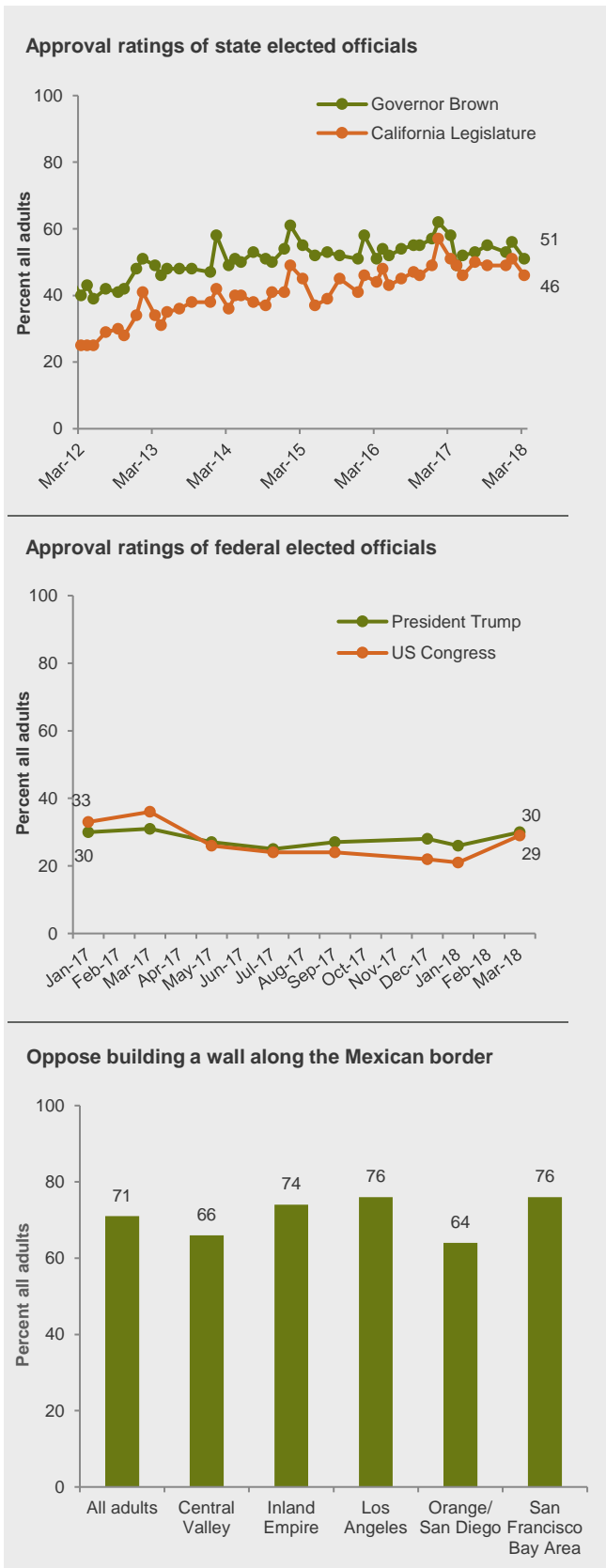
**“If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for affordable housing projects, would you vote yes or no?”**

Likely voters only	All likely voters	Party			Region				
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area
Yes	64%	85%	33%	64%	60%	62%	68%	49%	74%
No	31	11	60	29	35	31	28	45	20
Don't know	5	3	6	6	5	7	4	5	6

# State and National Issues

## Key Findings

- Half of Californians approve of Governor Brown’s job performance, while 46 percent approve of the state legislature. Forty-nine percent of Californians approve of the job the state legislators representing them are doing. *(page 12)*
- Forty-five percent of Californians see water supply as a big problem in their region. Forty-eight percent say it is very important to build tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta—starting with one and later adding a second—for California’s future. *(page 13)*
- A slight majority favor building the high-speed rail system (53% favor, 43% oppose). One in three say it is very important for California’s future quality of life and economic vitality. *(page 14)*
- About half of Californians—a record high—say that the state ranks near the top in the nation in state and local tax burden. A majority of Californians think they pay much more (37%) or somewhat more (19%) than they should in state and local taxes. *(page 15)*
- Thirty percent of Californians approve of President Trump’s job performance, while 29 percent approve of Congress. Half approve of their own representative, while 45 percent approve of Senator Feinstein and 41 percent approve of Senator Harris. *(pages 16, 17)*
- Six in ten California adults favor state and local governments making their own policies to protect undocumented immigrants—similar to January. Half say the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants is a bad thing for the country, and seven in ten oppose the border wall. *(pages 18, 19)*
- Three in ten Californians—with partisans divided—approve of the new federal tax law; a plurality say its effect on themselves and their families will be mostly negative. *(page 20)*



## Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

The governor’s approval rating has held steady in the midst of growing federal-state tension over policy differences. About half of Californians (51% adults, 54% likely voters) approve of the way that Jerry Brown is handling his job as California governor. The governor’s approval ratings were in a similar range in January (56% adults, 57% likely voters) and last March (58% adults, 61% likely voters). Today, the governor’s approval rating is 77 percent among Democrats, 43 percent among independents, and 20 percent among Republicans. Majorities of adults approve in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles.

**“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%	31%	18%
Likely voters		54	41	5
Party	Democrats	77	13	10
	Republicans	20	73	7
	Independents	43	39	18
Region	Central Valley	48	41	11
	Inland Empire	42	42	16
	Los Angeles	58	23	18
	Orange/San Diego	42	39	18
	San Francisco Bay Area	60	17	23

The state legislature’s approval rating has also held steady in the wake of sexual misconduct reports that began to surface last fall. Forty-six percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters approve of the way that the legislature is handling its job. Approval of the legislature was similar in January (51% adults, 50% likely voters) and last March (51% adults, 48% likely voters). Today, 66 percent of Democrats, compared to 38 percent of independents and 17 percent of Republicans, express approval. Majorities of adults in Los Angeles (53%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (52%) and fewer in other regions approve of the legislature.

Similarly, 49 percent of adults and 46 percent of likely voters approve of the way that the state legislators representing their assembly and senate districts are doing their jobs. Similar shares expressed approval of their own legislators last March (53% adults, 52% likely voters) and in January 2016 (49% adults, 45% likely voters). Today, 64 percent of Democrats, 42 percent of independents, and 22 percent of Republicans approve of their state legislators. Once again, majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (54%) and Los Angeles (52%) express approval, while fewer in other regions approve.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of ...?”**

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
the way that the California Legislature is handling its job	Approve	46%	66%	17%	38%	45%
	Disapprove	38	22	74	48	46
	Don't know	16	12	9	14	8
the job that the state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time	Approve	49	64	22	42	46
	Disapprove	37	25	69	39	44
	Don't know	14	11	8	19	10

## State Water Supply

With reports of disappointing rainfall and snow pack totals this winter spurring concerns about the return of drought conditions in the state, 45 percent of adults and 53 percent of likely voters say that the supply of water is a big problem in their part of California. The share of Californians saying that water supply is a big problem was somewhat lower last July (37% adults, 42% likely voters), after the historic drought officially ended, and higher in March 2016 (57% adults, 68% likely voters), when the drought was ongoing.

Today, at least four in ten adults in the Central Valley (49%), the Inland Empire (47%), Orange/San Diego (46%), Los Angeles (43%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (40%) say that the water supply is a big problem in their part of California. It is also noteworthy, in the context of the state water bond on the June ballot, that pluralities across parties see the supply of water as a big problem (53% Republicans, 48% independents, 45% Democrats). Whites (55%) are more likely than African Americans (47%), Latinos (36%), and Asian Americans (36%) to hold this view. Perceptions of water supply as a big problem rise with age, higher income, and homeownership.

**“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?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Big problem	45%	49%	47%	43%	46%	40%	53%
Somewhat of a problem	23	22	21	25	25	22	22
Not much of a problem	31	28	31	31	28	37	25
Don't know	1	–	1	1	–	1	–

Almost half of adults (48%) and 42 percent of likely voters say the governor’s proposal to build tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta—starting with one tunnel and adding a second tunnel later—is very important to California’s future. Responses were similar last March (51% adults, 47% likely voters) and in March 2016 (54% adults, 45% likely voters) when we asked a similar question about the tunnels. Today, we find differences across regions: majorities of residents in Los Angeles (55%) and the Inland Empire (53%) say the tunnels are very important, compared to fewer elsewhere (46% San Francisco Bay Area, 44% Orange/San Diego, 42% Central Valley). Democrats (49%) and independents (45%) are more likely than Republicans (35%) to hold this view. Latinos (59%) and Asian Americans (52%) are more likely than African Americans (41%) and whites (38%) to express this view.

**“The governor has proposed to improve the reliability of water supplies by building tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta—starting with one tunnel and then adding a second tunnel in the future. How important is this proposal for the future quality of life and economic vitality of California?”**

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Very important	48%	42%	53%	55%	44%	46%	42%
Somewhat important	30	25	32	31	32	28	26
Not too important	6	11	4	3	6	9	9
Not at all important	10	13	7	6	14	9	16
Don't know	6	9	4	5	4	8	7

## High-Speed Rail

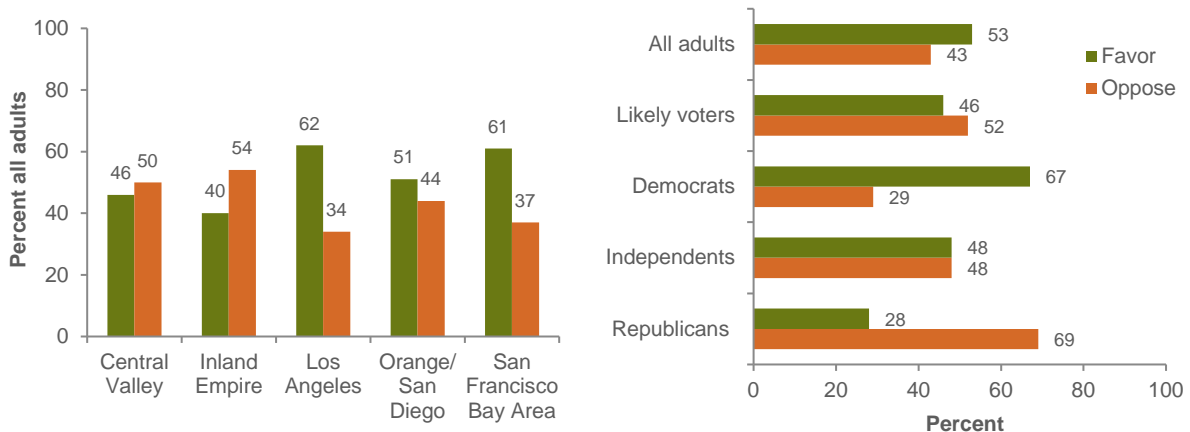
In November 2008, California voters passed Proposition 1A—the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century—with 53 percent support. How do Californians view this project today? One in three adults (35%) and likely voters (32%) view the high-speed rail system as very important 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 in March 2015. 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 (39%) are much more likely than Republicans (23%) to hold this view. Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (44%) are the most likely to say it is very important.

**“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	Inland Empire	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	San Francisco Bay Area	
Very important	35%	29%	31%	38%	30%	47%	32%
Somewhat important	29	21	33	32	33	25	26
Not too important	16	22	16	13	14	17	15
Not at all important	17	26	19	16	20	9	25
Don't know	2	2	1	1	3	2	1

New cost estimates of the high-speed rail system are up to \$77 billion—nearly double the original estimate. When told that the estimated costs are about \$70 billion, a slight majority of Californians (53%) favor building the high-speed rail system, compared to slightly fewer likely voters (46%). In response to a similar question last year, 48 percent of adults and 41 percent of likely voters favored building the system. Today, a total of 72 percent of adults say they would be in favor if the system cost less, while 24 percent would still be opposed. Support for the system is higher in Los Angeles (62%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (61%), and lower in the Inland Empire (40%). Democrats (67%) are much more likely than independents (48%) and far more likely than Republicans (28%) to be in favor. Support is higher among Asian Americans (69%) and Latinos (62%) than among other racial/ethnic groups, and declines with age.

**“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 \$70 billion over the next 20 years. Do you favor or oppose building a high-speed rail system in California?”**



## State and Local Tax System

Do Californians think that they have a high tax burden compared to residents of other states? A record-high 49 percent of adults and 58 percent of likely voters say that California ranks near the top in per capita state and local tax burden compared to other states. Fewer Californians said that the state is near the top in tax burden in March 2016 (36% adults, 46% likely voters) and in earlier PPIC surveys dating back to 2006. Today, this perception is more common in higher-income groups (58% \$80,000 or more, 53% \$40,000 to under \$80,000, 40% under \$40,000). Republicans (67%) and independents (54%) are more likely than Democrats (42%) to hold the view that California currently ranks near the top in state and local tax burden per capita. The public’s perceptions are somewhat in line with the fiscal facts: California’s state and local tax collections per capita in 2014 were 13th-highest in the nation (Tax Policy Center, October 2017).

**“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	49%	40%	53%	58%	58%
Above average	23	21	23	27	23
Average	13	21	14	5	9
Below average	3	3	4	2	2
Near the bottom	4	6	3	3	4
Don’t know	7	10	4	6	4

As the April 17 deadline for filing income tax returns approaches—and in the wake of the new federal tax law—how do Californians perceive their state and local tax system? A majority of Californians say they pay more taxes to state and local governments than they feel they should (adults: 37% much more and 19% somewhat more; likely voters: 41% much more and 20% somewhat more). The public’s perceptions of paying much or somewhat more than they should in state and local taxes were similar last March (58% adults, 59% likely voters) and in March 2016 (56% adults, 61% likely voters) before the passage of Proposition 55, which extended the Proposition 30 tax increases. Today, Republicans (78%) are more likely than independents (63%) and far more likely than Democrats (47%) to say that they pay much or somewhat more than they should. Californians with higher incomes are more likely to say they are paying much more or somewhat more than they should.

**“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?”**

	All adults	Household income			Likely voters
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Much more than you should	37%	31%	43%	39%	41%
Somewhat more than you should	19	16	15	26	20
About the right amount	35	40	35	29	31
Less than you should	6	9	4	5	5
Don’t know	3	4	3	2	2

## Approval Ratings of Federal Elected Officials

President Trump’s approval rating (30% adults, 37% likely voters) is virtually unchanged from January (26% adults, 32% likely voters) and December (28% adults, 34% likely voters). Today, 78 percent of Republicans approve of President Trump, compared to 30 percent of independents and 8 percent of Democrats. Regionally, approval is lower in the San Francisco Bay Area (23%) and Los Angeles (24%) than it is elsewhere (36% Central Valley, 36% Orange/San Diego, 31% Inland Empire). Across racial/ethnic groups, whites (42%) are more likely than Asian Americans (29%), Latinos (14%), and African Americans (13%) to approve. A recent Gallup weekly tracking poll had adults nationwide giving the president a somewhat higher approval rating (39% approve, 56% disapprove).

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		30%	65%	5%
Likely voters		37	61	2
Party	Democrats	8	91	2
	Republicans	78	20	2
	Independents	30	65	5
Region	Central Valley	36	59	5
	Inland Empire	31	64	5
	Los Angeles	24	71	5
	Orange/San Diego	36	60	4
San Francisco Bay Area		23	72	6

Fewer than three in ten Californians (29%) and 22 percent of likely voters approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job. Approval of the US Congress was slightly lower in January (21% adults, 15% likely voters) and December (22% adults, 15% likely voters). Across parties, fewer than one-third of voters approve. Asian Americans (43%) and Latinos (40%) are more likely than African Americans (24%) and whites (19%) to approve. Approval of Congress declines as age, income, and education levels rise. Among adults nationwide, approval of the US Congress was at 15 percent in a February Gallup poll.

About half of California adults (52%) and likely voters (53%) approve of their own representatives to the US House. Approval ratings were similar in March 2017 (51% adults, 49% likely voters). Democrats (62%) are more likely than independents (50%) and Republicans (38%) to approve of their own representative. Approval is higher in Democratic-held districts (55%) than in Republican-held districts (44%).

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of ...?”**

		All adults	Party			Likely voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
the way the US Congress is handling its job	Approve	29%	19%	30%	25%	22%
	Disapprove	65	75	65	71	74
	Don't know	6	5	5	5	4
the way your own representative to the US House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job	Approve	52	62	38	50	53
	Disapprove	34	28	51	36	39
	Don't know	14	10	11	14	9



## Approval Ratings of California’s Senators

As Senator Feinstein seeks reelection, 45 percent of Californians and 54 percent of likely voters approve of the way she is handling her job. Senator Feinstein’s approval rating was similar in September (48% adults, 54% likely voters). Today, a strong majority of Democrats (75%) approve of her job performance, compared to 42 percent of independents and 24 percent of Republicans. Regionally, approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (55%) and lowest in the Central Valley (38%). Across demographic groups, approval of Senator Feinstein is highest among African Americans (60%), college graduates (52%), women (50%), and those 55 and older (50%).

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as US senator?”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		45%	37%	17%
Likely voters		54	41	4
Party	Democrats	75	17	8
	Republicans	24	70	5
	Independents	42	44	14
Region	Central Valley	38	41	21
	Inland Empire	42	41	17
	Los Angeles	46	34	19
	Orange/San Diego	42	43	15
	San Francisco Bay Area	55	29	16

One year into her first term as senator, Kamala Harris has the approval of 41 percent of adults and 45 percent of likely voters. About three in ten adults are not sure how to rate Senator Harris. The senator’s approval rating was similar in September (42% adults, 47% likely voters). Today, Democrats (62%) are much more likely than independents (45%) and far more likely than Republicans (16%) to approve. Regionally, approval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (51%) and lowest in the Central Valley (35%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Senator Harris’s approval rating is highest among African Americans (64%) and lowest among Latinos (38%; 44% Asian Americans, 40% whites).

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Kamala Harris is handling her job as US senator?”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		41%	30%	29%
Likely voters		45	39	16
Party	Democrats	62	19	19
	Republicans	16	55	29
	Independents	45	31	24
Region	Central Valley	35	34	31
	Inland Empire	38	36	26
	Los Angeles	44	30	26
	Orange/San Diego	36	28	36
	San Francisco Bay Area	51	27	22

## Immigration Policy

On March 6, the US Justice Department announced that it was suing California over three immigration-related laws passed by the California Legislature in 2017. Following this announcement, majorities of California adults (61%) and likely voters (55%) continue to favor state and local governments making their own policies and taking actions to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants. Findings were similar in January, when 65 percent of adults and 58 percent likely voters were in favor. Today, nearly eight in ten Democrats and a majority of independents are in favor, while nearly eight in ten Republicans are opposed. At least half across age, education, gender, income, and regional groups are in favor. Whites are divided (47% favor, 50% oppose), while strong majorities of Latinos and those in other racial/ethnic groups are in favor (sample sizes for African Americans and Asian Americans are too small for separate analysis).

**“Do you favor or oppose the California state and local governments making their own policies and taking actions, separate from the federal government, to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in California?”**

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity*		
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Latinos	Whites	Other groups
Favor	61%	79%	21%	54%	76%	47%	66%
Oppose	36	18	78	41	20	50	32
Don't know	3	3	1	5	3	3	2

Amid increasing reports of immigration enforcement activities, half of California adults (51%) and likely voters (49%) think the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants is a bad thing for the country. However, there are stark partisan differences on this issue: 74 percent of Democrats say the crackdown is a bad thing for the country and 81 percent of Republicans say it is a good thing. A majority of independents say the crackdown is bad for the country. There are also notable differences across racial/ethnic groups. Majorities of African Americans and Latinos say the crackdown is a bad thing, while Asian Americans (42% good, 47% bad) and whites (47% good, 45% bad) are divided. Across age groups, Californians age 18 to 34 (61%) are more likely than older residents (47% 35 to 54, 44% 55 and older) to say the crackdown is a bad thing. In a January Washington Post-ABC News poll, adults nationwide were divided on the crackdown (46% good thing, 47% bad thing).

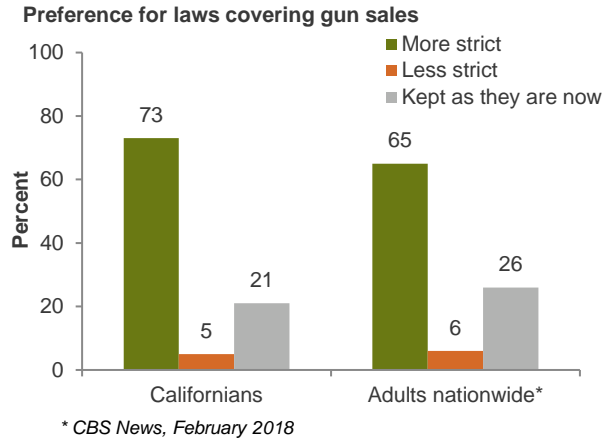
**“Do you think the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants is a good thing for the country or a bad thing for the country?”**

	All adults	Party			Race/Ethnicity			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	African Americans	Asian Americans	Latinos	Whites
Good thing	39%	19%	81%	36%	31%	42%	27%	47%
Bad thing	51	74	13	55	61	47	58	45
Mixed/neither (volunteered)	6	4	3	5	6	3	7	5
Don't know	5	2	3	4	1	7	7	3

As President Trump steadfastly promotes a border wall as part of his immigration policy, solid majorities of Californians (71% adults, 62% likely voters) continue to oppose building a wall along the entire border with Mexico. Support for a border wall has been similar since we began asking this question in May 2016. Across parties, nine in ten Democrats (90%) and seven in ten independents (69%) are opposed, while seven in ten Republicans (71%) are in favor. Solid majorities across regions and racial/ethnic groups oppose building a wall. Adults nationwide in a January Monmouth University poll (40%) were much more likely than Californians in our survey (25%) to support building a wall.

## Gun Policy

Following the tragic high school shooting in Parkland, Florida, do Californians think the laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, made less strict, or kept as they are? Most Californians (73%) think laws covering the sale of guns should be stricter; 21 percent say they should be kept as they are now and only 5 percent think they should be made less strict. The share of Californians who think laws should be made stricter is up 13 points since we last asked this question in May 2017—and is the highest it has been since this question was first asked in 2015. According to a February CBS News poll, 65 percent of adults nationwide say laws should be more strict (6% less strict, 26% kept as they are now).



Today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats (87%) and a solid majority of independents (68%) say gun laws should be stricter. Notably, almost half of Republicans (48%) now say the laws covering gun sales should be made stricter, up from 28 percent in May 2017. Strong majorities across all regions and across all age, education, income, and racial/ethnic groups say that the laws covering gun sales should be made stricter. Women (80%) are much more likely than men (65%) to hold this view. Notably, solid majorities of Californians in both Democratic-held (77%) and Republican-held (63%) congressional districts say gun laws should be made stricter.

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

	More strict	Less strict	Kept as they are now	Don't know	
All adults	73%	5%	21%	2%	
Likely voters	70	6	24	—	
Party	Democrats	87	3	10	—
	Republicans	48	11	41	1
	Independents	68	7	24	1
Region	Central Valley	67	7	25	1
	Inland Empire	68	4	27	1
	Los Angeles	79	4	16	2
	Orange/San Diego	67	5	27	2
	San Francisco Bay Area	80	6	12	2

## Federal Tax Policy

Majorities of California adults (61%) and likely voters (58%) disapprove of the tax law passed by Congress and signed into law by the president in December. An overwhelming majority of Democrats (86%) and a solid majority of independents (60%) disapprove of the tax law, while seven in ten Republicans (71%) approve. Across regions, fewer than four in ten approve of the recently passed tax law. Notably, a strong majority of Californians who live in Democratic-held congressional districts (66%) disapprove of the law, while those who live in Republican-held districts are more divided (41% approve, 48% disapprove). Majorities across all demographic groups disapprove of the tax law, with lower-income adults less likely than those with higher incomes to approve. In a January Pew Research Center poll, 37 percent of adults nationwide approved of the tax law and 46 percent disapproved.

**“Do you approve or disapprove of the tax law passed by Donald Trump and Congress in December?”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		30%	61%	10%
Likely voters		36	58	6
Party	Democrats	10	86	4
	Republicans	71	19	10
	Independents	31	60	10
Region	Central Valley	39	49	12
	Inland Empire	31	56	13
	Los Angeles	23	67	10
	Orange/San Diego	38	55	7
	San Francisco Bay Area	22	67	11

A plurality of Californians (42%) think that the new tax law will have a mostly negative effect on them and their families. Across parties, a majority of Democrats and a plurality of independents expect a negative effect, while half of Republicans think the law will have a positive effect for them. Pluralities across all regions expect a negative effect. African Americans (56%) and Latinos (53%) are much more likely than whites (36%) and Asian Americans (33%) to think the new tax law will have a negative effect on them. Californians are much more likely to expect a negative effect than adults nationwide in the Pew Research Center poll (27% mostly negative, 29% mostly positive, 33% not much of an effect).

**“Do you think the overall effect of the tax law on you and your family over the coming years will be mostly positive, mostly negative, or will it not affect you much either way?”**

		Mostly positive	Mostly negative	Not much of an effect	Don't know
All adults		24%	42%	28%	5%
Likely voters		27	40	29	3
Party	Democrats	11	56	29	4
	Republicans	50	14	33	3
	Independents	23	43	29	5
Region	Central Valley	34	37	22	6
	Inland Empire	32	40	25	2
	Los Angeles	18	46	33	3
	Orange/San Diego	24	39	32	5
	San Francisco Bay Area	21	47	24	9

# 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 Alyssa Dykman 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 1,706 California adult residents, including 1,193 interviewed on cell phones and 513 interviewed on landline telephones. Interviews took an average of 18 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from March 4–13, 2018.

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 a “youngest male/female” 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 2012–2016 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 2016 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 3.4$  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 3.4 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,244 adults asked question 34a (regarding state and local action to protect undocumented immigrants) from March 7–13, the sampling error is  $\pm 4.1$  percent; for the 1,404 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.7$  percent; for the 931 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.5$  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 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 ABC/Washington Post, CBS News, CNN, Gallup, Monmouth, and the 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 4–13, 2018

1,706 California Adult Residents:  
English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 3.4\%$  AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

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

51% approve  
31 disapprove  
18 don't know

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

46% approve  
38 disapprove  
16 don't know

**3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job that the state legislators representing your assembly and senate districts are doing at this time?**

49% approve  
37 disapprove  
14 don't know

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

67% yes *[ask q4a]*  
33 no *[skip to q5b]*

**4a. 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 q5]*  
25 Republican *[skip to q5a]*  
5 another party *(specify) [skip to q6]*  
25 independent *[skip to q5b]*

**5. 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 q6]*

**5a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

66% strong  
32 not very strong  
1 don't know

*[skip to q6]*

**5b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

21% Republican Party  
43 Democratic Party  
26 neither *(volunteered)*  
10 don't know



**6. [likely voters only; ballot designations updated for Gavin Newsom and Delaine Eastin beginning March 9] 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 governor were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? [rotate names and then ask “or someone else?”]**

- 28% Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, Lieutenant Governor/businessman
- 14 John Cox, a Republican, businessman
- 12 Antonio Villaraigosa, a Democrat, public policy advisor
- 10 Travis Allen, a Republican, California Assemblyman/businessman
- 6 John Chiang, a Democrat, California State Treasurer
- 5 Delaine Eastin, a Democrat, educator/youth advocate
- 1 someone else (specify)
- 24 don't know

**7. [likely voters only] How closely are you following news about candidates for the 2018 governor’s election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?**

- 14% very closely
- 34 fairly closely
- 35 not too closely
- 16 not at all closely
- don't know

**8. [likely voters only] In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for governor this June?**

- 55% satisfied
- 29 not satisfied
- 16 don't know

**9. [likely voters only] Which one issue would you like to hear the candidates for governor talk about between now and the June primary?**

[code, don't read]

- 23% immigration, illegal immigration
- 10 guns, gun control
- 8 education, schools, teachers
- 8 jobs, economy
- 8 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 5 health care, health insurance
- 4 homelessness
- 3 environment, pollution, global warming
- 3 housing costs, availability
- 3 infrastructure
- 2 crime, gangs, drugs
- 2 government in general, problems with elected officials, parties
- 2 water, drought
- 10 other (specify)
- 9 don't know

**10. [likely voters only] Keeping in mind that California has the top-two primary system, if the June primary for US Senator were being held today, and these were the candidates, who would you vote for? [rotate names and then ask “or someone else?”]**

- 42% Dianne Feinstein, a Democrat, US Senator
- 16 Kevin de León, a Democrat, California Senator
- 2 someone else (specify)
- 39 don't know

**11. [likely voters only] In general, would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with your choices of candidates in the primary election for US Senator this June?**

- 47% satisfied
- 44 not satisfied
- 9 don't know

On another topic,

**12. [likely voters only] Is voting this year more important to you than in past midterm elections, less important, or about the same?**

- 51% more important
- 1 less important
- 48 about the same
- first year that I’m eligible (volunteered)
- don’t know

**13. [likely voters only] If the 2018 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?]**

- 39% Rep/lean Rep
- 53 Dem/lean Dem
- 8 don’t know

**14. [likely voters only] Would you prefer to elect a representative to Congress who [rotate] (1) has experience in politics, [or] (2) is new to politics?**

- 52% has experience in politics
- 36 is new to politics
- 12 don’t know

Next,

*[rotate questions 15 and 16]*

**15. [likely voters only] If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for affordable housing projects, would you vote yes or no?**

- 64% yes
- 31 no
- 5 don’t know

**16. [likely voters only] If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for water infrastructure projects, would you vote yes or no?**

- 66% yes
- 26 no
- 8 don’t know

Next,

**17. 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?**

- 37% much more
- 19 somewhat more
- 35 about the right amount
- 6 less than you should
- 3 don’t know

**18. 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?**

- 49% near the top
- 23 above average
- 13 average
- 3 below average
- 4 near the bottom
- 7 don’t know

On a related topic,

This year marks the 40th anniversary of Proposition 13, the 1978 ballot measure that limits the property tax rate to 1 percent of assessed value at time of purchase and annual tax increases to no more than 2 percent until the property is sold.

**19. Overall, do you feel passing Proposition 13 turned out to be mostly a good thing for California or mostly a bad thing?**

- 57% mostly a good thing
- 23 mostly a bad thing
- 2 mixed (volunteered)
- 17 don’t know

**20. Under Proposition 13, a two-thirds vote at the ballot box is required to pass any new local special taxes. Overall, do you think the supermajority vote requirement imposed by Proposition 13 has had a good effect or a bad effect or no effect on local government services provided to residents in the state of California?**

- 39% good effect
- 19 bad effect
- 26 no effect
- 16 don't know

**21. Do you favor or oppose allowing local special taxes to pass with a 55 percent majority vote instead of a two-thirds vote?**

- 35% favor
- 55 oppose
- 10 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?**

- 45% big problem
- 23 somewhat of a problem
- 31 not much of a problem
- 1 don't know

**23. The governor has proposed to improve the reliability of water supplies by building tunnels in the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta—starting with one tunnel and then adding a second tunnel in the future. 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?**

- 48% very important
- 30 somewhat important
- 6 not too important
- 10 not at all important
- 6 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 \$70 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?")**

- 53% favor
- 19 oppose, but would favor if it cost less
- 24 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?**

- 35% very important
- 29 somewhat important
- 16 not too important
- 17 not at all important
- 2 don't know

Next,

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

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

*[rotate questions 27 and 28]*

**27. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Kamala Harris is handling her job as US senator?**

- 41% approve
- 30 disapprove
- 29 don't know

**28. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as US senator?**

- 45% approve
- 37 disapprove
- 17 don't know

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

- 29% approve
- 65 disapprove
- 6 don't know

**30. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way your own representative to the US House of Representatives in Congress is handling his or her job?**

- 52% approve
- 34 disapprove
- 14 don't know

Next,

**31. Do you approve or disapprove of the tax law passed by Donald Trump and Congress in December?**

- 30% approve
- 61 disapprove
- 10 don't know

**32. Do you think the overall effect of the tax law on you and your family over the coming years will be mostly positive, mostly negative, or will it not affect you much either way?**

- 24% mostly positive
- 42 mostly negative
- 28 not much of an effect
- 5 don't know

On another topic,

**33. Do you think the federal crackdown on undocumented immigrants is a good thing for the country or a bad thing for the country?**

- 39% good thing
- 51 bad thing
- 5 mixed (*volunteered*)
- 1 neither (*volunteered*)
- 5 don't know

**34. All in all, would you favor or oppose building a wall along the entire border with Mexico?**

- 25% favor
- 71 oppose
- 3 don't know

**34a. [Asked beginning March 7] Do you favor or oppose the California state and local governments making their own policies and taking actions, separate from the federal government, to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in California?**

- 61% favor
- 36 oppose
- 3 don't know

Next,

**34b. In general, do you think laws covering the sale of guns should be made more strict, less strict, or kept as they are now?**

- 73% more strict
- 5 less strict
- 21 kept as they are now
- 2 don't know

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

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

- 14% very liberal
- 21 somewhat liberal
- 30 middle-of-the-road
- 20 somewhat conservative
- 13 very conservative
- 2 don't know

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

- 25% great deal
- 35 fair amount
- 31 only a little
- 8 none
- don't know

*[d1-d16 demographic questions]*

PPIC STATEWIDE  
SURVEY ADVISORY  
COMMITTEE

**Ruben Barrales**  
*President and CEO*  
GROW Elect

**Angela Glover Blackwell**  
*President and CEO*  
PolicyLink

**Mollyann Brodie**  
*Senior Vice President*  
Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation

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

**Jon Cohen**  
*Vice President of Survey Research*  
SurveyMonkey

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

**Lisa García Bedolla**  
*Director*  
Institute of Governmental Studies  
University of California, Berkeley

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Mindy Romero**  
*Founder and Director*  
California Civic Engagement Project  
at the UC Davis Center for Regional Change

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

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

**Carol Whiteside**  
*Principal*  
California Strategies

PPIC BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

**Mas Masumoto, Chair**

*Author and Farmer*

**Mark Baldassare**

*President and CEO*  
Public Policy Institute of California

**Ruben Barrales**

*President and CEO*  
GROW Elect

**María Blanco**

*Executive Director*  
University of California  
Immigrant Legal Services Center

**Louise Henry Bryson**

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

**A. Marisa Chun**

*Partner*  
McDermott Will & Emery LLP

**Chet Hewitt**

*President and CEO*  
Sierra Health Foundation

**Phil Isenberg**

*Former Chair*  
Delta Stewardship Council

**Donna Lucas**

*Chief Executive Officer*  
Lucas Public Affairs

**Steven A. Merksamer**

*Senior Partner*  
Nielsen, Merksamer, Parrinello,  
Gross & Leoni, LLP

**Leon E. Panetta**

*Chairman*  
The Panetta Institute for Public Policy

**Gerald L. Parsky**

*Chairman*  
Aurora Capital Group

**Kim Polese**

*Chairman*  
ClearStreet, Inc.

**Gaddi H. Vasquez**

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



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

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



**PPIC**

**PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA**