



# Californians & Their Government

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*Supported with funding from the James Irvine Foundation  
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**PPIC**

PUBLIC POLICY  
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

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

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## News Release

EMBARGOED: Do not publish or broadcast until 9:00 p.m. PST on Thursday, February 9, 2017.

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### PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT

## A Third of Californians Approve of Trump's Job Performance

VIEWS ON IMMIGRATION, HEALTH CARE, CLIMATE CHANGE, ABORTION AT ODDS WITH PRESIDENT

SAN FRANCISCO, February 9, 2017—Just a third of Californians approve of the way President Trump is doing his job, according to a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), with funding from the James Irvine Foundation.

In the survey, taken January 22–31, the president's job approval rating is 30 percent among California adults and 34 percent among likely voters. Majorities in both groups disapprove (58% all adults, 55% likely voters). There's a strong partisan divide among Californians on this question: 72 percent of Republicans and 10 percent of Democrats approve of the president's job performance. Approval is low across regions of the state. There are differences across racial/ethnic groups, with whites (39%) and Asian Americans (37%) twice as likely as Latinos (17%) and African Americans (15%) to approve. Californians overall are less likely to approve of President Trump than are adults nationwide (45% approve), according to a Gallup tracking poll from January 23–29.

Trump's favorability rating is 33 percent among adults and 37 percent among likely voters. Most have an unfavorable opinion (60% adults, 59% likely voters), and about half in each group have a strongly unfavorable one. Slightly less than a third of Californians have confidence (15% great deal, 13% good amount) that the president will make the right decisions for the country's future (26% just some confidence, 45% none at all).

"The California public's early reviews of President Trump are generally negative," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO. "Yet they also demonstrate that the state's voters have deep partisan divisions that are very much in line with national politics."

### Most Support State, Local Action on Immigration

As California leaders consider their responses to Trump's early action on immigration, the survey asked whether state and local governments should make their own policies and take actions—separate from the federal government—to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in California. A solid majority of adults (65%) and 58 percent of likely voters favor state and local action. Opinion differs widely across political parties: 80 percent of Democrats favor state and local government action, while 69 percent of Republicans oppose it. Majorities across regions and racial/ethnic groups are in favor.

Consistent with PPIC surveys over the past year, an overwhelming majority of Californians (85%) say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the US legally if certain requirements are met. Strong majorities across parties hold this view (93% Democrats, 84% independents, 65% Republicans). Of those who say they voted for Trump, 61 percent say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay and 34 percent say they should not.

When Californians are asked to name the one issue facing the state that is most important for the governor and legislature to work on, immigration is tied with jobs and the economy as the top issue (14% adults, 13% likely voters). Last January, Californians said water and drought (17% adults, 18% likely voters) and jobs and the economy (16% adults, 19% likely voters) were most important.

## A Slight Majority Oppose ACA Repeal

In the wake of Trump's pledge to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the survey asked Californians for their opinions of the 2010 health care law. Half (51% adults, 53% likely voters) view the law favorably (39% adults, 40% likely voters view it unfavorably). Californians are somewhat more likely to have favorable opinions of the law than were adults nationwide in a December Kaiser Family Foundation survey (43% favorable, 46% unfavorable). There are stark partisan differences: 77 percent of Democrats view the law favorably and 74 percent of Republicans view it unfavorably. Independents are more evenly divided but are more likely to view the law favorably (50%) than unfavorably (40%).

A slight majority of Californians (53%) oppose repealing the ACA. About a quarter (26%) say Congress should wait to repeal it until details of a replacement plan are announced, while 16 percent favor an immediate repeal. Across political parties, most Democrats (78%) and independents (57%) oppose repealing the ACA, while Republicans (80%) overwhelmingly favor it.

## Strong Majority See Climate Change as Major Threat

The Trump administration's approach to federal climate change policy appears likely to diverge from California's. A strong majority of Californians (65%) say global climate change is a major threat to the well-being of the US (20% minor threat, 12% not a threat). Adults nationwide were much less likely to see climate change as a major threat in a January Pew Research Center survey (52% major, 32% minor, 14% not a threat). In the PPIC survey, Democrats (82%) are far more likely than independents (62%) and Republicans (27%) to say climate change is a major threat. A solid majority of Californians (63%) say they favor the state government making its own policies—separate from the federal government—to address global warming. Partisans are split: 77 percent of Democrats, 64 percent of independents, and just 30 percent of Republicans favor the state making its own policies. Republican support has dropped 19 points since last July.

## Most across Parties Support Abortion Access

As Congress considers Trump's Supreme Court nominee, abortion policy is an important issue in the debate. Most Californians (71%) say the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion, while 27 percent say the government should pass more laws to restrict the availability of abortion. Since PPIC first asked this question in 2000, solid majorities of Californians have said the government should not interfere with access. Today, this view is held across parties (87% Democrats, 75% independents, 60% Republicans). Majorities of men and women and majorities across racial/ethnic, age, education, and income groups concur. Asked about the *Roe v. Wade* decision establishing a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, 71 percent of Californians say they do not want to see the decision completely overturned. In PPIC surveys since 2005, at least 65 percent of Californians expressed this view.

"Californians' policy preferences are deeply at odds with the new federal direction on abortion access, climate change, health insurance, and undocumented immigrants," Baldassare said.

## Most Approve of Supreme Court's Job Performance

Most adults (57%) approve of the way the Supreme Court is handling its job. Independents (61%) are the most likely to approve, followed by Democrats (54%) and Republicans (49%). Asked about the ideology of the court, 20 percent say it is too liberal, 24 percent say it is too conservative, and 47 percent say it is just

about right. Across parties, 48 percent of Republicans say it is too liberal, while 47 percent of Democrats and 37 percent of independents say it is just about right.

## Approval Ratings for Congress Are Similar to Trump's

Californians' job approval ratings for Congress are similar to their ratings for Trump. Just a third of adults (33%) and a quarter of likely voters (25%) approve of the way Congress is doing its job. Democrats (19%) are much less likely than independents (35%) and Republicans (39%) to approve.

Although Republicans control the executive and legislative branches of the federal government, only about half of Californians (50% adults, 55% likely voters) say the president and Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (85%) and a majority of independents (56%) expect productive collaboration, compared to 34 percent of Democrats. The belief that the president and Congress will be able to accomplish a lot is down sharply from January 2009, when there was a Democratic president and Democratic-controlled Congress. Then, 81 percent of Californians—including 66 percent of Republicans—held this view.

Half of Californians (52%) think the nation will have good times financially in the next year. When they are asked about the direction of the nation, just 36 percent of adults and 37 percent of likely voters say the US is headed in the right direction.

## Governor Brown, California Legislature Get High Ratings

When asked about state leaders, California adults and likely voters each give Governor Brown 62 percent job approval rating—a record high in PPIC Statewide Surveys. The legislature's approval ratings—57 percent among all adults and 50 percent among likely voters—are the highest since 2001. A record-high 66 percent of adults and 64 percent of likely voters say the governor and legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. About half of Californians (53% adults, 51% likely voters) say the state will have good times financially in the year ahead. Most (58% adults, 58% likely voters) say things in California are generally going in the right direction.

"Californians give much higher approval ratings to the governor and legislature than to the president and Congress today," Baldassare said. "With starkly different views of the direction of the state and the nation, many Californians have hopes that the governor and legislature will be able to work together and keep the state on its current track."

## Fewer Than Half Support Brown's Budget

When Brown proposed his 2017–18 budget, he estimated a \$1.6 billion deficit for the state. Yet just 37 percent of Californians see the budget situation as a big problem—a record low since PPIC first asked the question in 2006. Brown's plan includes modest spending increases in K–14 and higher education, health and human services, and prisons and corrections. It also calls for slowing spending growth in K–14 education and other areas, and putting \$1.1 billion in the state rainy day fund. When read a short description of the plan, just under half of California adults (47%) and 43 percent of likely voters favor it.

Brown has proposed about \$43 billion in additional spending over the next ten years to address a multibillion-dollar shortfall in funding for infrastructure improvements. Funding would come from a \$65 fee on all vehicles, increased state gas and diesel taxes, and cap-and-trade funds. When they are read a short description of this proposal, 41 percent of adults and 43 percent of likely voters are in favor.

For more survey findings on transportation, read "[Californians and Transportation](#)."

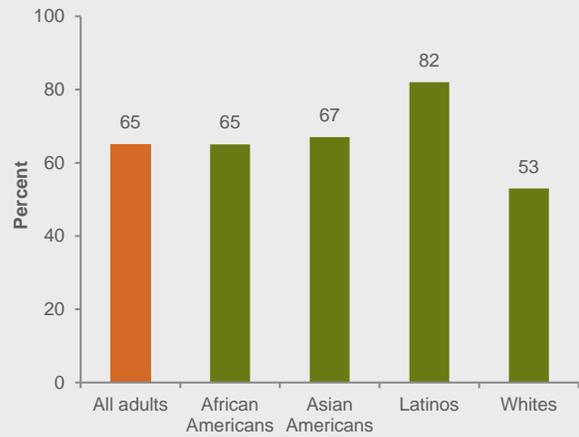
"The public strongly believes that transportation spending should be a high priority for the state government," Baldassare said. "Yet with most saying that we also have to spend what we have more wisely, state bonds are much more popular than fees and taxes for funding much-needed improvements."

# Federal Government

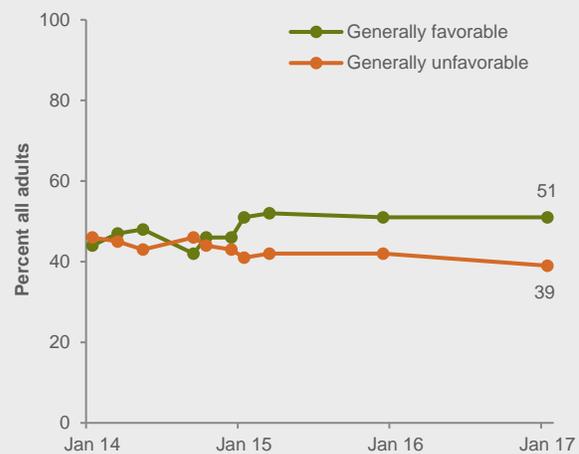
## Key Findings

- Thirty percent of California adults and 34 percent of likely voters approve of President Trump’s job performance. One in three adults (33%) and one in four likely voters (25%) approve of the US Congress. *(page 7)*
- A third of California adults have a favorable opinion of Donald Trump. About three in ten have a great deal (15%) or a good amount (13%) of confidence in President Trump to make the right decisions for the country’s future. *(page 8)*
- Half of Californians think President Trump and the US Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. Thirty-six percent of Californians say the country is headed in the right direction, and about half expect good economic times. *(page 9)*
- Most Californians support finding a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the country legally; two in three favor California’s state and local governments making their own policies to protect the legal rights of undocumented immigrants in the state. *(page 10)*
- Fifty-one percent of California adults have a favorable opinion of the Affordable Care Act, with partisans sharply divided. About half say it should not be repealed. *(page 11)*
- Climate change is viewed as a major threat by two in three Californians; a solid majority favor the state making its own policies to address climate change. *(page 12)*
- Seven in ten Californians think government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion. *(page 13)*
- Most Californians approve of the Supreme Court; a plurality think the ideology of the current court is just about right. *(page 14)*

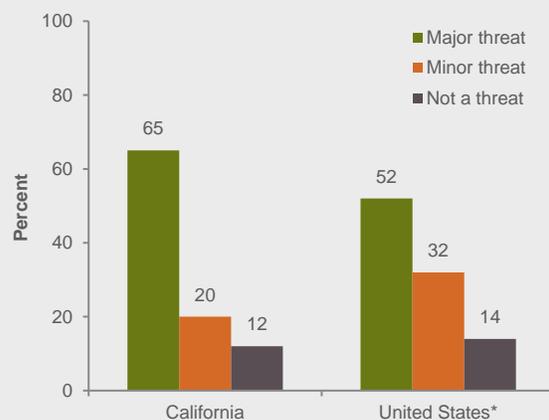
**Support for California acting on its own to protect the rights of undocumented immigrants in the state**



**Opinion of Affordable Care Act**



**Perception of global climate change**



\*Pew Research Center, January 2017

## Approval of Federal Elected Officials

Donald Trump begins his term as president with the approval of 30 percent of Californians and a third of likely voters (34%); majorities in both groups disapprove. There are stark partisan differences: 10 percent of Democrats approve, compared to 72 percent of Republicans. Approval of President Trump is low across regions. Men are 10 points more likely than women to approve (35% to 25%). There are also differences across racial/ethnic groups, with whites (39%) and Asian Americans (37%) twice as likely as Latinos (17%) and African Americans (15%) to approve. Californians are less likely than adults nationwide to approve of President Trump according a Gallup tracking poll from January 23–29 (45%).

**“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%	58%	12%
Likely voters		34	55	11
Party	Democrats	10	82	8
	Republicans	72	16	12
	Independents	37	48	15
Region	Central Valley	34	51	15
	San Francisco Bay Area	28	60	13
	Los Angeles	27	62	11
	Orange/San Diego	30	60	10
	Inland Empire	32	57	11

A third of Californians (33%) and a quarter of likely voters (25%) approve of the way the US Congress is handling its job. Approval among all adults was similar in recent months and last January. Democrats (19%) are much less likely than independents (35%) and Republicans (39%) to approve. Fewer than half across regions and age, education, and income groups approve. Asian Americans (40%) and Latinos (40%) are more likely than whites (27%) and African Americans (19%) to approve. According to a January CBS News poll, fewer adults nationwide approve of Congress (24% approve, 71% disapprove).

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

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
All adults		33%	58%	9%
Likely voters		25	68	7
Party	Democrats	19	73	8
	Republicans	39	56	5
	Independents	35	58	7
Region	Central Valley	34	57	9
	San Francisco Bay Area	35	55	10
	Los Angeles	31	62	6
	Orange/San Diego	38	58	4
	Inland Empire	29	53	17

## New President

A third of California adults and 37 percent of likely voters have a favorable opinion of Donald Trump. Most have an unfavorable opinion, and about half of adults and likely voters hold a strongly unfavorable opinion. Last January, fewer Californians (22% adults, 27% likely voters) viewed him favorably. Notably, today only 9 percent of Democrats have a positive opinion, compared to 80 percent of Republicans. Four in ten or fewer across regions and age, education, and income groups hold favorable opinions. Whites (44%) are much more likely to have a positive view than Asian Americans (30%), Latinos (23%), and African Americans (10%). According to a January ABC News/Washington Post poll, adults nationwide are slightly more likely than Californians to have a favorable view (40%).

### “Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Donald Trump?”

		Favorable	Unfavorable	Don't know	
All adults		33%	60%	7%	
Likely voters		37	59	4	
Party	Democrats	9	86	5	
	Republicans	80	15	4	
	Independents	35	55	9	
Region	Central Valley	40	53	6	
	San Francisco Bay Area	27	67	5	
	Los Angeles	26	62	12	
	Orange/San Diego	37	56	7	
		Inland Empire	36	61	2

About three in ten Californians have a great deal (15%) or a good amount (13%) of confidence in President Trump to make the right decisions for the country’s future; seven in ten have only some confidence (26%) or none at all (45%). Republicans are much more likely than Democrats to be confident. Fewer than four in ten across regions and age, education, and income groups are confident. Whites (42%) are much more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to be confident. According to the ABC News/Washington Post poll, adults nationwide are more likely to be confident (38%).

### “How much confidence do you have in President Trump to make the right decisions for the country’s future—a great deal of confidence, a good amount, just some, or none at all?”

		A great deal	A good amount	Just some	None at all	Don't know	
All adults		15%	13%	26%	45%	2%	
Likely voters		19	15	19	45	1	
Party	Democrats	3	6	22	67	1	
	Republicans	47	31	14	8	1	
	Independents	18	14	31	36	2	
Region	Central Valley	22	17	23	36	2	
	San Francisco Bay Area	12	11	27	49	1	
	Los Angeles	13	9	28	47	2	
	Orange/San Diego	15	16	25	43	1	
		Inland Empire	17	13	19	49	2

## State of the Nation

Despite a Republican president and a Republican-controlled Congress, only about half of Californians (50% adults, 55% likely voters) think the president and Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (85%) and 56 percent of independents anticipate productive collaboration, compared with one in three Democrats (34%). Across regions, residents in the Central Valley (54%) are the most likely to express optimism and residents in Los Angeles (46%) are the least likely. Whites (58%) are the most likely to think the president and Congress will be able to accomplish a lot together in the next year (46% Asian Americans, 43% Latinos, 42% African Americans). Notably, this belief is down sharply from January 2009 when there was a Democratic president and Democratic-controlled Congress; at that time, 81 percent of Californians—including 66 percent of Republicans—held this view.

### “Do you think that President Trump and the US Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, will be able to work together	50%	34%	85%	56%	55%
No, will not be able to work together	44	57	13	39	39
Don't know	6	9	2	5	6

Thirty-six percent of Californians think things in the United States are headed in the right direction. In October 2016, just prior to the election, optimism was slightly higher (43%). Although the overall percentage has changed only slightly, there has been a dramatic shift among partisans. Six in ten Republicans think things are going in the right direction (61%, up from 17%), while one in five Democrats are optimistic (20%, down from 57%). Four in ten independents say things are heading in the right direction (43%, up from 33%). Today, four in ten or fewer across regions and racial/ethnic groups think things are going in the right direction and men (42%) are more likely than women (31%) to be optimistic.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	36%	20%	61%	43%	37%
Wrong direction	57	73	37	51	57
Don't know	7	6	2	6	6

Half of Californians (52%) think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially; 39 percent expect bad times. Results were similar in October 2016 (46% good times, 39% bad times). Once again, the partisan outlook has changed greatly since October. Fewer than four in ten Democrats expect good times (38%, down from 58%), compared with more than eight in ten Republicans (83%, up from 27%). Whites (60%) are the most likely to be optimistic about good economic times, followed by Asian Americans (51%), Latinos (46%), and African Americans (38%). Optimism increases as incomes rise and is higher among men (59%) than women (46%).

Optimism about the direction of the country and economic conditions are both far higher among those who approve of President Trump than who disapprove.

## Immigration Policy

As a candidate, President Trump promised a new federal approach to undocumented immigrants living in the United States, and he has taken action on immigration in the early days of his administration. In California, state and local governments are considering their responses to the new administration’s policies, including the president’s executive order challenging “sanctuary cities.”

A solid majority of adults (65%) and 58 percent of likely voters favor California’s state and local governments making their own policies and taking actions—separate from the federal government—to protect the rights of undocumented immigrants living in the state. Opinions differ widely across political parties: 80 percent of Democrats favor state and local government action, while 69 percent of Republicans oppose it. Majorities across regions are in favor, with residents of Los Angeles (73%) most likely to be in favor (68% San Francisco Bay Area, 65% Inland Empire, 59% Orange/San Diego, 58% Central Valley). Majorities across racial/ethnic groups are also in favor, with Latinos (82%), Asian Americans (67%), and African Americans (65%) more likely than whites (53%) to support this approach. Among those who express approval of President Trump, 27 percent favor state and local action to protect the rights of undocumented immigrants (69% oppose).

**“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			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	65%	80%	27%	59%	58%
Oppose	32	17	69	38	39
Don't know	3	3	3	3	2

An overwhelming majority of Californians (85%) say there should be a way for undocumented immigrants to stay in the United States legally if certain requirements are met—only 13 percent say they should not be allowed to stay in this country legally. This is consistent with PPIC surveys over the past year. Strong majorities across parties say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay, including 93 percent of Democrats and 65 percent of Republicans. Ninety-four percent of Latinos agree, as do overwhelming majorities of African Americans (87%), whites (81%), and Asian Americans (79%). At least three in four across regions and age, education, and income groups say the same. Among those who say they voted for Donald Trump, 61 percent say undocumented immigrants should be allowed to stay, and 34 percent say they should not.

**“Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are living in the US? There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met, or they should not be allowed to stay in this country legally?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Allowed to stay legally	85%	93%	65%	84%	83%
Not allowed to stay legally	13	6	33	13	15
Don't know	2	1	3	3	2

## Health Care Policy

On the day of his inauguration, President Trump signed an executive order aimed at weakening the Affordable Care Act (ACA) pending its potential repeal. About half of Californians (51%) have a generally favorable opinion of the 2010 health reform law, while 39% percent have a generally unfavorable opinion. Opinions about the law were similar in December 2015 (51% favorable, 42% unfavorable), though fewer than half viewed the law favorably in PPIC Statewide Surveys from December 2013 to December 2014. Californians are somewhat more likely to have a favorable view of the health reform law than adults nationwide (43% favorable, 46% unfavorable), according to a December Kaiser Family Foundation survey.

There are stark partisan differences on this issue: three in four Democrats (77%) have a favorable opinion of the 2010 health reform law, while three in four Republicans (74%) view it unfavorably. Independents are more divided, though they are more likely to view the law favorably (50%) than unfavorably (40%). About half of Californians with health insurance (52%) and without health insurance (48%) have a favorable opinion of the law. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups, with the exception of whites (44%), have a generally favorable opinion of the law.

**“As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a generally favorable or generally unfavorable opinion of it?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favorable	51%	77%	17%	50%	53%
Unfavorable	39	17	74	40	40
Don't know	9	7	9	11	7

A slight majority of Californians (53% adults, 54% likely voters) oppose repealing the ACA. A quarter of Californians say Congress should wait to repeal until details of a replacement plan are announced, while 16 percent favor immediate repeal of the law. Adults nationwide are slightly more likely than Californians to favor repealing the law (49% to 42%), according to the Kaiser Family Foundation survey.

Majorities of Democrats (78%) and independents (57%) oppose repealing the ACA, but an overwhelming majority of Republicans (80%) favor a repeal. However, half of Republicans (51%) think a repeal should occur after a replacement is announced—only 29 percent favor an immediate repeal. Across regions, majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (59%), Orange/San Diego (59%), and Los Angeles (56%) say Congress should not repeal the law. Slight majorities in the Central Valley (51%) and Inland Empire (52%) support a repeal. Among those who approve of President Trump, 30 percent favor an immediate repeal, and 43 percent favor a repeal once a replacement is announced.

**“Do you think Congress should vote to repeal the 2010 health care law, or should they not vote to repeal it? (If yes: should lawmakers vote to repeal the law immediately and work out the details of a replacement plan later or should lawmakers wait to vote to repeal the law until the details of a replacement plan have been announced?)”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, repeal and work out details of replacement plan later	16%	8%	29%	15%	16%
Yes, repeal but wait until details of a replacement plan are announced	26	12	51	25	27
No, should not vote to repeal	53	78	17	57	54
Don't know	4	2	3	3	3

## Climate Change

With the Trump administration expected to set a new direction for federal climate change policy, California and the federal government are likely to diverge further on this issue over the next several years. Today, a strong majority of Californians (65%) say global climate change is a major threat to the well-being of the United States (20% minor threat, 12% not a threat). Adults nationwide in a January Pew Research Center survey were much less likely to say that global climate change is a major threat (52% major, 32% minor, 14% not a threat).

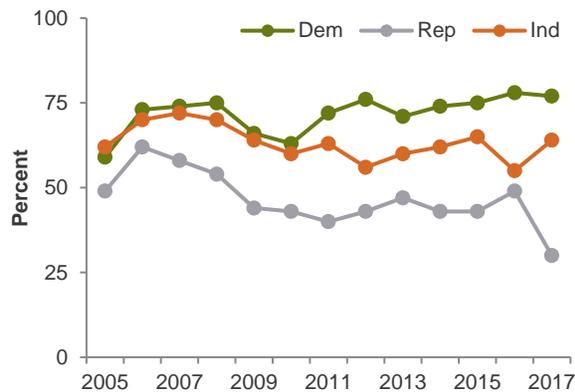
In our survey, Democrats (82%) are far more likely than independents (62%) or Republicans (27%) to say climate change is a major threat, with about three in ten Republicans (31%) saying it is not a threat. Majorities across regions as well as racial/ethnic and age groups say climate change is a major threat. Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area (73%) and Los Angeles (70%) residents are the most likely to say so. Whites (57%) are less likely to hold this view than other racial/ethnic groups (65% African Americans, 74% Asian Americans, 74% Latinos). The likelihood of saying climate change is a major threat declines with increasing age (73% 18–34, 65% 35–54, 59% 55 and older).

**“Do you think that global climate change is a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to the well-being of the United States?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Major threat	65%	82%	27%	62%	60%
Minor threat	20	10	40	24	21
Not a threat	12	6	31	12	16
Don't know	3	1	3	2	2

Solid majorities of California adults (63%) and likely voters (60%) say they favor the state government making its own policies—separate from the federal government—to address the issue of global warming. Findings were similar last July (67% adults, 65% likely voters), and majorities have been in favor since we first asked this question in 2005. Today, there are wide partisan differences, with solid majorities of Democrats (77%) and independents (64%) in favor and a solid majority of Republicans opposed (67%). Support among Republicans has dropped 19 points since last July.

**Support for California making its own policies to address global warming**



**“Do you favor or oppose the California state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of global warming?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	63%	77%	30%	64%	60%
Oppose	33	19	67	33	37
Don't know	4	4	3	2	3

Majorities across regions are in favor of the state making its own climate change policy, with Central Valley residents (53%) less likely than others to be in favor (61% Inland Empire, 63% Orange/San Diego, 66% Los Angeles, 69% San Francisco Bay Area). Asian Americans (70%) and Latinos (68%) are more likely than African Americans (58%) or whites (57%) to be in favor.

## Abortion

As Congress considers President Trump’s Supreme Court nominee, abortion policy is one of the central issues to the debate. When asked which statement comes closest to their own view, Californians are far more likely to say the government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion (71%) than to say the government should pass more laws to restrict the availability of abortion (27%). Since 2011, about seven in ten Californians have said the government should not interfere with access. A solid majority have held this view since we first asked this question in 2000. Today, majorities across parties say the government should not interfere, with Democrats (87%) more likely than independents (75%) or Republicans (60%) to say so. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups agree, with Latinos (60%) less likely to say so than others (78% whites, 77% African Americans, 75% Asian Americans). Two in three men (67%) say the government should not interfere, and women are slightly more likely to hold this view (74%). At least six in ten Californians across age, education, and income groups say the government should not interfere.

**“Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right? The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion; or the government should not interfere with a woman’s access to abortion?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Government should pass more laws	27%	13%	36%	23%	22%
Government should not interfere with access	71	87	60	75	76
Don't know	2	1	3	2	2

In 1973, the Supreme Court’s decision in *Roe v. Wade* established a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion. Today, 71 percent of Californians say they do not want to see that decision completely overturned (25% say overturn). In our surveys since 2005, at least 65 percent have said the same. Today, majorities across parties do not want *Roe v. Wade* completely overturned, with Democrats (87%) and independents (73%) much more likely than Republicans (59%) to say so. The likelihood of agreeing rises with higher education and income levels, though solid majorities across education and income groups agree. Majorities across racial/ethnic groups do not want it overturned, with Latinos (62%) being the least likely. In a December Pew Research Center poll, adults nationwide (69% do not overturn, 28% overturn) had similar opinions to Californians in our survey.

**“In 1973, the *Roe v. Wade* decision established a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, overturn	25%	11%	37%	25%	21%
No, not overturn	71	87	59	73	77
Don't know	4	2	3	1	2

Among Californians who say they voted for Donald Trump, slight majorities say they do not want to see *Roe v. Wade* completely overturned (55%) and that the government should not interfere with access to abortion (52%).

## Supreme Court

President Trump’s nomination of Neil Gorsuch follows a year-long vacancy on the Supreme Court, which changed the makeup of the court. Today, majorities of California adults (57%) and likely voters (53%) approve of the way the Supreme Court is handling its job. Californians are more likely to approve of the Supreme Court (57%) than of President Trump (30%) or the US Congress (33%). Independents (61%) are the most likely to approve of the Supreme Court, followed by Democrats (54%) and Republicans (49%). Approval is somewhat higher than it was last May (45%), with both independents and Republicans more likely to approve of the court today than they were last year (48% and 33%). Today, at least half approve across regions and age, education, and income groups. Asian Americans (67%) are the most likely to express approval, followed by Latinos (60%), whites (54%), and African Americans (46%).

### “Do you approve or disapprove of the way the Supreme Court is handling its job?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	57%	54%	49%	61%	53%
Disapprove	32	34	44	29	36
Don't know	11	12	7	10	10

When asked if the current Supreme Court is too liberal, too conservative, or just about right, pluralities of Californians say it is just about right (47% adults, 43% likely voters). Californians are about as likely to say the court is too liberal as they are to say it is too conservative. Across parties, pluralities of Democrats (47%) and independents (37%) say the court is just about right, while a plurality of Republicans (48%) say it is too liberal. Asian Americans (59%) are the most likely to say the ideology of the current Supreme Court is about right, followed by Latinos (51%), whites (43%), and African Americans (39%). Across regions and age, education, and income groups, the most common response is that the current court is just about right.

Among the majority of Californians who do not want to see the Supreme Court completely overturn its decision in *Roe v. Wade*, 51 percent say the ideology of the current court is just about right (27% too conservative, 14% too liberal). Among those who say they voted for Donald Trump, 51 percent say the court is too liberal.

### “In general, do you think the current Supreme Court is too liberal, too conservative, or just about right?”

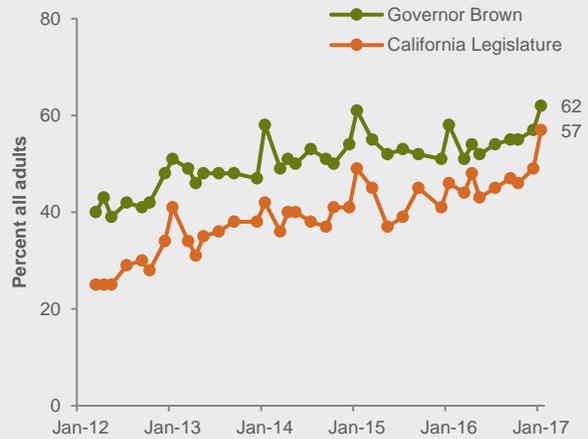
	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Too liberal	20%	8%	48%	23%	22%
Too conservative	24	36	8	31	27
Just about right	47	47	37	37	43
Don't know	8	9	7	9	8

# State Government

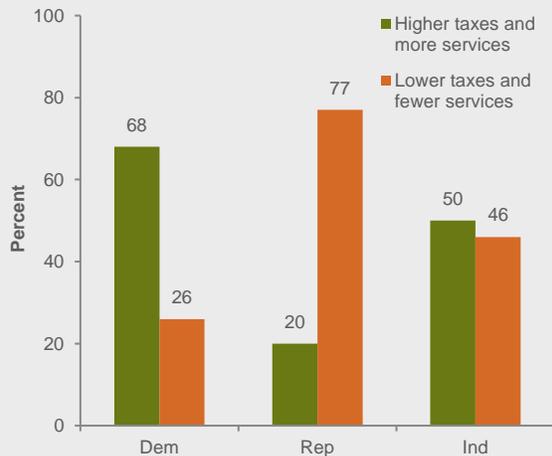
## Key Findings

- Approval of Governor Brown (62%) is at a record high, the state legislature’s approval rating (57%) is at its highest point since 2001, and a record-high 66 percent think the governor and legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. *(page 16, 17)*
- Most Californians (58%) think the state is heading in the right direction, and 53 percent expect good economic times in California in the next 12 months. *(page 18)*
- A plurality of Californians (44%) say K–12 education should be the state’s highest spending priority. Notably, few residents (16%) know that K–12 education is already the top area of state spending. *(page 19)*
- About half of adults (52%) and likely voters (49%)—divided along party lines—prefer to pay higher taxes for a state government that provides more services. *(page 19)*
- A record-low share of Californians (37%) think the state budget situation is a big problem. When read a summary of the governor’s proposed 2017–18 budget, fewer than half of adults (47%) and likely voters (43%) are in favor. Four in ten adults and likely voters favor the governor’s transportation infrastructure funding plan. *(page 20)*
- An overwhelming majority of Californians say spending on surface transportation is important for the state’s future. Half of adults prefer using existing funds more wisely to improve the state’s roads. At least six in ten adults and likely voters would vote yes on a state bond measure to fund surface transportation. About half would vote for a local sales tax increase for local transportation projects—a two-thirds majority is needed to pass this type of measure. *(page 21)*

Approval ratings of state elected officials



Preference for the size of state government



Perception that the state budget situation is a big problem



## Approval Ratings of State Elected Officials

As Jerry Brown begins the third year of his fourth term as governor of California, 62 percent of adults and 62 percent of likely voters approve of the way that he is handling his job, a record high in PPIC Statewide Surveys. The governor’s approval rating was similar in December (57% adults, 59% likely voters) and last January (58% adults, 60% likely voters). Today, majorities of Democrats (82%) and independents (57%) and far fewer Republicans (25%) approve of the governor. Majorities across major regions approve, and Latinos (73%) are more likely than Asian Americans (64%), African Americans (63%), and whites (55%) to approve.

### “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		62%	24%	13%
Likely voters		62	31	7
Party	Democrats	82	9	9
	Republicans	25	66	8
	Independents	57	30	14
Region	Central Valley	56	32	12
	San Francisco Bay Area	73	18	9
	Los Angeles	65	17	18
	Orange/San Diego	60	28	11
	Inland Empire	54	30	16

At the start of the 2017–18 session, 57 percent of adults and 50 percent of likely voters approve of the way the California Legislature is handling its job. Approval of the state legislature was somewhat lower in December (49% adults, 45% likely voters) and last January (46% adults, 41% likely voters). Today, majorities of Democrats (71%) and independents (52%) say they approve, while fewer Republicans (20%) hold this view. Half or more across the state’s major regions approve of the legislature. Latinos (67%) and Asian Americans (63%) are more likely than African Americans (50%) and whites (49%) 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		57%	30%	13%
Likely voters		50	38	11
Party	Democrats	71	18	12
	Republicans	20	75	6
	Independents	52	34	15
Region	Central Valley	50	37	13
	San Francisco Bay Area	69	22	10
	Los Angeles	59	25	15
	Orange/San Diego	51	35	13
	Inland Empire	50	36	14

## Top Issues, Prospect of State Leaders Working Together in 2017

Californians name jobs and the economy (14% adults, 13% likely voters), immigration (14% adults, 13% likely voters), and education and schools (11% adults, 10% likely voters) as the most important issues for the governor and legislature to work on in 2017. Other top issues are health care and health insurance (7% adults, 8% likely voters) and water and the drought (6% adults, 8% likely voters), while the state budget is the most important issue for 5 percent of all adults and 9 percent of likely voters.

Last January, Californians named water and the drought (17% adults, 18% likely voters) and jobs and the economy (16% adults, 19% likely voters) as the most important issues for the governor and legislature to work on. Other top issues mentioned in 2016 included education and schools (9% adults, 9% likely voters), immigration (9% adults, 7% likely voters), and the state budget (4% adults, 5% likely voters).

Across the state’s regions, Central Valley residents are the most likely to mention water and the drought as the most important issue. There are partisan differences in mentioning education and schools (14% Democrat, 5% Republican) but not in the naming of jobs and the economy or immigration. There are differences across racial/ethnic groups in mentions of jobs and the economy (22% African Americans, 15% Asian Americans, 14% Latinos, 11% white) and immigration (21% Latinos, 11% whites, 10% Asian Americans, 9% African Americans).

### “Which one issue facing California today do you think is the most important for the governor and state legislature to work on in 2017?”

Top 5 issues	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Jobs, economy	14%	13%	10%	16%	17%	10%	13%
Immigration, illegal immigration	14	14	14	14	15	11	13
Education, schools, teachers	11	6	11	11	14	14	10
Healthcare, health insurance	7	8	10	7	6	6	8
Water, drought	6	12	6	4	3	2	8

Following the November election in which Democrats secured a two-thirds majority in both chambers, a record-high 66 percent of adults and 64 percent of likely voters say they think that Governor Brown and the state legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year. Fewer Californians held this view in January 2016 (57% adults, 53% likely voters), January 2015 (59% adults, 52% likely voters), January 2014 (57% adults, 51% likely voters), January 2013 (57% adults, 51% likely voters), and January 2012 (44% adults, 32% likely voters). When Governor Brown entered office in January 2011, 58 percent of adults and 52 percent of likely voters held this view. Today, majorities of Democrats (74%) and independents (59%) and fewer Republicans (44%) hold this view. Majorities across regional, age, income, education, and racial/ethnic groups have this positive outlook on 2017.

### “Do you think that Governor Brown and the state legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?”

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, will be able to	66%	74%	44%	59%	64%
No, will not be able to	22	15	47	25	25
Don't know	11	11	9	16	12

## State of the State

Fifty-eight percent of adults and likely voters say that things in California are generally going in the right direction. California adults (but not likely voters) were similarly positive in October (54% adults, 50% likely voters) and last January (54% adults, 49% likely voters). Today, majorities of Democrats (78%) and independents (55%) and far fewer Republicans (21%) say that things are going in the right direction. Majorities in the coastal regions have this perception. Asian Americans (69%) and Latinos (64%) are more likely than whites (51%) and African Americans (49%) to hold this view.

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

		Right direction	Wrong direction	Don't know
All adults		58%	35%	7%
Likely voters		58	38	4
Party	Democrats	78	19	3
	Republicans	21	77	3
	Independents	55	37	8
Region	Central Valley	49	42	9
	San Francisco Bay Area	70	25	4
	Los Angeles	64	29	7
	Orange/San Diego	55	38	7
	Inland Empire	45	43	11

Fifty-three percent of adults and 51 percent of likely voters say the state will have good times financially in the next 12 months. Slightly fewer Californians expected good economic times in October (47% adults, 46% likely voters) and last January (49% adults, 44% likely voters). Today, majorities of Democrats (57%) and independents (54%) and fewer Republicans (45%) are optimistic. With the exception of the Central Valley, majorities across regions think that good times are ahead. Latinos (60%) and Asian Americans (59%) are more likely than whites (49%) and African Americans (41%) to expect good times.

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

		Good times	Bad times	Don't know
All adults		53%	35%	12%
Likely voters		51	34	15
Party	Democrats	57	31	13
	Republicans	45	42	13
	Independents	54	33	13
Region	Central Valley	45	42	12
	San Francisco Bay Area	54	34	12
	Los Angeles	56	31	13
	Orange/San Diego	54	34	11
	Inland Empire	63	33	4

## State Spending

Governor Brown has recently proposed a 2017–18 state budget that includes approximately \$122.5 billion in General Fund expenditures with nine in ten dollars allocated for K–12 public education (42.6%, \$52.2 billion), health and human services (27.7%, \$34.0 billion), higher education (11.9%, \$14.6 billion), and corrections and rehabilitation (9.0%, \$11.1 billion). When asked to identify the largest area of state spending, few Californians correctly name K–12 public education (16% adults, 17% likely voters) and a plurality incorrectly name corrections and prisons (39% adults, 36% likely voters). In our January surveys since 2010, we have seen similar patterns of correct and incorrect responses. Today, Democrats are much more likely to incorrectly name prisons and corrections as the largest spending area (46%) than are Republicans (31%) and independents (31%).

**“I’m going to name some of the largest areas for state spending. Please tell me the one that represents the most spending in the state budget.”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Prisons and corrections	39%	46%	31%	31%	36%
Health and human services	28	21	35	40	31
K–12 public education	16	16	20	13	17
Higher education	12	12	8	12	8
Don’t know	5	5	6	4	7

About half of Californians (44% adults, 49% likely voters) think that K–12 public education should have the highest priority when it comes to state government spending. Fewer Californians choose health and human services, higher education, or prisons and corrections. About half of Democrats (47%) and Republicans (48%), and 42 percent of independents, say that K–12 public education should be the top priority. K–12 public education was also named as the top priority for state spending last January (49% adults, 54% likely voters) and in January 2015 (53% adults, 57% likely voters).

**“Thinking about these four areas of state spending, I’d like you to name the one you think should have the highest priority when it comes to state government spending.”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
K–12 public education	44%	47%	48%	42%	49%
Health and human services	30	30	26	32	28
Higher education	19	18	15	18	15
Prisons and corrections	4	3	8	5	5
Don’t know	2	2	2	3	3

About half of adults (52%) and likely voters (49%) say they would rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services than pay lower taxes and have fewer services provided (43% adults, 47% likely voters). In December 2015, a similar proportion of Californians (48% adults, 45% likely voters) said they would rather pay higher taxes and have more services. Today, Democrats (68%) are much more likely than independents (50%) and Republicans (20%) to hold this view. The preference for higher taxes and more services is slightly more common in the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) than in other regions, among those under 35 (58%) than among older residents, and among African Americans (67%), Latinos (58%), and Asian Americans (58%) than among whites (46%).

## State Budget

In his January 10 unveiling of the 2017–18 proposed state budget, Governor Brown estimated a \$1.6 billion deficit for the state. Yet, today only 37 percent of Californians say the budget situation is a big problem—a record low since we first began asking this question in 2006. Across parties, a majority of Republicans (61%) say the budget situation is a big problem, while fewer independents (37%) and Democrats (26%) say the same.

Governor Brown’s budget proposal calls for slowing spending growth in K–14 education and other areas and includes modest increases in spending in the largest areas of the state budget. It also includes about \$1.1 billion for the state’s rainy day fund. After being read a short description, 47 percent of adults and 43 percent of likely voters favor the governor’s budget plan.

Half of Democrats (51%) are in favor, while independents (39%) and Republicans (34%) are less likely to favor the governor’s budget proposal. With the exception of the San Francisco Bay Area (52% favor), fewer than half of Californians across regions favor the proposed budget. Across racial/ethnic groups, Asian Americans (55%) and Latinos (53%) are more likely than whites (41%) and African Americans (36%) to favor the governor’s budget plan.

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

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	47%	51%	34%	39%	43%
Oppose	44	39	60	49	49
Don't know/have not heard anything about the budget	9	10	6	12	8

\*For complete question text, see p. 26.

Governor Brown has proposed about \$43 billion of additional spending over the next 10 years to address a multibillion-dollar shortfall in infrastructure improvement funds. The new funding would come from a \$65 fee on all vehicles, an increase in the state’s gasoline and diesel taxes, and cap-and-trade revenues. After hearing a brief description of the governor’s infrastructure funding proposal, about four in ten Californians (41% adults, 43% likely voters) favor the plan. A slight majority of Democrats (53%) are in favor, while independents are more divided (46% favor, 48% oppose) and most Republicans oppose the proposal (19% favor, 78% oppose). Regionally, support of the governor’s infrastructure proposal is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (52%), followed by Los Angeles and Orange/San Diego (42% each), the Central Valley (37%), and the Inland Empire (33%). Support for the governor’s proposal falls short of a majority across all demographic groups, with the exception of Asian Americans (60%) and college graduates (54%).

**“To address a multibillion-dollar shortfall in California infrastructure improvements, Governor Brown has proposed about \$43 billion of additional spending for state and local transportation projects over the next 10 years with a focus on repair and maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges and also public transit ... In general, do you favor or oppose this proposal?”\***

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	41%	53%	19%	46%	43%
Oppose	54	42	78	48	53
Don't know	5	5	3	5	4

\*For complete question text, see p. 26.

## Transportation Funding

Solid majorities of adults (61%) and likely voters (68%) think that spending more money on the maintenance of the state’s roads is very important for the future of California. Findings were similar in March 2016 (62% adults, 68% likely voters said very important). Today, majorities across regions and two-thirds of Democrats (65%), Republicans (67%), and independents (66%) say spending more on the maintenance of surface transportation is very important to California’s future. Californians 55 and older (70%) are more likely than younger residents (55% 18–34, 59% 35–54) to say spending on maintenance is very important. Notably, Californians who favor Governor Brown’s infrastructure spending plan are more likely to say spending on the maintenance of surface transportation is very important than are those who oppose the plan (69% to 56%).

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

	All adults	Region					Likely voters
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Very important	61%	70%	62%	61%	55%	58%	68%
Somewhat important	32	25	34	32	36	33	27
Not too important	5	3	4	5	7	7	3
Not at all important	1	1	–	1	2	2	2
Don't know	–	–	–	1	1	–	–

When asked what is needed to significantly improve the quality of California’s roads, about half of adults (51%) and likely voters (52%) say wiser use of existing funds is needed. An additional four in ten say wiser use of existing funds and an increase in the amount of state funding is needed. Few adults (7%) and likely voters (4%) prefer increased funding alone to significantly improve California’s roads and surface transportation. Across parties, majorities of Republicans (72%) and independents (56%) say wiser use alone is needed, while fewer Democrats (41%) say the same. Majorities in the Inland Empire (59%), Central Valley (56%), and Orange/San Diego (54%) say only wiser use of existing funds is needed, while fewer in the San Francisco Bay Area (44%) and Los Angeles (48%) hold this view.

**“To significantly improve the quality of California’s roads and surface transportation, which of the following statements do you agree with the most?”**

	All adults	Party			Likely voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Use existing funds more wisely	51%	41%	72%	56%	52%
Increase the amount of state funding	7	6	4	8	4
Use funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding	40	49	24	34	41
Don't know	2	4	–	2	2

A majority of adults (65%) and likely voters (60%) would vote yes on a state bond measure to pay for surface transportation projects. Another potential revenue source for transportation is a local sales tax increase, which requires a two-thirds majority to pass. However, only about half of Californians (50% adults, 53% likely voters) would vote yes on a local sales tax increase. Fewer than half of Californians (47% adults, 41% likely voters) would favor a measure to replace the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority for voters to pass local sales taxes to pay for roads and surface transportation.

# Regional Map



# Methodology

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

Findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,702 California adult residents, including 681 interviewed on landline telephones and 1,021 interviewed on cell phones. Interviews took an average of 21 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekend days and weekday nights from January 22–31, 2017.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the "last birthday method" to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phone interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection, and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving).

Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement to help defray the cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

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

Abt SRBI uses the US Census Bureau's 2011–2015 American Community Survey's (ACS) Public Use Microdata Series for California (with regional coding information from the University of Minnesota's Integrated Public Use Microdata Series for California) to compare certain demographic characteristics of the survey sample—region, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and education—with the characteristics of California's adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the ACS figures. To estimate landline and cell phone service in California, Abt SRBI used 2015 state-level estimates released by the National Center for Health Statistics—which used data from the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) and the ACS—and 2016 estimates for the West Census Region in the latest NHIS report. The estimates for California were then compared against landline and cell phone service reported in this survey. We also used voter registration data from the California Secretary of State to compare the party registration of registered voters in our sample to party registration statewide. The landline and cell phone samples were then integrated using a frame integration weight, while sample balancing adjusted for differences across regional, age, gender, race/ethnicity, education, telephone service, and party registration groups.

The sampling error, taking design effects from weighting into consideration, is  $\pm 3.3$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the total unweighted sample of 1,702 adults. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 3.3 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California

were interviewed. The sampling error for unweighted subgroups is larger: for the 1,428 registered voters, the sampling error is  $\pm 3.6$  percent; for the 1,107 likely voters, it is  $\pm 4.1$  percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

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

We present specific results for non-Hispanic whites, who account for 43 percent of the state's adult population, and also for Latinos, who account for about 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. 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, 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 News/Washington Post, Kaiser Family Foundation, Gallup, 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

January 22–31, 2017

1,702 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish

MARGIN OF ERROR  $\pm 3.3\%$  AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE  
PERCENTAGES MAY NOT ADD TO 100 DUE TO ROUNDING

- 1. First, which one issue facing California today do you think is the most important for the governor and the state legislature to work on in 2017?**

*[code, don't read]*

- 14% immigration, illegal immigration
- 14 jobs, economy
- 11 education, schools, teachers
- 7 health care, health insurance
- 6 water, drought
- 5 environment, pollution, global warming
- 5 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 4 government in general, problems with elected officials, parties
- 3 crime, gangs, drugs
- 3 infrastructure
- 2 abortion
- 2 guns, gun control
- 2 homelessness
- 2 housing costs, availability
- 9 other (specify)
- 11 don't know

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

- 62% approve
- 24 disapprove
- 13 don't know

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

- 57% approve
- 30 disapprove
- 13 don't know

- 4. Do you think that Governor Brown and the state legislature will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?**

- 66% yes, will be able to work together
- 22 no, will not be able to work together
- 11 don't know

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

- 58% right direction
- 35 wrong direction
- 7 don't know

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

- 53% good times
- 35 bad times
- 12 don't know

- 7. I'm going to name some of the largest areas for state spending. Please tell me the one that represents the most spending in the state budget. *[rotate]* (1) K–12 public education, (2) higher education, (3) health and human services, *[or]* (4) prisons and corrections.**

- 16% K–12 public education
- 12 higher education
- 28 health and human services
- 39 prisons and corrections
- 5 don't know

**8. Thinking about these four areas of state spending, I'd like you to name the one you think should have the highest priority when it comes to state government spending, [rotate in same order as Q7] (1) K-12 public education, (2) higher education, (3) health and human services, [or] (4) prisons and corrections.**

- 44% K-12 public education
- 19 higher education
- 30 health and human services
- 4 prisons and corrections
- 2 don't know

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

- 61% very important
- 32 somewhat important
- 5 not too important
- 1 not at all important
- don't know

**10. 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?**

- 37% big problem
- 45 somewhat of a problem
- 13 not a problem
- 5 don't know

**11. In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more—[rotate] (1) I'd rather pay higher taxes and have a state government that provides more services, [or] (2) I'd rather pay lower taxes and have a state government that provides fewer services?**

- 52% higher taxes and more services
- 43 lower taxes and fewer services
- 5 don't know

**12. On another topic, the state government has a budget of about \$123 billion and is projected to have a deficit of \$1.6 billion in the upcoming fiscal year. Governor Brown recently proposed a budget plan to close this deficit by slowing spending growth in K-14 education and in other areas and eliminating some planned one-time spending. It includes modest increases in the largest areas of the state budget such as K-14 and higher education, health and human services, and prisons and corrections and about \$1.1 billion for the state's rainy day fund. In general, do you favor or oppose the governor's budget plan?**

- 47% favor
- 44 oppose
- 4 haven't heard anything about the budget (*volunteered*)
- 5 don't know

**13. To address a multibillion-dollar shortfall in California infrastructure improvements, Governor Brown has proposed about \$43 billion of additional spending for state and local transportation projects over the next 10 years with a focus on repair and maintenance of roads, highways, and bridges and also public transit. The new funding would come from a \$65 fee on all vehicles and by increasing the state's gasoline excise tax to 21.5 cents with annual adjustments for inflation, an 11 cent increase in the diesel excise tax, and cap-and-trade revenues. In general, do you favor or oppose this proposal?**

- 41% favor
- 54 oppose
- 5 don't know

Next, please tell me if you would vote yes or no on each of the following proposals to increase state and local funding for surface transportation projects in California.

*[rotate questions 14 and 15]*

**14. If the state ballot had a bond measure to pay for roads and surface transportation projects in California, would you vote yes or no?**

- 65% yes
- 31 no
- 4 don't know

**15. If your local ballot had a measure to increase the local sales tax to pay for roads and surface transportation projects in your part of California, would you vote yes or no?**

- 50% yes
- 48 no
- 2 don't know

**16. As you may know, the California state constitution requires a two-thirds vote at the ballot box to pass any local special taxes. If the state ballot had a measure to replace the two-thirds vote requirement with a 55 percent majority vote for voters to pass local sales taxes to pay for roads and surface transportation projects, would you vote yes or no?**

- 47% yes
- 51 no
- 3 don't know

**17. To significantly improve the quality of California's roads and surface transportation, which of the following statements do you agree with the most?**  
*[rotate responses 1 and 2] (1) We need to use existing state funds more wisely, [or] (2) We need to increase the amount of state funding, [or] (3) We need to use existing state funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding.*

- 51% use existing funds more wisely
- 7 increase the amount of state funding
- 40 use funds more wisely and increase the amount of state funding
- 2 don't know

On another topic,

**18. Overall, do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of Donald Trump? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?**

- 19% strongly favorable
- 14 somewhat favorable
- 12 somewhat unfavorable
- 48 strongly unfavorable
- 7 don't know

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

- 30% approve
- 58 disapprove
- 12 don't know

**20. How much confidence do you have in President Trump to make the right decisions for the country's future—a great deal of confidence, a good amount, just some, or none at all?**

- 15% great deal of confidence
- 13 a good amount
- 26 just some
- 45 none at all
- 2 don't know

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

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

**22. Do you think that President Trump and the US Congress will be able to work together and accomplish a lot in the next year, or not?**

- 50% yes, will be able to work together
- 44 no, will not be able to work together
- 6 don't know

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

- 36% right direction
- 57 wrong direction
- 7 don't know

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

- 52% good times
- 39 bad times
- 8 don't know

**25. As you may know, a health reform bill was signed into law in 2010. Given what you know about the health reform law, do you have a [rotate] (1) [generally favorable] [or] (2) [generally unfavorable] opinion of it?**

*[Interviewer note: If respondent asks if the health reform law refers to the Affordable Care Act or Obamacare, please answer "Yes"]*

- 51% generally favorable
- 39 generally unfavorable
- 9 don't know

**26. Now thinking specifically about the 2010 health care law, also known as the Affordable Care Act and sometimes referred to as Obamacare. Do you think Congress should vote to repeal the 2010 health care law, or should they not vote to repeal it? (if yes: [rotate 1 and 2] (1) should lawmakers vote to repeal the law immediately and work out the details of a replacement plan later [or] (2) should lawmakers wait to vote to repeal the law until the details of a replacement plan have been announced?)**

- 16% yes, vote to repeal the law immediately and work out the details of a replacement plan later
- 26 yes, wait to vote to repeal the law until the details of a replacement plan have been announced
- 53 no, should not vote to repeal
- 4 don't know

**27. Next, do you think that global climate change is a major threat, a minor threat, or not a threat to the well-being of the United States?**

- 65% major threat
- 20 minor threat
- 12 not a threat
- 3 don't know

**28. Do you favor or oppose the California state government making its own policies, separate from the federal government, to address the issue of global warming?**

- 63% favor
- 33 oppose
- 4 don't know

Changing topics,

**29. Which comes closer to your view about how to handle undocumented immigrants who are living in the US? [rotate] (1) There should be a way for them to stay in the country legally, if certain requirements are met [or] (2) They should not be allowed to stay in this country legally.**

- 85% allowed to stay legally
- 13 not allowed to stay legally
- 2 don't know

**30. 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?**

- 65% favor
- 32 oppose
- 3 don't know

On another topic,

**31. Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right [rotate] (1) The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion; [or] (2) the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion.**

- 27% government should pass more laws
- 71 government should not interfere with access
- 2 don't know

**32. In 1973, the *Roe v. Wade* decision established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?**

25% yes, overturn *Roe v. Wade*  
71 no, not overturn *Roe v. Wade*  
4 don't know

**33. On another topic, do you approve or disapprove of the way the Supreme Court is handling its job?**

57% approve  
32 disapprove  
11 don't know

**34. In general, do you think the current Supreme Court is too liberal, too conservative, or just about right?**

20% too liberal  
24 too conservative  
47 just about right  
8 don't know

**35. 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 q35a]  
30 no [skip to q36b]

**35a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?**

45% Democrat [ask q36]  
26 Republican [skip to q36a]  
5 another party (*specify*) [skip to q37]  
25 independent [skip to q36b]

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

60% strong  
39 not very strong  
1 don't know

*[skip to q37]*

**36a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?**

55% strong  
43 not very strong  
1 don't know

*[skip to q37]*

**36b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?**

25% Republican Party  
47 Democratic Party  
20 neither (*volunteered*)  
8 don't know

**37. Would you consider yourself to be politically:**

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

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

**38. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?**

29% great deal  
36 fair amount  
28 only a little  
7 none  
1 don't know

*[d1-d18 demographic questions]*

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