



PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY
SEPTEMBER 2003

*Californians and
Their Government*

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**Public
Policy
Institute of
California**

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including education, health care, immigration, income distribution, welfare, urban growth, and state and local finance.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure, or on any local, state or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

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Preface

The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, the survey series has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 78,000 Californians.

The current survey is the fifteenth in our *Californians and Their Government* series, which is conducted on a periodic basis throughout the state's election cycles. The series is focusing on the social, economic, and political trends that underlie public policy preferences and ballot choices. The current survey focuses on California's statewide special election. It examines voters' preferences on the recall, perceptions and attitudes related to the political campaign by the candidates, and on state propositions that will also be on the ballot, as well as Californians' attitudes and perceptions toward state and national issues. This report presents the responses of 2,001 adult residents throughout the state on a wide range of issues:

- The statewide special election, including the level of public support for the recall, current favorites among the replacement candidates on the recall ballot, importance of the debates, attention to the news stories and paid political commercials, attitudes toward the California recall process, and public support for Proposition 54 (racial classification).
- California policy issues, including the most important problem facing Californians, overall optimism about the direction of California today, the general outlook for the state and regional economies, approval ratings of Governor Davis, distrust in state government, attitudes and perceptions toward the state budget deficit, and perceptions of waste in government spending.
- National politics, including the U.S. presidential election, overall direction of the nation and the U.S. economy, overall approval ratings of President Bush and of his handling of the U.S. economy and federal budget and taxes, perceptions of the major parties' performance on domestic policy, approval ratings for the U.S. senators from California, and job performance ratings for the U.S. Congress and local representatives to the U.S. House of Representatives.
- The extent to which Californians may differ in their ballot choices for the special election, political and economic attitudes toward the state, and attitudes toward national political issues by party affiliation, demographics, race/ethnicity, and region of residence.

This is the 39th PPIC Statewide Survey, which has included a number of special editions:

- The Central Valley (11/99, 3/01, 4/02, 4/03)
- San Diego County (7/02)
- Orange County (9/01, 12/02)
- Los Angeles County (3/03)
- Population Growth (5/01)
- Land Use (11/01, 11/02)
- The Environment (6/00, 6/02, 7/03)
- California State Budget (6/03)

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail (order@ppic.org) or phone (415-291-4400). Copies of this and earlier reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org.

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Press Release

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

DISTRUST OF GOVERNMENT SWELLS, SUPPORT FOR RECALL SUBSIDES

Most Voters Say Upcoming Recall Debates Important; 2004 Preview: More Californians Prefer Democrat to Bush

SAN FRANCISCO, California, September 21, 2003 — While the perception of government waste in Sacramento has sustained voter outrage and propelled trust in government to new lows, fewer Californians now appear to view the recall of Governor Gray Davis as a solution to the problem, according to a new survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

Californians' trust in their state government is at its lowest level since the statewide survey began in 1998. Today, only 27 percent of state residents say that they trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Since June 2003 — when a new low of only 34 percent was reached — trust has fallen another 7 percentage points. And the percentage of Californians who say that they never trust state government to do what is right grew from 4 percent in June to 9 percent today.

Why the drop? The budget crisis — and a perception of taxpayer dollars being wasted — has certainly helped fuel distrust. Indeed, 70 percent of Californians — including majorities of Republicans (84%), independents (72%), and Democrats (61%) think that state government could spend less money without reducing services. Among those who hold this view, 67 percent say Sacramento could cut its spending by more than 10 percent without affecting services. In contrast, only one-quarter of residents (27%) say that public schools could spend less without jeopardizing educational quality.

“This is a tremendous challenge for state leaders, who really bank on the public’s faith — or at least their tolerance — during troubled times,” says survey director Mark Baldassare. “But while distrust and anger remain white hot — and a majority still favor the recall of Governor Davis — enthusiasm for the recall effort is cooling a bit. Fewer voters may see the process as a cure for their larger concerns.”

Currently, 53 percent of likely voters say they would vote to remove Davis as governor, down from 58 percent one month ago. Since August, support for keeping Davis in office has increased among Democrats (56% to 65%), independents (32% to 48%), and Latinos (35% to 46%), while Republicans have remained overwhelmingly in favor of recalling him (84% to 86%). Support for the recall has eroded in the San Francisco Bay Area (40% to 35%) and Los Angeles (57% to 48%).

Nearly one in five likely voters (18%) haven't yet decided on a replacement candidate. Among those voters who have decided, a nearly equal number name Democrat Cruz Bustamante (28%) and Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger (26%), while 14 percent prefer Republican Tom McClintock. Since August, support has increased for Bustamante (18% to 28%), McClintock (5% to 14%), and Schwarzenegger (23% to 26%). Bustamante gets his highest support in the Bay Area (37%), Schwarzenegger in Other Southern California (37%), and McClintock in the Central Valley (24%). Latinos now support Bustamante over Schwarzenegger by a margin of 3 to 1 (49% to 15%).

As the campaign proceeds, questions about the recall itself linger. Half of likely voters (49%) say the current effort to oust Governor Davis is an appropriate use of the recall, while 45 percent say it is not. And 58 percent say the recall process needs major (34%) or minor (24%) changes. Most voters (77%) say they are at least somewhat knowledgeable about how the recall process works in California.

Despite the modest decline in support for the recall and some questions about its appropriateness, Californians remain captivated by the campaign. Today, 92 percent of likely voters are very closely

(49%) or fairly closely (43%) following news on the recall. What are their sources? Almost half (46%) get most of their information from television — with local news dominating network and cable programs — 26 percent from newspapers, 16 percent from radio, and 8 percent from the Internet. Voters are also hearing from the recall's key players directly via television advertisements: Although 83 percent report seeing commercials, only 6 percent say the spots were very helpful in deciding how to vote.

Voters to Candidates: Upcoming Debate Key

If advertisements aren't helpful, can debates fill the gap? As voters seek to learn more about the candidates, the upcoming California Broadcasters Association debate looms large: 67 percent of likely voters say the candidates' performances in this debate will be very (27%) or somewhat (40%) important in deciding how to vote. Voters evidently hope to get more from the upcoming event than they have from previous debates: Only 35 percent describe those debates as very (9%) or somewhat (26%) helpful.

What are voters most eager to learn from the debates? Half (50%) say that where candidates stand on the issues matters most. And currently, they see the economy and jobs (35%) as the most pressing issues facing California, followed by the state budget and taxes (16%), the recall (13%), and education (11%). Most voters express far less interest in learning about other gubernatorial credentials, including experience (17%), character (15%), and intelligence (11%).

Californians More Optimistic, But Equally Partisan, About National Conditions

Californians are far less pessimistic about where the nation is headed than they are about the state: 51 percent say the United States is going in the wrong direction, but 67 percent see the state heading that way. And more state residents foresee good times financially for the nation than are optimistic about economic prospects in California in the coming year (47% to 32%). Interestingly, such perceptions have a distinctly partisan flavor: 68 percent of Republicans say the nation is going in the right direction, but 82 percent say the state is headed the wrong way. Democrats are more likely to say that the nation (56%) rather than the state (52%) will face bad times financially in the next 12 months.

Approval ratings for President George W. Bush have dropped six points since June and match his current national rating: 51 percent of Californians approve of the way he is handling his job. However, more state residents disapprove than approve of his handling of the economy (52% to 42%) and the federal budget and taxes (51% to 41%). Disapproval ratings for Governor Davis remain higher overall (65%), as well as on the issues of the economy (65%) and the state budget and taxes (70%).

Similar to her ratings in October 2002, 51 percent of Californians — and 57 percent of likely voters — approve of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator, while 24 percent disapprove and 25 percent are undecided. Forty-one percent of state residents approve of Barbara Boxer's performance as U.S. Senator, 27 percent disapprove, and 32 percent are undecided. While Senator Boxer's approval rating has dropped somewhat since last October (48%), her disapproval rating remains the same. Californians have not altered their assessment of their own representative in the U.S. House of Representatives since last year: 39 percent say they are doing an excellent or good job, while 46 percent rate their performance as fair or poor. However, criticism of the U.S. Congress as a whole has grown substantially: 66 percent of Californians rate its performance as either fair or poor, up from 59 percent in October 2002.

2004 Presidential Election Preview

If the 2004 presidential election were held today, 46 percent of state residents say they would vote for the Democratic nominee, and 37 percent say they would vote to re-elect Bush. This gap narrows among likely voters: 45 percent support the Democrat and 40 percent choose Bush. Californians differ from Americans as a whole in their presidential preferences: 48 percent of Americans would vote to re-elect Bush and 40 percent would vote for the Democratic nominee.

At this early stage in the 2004 campaign, no single candidate running in the Democratic presidential primary is the clear favorite. Among the voters likely to vote in the Democratic primary (Democrats and independents who describe themselves as closer to the Democratic Party), Howard Dean receives the

highest level of support (21%), followed by Joe Lieberman (12%), and John Kerry (11%). However, 33 percent of likely voters are presently undecided.

Asked to choose who they trust the most — Democrats or Republicans — on three national issues expected to be critical in the 2004 presidential election, Californians tend to prefer Democrats on domestic concerns and Republicans on security issues. State residents say they trust Democrats to do a better job handling health care (53% to 28%) and jobs and the economy (47% to 37%), while Republicans are more trusted when it comes to national security and terrorism (47% to 33%).

More Key Findings

- **Proposition 54 Loses Support** (page 6)

Currently, 38 percent of likely voters favor Proposition 54 — which would prohibit state and local governments from using race, ethnicity, color, and national origin to classify students, employees, or contractors — down from 50 percent in August.

- **Recession Sticks** (page 8)

A majority of Californians (58%) say their region remains mired in an economic recession.

- **Taming the Budget Deficit** (page 11)

Forty-two percent of state residents prefer to resolve the current budget deficit through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, while 31 percent favor cuts only and 8 percent choose taxes only.

About the survey

The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and public policy preferences. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,001 California adult residents interviewed from September 9 to September 17, 2003. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for the 1,501 registered voters is +/- 2.5% and for the 1,033 likely voters is +/- 3%. For more information on survey methodology, see page 19.

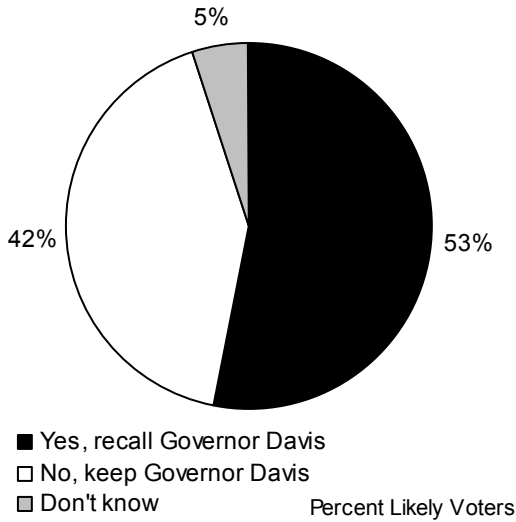
Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His most recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through objective, nonpartisan research on the economic, social, and political issues that affect Californians. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

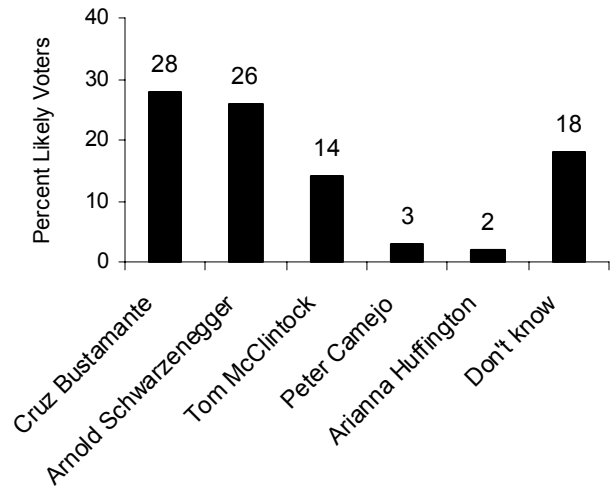
This report will appear on PPIC's website (www.ppic.org) on September 21. See graphics next page.

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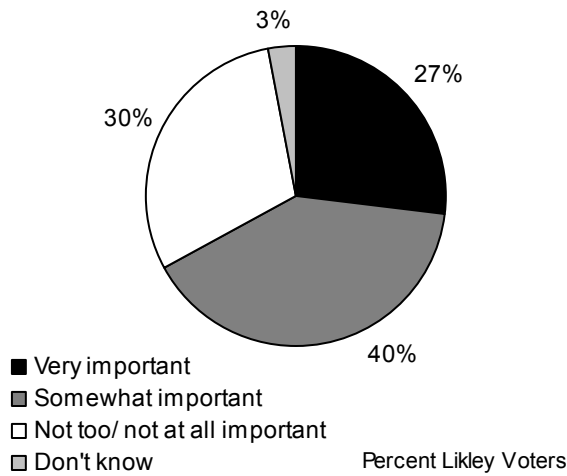
Davis Recall



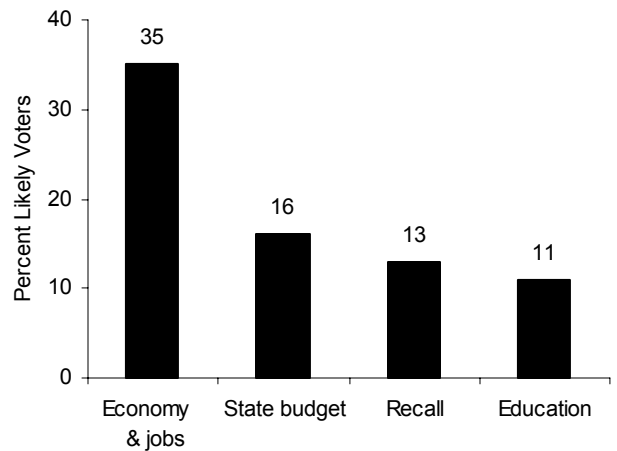
Replacement Candidates



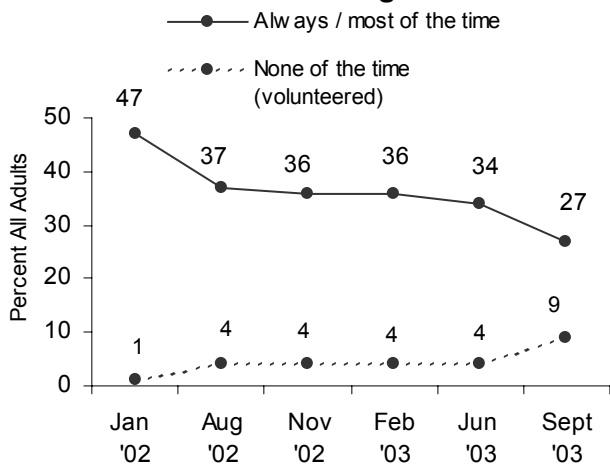
In deciding how to vote, how important are the candidates' performances in the debates?



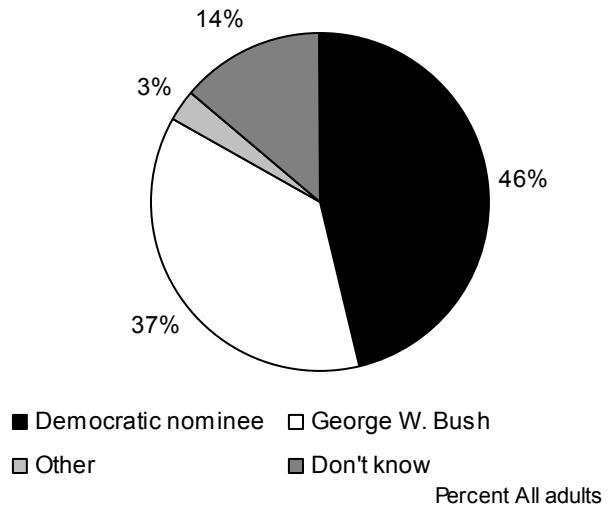
Most Important Problem Facing California



How much of the time do you trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right?



Bush vs. Democratic Nominee



Statewide Special Election*

The Davis Recall Election

If the statewide special election were held today, 53 percent of likely voters say they would vote to remove Governor Davis from office, 42 percent say they would vote to keep him, and 5 percent are undecided. Support for keeping him in office has returned to the levels we found in the PPIC June (41%) and July (42%) surveys, after a slight decline in August (36%).

“If the special election to recall Governor Davis were held today, would you vote ‘yes’ to remove Davis as governor or ‘no’ to keep Davis as governor?”

<i>Likely Voters</i>	Jun 03	Jul 03	Aug 03	Sept 03
Yes, remove Davis as governor	48%	48%	58%	53%
No, keep Davis as governor	41	42	36	42
Don't know	11	10	6	5

Most Republicans (86%) support the recall, most Democrats (65%) oppose it, and independent voters are evenly divided between support and opposition (48% to 48%). However, since the August survey, support for keeping Davis in office has increased among Democrats (56% to 65%) and independents (32% to 48%), while Republicans have remained overwhelmingly in favor of recalling him (84% to 86%). These significant partisan differences are consistent with the percentages of liberal (27%), moderate (48%), and conservative (82%) likely voters who support the recall.

Regionally, opposition to the recall is strongest in the San Francisco Bay Area (60%), while support for it is strongest in the Central Valley (66%) and Other Southern California (69%). Since the August survey, support for the recall has fallen somewhat in the San Francisco Bay Area (40% to 35%) and Los Angeles (57% to 48%). Across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos’ support for the recall is lower now (48%) than in August (58%), while support among whites is roughly the same (56%) as it was then (60%). Among demographic groups, support for the recall is similar among men (54%) and women (52%) but higher among 35 to 54 year olds (59%) than among younger or older voters, and higher among voters with incomes of \$80,000 or more (57%) than among those with lower incomes.

“If the special election to recall Governor Davis were held today, would you vote ‘yes’ to remove Davis as governor or ‘no’ to keep Davis as governor?”

	Likely Voters	<u>Party Registration</u>			<u>Region</u>				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes, remove Davis as governor	53%	29%	86%	48%	66%	35%	48%	69%	48%
No, keep Davis as governor	42	65	11	48	30	60	47	28	46
Don't know	5	6	3	4	4	5	5	3	6

* In this chapter of the report, all data used in tables are from likely voters only. Subsequent chapters use data from both likely voters and all adults, as indicated.

Replacement Candidates

Asked how they would vote on a replacement for Governor Davis if the recall election were held today, most voters express a preference, but a substantial percentage do not. Among those who have decided, Democrat Cruz Bustamante (28%) and Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger (26%) are about tied, while 14 percent prefer Republican Tom McClintock. Nearly one in four voters say they favor no one or would not vote (5%) or haven't decided on a candidate (18%). Since the August survey, support has increased for Bustamante (18% to 28%) and McClintock (5% to 14%) and Schwarzenegger (23% to 26%), and the number of undecided voters has declined (32% to 18%).

Currently, Bustamante is the favorite among Democratic voters (49%); Republicans prefer Schwarzenegger (47%) to McClintock (24%); and independents are more evenly divided between Bustamante with 24 percent and Schwarzenegger with 21 percent, while 12 percent support McClintock. Nearly half of Latinos support Bustamante (49%). Among white voters 28 percent would vote for Schwarzenegger and 25 percent for Bustamante; 15 percent support McClintock. Bustamante's support is highest among liberals (50%), Schwarzenegger's is highest among conservatives (42%), and moderates are divided between Bustamante (24%) and Schwarzenegger (25%). Although McClintock gets his highest support from conservatives, they favor Schwarzenegger even more (29% to 42%).

McClintock gets his highest support in the Central Valley (24%), Bustamante in the San Francisco Bay Area (37%), and Schwarzenegger in Other Southern California (37%). Although there are no significant differences by gender, support for Schwarzenegger increases with income, and support for McClintock increases with age. Bustamante's support is highest among voters under 35 years old (36%) and non-native born likely voters (42%).

**“How would you vote on the second part of the recall ballot:
If the election were held today would you vote for ...*”**

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Cruz Bustamante	28%	49%	7%	24%	20%	37%	29%	22%	49%
Arnold Schwarzenegger	26	11	47	21	27	16	24	37	15
Tom McClintock	14	6	24	12	24	9	11	14	9
Peter Camejo	3	2	1	3	2	3	3	2	2
Arianna Huffington	2	2	1	7	1	3	3	2	0
Someone else	4	6	1	5	1	5	4	4	2
No one / Wouldn't vote	5	7	1	7	6	8	4	3	7
Don't know	18	17	18	21	19	19	22	16	16

* The names, titles, and party affiliations of each of these candidates were read in random order.

Importance of the Debates

As voters seek to learn more about the candidates, the upcoming California Broadcasters Association debate looms large. Two in three voters say the candidates' performances in this upcoming debate will be very important (27%) or somewhat important (40%) in deciding how to vote in the recall election. Although the importance of the debate for deciding how to vote is similar across party lines, political ideologies, and regions of the state, the candidates' performances are ranked especially high by younger, less affluent, and less educated voters.

"In deciding how to vote in the October 7th special election, how important to you are the candidates' performances in the upcoming public debates?"

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	27%	29%	27%	24%	47%
Somewhat important	40	40	40	42	34
Not too important	16	16	18	17	12
Not at all important	14	14	12	15	6
Don't know	3	1	3	2	1

Voters evidently hope to get more from the upcoming debate than they have from previous debates. Only one-third of likely voters described these events as very helpful (9%) or somewhat helpful (26%) in deciding how to vote. Two in three voters said that the debates were not too helpful (18%) or not at all helpful (32%) or that they were not sure or didn't know about the debates (15%). Reaction to these debates was similar across political parties, regions of the state, and education and income groups.

What are voters most eager to learn from debates? Half say that where candidates stand on the issues matters most, and they place much less importance on the candidates' experience (17%), character (15%), or intelligence (11%). While Democrats, Republicans, and independents all care most about where candidates stand on the issues, Republicans care more than Democrats and independents about a candidate's character (23% to 8%); Democrats and independents care more about a candidate's experience.

"In general, people have different ideas about what they want to learn from the candidate debates. Which of these is most important to you?"

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Candidates' stands on the issues	50%	49%	51%	45%	30%
Candidates' experience	17	23	11	17	31
Candidates' character	15	8	23	13	14
Candidates' intelligence	11	12	9	13	19
All of the above	2	3	1	3	1
Something else	4	2	4	7	3
Don't know	1	3	1	2	2

Campaign Awareness

Nine in 10 Californians (92%) are closely following the news about the recall election, and the proportion who are “very closely” following this news has increased somewhat since the August survey (45% to 49%). The proportion has increased among both Republicans (48% to 57%) and independents (44% to 48%), but not among Democrats (43% to 43%). At this stage, whites (52%) are more likely than Latinos (38%) to say they are very closely following this issue.

Where are likely voters getting their news about the recall election? Almost half (46%) say that they get most of their information from television, 26 percent say from newspapers, 16 percent from radio, and 8 percent from the Internet. Television is the dominant source of recall election news among Latinos (69%), those with incomes under \$40,000 (60%), and those with no college education (68%). Newspapers and television are mentioned equally by college graduates and higher-income voters as their major recall-news source. Among those who get most of their news from television, local news (38%) is more popular than major network news (31%) or cable network news (28%).

“How closely are you following news about the election to recall Governor Gray Davis from office—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?”

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very closely	49%	43%	57%	48%	38%
Fairly closely	43	46	38	42	49
Not too closely	6	9	4	8	11
Not at all closely	2	2	1	2	2

Eight in 10 likely voters (83%) say they have seen television advertisements about the recall election. This percentage holds across all major regions and among Democrats and Republicans; men and women; all age groups; and liberals, moderates, and conservatives. More people have seen television commercials for the recall than did for the gubernatorial candidates during the fall 2002 election (August 2002, 71%; September 2002, 75%; October 2002, 79%).

Of those who have seen television commercials, nearly half of likely voters (48%) say the commercials have not been at all helpful in deciding how to vote in the recall election. About one in four describe the ads as very helpful (6%) or somewhat helpful (18%). The voters who are most likely to consider the advertisements at least somewhat helpful are Latinos (39%), those with no college education (39%), and those with annual incomes under \$40,000 (37%).

“In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements about the recall election?”

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	83%	82%	87%	78%	77%
No	17	18	13	22	23

Recall Perceptions

California’s likely voters continue to give mixed reviews to the recall election. Forty-nine percent of likely voters say that the current effort to remove Governor Davis is an appropriate use of the recall, while 45 percent say it is not. In the August survey, 52 percent said it was appropriate and 43 percent said it was not.

Public perceptions of the current recall election continue to be highly related to party registration and political ideology. Three in four Republicans (76%) believe the current election is an appropriate use of the recall, while two in three Democrats (65%) think it is not appropriate. Conservatives (77%) are much more likely than moderates (42%) or liberals (26%) to say it is appropriate. Forty-seven percent of Latinos and 51 percent of whites think the current recall is appropriate.

“Do you think that the current effort to recall the governor is an appropriate use of the recall process?”

Likely Voters	Aug 03	Sept 03
Yes	52%	49%
No	43	45
Don't know	5	6

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	49%	29%	76%	46%	47%
No	45	65	18	50	44
Don't know	6	8	6	4	9

What do voters think about the way the recall process is working? Nearly eight in 10 likely voters say they know a lot (32%) or at least something (45%) about how the recall process works in California, while two in 10 likely votes say they know very little (19%) or nothing (4%). Fifty-eight percent of likely voters believe the recall process in California needs changes, while 35 percent think it is fine the way it is. One in three likely voters think the process needs major changes. Democrats (45%) and independents (38%) are much more likely than Republicans (19%) to see the need for major changes. Conservatives (59%) are more likely than moderates (28%) and liberals (18%) to say the recall process is fine the way it is.

“Generally speaking, and regardless of how you feel about the upcoming election, do you think the recall election process in California needs major changes, minor changes, or is it basically okay the way it is?”

	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Needs major changes	34%	45%	19%	38%	34%
Needs minor changes	24	25	21	21	21
Okay the way it is	35	20	53	36	34
Don't know	7	10	7	5	11

Proposition 54: Racial Classification Initiative

Attention to Proposition 54 has been swamped in the wake of media coverage of the recall. This citizens’ initiative would prohibit state and local governments from using race, ethnicity, color, and national origin to classify students, employees, or contractors. When asked how familiar they are with Proposition 54, 47 percent said they know a lot (16%) or something (31%) about it. When read the official title and ballot summary, 38 percent said they would vote yes on Proposition 54, 44 percent would vote no, and 18 percent were undecided. This indicates a decline in support from August, when 50 percent said they would vote yes and 37 percent said they would vote no.

More Republicans are for the measure than against it (49% to 33%), while more Democrats are against than for it (52% to 29%). Independents are more evenly divided (39% to 46%). Half of all non-whites,* and 51 percent of Latinos oppose the measure. Regionally, opposition to Proposition 54 is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (47%) and Los Angeles (52%), and support is highest in Other Southern California (43%) and the Central Valley (47%). Since the August survey, support for Proposition 54 has declined among Democrats (43% to 29%) and Los Angeles voters (49% to 30%).

As in the August survey, half of likely voters say that collecting racial and ethnic data is important. However, only one in five voters (20%) describe it as “very important.” Sixty-one percent of non-whites think that it is important (33%, very important) and 46 percent of whites think it is important (18 percent, very important) that the state collect these data.

“If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 54? ”

<i>Likely Voters</i>	Aug 03	Sept 03
Yes	50%	38%
No	37	44
Don't know	13	18

	Likely Voters	<u>Party Registration</u>			<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	
		Dem	Rep	Ind	White	Non-White
Yes	38%	29%	49%	39%	38%	34%
No	44	52	33	46	43	50
Don't know	18	19	18	15	19	16

“How important is it to you that state and local governments collect data on race and ethnicity?”

<i>Likely Voters</i>	Aug 03	Sept 03
Very / somewhat important	50%	47%
Not too / not at all important	47	48
Don't know	3	5

* Non-white category includes African Americans, Asians, Latinos, and those who specify “other.”

California Policy Issues

Most Important Problem

Although the recall election has dominated California media reports in recent months, state residents continue to see the economy, jobs, and unemployment as the most pressing issues facing people in the state today. Overall, nearly one in three Californians (33%) believes that these are the most important issues. Thirteen percent mention the state budget and taxes as the most important problem, 11 percent say education, and 10 percent think that the recall is the most important issue. No other issue is mentioned by more than 5 percent of Californians. The recall was first noted as the most important issue in August 2003, when 11 percent mentioned it as the chief problem facing the state. Aside from this new interest in the recall, the list of issues and the percentages of Californians who find them most important has been consistent with most surveys conducted in 2003.

The economy, jobs, and unemployment are mentioned as the most important issues across the state's major regions and demographic and political groups. However, people in the San Francisco Bay Area are somewhat more likely than Other Southern California residents to believe that these are the most problematic issues (36% to 28%), as are Democrats (40%) relative to Republicans (29%) and independents (28%). The state budget and taxes are of more concern in the Central Valley (17%) and in Other Southern California (15%) than they are in Los Angeles (11%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (10%).

Among the state's likely voters, 35 percent say that the economy, jobs, and unemployment are the top issues facing people in the state today, 16 percent mention the state budget and taxes, 13 percent believe it is the recall, and 11 percent say education and schools.

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

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Economy, jobs, unemployment	33%	32%	36%	34%	28%	35%
State budget, deficit, taxes	13	17	10	11	15	16
Education, schools	11	9	16	11	9	11
Recall of governor	10	9	9	7	13	13
Immigration, illegal immigration	4	3	4	5	5	5
Crime	3	2	1	6	3	1
Health care/costs, HMOs	3	2	3	4	2	3
Electricity costs, energy crisis	2	3	2	1	2	2
Government regulations	2	2	2	2	2	3
Housing costs/availability	2	2	2	2	2	1
Other	11	11	9	11	12	8
Don't know	6	8	6	6	7	2

Overall Mood and Economic Outlook

Two-thirds of Californians (67%) believe that the state is headed in the wrong direction. An even higher percentage of likely voters (75%) think that the state has taken a wrong turn. These percentages are in line with those from August 2003, a continuation of a six-year high in pessimism about the direction of the state.

More than six in 10 Californians in each of the state’s major regions think that the state is headed the wrong way. And while pluralities across demographic and political groups agree on this, there are diverse opinions across groups. For example, while three-quarters of whites think the state is headed in the wrong direction, a bare majority (52%) of Latinos think so. Eighty-two percent of Republicans say that things are going in the wrong direction, compared to 72 percent of independents and 64 percent of Democrats. Pessimism about the direction of the state increases significantly with education and household income.

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

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Right direction	24%	19%	25%	25%	25%	17%
Wrong direction	67	71	64	66	68	75
Don't know	9	10	11	9	7	8

Californians’ economic outlook also remains dim. A majority of state residents (50%) expect bad economic times over the next 12 months, while 32 percent think that good times lie ahead and nearly two in five (18%) are uncertain. Californians across the state’s major regions and demographic and political groups are similarly pessimistic about the state’s short-term economic prospects. However, similar outlooks for the state’s economy mask dissimilar attitudes toward the regional economies. While nearly half (45%) of Californians who live in Other Southern California think that their region is *not* in an economic recession, only 25 percent of San Francisco Bay Area residents feel this way about their region.

“Would you say that your region is in an economic recession or not?”
If ‘yes’: “Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?”

	All Adults	Region				Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes, serious recession	19%	21%	26%	18%	14%	23%
Yes, moderate recession	30	27	35	32	26	28
Yes, mild recession	9	10	8	8	8	8
No	36	33	25	35	45	36
Don't know	6	9	6	7	7	5

Davis' Approval Ratings

In line with their negative perceptions of the state, only one in three Californians (31%) and one in four likely voters (26%) approves of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor of California. This represents a modest increase in the percentage of all adults who approve of the governor's job performance, which stood at a low point of 26 percent last month. As in previous surveys, Davis' overall approval rating varies by partisan affiliation. While majorities across party lines disapprove of his performance in office, disapproval is highest among Republicans (90%) and higher among independents (68%) than Democrats (55%).

When it comes to assessing the governor's handling of specific issues, support is even lower. Only 26 percent of Californians and 23 percent of the state's likely voters approve of the way that Davis is handling the problem of jobs and the economy in California. Among those Californians who think that the economy, jobs, and unemployment are the most important issues facing the state, 25 percent approve of the governor's handling of these issues, and 66 percent disapprove. As with Davis' overall approval rating, assessments of his performance in this area are also highly partisan: 88 percent of Republicans, 71 percent of independents, and 54 percent of Democrats disapprove of his handling of jobs and the state economy.

Davis' approval rating on the state budget and taxes is even lower: 23 percent of all adults and 21 percent of likely voters approve of his handling of these issues. Among the 13 percent of Californians who cite the state budget and taxes as the most important issue facing people in the state today, only 12 percent approve of the governor's performance in this area, and 82 percent disapprove. Ninety-two percent of Republicans, 71 percent of independents, and 61 percent of Democrats disapprove of Davis' handling of the state's budget and taxes.

There continues to be a large Latino-white gap in the governor's approval ratings. Fifty percent of Latinos approve of Davis' overall job performance, compared to only 21 percent of whites. Thirty-nine percent of Latinos approve of the way Davis is managing the job situation and the economy, compared to 20 percent of whites. And when it comes to the state budget and taxes, 36 percent of Latinos approve of the governor's performance, compared to 16 percent of whites.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling ...”

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>His job as governor of California?</i>	Approve	31%	40%	8%	27%	26%
	Disapprove	65	55	90	68	71
	Don't know	4	5	2	5	3
<i>The issue of jobs and the economy in California?</i>	Approve	26%	36%	8%	21%	23%
	Disapprove	65	54	88	71	69
	Don't know	9	10	4	8	8
<i>The issue of the state budget and taxes?</i>	Approve	23%	31%	6%	22%	21%
	Disapprove	70	61	92	71	74
	Don't know	7	8	2	7	5

Distrust in State Government

The governor’s low approval ratings come in the context of a general lack of confidence in state government today. Californians’ trust in their state government to do what is right is at its lowest level since we first asked about this issue in January 1999. Today, only 27 percent of state residents say that they trust the government in Sacramento to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Since June 2003—when a new low of only 34 percent said that they thought the state government could be trusted just about always or most of the time—trust has fallen another 7 percentage points. More than six in 10 Californians (61%) say that the state government can be trusted to do what is right only some of the time, and 9 percent volunteer that it can never be trusted. Prior to this month’s survey, no more than 4 percent of respondents in any survey volunteered that they didn’t trust the state government at all.

“How much of the time do you think you can trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right?”

	Jan 1999	Jan 2001	Jan 2002	Aug 2002	Nov 2002	Feb 2003	Jun 2003	Sep 2003
Just about always / most of the time	37%	46%	47%	37%	36%	36%	34%	27%
Only some of the time	60	50	49	58	59	58	60	61
None of the time / not at all (volunteered)	2	2	1	4	4	4	4	9
Don't know	1	2	3	1	1	2	2	3

Among the state’s likely voters, only 21 percent think that the legislators in Sacramento can be trusted to do what is right just about always or most of the time, and 12 percent of this group volunteer that the state government can be trusted none of the time. Nearly one-third of Democrats (31%) trust the state government to do what is right just about always or most of the time, while only 19 percent of independents and 17 percent of Republicans feel this way. Sixteen percent of Republicans, 10 percent of independents, and 6 percent of Democrats volunteer that they have no trust in the state government to ever do what is right.

Latinos continue to be significantly more trusting than whites of the Sacramento lawmakers. Forty-five percent of Latinos, but only 19 percent of whites, trust the legislators to do what is right just about always or most of the time. Californians who are 18 to 34 years old also tend to be more trusting of state government than those age 55 and older (36% to 22%).

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Just about always / most of the time	27%	31%	17%	19%	21%
Only some of the time	61	61	66	68	66
None of the time / not at all (volunteered)	9	6	16	10	12
Don't know	3	2	1	3	1

State Budget Deficit

In the course of the recall election, the candidates have proposed a variety of solutions for closing the budget gap between state spending and tax revenues. On the heels of a \$38 billion two-year budget deficit, the state faces another \$8 billion deficit in the current fiscal year. Californians want to deal with today's deficit in much the same way they wanted to handle the prior deficit in our February 2003 survey. Forty-two percent of state residents want to resolve the problem through a mixture of spending cuts and tax increases, 31 percent prefer an emphasis on spending cuts, and fewer than one in 10 opt for higher taxes and borrowing (8% each). Similar percentages of likely voters prefer each of these fiscal solutions.

More than half of Republicans (51%) prefer that the budget deficit be reduced primarily through spending cuts, compared to only 30 percent of independents and 20 percent of Democrats. Democrats (10%) are more likely than Republicans (5%) and independents (4%) to say that the deficit should be dealt with mostly through tax increases. Independents (11%) are the most likely to advocate the state's running a deficit. Among both Democrats (52%) and independents (43%), a mixture of spending cuts and tax increases is the most frequently mentioned approach to deficit reduction.

“The state government faces an \$8 billion budget deficit in the current fiscal year. How would you prefer to deal with the state budget deficit?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Mixture of spending cuts and tax increases	42%	52%	31%	43%	44%
Mostly through spending cuts	31	20	51	30	34
Mostly through tax increases	8	10	5	4	8
Okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit	8	7	5	11	5
Other answer	4	4	5	6	5
Don't know	7	7	3	6	4

In general, Californians are closely divided between those who would prefer paying lower taxes and have a smaller state government with fewer services (47%) and those who would prefer paying higher taxes to support a larger state government with more services (43%). The partisan divide on this fundamental question reflects the same kind of division we saw on preferences for resolving the budget deficit. Seventy-four percent of Republicans and 54 percent of independents would, if given the choice, prefer paying lower taxes and having fewer state services, while 56 percent of Democrats would prefer paying higher taxes and having more services. Among likely voters, 52 percent would opt for lower taxes and fewer state services, while 38 percent would prefer to pay higher taxes and have more services.

“In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more: I'd rather pay higher taxes to support a larger state government that provides more services, or I'd rather pay lower taxes and have a smaller state government that provides fewer services?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Lower taxes and fewer services	47%	33%	74%	54%	52%
Higher taxes and more services	43	56	18	37	38
Don't know	10	11	8	9	10

Waste in Government

Since many Californians believe that spending cuts should be used to reduce the state budget deficit, do they believe that these reductions would have noticeable impacts? Seven in 10 Californians (70%) and likely voters (71%) think that the *state* government could spend less money and still maintain the same level of services it currently provides. Eighty-four percent of Republicans, 72 percent of independents, and 61 percent of Democrats say that the state could provide the same level of services with less money.

Fifty-nine percent of Californians believe that their *local* governments could spend less and provide the same level of services, while 34 percent think it could not. By contrast, fewer than three in 10 adults and likely voters (27% and 28%) think that the public schools in their areas could spend less without hurting the quality of education they provide. Nearly twenty-five years ago, in the wake of Proposition 13, 77 percent of Californians felt that the state government could cut spending without reducing services, 63 percent thought that their local government could manage this, and 41 percent said that their local public school could cut spending without reducing the quality of education (statistics from the 1979 California Tax Revolt Study).

“In general, do you think _____ could spend less and still provide the same level of services?”

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
The state government	Yes, could spend less	70%	61%	84%	72%	71%
	No, could not spend less	25	34	14	24	25
	Don't know	5	5	2	4	4
Local government in your area	Yes, could spend less	59%	50%	68%	61%	57%
	No, could not spend less	34	43	26	31	37
	Don't know	7	7	6	8	6

Among the 70 percent of Californians who think that the state government could cut spending without reducing services, 20 percent think that the state could maintain service levels as long as it cut less than 10 percent of its expenditures, while 12 percent think that the state could cut spending 30 percent or more without reducing services. Impressions about how much state and local governments could cut spending without reducing services are similar to those of Californians in 1979, when 25 percent thought the state could cut under 10 percent, and 10 percent thought it could cut 30 percent or more, without reducing service levels.

“How much could the state government cut its spending without reducing services?”
(asked of those who say the state government could spend less)

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Under 10 percent	20%	25%	13%	18%	18%
10 percent to under 20 percent	39	37	40	37	36
20 percent to under 30 percent	16	13	19	22	18
30 percent or more	12	9	15	16	13
Don't know	13	16	13	7	15

National Politics

U.S. Conditions Today

Californians are less pessimistic about where the nation is headed than they are about the state: Fifty-one percent say the United States is going in the wrong direction, but 67 percent see the state heading the wrong way. Conversely, Californians are more optimistic about the future of the nation than of the state: Forty-two percent say the nation is headed in the right direction; only 24 percent believe that about the state.

Assessing the nation’s prospects is a highly partisan matter. Sixty-eight percent of Democrats say the country is going in the wrong direction; 68 percent of Republicans believe it is going the right way. Across the state, San Francisco Bay Area residents (67%) are the most likely to say things are generally going in the wrong direction, followed by Los Angeles County residents (52%). Other Southern California residents (52%) are more likely to say the country is on the right track, and Central Valley residents are split. State residents with household incomes of \$80,000 or higher are more likely than those with lower incomes to say the country is going in the right direction. Latinos, who often express greater optimism than other groups, are today just as likely as whites to say the nation is headed in the right direction (44% to 45%)

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

	All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Right direction	42%	27%	68%	37%	44%
Wrong direction	51	68	26	53	46
Don't know	7	5	6	10	10

Asked about the economic future of the United States in the next 12 months, Californians are split: Forty-seven percent say the nation will see good times; 42 percent say bad times. A quarter of those who say the country is going in the wrong direction are still optimistic about the country’s economic future and say we will have good times financially in the upcoming year. Democrats (56%) are more likely to say the country will face bad times, while Republicans (65%) are more likely to say the next year will bring good times; independents are divided on this issue. Once again, Californians are more negative about the state than the nation: 50 percent expect the state to face bad economic times during the next 12 months.

“Do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good times	47%	34%	65%	43%	52%
Bad times	42	56	27	48	35
Don't know	11	10	8	9	13

Approval Ratings: President Bush

Although 51 percent of Californians believe the country is headed in the wrong direction, 51 percent approve of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president. This matches his national level of approval (52%) reported in a recent Gallup poll. However, Bush's approval rating among Californians has dropped six points since June of this year and 13 points since September 2002. Today, 82 percent of California Republicans approve of the president's job performance, while 67 percent of Democrats disapprove; independents are almost evenly split. Latinos are about as likely as whites to say they approve of the president's performance (54% to 53%). Only 35 percent of San Francisco Bay Area residents support President Bush, compared to 60 percent of Other Southern California and 62 percent of Central Valley residents.

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling ..."

		All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>His job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	51%	29%	82%	45%	54%
	Disapprove	44	67	14	49	40
	Don't know	5	4	4	6	6
<i>The U.S. economy?</i>	Approve	42%	22%	71%	41%	44%
	Disapprove	52	73	22	53	49
	Don't know	6	5	7	6	7
<i>The federal budget and taxes?</i>	Approve	41%	22%	71%	37%	42%
	Disapprove	51	71	21	58	48
	Don't know	8	7	8	5	10

The president's ratings are lower on other dimensions: Forty-two percent of Californians approve of the way he is handling the national economy. Here, again, the rating is similar to his national approval rating on the economy (39%, based on a recent CBS News poll). While 71 percent of Republicans give the president high marks on the economy, this is lower than their overall approval rating of his job as president (82%). However, it is much higher than his economic approval rating by Democrats (22%) or independents (41%). Moreover, 73 percent of Democrats and 53 percent of independents disapprove of the president's performance on the economy. Across regions, 66 percent of San Francisco Bay Area and 57 percent of Los Angeles residents disapprove of the president's handling of this issue, whereas 53 percent of Central Valley and 51 percent of Other Southern California residents approve of it. State residents with household incomes of \$80,000 or more are more likely than people in lower income categories to approve of the president's economic performance (47% to 40%).

How do Californians feel about the president's handling of the federal budget and taxes? Half (51%) say they disapprove of Bush's performance; 41 percent approve. As in other issue areas, a large majority of Republicans (71%) approve of the president's performance on the budget and taxes, while a large majority of Democrats (71%) disapprove. Disapproval is higher among residents with a college degree (58%) than among those with less education (46%). Approval is higher among homeowners than among renters (45% to 37%) and higher among residents with household incomes of \$80,000 or more than among people with lower incomes (49% to 39%).

2004 Presidential Election

If the 2004 presidential election were held today, 46 percent of state residents say they would vote for the Democratic nominee, and 37 percent say they would vote to re-elect George W. Bush. This gap narrows among likely voters: Forty-five percent would vote for the Democratic nominee and 40 percent for President Bush. Only 12 of the state's likely voters say they don't know how they would vote. According to a recent *Washington Post*/ABC News poll, nationwide, 48 percent of Americans would vote to re-elect Bush and 40 percent would vote for the Democratic nominee.

There are large partisan differences: 77 percent of Republicans, 31 percent of independents, and 15 percent of Democrats say that they would vote to re-elect President Bush if the 2004 presidential election were held today. Across the state, the Democratic nominee gets majority support over George Bush in the more heavily Democratic San Francisco Bay Area (59% to 23%) and Los Angeles (52% to 30%), but Bush is favored over the Democratic nominee in Other Southern California (47% to 35%) and the Central Valley (50% to 34%).

Among Latinos, the Democratic nominee is ahead of Bush (52% to 32%), while whites are evenly divided (44% for Bush; 41% for the Democratic nominee). At this stage in the presidential election, there is no evident gender gap among Californians: Both women (47% to 35%) and men (45% to 39%) prefer the Democratic nominee to George W. Bush. Republican men (79%) and women (75%) are nearly equally likely to support the president, as are Democratic men (72%) and women (78%) to support the Democratic nominee.

"If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for ..."

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
The Democratic nominee	46%	76%	9%	42%	34%	59%	52%	35%	52%
George W. Bush, the Republican	37	15	77	31	50	23	30	47	32
Other answer	3	2	2	6	4	3	3	1	1
Don't know	14	7	12	21	12	15	15	17	15

Six months before the March 2004 primary, no single candidate running in the Democratic presidential primary is the clear favorite. Among the likely voters who are registered as Democrats or as independents but describe themselves as closer to the Democrats, Howard Dean (21%) gets the highest level of support, followed by Joe Lieberman (12%) and John Kerry (11%). Dick Gephardt (7%), Dennis Kucinich (4%), Wesley Clark (3%), John Edwards (2%), Carol Moseley Braun (1%), and Bob Graham (1%) have lower levels of support, and 4 percent name someone else. At this stage, 33 percent say they do not know how they would vote if the presidential primary were held today.

Political Parties and National Issues

Which of the two major political parties—Democrat or Republican—is perceived as most capable of leading the country? Asked to choose which party they trust the most on three issues expected to be critical in the 2004 presidential election—health care, jobs and the economy, and national security and terrorism—state residents generally stand firm with their party affiliation.

A majority of California residents (53%) say they trust the Democrats to do a better job handling health care issues. Eight in 10 Democrats and 20 percent of Republicans trust the Democratic Party in this policy area, while 64 percent of Republicans and only one in 10 Democrats trust the Republican Party. A majority of independents (51%) place more trust in Democrats when it comes to health care.

“Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust more in handling the following national issues ...”

		All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Health care	Democrats	53%	82%	20%	51%	56%
	Republicans	28	9	64	22	22
	Both	1	1	2	2	1
	Neither	8	4	9	18	3
	Don't know	10	4	5	7	18
Jobs and the economy	Democrats	47%	77%	10%	44%	53%
	Republicans	37	14	81	35	26
	Both	2	2	1	3	1
	Neither	6	4	4	13	3
	Don't know	8	3	4	5	17
National security and terrorism	Democrats	33%	54%	7%	28%	39%
	Republicans	47	30	83	43	36
	Both	3	4	2	3	3
	Neither	7	6	4	14	4
	Don't know	10	6	4	12	18

On the issue of jobs and the economy, close to half of Californians (47%) say they trust the Democrats to do a better job, while 37 percent would trust Republicans. Nearly eight in ten Democrats (77%) believe that their party can do the better job, whereas eight in 10 Republicans (81%) have more trust in the Republican Party. Independents trust Democrats more than they trust Republicans on this issue (44% to 35%). Residents with a household income of \$80,000 or more are more likely than less affluent Californians to trust Republicans over Democrats in handling the problem of jobs and the economy (48% to 32%).

Republicans are more trusted than Democrats when it comes to national security and terrorism: Forty-seven percent of Californians prefer the Republican Party on this issue, while 33 percent place their trust with the Democrats. Thirty percent of Democrats and 83 percent of Republicans trust the Republican Party to do a better job. Fifty-three percent of likely voters trust the Republican Party. A majority of whites favor the Republicans (54%) when it comes to dealing with terrorism and national security, while Latinos are split (36% for Republicans, 39% for Democrats).

Approval Ratings: California's U.S. Senators

Fifty-one percent of Californians approve of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as a U.S. Senator, 24 percent disapprove, and 25 percent are undecided. These ratings are similar to those in the October 2002 statewide survey. Sixty-nine percent of Democrats approve of the senator's performance, up slightly from 66 percent in 2002. Six in 10 independents (58%) approve of her job performance, while half of Republicans disapprove.

Feinstein has strong support from liberals (66%) and moderates (53%), while conservatives offer more mixed reviews (38% approve, 40% disapprove). Her approval rating is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area, where 63 percent of residents think she's doing a good job; by contrast, in Other Southern California, only 41 percent approve of the job she's doing. Approval for the senator's performance rises with income, age, and education. Among likely voters, 57 percent think she's doing a good job, 29 percent think not, and 14 percent are undecided.

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?</i>	Approve	51%	69%	35%	58%	57%
	Disapprove	24	12	50	22	29
	Don't know	25	19	15	20	14
<i>Do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?</i>	Approve	41%	60%	19%	44%	43%
	Disapprove	27	14	56	30	35
	Don't know	32	26	25	26	22

Forty-one percent of Californians approve of Barbara Boxer's performance as a U.S. Senator, 27 percent disapprove, and 32 percent are undecided. While Senator Boxer's approval rating has slipped somewhat since last October (48%) and since February 2002 (52%), her disapproval ratings remain the same. Today, there are simply more residents who are undecided than in October (27%) or February (21%). Six in 10 Democrats (60%) and a plurality of independents (44%) approve of the way Boxer is handling her job, while 56 percent of Republicans disapprove. As with Feinstein, liberals (58%) strongly support Boxer, while she receives less support from moderates (42%) and conservatives (29%).

In the San Francisco Bay Area, a majority of residents (54%) approve of Boxer's handling of her job as U.S. Senator. Elsewhere in the state, her approval ratings are lower than 50 percent (Los Angeles, 44%; Central Valley, 36%; Other Southern California, 34%). Latinos are more likely than whites to voice approval of the senator (47% to 38%). Renters (43%) and those who do not have children in their household (44%) are more likely than homeowners (39%) and those who have children at home (37%) to approve of Senator Boxer's performance. Her approval rating among likely voters is 43 percent, while 35 percent disapprove, and 22 percent are undecided.

Approval Ratings: U.S. Congress

Sixty-six percent of Californians rate the U.S. Congress' performance at this time as either fair (49%) or poor (17%), while 28 percent say they are doing a good (25%) or excellent job (3%). The percentage of Californians who say Congress is doing an excellent or good job has dropped 10 points since last October, and the number saying Congress' performance is fair or poor has risen 7 points. Nationally, 53 percent of Americans say they disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans (72% to 63%) to give Congress a fair or poor rating, while Republicans are more likely than Democrats to say it is doing an excellent or good job (34% to 24%). Across the state, San Francisco Bay Area residents (20%) are the most likely to say Congress is doing a poor job, while Central Valley and Other Southern California residents are the most likely to say it is doing an excellent or good job (both 32%). Whites are more likely than Latinos to rate Congress' performance as poor (19% to 9%), and Latinos are more likely than whites to say it is doing an excellent or good job (36% to 26%).

"How do you rate the job performance of the U.S. Congress at this time?"

	<u>All Adults</u>								
	Oct 98	Dec 98	Sep 99	Dec 99	Aug 00	Oct 00	Dec 01	Oct 02	Sept 03
Excellent	5%	4%	2%	5%	4%	5%	13%	4%	3%
Good	34	29	24	30	34	33	46	34	25
Fair	40	42	48	44	45	46	31	46	49
Poor	19	22	21	18	14	13	8	13	17
Don't know	2	3	5	3	3	3	2	3	6

Californians continue to give their own representatives in the U.S. House of Representatives better reviews than they give Congress as a whole: Thirty-nine percent say that their representative is doing an excellent (7%) or good (32%) job, while 46 percent rate their representative's performance as fair (37%) or poor (9%). These ratings are almost identical to the ratings residents gave their local representatives last year. Forty-four percent of Republicans and 37 percent of Democrats and independents give their representatives excellent or good ratings. Across the state's major regions, ratings are similar, but there are some small differences: For example, Central Valley residents were the most likely to say their representative was doing an excellent or good job (44%).

"What about the representative to the U.S. House of Representatives from your congressional district: How do you rate his or her performance at this time?"

	<u>All Adults</u>				
	Aug 00	Oct 00	Dec 01	Oct 02	Sept 03
Excellent	7%	8%	10%	6%	7%
Good	39	36	42	35	32
Fair	31	36	28	36	37
Poor	8	7	7	7	9
Don't know	15	13	13	16	15

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Jon Cohen, survey research manager, and Renatta DeFever and Eliana Kaimowitz, survey research associates.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,001 California adult residents interviewed between September 9 and September 17, 2003. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to ten 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 by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Casa Hispana translated the survey into Spanish, and Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,001 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. The sampling error for the 1,501 registered voters is +/- 2.5 percent, and the sampling error for the 1,033 likely voters is +/- 3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to four geographic regions. “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. “SF 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, and “Other Southern California” includes the mostly suburban regions of Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. These four regions are the major population centers of the state, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population.

We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 28 percent of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. The sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. We do contrast the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The “independents” category includes only those who are registered to vote as “decline to state.”

In some cases, we compare PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by CBS News, Gallup, Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation, *Washington Post*/ABC News, and the 1979 California Tax Revolt Study at the University of California, Berkeley. We use earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in California.

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT
SEPTEMBER 9—SEPTEMBER 17, 2003
2,001 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
MARGIN OF ERROR +/- 2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. Thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today? *[open-ended question]*

- 33% economy, jobs, unemployment
- 13 state budget, deficit, taxes
- 11 education, schools
- 10 recall of governor
- 4 immigration, illegal immigration
- 3 crime, gangs
- 3 health care, health costs, HMOs
- 2 electricity costs, energy crisis
- 2 government regulations
- 2 housing costs, housing availability
- 1 environment, pollution
- 1 drugs
- 1 population growth and development
- 1 race relations
- 1 traffic; transportation
- 1 inefficiency of state/local government
- 5 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

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

- 24% right direction
- 67 wrong direction
- 9 don't know

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

- 32% good times
- 50 bad times
- 18 don't know

4. Would you say that your region is in an economic recession or not? (*if yes: Do you think it is in a serious, a moderate, or a mild recession?*)

- 19% yes, serious recession
- 30 yes, moderate recession
- 9 yes, mild recession
- 36 no
- 6 don't know

[Responses recorded for questions 5 to 22 are from likely voters only. All other responses are from all adults.]

5. On another topic, how closely are you following news about the election to recall Governor Gray Davis from office—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

- 49% very closely
- 43 fairly closely
- 6 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely

6. Where do you get most of your news about the recall election—from television, newspapers, radio, the Internet, magazines, talking to other people, or from another source?

- 46% television *[ask q. 6a]*
- 26 newspapers *[skip to q. 7]*
- 16 radio *[skip to q. 7]*
- 8 Internet *[skip to q. 7]*
- 2 talking to other people *[skip to q. 7]*
- 1 magazines *[skip to q. 7]*
- 1 all of the above *[skip to q. 7]*

6a. Would that be major network TV, local TV, or cable news stations such as CNN or MSNBC?

- 38% local TV
- 31 major network TV
- 28 cable TV
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 1 don't know

7. On October 7th, there will be a special election on whether to recall Governor Davis from office. On this ballot, voters will be asked two questions: first, whether Davis should be removed as governor, and second, who from a list of 135 candidates should replace him if he is recalled.

If the election were held today, would you vote yes to remove Davis as governor or no to keep Davis as governor?

- 53% yes, remove Davis
- 42 no, keep Davis
- 5 don't know

8. Regardless of how you would vote on the first part of the recall, how would you vote on the second part of the recall ballot? If the election were held today, would you vote for ...
[read rotated list, then ask "or someone else?"]
- 28% Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante, Democrat
 - 26 Actor/Businessman Arnold Schwarzenegger, Republican
 - 14 State Senator Tom McClintock, Republican
 - 3 Financial Investment Advisor Peter Camejo, Green Party
 - 2 Author/Columnist/Mother Arianna Huffington, independent
 - 4 someone else (*specify*)
 - 5 no one/wouldn't vote (*volunteered*)
 - 18 don't know
9. Would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with the choices of replacement candidates in the recall election on October 7th?
- 50% satisfied
 - 43 not satisfied
 - 7 don't know
10. If Governor Davis is recalled from office, do you think that things in California would get better, would get worse, or would it make no difference?
- 42% would get better
 - 16 would get worse
 - 31 would make no difference
 - 11 don't know
11. In the past month, have you seen any television advertisements about the recall election?
- 83% yes [*ask q. 11a*]
 - 17 no [*skip to q. 12*]
- 11a. So far, have the television advertisements been very helpful, somewhat helpful, not too helpful, or not at all helpful in deciding how to vote in the recall election?
- 6% very helpful
 - 18 somewhat helpful
 - 26 not too helpful
 - 48 not at all helpful
 - 2 don't know
12. So far, have the public debates been very helpful, somewhat helpful, not too helpful, or not at all helpful to you in deciding how to vote on October 7th?
- 9% very helpful
 - 26 somewhat helpful
 - 18 not too helpful
 - 32 not at all helpful
 - 10 did not know about them (*volunteered*)
 - 5 don't know
13. In general, people have different ideas about what they want to learn from the candidate debates. Which of these is most important to you ...
[read rotated list, then ask "or something else"]
- 50% candidates' stands on the issues
 - 17 candidates' experience
 - 15 candidates' character
 - 11 candidates' intelligence
 - 2 all of the above
 - 4 something else (*specify*)
 - 1 don't know
14. In deciding how to vote in the October 7th special election, how important to you are the candidates' performances in the upcoming public debates—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?
- 27% very important
 - 40 somewhat important
 - 16 not too important
 - 14 not at all important
 - 3 don't know
15. Do you think that the current effort to recall the governor is an appropriate use of the recall process or not?
- 49% yes
 - 45 no
 - 6 don't know
16. At this time, how much would you say that you know about how the recall process works in California—a lot, some, very little, or nothing?
- 32% a lot
 - 45 some
 - 19 very little
 - 4 nothing

17. Generally speaking, and regardless of how you feel about the upcoming election, do you think the recall election process in California needs major changes, minor changes, or is it basically okay the way it is?
- 34% needs major changes
 - 24 needs minor changes
 - 35 okay the way it is
 - 7 don't know
18. On another topic, Proposition 53 on the October 7th ballot, called the Funds Dedicated for State and Local Infrastructure Legislative Constitutional Amendment, generally dedicates up to 3% of General Fund revenues annually to fund state and local (excluding school and community college) infrastructure projects. The fiscal impact includes potential transfers of General Fund revenues for state and local infrastructure of 850 million dollars in 2006–2007, increasing to several billions of dollars in future years, under specified conditions.
- If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 53?
- 21% yes
 - 49 no
 - 30 don't know
19. What if there was a measure on your local ballot to increase the local sales tax for transportation projects by one-half cent? Would you vote yes or no?
- 41% yes
 - 53 no
 - 6 don't know
20. Also on the October 7th ballot is Proposition 54, the Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color, or National Origin Initiative Constitutional Amendment. How much have you seen, heard, or read about this ballot measure—a lot, some, not much, or nothing?
- 16% a lot
 - 31 some
 - 25 not much
 - 28 nothing
21. (As you may know) Proposition 54 would prohibit state and local governments from classifying any person by race, ethnicity, color, or national origin. Various exemptions apply. The measure would not result in a significant fiscal impact on state and local governments.
- If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 54?
- 38% yes
 - 44 no
 - 18 don't know
22. How important is it to you that state and local governments collect data on race, ethnicity, color, and national origin—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?
- 20% very important
 - 27 somewhat important
 - 18 not too important
 - 30 not at all important
 - 5 don't know
23. In general, how much of the time do you trust the state government in Sacramento to do what is right—just about always, most of the time, or only some of the time?
- 7% just about always
 - 20 most of the time
 - 61 only some of the time
 - 9 none of the time, not at all (*volunteered*)
 - 3 don't know
24. In general, which of the following statements do you agree with more—I'd rather pay higher taxes to support a larger state government that provides more services, or I'd rather pay lower taxes and have a smaller state government that provides fewer services?
- 43% higher taxes and more services
 - 47 lower taxes and fewer services
 - 10 don't know
25. On another topic, the state government faces an 8 billion dollar budget deficit in the current fiscal year. How would you prefer to deal with the state budget deficit—mostly through spending cuts, mostly through tax increases, through a mix of spending cuts and tax increases, OR do you think that it is okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit?
- 42% mixture of spending cuts and tax increases
 - 31 mostly through spending cuts
 - 8 mostly through tax increases
 - 8 okay for the state to borrow money and run a budget deficit
 - 4 other answer (*specify*)
 - 7 don't know
- I'd like your opinions on how efficiently state and local governments use your tax money.
- [rotate questions 26 and 27]
26. Do you think the public schools in your area could spend less without hurting the quality of education they provide?
- 27% yes, could spend less
 - 66 no, could not spend less
 - 7 don't know

27. In general, do you think local government in your area could spend less and still provide the same level of services?

- 59% yes, could spend less [ask q. 27a]
- 34 no, could not spend less [skip to q. 28]
- 7 don't know [skip to q. 28]

27a. How much could local government cut its spending without reducing services? [read list]

- 28% under 10 percent
- 39 10 percent to under 20 percent
- 12 20 percent to under 30 percent
- 10 30 percent or more
- 11 don't know

28. In general, do you think the state government could spend less and still provide the same level of services?

- 70% yes, could spend less [ask q. 28a]
- 25 no, could not spend less [skip to q. 29]
- 5 don't know [skip to q. 29]

28a. How much could the state government cut its spending without reducing services? [read list]

- 20% under 10 percent
- 39 10 percent to under 20 percent
- 16 20 percent to under 30 percent
- 12 30 percent or more
- 13 don't know

29. Changing topics, overall do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?

- 51% approve
- 44 disapprove
- 5 don't know

[rotate questions 30 and 31]

30. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling the U.S. economy?

- 42% approve
- 52 disapprove
- 6 don't know

31. Do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling the federal budget and taxes?

- 41% approve
- 51 disapprove
- 8 don't know

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

- 42% right direction
- 51 wrong direction
- 7 don't know

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

- 47% good times
- 42 bad times
- 11 don't know

Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the following national issues?

[rotate questions 34 to 36]

34. (Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the issue of) health care?

- 53% Democrats
- 28 Republicans
- 1 both (volunteered)
- 8 neither (volunteered)
- 10 don't know

35. (Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the issue of) jobs and the economy?

- 47% Democrats
- 37 Republicans
- 2 both (volunteered)
- 6 neither (volunteered)
- 8 don't know

36. (Which political party—the Democrats or the Republicans—do you trust to do a better job in handling the issue of) national security and terrorism?

- 33% Democrats
- 47 Republicans
- 3 both (volunteered)
- 7 neither (volunteered)
- 10 don't know

37. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

- 51% approve
- 24 disapprove
- 25 don't know

38. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

41% approve
27 disapprove
32 don't know

[rotate questions 39 and 40]

39. Overall, how do you rate the job performance of the U.S. Congress at this time—excellent, good, fair, or poor?

3% excellent
25 good
49 fair
17 poor
6 don't know

40. Overall, at this time how do you rate the job performance of the representative to the U.S. House of Representatives from your congressional district—excellent, good, fair, or poor?

7% excellent
32 good
37 fair
9 poor
15 don't know

41. Changing topics back to the state: Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling his job as governor of California?

31% approve
65 disapprove
4 don't know

[rotate questions 42 and 43]

42. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling the issue of jobs and the economy in California?

26% approve
65 disapprove
9 don't know

43. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Gray Davis is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes?

23% approve
70 disapprove
7 don't know

44. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote?

75% yes *[ask q. 45]*
25 no *[skip to q. 45a]*

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

44% Democrat *[ask q. 45b]*
34 Republican *[ask q. 45c]*
4 another party *(specify) [skip to q. 47]*
18 independent *[ask q. 45a]*

45a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

27% Republican party *[skip to q. 47]*
42 Democratic party *[ask q. 46]*
21 neither *[skip to q. 47]*
10 don't know *[skip to q. 47]*

45b. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

47% strong *[ask q. 46]*
51 not very strong *[ask q. 46]*
2 don't know *[ask q. 46]*

45c. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

56% strong *[skip to q. 47]*
42 not very strong *[skip to q. 47]*
2 don't know *[skip to q. 47]*

[Responses recorded for question 46 are from likely voters registered as Democrats or from independents who say in question 45a that they are closer to the Democratic Party than the Republican Party.]

46. I'm going to read a list of people who may be running in the Democratic presidential primary in March 2004. If the election were held today, would you vote for ...

[read rotated list, then ask "or someone else?"]

21% Howard Dean
12 Joe Lieberman
11 John Kerry
7 Dick Gephardt
4 Dennis Kucinich
3 Wesley Clark *(volunteered)*
2 John Edwards
1 Carol Moseley Braun
1 Bob Graham
0 Al Sharpton
1 none of them *(volunteered)*
4 someone else *(specify)*
33 don't know

47. If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for ... [rotate] George W. Bush, the Republican, or for the Democratic nominee?

46%	Democratic nominee
37	George W. Bush, the Republican
3	other answer (<i>specify</i>)
14	don't know

48. On another topic, would you consider yourself to be politically very liberal, somewhat liberal, middle-of-the-road, somewhat conservative, or very conservative?

10%	very liberal
22	somewhat liberal
29	middle-of-the-road
26	somewhat conservative
11	very conservative
2	don't know

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

22%	great deal
44	fair amount
26	only a little
7	none
1	don't know

50. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?

51%	always
18	nearly always
10	part of the time
5	seldom
16	never

51. Do you plan to vote in the statewide recall election on October 7th? (*if yes*: Will you vote at your local polling place or by absentee ballot?)

57%	yes, local polling place
20	yes, absentee ballot
18	no, not planning to vote
5	don't know

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