



Public Policy Institute of California: Voters Remain Divided on 'Split Roll' Property Tax

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Body

The Public Policy Institute of California issued the following news release on Oct. 22:

With Election Day less than two weeks away, Californians remain divided on a ballot measure that would change how commercial property is taxed. On another closely watched ballot measure, reinstating affirmative action in the public sector has gained slightly since September, but still has less than majority support. These are among the key findings of a statewide survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California.

Proposition 15 would change the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property by basing it on current market value instead of purchase price--creating a "split roll" tax. Among likely voters, 49 percent are in favor, 45 percent oppose, and 6 percent are undecided. The margin was somewhat wider in September (51% yes, 40% no, 9% undecided). Democrats (71%) are far more likely to say they would vote yes than independents (42%) or Republicans (18%). Less than half of homeowners (41%) approve, compared with 64 percent of renters. Younger Californians are more likely than older residents to approve (60% ages 18 to 44, 42% 45 and older). Across regions, 55 percent of likely voters in Los Angeles would vote yes, as would about half in Orange/San Diego (53%), the San Francisco Bay Area (50%), and the Inland Empire (48%); 42 percent of likely voters in the Central Valley would vote yes.

"Californians remain closely divided on Proposition 15 as its proponents and opponents make their closing arguments to voters over the next few weeks," said Mark Baldassare, PPIC president and CEO.

Proposition 16 would repeal Proposition 209, a 1996 constitutional amendment that banned the use of affirmative action involving race-based or sex-based preferences in the public sector. Among likely voters, 37 percent would vote yes and 50 percent would vote no, with 12 percent undecided. This is a slight gain from September, when 31 percent said yes, 47 percent said no, and 22 percent were undecided. Today, 61 percent of Democratic likely voters support Proposition 16 (up from 46% in September), compared with 22 percent of independents and 11 percent of Republicans (both similar to September). Support is highest among likely voters in Los Angeles (41%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (40%), followed by the Inland Empire (35%), Central Valley (33%), and Orange/San Diego (32%).

"Proposition 16 support has grown slightly but still falls short of a majority, with Democrats more in favor and most Republicans and independents opposed to the measure," Baldassare said.

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Views on Confirming Barrett for Supreme Court Break along Partisan Lines, while Majorities across Parties Oppose Overturning Roe v. Wade

Last month, President Trump nominated Judge Amy Coney Barrett to the US Supreme Court. About four in ten Californians (41% adults, 41% likely voters) believe the Senate should confirm Barrett, while 47 percent of adults and 54 percent of likely voters believe the Senate should not confirm. Views vary widely by party affiliation, with 84 percent of Republicans, 44 percent of independents, and 16 percent of Democrats saying the Senate should confirm.

Judge Barrett's nomination has resurfaced the issue of whether Roe v. Wade, the landmark 1973 abortion rights ruling, could be overturned. An overwhelming majority of Californians (70%) say Roe v. Wade should not be overturned. Across partisan groups, overwhelming majorities of Democrats (89%) and independents (77%) and a slim majority of Republicans (53%) do not want the ruling overturned.

"Partisans are divided on the Supreme Court nominee, while majorities across party lines say that the Supreme Court should not overturn Roe v. Wade," Baldassare said.

Next month, the Supreme Court will hear a case challenging the constitutionality of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), the 2010 federal health reform law. A solid majority of Californians (60%) have a favorable view of the ACA, while a third (34%) have an unfavorable view. Across partisan groups, 88 percent of Democrats, 55 percent of independents, and 19 percent of Republicans have a favorable view.

Two in Three Are Concerned about COVID-19 Vaccine Being Rushed

A number of efforts to develop a COVID-19 vaccine are underway, with one or more vaccines possibly available by the end of the year. Governor Newsom has announced the launch of an expert scientific panel to independently review federally approved vaccines. Most Californians say they would definitely (26%) or probably (31%) get the vaccine if it were available today, while a smaller share would probably not (20%) or definitely not (20%) get the vaccine. Nationwide, a slim majority of adults say they would definitely (21%) or probably (30%) get a vaccine if available, according to a Pew Research Center poll in September.

At least half of Californians across party lines say they would either definitely or probably get a COVID-19 vaccine if one were available today: 56 percent of both Democrats and independents and 50 percent of Republicans. Across racial/ethnic groups, there are sharp differences: 70 percent of Asian Americans, 62 percent of whites, and 54 percent of Latinos say they would definitely or probably get a vaccine if available today, with 29 percent of African Americans saying definitely or probably.

Asked about vaccine development, two-thirds of Californians (68%) are more concerned about approval of a vaccine moving too fast, without fully ensuring safety and effectiveness, while one in four (26%) are more concerned about approval moving too slowly, delaying access to a vaccine. Views vary across party lines, but majorities are in agreement: 82 percent of Democrats, 73 percent of independents, and 51 percent of Republicans are more concerned about approval moving too fast.

"One-quarter say they will definitely get the COVID-19 vaccine, with reluctance crossing party lines, and two in three fear that approval will move too fast," Baldassare said.

Biden Maintains Wide Lead over Trump, with Record-High Share of Californians More Enthusiastic about Voting than Usual

As the candidates prepare for the final presidential debate tomorrow, Joe Biden maintains a sizeable lead over Donald Trump, with 58 percent of likely voters favoring Biden/Harris and 32 percent favoring Trump/Pence--very similar to September (60% Biden/Harris; 31% Trump/Pence). Biden leads by wide margins in the San Francisco Bay Area (71% to 21%) and Los Angeles (70% to 22%), with narrower leads in Orange/San Diego (50% to 37%) and the Inland Empire (48% to 42%). Trump has a narrow lead in the Central Valley (44% to 38%).

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Asked whether they are more enthusiastic or less enthusiastic than usual about voting in this November's presidential election, 72 percent of likely voters say they are more enthusiastic--a record high in PPIC surveys. By comparison, four years ago in October 2016, 49 percent were more enthusiastic than usual. Majorities across party lines say they are more enthusiastic than usual this year: 79 percent of Democrats, 74 percent of Republicans, and 59 percent of independents.

"About three out of four say that they are more enthusiastic about voting in this presidential election, with sharp increases across party lines compared to four years ago," Baldassare said.

If the election for the US House of Representatives were held today, most likely voters (58%) would vote for or lean toward the Democratic candidate; more than a third (37%) would vote for or lean toward the Republican candidate. This is similar to September (60% Democratic, 33% Republican). In the eight California House districts considered competitive according to the Cook Political Report (districts 4, 10, 21, 22, 25, 39, 48, and 50), likely voters are divided: 49 percent favor the Republican, and 47 percent favor the Democrat. This is similar to September (54% Republican, 42% Democrat).

Californians See COVID-19 and Jobs and the Economy as Top Issues Facing the State; Outlook for the State Is Brighter than for the US

When asked to identify the most important issue facing the state, COVID-19 (20%) and jobs and the economy (16%) were named by more Californians than other issues. Following these are environment/pollution/global warming (7%), homelessness (6%), housing costs/availability (6%), state budget/deficit/spending (6%), and wildfires/fires (5%).

Amid the pandemic and a damaging wildfire season, Californians are somewhat split on whether the state is going in the right direction or the wrong direction: 55 percent of adults and 50 percent of likely voters say right direction, while 39 percent of adults and 46 percent of likely voters say wrong direction. Democrats (73%) are far more likely than independents (47%) and Republicans (13%) to say right direction. Across racial/ethnic groups, solid majorities of Asian Americans (68%), African Americans (65%), and Latinos (60%) say right direction, while whites are divided (48% right direction, 48% wrong direction).

In contrast to generally divided views on the state outlook, solid majorities (62% adults, 72% likely voters) of Californians think the nation is heading in the wrong direction; 33 percent of adults and 25 percent of likely voters say the nation is heading in the right direction.

"California is facing a range of issues, including the COVID-19 and wildfire crises, at a time when residents are much more upbeat about the direction of the state than the nation," Baldassare said.

About Two-Thirds Think the State Is Economically Divided

Asked whether they think California is economically divided into "haves" and "have-nots," solid majorities of Californians (64% adults, 67% likely voters) say it is, while one in three (32% adults, 30% likely voters) say it is not. This is consistent with the shares of adults and likely voters holding these views in various PPIC surveys going back to 2002.

Solid majorities across income groups say the state is divided into haves and have-nots (65% annual household income under \$40,000; 63% \$40,000 to under \$80,000; 69% \$80,000 or more). Across racial/ethnic groups, African Americans (70%) and Latinos (68%) are most likely to hold this view, followed by whites (61%), and Asian Americans (60%). In addition, majorities across party lines hold this view (76% Democrats, 65% independents, 52% Republicans).

When asked which economic group they are in, 44 percent say haves and 43 percent say have-nots, similar to November 2019 (41% haves, 44% have-nots). Today, there are wide disparities across racial/ethnic groups in the share saying they are have-nots, with Latinos (62%) and African Americans (53%) more likely than whites (32%) and Asian Americans (26%) to say they are have-nots.

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"Two in three Californians say that we are a state of economic haves and have-nots today, with racial disparities among those seeing themselves as have-nots," Baldassare said.

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