

Election tests depth of California's blueness

Newstex Blogs

CalMatters

November 2, 2020 Monday 9:35 AM EST

Copyright 2020 Newstex LLC All Rights Reserved

Length: 729 words

Byline: Dan Walters

Body

Nov 02, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) In summary California is a blue state but this election may tell us just how deeply blue it truly is. Credit Donald Trump with one achievement in California: His presidency has encouraged record numbers of Californians to become registered voters and cast ballots. However, they are mostly registering as Democrats, mostly voting against him and are solidifying California, once a bastion of conservatism, as one of the nation's bluest states. Data from the Secretary of State's office[1] attest to the inexorable trend. Twenty years ago, as the new century began, 71% of California's potential voters (citizens over the age of 18) were actually registered to vote.

Today, it's nearly 85%, with Democratic registration having jumped by 41% during the last two decades while Republican ranks shrank by 155,000 bodies. Not only are there a lot more Democratic voters but early data from this year's election indicate they are more energized. Pre-election day polling[2] for Capitol Weekly found that well over half of early voters were Democrats, much higher than their 46.4% of registered voters. The heavy turnout of Democrats could, other polling indicates, give Trump's Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, a landslide victory of record proportions in California. Get a veteran journalist's take on what's going on in California with a weekly round-up of Dan's column every Friday. Keep tabs on the latest California policy and politics news Of course, everyone knew going into this election year, even before Biden nailed down the Democratic nomination, that Democrats would claim California's 55 electoral votes. California hasn't voted for a Republican presidential nominee since 1988 and Trump has been an especially unpopular president in the state, often citing its left-of-center politicians and policies as something the rest of the nation should shun. However, the sheer size of the anti-Trump vote this year is remarkable and will help Democrats retain and perhaps even increase their very lopsided margins in the Legislature and the state's congressional delegation. If those aspects of the election are largely settled in advance, what are California's voters really deciding this year? The election's big action is found in the 12 statewide ballot measures, mostly conflicts between moneyed interest groups, which are spending the better part of a billion dollars to influence voters. While their specifics vary widely, the measures are noteworthy in two respects — they are mostly rehashes of previous clashes and their outcomes may indicate where California public policy on several pithy issues is headed. For instance, Proposition 15, a hefty tax increase on commercial real estate, probes whether the leftward drift of California politics means voters are amenable to other tax hikes that have been kicking around, such as another income tax bite on the wealthy. The same issue is also being probed in hundreds of local tax increase measures being proposed by local governments and school districts reeling from impacts of the COVID-19 recession and ever-higher costs for employee pensions and health care. Proposition 22 is a referendum on the nature of 21st century work — whether the recent trend toward independent gig employment will continue or the traditional concept of payroll employment will be bolstered. It's a big issue for union leaders who see gig work undermining their ability to generate new members. Propositions 20 and 25 test whether Californians approve of

Election tests depth of California's blueness

recent changes that ease up on criminal justice penalties or believe that the reforms go too far and place them in danger. Proposition 16's outcome will reveal whether the ban on affirmative action in employment, contracting and college admissions, adopted by voters 24 years ago, still resonates with a new generation of Californians. While California is certainly a blue state, how these and other measures fare in a high-turnout election will reveal just how deeply blue it is. Support in-depth reporting that matters As a nonprofit newsroom, we rely on the generosity of Californians like you to cover the issues that matter. If you value our reporting, support our journalism with a donation. [1]: <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/report-registration/60day-gen-2020> [2]: <https://www.meridianhq.com/return-tracker/>

Load-Date: November 2, 2020

End of Document