

California at crossroads over district attorney role

Newstex Blogs

CalMatters

October 29, 2020 Thursday 1:35 PM EST

Copyright 2020 Newstex LLC All Rights Reserved

Length: 2585 words

Byline: Emily Hoeven

Body

Oct 29, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;; Good morning, California. It's Thursday, October 29. (Yes, I know I said it was September[1] in yesterday's newsletter; the pandemic has warped my sense of time.) Traditional vs. progressive Jackie Lacey and George Gascón. Illustration by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters; Creative Commons Beyond the criminal[2] justice[3] propositions[4] on California's November ballot, the upcoming election will also serve as a barometer for the role Californians think district attorneys should play in the aftermath of historic protests against police brutality[5]. The main litmus test is taking in place in Los Angeles County[6], with incumbent Jackie Lacey, a Democrat with a more traditional law-and-order approach, facing off against Democrat George Gascón, the former district attorney of San Francisco often described as a 'progressive prosecutor.'

In the wake of George Floyd's death, prominent California politicians — including Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti[7] and U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff[8] — shifted their endorsement from Lacey to Gascón. District attorneys, with the power to investigate and prosecute police killings, have come under renewed scrutiny for being too cozy with law enforcement. In August, a group of prosecutors — including Gascón — asked the state bar to ban district attorneys from accepting law enforcement money[9]. The political landscape also appears to be shifting in Alameda County, where District Attorney Nancy O'Malley recently announced she was reopening an investigation[10] into a BART officer's 2009 killing of Oscar Grant. The news came a few weeks after the Democrat became the second district attorney in the state[11] to charge an officer for homicide[12] under a new law restricting police use of deadly force[13]. Critics say[14] O'Malley, long seen as a police ally, is attempting to head off a progressive challenger when she faces reelection in two years. O'Malley[15]: 'No matter what you do, someone's going to criticize. So, for me, I have to do what's right.' Someone considering a run against her[16]: Assemblymember Rob Bonta. Last week, the Oakland Democrat unveiled plans to introduce a bill[17] that would require district attorneys who have accepted law enforcement money to recuse themselves from investigations into officer misconduct. Bonta[18]: 'We must cure the conflict of interest that gives the appearance that police officers are not being held accountable due to police unions' direct campaign contributions to district attorneys.' _____ The coronavirus bottom line: As of 9 p.m. Wednesday night, California had 908,713 confirmed coronavirus cases and 17,475 deaths from the virus, according to a CalMatters tracker[19]. Also: CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking the state's daily actions[20]. And we're tracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[21]. Advertisement <https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/programs/california/> Other stories you should know 1. California voters fear election unrest Image via iStock As Election Day inches nearer, 87% of California voters are concerned that many Americans won't respect the outcome of the presidential election — and 88% think violence is likely if the outcome is in dispute, according to a Wednesday poll from UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies[22]. That marks a noticeable increase from September, when 82% of voters expressed doubt[23] that Americans would respect the results of the presidential election. Meanwhile, 46% of voters said they were less

confident mail-in ballots would be counted than votes cast in person — a view expressed by 78% of Trump supporters and 32% of Biden supporters. IGS Co-director Eric Schickler: 'The lack of public confidence that all votes will be counted and that both parties will respect the election outcome are worrisome signs of a political system that is under unusual stress.' The news comes as some California police departments are gearing up for potential election-related unrest. The Beverly Hills Police Department recently announced plans to close Rodeo Drive[24] on Nov. 3 and 4, and the Los Angeles Police Department told officers[25]they may need to reschedule vacations originally booked during the week of the election. 2. Preview of prop votes Image via iStock Less than a week out from the election, 37% of California voters[26] have already cast their ballots — and Democrats are voting early at much higher rates[27] than Republicans or independents, a trend apparent in the results of an exit poll from Capitol Weekly[28] released Wednesday. A majority of this left-leaning electorate expressed support for a number of statewide propositions that other polls indicate are close races or likely to fail. Here's a closer look: 60% yes, 40% no on Prop. 15[29], which would raise taxes on commercial properties. A recent Public Policy Institute of California poll[30] pegged this measure at 49% yes, 45% opposed and 6% undecided. 53% yes, 47% no on Prop. 16[31], which would overturn the state's affirmative action ban. From PPIC[32]: 37% yes, 50% no, 12% undecided. 52% yes, 48% no on Prop. 22[33], which would exempt Uber and Lyft from a state labor law. A recent poll from UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies[34]: 46% yes, 42% no, 12% undecided. The Capitol Weekly poll also shows two measures losing by double digits — Prop. 20[35], which would crack down on crime, and Prop. 23[36], which would tighten regulations on kidney dialysis clinics. Losing by a few points: Prop. 19[37], another property tax measure, and Prop. 21[38], a rent control measure. 3. School reopening plans divide parents A woman carries a sign in favor of reopening schools for in-person instruction during a demonstration in Brentwood on Sept. 15, 2020. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters California's two largest school districts, Los Angeles Unified[39] and San Diego Unified[40], don't anticipate students returning to campus until January 2021 at the earliest, education leaders said this week. Predictably, the announcements stirred both support and vehement opposition from parents. Those criticizing the decision pointed out that other school districts in Los Angeles and San Diego counties have begun offering some in-person services to students. LAUSD Board of Education Vice President Jackie Goldberg[41]: 'This is finals time for the high-schoolers and the end-of-semester assessments for all the other grades. Why would we want to go back in December? Which would probably be the earliest we could possibly go. This is the wrong time to do that.' Parent Danna Rosenthal[42]: Any return is an improvement, 'even if it means three weeks before the end of the semester. My kids are suffering.' Meanwhile, plans to reopen schools in Fresno County's fourth-largest district[43] spurred intense backlash along with fervent support at a heated board meeting this week. Sanger Unified Superintendent Adela Jones[44]: 'I have never experienced in my 36 years of education a situation like this that has been so divisive. I do not want to see our community be divided over this.' CalMatters columnist Dan Walters[45]: Three of California's 12 statewide propositions renew sharp conflicts between business groups and unions. College students must vote: Our generation has the ability to correct past mistakes and fundamentally shift the tone of American politics, argues Gabriella Sonderegger, a chemistry student at University of the Pacific[46]. Counties must invest in girls: When girls have nowhere to turn for safety or support, we perpetuate a cycle that leads to harmful outcomes for young people, write Desiree Victor of the Young Women's Freedom Center and Haleema Bharoocha of the Alliance for Girls[47]. Other things worth your time Firefighters gain control over Orange County blazes that forced 100,000 evacuations. // Los Angeles Times[48]How wildfires have driven an exodus from Butte County. // Mercury News[49]Need a translator to vote? California is trying to help. // CalMatters[50]Opinion: How California is failing Black women and girls exploited through sex trafficking. // Washington Post[51]An interview with anti-affirmative-action leader Ward Connerly. // EdSource[52]Why disaffection with Rep. Devin Nunes is growing among his constituents. // The Guardian[53]Reddit latest tech company to announce permanent work-from-home policy. // SF Gate[54]These tiny homes were going to solve Sacramento's homeless crisis. So where are they? // Sacramento Bee[55]San Francisco to begin moving more than 500 homeless people out of hotels. Where will they go? // San Francisco Chronicle[56]See you tomorrow.Tips, insight or feedback? Email emily@calmatters.org [57].; Follow me on Twitter: [@emily_hoeven](https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven) [58]Subscribe to CalMatters newsletters [here](#) [59]. Follow CalMatters on Facebook [60] and Twitter [61]. CalMatters is now available in Spanish on Twitter [62], Facebook [63] and RSS [64]. [1]: https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven/status/1321474940743249926 [2]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-17-parole-vote/> [3]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-20-crime/> [4]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-25-cash-bail/> [5]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/06/how-california-protests-are-making-history/> [6]:

California at crossroads over district attorney role

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-09-18/district-attorney-race-jackie-lacey-george-gascon> [7]:
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-04/la-mayor-eric-garcetti-shifts-support-george-gascon-district-attorney-race> [8]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-06-20/adam-schiff-drops-endorsement-jackie-lacey-la-county-district-attorneys-race> [9]: <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/6934752/Letter-to-CAL-BAR-Regarding-Prosecutor-Rule-Change.pdf> [10]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/crime/article/Alameda-DA-to-reopen-Oscar-Grant-case-15623137.php> [11]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-30/murder-charge-san-diego-county-sheriffs-deputy-first-under-new-law> [12]: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/local-politics/article/Progressive-prosecutor-or-politician-Alameda-15679394.php> [13]:
<https://calmatters.org/justice/2019/08/newsom-signs-landmark-police-use-of-force-bill/> [14]:
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/local-politics/article/Progressive-prosecutor-or-politician-Alameda-15679394.php> [15]:
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/local-politics/article/Progressive-prosecutor-or-politician-Alameda-15679394.php> [16]:
<https://www.sfchronicle.com/local-politics/article/Progressive-prosecutor-or-politician-Alameda-15679394.php> [17]:
<https://a18.asmdc.org/press-releases/20201022-bonta-announces-first-nation-legislation-cure-conflict-interest-elected> [18]: <https://a18.asmdc.org/press-releases/20201022-bonta-announces-first-nation-legislation-cure-conflict-interest-elected> [19]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [20]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/> [21]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [22]: <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5mn2w794> [23]:
<https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/09/wine-country-under-wildfire-siege/> [24]:
<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-27/concerned-about-election-unrest-beverly-hills-will-close-rodeo-drive> [25]: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-14/lapd-tells-officers-to-be-available-in-case-of-election-related-unrest?utm_source=sfmc_100035609&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=32970+Essential+California++Saturday+Edition&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.latimes.com%2fcalifornia%2fstory%2f2020-10-14%2flapd-tells-officers-to-be-available-in-case-of-election-related-unrest%3f&utm_id=16130&sfmc_id=1845983 [26]: <https://www.politicaldata.com/2020-ballot-retuned-tracker-state/> [27]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-fires-diablo-winds-pge-shutoffs/> [28]: <https://capitolweekly.net/an-early-voting-survey-of-the-ballot-propositions/> [29]:
<https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-15-property-tax-big-business/> [30]:
<https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-affirmative-action-prop-16/> [31]:
<https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-16-affirmative-action/> [32]:
<https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-affirmative-action-prop-16/> [33]:
<https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-22-gig-workers-ab-5/> [34]:
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/2pr670k8?> [35]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-20-crime/> [36]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-23-kidney-dialysis-clinics/> [37]:
<https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-19-property-tax-break/> [38]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-21-rent-control/> [39]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-28/los-angeles-campuses-unlikely-to-reopen-until-at-least-january> [40]:
<https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/news/education/story/2020-10-27/san-diego-unifieds-phase-two-reopening-may-happen-in-january> [41]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-28/los-angeles-campuses-unlikely-to-reopen-until-at-least-january> [42]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-28/los-angeles-campuses-unlikely-to-reopen-until-at-least-january> [43]: <https://www.fresnobee.com/article246768736.html> [44]:
<https://www.fresnobee.com/article246768736.html> [45]: <https://calmatters.org/commentary/2020/10/california-labor-business-ballot-measures-propositions/> [46]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=146935> [47]:
<https://calmatters.org/?p=146911> [48]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-28/firefighters-battle-to-save-orange-county-subdivisions-as-flames-march-closer> [49]: <https://www.mercurynews.com/2020/10/28/an-exodus-how-fires-have-driven-migration-from-butte-county/> [50]:
<https://calmatters.org/politics/votebeat/2020/10/california-election-translator-bilingual-poll-workers/> [51]:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2020/10/28/how-california-is-failing-vulnerable-victims-systemic-racism/> [52]: <https://edsource.org/2020/ward-connerly-anti-affirmative-action-leader-calls-prop-16-effort-to-reshape-power-in-california/642212> [53]: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/oct/28/devin-nunes-california-congress-election?CMP=oth_b-aplnews_d-1 [54]: <https://www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/Reddit-permanent-work-from-home-15679060.php> [55]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/article246733311.html> [56]:

California at crossroads over district attorney role

<https://www.sfchronicle.com/local-politics/article/S-F-will-being-moving-more-than-500-homeless-15682132.php> [57]: emily@calmatters.org [58]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=fdbf3734c1&e=8df3ed9f4c> [59]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=2a7ce24a72&e=8df3ed9f4c> [60]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=9b9a39b357&e=8df3ed9f4c> [61]: <https://calmatters.us11.list-manage.com/track/click?u=5f4af3af825368013c58e4547&id=ad27afd972&e=8df3ed9f4c> [62]: https://twitter.com/calmatters_es [63]: <https://www.facebook.com/calmatterses> [64]: <https://calmatters.org/category/calmatters-en-espanol/>

Load-Date: October 29, 2020