

New PPIC Poll on Propositions: One Anticipated Outcome, One Surprise

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Sep 17, 2020(Fox Hounds: [http://www.foxandhoundsdaily.com/Delivered by Newstex](http://www.foxandhoundsdaily.com/Delivered%20by%20Newstex)) The Public Policy Institute of California's September poll[1] measured the current standing of two ballot measures: Proposition 15, the property tax increase on commercial property, and Proposition 16 to rescind the ban on affirmative action. As expected, the Prop 15 battle is going to be close with a slim majority in favor at the present time. However, despite all the action around social justice the last few months, the affirmative action ban repeal trails badly.

According to the poll, Proposition 15 is in front now with 51% of likely voters saying they would vote yes, 40% would vote no, with 9% undecided. While the poll indicates the yes side enjoys a lead in four of the five regions of the state that PPIC identifies (the Orange/San Diego Counties region was opposed), there are other items in the poll that mean the election likely will tighten and could turn. The poll that was taken between September 4 and 13. The yes side was on the air with its television ads the entire time while no side ads began during that period. With both sides promising big buys in media and other voter outreach, poll numbers could shift. The question asked by the pollsters mirrored the ballot label and summary that the attorney general put on the proposition, which was heavily criticized in the media as being biased toward the proponents. Arguments made by the campaigns will attempt to either boost or sand down that edge the AG offered the proponents, many his political allies. Important to the Proposition 15 battle were two separate questions in the poll that asked about the state's and country's economic situation. By a two-to-one margin, likely voters believe that the United States will have bad economic conditions over the next 12 months. Well over 70% of likely voters said California is in a recession. Couple those findings with a recent poll released by the National Federation of Independent Business/California that 94% of small businesses in the state are opposed to Prop 15 because of its potential devastating effects on small business, and the economic issue is sure to influence the vote before the election is over. That economic issue was not expressed in the question PPIC asked about Proposition 15. In addition, homeowners were split within the margin of error on supporting the initiative, 47% in favor, 44% opposed. If the charge made by opponents gains acceptance that this property tax increase for commercial property is just the first step in going after all of the property tax protections of the iconic Proposition 13, homeowner opposition is sure to grow. Interestingly, that while schools are being pushed as a great beneficiary of the new tax dollars that would come in if the measure passed, the poll found that households with children were less supportive of the initiative than households that had no children. Households with no children supported the measure 52% to 39% while households with children were under 50% with a slim lead of 46% yes, 42% no. As predicted by many observers, the battle over Proposition 15 is expected to be close and this poll supports that notion. Alternatively, and perhaps surprisingly, the news leading headlines about social justice and equality don't seem to have propped up the attempt to repeal the ban on affirmative action, Proposition 16. The PPIC poll found only 31% support for Prop 16 while 47% opposed and 22% are undecided. Should the initiative pass diversity could be considered in awarding contracts, public employment, and public college admissions. In putting the measure on the ballot, the legislature argued that removing the affirmative action ban

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was a way to satisfy an advance toward racial equality in the state. However, that attitude does not seem to have transferred to the voters at large. Explaining the seeming disconnect between the marches for social justice and lack of support for repealing the affirmative action ban, Mark Baldassare, president and CEO of PPIC and leader of the poll wrote, 'Proposition 16 was placed on the November ballot by the legislature and it has not yet had as high a public profile as some of the well-funded initiatives. Today, there are large numbers of undecideds and more voters are saying they would vote no than say they would vote yes after being read the ballot title and label. Between now and the election, it appears that many voters are in need of a history lesson to learn about Proposition 209 passing in 1996, knowledge of the supporters and opponents of Proposition 16, and clarity on what a 'no' vote and a 'yes' vote means for a ballot measure that seeks to overturn an anti-affirmative action law.' Proposition 16 has a ways to go to become as competitive as Proposition 15. [1]: <https://www.ppic.org/publication/ppic-statewide-survey-californians-and-their-government-september-2020/>

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