

California Institutions

Characteristics of the California Legislature

- Chief law making institution in the state
- Deeply unpopular
 - As low as 12%
 - Near 43% recently
- Since 1879, number of seats in both legislative chambers have remained fixed
 - California Assembly
 - 80 members/districts
 - Like United States House of Representatives
 - California Senate
 - 40 members/districts
 - Like United States Senate
 - Redistricting
 - Lines redrawn every 10 years

SJSU-Area State Legislature

- Ash Kalra (D, 25th Assembly District)
- Dave Cortese (D, 15th Senate District)

Term Limits

- Term limits popular in the 1990s
- California adopted one of the most stringent laws
- Prop 140 (1990)
 - Assembly
 - Three 2-year terms
 - Senate
 - Two 4 year terms
- Prop 28 (2012)
 - Modified term limits
 - Total of 12 years in the state legislature
 - Can be split between assembly and senate or just one
- Consequences of term limits
 - Good
 - More diverse legislature, better represents California
 - May have more ambitious politicians because their time is limited

- Bad
 - May slack off in the last few years
 - May spend last few years looking for other jobs
 - Looking out for themselves rather than their constituents

Leaders of the California Legislature

- Speaker of the Assembly
 - Robert Rivas (D, 29th AD)
 - Dictates flow of legislation
 - Draw up committee assignments
 - Chosen every new legislative term by members
- Senate Pro Tempore
 - Equivalent of United States Senate majority leader
 - Not ceremonial like how the US Senate pro tempore is
 - Mike McGuire (D, 2nd SD)
 - Guides legislation through State Senate
 - Assigns committee posts
 - Is the chair of the Senate Rules Committee

Legislative Committees

- Standing committees
 - Effectively permanent committees
 - Number has been known to vary between terms
 - Committee assignments
 - Hold hearings, markup
 - Works the same way as in Congress

Legislative rules

- Simple majority in both chambers
- 2 / 3 vote required for fiscally related bills (54 Assembly, 27 Senate)
- No filibuster in California Senate
- Legislation must pass both chambers in identical form
- Governor then has 12 days to sign passed bills, 30 days if bill is passed at the end of the session
- Line item veto
 - Enshrined in California Constitution
 - Can be overridden

California Governor

- Gavin Newsom
- Chief executive of California
- Compare this to the president
- Limited to two, 4 year terms
 - Unless your name is Jerry Brown
 - The term limit was passed after he had served two terms
- Other independently elected executive officers
 - Running separately from the governor
 - Does not run on the same ticket as the governor
 - Lieutenant governor
 - Eleni Kounalakis
 - “Executive-in-waiting”
 - President of California State Senate
 - Attorney general
 - Rob Bonta
 - Head of California Department of Justice
 - California’s “chief law enforcement officer”
 - Secretary of state
 - Dr. Shirley N. Weber
 - Oversees election processes in the state
 - Among other important responsibilities
 - Local county registrars have to report to the secretary of state
 - Superintendent of public instruction
 - Tony Thurmond
 - Head of the department education
 - Non-partisan office
 - Controller
 - Malia Cohen
 - Collect taxes and issues checks for the state
 - Treasurer
 - Fiona ma
 - Borrows money for the state (issues bonds)
 - And everyone else in California’s executive branch