



## CALIFORNIA'S LIKELY VOTERS

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- **Democrats have the edge among registered voters and an advantage at the polls.**  
Forty-three percent of registered voters in California are Democrats and 34 percent are Republicans. Among likely voters, the Democrats' advantage over Republicans narrows to 7 points (Democrats, 43%; Republicans, 36%).
- **California is becoming an “unparty state,” but major parties still dominate elections.**  
The most notable change in the California electorate since 1996 is the addition of 1.1 million “decline to state” or independent voters (from 1.8 million to 2.9 million). Today, 18 percent of registered voters in California are independents. Major party voters still account for nearly eight in 10 of the state's likely voters, but 16 percent of likely voters are independents. Independent likely voters lean more toward the Democratic Party than the Republican Party (42% to 28%), but three in 10 do not lean either way.
- **California's urban regions differ in voter registration and participation.**  
Los Angeles County makes up 27 percent of California's adult population and 26 percent of the state's likely voters—but has 32 percent of California's non-registered adults. The San Francisco Bay Area has 20 percent of California's adult population and 23 percent of the state's likely voters—and only 17 percent of non-registered adults. Other urban areas such as Orange and San Diego Counties and the Inland Empire, as well as rural regions, have shares of likely voters and unregistered adults that very closely reflect their share of California's adult population.
- **Californians are divided fairly evenly across the political ideological spectrum.**  
Thirty-six percent of likely voters describe themselves as politically conservative, 32 percent as middle-of-the-road, and 32 percent as liberal. Registered, but infrequent, voters are similarly spread (conservative, 33%; middle-of-the-road, 36%; liberal, 31%). Those who are not registered to vote tend to be conservative (conservative, 38%; middle-of-the-road, 34%; liberal, 28%).
- **A large majority of likely voters are white; a majority of those not registered to vote are Latino.**  
Nearly three-quarters of the state's likely voters are white, 14 percent are Latino, 6 percent are black, 5 percent are Asian, and 3 percent are of other racial or ethnic groups. Whites are a bare majority of infrequent voters (51%). Latinos represent a large majority of those not registered to vote (63%). Eighty-eight percent of likely voters were born in the United States, compared with 77 percent of infrequent voters, and only 31 percent of those not registered to vote.
- **Large demographic differences exist between likely voters and other adults.**  
Likely voters are older, more educated, and more affluent than both infrequent voters and those not registered to vote. Thirty-nine percent of likely voters are age 55 and older, compared with only 19 percent of infrequent voters and 11 percent of those not registered to vote. By contrast, 52 percent of those not registered to vote are under 35 years old. Likely voters are much more likely to have a college or postgraduate degree (likely voters, 53%; infrequent voters, 30%; not registered, 17%) and to have annual household incomes of \$80,000 or higher (likely voters, 35%; infrequent voters, 21%; not registered, 10%). Likely voters (77%) are also much more likely than infrequent voters (48%) and those who are not registered to vote (34%) to own their homes.

		<b>Registered Voters</b>		<b>Not Registered</b>
		<b>Likely Voters</b>	<b>Infrequent Voters</b>	
<b>All Adults</b>	<b>All Adults</b>	53%	24%	23%
<b>Party registration</b>	<b>Democrat</b>	43	43	-
	<b>Republican</b>	36	28	-
	<b>Independent</b>	16	26	-
	<b>Other party</b>	5	3	-
<b>Independent and not registered, major party leanings</b>	<b>Republican party</b>	28	27	21
	<b>Democratic party</b>	42	41	44
	<b>Neither/don't know</b>	30	32	35
<b>Ideology</b>	<b>Liberal</b>	32	31	28
	<b>Middle-of-the-road</b>	32	36	34
	<b>Conservative</b>	36	33	38
<b>Region</b>	<b>Los Angeles</b>	26	26	32
	<b>SF Bay Area</b>	23	19	17
	<b>Central Valley</b>	16	18	17
	<b>Orange/San Diego</b>	17	17	16
	<b>Inland Empire</b>	9	11	10
	<b>Other</b>	9	9	8
<b>Age</b>	<b>18 to 34</b>	18	45	52
	<b>35 to 54</b>	43	36	37
	<b>55 and older</b>	39	19	11
<b>Gender</b>	<b>Men</b>	50	49	50
	<b>Women</b>	50	51	50
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>	<b>White</b>	72	51	24
	<b>Latino</b>	14	30	63
	<b>Black</b>	6	8	3
	<b>Asian</b>	5	8	8
	<b>Other</b>	3	3	2
<b>Education</b>	<b>No college</b>	16	45	67
	<b>Some college</b>	31	25	16
	<b>College graduate</b>	53	30	17
<b>Income</b>	<b>Under \$40,000</b>	28	46	70
	<b>\$40,000 to \$79,999</b>	37	33	20
	<b>\$80,000 or more</b>	35	21	10
<b>Own/rent</b>	<b>Own</b>	77	48	34
	<b>Rent</b>	23	52	66
<b>Nativity</b>	<b>U.S.-born</b>	88	77	31
	<b>Immigrant</b>	12	23	69

**Sources:** (1) Combined results of eleven PPIC Statewide Surveys conducted between May 2005 and May 2006, including interviews with 12,446 likely voters, 5,450 infrequent voters, and 5,402 unregistered adults. "Likely voters" are registered voters meeting criteria on interest in politics, attention to issues, voting behavior, and intention to vote; "infrequent voters" do not meet these criteria. (2) California Secretary of State, *Report of Registration*, October 2004 and May 2006.