UCI-OC Poll

California's Next Election: Insights and Analysis

July 2, 2025

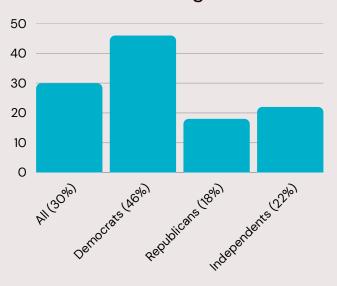
UCITVINE School of Social Ecology

California's next statewide election is less than a year away. In anticipation of that vote, and the choice of a new Governor for the state, researchers from the University of California's School of Social Ecology recently surveyed voters across California about the nature of the state and their thoughts on the candidates for Governor. Overall, the results found a disenchanted electorate, one worried about the direction of the state, concerned about several key policy issues, disapproving of national leaders and mixed within the state, and except for one potential candidate, unaware of most of the declared candidates for Governor.

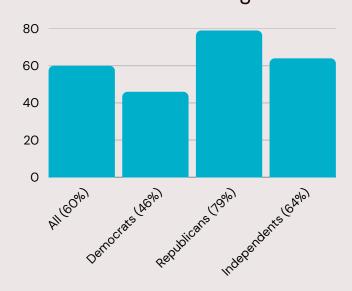
★ Californians Believe the State is on the Wrong Track, but There are Significant Partisan and Demographic Differences.

By a 2:1 margin, Californians believe the state is on the wrong, not right, track. This rate is 4:1 among Republicans and almost 3:1 for Independents, whereas Democrats are evenly split. Among racial and ethnic groups, African Americans are an exception in narrowly believing that the state is headed in the right direction. Across age groups, only those Californians over 80 believe the state is on the right track.

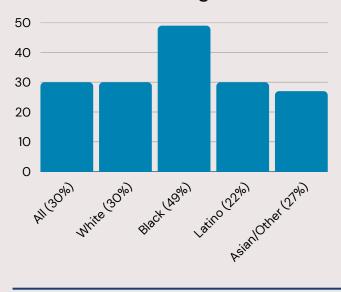
California on the Right Track



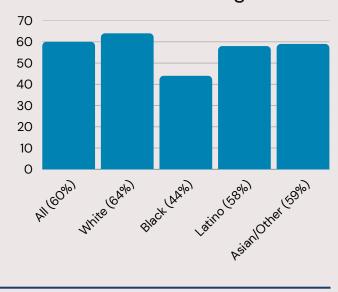
California on the Wrong Track



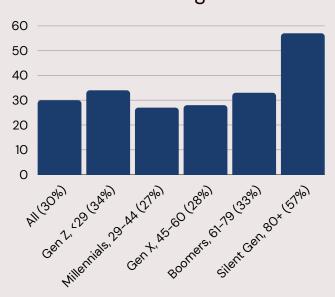
California on the Right Track



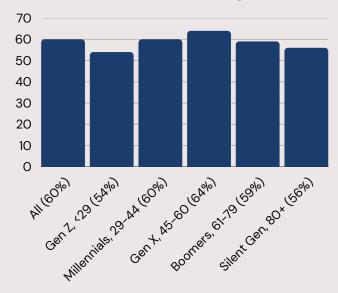
California on the Wrong Track



California on the Right Track



California on the Wrong Track



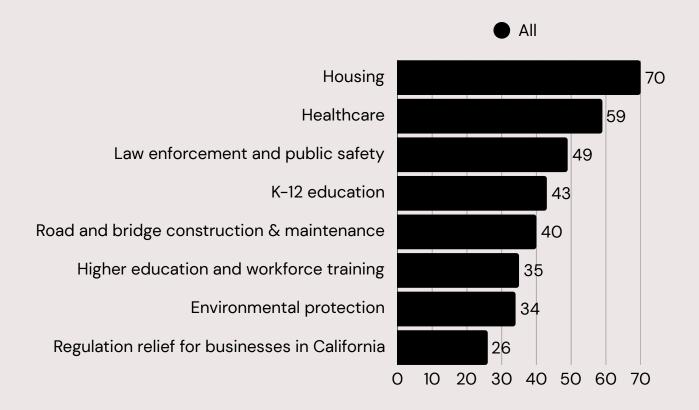
★ When it Comes to Funding Priorities, Housing is Preeminent, but Democrats and Republicans Seem to Live in Different Worlds

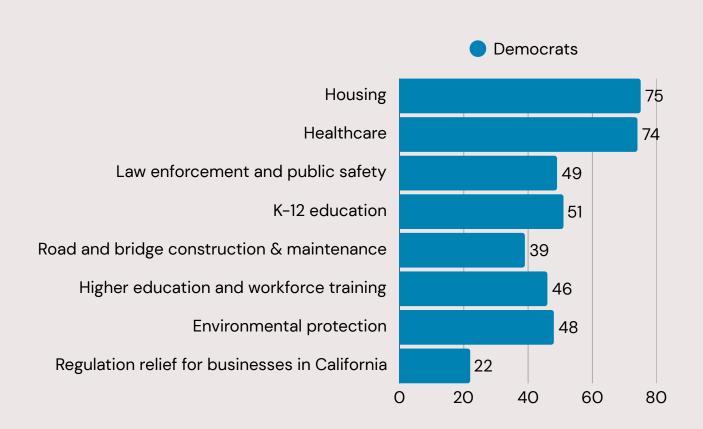
When asked about funding priorities for the state, 70% of Californians named housing. Indeed, 33% listed it as the top priority, mentioned almost twice as often as the next highest priority, health care.

However, there are significant partisan differences for priorities. Republicans seem out of step with other Californians in their lower prioritization of housing and higher ranking of regulation relief, just as Democrats are outliers in their higher prioritization of healthcare and education and lower rank for law enforcement and public safety.

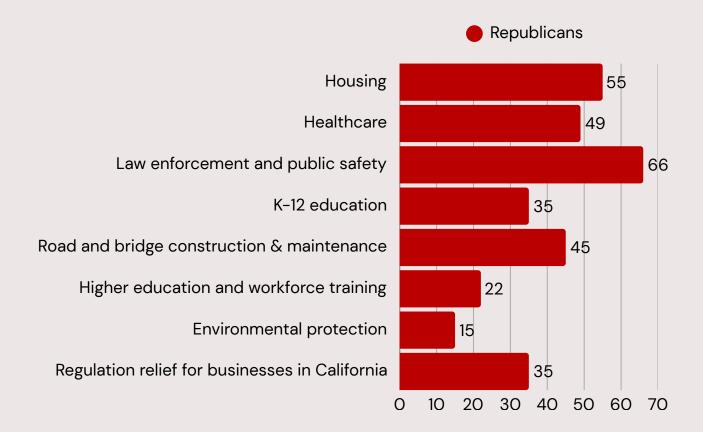
Perhaps the only issue on which there is broad agreement across partisan identification is the modest ranking for road and bridge maintenance and construction.

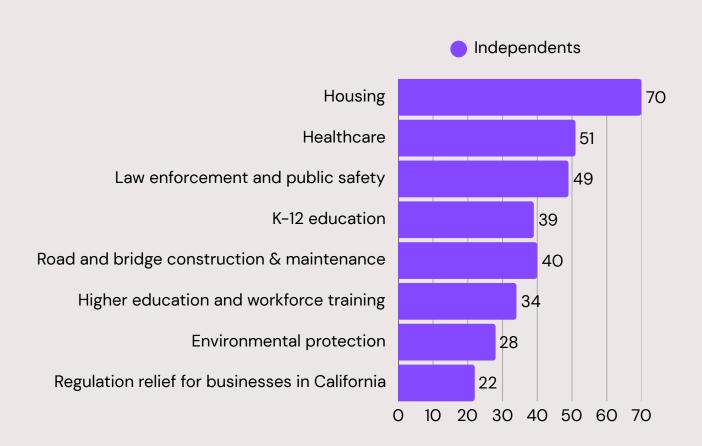
Funding Priorities



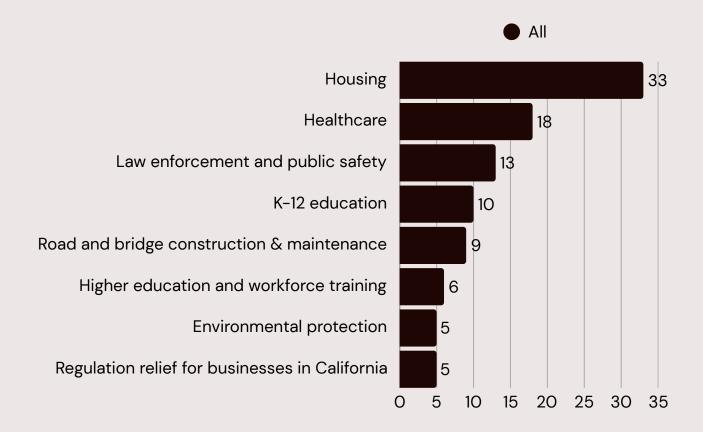


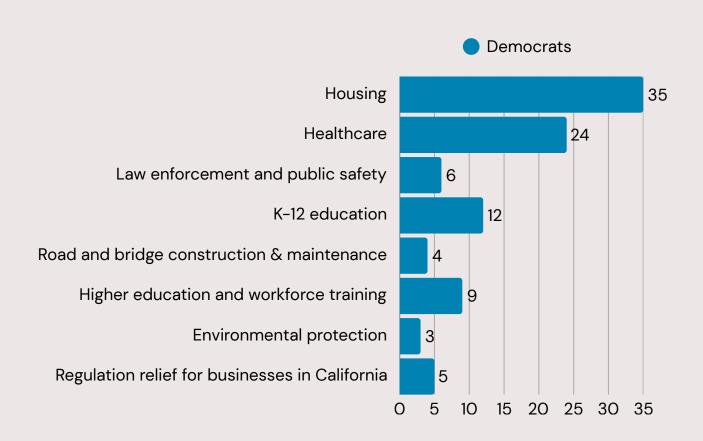
Funding Priorities



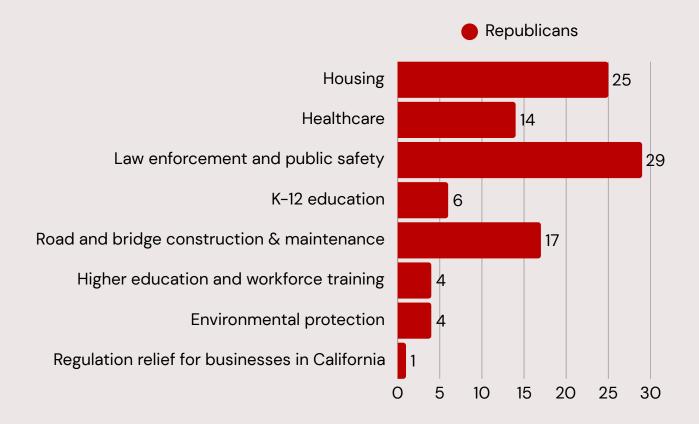


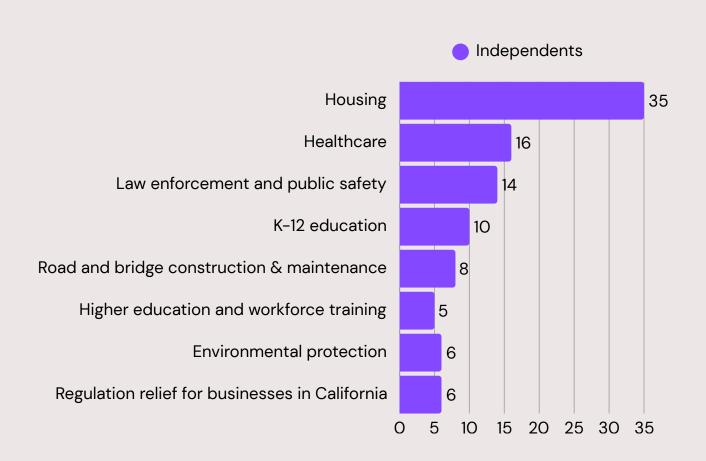
Highest Priority





Highest Priority





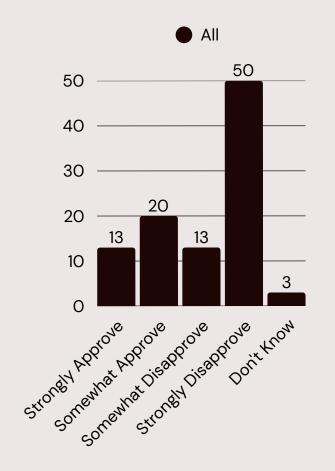
Donald Trump Approval Ratings

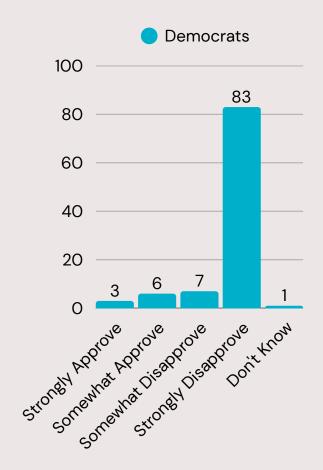
Californians Strongly Disapprove of Donald Trump

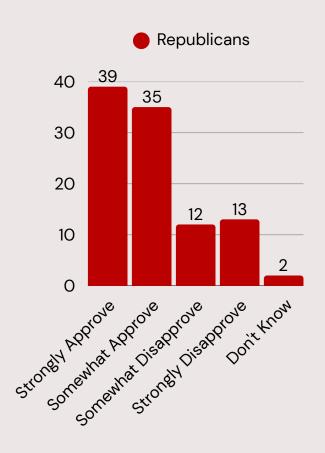
By more than a 2:1 ratio, Californians disapprove of Donald Trump – a level of disapproval that was recorded before the federal government's involvement in Los Angeles and continues virtually unchanged since then. Indeed, half of Calfornians surveyed then strongly disapproved of him. The only group that supported Mr. Trump was Republicans, where three-quarters of respondents gave the President their approval, although only 39% strongly approved of him. Besides his fellow partisans, the only "bright spots" for Mr. Trump were among White Californians and those with a high school education or less, where 41% and 42%, respectively, supported him. Still, even there, large majorities disapproved of him.

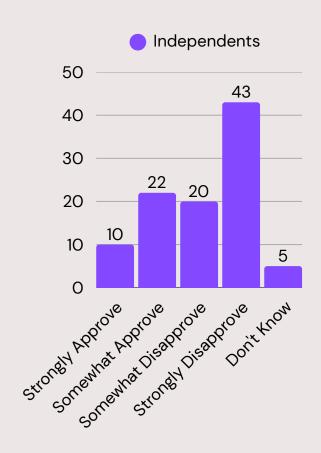
Following ICE's activity in Los Angeles and President Trump's call-up of the national guard, his approval numbers remain strongly negative. Overall, 33% of Californians approve of him, and 64% disapprove. However, there has been a slight shift of support among partisans, where Mr. Trump has seen his approval rise by 6 points among Republicans and drop 3 points among Democrats. Among independents, his disapproval numbers have risen by 8 points.

Trump Approval





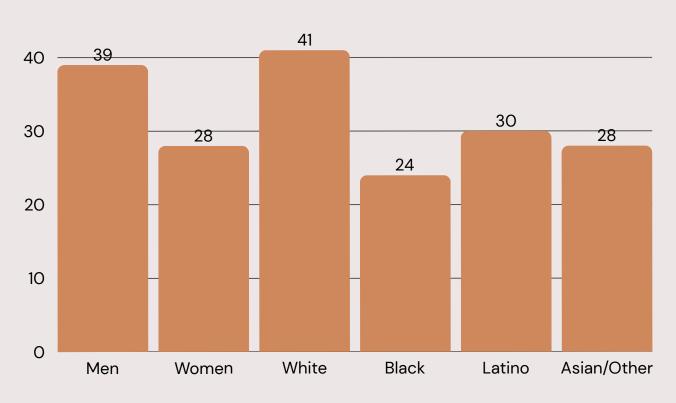




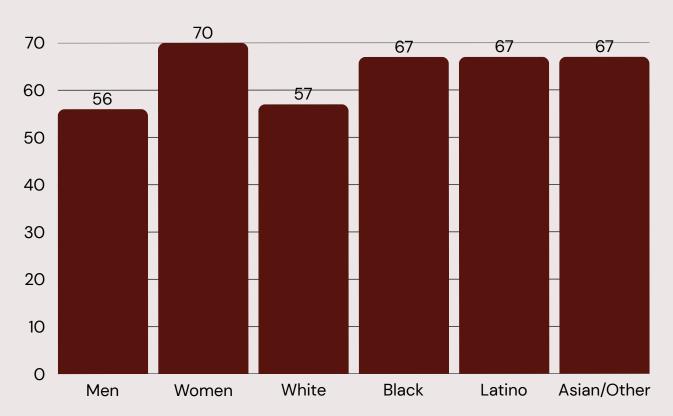
Early June data

Trump Approval

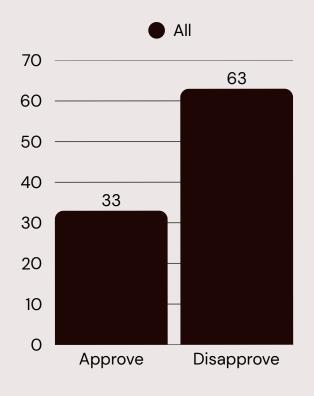


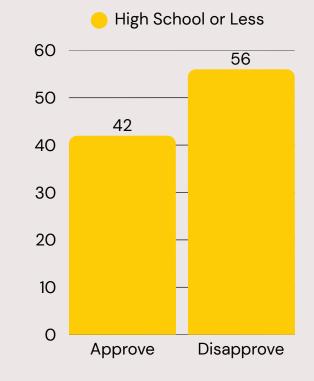


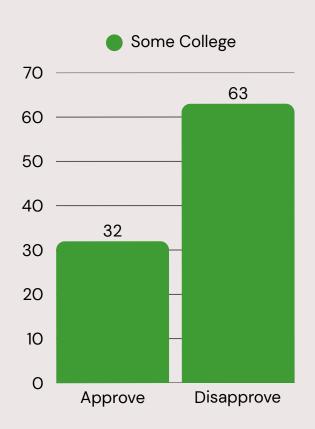
Trump Disapproval

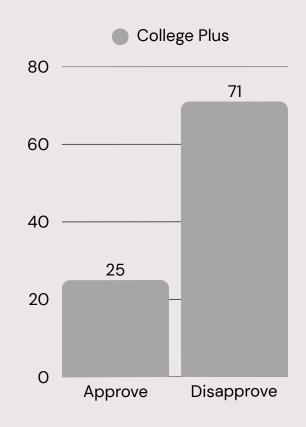


Trump Approval/Disapproval



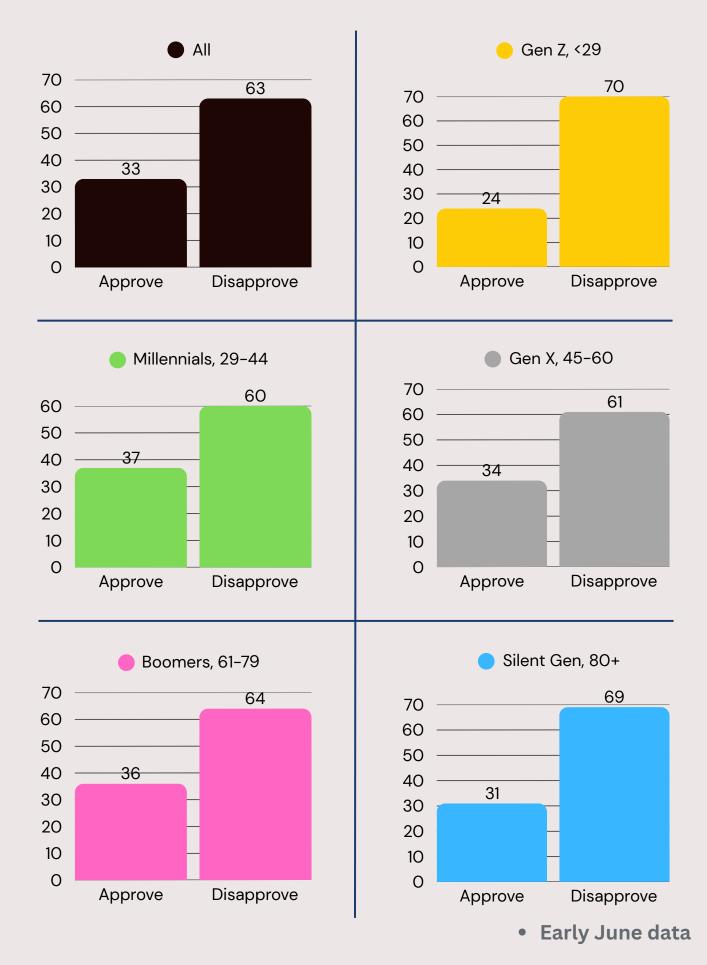




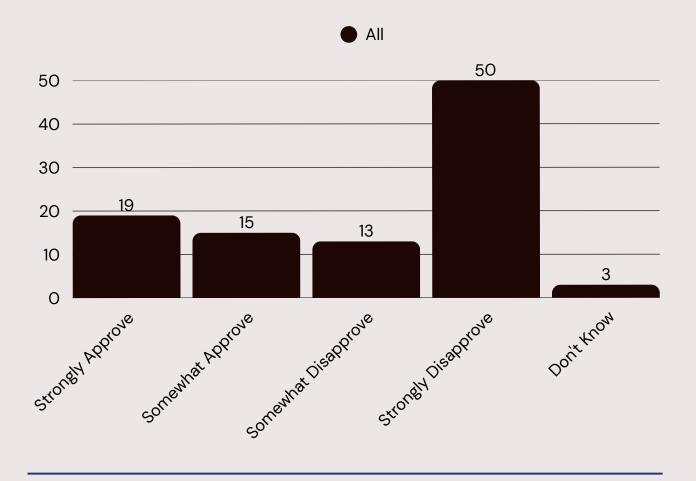


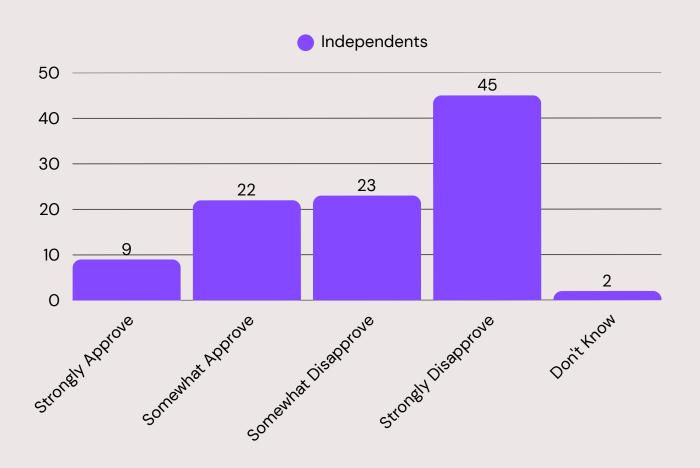
• Early June data

Trump Approval/Disapproval

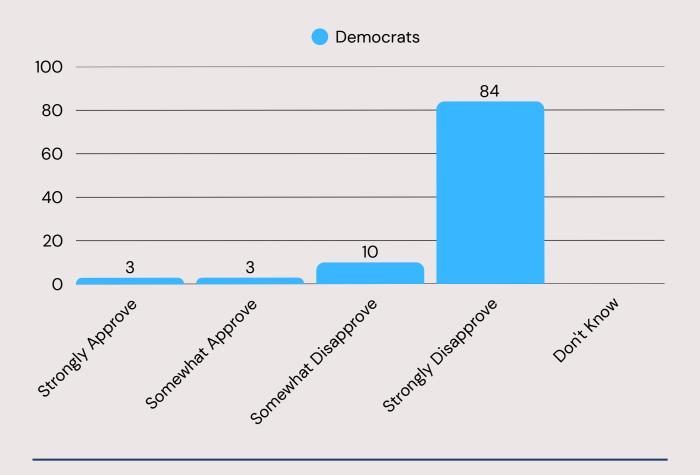


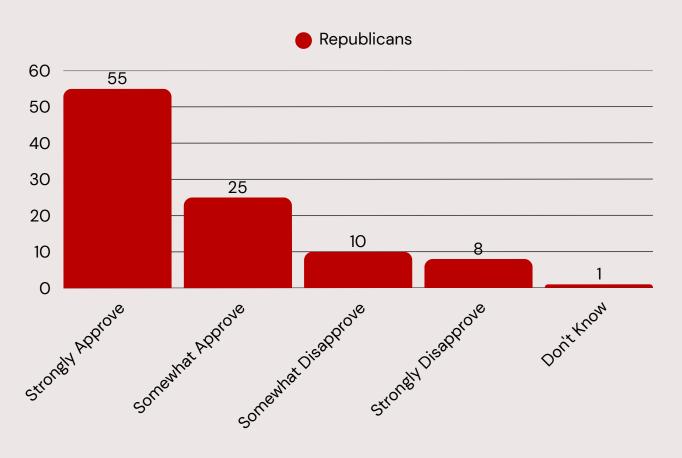
Post L.A. Trump Approval





Post L.A. Trump Approval





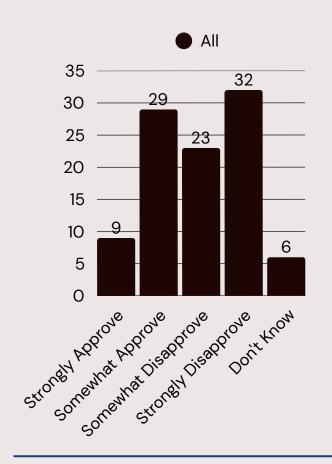
Gavin Newsom Approval Ratings

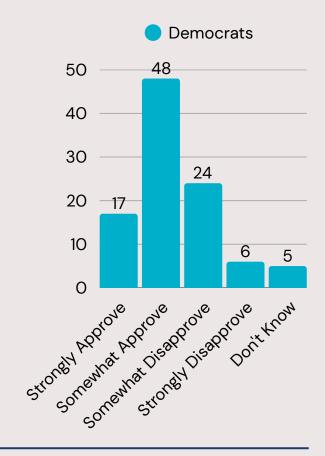
★ Whereas Californians were Souring on Gavin Newsom in Late Spring, his Standoff with Donald Trump over Los Angeles has Scored him Points

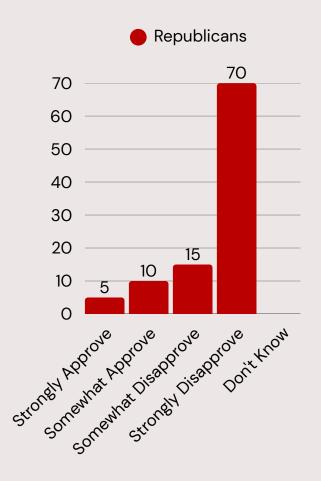
In late May and early June, Gavin Newsom's approval ratings as Governor looked nearly as bad as those for Donald Trump as President. Fifty-five percent of Californians disapproved of the Governor, nearly a third of them strongly. At that time, Democrats (65%) and African Americans (52%) approved of him and those Californians over 80 were evenly split in their view of the Governor. All other groupings disapproved.

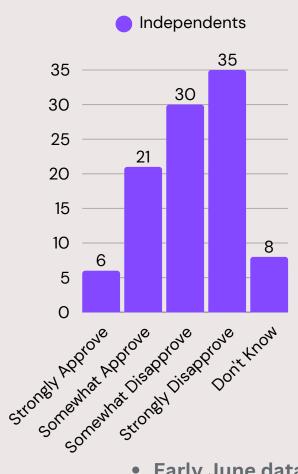
Following his standoff with President Trump, Governor Newsom has seen positive favorability scores. Of note, the questions asked are not identical – those in early June asked about Californians' approval of his work as Governor, whereas those post–standoff are general favorability scores. However, there is no mistaking that Newsom's battle with Trump has been good for his standing in the State, certainly among Democrats and also with Independents.

Newsom Approval



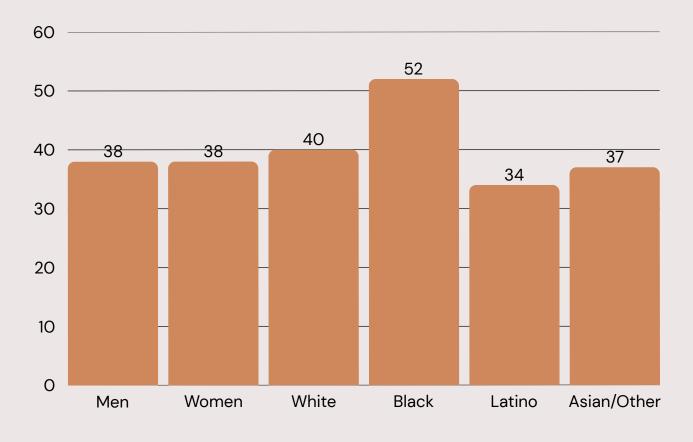




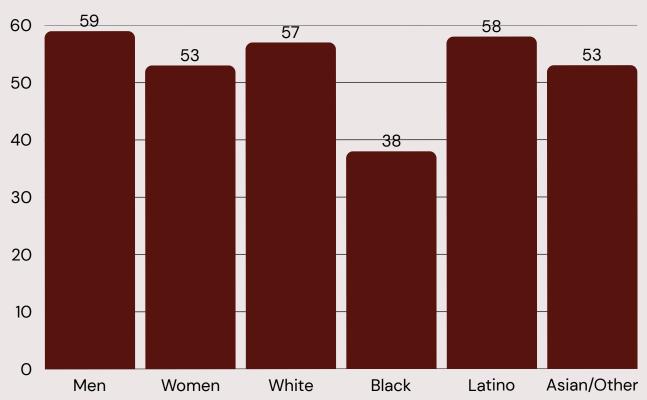


Early June data

Newsom Approval



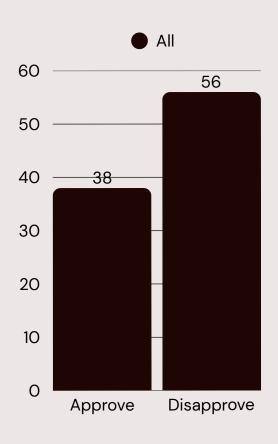
Newsom Disapproval

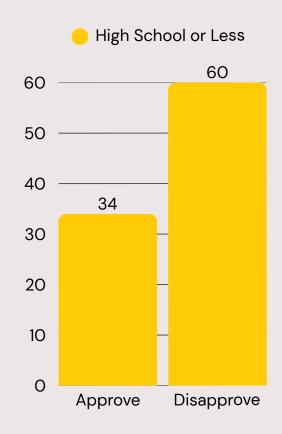


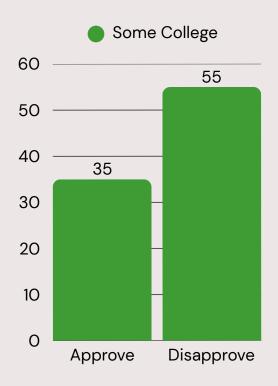
Newsom Approval/Disapproval

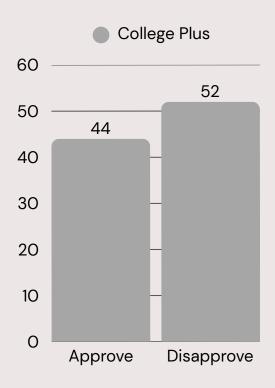


Newsom Approval/Disapproval



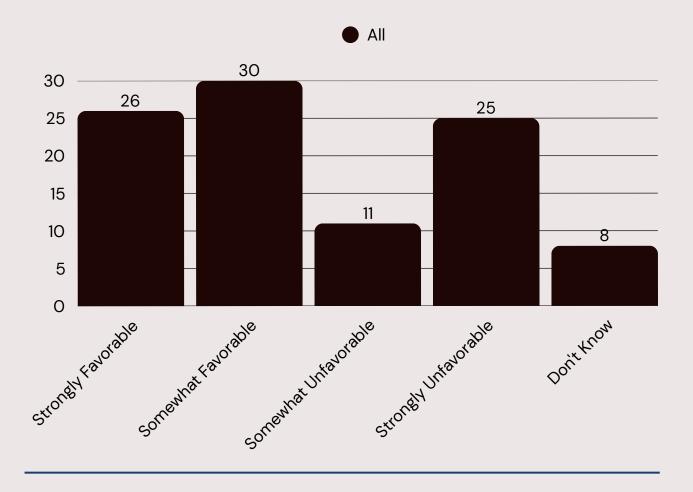


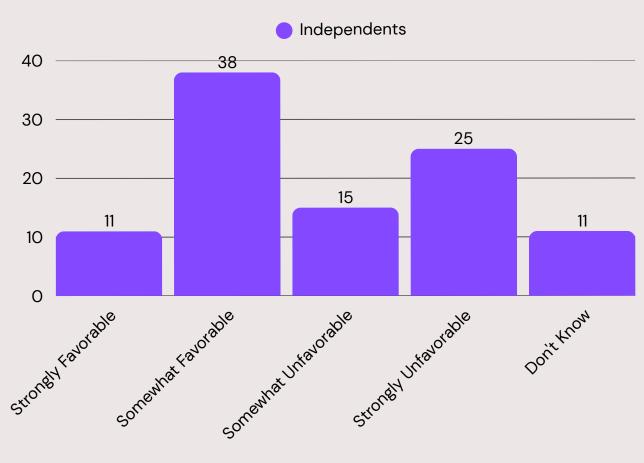




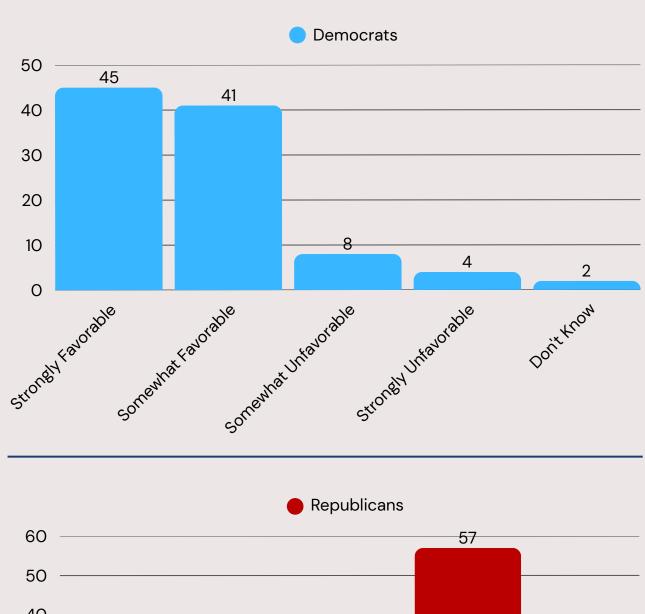
Early June data

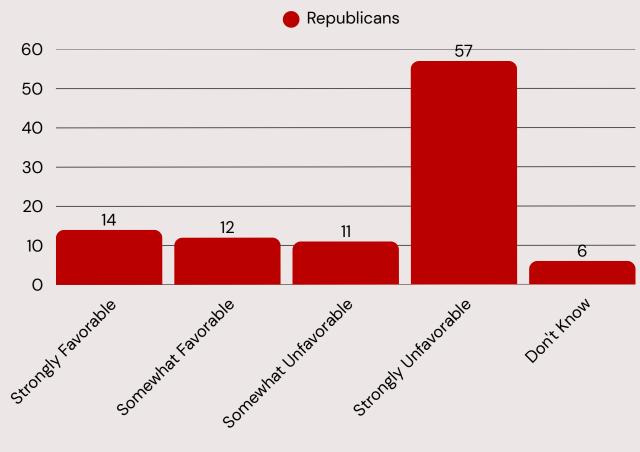
Post L.A. Newsom Favorability





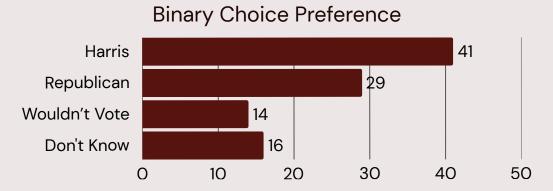
Post L.A. Newsom Favorability

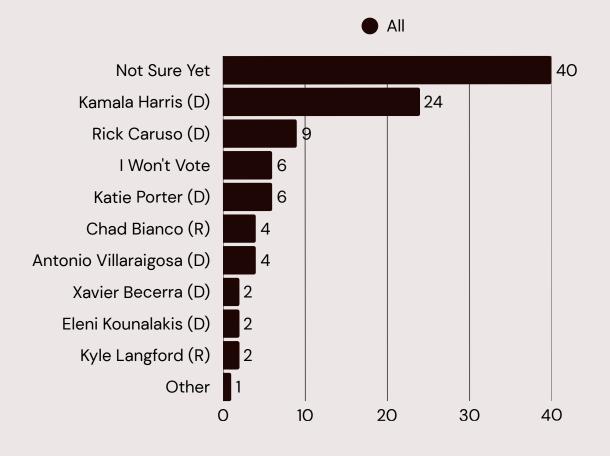


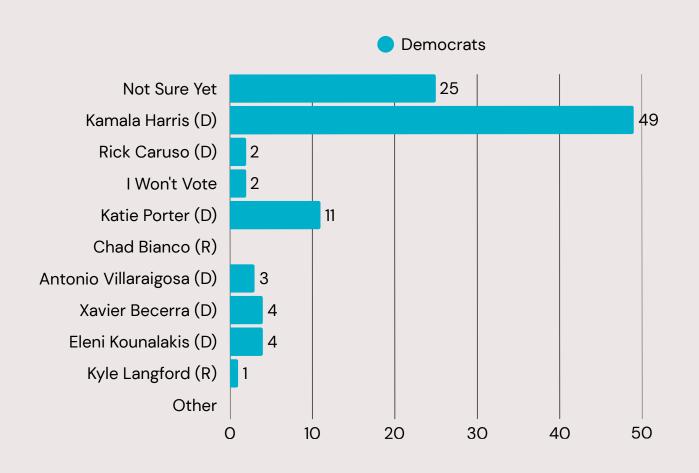


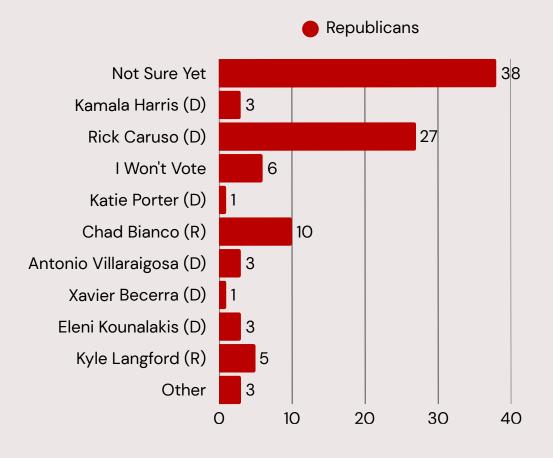
* Many Californians are Unsure of Their Choice for Governor. Kamala Harris is in the lead, but just Onequarter of Californians Name her as Their Candidate.

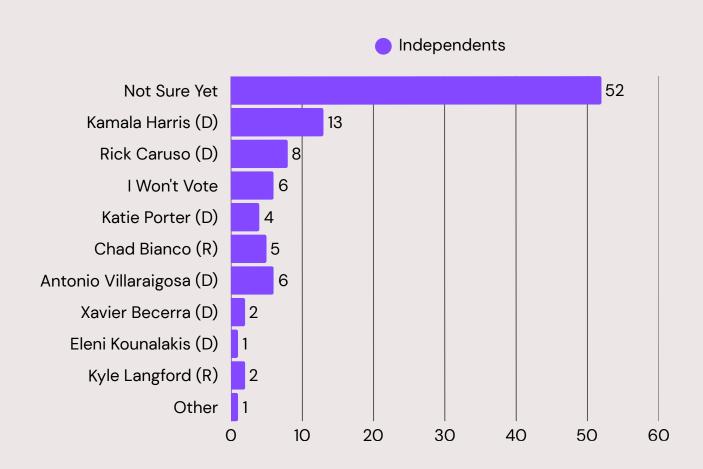
A year ahead of the primary election, 40% of Californians are unsure of their choice for Governor. Former Vice President Kamala Harris is in the lead, having not yet announced whether she will run, but even if she secures just 24% support from potential voters, and only half of Democrats. That said, there is no other candidate currently within striking distance. Indeed, the Vice President even tops Katie Porter in Orange County, where the latter most recently served as Congresswoman. When presented a binary choice between Harris and an unnamed Republican, 41% chose Harris, 29% the Republican, 16% were undecided, and 14% said they would not vote. Vice President Harris maintains an 11% net favorability rating among Californians, the highest of candidates tested. Many respondents had never heard of several candidates, including those who have run statewide before.

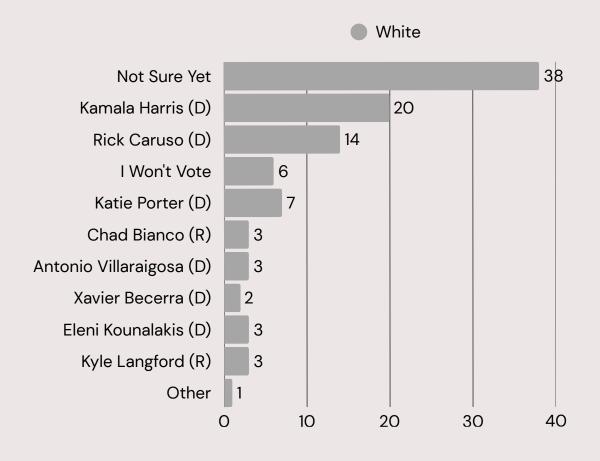


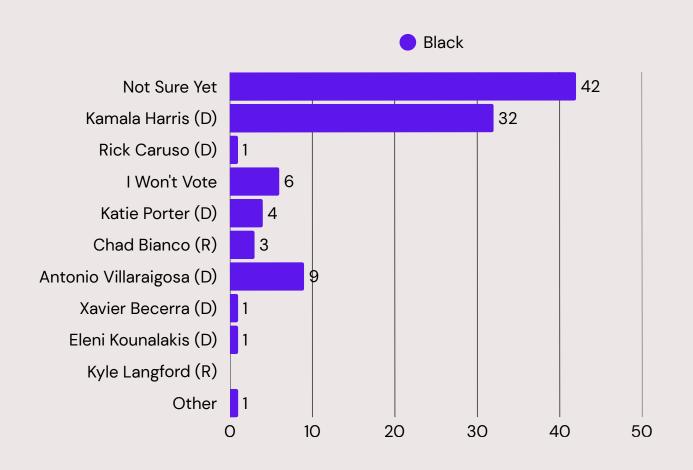


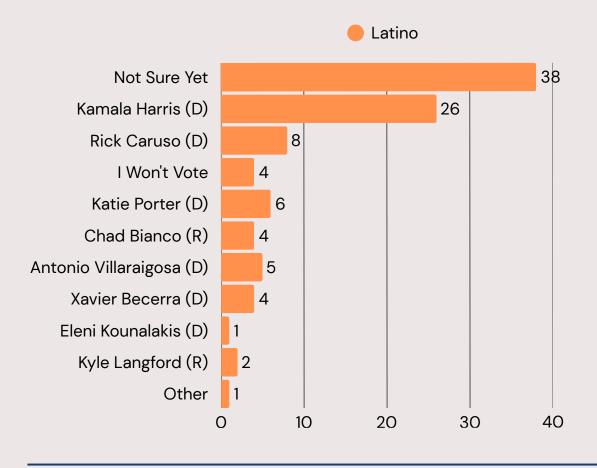


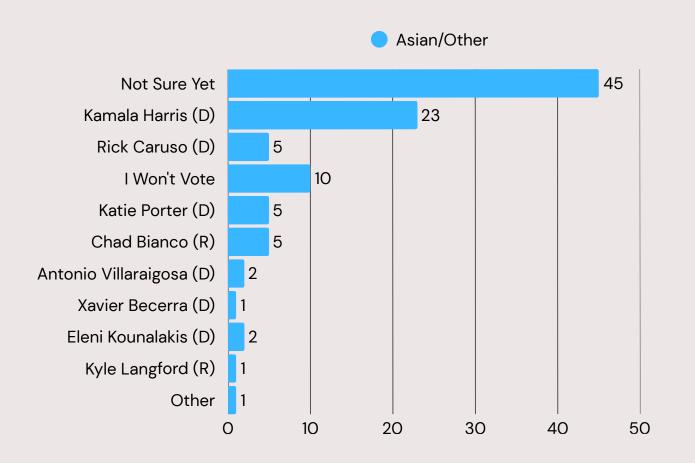


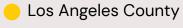


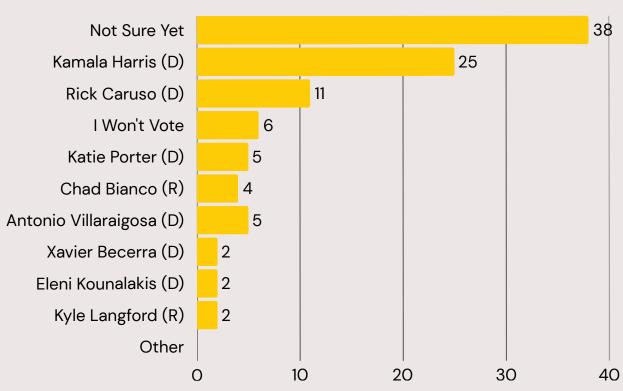




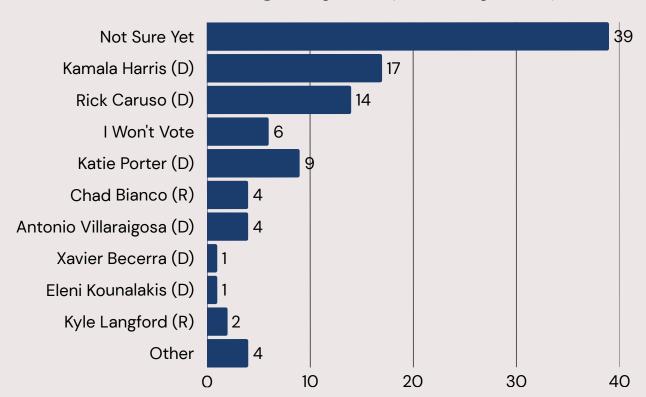


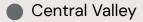


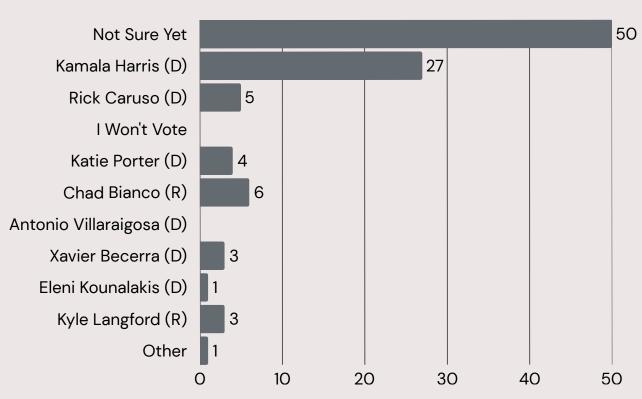






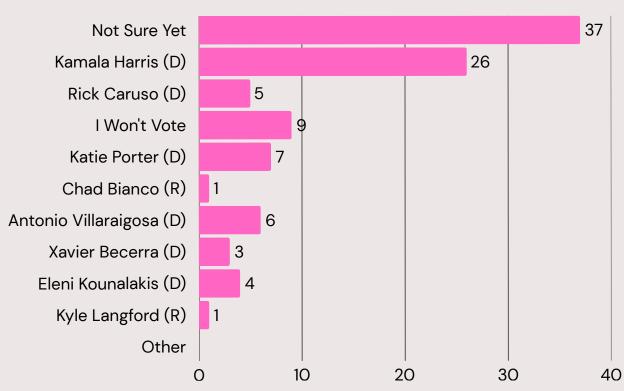


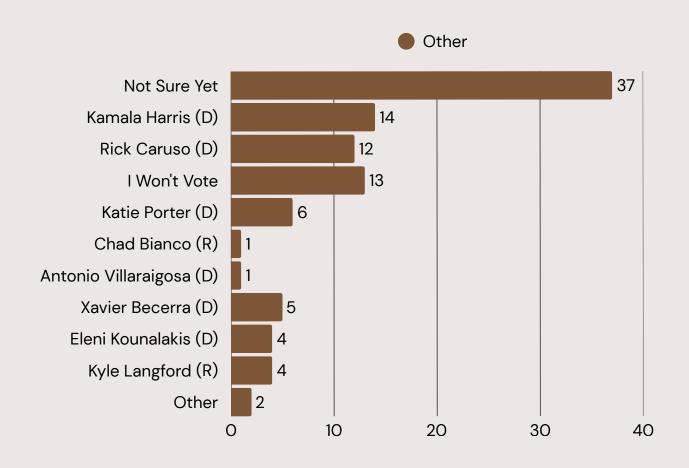


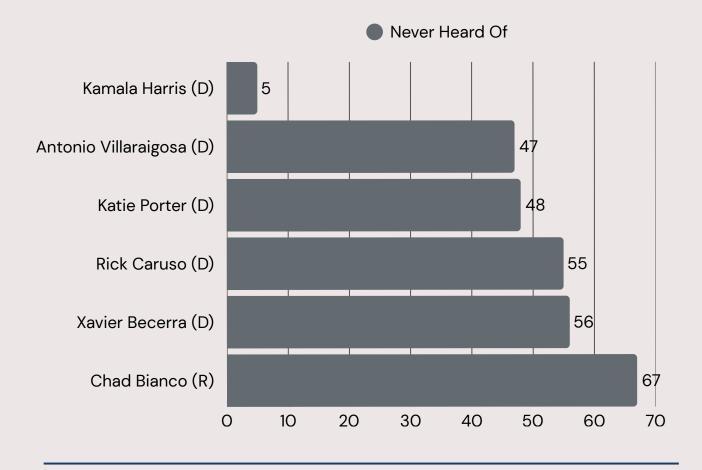


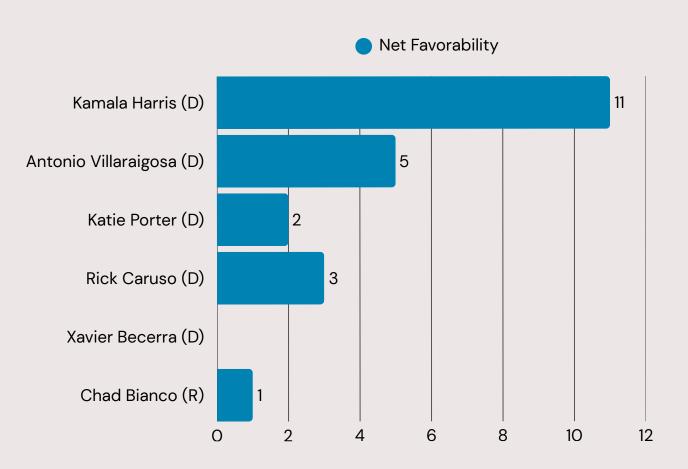










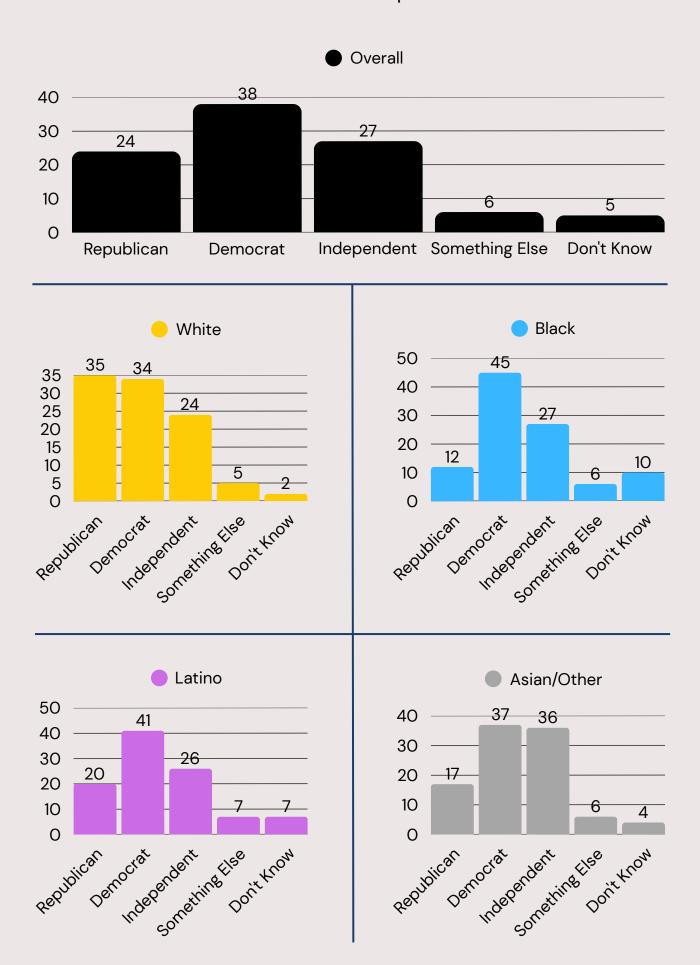


For all the Talk of Partisan Shifts, Republicans Haven't Sealed the Deal with Latinos and seem Far Behind with Gen Z. Millennials are a Key Group to Follow.

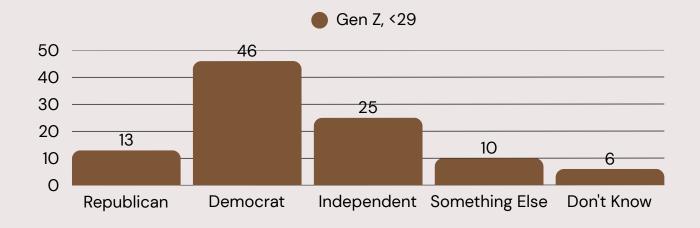
Nationally, Latino voters gravitated away from Democrats in the last presidential election, a trend that has been at play for several years. However, in California in 2025, only one in five Latinos self-identifies as Republican. White Californians are almost evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. All other racial or ethnic groups much more strongly identify as Democratic than Republican. One-third of Californians consider themselves independent or something else.

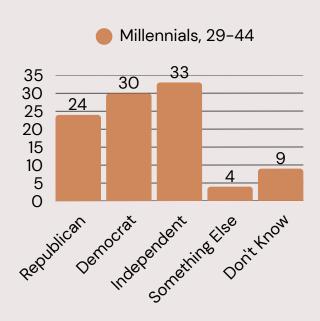
Post-2024 commentary also focused on the turnout and voting choices of younger voters. Whatever that behavior, Gen Z Californians are the most likely to identify as Democratic (46%) and least likely to call themselves Republican (13%). If there is a group to follow, it is Millennials, who are almost equally as likely to identify as Independent as Democratic.

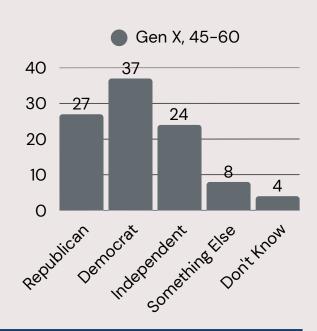
Partisanship

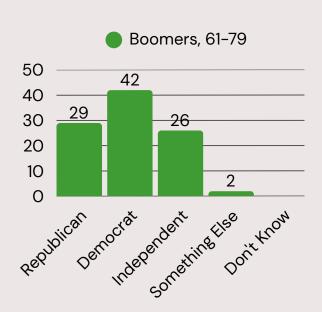


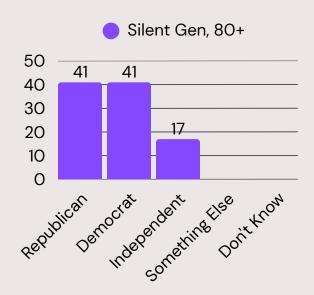
Partisanship











Methodology

Data come from two statewide polls conducted in partnership with Truedot, fielded, respectively May 27-June 2, 2025 and May 29-June 4, 2025. The first included a sample of 2,143 California adults, who completed the survey online. The second had a sample of 2,000 California adults, who also completed the survey online. Both were a representative online panel sample. Data collection was completed using a non-probability sample from a large online panel administered by Dynata. A variety of data quality checks and bot-detection mechanisms were in place. Data were weighted using a post-stratification weighting algorithm to calibrate the sample to the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) targets for the California adult population. The weighting variables included age, educational attainment, race and ethnicity (combined), gender, region of California, and parental status (for the second survey). Outside of the ACS targets, we also employed an additional calibration to reflect the 2024 election results among voters, ensuring political representativeness of the weighted sample. The modeled error estimate for the full sample was +/- 2.9% for the first survey and +/- 3.6% for the second.

A separate statewide survey of 509 California adults was conducted June 24–26, 2025 using a similar methodology to test the favorability of Donald Trump and Gavin Newsom following their standoff in Los Angeles. That survey had a modeled error estimate of +/- 4.5%.

To learn more about the UCI-OC Poll, visit the website:

sites.uci.edu/ocpoll

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