



# 2018 San Joaquin Valley Survey

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**A government can be no better than the public opinion which sustains it.**

**—Franklin D. Roosevelt**

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## INTRODUCTION

This survey represents the views and attitudes of registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley (Valley), which encompasses San Joaquin County in the north down to Kern County in the south. The purpose of the survey is to give voice to residents in the Valley and to inform policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as the media and the public, about social conditions, policy priorities, and viewpoints on issues facing the Valley. Although there are several statewide surveys done periodically throughout the year, these do not provide information and data about the San Joaquin Valley in particular.

Since 2018 is an election year, we sampled registered voters and focused many of our questions on important statewide races and ballot measures (In our 2017 survey, we sampled the adult population). Some of these include the governor's race, the US Senate race, a potential measure to repeal the gas taxes, and an affordable housing bond. As we did in our 2017 survey, we continued to ask questions about salient issues in current policy discussions. These topics include DACA, or the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, air quality, drug use and policy, and affordable housing.

The final sample for this year's survey included 634 registered voters who we contacted by landline or cell phones (70% cell/30% landline). The final sample is also weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and political party to ensure that the characteristics of our sample are representative of the entire registered voter population in the San Joaquin Valley.

We hope that the information found in this survey is useful to policymakers and the public so that the concerns and priorities of the Valley can be incorporated into public policy decisions in order to improve the living conditions and the quality of life in the San Joaquin Valley.

Dr. Jeff Cummins  
Co-Director, Institute for Leadership and Public Policy

## 2018 ELECTIONS

### *Newsom and Cox Lead in Close Gubernatorial Race in the San Joaquin Valley*

According to our survey of San Joaquin Valley registered voters, Democrat Gavin Newsom and Republican John Cox lead a close field of candidates running for the 2018 gubernatorial election. Fifteen percent of respondents said they would vote for Newsom if the election were held today, while 12 percent would support Cox (see Table 1 below). Under California's top-2 primary, the two candidates with the most votes, regardless of their party, move on to compete in the November general election.

Republican Travis Allen came in third with 11 percent of registered voters indicating that they would vote for him, while Democrat Antonio Villaraigosa is fourth with 9 percent support. Democrat John Chiang and Democrat Delaine Eastin received the least support with 4 percent and 2 percent, respectively. A significant percentage of voters in the San Joaquin Valley remain undecided, with nearly 4 out of 10 indicating no candidate preference.

Among party registrants, Democrats favor Newsom (27 percent) and Villaraigosa (17 percent), while Republicans lean towards Cox (30 percent) and Allen (21 percent). A small plurality of Independents, or those who designate No Party Preference, back Newsom with 14 percent indicating support for him, followed by Allen (11 percent), and Villaraigosa (10 percent).

With regard to race and ethnicity, Newsom and Cox are tied for the lead among whites at 17 percent, followed by Allen at 12 percent. Villaraigosa leads among Latino registered voters, as 22 percent said that they would vote for him. Newsom is second with 13 percent of Latino support, while Allen is third with 8 percent. The two Republican candidates lead among non-white, non-Latinos. Twelve percent of these voters indicated they would support Cox if the election were held today, while 11 percent said they would support Allen. Among Democratic candidates, Newsom had the most support from non-white, non-Latinos with 8 percent.

There does not appear to be a large gender gap in support for the gubernatorial candidates. With 16 percent support, Newsom leads among female voters, while the two Republican candidates, Cox and Allen, are tied among male voters at 15 percent apiece. Villaraigosa and Cox are tied for second at 10 percent among female voters, while Newsom (14 percent) and Villaraigosa (8 percent) are third and fourth among male voters.

**Table 1: Percentage That Would Vote for Each Gubernatorial Candidate**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Female	Male
Gavin Newsom	15	27	2	14	17	13	8	16	14
John Cox	12	1	30	5	17	5	12	10	15
Travis Allen	11	1	21	11	12	8	11	7	15
Antonio Villaraigosa	9	17	2	10	2	22	2	10	8
John Chiang	4	4	2	6	3	4	5	3	4
Delaine Eastin	2	3	1	5	2	2	6	4	1
Someone Else	8	8	6	13	8	8	14	10	7
Don't Know	38	39	36	37	38	38	43	40	36

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## Majority of Valley Voters Support Repeal of New Gas Taxes

The survey also shows that a majority of registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley support repeal of the gas taxes that the governor and legislature adopted last year. Overall, 58 percent of respondents said they would support repeal of the taxes if the election were held today, while 36 percent would vote to keep them. The new gas taxes and vehicle registration fees are expected to raise \$5 billion a year to help repair the state's roads and highways. Support for repeal of the taxes is stronger in the Valley than it is statewide. In a January 2018 Public Policy Institute of California poll, less than a majority, or 47 percent, of likely voters favored repeal of the taxes.

As expected, most Republicans (77 percent) support repeal of the gas taxes, while a majority of Democrats (53 percent) support keeping the taxes. A majority of Independents, or 58 percent, would join Republicans in voting to repeal them as well.

Support for repeal of the gas taxes rises with age. Exactly half of registered voters in the youngest age category, 18-34, would support repeal of the taxes. This percentage rises 10 percentage points to 60 percent for those respondents aged 35-54 and another 3 percentage points to 63 percent for those voters 55 and older.

Majorities of both female (53 percent) and male (63 percent) registered voters support repeal of the gas taxes, although males are more strongly in favor of repeal.

**Table 2: Percentage That Support Repeal of the Gas Taxes**

	Party Registration				Age			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	18-34	35-54	55+	Female	Male
Repeal Them	58	40	77	58	50	60	63	53	63
Keep Them	36	53	18	35	43	34	32	38	34
Don't know	6	6	5	7	7	5	5	8	3

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *Feinstein Leads in Race for US Senate, but Many Valley Voters Would Support Other Candidates*

Survey respondents were also asked about their vote preference in California's 2018 US Senate race. Only two candidates were running at the time of our survey and both are Democrats. Incumbent US Senator Dianne Feinstein received the most support with 29 percent of registered voters indicating that they would vote for her if the election were held today. Sixteen percent of respondents said that they would vote for former State Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León. Nearly 4 out of 10 voters said that they would support someone else besides Feinstein and de León, indicating dissatisfaction with the current field of candidates, most likely because no prominent Republican has entered the race.

Feinstein is the clear favorite among Democratic voters in the Valley. More than half (54 percent) would vote for her, while nearly 1 out of 5 would support her opponent de León. Dissatisfaction with the field of candidates is most obvious among registered Republicans. Sixty-eight percent said that they would vote for someone else besides Feinstein and de León. De León has a slight lead (13 percent to 8 percent) among Republicans that would vote for one of the two Democratic candidates. About 4 out of 10 Independents said they would vote for someone else besides the two candidates in the race. Twenty-four percent indicated that they would support Feinstein, while 16 percent would vote for de León.

There do not appear to be advantages for either candidate based on race or gender of the voter. Feinstein leads among all racial and ethnic groups who support one of the two candidates, despite the fact that de León is a Latino candidate. White and non-white, non-Latino voters are the most likely to say that they would vote for someone else. Feinstein also leads among both male and female voters. Thirty-five percent of female voters said they would vote for her, while 22 percent of males would do the same. Male voters were most likely to say that they would vote for someone else.

**Table 3: Percentage That Would Vote for Each US Senate Candidate if the Election Were Held Today**

		Party Registration			Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Female	Male
Dianne Feinstein	29	54	8	25	25	36	24	35	22
Kevin de León	16	18	13	19	12	22	16	17	15
Someone Else	39	8	68	41	49	22	35	32	47
Don't know	16	20	11	16	13	20	25	17	16

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.



## Valley Voters Show Large Gender Gap in Support of Congressional Candidates

In a hypothetical match-up between the two parties, registered voters slightly favor Democratic candidates over Republicans for Congressional races. This generic ballot question, which does not list candidate names, is often used to potentially signal support for one party or the other leading up to an election. Overall, 42 percent of registered voters in the Valley said they would support the Democratic candidate, while 39 percent would vote for the Republican candidate. This difference is the same as the 3-point advantage Democrats have over Republicans in party registration across the entire San Joaquin Valley.

While overall support for the two major parties is relatively close, there is a significant gender gap. Half of female respondents would support the Democratic candidate, while only one third of male respondents would, a gap of 17 percentage points. The gender gap is much smaller (8 percent) for Republican candidates: 35 percent of female voters would support a Republican candidate, while 43 percent of male voters would.

With regard to party registration, support for Congressional candidates falls largely along party lines. Eighty-five percent of Democrats would favor the Democratic candidate, while 87 percent of Republican voters would vote for the Republican candidate. Close elections this year may be won or lost based on which party Independent voters support. Among Independent registered voters, Democratic candidates have a 5-point advantage over Republicans (30-25 percent). We would note that a fairly large share of Independent voters, 30 percent, remain undecided.

There is considerable variation in support for Congressional parties across racial and ethnic categories. Slightly less than half of whites (48 percent) would support the Republican candidate, while a strong majority of Latinos, 59 percent, would vote for the Democratic candidate. Non-white, non-Latino respondents are more evenly split in their support: 42 percent favor Democrats, while 36 percent would vote for a Republican.

**Table 4: Percentage That Would Vote for Congressional Candidate of Each Party**

	All	Party Registration			Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Female	Male
Democrat	42	85	3	30	31	59	42	50	33
Republican	39	4	87	25	48	23	36	35	43
Third Party	6	1	1	15	7	3	6	5	6
Don't know/None	17	10	9	30	13	15	16	11	16

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *More than Half of Voters are Paying More Attention to Politics Since the Election of Donald Trump*

The survey also reveals that more than half of registered voters (54 percent) in the Valley are paying more attention to politics since the election of Donald Trump. Thirty-four percent said they are paying about the same amount of attention to politics, while 11 percent indicated that they are paying less attention. A higher percentage of voters paying attention to politics may suggest higher voter turnout in the 2018 elections.

A gender gap also exists among those who say they are paying more attention to politics since the election of Donald Trump. Sixty percent of females reported that they are paying more attention to politics, while a little less than half of males, 48 percent, are paying more attention, a gap of 12 percentage points. Forty-three percent of males responded that they are paying about the same amount of attention, while 26 percent of females answered the same way.

Across party registrants, Democrats are the most likely to say that they are paying more attention to politics since the election of Donald Trump. Sixty-two percent said they are paying more attention to politics, 34 percent about the same amount, and 11 percent indicated they are paying less attention. Nearly the same percentage of Republicans (50 percent) and Independents (52 percent) said they are paying more attention to politics.

Regarding race and ethnicity, 60 percent of non-white, non-Latinos are paying more attention to politics, while 57 percent of Latinos and 52 percent of whites are paying more attention. Forty percent of whites, 27 percent of Latinos, and 23 percent of non-white, non-Latinos said they are paying about the same amount of attention to politics since Trump's election.

**Table 5: Percentage that are Paying Attention to Politics Since the Election of Trump**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Female	Male
More Attention	54	62	50	52	52	57	60	60	48
About the Same	34	22	43	41	40	27	23	26	43
Less Attention	11	16	4	7	8	16	16	13	9
Don't Know	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## AIR QUALITY

### *Many Valley Voters Concerned about Air Quality*

With regard to air quality, about 3 out of 4 registered voters indicated they pay very close or fairly close attention to the air quality in their area. The survey was conducted in February shortly after the San Joaquin Valley experienced several weeks of poor air quality.

The results show that female registered voters are more concerned with air quality than male voters. Nearly 80 percent of female voters pay very close or fairly close attention to air quality, while 70 percent of male voters do.

Attention to air quality rises with the education level of respondents. Sixty-four percent of registered voters that are high school graduates or less said they pay very close or fairly close attention to air pollution. For respondents with some college, 72 percent indicated that they at least pay fairly close attention to air quality, while 81 percent of those with a BA or higher pay similar levels of attention.

In terms of party registrants, 80 percent of Independents said they pay very close or fairly close attention to air quality, followed by 78 percent of Democrats, and 68 percent of Republicans.

**Table 6: Percentage That Pay Attention to Air Quality in their Area**

	All	Party Registration			Education			Gender	
		Dem	Rep	Ind.	HS Grad	Some College	BA or Higher	Female	Male
Very Closely	53	58	46	58	44	54	56	59	47
Fairly Closely	21	20	22	23	20	18	25	20	23
Not Too Closely	16	15	20	11	22	17	12	14	19
Not at All	8	6	11	7	11	10	6	7	10
Don't know	1	1	1	0	3	0	0	0	1

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *Majority of Valley Voters Restrict their Activities, or Those of Their Children, When Air Quality is Poor*

The survey also reveals that more than half of registered voters (62 percent) in the Valley restrict their activities, or those of their children, when the air quality in their area is poor. The San Joaquin Valley Air District recommends that Valley residents should begin to reduce their outdoor activities when the Real-Time Outdoor Activity Risk (ROAR) Level reaches 3 or higher. Thirty-five percent of respondents said that they do not restrict their activities or their children's because of poor air quality.

There are considerable differences between female and male respondents. Nearly 7 out of 10 female registered voters indicated that they restrict their activities or their children's when air quality is poor. Just over half of male voters, or 53 percent, responded the same, a difference of 16 percentage points. Forty-three percent of male respondents said they do not restrict their activities when the air quality in their area is poor, while only 28 percent of female voters do not restrict their activities.

With regard to race and ethnicity, Latino respondents are the most likely to say that they restrict their activities, or their children's, if air quality is poor. Seventy-two percent of Latinos indicated that they restrict their activities, while 66 percent of non-white, non-Latinos responded the same. Slightly more than half of white voters, or 55 percent, said they limit their activities or their children's.

**Table 7: Percentage That Restrict Their Activities or Their Children's When Air Quality is Poor**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Female	Male
Yes	62	71	51	64	55	72	66	69	53
No	35	27	44	34	40	28	28	28	43
Don't Pay Attention/ Don't know	3	2	4	3	5	0	6	3	4

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *Majority of Valley Voters Support More Restrictions on Residents and Businesses to Improve Air Quality*

Survey respondents were also asked if they would support more restrictions on residents and businesses to improve air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. Slightly more than half of registered voters, or 53 percent, said that they would support more restrictions. Forty percent of respondents indicated that they would not support more restrictions.

There are substantial differences among respondents depending upon their party registration, race and ethnicity, and age. Registered Democrats are the most supportive of more restrictions, with 71 percent in support. Fifty-three percent of those registered as Independents, or No Party Preference, said they would support more restrictions on residents and businesses to improve air quality, while only one-third of Republicans would support more restrictions. Nearly 6 out of 10, or 58 percent, of Republicans would not support more restrictions.

In terms of race and ethnicity, 63 percent of Latinos and 60 percent of non-white, non-Latinos support more restrictions on residents and businesses, while slightly less than half, or 46 percent, of whites support more restrictions. There is also significant variation among different age groups. Support for restrictions declines with age. Among the youngest age category, 18-34, 64 percent support more restrictions. This percentage declines by 10 percentage points to 54 percent for those aged 35-54. The least supportive age group is registered voters 55 and older, with less than half, or 43 percent, that would support more restrictions on residents and businesses.

**Table 8: Percentage That Support More Restrictions on Residents and Businesses to Improve Air Quality**

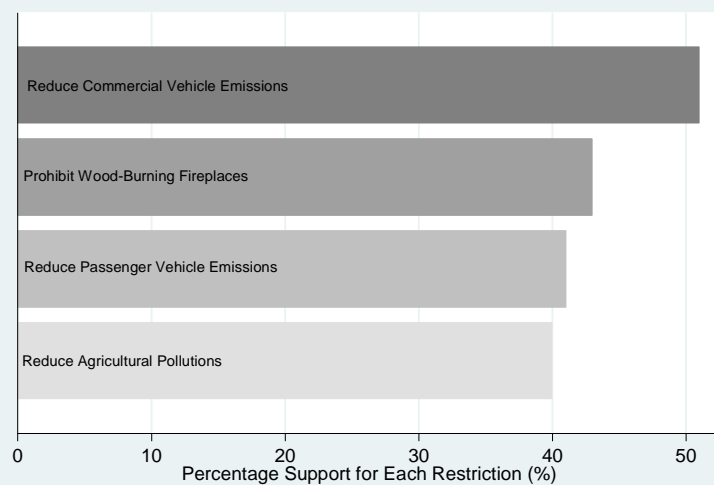
	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Age		
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	18-34	35-54	55+
Yes	53	71	33	53	46	63	60	64	54	43
No	40	25	58	37	47	31	31	31	38	50
Don't know	7	4	8	10	7	6	9	5	8	7

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *Support is Highest for Reducing Commercial Vehicle Emissions*

Respondents that indicated support for more restrictions on residents and businesses to improve air quality in the region were also asked which specific restrictions they would support. Respondents could identify more than one choice. Among these respondents, 51 percent support restrictions that would reduce commercial vehicle emissions such as semi-trucks. Forty-three percent of respondents indicated that they would support the prohibition of wood-burning fireplaces, while 41 percent would support reducing passenger vehicle emissions. Forty percent of registered voters who support more restrictions said that they would support reducing agricultural pollution.

Figure 1. Support for Restrictions to Improve Air Quality



## IMMIGRATION

### *Strong Majority in San Joaquin Valley Support DACA Program*

Our survey of the San Joaquin Valley also showed that 7 out of 10 registered voters support the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, otherwise known as DACA. The program began under the Obama Administration and protects undocumented immigrants from deportation who were brought into the United States illegally as children. President Trump took executive action to end the program by March 5, 2018, but court challenges have delayed the program's termination.

Support for the program varies significantly by party. Ninety-three percent of Democrats support the program, while 42 percent of Republicans support it as well. For Independent voters, 76 percent favor the program. Across all racial and ethnic categories, strong majorities of voters indicate support for the program. Eighty-six percent of Latinos, 68 percent of non-white, non-Latinos, and 61 percent of whites support the program.

Support for DACA declines with the respondents' age. Of those in the youngest age category, 18-34, 81 percent said they support the program. Sixty-seven percent of those in the 35-54 category are in favor of DACA, while 64 percent of those 55 and older support the program.

**Table 9: Percentage that Support/Oppose DACA Program**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Age		
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	18-34	35-54	55+
Support	70	93	42	76	61	86	68	81	67	64
Oppose	23	4	46	17	30	10	24	14	25	28
Don't know	7	3	13	7	9	4	8	5	8	8

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## *A Majority of Valley Voters Know Someone Who Would be Affected if the DACA Program is Terminated*

Nationwide, there are nearly 700,000 immigrants who have received DACA status, with 29 percent of them residing in California. The survey also reveals that more than half of registered voters in the Valley know someone who would be affected if the DACA program is terminated. In contrast, 43 percent of respondents said that they did not know someone affected by DACA.

The results vary significantly by party registration, race and ethnicity, and age. Strong majorities of both Democrats (58 percent) and Independents (64 percent) indicate that they know someone that would be affected if the DACA program is terminated. Less than half of Republicans, 42 percent, know someone who would be affected.

With regard to race and ethnicity, 3 out of 4 (74 percent) Latinos know someone who would be affected, while less than half of whites (43 percent) and non-white, non-Latinos (41 percent) said that they know someone affected by DACA.

The results for age suggest that younger voters are more likely to come in contact with someone in the DACA program. This is likely because initial implementation of the program had a maximum age of 31. For those in the 18-34 age category, the survey shows that 67 percent know someone who would be affected if the program is terminated. This percentage declines to 55 percent for those aged 35-54 and to 41 percent for the oldest age category, 55 and over.

**Table 10: Percentage that Personally Know Someone Affected by DACA Program**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Age		
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	18-34	35-54	55+
Yes	54	58	42	64	43	74	41	67	55	41
No	43	39	54	34	53	25	50	31	41	54
Don't know	3	3	4	2	4	1	9	2	4	4

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.



## DRUGS

### *Half of Valley Voters Know Someone that has Overdosed on Prescription or Illegal Drugs*

Illegal drug use in the Valley and across the nation has increasingly been recognized as an epidemic. Respondents in the survey were also asked if they knew someone that had overdosed on prescription or illegal drugs. Exactly half of registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley said that they knew someone that had overdosed on drugs. Independent voters were the most likely to indicate that they knew someone that had overdosed (57 percent), followed by Republicans at 54 percent, and Democrats at 41 percent.

Among racial and ethnic groups, more than half (54 percent) of white voters said that they knew someone that had overdosed, while half of non-white, non-Latinos indicated the same. A little more than 4 out of 10 Latinos said that they knew someone that had overdosed.

The prevalence of knowing someone that had overdosed varies considerably by income levels. Respondents with low- and high-income levels (54 percent and 55 percent, respectively) were the most likely to know someone that had overdosed, while middle-income respondents were the least likely (41 percent) to know someone.

**Table 11: Percentage that Know Someone That Has Overdosed on Prescription or Illegal Drugs**

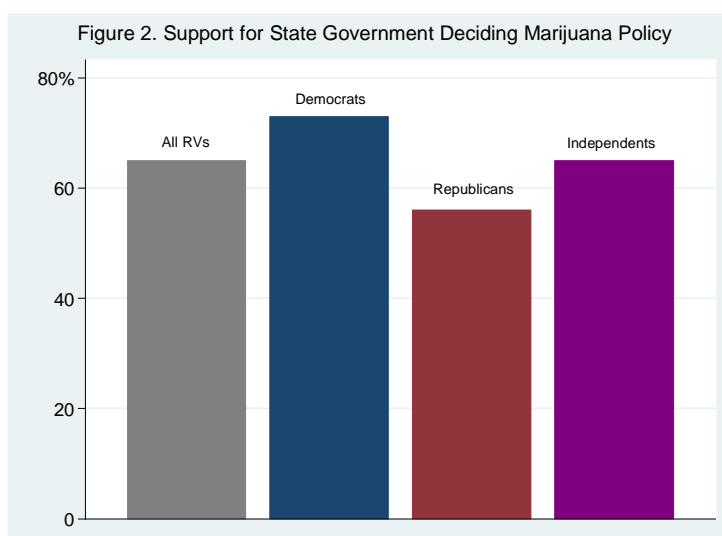
	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Income		
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000
Yes	50	41	54	57	54	43	50	54	41	55
No	50	59	46	43	46	57	48	46	59	45
Don't know	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## More than 6 Out of 10 Voters Think that the Legality of Marijuana Should be left up to the State to Decide

In 2018, recreational use of marijuana became legal in California, joining several other states that had already legalized it. Under federal law, marijuana remains an illegal substance for any purpose. Our survey revealed strong support for allowing state government to decide whether marijuana use is legal or not. Sixty-five percent of registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley think that marijuana policy should be left up to the state. Twenty-two percent think the federal government should determine policy, while 6 percent answered that both federal and state government should be involved in deciding the legality of marijuana.

There is some variation by party registration, but more than half of those registered with the two major parties or as Independents think that the state government should determine marijuana policy. Nearly three quarters of Democrats, 65 percent of Independents, and 56 percent of Republicans believe that it should be left up to the state government.



Across different income levels, support for allowing state government to determine the legality of marijuana is fairly consistent. Sixty-eight percent of low-income respondents, or those who make below \$40,000 a year, and 69 percent of middle-income respondents, or those who make between \$40,000 and \$80,000, think the state should make decisions about marijuana use. For high-income respondents, 63 percent think state government should determine the legal status of marijuana.

**Table 12: Who Should Decide Marijuana Policy**

	All	Party Registration			Income		
		Dem	Rep	Ind.	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000
Federal Government	22	16	30	20	15	22	26
State Government	65	73	56	65	68	69	63
Both	6	4	5	9	7	4	6
Don't know	7	7	9	6	10	5	5

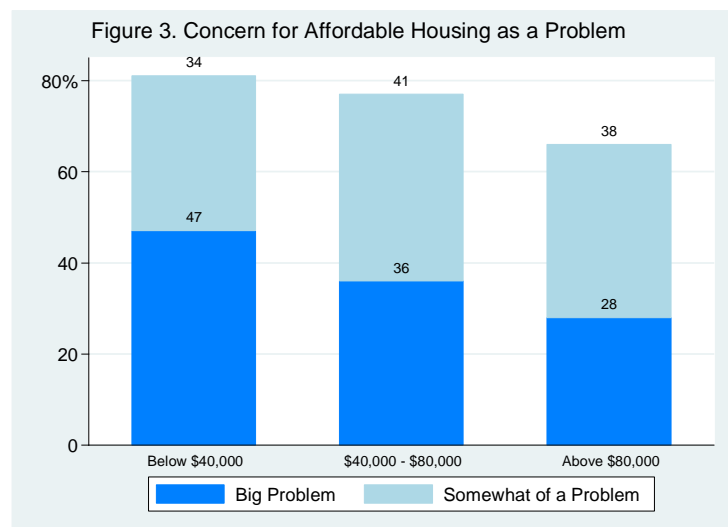
Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

### *Most in the Valley Think Affordable Housing is a Problem*

In recent years, there has been growing attention to the housing shortage in California. Much of the attention has been devoted to housing affordability in the Bay Area and Southern California. However, according to a recent report by the California Housing Partnership Corporation, renters in Fresno County need to make nearly twice the minimum wage to afford the median rent for a housing unit of \$999 a month. Our survey supports concerns about affordable housing in the San Joaquin Valley. Seventy-five percent of respondents said that affordable housing was either a “big problem” or “somewhat of a problem.” Twenty-four percent said that it was not a problem.

Not surprisingly, those respondents in low-income households were the most likely (81 percent) to say it is at least somewhat of a problem (See Figure 3 ). Of those respondents in a middle-income household, 77 percent indicated that it is a problem (either a big problem or somewhat of a problem). Although voters from high-income households were the least likely to say that it is a problem, nearly 7 out of 10 identified affordable housing as a problem.



Concern for affordable housing was high across political parties. Democratic voters were the most likely to express concern at 80 percent, followed by Independents at 78 percent, and Republicans at 66

percent. Female registered voters were more likely than male registered voters to indicate that affordable housing is a problem. Seventy-eight percent of female voters said it is a problem, while 70 percent of male voters responded the same way.

**Table 13: Percentage that Think Affordable Housing is a Problem**

	Party Registration				Income			Gender	
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000	Male	Female
Big Problem	36	41	29	37	47	36	28	30	41
Somewhat of a Problem	39	39	37	41	34	41	38	40	37
Not a Problem	24	18	32	19	15	21	32	29	19
Don't know	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	1	3

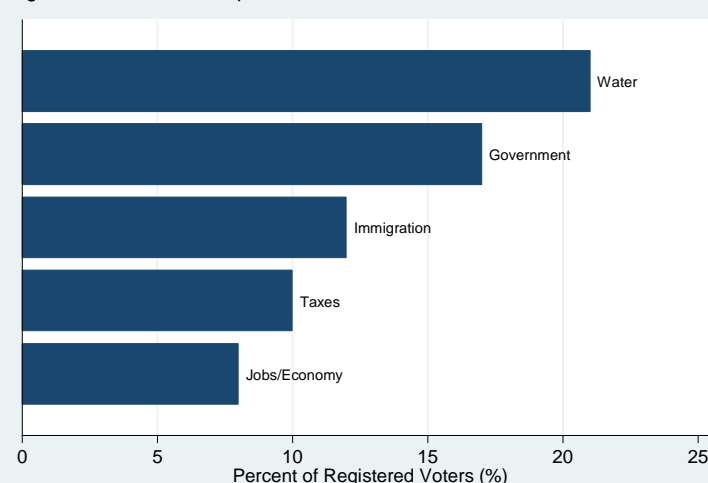
Note: Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## POLICY PRIORITIES

### *Water Remains the Top Priority, But New Issues Rise to the Top*

For the second year in a row of our survey, respondents identified water (21 percent) as the most important problem facing the state.<sup>1</sup> Aside from immigration, three new issues emerged in the Top 5 priorities for the Valley. Government, which includes those who identify elected officials such as the governor or president, came in second with 17 percent of registered voters indicating it as their top issue. Immigration, which came in fourth in last year's survey of the San Joaquin Valley, rose to third this year, with 12 percent of respondents naming it as their top priority. Taxes came in fourth at 10 percent, while jobs/economy round out the Top 5 issues with 8 percent.

Figure 4. State's Most Important Problem



There is some variation in the Top 5 Priorities among voters registered with different parties. Democratic respondents identified water (23 percent) as their top priority, followed by immigration (13 percent) and government (11 percent). The top priority for Republican voters was government (24 percent), which includes those who identified Governor Jerry Brown as the most important problem. Water was second (19 percent) for Republicans, followed by taxes (14 percent). The ranking of policy priorities for Independents was the same as those for respondents overall.

Among different racial and ethnic groups, water remained the top priority for all groups although government tied for the lead among white respondents. White respondents identified taxes as a slightly higher priority than immigration, while immigration was the second highest priority for Latino registered voters. Water and government are the top 2 priorities for non-white, non-Latinos, followed by taxes. Immigration and jobs/economy tied for fourth among non-white, non-Latinos.

There was some variation in the ranking of priorities based on household income. For low-income respondents, water was the top priority (27 percent), followed by immigration and government. For middle-income registered voters, water was the top priority, but immigration and jobs/economy tied for second with 12 percent identifying each of those as a top priority. In the highest income category, those making above \$80,000 a year, government was the top priority (22 percent), followed by water (18 percent), and taxes (14 percent).

<sup>1</sup> Last year's survey sampled adults, rather than registered voters.

**Table 14: Most Important Problem Facing the State**

	All	Party Registration			Race/Ethnicity			Income		
		Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000
Water	21	23	19	18	21	21	23	27	20	18
Government	17	11	24	14	21	10	13	12	11	22
Immigration	12	13	13	11	10	16	6	16	12	10
Taxes	10	5	14	9	11	8	8	6	7	14
Jobs/Economy	8	7	10	8	9	7	6	7	12	6

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

### *Valley Voters are More Pessimistic about the Economy Over the Next 12 Months*

Despite a robust state economy, a slight plurality of voters think bad times are ahead for the state's economy over the next 12 months. Forty-five percent of respondents said that they expect bad times are ahead as opposed to 42 percent who said that good times are ahead. There was a marked split between male and female registered voters. Male voters were more likely to say that good times are ahead than female voters (48 percent to 36 percent).

Among racial and ethnic groups, Latinos were the most likely to respond that economic bad times are ahead (49 percent), followed by white voters at 43 percent. A slight majority of non-white, non-Latinos (51 percent) said that economic good times are ahead.

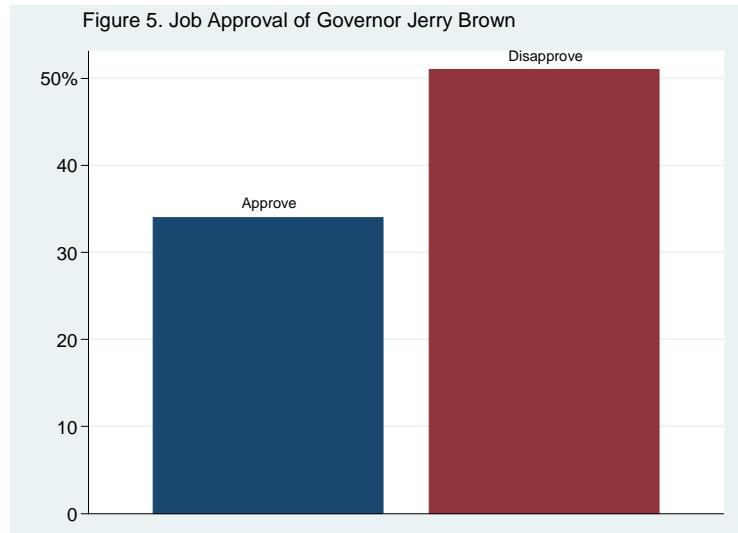
There is variation in the economic outlook among different income groups. High-income voters were the most likely to say that economic good times are ahead (47 percent), while middle-income voters were the least likely to respond the same (37 percent). Exactly half of middle-income respondents said that they expect economic bad times over the next 12 months. Forty-two percent of low-income respondents were pessimistic about the economy over the next year.

**Table 15: Percentage that Think Economic Conditions will be Good or Bad During the Next 12 Months**

	All	Gender		Race/Ethnicity			Income		
		Male	Female	White	Latino	Other	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000
Good Times	42	48	36	41	41	51	39	37	47
Bad Times	45	42	48	43	49	41	42	50	44
Don't know	13	10	15	15	10	8	18	13	9

## A Majority in the Valley Disapprove of Jerry Brown's Job as Governor

Although Governor Jerry Brown typically receives majority support in statewide polls, a slight majority of registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley disapprove of his job as governor (Figure 5). Fifty-one percent of respondents said that they disapprove, while 34 percent indicated that they approve of his job. Not surprisingly, Democrats were the most likely to approve of the governor's job (60 percent), but that level is somewhat lower than what we might expect from voters of the governor's party. On the other hand, only 31 percent of Independents and 11 percent of Republicans indicated approval of the governor. Eighty-three percent of Republicans, 48 percent of Independents, and 22 percent of Democrats said that they disapprove of the governor.



High-income respondents were the most likely to say that they disapprove of the governor (59 percent), while low-income voters were the least likely to say that they disapprove (44 percent). Among racial and ethnic groups, whites and non-white, non-Latinos were the most likely to say that they disapprove of the governor (61 percent and 52 percent, respectively). Forty-six percent of Latinos indicated that they approve of the governor's performance.

**Table 16: Percentage that Approve of Jerry Brown as Governor**

	Party Registration				Race/Ethnicity			Income		
	All	Dem	Rep	Ind.	White	Latino	Other	Below \$40,000	\$40,000-\$80,000	Above \$80,000
Approve	34	60	11	31	27	46	34	41	37	30
Disapprove	51	22	83	48	61	34	52	44	46	59
Don't know	15	19	6	21	12	20	14	16	18	11

Note: "Other" for race/ethnicity includes blacks and Asians. Numbers may not add to 100 due to rounding.

## QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

February 5-15, 2018

N=634

Registered Voters, San Joaquin Valley

Margin of error  $\pm 3.9\%$  at 95% confidence level

### 1. What would you say is the most important problem facing the State of California today?

21%	water
17	government
12	immigration
10	taxes
8	jobs/economy
5	environment
4	education
3	crime/drugs
3	healthcare/health
3	infrastructure
3	budget/spending
3	homelessness
2	air quality
1	housing
<1	terrorism
<1	race relations
<1	energy/energy prices
2	other
2	don't know/refuse to answer

### 2. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

42%	good times
45	bad times
13	don't know/refuse to answer

### 3. Do you approve or disapprove of how Jerry Brown is handling his job as California's governor?

34%	approve
51	disapprove
15	don't know/refuse to answer



- 4. Do you generally feel that things in California are moving in the right direction or are off on the wrong track?**
- 37% moving in the right direction
  - 56 off on the wrong track
  - 6 don't know/refuse to answer
- 5. Turning to the 2018 elections, Governor Jerry Brown will leave the governor's office this year because of California's term limits law. Under the new top-2 primary system in California, the two candidates that receive the most votes in the June primary, regardless of party, will move on to the general election in November. If the June primary election were held today and the following were the candidates, who would you vote for?**
- 15% Gavin Newsom
  - 12 John Cox
  - 11 Travis Allen
  - 9 Antonio Villaraigosa
  - 4 John Chiang
  - 2 Delaine Eastin
  - 8 someone else
  - 38 don't know
- 6. In your decision about which candidate to vote for in the governor's race, which factor is most important to you?**
- 42% position on the issues
  - 22 candidate's previous experience and record
  - 21 a new approach or thinking
  - 9 none of the above
  - 7 don't know/refuse to answer
- 7. As you may know, California also has an election this year for one of its two US Senators. If the June primary election were held today and the following were the candidates, who would you vote for?**
- 29% Dianne Feinstein
  - 16 Kevin de León
  - 39 someone else
  - 16 don't know
- 8. In your decision about which candidate to vote for in California's US Senate race, which factor is most important to you?**
- 46% position on the issues
  - 21 a new approach or thinking

- 20 candidate's previous experience and record
- 6 none of the above
- 7 don't know/refuse to answer

**9. Since the election of Donald Trump, would you say that you are paying more attention to politics, about the same amount of attention, or are you paying less attention to politics?**

- 54% more attention to politics
- 34 about the same
- 11 paying less attention
- <1 don't know/refuse to answer

**10. If the election for Congress were held today, would you vote for the candidate from the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?**

- 42% Democratic Party
- 39 Republican Party
- 6 Third party
- 5 none
- 9 don't know/refuse to answer

**11. Last year, the governor and legislature adopted an increase in gas taxes and vehicle registration fees to raise \$5 billion a year to help repair the state's roads and highways. Opponents of the tax and fee increases are seeking to place an initiative on the ballot to repeal the taxes and fees. If the election were held today, would you vote to repeal the new taxes or to keep them?**

- 58% repeal them
- 36% keep them
- 6 don't know/refuse to answer

**12. Turning our attention to some of the problems facing our region, the San Joaquin Valley has some of the worst air quality in the nation and experienced several weeks of this poor air quality this winter. How closely do you pay attention to the air quality in your area?**

- 53% very closely
- 21 fairly closely
- 16 not too closely
- 8 not at all
- 1 don't know/refuse to answer

**13. If you hear or read that the air quality in your area is poor, do you restrict your activities or, if you have children, do you restrict their activities?**

- 62% yes
- 35 no

- 2 don't pay attention to air quality
- 1 don't know/refuse to answer

**14. Some health care advocates support imposing more restrictions on residents and businesses to improve the air quality in the San Joaquin Valley. Do you think more restrictions should be imposed on residents and businesses to improve air quality?**

- 53% yes
- 40 no
- 7 don't know/refuse to answer

**15. [If yes to Q14] What further restrictions do you support for improving air quality in your area? [May indicate more than one]**

- 51% reducing commercial vehicle emissions such as semi-trucks
- 43 prohibiting wood burning fireplaces
- 41 reducing passenger vehicle emissions
- 40 reducing agricultural pollution
- 14 something else
- 4 don't know

**16. Changing topics, the DACA program, or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, protects undocumented immigrants from deportation if they were children when they were brought into the United States illegally. DACA also provides temporary legal protection and work permits for these immigrants. Do you support or oppose the DACA program?**

- 70% support
- 23 oppose
- 7 don't know/refuse to answer

**17. Do you personally know someone who would be affected if the DACA program is terminated?**

- 54% yes
- 43 no
- 3 don't know/refuse to answer

**18. Turning our attention to housing, California is known for its high cost of living. Do you consider affordable housing to be a big problem in your area, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem at all?**

- 36% big problem
- 39 somewhat of a problem
- 24 no problem
- 2 don't know/refuse to answer

**19. The governor and legislature placed a \$4 billion bond on the November 2018 general election ballot to fund affordable housing projects and veterans housing. If the election were held today, would you support this bond measure?**

67%    yes  
24      no  
9       don't know/refuse to answer

**20. Next, we are going to ask a couple questions about illegal drug use. Drug overdoses are increasingly recognized as an epidemic. Do you know someone that has overdosed on either prescription or illegal drugs?**

50%    yes  
50      no  
<1      don't know/refuse to answer

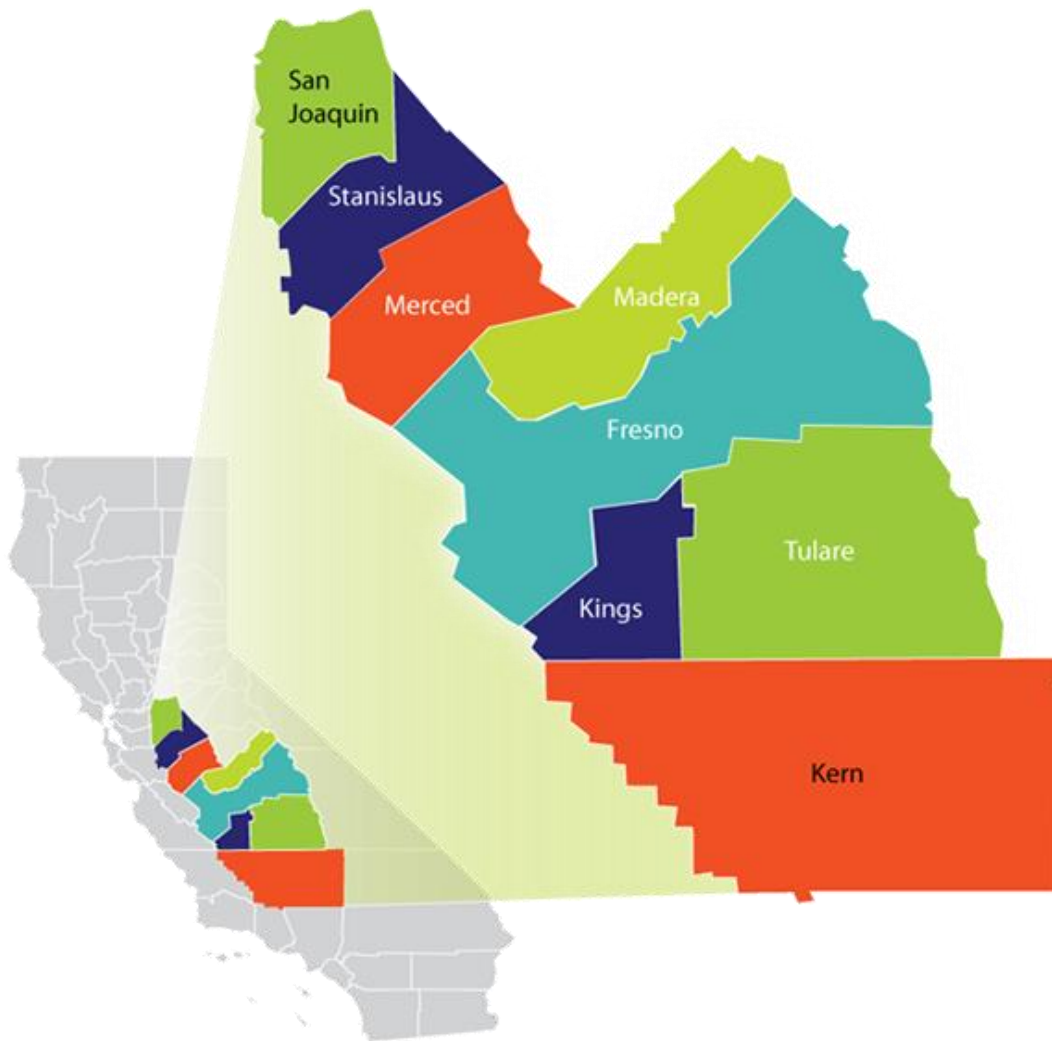
**21. Beginning this year, recreational use of marijuana became legal in California. Do you think laws regarding whether the use of marijuana is legal or not should be determined by the federal government, or left to each individual state government to decide?**

22%    federal government  
65      state government  
6       both  
7       don't know/refuse to answer

**22. President Trump and Congress are responsible for passing a budget to fund the federal government and avoid a government shutdown. Who do you mainly hold responsible for the federal budget?**

13%    President Trump  
19      Congressional Democrats  
17      Congressional Republicans  
49      both the President and Congress  
9       don't know/ refuse to answer

## MAP OF THE SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY



Map Credit: Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

## METHODOLOGY OF SURVEY

The findings in this report are based on a survey of a random sample of registered voters from the San Joaquin Valley, which includes eight counties: Fresno, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, and Tulare. The final sample size is 634 registered voters. Seventy percent of respondents were interviewed on cell phones and 30 percent were interviewed on landlines. On average, interviews took 6 minutes to complete. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and Sunday evenings, from February 5-15, 2018.

Phone numbers were randomly selected by county from the state voter file provided by the California Secretary of State's Office. The sample was limited to one registered voter per household. Using a Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) system, we dialed 28,707 unique numbers. Up to 7 attempts were made to reach each randomly selected number on different days during the interview period. The average number was dialed 2.7 times. Based on the American Association for Public Opinion Research's (AAPOR) Standard Definitions, Version 9 (2016), we had a response rate of 2.4% (RR1) and a contact rate of 40.7% (CR1). The final sample was weighted by age, gender, race/ethnicity, and party registration to match the characteristics of the San Joaquin Valley registered voter population. The Institute used data from the voter file to determine the benchmarks for age and party registration and used registered voter county reports from Political Data, Inc. for gender and race/ethnicity in order to assure representativeness of the sample. The margin of error for the survey is  $\pm 3.9$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level for the unweighted sample of 634 adults. That is, we are 95 percent confident the results will reflect the population's responses  $\pm 3.9$  percentage points, if all registered voters in the San Joaquin Valley were interviewed. There are other possible sources of error beyond sampling variability, such as question wording, question sequencing, and survey timing. Additional information about our methodology is available upon request from Dr. Lisa Bryant at [lbryant@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:lbryant@mail.fresnostate.edu) or 559.278.7612.

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## **About the Institute for Leadership and Public Policy**

Under the College of Social Sciences, the Institute for Leadership and Public Policy is dedicated to conducting policy-relevant research and offering student training and career development to inspire public leadership in the San Joaquin Valley. Financial support for the Institute has been provided by a generous gift from PG&E and Chevron.

For more information, contact Dr. Jeff Cummins at 559.278.6693, Co-Director of the Institute for Leadership and Public Policy or Dr. Lisa Bryant, Survey Director, at 559.278.7612 or 559.512.0124.