

Voting and Political Demography in 1996

February 1997

Findings in Brief

- Approximately 10.3 million Californians voted in the November 1996 Presidential elections, down from 11.4 million four years earlier. The 1996 election's citizen participation rate was 52.6%, the lowest in a Presidential election in California since 1924.
- Voting by mail continued to grow in overall popularity with voters. Over 2 million Californians voted by mail using an absentee ballot in the 1996 election. Mail ballot voting has increased in each successive Presidential election in California over the past twenty years from 4.5% of votes cast in 1976 to 20.2% last year.
- California voters in 1996 tended to include larger proportions of better educated, more affluent, and older voters than voters in previous recent Presidential elections. As compared to precinct voters, mail ballot voters included proportionately more political conservatives and voters over the age of 60.
- Democrat Bill Clinton carried California in 1996 by a 13 point margin — 51% to 38% — over Republican Bob Dole. The 1996 vote for President was highly partisan and ideological, with Democrats and liberals heavily supporting Clinton and Republicans and conservatives strongly backing Dole. However, the key to Clinton's win in California was his greater than two to one vote lead among political moderates. While there were differences in voter preferences by gender and race/ethnicity, pluralities of men and women as well as whites and minorities preferred Clinton over Dole.
- Proposition 209, the controversial ballot measure banning state-based affirmative action programs, was approved by this state's voters by a 55% to 45% margin. The vote on Prop. 209 varied widely by subgroup. Republicans favored Prop. 209 four to one, while Democrats were opposed by greater than a two to one margin. White non-Hispanics supported the initiative 62% to 38%, while majorities of Latino, black and Asian voters were opposed. The initiative carried among both male and female voters, although men, especially white men, were most supportive.
- A comparison of the demographic characteristics of registered voters and eligible non-registrants in this state finds that the older a citizen is, the more likely he or she is to be registered to vote. In addition, white non-Hispanics are more likely to be registered to vote than Latino and Asian citizens. Education and income are also closely tied to registration status, with registered voters skewed more toward the upper end of each subgroup.

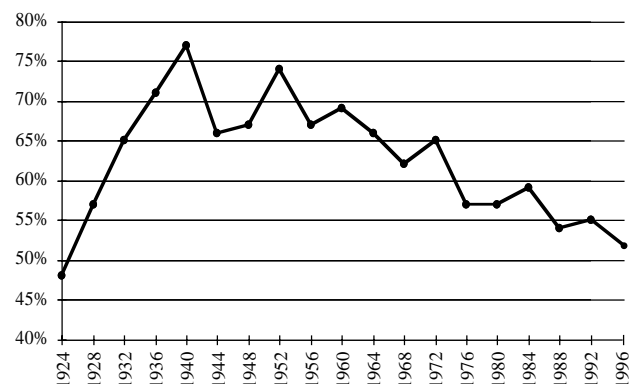
Voting participation in the 1996 Presidential election lowest since 1924

The long term trend of declining voting participation in California accelerated in 1996, ranking last year's election as the lowest participation rate of any Presidential election in this state since 1924. According to the California Secretary of State slightly more than 19.5 million adult citizens were eligible to register and vote in the 1996 elections. Of these, about 10.3 million Californians actually voted, a participation rate of 52.6%.

The chart below compares the citizen participation rate in Presidential elections in California since 1924. It shows that voting participation increased significantly between 1924 and 1940, reflecting the steady increase in voting by women following the passage of the 19th Amendment. Voting participation peaked in 1940 at 78.3%, but has trended downward ever since.

There was a big increase in the number of citizen-eligible voters in 1972, when the minimum voting age was lowered from 21 to 18. This development is partially responsible for depressing voting participation in subsequent years because the proportion of 18-20 year old citizens who vote tends to be lower than for the rest of the population. However, other factors also were at work in lowering voter turnout in the 1996 elections, including less interest in the Presidential campaign and the absence of other statewide candidate races such as for Governor or U.S. Senator on the ballot.

Table 1
Proportion of Citizen-Eligibles Participating
in California Presidential Elections
(1924-1996)



Voting by mail continues to grow in popularity

Over the past two decades, there has been a continuing growth in both the percentage and absolute number of Californians voting by mail. In the 1996 Presidential election, a record 2,078,065 absentee votes were cast, comprising 20.2% of the total statewide vote.

The table below illustrates the increasing popularity of mail ballot voting. Prior to 1976 absentee voting varied only slightly comprising no more than 4% or 5% of all votes cast. Since 1976, voting by mail has increased in each successive Presidential election in California — from 4.5% in 1976 to 20.2% in 1996.

	Precinct Voters		Absentee Voters	
1996	8,185,425	(78.8%)	2,078,065	(20.2%)
1992	9,424,005	(82.9%)	1,950,179	(17.1%)
1988	8,759,686	(85.9%)	1,434,853	(14.1%)
1984	8,882,801	(90.7%)	913,574	(9.3%)
1980	8,226,382	(93.7%)	549,077	(6.3%)
1976	7,770,508	(95.5%)	366,694	(4.5%)

Changes in the shape of the California electorate

The 1996 election witnessed some significant changes in the demographic composition of voters compared to earlier Presidential elections. For example,...

- Voters in 1996 included larger proportions of better educated and more affluent voters than in previous elections. For example, 36% of voters last year reported an annual household income of \$60,000 or more, up from 31% in 1992 and 25% in 1988. Similarly, nearly half (46%) of 1996 general election voters were college graduates, up from 42% and 41% in 1992 and 1988.
- Voters in 1996 also tended to be older. Over four in ten California voters (42%) were age 50 or older in 1996, up from 33% in 1992 and 36% in 1988.
- A slightly smaller proportion of voters in 1996 (77%) were white non-Hispanic. Whites comprised 79% of Presidential voters in California in 1992 and 81% in 1988.
- One third of voters in 1996 (33%) were conservative in politics, up from 29% in 1992.
- A slightly smaller proportion of the electorate in 1996 were Los Angeles County residents than in previous years.
- Female voters outnumbered male voters by a six percentage point margin — 53% to 47%, similar to the distribution of the California vote in 1992.
- Voters identifying with the Democratic Party outnumbered Republican Party identifiers by 4 percentage points (42% to 38%), similar to 1992.

	1996	1992	1988
Region			
Los Angeles County	24.4%	24.9%	26.8%
San Francisco Bay Area	23.3	23.5	23.4
Central Valley	14.7	14.2	13.5
San Diego County	8.8	8.8	8.7
Orange County	8.5	8.6	8.9
Inland Empire	8.3	8.3	7.5
Central Coast	7.1	6.9	6.8
North Coast/Sierras	4.9	4.8	4.4
Party identification			
Democrat	42%	41%	42%
Republican	38	37	41
Independent	20	22	17
Political ideology			
Conservative	33%	29%	32%
Moderate	45	49	47
Liberal	22	22	21
Age			
18 – 29	17%	19%	20%
30 – 49	42	48	44
50 – 59	14	12	13
60 or older	28	21	23
Gender			
Male	47%	47%	49%
Female	53	53	51
Ethnicity			
White (non-Hispanic)	77%	79%	81%
Hispanic	11	10	7
Black	6	6	8
Asian	4	4	4
Other	2	1	*
Annual household income			
Under \$20,000	16%	19%	23%
\$20,000 – \$39,999	24	26	27
\$40,000 – \$59,999	24	24	25
\$60,000 or more	36	31	25
Education			
High school grad or less	22%	26%	25%
Some college/trade school	32	32	34
College graduate	26	25	23
Post graduate work	20	17	18
Religion			
Protestant	47%	45%	45%
Catholic	28	28	25
Jewish	5	5	5
Other	7	9	9
No preference	13	13	16

Source: Regional vote comes from the California Secretary of State's official Statement of Vote. All other demographic characteristics are derived from exit polls of precinct voters on Election Day and pre-election telephone surveys of absentee voters conducted by The Field Institute for Voter News Service in California.

* less than 1/2 of 1%

Characteristics of precinct and absentee voters

In the November 1996 election, The Field Institute teamed with the Voter News Service (VNS), which conducts exit polls for the television networks on Election Day, to retrieve estimates of the California vote. Estimates of the precinct vote (i.e., voters who cast their ballots at the polls on Election Day) were retrieved from VNS's Election Day exit poll. Estimates of the absentee vote were obtained through a separate pre-election telephone survey of voters by The Field Institute conducted in the final week of the 1996 election campaign. A total of 3,229 voters, including 2,815 precinct voters and 414 absentee ballot voters, were interviewed in this effort.

Table 4 compares how precinct and absentee voters differed on various regional and demographic characteristics. According to the survey, absentee ballot voters in 1996 differed from precinct voters in the following ways:

- A larger proportion of absentee ballot voters than precinct voters were residents of San Diego County or the Central Coast counties between Los Angeles and the San Francisco Bay Area. By contrast, proportionately more precinct voters than absentee voters were residents of Los Angeles County.
- Absentee voters in 1996 included proportionately fewer Democrats and a larger proportion of Republicans and independents. The party identification of absentee voters in 1996 was 40% Republican, 36% Democrat and 24% independent/other. Among precinct voters the distribution was weighted more to the Democratic side — 44% Democrat, 38% Republican and 18% independent/other.
- Absentee ballot voters were more likely than precinct voters to report themselves to be conservative in politics and less likely to be liberal. Among absentee voters in 1996 41% were conservative, 15% were liberal and 44% were moderates. Among precinct voters the split was 31% conservative, 24% liberal, and 45% moderate.
- Absentee ballot voters were older on average than precinct voters. Among absentee voters the majority (51%) were age 50 or older, while 49% were under age 50. Among precinct voters 61% were under age 50 and 39% were age 50 or older.
- Compared to precinct voters, absentee voters included a somewhat larger proportion of women and white non-Hispanics.
- Absentee voters in California in 1996 included proportionately more Protestants and fewer Catholic or Jewish voters than did precinct voters.
- Compared to precinct voters, a larger proportion of absentee ballot voters were married or living together and fewer were single.

Table 4

Comparing the Regional and Demographic Characteristics of Precinct Voters and Absentee Voters in the 1996 Election

	Precinct voters	Absentee/mail ballot voters
<u>Region</u>		
Los Angeles County	26%	19%
San Francisco Bay Area	23	23
Central Valley	15	15
San Diego County	8	12
Orange County	8	9
Inland Empire	8	8
Central Coast	6	9
North Coast/Sierra	5	6
<u>Party identification</u>		
Democrat	44%	36%
Republican	38	40
Independent/other	18	24
<u>Political ideology</u>		
Conservative	31%	41%
Moderate	45	44
Liberal	24	15
<u>Age</u>		
18–29	18%	13%
30–49	43	36
50–59	14	13
60 or older	25	38
<u>Gender</u>		
Men	48%	45%
Women	52	55
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
White (non-Hispanic)	76%	81%
Latino	12	9
Black/African-American	6	5
Asian/other	6	6
<u>Annual household income</u>		
Under \$20,000	16%	17%
\$20,000–\$39,999	23	26
\$40,000–\$59,999	25	21
\$60,000 or more	36	36
<u>Education</u>		
High school grad or less	22%	22%
Some college/trade school	31	38
College graduate	27	21
Post graduate work	20	19
<u>Religion</u>		
Protestant	45%	56%
Catholic	29	22
Jewish	6	3
Other	7	6
No preference	13	13
<u>Marital status</u>		
Married/living together	54%	61%
Separated/divorced/widow	22	22
Single/never married	24	17

Source: 1996 Field Institute estimates

An analysis of the California vote for President

Democrat Bill Clinton defeated Republican Bob Dole in California by a 51% to 38% margin. Reform Party candidate Ross Perot received 7% of the vote, while other candidates running for President garnered a collective 4%. Clinton's 13-point victory in California was similar to his vote margin over Republican George Bush four years earlier, when Clinton received 46% of the California vote, Bush 33% and Perot 21%.

An analysis of the 1996 vote in California shows the following:

- Clinton carried the two major Democratic Party strongholds of the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County (which together account for almost half of the statewide vote) by large two to one margins. Dole did less well in the state's traditionally Republican strongholds. While Dole carried Orange County by a 52% to 38% margin, he only narrowly outpolled Clinton in San Diego County and the Central Valley, and split evenly the votes of the Inland Empire.
- The vote for President was highly partisan and ideological. Self-identified Democrats supported Clinton by a 87% to 5% margin, while self-identified Republicans supported Dole 80% to 13%. Conservatives favored Dole by a 71% to 19% margin, while liberals supported Clinton 79% to 8%. However, Clinton captured the large segment of moderate voters by a greater than two to one margin (61% to 29%).
- While there were some significant differences in voter preferences by gender, both men and women favored Clinton. Among women Clinton defeated Dole by 21 percentage points (56% to 35%), while among men Clinton's preference margin was 5 points (46% to 41%).
- Clinton carried the white non-Hispanic vote by a narrow four-point margin in California (46% to 42%). By contrast, Clinton was preferred over Dole by larger margins among the state's ethnic and racial minorities, especially among African-Americans (84% to 7%) and Latinos (70% to 21%).
- Clinton bested Dole among voters in each age category, although the President's preference margin was widest among younger voters under age 30 (54% to 32%). Clinton also outpolled Dole across all educational levels, but did best among voters with post graduate training and voters with only a high school education or less.
- Higher income voters were more likely to support Dole, while middle and lower income voters were much more likely to favor Clinton.
- Protestants supported Dole by a six point margin (48% to 42%), while Catholics favored Clinton 53% to 38%. Among voters affiliated with the Jewish or other religions and those with no religious preference, Clinton was overwhelmingly preferred by margins of three to one or more.

Table 5
California Voter Preferences for President in 1996

	Clinton	Dole	Perot	Others*
Statewide Total	51%	38	7	4
<u>Region</u>				
(.24) Los Angeles County	59%	31	7	3
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	61%	28	6	5
(.15) Central Valley	45%	46	7	2
(.09) San Diego County	44%	46	7	3
(.09) Orange County	38%	52	8	2
(.08) Inland Empire	44%	44	9	3
(.07) Central Coast	47%	40	8	5
(.05) North Coast/Sierra	38%	48	9	5
<u>Party identification</u>				
(.42) Democrat	87%	5	4	4
(.38) Republican	13%	80	6	1
(.20) Independent/other	48%	28	16	8
<u>Political ideology</u>				
(.33) Conservative	19%	71	8	2
(.45) Moderate	61%	29	7	3
(.22) Liberal	79%	8	6	7
<u>Gender</u>				
(.53) Women	56%	35	6	3
(.47) Men	46%	41	9	4
<u>Ethnicity</u>				
(.77) White (non-Hispanic)	46%	42	8	4
(.41) White women	51%	39	6	4
(.36) White men	40%	47	9	4
(.11) Latino	70%	21	7	2
(.06) Black/African-American	84%	7	5	4
(.06) Asian/other	52%	43	4	1
<u>Age</u>				
(.17) 18–29	54%	32	8	6
(.30) 30–49	52%	38	6	4
(.25) 50–59	49%	40	8	3
(.28) 60 or older	51%	41	6	2
<u>Education</u>				
(.22) High school grad or less	57%	30	10	3
(.31) Some college/trade school	47%	44	7	2
(.26) College graduate	47%	42	7	4
(.21) Post graduate work	53%	36	4	7
<u>Household income</u>				
(.10) Less than \$15,000	68%	24	5	3
(.17) \$15,000–\$29,999	59%	29	7	5
(.25) \$30,000–\$49,999	52%	36	8	4
(.23) \$50,000–\$74,999	48%	42	7	3
(.25) \$75,000 or more	42%	48	6	4
<u>Religion</u>				
(.48) Protestant	42%	48	7	3
(.27) Catholic	53%	38	6	3
(.05) Jewish	76%	12	6	6
(.07) Other	62%	22	9	7
(.13) No preference	61%	22	10	7

* Includes Green party candidate Ralph Nader (2%), Libertarian Party candidate Harry Browne (1%) and various others (less than 1/2 of 1%).

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the California Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup preferences are adjusted percentages derived from exit polls of precinct voters on Election Day and pre-election telephone surveys of absentee voters conducted by Voter News Service in California (n=3,229).

Vote analysis of Prop. 209, the anti-affirmative action initiative

Proposition 209, the highly controversial ballot measure which prohibits preferential treatment and dismantles existing public-sector affirmative action programs based on race, sex, color, ethnicity or national origin, was approved by California voters in the 1996 general election by a 55% to 45% margin. An analysis of the vote by regional and demographic subgroups shows the following:

- The vote on Prop. 209 was highly partisan, with Republicans favoring it four to one, and Democrats opposed by a greater than two to one margin. Independents favored the initiative by six points (53% to 47%).
- Prop. 209 passed by large margins across all regions of the state, except the heavily Democratic regions of Los Angeles County and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. In these two areas, No voters outnumbered Yes voters by 54% to 46% margins. By contrast, voters in the rural counties of the North Coast and Sierras voted Yes by a greater than two to one margin.
- Political ideology was strongly linked to opinions of the measure. Conservatives were strongly supportive, favoring Prop. 209 more than three to one (76% to 24%). Conversely, liberals opposed the initiative 73% to 27%. Political moderates were somewhat more divided, but voted in favor by 8 points.
- There were big differences in voter preferences on Prop. 209 by race and ethnicity. White non-Hispanics were highly supportive of the measure (62% to 38%). By contrast, large majorities of Latino, black and Asian voters were opposed.
- The initiative carried among both male and female voters, although men — especially white men — were most supportive.
- Voters age 60 or older supported Prop. 209 by 18 points, while voters under age 30 were opposed (52% to 48%). A majority of voters in the middle age categories voted Yes on the proposition.
- While majorities of voters across all education levels supported the initiative, there were big differences in voter preferences by income. For example, voters earning less than \$15,000 opposed the initiative 61% to 39%, while voters with annual household income levels of \$75,000 or more supported it 61% to 39%.
- Protestants were much likely to be supportive of Prop. 209 than other voters in California. Nearly two in three Protestants (64%) voted Yes on the initiative, while just 36% voted No. Catholics, Jews and those with no religious preference were closely divided on Prop. 209, while voters affiliated with other religions voted against the initiative by a 61% to 39% margin.

**Table 6
Voter Preferences on Proposition 209
(the Anti-Affirmative Action Initiative)**

	Yes	No
Statewide Total	55%	45
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	46%	54
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	46%	54
(.15) Central Valley	62%	38
(.09) San Diego County	63%	37
(.09) Orange County	64%	36
(.08) Inland Empire	61%	39
(.07) Central Coast	58%	42
(.05) North Coast/Sierra	68%	32
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.43) Democrat	32%	68
(.37) Republican	80%	20
(.20) Independent/other	53%	47
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.33) Conservative	76%	24
(.45) Moderate	54%	46
(.22) Liberal	27%	73
<u>Gender</u>		
(.52) Women	52%	48
(.48) Men	59%	41
<u>Ethnicity</u>		
(.77) White (non-Hispanic)	62%	38
(.40) White women	58%	42
(.37) White men	66%	34
(.11) Latino	30%	70
(.06) Black/African-American	27%	73
(.06) Asian/other	44%	56
<u>Age</u>		
(.18) 18–29	48%	52
(.33) 30–49	52%	48
(.26) 50–59	57%	43
(.23) 60 or older	59%	41
<u>Education</u>		
(.21) High school grad or less	55%	45
(.31) Some college/trade school	59%	41
(.27) College graduate	58%	42
(.21) Post graduate work	51%	49
<u>Household income</u>		
(.09) Less than \$15,000	39%	61
(.17) \$15,000–\$29,999	47%	53
(.25) \$30,000–\$49,999	59%	41
(.24) \$50,000–\$74,999	57%	43
(.25) \$75,000 or more	61%	39
<u>Religion</u>		
(.48) Protestant	64%	36
(.27) Catholic	53%	47
(.05) Jewish	47%	53
(.07) Other	39%	61
(.13) No preference	51%	49

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the California Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup preferences are adjusted percentages derived from exit polls of precinct voters on Election Day and pre-election telephone surveys of absentee voters conducted by Voter News Service in California (n=3,034).

Demographic characteristics of California's registered voters in 1996

In its ongoing statewide surveys, The Field Institute regularly asks Californians who are citizens about their voting registration status. The Institute's most recent review of the characteristics of registered voters vs. eligible non-registrants is summarized in Table 7 opposite. A summary of the most salient demographic differences found from this comparison is as follows:

- Women are slightly more likely to be registered to vote than men. Over two-thirds (68%) of citizen-eligible women are registered to vote vs. 65% among men.
- The older a citizen is, the more likely he or she is to be registered to vote. Among younger citizens age 18-24, only about half (51%) are currently registered. The proportion who are registered increases with each successive age category and reaches 75% among those age 60 or older.
- White non-Hispanics are more likely to be registered to vote than any other racial/ethnic subgroup in California. Three quarters (74%) of white citizens are registered to vote, compared to 67% of African-Americans and 50% among citizen-eligible Latinos or Asians.
- Citizens who identify themselves as strong conservatives or strong liberals are more likely to be registered to vote than more moderate voters. For example, 82% of strong conservatives are registered to vote, while 18% are not. Among strong liberals 74% are registered and 26% are not. On the other hand, the proportion of registered voters among moderate conservatives, middle-of-the-roaders and moderate liberals ranges between 60% and 64%.
- Education is closely associated with a citizen's likelihood of being registered to vote. While just 59% of adults with a high school education or less are registered, 77% of those who have completed post graduate work are registered.
- Household income also relates to a person's likelihood to be registered. For example, just 59% of those with an annual household income of less than \$20,000 are currently registered, while 75% of those earning \$80,000 or more per year are registered.
- Protestants are slightly more likely than Californians of other faiths and those without a religious preference to be registered to vote.
- Homeowners are far more likely to be registered to vote than renters. Greater than seven in ten homeowners (73%) are currently registered, compared to just 59% of renters.
- Voters who are single and have never been married are less likely to be registered to vote than are those who are or have been married. Slightly more than half of single residents (55%) are registered, compared to 70% of current or former married residents.

Table 7
Demographic characteristics of registered voters and eligible non-registrants in California (among citizen-eligible adults)

	Registered to vote	Eligible non-registrants
Statewide	67%	33
<u>Gender</u>		
Male	65%	35
Female	68%	32
<u>Age</u>		
18-24	51%	49
25-29	57%	43
30-39	67%	33
40-49	70%	30
50-59	73%	27
60 or older	75%	24
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>		
White (non-Hispanic)	74%	26
Latino	50%	50
Black/African-American	67%	33
Asian/other	50%	50
<u>Political ideology</u>		
Strongly conservative	82%	18
Moderately conservative	60%	40
Middle-of-the-road	64%	36
Moderately liberal	62%	38
Strongly liberal	74%	26
<u>Education</u>		
High school grad or less	59%	41
Some college/trade school	71%	29
College graduate	73%	27
Post graduate work	77%	23
<u>Household income</u>		
Under \$20,000	59%	41
\$20,000-\$39,999	66%	34
\$40,000-\$59,999	69%	31
\$60,000-\$79,999	72%	28
\$80,000 or more	75%	25
<u>Religion</u>		
Protestant	70%	30
Roman Catholic	68%	32
Jewish	69%	31
Other	65%	35
No preference	67%	33
<u>Tenure</u>		
Homeowner	73%	27
Renter	59%	41
<u>Marital status</u>		
Married/living together	70%	30
Separated/divorced/widow	70%	30
Single/never married	55%	45

Source: 1996 Field Institute estimates. The Field Institute's estimate of the overall statewide proportion of citizen-eligible Californians registered to vote is lower than the official totals published by the California Secretary of State due to allowances for "deadwood" on the official registration rolls.

Demographic differences among partisans

According to official state estimates, 47.2% of all registered voters in California are Democrats, 36.4% are Republicans, 5.0% are registered with another party and 11.4% decline to state a party preference. However, the official voter rolls contain a relatively large amount of “deadwood” due to the fact that some voters on the rolls are deceased or have moved. The Field Institute estimates that the current distribution of California’s registered voters excluding deadwood listings is 45% Democratic, 39% Republican and 16% other. A demographic profile of the state’s registered voters by party reveals the following:

- There is a big partisan difference between men and women. Greater than half of the state’s female voters (51%) are Democrats, while just 35% are Republicans. Among men the GOP holds a 43% to 39% edge.
- There are large differences in party registration by race/ethnicity. Among white non-Hispanics, Republicans outnumber Democrats 45% to 39%. However, among registered African-Americans, Democrats outnumber Republicans 83% to 6%. Among Latino registrants, the Democrats hold a 59% to 25% edge over the GOP and among Asians/others Democrats hold a 45% to 35% registration advantage.
- Voters at both the high and low end of the education scale are more likely to be registered as Democrats than Republicans.
- Republicans outnumber Democrats by a 47% to 39% margin among Californians whose annual household income is \$80,000 or more, and by a 45% to 39% among those in the \$60,000 - \$79,999 income group. However, Democrats have an edge over the GOP among all other income groups, particularly the lowest.
- Renters are much more likely to be registered as Democrats than Republicans (52% to 29%). On the other hand, Republicans have an edge over Democrats among homeowners 45% to 41%.
- Protestants tend to be more Republican in their partisan affiliation (51% to 37%). Roman Catholics, Jews, those affiliated with other religions, as well as those with no religious preference are more apt to be Democrats.
- Married Californians are slightly more likely to be registered as Republicans than Democrats, whereas voters who are separated, divorced or widowed, as well as singles who have never married, are more likely to be Democrats.
- The political ideology of registrants is closely related to their party affiliation. Strong or moderate conservatives are predominantly Republicans, while strong or moderate liberals are predominantly Democratic. Moderates currently divide three to two (48% to 32%) in favor of Democrats.

Table 8			
Estimates of party registration in California			
excluding “deadwood”			
(among registered voters)			
	Democrat	Republican	Other
(100%) Statewide	45%	39	16
<u>Gender</u>			
(.48) Male	39%	43	18
(.52) Female	51%	35	14
<u>Age</u>			
(.09) 18-24	45%	35	20
(.10) 25-29	47%	34	19
(.23) 30-39	40%	39	20
(.19) 40-49	48%	36	16
(.14) 50-59	42%	43	15
(.25) 60 or older	48%	41	11
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.73) White (non-Hispanic)	39%	45	16
(.15) Latino	59%	25	16
(.06) Black/African-American	83%	6	11
(.06) Asian/other	45%	35	20
<u>Education</u>			
(.31) High school grad or less	47%	35	18
(.36) Some college/trade school	44%	42	14
(.18) College graduate	41%	41	18
(.15) Post graduate work	48%	37	15
<u>Household income</u>			
(.19) Under \$20,000	55%	28	17
(.30) \$20,000-\$39,999	46%	39	15
(.22) \$40,000-\$59,999	43%	41	16
(.13) \$60,000-\$79,999	39%	45	16
(.16) \$80,000 or more	39%	47	14
<u>Tenure</u>			
(.63) Homeowner	41%	45	14
(.37) Renter	52%	29	19
<u>Religion</u>			
(.48) Protestant	37%	51	12
(.25) Roman Catholic	51%	32	17
(.03) Jewish	66%	24	10
(.06) Other	40%	33	27
(.18) No preference	57%	20	23
<u>Marital status</u>			
(.54) Married/living together	41%	43	16
(.22) Separated/divorced/widow	49%	35	16
(.24) Single/never married	51%	31	18
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.19) Strongly conservative	16%	76	8
(.14) Moderately conservative	30%	56	14
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	48%	32	20
(.12) Moderately liberal	71%	13	16
(.10) Strongly liberal	80%	7	13

Source: 1996 Field Institute estimates.

Wide ethnic and racial differences between California's overall population and its voters

Of the state's 32.3 million residents, approximately 17.1 million or 53% are white non-Hispanic, while 47% or approximately 15 million are members of racial or ethnic minorities. However, whereas racial and ethnic minorities now represent almost half of the state's population, in the November 1996 elections they comprised just 23% of the vote.

Some of the reasons for this disparity are:

- California's racial and ethnic minority population is generally much younger than their white Anglo counterparts. Because of this, racial/ethnic minorities account for a smaller share of the state's nearly 23 million adults (43%) than they do of the state's total population (47%).

- Disproportionately more of the state's Hispanic or Asian adults are not citizens and are therefore not eligible to vote. Among the state's citizen-eligible population, *The Field Poll* estimates that just 34% are racial/ethnic minorities.
- Hispanic and Asian citizens are less likely than white non-Hispanics and blacks to be registered to vote. Because of this, racial/ethnic minorities comprise just 27% of the state's registered voters.
- Among Californians registered to vote, disproportionately fewer minorities turned out to vote in the 1996 Presidential election than did their white non-Hispanic counterparts. Because of this, racial/ethnic minorities accounted for just 23% of all voters.

Table 9
California Population and Voting Participation by Race/Ethnicity — 1996

	Total Population		Adult Population		Citizen-eligible-adults		Registered voters		1996 General election voters	
	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)
Total — 1996	32,344 ¹	100%	22,800 ¹	100%	19,527 ²	100%	13,000	100%	10,263 ²	100%
White (non-Hispanic)	17,150	(53%)	13,000	(57%)	12,900	(66%)	9,500	(73%)	7,900	(77%)
Latino	9,850	(30)	6,100	(27)	3,800	(19)	1,950	(15)	1,178	(11)
Black/African-American	1,844	(6)	1,300	(6)	1,150	(6)	750	(6)	610	(6)
Asian/other	3,500	(11)	2,400	(10)	1,677	(9)	800	(6)	575	(6)

¹ California Department of Finance

² California Secretary of State

All other figures are 1996 Field Institute estimates.

About The Field Institute

The Field Institute is a non-partisan, not-for-profit research organization devoted to the study of public opinion on a variety of social, economic and political issues. The Institute was established with funds and support from Field Research Corporation, one of the oldest and largest marketing and opinion research companies in the Western United States. The Institute's annual operating revenues come from a variety of sources which include: (1) media sponsors of The Field Poll, (2) an Academic Consortium of UC and CSU campuses, and (3) underwriters of ad hoc studies.

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Officers of The Field Institute are Mervin Field, President, and Mark DiCamillo, Director.

The Field Institute • 550 Kearny Street, Suite 900 • San Francisco, California 94108 • (415) 781-4921 • FAX (415) 434-2541