

FINDINGS IN BRIEF

Low voting participation

Voting participation in California's November 1998 general election declined significantly from the state's last gubernatorial election in 1994 and equaled the state's previous record low turnout for a general election set in 1990. Out of the more than 20.8 million California citizen-eligible adults just 8.6 million voted in 1998 for a participation rate of 41%.

New absentee vote record

Despite the low overall turnout, the 1998 general election set a new record for absentee ballot voting, both in terms of their number and percentage of all votes. A total of 2,131,462 Californians voted using absentee ballots, representing a quarter (24.7%) of all votes cast. Previous proportions of absentee voting in recent gubernatorial elections were: 1994 (22.0%); 1990 (18.4%); 1986 (9.0%); 1982 (6.5%); 1978 (4.4%); 1974 (3.4%).

Low turnout among GOP constituencies

Contrary to traditional expectations, the low 1998 turnout hurt Republicans and helped Democrats. While there was a five percentage point decline in overall participation between 1994 and 1998 (46% to 41%), the decrease was not proportionate between the two major parties, with the drop-off in voting among Democrats smaller than that of Republicans. Voter groups which traditionally favored Republicans voted in significantly lower proportions in November, where there was a proportionate increase in the share of votes cast by groups traditionally favoring Democratic candidates.

Davis' sweeping victory

Democrat Gray Davis' sweeping (58% to 38%) victory over Republican Dan Lungren in the Governor's race was a result of Davis winning in nearly every region of the state and piling up majorities among Democrats, independents, moderate and liberal voters, men and women, and across all income, age, educational, race and ethnic groups. While union members favored Davis by a nearly three to one margin, Davis was also preferred among non-union households, Republicans and those who are ideologically conservative stood by Lungren by a large margin. Protestant/Christian voters favored Lungren by a small margin, but all other religious groups voted overwhelmingly for Davis.

How Boxer won

Democrat Barbara Boxer's overall ten point margin of victory over Republican Matt Fong was fashioned by her ability to pile up huge pluralities in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area, while losing to Fong in the sections of the state outside of these two vote heavy areas. Fong polled more votes than Boxer in San Diego, Orange, Central Valley, Inland Empire, and North Coast/Sierra. While losing heavily among conservative voters, Boxer was able to win handily among moderate voters and overwhelmingly among liberals. While men divided their vote evenly between Boxer and Fong, a large majority of women supported Boxer.

Absentee vs. precinct voter differences

Traditionally, more Republicans tend to vote by absentee ballot than Democrats. However, the differences now are not as large as they once were. Among absentee voters this year 38% were Democrats and 42% Republicans. By contrast, 44% of precinct voters were Democrats and 35% were Republicans. Absentee ballot voters also included disproportionately more voters age 60 and older, as well as white non-Hispanic.

Registration list deadwood

The Field Institute, along with many other election observers, believe that the state's registration lists contain a large amount of "deadwood" due to the fact that many names on the rolls are duplicates, people who are deceased or have moved out of state. Rather than there being almost 15 million registrants as reported by the California Secretary of State, The Field Institute estimates that the actual number is closer to 13 million. Thus, rather than Democrats having an eleven percentage point registration advantage over Republicans the real figure is closer to eight points (45% to 37%).

Racial/ethnic voting disparities

There are big racial/ethnic differences between California's overall population and its voters. For example, where white non-Hispanics account for 53% of the state's population, they represented 74% of the voters in last November's election. Stated another way, while Latinos, Blacks, Asians and others represent 47% of the state's population, they accounted for just 26% of the November vote.

Voter turnout in the November 1998 elections matched the previous all-time low recorded in 1990

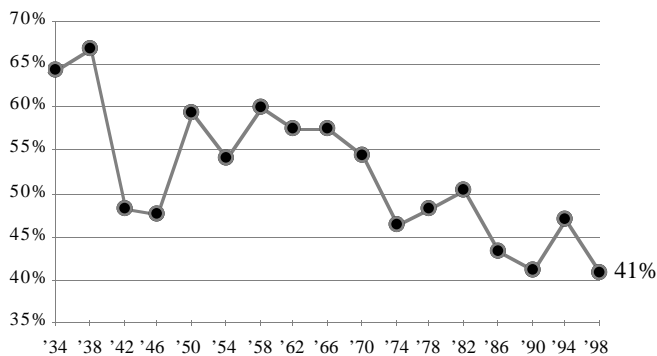
Voting participation in California’s November 1998 general election declined significantly from the state’s last gubernatorial election in 1994 and equaled the state’s previous record low turnout for a general election set in 1990. According to the California Secretary of State’s official Statement of Vote, out of the more than 20.8 million California citizen eligible adults, just 8,617,649 voted in the November general election, a participation rate of just 41%.

This represents a continuation of long-term trend of declining participation in elections in California since the 1930’s. For example, during the 1930’s greater than 60% of citizen eligible adults typically voted in statewide general elections. After a temporary decline in participation because of World War II, voting turnout remained fairly stable, up until 1970 when it started to show some significant declines.

The 1990 gubernatorial election set a record low for participation when just 41% of citizen-eligible adults voted. Although voter turnout rebounded somewhat in the 1994 gubernatorial election to 47%, this year’s 41% participation rate equals the state’s previous record low.

Table 1 below shows the trend of citizen-eligible adults participating in California gubernatorial elections since 1934.

Table 1
Proportion of Citizen-Eligible Adults Participating in California Gubernatorial Elections (1934-1998)



Source: California Secretary of State, Statements of Vote 1934-1998

Record number of absentee ballots cast

California’s 1998 general election set a new record both in terms of the number and percentage of absentee ballot votes cast. A total of 2,131,462 Californians voted using absentee ballots, representing about a quarter (24.7%) of all votes cast in the election.

The growth in absentee ballot voters continues a long-term trend of increasing popularity of this method of voting that began in the early 1980’s, following changed state election laws which relaxed absentee voting requirements.

Table 2
Precinct and Absentee Ballot Voting in California Gubernatorial Elections since 1974

	Precinct voters		Absentee ballot voters	
1998	6,486,187	(75.3%)	2,131,462	(24.7%)
1994	6,937,749	(78.0%)	1,962,844	(22.0%)
1990	6,446,992	(81.6%)	1,452,139	(18.4%)
1986	6,931,802	(91.0%)	685,340	(9.0%)
1982	7,539,128	(93.5%)	525,186	(6.5%)
1978	6,817,952	(95.6%)	314,258	(4.4%)
1974	6,817,952	(96.6%)	216,618	(3.4%)

Source: California Secretary of State, Statements of Vote 1974-1998

Large overstatement of voters on the state’s official registration rolls

According to official voter registration data recorded by the Secretary of State, there are 14,969,185 voter names now on the state’s election rolls. However, this total is known to contain a relatively large amount of “deadwood,” due to the fact that many names on the rolls are duplicates, people who are deceased or have moved out of state.

There is no firm estimate of just how many of the names on the official rolls are deadwood listings. Some estimates place it as high as 20%. The Field Institute makes its estimates of the size of the deadwood based on its pre-election polls and post-election analyses. Prior to the November 1998 election, our estimate assumed that the official rolls needed to be discounted by at least 10% or 1.5 million names, producing a revised registration total of about 13.5 million voters. However, it now appears that a more realistic discount would be 13.3% or 2 million deadwood listings, producing an estimate of only 13.0 million voters.

Basing pre-election estimates of voter turnout on the total number of names on the official registration rolls, unadjusted for deadwood, produces illusory estimates. Turnout based on current estimates of the total citizen voting age population, called “participation rates,” are considered by political scientists to be more accurate and to have more utility in comparing turnouts over time.

Prior to the November 1998 election, the Secretary of State’s office estimated that 9.4 million citizens, or 63% of the almost 15 million names on the registration list, would vote on November 3. The actual turn-out was only slightly more than 8.6 million, or 57% of the total unadjusted registration list. The Field Institute, in its pre-election estimate of turnout, assumed that the deadwood on the voter rolls amounted to about 10%, producing a total of 13.5 million registered voters. Applying the likely voter proportion of 67% found in its pre-election polls to this number produced a pre-election turnout estimate of about 9 million voters. However, if this 67% likely voter factor had been applied to an estimated registration base of 13 million, which now appears to be more valid, it would have produced a turnout estimate of 8.7 million voters — a figure close to the actual number voting.

Despite 1.9 million more citizen-eligible adults in California since 1994, there were 283 thousand fewer voters in the 1998 election

Between 1994 and 1998 the number of adult citizens eligible to vote in California increased by 1.9 million, from 18.9 million in 1994 to 20.8 million in 1998. Despite this, the actual number of votes cast in 1998 was about 283 thousand fewer than the number cast in 1994.

Los Angeles County registered the largest decline in voting, with about 89 thousand fewer voters in 1998 than 1994. Other regions which registered significant declines were the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, which saw a decline of about 55 thousand voters, and Orange County which registered an approximately 53 thousand vote decline.

The only area of the state which witnessed a greater number of voters in 1998 than 1994 was the generally rural North Coast/Sierra region, which registered an 11 thousand voter increase.

	1994	1998	Δ
Total citizen-eligible adults	18.9 million	20.8 million	+1.9 mil.
Total voters	8,900,593	8,617,649	-282,944
Region			
Los Angeles Co.	2,147,678 (24%)	2,058,862 (24%)	-88,816
S.F. Bay Area	2,066,981 (23%)	2,012,403 (23%)	-54,578
Central Valley	1,371,757 (15%)	1,340,670 (16%)	-31,087
San Diego County	776,390 (9%)	769,911 (9%)	-6,479
Orange County	774,009 (9%)	721,094 (8%)	-52,915
Inland Empire	736,096 (8%)	710,580 (8%)	-25,516
Central Coast	634,787 (7%)	599,926 (7%)	-34,861
North Coast/Sierra	392,895 (4%)	404,203 (5%)	+11,308

Source: California Secretary of State, Statements of Vote, 1994 and 1998

Contrary to traditional expectations, low turnout in 1998 hurt Republicans and helped Democrats

The overall decrease in voting in 1998 did not seem to be proportionate between the members of the two major parties.

In the 1994 election self-identified Democrats outnumbered Republicans by just two percentage points (41% to 39%). However, in 1998 Democrats outnumbered Republicans at the polls by five percentage points (42% to 37%).

Further, compared to 1994, the 1998 electorate included smaller proportions of voters in many demographic categories which traditionally favor Republican candidates. These included:

- conservatives (-7)
- voters who have attended college but are non-college graduates (-5)
- Protestants/Christians (-4)
- voters age 30-44 (-3)

Moreover, there was a proportionate increase in the turnout of subgroups which traditionally have favored Democrats. One large group was women, who voted heavily for Gray Davis and Barbara Boxer in 1998. In 1994, women had a two point greater participation than men (51% to 49%). In 1998 this appeared to expand to a four point margin (52% to 48%).

There were other increases between 1994 and 1998 in demographic groups which normally prefer Democrats, such as:

- voters stating no religious preference (+6)
- voters who have completed post graduate work (+5)
- political moderates (+5)
- Latinos (+3)
- voters age 45-59 (+3)

	1994	1998	Δ
	%	%	
Party identification			
Democrat	41	42	+1
Republican	39	37	-2
Independent/other	20	21	+1
Political ideology			
Conservative	36	29	-7
Moderate	44	49	+5
Liberal	20	22	+2
Gender			
Male	49	48	-1
Female	51	52	+1
Age			
18 - 29	15	14	-1
30 - 44	33	30	-3
45 - 59	26	29	+3
60 or older	26	27	+1
Race/ethnicity			
White (non-Hispanic)	75	74	-1
Latino	10	13	+3
Black/African-American	9	7	-2
Asian/other	6	6	—
Education			
High school grad or less	22	19	-3
Some college	34	29	-5
College graduate	27	30	+3
Post graduate work	17	22	+5
Religion			
Protestant/Christian	49	45	-4
Catholic	29	28	-1
Jewish	3	4	+1
Other	8	6	-2
No preference	11	17	+6
Labor union status			
Union-affiliated	*	22	*
Non-union	*	78	*

Source: Percentages are from exit polls conducted in California by Voter News Service (VNS) in 1994 and 1998. Sample size for the VNS surveys included 3,050 voters in 1994 and 2,818 voters in 1998.

* Union status not measured in a comparable manner in 1994.

An analysis of the 1998 vote for Governor

Democrat Gray Davis defeated Republican Dan Lungren in the 1998 California gubernatorial election by a commanding 58.0% to 38.4% margin. Other candidates received 3.6% of the vote. An analysis of the 1998 vote for Governor shows the following subgroup characteristics:

- Among precinct voters Davis was preferred over Lungren 60% to 36%, while among absentee ballot voters his preference margin was much less — 51% to 45%.
- Davis carried the state's two most populous areas by huge margins. In L.A. County, which accounts for 24% of the voters, Davis won by 66% to 31%. In the San Francisco Bay Area (23% of the state's vote) Davis' victory margin was even larger — 68% to 28%. In the Central Valley, Inland Empire, San Diego County and Central Coast areas, Davis won by margins ranging from 3 to 14 points. Davis failed to carry Orange County and the North Coast/Sierra region, but by relatively narrow margins.
- Davis was preferred by 90% of Democrats, while just 7% crossed over to vote for Lungren. Lungren won a somewhat smaller proportion of GOP voters (79%), while 20% defected to Davis. Voters identifying themselves as independents preferred Davis 53% to 35%.
- Liberals supported Davis by a 85% to 7% margin, while Lungren carried the conservative vote 77% to 21%. One reason for Davis' big victory margin was his strong support among moderates (64% to 32%), who represent about one-half (49%) of the state's voters.
- While Davis was supported by majorities of both men and women, his margin was much greater among women.
- White non-Hispanics were nearly evenly divided in their preferences (50% for Davis vs. 46% for Lungren). However, among the 26% of votes cast by racial/ethnic minorities Davis led decisively. Among Latinos, Davis was preferred 78% to 17%. Among blacks the split was 83% to 11%. Asian voters also supported Davis by a greater than two to one margin (67% to 29%).
- While Davis was preferred by voters in all age categories, his margin was greatest among those under age 30 and smallest among voters over age 60.
- Voters living in households where a union member resided supported Davis by a huge 70% to 25% margin. Among those living in non-union households, Davis was preferred by a narrower margin — 53% to 43%.
- Davis was preferred over Lungren among voters across all income categories, although his margin was greatest among those with household incomes of less than \$30,000.
- One of the few major demographic subgroups which Lungren carried was Protestants/Christians (51% to 46%). By contrast, 61% of Catholics, 83% of Jews, and 63% of those affiliated with other religions and 71% of voters with no religious preference preferred Davis.

Table 5
Voter Preferences in the 1998 Gubernatorial Race
by Selected Demographic Subgroups

	Davis (D)	Lungren (R)
Statewide Vote	<u>58.0%</u>	<u>38.4%</u>
<u>Vote method</u>		
(.75) Precinct voter	60%	36
(.25) Absentee voter	51%	45
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	66%	31
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	68%	28
(.09) San Diego County	49%	46
(.08) Orange County	45%	52
(.15) Central Valley	51%	46
(.08) Inland Empire	52%	44
(.07) Central Coast	55%	41
(.05) North Coast/Sierra	47%	48
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.42) Democrat	90%	7
(.37) Republican	20%	79
(.21) Independent/other	53%	35
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.29) Conservative	21%	77
(.49) Moderate	64%	32
(.22) Liberal	85%	7
<u>Sex</u>		
(.48) Male	54%	43
(.52) Female	60%	35
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>		
(.74) White (non-Hispanic)	50%	46
(.13) Latino	78%	17
(.07) Black/African-American	83%	11
(.06) Asian	67%	29
<u>Age</u>		
(.14) 18-29	63%	31
(.30) 30-44	59%	36
(.29) 45-59	58%	39
(.27) 60 or older	51%	46
<u>Labor union affiliation</u>		
(.22) Union member in household	70%	25
(.78) Non-union household	53%	43
<u>Education</u>		
(.22) High school education or less	63%	33
(.34) Some college	54%	42
(.27) College graduate	53%	44
(.17) Post graduate degree	60%	35
<u>Household income</u>		
(.08) Under \$15,000	62%	25
(.15) \$15,000-\$29,999	65%	29
(.22) \$30,000-\$49,999	54%	41
(.24) \$50,000-\$74,999	56%	42
(.31) More than \$75,000	54%	43
<u>Religion</u>		
(.45) Protestant/Christian	46%	51
(.28) Catholic	61%	36
(.04) Jewish	83%	14
(.06) Other	63%	26
(.17) No preference	71%	22

(Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each major party candidate is composed of voters who supported other candidates.)

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are from Voter News Service.

Vote analysis of the 1998 election for U.S. Senate

In the U.S. Senate race, Democrat Barbara Boxer won reelection over Republican Matt Fong by a 53.1% to 43.0% margin, with 3.9% of voters preferring other candidates.

- While Boxer was preferred over Fong by 12 points among precinct voters (54% to 42%), the race was extremely close among absentee ballot voters (Boxer 49% vs. Fong 47%).
- Boxer's big overall ten point margin of victory was fashioned by her ability to pile up huge pluralities in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area, while losing to Fong in the sections of the state outside of these two vote heavy areas. Fong polled more votes than Boxer in the following areas: San Diego, Orange, Central Valley, Inland Empire, and North Coast/Sierra.
- Boxer was preferred among Democrats 87% to 11%, while Fong was favored by Republicans 82% to 15%. Boxer carried the votes of independents 50% to 42%.
- Conservatives supported Fong 78% to 19%, while liberals backed Boxer 85% to 11%. Moderates supported Boxer by a comfortable 57% to 39% margin.
- There was a large gender gap in voting preferences in the Senate race. Female voters were solidly for Boxer, 57% to 39%, while males split evenly (48% to 48%).
- Fong was narrowly preferred over Boxer among white non-Hispanics 50% to 46%. But, Boxer led Fong among each of the state's racial/ethnic minority voters. Among Latinos Boxer was preferred 72% to 23%; among blacks she led 85% to 13%, while Asian voters backed Boxer, 54% to 44%.
- Boxer was preferred over Fong among voters under age 30 nearly two to one (63% to 34%). Older voters age 60 or more split evenly. Voters between ages 30 and 59 supported Boxer roughly five to four.
- Union-affiliated voters supported Boxer 62% to 33%, while voters in non-union households were closely divided (Boxer 51% vs. Fong 46%).
- Boxer was preferred over Fong by large margins among voters with no more than a high school education and those with post graduate degrees.
- Voters with household incomes of less than \$30,000 supported Boxer roughly two to one, while those earning \$50,000 or more divided almost evenly in their preferences. Middle income voters favored Boxer 54% to 41%.
- Protestant/Christian voters preferred Fong over Boxer by a fourteen point margin (55% to 41%). However, Boxer was preferred among Catholics (56% to 39%), Jewish voters (81% to 19%), those affiliated with other religions (62% to 32%) and voters with no religious preference (70% to 26%).

Table 6
Voter Preferences in the 1998 Senate Race
by Selected Demographic Subgroups

	Boxer	Fong
Statewide Vote	<u>53.1%</u>	<u>43.0%</u>
<u>Vote method</u>		
(.75) Precinct voter	54%	42
(.25) Absentee voter	49%	47
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	61%	36
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	63%	34
(.09) San Diego County	46%	49
(.08) Orange County	39%	57
(.15) Central Valley	45%	50
(.08) Inland Empire	47%	48
(.07) Central Coast	50%	46
(.05) North Coast/Sierra	42%	53
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.42) Democrat	87%	11
(.37) Republican	15%	82
(.21) Independent/other	50%	42
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.29) Conservative	19%	78
(.49) Moderate	57%	39
(.22) Liberal	85%	11
<u>Sex</u>		
(.48) Male	48%	48
(.52) Female	57%	39
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>		
(.74) White (non-Hispanic)	46%	50
(.13) Latino	72%	23
(.07) Black/African-American	85%	13
(.06) Asian	54%	44
<u>Age</u>		
(.14) 18-29	63%	34
(.30) 30-44	53%	41
(.29) 45-59	52%	45
(.27) 60 or older	50%	48
<u>Labor union affiliation</u>		
(.22) Union member household	62%	33
(.78) Non-union household	51%	46
<u>Education</u>		
(.22) High school or less	60%	34
(.34) Some college	51%	43
(.27) College graduate	48%	50
(.17) Post graduate degree	56%	41
<u>Household income</u>		
(.08) Under \$15,000	64%	25
(.15) \$15,000-\$29,999	63%	33
(.22) \$30,000-\$49,999	54%	41
(.24) \$50,000-\$74,999	48%	50
(.31) More than \$75,000	49%	49
<u>Religion</u>		
(.45) Protestant/Christian	41%	55
(.28) Catholic	56%	39
(.04) Jewish	81%	19
(.06) Other	62%	32
(.17) No preference	70%	26

(Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each major party candidate is composed of voters who supported other candidates.)

Source: Statewide and regional vote percentages are based on official vote totals reported by the Secretary of State. Other demographic subgroup percentages are from Voter News Service.

Differences between absentee and precinct voters

Estimates of the precinct vote (i.e., voters who cast ballots at their local polling places on Election Day) as shown in Table 7 were obtained by means of an Election Day exit poll of 2,518 such voters conducted by Voter News Service (VNS). Estimates of the absentee vote were obtained through a separate pre-election telephone survey of 300 absentee ballot voters conducted by The Field Institute and VNS just prior to the election. Results from the VNS Election Day exit poll and The Field Institute pre-election survey of absentee voters were then combined by VNS to produce estimates of the overall California electorate based on an overall sample of 2,818 voters.

A comparison of precinct and absentee voters shows:

- A larger proportion of precinct voters identify with the Democratic (44%) than the Republican Party (35%). However, among absentee ballot voters, GOP identifiers (42%) outnumber Democrats (38%).
- Slightly more than half of precinct voters (51%) describe themselves as moderate in politics, while 27% consider themselves conservative and 22% are liberals. Among absentee ballot voters, the proportion of voters describing themselves as moderate (43%) is only slightly greater than the proportion of voters who are conservative (36%).
- Precinct voters are well distributed across all age categories, with about half under age 45 and half age 45 or older. Absentee voters, on the other hand, include much larger proportions of older voters than younger voters, with 68% of absentee voters age 45 or older and just 32% under age 45.
- 71% of precinct voters are white non-Hispanics, while 29% are racial/ethnic minorities. By contrast, a larger proportion of absentee voters (83%) are white non-Hispanics and just 17% are racial/ethnic minorities.
- Less than one in four precinct voters (22%) reported annual household incomes of less than \$30,000, while a somewhat larger proportion (32%) had household incomes of \$75,000 or more. Absentee ballot voters had a slightly lower household income profile, with about as many earning less than \$30,000 (27%) as earned \$75,000 or more (28%).
- About one in four precinct voters (24%) reported that they or someone else in their household are affiliated with a labor union. Among absentee voters just 15% reported this.
- About half of precinct voters (51%) graduated from college, while 49% did not. Among absentee voters a slightly larger proportion are college graduates (55%) than non-college graduates (45%).
- Among precinct voters 44% are Protestant/Christians and 30% were Catholic, while among absentee ballot voters Protestants/Christians outnumbered Catholics more than two to one (48% to 23%).

Table 7

Comparing the Regional and Demographic Characteristics of Precinct and Absentee Voters in the 1998 Election

	Precinct voters	Absentee ballot voters
	%	%
<u>Region</u>		
(.24) Los Angeles County	25	19
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	24	23
(.18) Central Valley	15	15
(.09) San Diego County	8	11
(.08) Orange County	8	8
(.08) Inland Empire	9	8
(.07) Central Coast	6	10
(.05) North Coast/Sierra	5	6
<u>Party identification</u>		
(.42) Democrat	44	38
(.37) Republican	35	42
(.21) Independent/other	21	20
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.29) Conservative	27	36
(.49) Moderate	51	43
(.22) Liberal	22	21
<u>Age</u>		
(.14) 18-29	16	9
(.30) 30-44	32	23
(.29) 45-59	29	28
(.27) 60 or older	23	40
<u>Gender</u>		
(.48) Men	48	48
(.52) Women	52	52
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>		
(.74) White (non-Hispanic)	71	83
(.13) Latino	15	9
(.07) Black/African-American	8	4
(.06) Asian/other	6	4
<u>Annual household income</u>		
(.08) Under \$15,000	8	9
(.15) \$15,000-\$29,999	14	18
(.22) \$30,000-\$49,999	22	23
(.24) \$50,000-\$74,999	25	22
(.31) \$75,000 or more	32	28
<u>Labor union</u>		
(.22) Union member in household	24	15
(.78) Non-union household	76	85
<u>Education</u>		
(.22) High school grad or less	19	20
(.34) Some college	30	25
(.27) College graduate	29	32
(.17) Post graduate work	22	23
<u>Religion</u>		
(.45) Protestant/Christian	44	48
(.28) Catholic	30	23
(.04) Jewish	4	3
(.06) Other religions	5	10
(.17) No preference	17	16

Source: Field Institute estimates based on TFI's pre-election survey of 300 absentee ballot voters and VNS's Election Day exit poll of 2,518 precinct voters in California.

Demographic differences among partisans

Of the 14,969,185 names listed on the state's official voter rolls, the partisan distribution of voters is 6,989,006 Democrats (46.7%), 5,314,912 Republicans (35.5%) and 2,665,267 names registered with other parties or who decline to state a party preference (17.8%).

Because of the relatively large amount of list deadwood, however, the actual proportions of registered Democrats or Republicans differ somewhat from the official state percentages. The Field Institute estimates that, excluding deadwood listings, there are about 13 million actual voters. The distribution of this revised total includes the following partisan divisions — 45% Democratic, 37% Republican and 18% other/decline to state.

A profile of California's registered voter population according to Field Institute estimates shows:

- Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area are the most heavily Democratic regions in the state. Regions in which Republican registrants outnumber Democrats include the San Diego/Orange area and the Central Coast. Other parts of the state are about evenly split between Democratic and Republican registrants.
- Seven in ten (70%) conservatives are registered as Republicans, while 74% of liberals are registered Democrats. Democrats hold a 49% to 27% registration advantage among political moderates.
- Greater than half (51%) of the state's female voters are Democrats, and just 34% are Republicans. Among men, the GOP holds a narrow 41% to 38% advantage.
- Voters under age 30 and age 40 – 49 are more likely to be Democrats than GOPers, while voters in other age categories split about evenly between the parties.
- Republicans hold a 44% to 39% advantage among white non-Hispanics, while Democrats have a big edge among blacks (77% to 8%) and Latinos (62% to 20%). Asian voters line up 46% Democratic and 31% Republican.
- College graduates who have not completed graduate work are slightly more likely to be registered as Republicans than Democrats (44% to 40%). Other education segments align more with the Democratic Party.
- Republicans outnumber Democrats 46% to 39% among voters with household incomes of \$80,000 or more. Those in the \$60,000 – \$80,000 range are split about evenly, while those earning less, and especially those earning less than \$20,000, are more likely to be Democrats.
- Voters in households where a union member resides favor the Democratic Party 52% to 31%, while non-union voters divide 43% Democrat and 39% Republican.
- Protestants are more likely to be Republicans than Democrats (50% to 37%). Voters affiliated with other religions and those with no religious preference are more Democratic.

Table 8
Estimates of Party Registration in California
Excluding "Deadwood"
(among registered voters)

	Democrat	Republican	Other/ decline to state
(100%) Statewide	45%	37	18
<u>Region</u>			
(.27) Los Angeles County	52%	30	18
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	51%	29	20
(.17) San Diego/Orange	33%	49	18
(.16) Central Valley	44%	42	14
(.09) Inland Empire	43%	43	14
(.06) Central Coast	35%	42	23
(.04) North Coast/Sierra	42%	42	16
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.33) Conservative	21%	70	9
(.45) Moderate	49%	27	24
(.22) Liberal	74%	6	20
<u>Gender</u>			
(.48) Male	38%	41	21
(.52) Female	51%	34	15
<u>Age</u>			
(.20) 18-29	44%	30	26
(.23) 30-39	41%	39	20
(.18) 40-49	47%	34	19
(.14) 50-59	44%	40	16
(.25) 60 or older	45%	43	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.72) White (non-Hispanic)	39%	44	17
(.16) Latino	62%	20	18
(.06) Black/African-American	77%	8	15
(.06) Asian/other	46%	31	23
<u>Education</u>			
(.23) High school grad or less	47%	35	18
(.38) Some college/trade school	45%	37	18
(.22) College graduate	40%	44	16
(.17) Post graduate work	48%	33	19
<u>Household income</u>			
(.14) Under \$20,000	56%	25	19
(.26) \$20,000-\$39,999	48%	36	16
(.22) \$40,000-\$59,999	45%	36	19
(.15) \$60,000-\$79,999	42%	41	17
(.23) \$80,000 or more	39%	46	15
<u>Labor union affiliation</u>			
(.22) Union member in household	52%	31	17
(.78) Non-union household	43%	39	18
<u>Religion</u>			
(.42) Protestant	37%	50	13
(.25) Catholic	52%	33	15
(.03) Jewish	66%	21	13
(.13) Other	49%	27	24
(.17) No preference	48%	25	27

Source: Field Institute estimates based on an aggregation of six polls of California voters conducted February – October 1998 (n=4,706).

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

Of the state's estimated 33.2 million residents, approximately 17.6 million (53%) are white non-Hispanic, while 47%, or approximately 15.6 million, are members of racial or ethnic minorities. Whereas racial and ethnic minorities now represent almost half of the state's population, in the November election they comprised just 26% of its voters. Some of the reasons for this disparity are:

- California's racial/ethnic minority population is generally younger than their white non-Hispanic counterparts. Because of this, racial/ethnic minorities account for a smaller share of the state's nearly 24 million adults (43%) than they do of the state's total population (47%).
- Disproportionately more of the state's Latino and Asian adults are not citizens, and are therefore not eligible to vote.

Among the state's citizen-adults who are eligible to vote, The Field Institute estimates that just 35% are racial/ethnic minorities.

- Latino and Asian citizen adults are also less likely than white non-Hispanics and blacks to be registered to vote. Because of this, racial/ethnic minorities comprise just 28% of the state's registered voters.
- Among Californians registered to vote, disproportionately fewer Latino and Asians turned out to vote in the 1998 general election compared to white non-Hispanics and blacks. Almost three-fourths (74%) of all voters in 1998 were white non-Hispanics, 13% were Latino, 7% were black and 6% were Asian/other.

**Table 9
California Population and Voting Participation by Race/Ethnicity — 1998**

	Total Population		Adult Population		Citizen-eligible-adults		Registered voters		1998 General election voters	
	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)	(000's)	(%)
Total	33,252 ¹	100%	23,830 ¹	100%	20,650 ²	100%	13,000	100%	8,618 ²	100% ³
White (non-Hispanic)	17,612	(53%)	13,650	(57%)	13,450	(65%)	9,300	(72%)	6,418	(74%)
Latino	9,600	(29)	5,925	(25)	3,900	(19)	2,100	(16)	1,150	(13)
Black/African-American	2,275	(7)	1,555	(7)	1,350	(7)	800	(6)	575	(7)
Asian/other	3,765	(11)	2,700	(11)	1,950	(9)	800	(6)	475	(6)

¹ California Department of Finance

² California Secretary of State

³ Voter News Service

All other figures are 1998 Field Institute estimates.

About The Field Institute

The Field Institute is a non-partisan research organization devoted to the study of public opinion on a variety of social, economic and political issues. The Institute undertakes regularly scheduled opinion and attitude surveys as well as ad hoc studies in California, its primary area of focus.

The Institute's services are available to all sectors of the public. All data from Institute studies are archived for use by scholars, policymakers, and other persons or organizations. Archived data sets are available from more than 200 studies conducted by The Field Institute and The Field Poll since 1956.

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Officers of The Field Institute are Mervin Field, Mark DiCamillo, and Dr. E. Deborah Jay.