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## ***The Israel-Hamas conflict is dividing California voters.***

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

California voters divide sharply along age, party and ideological grounds when asked their opinions about the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict in Gaza. For example . . .

- Among all voters statewide, 30% say their sympathies lie more with the Israelis, 24% the Palestinians, while another 28% say they sympathize with both equally. Yet, Republicans, conservatives, and voters ages 65 or older report sympathizing more with the Israelis than the Palestinians. And while large proportions report sympathizing with both groups equally, younger voters, liberals, Democrats and Black voters say they sympathize more with the Palestinians than the Israelis in the current situation.
- Most voters who express an opinion believe that the Israeli military's response to the Hamas attack has been too much. This is especially true among the state's Democrats, younger voters, and liberals. By contrast, pluralities of Republicans and conservative voters describe the Israeli military's response to the attack as about right.
- Californians are about evenly divided when asked what course of action Israel should now take in the conflict. Among all voters 41% feel Israel should agree to a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war, even if Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza. However, nearly as many (36%) feel it should continue its military actions until Hamas is no longer a viable force in Gaza. Majorities of the state's Democrats, liberals, and younger voters favor a cease fire, while majorities of Republicans, conservatives, and voters ages 65 or older support Israel fighting on.
- Most Californians offering an opinion feel that the best long-term solution to the Israel-Palestine situation is the creation of two separate, independent states, Israel and Palestine. Pluralities across nearly all voter segments favor a two-state solution, with Democrats, No Party Preference voters, liberals, older voters, and whites most likely to back this outcome. Strongly conservative voters feel otherwise, with a plurality favoring the creation of a single Israeli state for the entire territory that is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- California voters are very critical of the job President Joe Biden is doing in handling the Israel-Hamas conflict, with 55% disapproving and 33% approving. Highly negative appraisals of the President's performance are coming from both the political right and the political left. There is also a huge generational divide in evaluations of Biden's handling of the crisis, with voters under age 30 disapproving 69% to 15%, while voters ages 65 or older approve 52% to 40%.

Eric Schickler, co-director of IGS, offered this comment, “The Israel-Hamas conflict divides California voters along multiple dimensions, especially among Democrats, underscoring the political challenges President Biden faces in handling this crisis.”

**Voters are divided when asked where their sympathies lie in the Israel-Palestinian conflict**

When asked who they sympathize with more in the current Israel-Palestinian conflict, 30% say the Israelis, 24% say the Palestinians, while another 28% say both equally. However, there are distinct differences in opinions across subgroups of the California voting population. Larger proportions of Republicans, conservatives, and voters ages 65 or older report that their sympathies lie more with the Israelis than the Palestinians. On the other hand, while large proportions report sympathizing with both groups equally, younger voters, liberals, Democrats and Black voters say they sympathize more with the Palestinians than the Israelis.

**Table 1**  
**Voter sympathies in the current Israel-Palestinian conflict**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	<b>More with Israelis %</b>	<b>More with Palestinians %</b>	<b>Both equally %</b>	<b>No opinion %</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	30	24	28	18
Likely voters	37	20	29	14
<b>Party registration</b>				
Democrats	16	33	34	17
Republicans	63	5	15	17
No party preference	24	24	30	22
Other parties	25	24	31	20
<b>Political ideology</b>				
Strongly conservative	72	4	9	15
Somewhat conservative	50	8	21	21
Moderate	27	16	33	24
Somewhat liberal	14	32	40	14
Strongly liberal	7	58	28	7
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	26	27	27	20
Male	34	20	29	17
<b>Age</b>				
18-29	14	44	21	21
30-39	20	33	26	21
40-49	26	21	32	21
50-64	35	14	30	21
65 or older	46	13	32	9
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White	38	19	32	11
Latino	24	27	23	26
Asian/Pacific Islander	23	31	29	17
Black	8	29	28	35

**Plurality describes the Israeli military response to the Hamas attack as being too much**

Nearly half of the state’s voters (44%) consider the Israeli military response to the Hamas attack as too much, compared to just 9% who say it has been too little. Another 23% think it is about right, while 24% do not offer an opinion.

Pluralities of Californians across most major subgroups consider the Israeli military’s response to the Hamas attack as too much. Most likely to feel this way are Democrats, younger voters, and liberals, especially those who describe themselves as strongly liberal in politics. By contrast, Republicans and conservative voters feel the Israeli response has been about right. Voters ages 65 and older divide about evenly between these two responses.

**Table 2**  
**Israeli military’s response to the Hamas attack**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	<b>Too much</b>	<b>About right</b>	<b>Too little</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	44	23	9	24
Likely voters	42	28	10	20
<b>Party registration</b>				
Democrats	60	14	3	23
Republicans	13	42	22	23
No party preference	43	21	9	27
Other parties	42	19	9	30
<b>Political ideology</b>				
Strongly conservative	8	45	28	19
Somewhat conservative	20	38	16	26
Moderate	37	23	7	33
Somewhat liberal	51	14	4	21
Strongly liberal	82	5	1	12
<b>Gender</b>				
Female	46	18	8	28
Male	41	28	11	20
<b>Age</b>				
18-29	56	13	4	27
30-39	50	14	8	28
40-49	41	20	8	31
50-64	37	24	12	27
65 or older	37	37	11	15
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>				
White	44	28	11	17
Latino	41	19	8	32
Asian/Pacific Islander	49	20	8	23
Black	41	11	3	45

**Divided views about the best course of action for Israel to take right now**

Californians are divided when asked what they believe the best course of action for Israel to take in the crisis should be right now. About four in ten (41%) believe Israel should agree to a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza. However, nearly as many (36%) feel it should continue its military actions until Hamas is no longer a viable force on the Gaza Strip. Another 23% have no opinion.

Views about this vary significantly across voter subgroups. Majorities of Democrats, liberals, and younger voters favor Israel agreeing to a cease fire, while majorities of Republicans, conservatives, and older voters believe Israel should continue fighting until Hamas is no longer viable.

There are also differences in opinions about this by gender and across the state’s racial and ethnic populations. Pluralities of women and voters of color are more likely to support Israel agreeing to a cease fire, while men and the state’s white voters are somewhat more inclined to believe that Israel should continue fighting until Hamas is no longer viable.

**Table 3**  
**Best course of action for Israel to take right now**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	Agree to a cease fire even if Hamas remains viable %	Continue fighting until Hamas is no longer viable %	No opinion n%
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>23</b>
Likely voters	38	43	19
<b><u>Party registration</u></b>			
Democrats	55	23	22
Republicans	13	66	21
No party preference	41	32	27
Other parties	43	30	27
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>			
Strongly conservative	12	72	16
Somewhat conservative	22	56	22
Moderate	36	33	31
Somewhat liberal	52	23	25
Strongly liberal	73	13	14
<b><u>Gender</u></b>			
Female	45	29	26
Male	36	43	21
<b><u>Age</u></b>			
18-29	55	18	27
30-39	49	24	27
40-49	40	33	27
50-64	34	42	24
65 or older	32	52	16
<b><u>Race/ethnicity</u></b>			
White	36	45	19
Latino	46	25	29
Asian/Pacific Islander	46	32	22

### **Two-state solution seen as the best long-term resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict**

When asked to consider the best long-term resolution to the Israel-Palestinian conflict, about half of California voters (47%) favor the creation of two separate, independent states, Israel and Palestine, in the region. This alternative is preferred by a wide margin over three other alternatives posed in the survey. These include creating a single state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian, favored by 14%, having Israel form a single state from what is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, supported by 11%, and creating a single Palestinian state for the entire territory that is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, backed by just 3%.

While pluralities across nearly all voter subgroups favor the two-state solution, Democrats, No Party Preference voters, liberals, older voters, and whites are most likely to back this alternative. Strongly conservative voters are the exception, with a plurality favoring the creation of a single Israeli state for all the territory that is now Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

**Table 4**  
**Best long-term resolution to Israel-Palestine conflict**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	<b>Two separate, independent states – Israel and Palestine</b>	<b>One single state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian</b>	<b>One single Israeli state for all of Israel, West Bank, Gaza</b>	<b>One single Palestinian state for all of Israel, West Bank, Gaza</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	47	14	11	3	25
Likely voters	50	12	15	2	21
<b>Party registration</b>					
Democrats	54	16	2	3	25
Republicans	34	8	31	1	26
No party preference	50	13	9	3	25
Other parties	37	17	12	6	28
<b>Political ideology</b>					
Strongly conservative	26	6	43	1	24
Somewhat conservative	43	9	21	1	26
Moderate	47	13	7	2	31
Somewhat liberal	57	18	2	3	20
Strongly liberal	56	19	1	8	16
<b>Gender</b>					
Female	45	13	10	3	29
Male	49	14	13	3	21
<b>Age</b>					
18-29	44	18	4	7	27
30-39	41	17	8	5	29
40-49	44	14	9	2	31
50-64	47	10	15	1	27
65 or older	56	11	16	1	16
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>					

White	54	13	14	2	17
Latino	37	14	11	4	34
Asian/Pacific Islander	49	13	8	4	26
Black	40	16	4	4	36

**Majorities disapprove of President Biden’s handling of the Israel-Hamas conflict**

The overall California electorate is highly critical of the job President Biden is doing in handling the Israel-Hamas conflict, with 55% of voters disapproving and just 33% approving.

Highly negative appraisals of the President’s performance are coming from both the political right, with two-thirds of the state’s Republicans and conservative voters disapproving, as well as the political left, with two-thirds of strongly liberal voters also disapproving.

There is a huge generational divide in evaluations of Biden’s handling of the crisis, About seven in ten voters under age 30 (69%) disapprove of the President on this, while just 15% approve. By contrast, among voters ages 65 or older, more approve (52%) than disapprove (40%).

Latino voters, women, voters ages 30-49, and those registered with a minor party are also more critical of Biden’s handling of the crisis than other voter segments.

**Table 5**  
**Appraisal of the job President Biden is doing in handling the Israel-Hamas conflict**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>12</b>
Likely voters	40	52	8
<b>Party registration</b>			
Democrats	40	49	11
Republicans	25	66	9
No party preference	32	54	14
Other parties	23	63	14
<b>Political ideology</b>			
Strongly conservative	25	67	8
Somewhat conservative	30	60	10
Moderate	37	49	14
Somewhat liberal	40	47	13
Strongly liberal	28	64	8
<b>Gender</b>			
Female	29	58	13
Male	38	53	9
<b>Age</b>			
18-29	15	69	16
30-39	21	65	14
40-49	28	61	11
50-64	40	50	10

65 or older	52	40	8
<b><u>Race/ethnicity</u></b>			
White	40	51	9
Latino	23	65	12
Asian/Pacific Islander	32	53	15
Black	33	46	21

**Californians are concerned about the possibility of increasing hate incidents and violence against both Jewish Americans and Muslim or Arab Americans in the U.S.**

One sentiment shared by large majorities across nearly all segments of the California voter population relates to their concern about the possibility of increasing hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans and Muslim or Arab Americans in the United States.

Eight in ten of the state’s voters (80%) express concerns about the possibility of increased hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans as a result of the conflict, and nearly as many (75%) say this with regard to Muslim or Arab Americans.

**Table 6**  
**Concerns about the threat of increased hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans and against Muslim/Arab Americans (among California registered voters)**

	Jewish Americans		Muslim or Arab Americans	
	Concerned %	Not concerned %	Concerned %	Not concerned %
<b>Total registered voters</b>	80	12	75	17
Likely voters	87	9	78	16
<b><u>Party registration</u></b>				
Democrats	82	10	85	8
Republicans	81	13	60	31
No party preference	74	16	69	20
Other parties	78	14	74	18
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>				
Strongly conservative	81	13	53	38
Somewhat conservative	80	13	62	28
Moderate	73	14	71	16
Somewhat liberal	85	9	87	8
Strongly liberal	86	11	94	3
<b><u>Gender</u></b>				
Female	81	10	79	12
Male	78	14	70	22
<b><u>Age</u></b>				
18-29	71	20	75	16
30-39	72	17	70	19
40-49	74	10	69	20
50-64	82	10	73	18
65 or older	94	3	83	12
<b><u>Race/ethnicity</u></b>				
White	87	10	78	17



Latino	76	13	73	16
Asian/Pacific Islander	76	14	73	15
Black	69	19	65	16

*Differences between 100% and the sum of each question's percentages equal proportions with no opinion.*

**About the Survey**

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was done online in English and Spanish January 4-8, 2024, among 8,199 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Data collection was completed by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations. Samples of California registered voters with email addresses were derived from information contained on the official voter registration rolls and provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, after the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the survey data file to align the sample of registered voters to population characteristics of the registered voters statewide and within major regions of the state.

The sampling error associated with the survey results is difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-1.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. A more complete description of the survey methods used by the poll can be found on the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website or at [https://igs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/survey\\_methods\\_of\\_the\\_berkeley\\_igs\\_poll\\_update\\_d\\_1\\_3\\_24.pdf](https://igs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/survey_methods_of_the_berkeley_igs_poll_update_d_1_3_24.pdf)

**Question wording**

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Biden is doing with regard to the fighting between Israel and Hamas?

In the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank, are your sympathies more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinians (or about equal)?

Do you think the Israeli military response to Hamas's attack on Israel has been too much, too little, or about right?

What do you feel would be the best course of action for Israel to take in the current situation?

- (1) Israel should continue its military actions against Hamas until Hamas is no longer a viable force in Gaza.
- (2) Israel should agree to a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza

Which of the following do you think would be the best resolution of the Israel - Palestine conflict?

- (1) Two separate states, a Jewish state alongside an independent Palestinian state.
- (2) A single Palestinian state encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- (3) A single Israeli state encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- (4) A single state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian, encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

How concerned are you about increases in hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans in the United States?

How concerned are you about increases in hate incidents and violence against Muslim or Arab Americans in the United States?

#### **About the Institute of Governmental Studies**

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication, and public service. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS's co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a copy of the detailed tabulations to this report or a listing of all past poll reports issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll*, please visit the poll's website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.