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While the statewide law providing sanctuary to undocumented immigrants is supported by a majority of California voters, the issue is highly divisive.

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The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that the statewide law to provide sanctuary to undocumented immigrants and limit some types of cooperation with federal immigration officials, while supported by a majority, is creating big divisions among the state's electorate.

When asked their overall opinion of the law, 56% of voters favor it, while 41% of voters are opposed. Opinions among voters in both camps are strongly held, with 38% saying they strongly favor the law, while 32% are strongly opposed.

Voter opinions are similarly divided and strongly held with regard to attempts by local officials to opt their cities out of the law. When asked how they would feel if the local officials in their communities proposed opting out of the law, 52% of voters are opposed (39% strongly), while 42% are in favor (33% strongly).

The profile of voter responses to these two questions are consistent with and in many respects are mirror images of their opinions about their views of the law itself. For example . . .

- About eight in ten Democrats and liberals favor the statewide law and similar proportions oppose efforts by local officials to opt out of the law. By contrast, large majorities of Republicans and conservatives oppose the law and support local opt out efforts.
- Large majorities of voters in Los Angeles County, San Diego County and the San Francisco Bay Area support the law and oppose efforts by local officials to opt their communities out of the law. On the other hand, a majority of voters in Orange County, where the revolt against the statewide law first began, oppose the law and support local efforts to opt out of the law. Similar sentiments are expressed by voters in the Central Valley and in areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area.
- These issues are also dividing voters along racial, gender and generational lines. Majorities of female voters, Latinos, African Americans and younger voters support the law and oppose any

effort to opt out their communities from the law. By contrast, males, white non-Hispanics and voters over the age of 40 are more divided, with about half supporting the statewide law and opposing any local effort to opt out of it.

Given the political divisions that characterize voter views on these matters, this issue is likely to become a major campaign issue, not only in this year's elections for governor and U.S. Senate, but also in the state's many competitive congressional elections this fall. These races are taking on added significance this year, as the Democratic Party is targeting at least seven of the state's Republican-held congressional districts in its efforts to win back control of the House of Representatives.

The latest poll examined the opinions of voters within the state's congressional districts by subdividing the overall statewide sample into three segments: (1) voters living in the thirty-nine districts represented by Democrats, (2) voters living in the seven Republican-held districts rated by independent observers as being safe seats in the fall elections, and (3) voters living in the seven Republican-held districts deemed by independent observers as being competitive between the two parties in November.

The results show that there are wide differences in opinions about the law among voters across these three segments. For example, large majorities of voters living in congressional districts represented by Democrats favor the law and oppose local efforts to opt out of it. The reverse is true among voters living in the Republican-held congressional districts considered safe for the GOP this fall, where majorities oppose the law and favor local efforts to opt out of it. However, voters living in Republican-held districts considered competitive in the fall, and which the Democratic Party is targeting, are more divided and oppose the state law only narrowly.

Voter views about the statewide law to give undocumented immigrants sanctuary

Table 1 below reports the distribution of California voter sentiment about the statewide law giving sanctuary to undocumented immigrants and limiting some forms of cooperation with federal immigration officials trying to deport them. The results indicate that a 56% majority of voters support the law, while 41% are opposed. Opinions on both sides are strongly held, with 38% of voters strongly supportive of the law and 32% strongly opposed.

Table 1
Views about the statewide law that provides sanctuary to undocumented immigrants and limits cooperation with federal immigration officials (among California registered voters)

	Total
	%
Favor (net)	<u>56</u>
Favor strongly	38
Favor somewhat	18
Oppose (net)	<u>41</u>
Oppose somewhat	9
Oppose strongly	32
Undecided	3

Voter opinions toward the law vary widely across voter subgroups

Voter opinions toward the law vary widely across major subgroups of the registered voter population.

The largest differences relate to the party registration and political ideology of voters. While over eight in ten Democrats and liberals favor the statewide law, similarly large majorities of Republicans and conservatives are opposed to it.

There are also big differences in voter opinions across the state geographically. Voters living in the state’s coastal counties, which comprise more than 70% of all voters, support the law by a wide margin (60% to 37%). By contrast, a majority of voters in the state’s inland counties oppose the law 53% to 44%.

Support for the law is greatest among voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, and San Diego County. By contrast, a majority of voters oppose the law in Orange County, where the local revolt against the state law had its origins. Similar sentiments are observed among voters in the Central Valley, and in areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area.

Opinions about the statewide law also divide voters by race/ethnicity, gender and age. For example, while about seven in ten Latino and African American voters support the law, white non-Hispanics are evenly divided.

Similarly, while seven in ten voters under the age of 40 favor the law, those over age 40 hold much more divided views.

In addition, support for the law is also much greater among women (62% to 37%) than men (49% to 47%).

Table 2
Views about the law across subgroups of the registered voter population

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
Total registered voters	56	41	3
Party registration			
Democrats	83	14	3
Republicans	11	88	1
No party preference/other	52	43	5
Political ideology			
Very conservative	12	87	1
Somewhat conservative	14	82	4
Moderate	52	43	5
Somewhat liberal	85	14	1
Liberal	96	3	1
Area			
Coastal counties	60	37	3
Inland counties	44	53	3
Region			
Los Angeles County	61	34	5
San Diego County	60	38	2
Orange County	47	51	2
Other Southern California	49	47	4
Central Valley	46	52	2
San Francisco Bay Area	66	33	1
Other Northern California	41	58	1
Gender			
Male	49	47	4
Female	62	37	1
Age			
18-29	70	24	6
30-39	67	30	3
40-49	50	47	3
50-64	49	49	2
65 or older	47	50	3
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	49	50	1
Latino	71	23	6
African American	67	26	7
Asian American/other	51	45	4
Congressional Districts			
Democratic-held districts	62	35	3
Republican-held districts considered safe*	35	63	2
Republican-held districts-competitive**	44	52	4

* Based on April 2018 Cook Political Report ratings of House elections in 2018. "Safe" Republican-held districts are those given the designation "solid Republican" or "likely Republican." These include the following Congressional Districts: CD-01 (LaMalfa), CD-04 (McClintock), CD-08 (Cook), CD-22 (Nunes), CD-23 (McCarthy), CD-42 (Calvert) and CD-50 (Hunter).

** Based on April 2018 Cook Political Report ratings of House elections in 2018. "Competitive" districts are those given the designation "toss-up" or "leans Republican." These include the following Congressional Districts: CD-10 (Denham), CD-21 (Valadao), CD-25 (Knight), CD-39 (open), CD-45 (Walters), CD-48 (Rohrabacher), and CD-49 (open).

How voters would react if local officials in their communities proposed to opt out of the law

A second question in the poll sought to gauge voter opinions about the growing movement of cities that are passing local ordinances against the statewide law. The question presented to voters was as follows:

“Some cities in California have passed local laws that attempt to opt out their communities from the new state law. If local officials in your city were to propose to opt out your community from the state’s new law providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, would you favor or oppose it?”

The reactions of voters to this question are consistent with and in many respects are mirror images of their opinions about the law itself. By a five-to-four margin (42% in favor and 52% opposed), most Californians oppose the idea of having their local leaders attempt to opt their communities out of the state law. But, like opinions of voters toward the law overall, views about this are strongly held, with 39% of voters strongly opposed to local opt out efforts, and 33% strongly in favor.

Table 3

If local officials in your city were to propose to opt out your community from the statewide law providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, would you favor or oppose it? (among California registered voters)

	Total
	%
Favor (net)	42
Favor strongly	33
Favor somewhat	9
Oppose (net)	52
Oppose somewhat	13
Oppose strongly	39
Undecided	6

Wide variations across voter subgroups also observed about local opt out efforts

Voter opinions toward efforts by local city officials to opt their communities out of the statewide law display the same wide variations across voter subgroups as is seen in reactions to the law overall.

While about three in four Democrats and liberals oppose any effort by their local officials to attempt to opt out of the statewide law, similar large majorities of Republicans and conservatives would support these efforts. Opposition is greatest among voters in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area. By contrast, slim majorities of voters in Orange County, the Central Valley and in other parts of California outside major population centers of the Bay Area and the greater Los Angeles area support such efforts.

While majorities of women, Latinos, African Americans and younger voters oppose any attempt by local officials to opt out of the statewide law, men, white non-Hispanics and voters over the age of 40 hold more divided opinions about these matters.

Table 4

If local officials in your city were to propose to opt out your community from the statewide law providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, would you favor or oppose it -- across subgroups of the registered voter population

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
Total registered voters	42	52	6
Party registration			
Democrats	19	75	6
Republicans	85	13	2
No party preference/other	42	50	8
Political ideology			
Very conservative	89	5	6
Somewhat conservative	77	21	2
Moderate	46	46	8
Somewhat liberal	16	78	6
Very liberal	6	91	3
Area			
Coastal counties	38	56	6
Inland counties	53	42	5
Region			
Los Angeles County	36	57	7
San Diego County	43	52	5
Orange County	53	44	3
Other Southern California	51	44	5
Central Valley	50	44	6
San Francisco Bay Area	33	63	4
Other Northern California	52	46	2
Gender			
Male	48	47	5
Female	37	57	6
Age			
18-29	30	61	9
30-39	35	58	7
40-49	41	51	8
50-64	46	49	5
65 or older	54	45	1
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	46	50	4
Latino	34	59	7
African American	28	60	12
Asian American/other	47	44	9
Congressional Districts			
Democratic-held districts	36	57	7
Republican-held districts considered safe	65	32	3
Republican-held districts-competitive	53	43	4

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of 4,038 registered voters by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The survey was completed online by distributing emails to stratified random samples of registered voters throughout California April 16-22, 2018 in English and Spanish. Each email invitation asked voters to participate in a short non-partisan survey, and were provided with a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. The sample listings of voters and their email addresses were derived from information contained on the state's official voter rolls. The voter lists were provided by Political Data, Inc., which is collaborating with IGS in its 2018 pre-election polling.

During the data processing phase, post-stratification weights were applied to align the overall sample of registered voters responding to the survey to the political and demographic characteristics of the state's overall registered voter population.

The IGS study director was responsible for overseeing all phases of the research, including the development of the survey questionnaire and email scripts, their translation into Spanish, the rules of sample selection, development of the post-stratification weights, oversight of data processing, and the analysis of the data.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size, the percentage distributions being examined and the design effects relating to how the sample was drawn. While estimates of the overall sampling error applicable to the results in this survey are not exact, it is likely that the maximum sampling error applicable to the results from the overall sample of registered voter is about +/- 3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Questions Asked

Last year California passed a state law that provides sanctuary to undocumented immigrants living in the country and limits cooperation with federal immigration officials who are attempting to deport these immigrants. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose this law?

Some cities in California have passed local laws that attempt to opt out their communities from the new state law. If local officials in your city were to propose to opt out your community from the state's new law providing sanctuary for undocumented immigrants, would you favor or oppose it?

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 (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within its newly established Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. For a complete listing of stories issued by the poll go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll>.