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Californians' economic well-being in decline; Most feel that the federal and state income taxes they now pay are too high.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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As Californians confront Tax Day, April 15 the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that about two in three voters (64%) consider the federal and state income taxes that they and their family have to pay are too high. This represents a ten percentage-point increase in the proportion of voters who said this six years ago, the last time a comparable question about income taxes was included in a statewide voter poll.

Contributing to the growing perception that income taxes are too high is the fact that many Californians report that their economic fortunes have declined over the past year. The poll finds twice as many voters now describing themselves as financially worse off than a year ago (42%) as report being better off (21%). Six years ago, the reverse was true with about twice as many voters saying they were financially better off than in the prior year (48%) as felt they were worse off (25%).

And when voters are asked about their financial prospects for the coming year more expect to be financially worse off (30%) than better off (21%), although a plurality (49%) anticipates no change.

Republicans and conservative voters are by far the most likely voter subgroups to consider federal and state income taxes as being too high. They are also more likely than other voters to maintain that their own personal financial situation has deteriorated since last year and that they expect that it will continue to worsen in the coming year.

Said G. Cristina Mora, IGS Co-Director, "The findings indicate that many Californians are feeling pinched in today's economy. While the pandemic brought gains for a few, a much larger percentage of Californians have borne an economic burden during this same time period."

Table 1				
Are the federal and state income taxes that you and your family now pay too high, about right or too low (among California registered voters)				
	Too high	About right	Too low	No opinion
	%	%	%	%
Statewide -- April 2022	64	26	1	9
April 2016	54	40	2	4
Party registration				
Democrats	54	35	2	9
Republicans	83	12	--	5
No Party Preference/other	66	23	1	10
Political ideology				
Strongly conservative	85	9	--	6
Somewhat conservative	78	15	1	6
Moderate	70	21	--	9
Somewhat liberal	50	39	1	10
Strongly liberal	38	45	3	14
Age				
18-29	59	23	1	17
30-39	71	19	2	9
40-49	72	22	1	5
50-64	70	23	1	6
65 or older	53	39	1	7
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	61	31	1	7
Latino	69	19	1	11
Asian/Pacific Islander	65	23	1	11
Black	66	22	1	11
Annual household income				
Less than \$40,000	57	25	1	17
\$40,000-\$99,999	65	27	1	7
\$100,000-\$199,999	68	26	1	5
\$200,000 or more	68	25	2	5

Note: 2016 survey conducted by The Field Poll among California registered voters as reported in release #2536, April 15, 2016 by Field Research Corporation.

Table 2
Trend of personal financial well-being now compared to last year, 1961-2022
(among California registered voters)

	Better off %	No change* %	Worse off %
April 2022	21	37	42
2016	48	27	25
2014	44	28	28
2012	25	33	42
2010	23	25	52
2008	14	23	63
2007	37	30	33
2004	41	32	27
2002	47	26	27
2000	54	28	18
1998	54	30	16
1996	38	35	27
1994	29	26	45
1992	25	28	47
1990	42	28	30
1988	49	26	25
1986	54	27	19
1984	55	24	21
1981	33	25	42
1978	34	36	30
1976	28	29	43
1974	39	33	28
1970	34	33	33
1966	37	45	18
1961	40	41	19

Note: Prior surveys conducted by The Field Poll among California registered voters as reported in release #2536, April 15, 2016 by Field Research Corporation.

** Includes those having no opinion.*

Table 3
Trend of financial expectations for the coming year, 1961-2022
(among California registered voters)

	Will be better off %	Remain about the same* %	Will be worse off %
April 2022	21	49	30
2014	40	50	10
2012	30	58	12
2010	30	58	12
2008	22	48	22
2007	32	49	14
2004	38	48	7
2002	41	45	8
2000	44	53	3
1998	46	49	5
1996	35	57	8
1994	37	49	14
1992	29	53	17
1990	38	47	15
1988	40	51	9
1986	52	42	6
1984	51	42	7
1981	35	46	19
1978	37	46	17
1976	37	45	18
1974	33	39	28
1970	34	44	22
1966	43	49	8
1961	48	46	6

Note: Prior surveys conducted by The Field Poll among California registered voters as reported in release #2473, June 16, 2014 by Field Research Corporation.

** Includes those having no opinion.*

Table 4
Current financial well-being compared to last year and expectations for next year
across major demographic subgroups of the California registered voter population

	Current			Next year		
	Better off now %	No change %	Worse off now %	Will be better off %	No change %	Will be worse off %
Total statewide	21	37	42	21	49	30
Party registration						
Democrat	28	43	29	27	56	17
Republican	9	24	67	8	37	55
No Party Pref./other	21	36	43	20	50	30
Political ideology						
Strongly conservative	7	23	70	11	29	60
Somewhat conservative	12	30	58	14	42	44
Moderate	19	39	42	20	51	29
Somewhat liberal	32	42	26	27	59	14
Strongly liberal	34	43	23	28	57	15
Age						
18-29	23	38	39	23	54	23
30-39	27	32	41	28	46	26
40-49	21	35	44	22	46	32
50-64	18	34	48	20	44	36
65 or older	17	44	39	12	55	33
Race/ethnicity						
White non-Hispanic	22	36	42	17	49	34
Latino	17	39	44	25	48	27
Asian/Pacific Islander	27	37	36	22	54	24
Black	23	40	37	29	47	24
Annual household income						
Less than \$40,000	12	38	50	20	54	26
\$40,000-\$99,999	18	35	47	20	48	32
\$100,000-\$199,999	25	36	39	20	47	33
\$200,000 or more	40	33	27	30	48	22

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish March 29-April 5, 2022, among 8,676 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Email invitations were distributed 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.

The current poll also included an oversampling of registered voters in the City of Los Angeles to enable the poll to examine specific issues of interest to voters in that City and to the *Times*. After the completion of data collection, the results were weighted to realign the Los Angeles City sample to its actual share of the statewide voter population.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California and were derived from information contained on the official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters to population characteristics.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and the 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 +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

Would you say that you and your family are financially better off or worse off than you were a year ago?

Looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you and your family will be better off financially, worse off, or remain about the same as now?

Do you feel the amount of federal and state income taxes that you and your family have to pay is too high, too low, or about right?

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. The detailed tabulations to this report and all past reports issued by the poll can be found at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.