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California Democrats and Republicans are worlds apart about the integrity of our election systems and mail ballot voting.

by Mark DiCamillo
Director, Berkeley IGS Poll

While California voters express confidence in the integrity of the state's election system by a nearly two-to-one margin, there is a 66 percentage-point gap between the views of voters within the state's two major political parties. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that while nearly nine in ten Democrats (88%) have confidence in the integrity of our election system, just 22% of Republicans say this.

When asked how concerned they were about potential threats to the functioning of the election system in the U.S. and in California, the state's partisans also hold vastly different views about the types of threats they are concerned about. The greatest concern to the state's Democratic voters has to do with the potential federal interference with the administration of the state's elections, which 80% consider a major concern. On the other hand, just 28% of Republicans describe federal government interference in our state elections as is a major concern. But, greater than eight in ten Republicans cite voter fraud (84%) and people who are non-citizens illegally voting in elections (85%) as major concerns, while few Democrats express these concerns.

The partisan gap is just as wide when voters are asked about the state's use of mail balloting as California's primary means of voting in elections. Among the overall electorate a 72% majority approves of the state's use of mail ballots to vote in elections, with 58% strongly approving. And by a greater than two-to-one margin voters also express confidence that late arriving mail ballots votes are counted accurately.

However, while approval of the mail ballot voting is nearly unanimously among Democrats (93%) among Republicans just one in three (33%) approve, while 62% do not. An underlying reason for this divide relates to the wide gap in the confidence that Democratic and Republican voters have about the accuracy of the vote count of late arriving mail ballots. And while 87% of Democrats are confident in their accuracy, most Republicans are skeptical, with just 27% expressing confidence and 69% do not.

Republicans are also much more likely than Democrats to express concerns about the slowness of the vote count in California after an election has been concluded. Among Republicans 85% report being concerned about the slowness of the vote count, with 62% very concerned. By contrast, just

38% of Democrats express concerns about the state’s slow vote count, of whom just 10% are very concerned.

IGS Co-Director, G. Cristina Mora notes “The results show that Californians are concerned, but the basis of that worry among Democrats and Republicans stems from vastly different sources. Democrats are highly confident in the state’s ability to carry out fair elections but fear the Trump administration’s meddling. Republicans, however, have little confidence in California election officials and seem to welcome federal oversight in elections. The basis of fear and worry could not be more polarized as we head towards November.”

Huge partisan difference among voters about their confidence in the integrity of the state’s election system

By a nearly two-to-one margin (64% to 34%) the overall electorate express confidence in the overall integrity of the election system in California. Democrats express confidence in the system by an overwhelming eight to one margin (88% to 11%). The views of No Party Preference voters are very similar to the overall statewide public and report confidence in the system two to one.

However, views about the integrity of the California election system are very different among Republicans. Just 22% of Republicans express confidence in the state’s election system, while three in four (76%) are not confident, 51% of whom say that they are “not at all confident” in the system.

Table 1
Confidence that voters have in the integrity of the election system in California
(among registered voters in California)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference/ others %
<u>Confident</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>88</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>64</u>
Extremely confident	24	38	4	19
Very confident	20	28	4	22
Somewhat	20	21	13	23
<u>Not confident</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>32</u>
Not too confident	14	7	25	14
Not at all confident	20	4	51	18
No opinion	2	1	2	4

Interference by the federal government or by foreign governments in the administration of elections are major concerns to the state’s voters

California voters were then asked how concerned they were about four potential threats to the functioning of the election system in the U.S. and in California. Of the four, majorities identify two threats as being a major concern to them. These include “attempts by the federal government to interfere with the administration of elections in California” (61%) and “attempts by foreign governments to interfere with the administration of elections in the U.S.” (59%). Smaller proportions of voters say that two other threats are a major concern, “voter fraud” (41%) and “people who are not citizens voting illegally in elections” (37%).

However, as with voter opinions about the integrity of California's election system, Democratic and Republican voters hold vastly different concerns when asked about the threats to election systems both in the U.S. and in California. The greatest concern to Democratic voters has to do with potential interference with the administration of California elections by the federal government, cited by 80% as a major concern. Relatively few Democrats report either voter fraud (21%) or non-citizens voting illegally in elections as major concerns to them.

By contrast, just 28% of Republicans describe federal government interference in California elections as a major concern, while greater than eight in ten cite voter fraud and people who are non-citizens illegally voting in elections as matters that concern them the most.

The potential election threat that majorities of both Democrats (55%) and Republicans (68%) can agree upon relates to their mutual concern with any attempt by foreign governments to interfere with the administration of elections.

<i>Table 2</i> Voter concern about potential threats to the election system <i>(among registered voters in California)</i>				
	Major concern %	Minor concern %	Not a concern %	No opinion %
Attempts by the federal government to interfere with the administration of elections in California				
Total registered voters	<u>61</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrat	80	12	6	2
Republican	28	20	47	5
No Party Preference/other	61	18	16	5
Attempts by foreign governments to interfere with the administration of elections in the U.S.				
Total registered voters	<u>59</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrat	55	31	11	2
Republican	68	23	6	3
No Party Preference/other	56	27	13	5
Voter fraud				
Total registered voters	<u>41</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrat	21	22	55	2
Republican	84	11	4	2
No Party Preference/other	36	24	35	4
People who are not citizens voting illegally in elections				
Total registered voters	<u>37</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>4</u>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrat	12	18	88	4

Republican	85	10	4	2
No Party Preference/other	33	20	42	5

Large majorities approve of the state’s use of mail balloting and believe these votes are accurately counted, but voters express concerns about the delays in the counting of the vote

Voters in this survey were also asked a series of questions about the state’s use of mail ballots as the primary means of voting in elections. The results indicate that Californians approve of mail balloting as the primary means of voting in elections by a wide 72% to 24% margin, with 58% saying they strongly approve.

By a greater than two to one margin (65% to 31%) voters also say they are confident that local election officials are accurately and fairly counting the large number of late arriving mail ballots that get counted days and sometimes weeks after the election. But a 53% majority of California voters also express concerns about the delays in the counting of late arriving mail ballots that this creates after an election.

Views about the state’s growing reliance on mail balloting as its primary means of voting, the accuracy of the counting of late arriving mail ballots, and the delays it creates in counting of the votes after an election are highly partisan. Democrats are nearly unanimous in their approval of California’s use of mail ballot voting and 88% express confidence that late arriving mail ballots are being counted accurately. And far fewer (38%) voice concerns about the delays this causes in the counting ballots after an election.

Republican voters hold diametrically opposite opinions than their Democratic counterparts on each of these matters. By a nearly two-to-one margin (62% to 33%) GOP voters disapprove of the use of mail balloting as California’s primary means of voting in elections, and 69% say they are not confident that late arriving mail ballots are being counted accurately and fairly. In addition, greater than eight in ten Republicans (85%) express concerns about the delays this causes in counting the state’s vote after an election, with 62% saying they are very concerned.

Table 3
Voter views of California's mail balloting
(among registered voters)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference/ others %
California's use of mail ballots as their primary means of voting in elections				
<u>Approve</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>93</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>72</u>
Approve strongly	58	81	15	58
Approve somewhat	14	11	18	14
<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>62</u>	<u>20</u>
Disapprove somewhat	10	3	20	11
Disapprove strongly	14	1	42	10
No opinion	5	3	5	7
Confidence that local election officials are fairly and accurately counting late arriving mail ballots				
<u>Confident</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>87</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>65</u>
Very confident	40	60	8	37
Somewhat	25	27	20	28
<u>Not confident</u>	<u>31</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>30</u>
Not too confident	15	7	28	16
Not at all	16	3	41	14
No opinion	4	3	3	6
Concerns about the delay in the counting of late arriving ballots has in counting votes in California after an election				
<u>Concerned</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>47</u>
Very concerned	26	10	62	20
Somewhat concerned	27	29	23	27
<u>Not concerned</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>48</u>
Not too concerned	25	30	10	29
Not at all concerned	20	29	3	19
No opinion	3	2	2	5

Question wording

How confident are you about the overall integrity of the election system here in California?

President Trump has expressed concerns about the integrity of the nation's election system. To what extent do the following things concern you as being potential threats to the election system in the U.S. and in California? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS READ)

Currently, all registered voters in California are mailed their official election ballot about 28 days before each election. As a result, most Californians now vote by returning their ballot in the envelope they receive in the mail, either by mailing it back, placing it in an official drop box, or taking it to a voting center rather than going to the polls to vote in person on Election Day. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of Californians using mail ballots as their primary means of voting in elections?

While California voters can return their mail ballots anytime on or before Election Day, most choose to wait until the closing days of the election before returning them. This creates a large backlog of late arriving mail ballots to be counted after the polls close. And it usually takes weeks to do because local election officials need to individually verify the signatures on each ballot envelope against the signature they have on file for that voter. How concerned are you about the delay this is causing in the counting of votes in California after an election?

How confident are you that your local election officials are fairly and accurately counting the late arriving mail ballots they receive when reporting the final vote totals?

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 conducted online in English and Spanish August 3 - 9, 2026 among 4,207 registered voters throughout California, including a weighted sample base of 1,905 Democrats, 1,060 Republicans and 1,242 No Party Preference or other registrants. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Data collection was completed by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email or text invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey questionnaire was housed. Reminders were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further invitations.

Samples of the state's registered voters 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 state's voter registration rolls, which is a public document. The samples were stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents. A separate random sample of Spanish-speakers was drawn from the pool of registered voters who requested that their official voting materials be sent to them in Spanish to enable the survey to assess voter opinions among the state's Spanish-speaking voters.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, the personally identifiable information about voters that was listed on their voting record was purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. Finally, after the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the data file to align the overall registered

voter sample to population characteristics of registered voters both 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 from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of about +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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 Professor G. 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. Veteran pollster Mark DiCamillo serves as director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll*. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.