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Majority of California Voters Support Early Voting, Expanded Services Available at Vote Centers

A *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted on behalf of the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund among 6,474 California registered voters, including 856 who voted in person, finds widespread support for the expanded services available at vote centers that make voting more convenient.

Since 2018, some California counties have used the Voter's Choice Act election model, which entails opening some voting sites 10 days before Election Day and opening many more three days before Election Day, in order to let voters who want to cast an in-person ballot do so at their convenience. In 2024, 29 counties used this model, and 78% of registered California voters resided in a Voter's Choice Act county.

California voters indicate that the diversity of voting options that the Voter's Choice Act allows aligns with their preferences for how they cast their ballot. When voters who voted in-person in 2024 were asked when they prefer to vote, 48% said on Election Day, 23% said in the early vote period immediately before Election Day, and 23% said in the early vote period four days before Election Day and beyond. As detailed below, young voters, Black voters, and AAPI voters were especially likely to prefer early voting options, while white voters and older voters preferred Election Day.

A new legislative proposal, SB 91, would shorten the availability of early voting by cutting the number of available early voting days from 10 to five. When California voters were polled on whether they would support reducing early voting sites in exchange for an increase in voting sites or an increase in voting hours close to Election Day, results were mixed. However, SB 91 does not require any expansion of hours or increase in sites.

When polled on whether they support eliminating voting locations 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant opening more locations in the period immediately before Election Day and on Election Day, in-person voter views were divided. Half the voters supported the trade-off posed in the question, while 27% were opposed, and another 23% were either undecided or neutral. Support differed greatly by age, with young voters far less supportive than older voters of removing the early-voting sites (35%, as compared to 68%).

A similar mixed reaction results when in-person voters are asked about eliminating voting locations 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant expanding the hours of voting sites beyond 9 am-5 pm in the period immediately before Election Day. Independent of any policy trade-off, however, voters indicated that expanding the hours of early voting sites could be beneficial. Among in-person voters, 42% expressed a preference for voting either before 9am or after 5pm, as compared to 44% who prefer to vote in the 9am-5pm window (another 14% prefer to vote on the weekend). Vote centers are currently only required to be open for eight hours during early voting days.

When asked through what method they voted, 16% reported that they had cast in-person ballots, while 44% used return-by-mail and another 38% dropped off their ballot at a dropbox or vote center. Certain groups, however, voted in-person at a significantly higher rate: in particular, 28% of Latinos and 24% of non-English dominant voters reported that they voted in person. Younger voters were also relatively more likely to vote in-person (22%).

"The Voter's Choice Act (VCA) is an important reform that gives voters more time, more flexibility, and more support to cast their ballots, " said Dora Rose, Deputy Director of the League of Women Voters of California, and Voter's Choice Act Task Force appointee. "This poll shows that underrepresented groups, including Latinos, voters with limited English, and young people all chose to vote in-person at higher rates. Reducing early in-person voting days could undermine the advantages that the model offers and risks confusing voters, thus exacerbating disparities in turnout."

More generally, the survey finds that California voters are satisfied with their voting experience, with early in-person voters expressing a very high degree of satisfaction. Satisfaction rates were elevated among voters casting their ballot in-person on Election Day (76%), in-person early (87%), by mail (85%), or by dropping off their ballot (83%).

Voters also strongly support the flexibility afforded by same-day voter registration (also known as conditional voter registration), which is a key feature of vote centers. In California, eligible voters can register or re-register (e.g. at a new address) any time up to and including Election Day, by visiting a vote center (in Voter's Choice Act counties), on Election Day at a polling place (in non-Voter's Choice Act counties), or at a county elections office (in all counties).

When asked "do you think offering eligible citizens the opportunity to register to vote up to and including Election Day is a good thing or a bad thing?" 71% of respondents agree it was a good thing. Support is strong across racial, gender, and regional groupings.

"With efforts underway in Washington that would make it harder for many to register and vote, this poll shows Californians appreciate the accessibility and flexibility that state leaders have provided them in the voting process," said Russia Chavis Cardenas, Deputy Director at California Common Cause, and Voter's Choice Act Task Force appointee. "We still haven't built a fully representative electorate in our state, but those who do vote like and use the reforms California has implemented."

In-Person Voters Prefer Diversity of Voting Options

Among the 856 in-person voters surveyed, respondents expressed a range of preferences regarding when they preferred to cast their ballots. While nearly half (48%) preferred Election Day, another 23% said in the early vote period immediately before Election Day, and 23% said in the early vote period four days before Election Day and beyond.

Among in-person voters, there are substantial differences across groups in preferences regarding when they vote. For example, while 58% of white voters indicate a preference for Election Day voting, just 35% of Black voters and 33% of Asian American and Pacific Islander voters express that same preference. Young voters are especially interested in early voting further out from Election Day. Nearly one third (32%) of respondents aged 18-29 indicate they prefer to vote four or more days before Election Day at an in-person site, compared to just 14% of those 65 years or older. Just 31% of young voters, but 67% of voters 65 and older, expressed a preference for voting on Election Day.

Table 1					
When you vote at an in-person site, when do you prefer to vote?					
	Election Day	1-3 days Before	4-10 days Before	>10 days Before	No recall
Total in-person voters	48	23	19	4	6
<u>Party registration</u>					
Democrat	42	24	22	7	5
Republican	59	22	13	2	4
No Party Preference/other	42	23	22	4	9
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>					
White	58	20	19	3	0
Latino	45	24	17	3	11
Black/African American	35	23	24	19	0
Asian American/Pacific Islander	33	27	23	5	12
<u>Age</u>					
18-29 years old	31	34	25	7	3
30-39 years old	40	28	23	6	3
40-49 years old	48	26	18	1	6
50-64 years old	55	13	14	6	12
65 or older	67	16	14	0	3

In-person voters were divided when offered the potential tradeoff between eliminating voting locations for the 4-10 days before Election Day in exchange for opening more locations in the period immediately before Election Day and on Election Day. Half the voters supported the proposal, but 27% were opposed, and 23% were either undecided or neutral.

Perhaps not surprisingly given their expressed preference for voting early, young voters were far less supportive than older voters of removing the early-voting sites (35%, as compared to 68%). Democrats were also somewhat less likely than Republicans to support the tradeoff (46%, as compared to 55%).

Table 2					
Would you support or oppose eliminating voting locations open 4-10 days before Election Day if it mean more voting locations were open for the three days before Election Day and on Election Day					
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Neither/No opinion	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Total in-person voters	27	23	23	11	15
<u>Party registration</u>					
Democrat	19	27	23	17	14
Republican	33	22	20	5	19
No Party Preference/other	28	21	25	12	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>					
White	28	25	22	10	15
Latino	26	26	24	9	15
Black/African American	31	22	26	17	4
Asian American/Pacific Islander	28	17	24	13	19
<u>Age</u>					
18-29 years old	16	19	28	19	18
30-39 years old	24	24	23	16	14
40-49 years old	28	21	33	3	14
50-64 years old	27	27	18	11	16
65 or older	43	25	10	6	15

When in-person voters are offered a different tradeoff -- eliminating voting locations 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant expanding the hours of voting sites beyond 9 am-5 pm in the period immediately before Election Day -- the results again reveal significant divisions. Among all registered voters, 52% supported this tradeoff, while 24% were opposed and another 24% were undecided or neutral. Again, however, young voters were significantly less supportive of the change than were older voters (43% vs. 71%). Democrats were also less supportive of the change (49%) than Republicans (59%).

Table 3 Would you support or oppose eliminating voting locations open 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant the voting locations that are open for the three days before Election Day would be open beyond 9am-5pm?					
	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Neither/No opinion	Somewhat Oppose	Strongly Oppose
Total in-person voters	29	23	24	10	15
<u>Party registration</u>					
Democrat	23	26	26	13	12
Republican	37	22	15	6	20
No Party Preference/other	25	22	30	11	11
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>					
White	26	26	23	8	16
Latino	30	22	24	12	12
Black/African American	47	20	22	5	6
Asian American/Pacific Islander	29	21	26	9	16
<u>Age</u>					
18-29 years old	19	23	28	15	14
30-39 years old	24	20	28	16	13
40-49 years old	30	23	28	8	11
50-64 years old	31	25	19	5	19
65 or older	42	26	11	6	15

Leaving aside potential tradeoffs with early-voting days, in-person voters did indicate that expanding the hours of early voting sites could be beneficial. About as many in-person voters (42%) expressed a preference for voting either before 9am or after 5pm, as expressed a preference to vote in the 9am-5pm window (another 14% prefer to vote on the weekend).

Once again, there were noteworthy differences across age and racial groups. For example, 17% of young voters express a preference for voting on the weekend, but just 2% of voters 65+ do. Older voters were especially likely to prefer the 9am-5pm window (59%), as compared to 41% of young voters. White voters were also more likely to prefer the 9am-5pm option (50%) than were Latinos (40%) or Black voters (24%).

Table 4				
When you vote at an in-person voting site, what time of day do you prefer to vote?				
	Weekdays Before 9am %	Weekdays 9am-5pm %	Weekdays after 5pm %	On the Weekend %
Total in-person voters	14	44	28	14
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White	19	50	21	9
Latino	7	40	37	16
Black/African American	31	24	35	9
AAPI	10	47	23	20
<u>Age</u>				
18-29 years old	6	41	30	22
30-39 years old	9	38	36	17
40-49 years old	19	38	35	9
50-64 years old	17	48	21	15
65 or older	20	59	18	2

Voters Generally Satisfied with Voting Experience and Same-Day Registration

Regardless of the method used by voters to cast their ballots, the survey finds considerable satisfaction with the voting experience. When asked, “How satisfied were you with your voting experience in the 2024 election?” 65% of respondents were very satisfied and another 19% were somewhat satisfied. Satisfaction rates were similar across voting methods, with 85% of vote-by-mail, 83% of ballot drop off, 87% of early in-person, and 76% of in-person election day voters expressing satisfaction with their experience.

Table 5:					
How satisfied were you with your experience voting in the 2024 election?					
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neither Sat. Nor Dissat.	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Not at all Satisfied
Total voters	63	20	11	3	3
Return-by-mail	67	18	10	2	3
Drop off (drop box/voting center)	62	21	12	3	3
In person Election Day	53	23	16	3	5
In person before Election Day	62	25	5	4	5

The results also indicate that voters are quite supportive of same-day voter registration, a feature available for 11 days in counties that offer vote centers. Fully 71% of respondents believe that it is a “good thing” that eligible citizens are allowed to register to vote up to and including Election Day, while 19% view this as a “bad” thing.

Table 6 Generally speaking, do you think offering eligible citizens the opportunity to register to vote up to and including Election Day is a good thing or a bad thing?			
	A good thing	A bad thing	Not Sure
Total registered voters	71	19	11
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	87	5	8
Republicans	41	46	13
No party preference/other	72	16	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White	68	22	10
Latino	74	15	11
Black/African American	80	8	12
Asian American/Pacific Islander	78	11	12
<u>Age</u>			
18-29 years old	82	8	10
30-39 years old	78	13	9
40-49 years old	72	16	11
50-64 years old	70	20	10
65 and older	57	30	13
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	73	14	13
San Diego County	66	23	11
Orange County	69	22	10
Inland Empire	66	23	12
Central Coast	68	22	9
Central Valley	66	24	10
San Francisco Bay Area	77	13	9
North Coast/Sierras	72	16	12

In 2024, same day registration was used by 323,133 voters in California. Support for same day registration is broad across racial, age, and regional groupings. For example, 68% of white voters, 74% of Latino voters, 80% of Black voters, and 78% of AAPI voters support same day registration. Similarly, the lowest level of support -- in the San Joaquin Valley -- is still 62% (as compared to 77% in the Bay Area and 73% in Los Angeles County).

Young voters are especially supportive (82%) but even those 65 or older support it by a 57%-30% margin. There is a significant partisan split, however, with registered Democrats strongly supportive of same day registration (87%-5%) and Republicans leaning opposed (46% view it as a bad thing, as compared to 41% who view it as a good thing). No Party Preference voters support same day registration by a 72%-16% margin.

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, Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, June 2-6, 2025, among 6,474 Californians registered to vote. Funding for the poll was provided Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund.

The poll was conducted by distributing email and text message invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email and text invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the Institute and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey questionnaire was housed. Reminder emails and texts were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further invitations. To accommodate non-English language voters, voters whose voting records indicated that they preferred to have their voting materials sent to them in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, or Korean were sent their email invitations in-language asking them to choose which language they preferred to complete the survey.

Samples of California registered voters were derived from information contained on the state's official voter registration rolls and was provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc. (PDI), a leading supplier of registered voter lists. To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters' email addresses, cell phone numbers and all other personally identifiable information found on the voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. 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 on a wide range of variables. More information about the survey methods used by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* can be found on the poll's website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

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 statewide registered voter sample have an estimate sampling error of about +/-2 points at the 95% confidence level.

Question Wording

How satisfied were you with your experience voting in the 2024 election?

Recent changes in state election laws also allow eligible citizens who are not registered to vote to become a registered voter any time up to and including Election Day. Generally speaking, do you think offering eligible citizens the opportunity to register to vote up to and including Election Day is a good thing or a bad thing

Some California counties use so-called “early voting.” They open voting sites 10 days before Election Day, in order to let voters who want to cast an in-person ballot do so at their convenience. [ASK only of in-person voters] When you vote at an in-person voting site, when do you prefer to vote?

When you vote at an in-person voting site, what time of day do you prefer to vote?

Would you support or oppose eliminating voting locations open 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant more voting locations were open for the three days before Election Day and on Election Day?

Would you support or oppose eliminating voting locations open 4-10 days before Election Day if it meant the voting locations that are open for the three days before Election Day would be open beyond 9 am-5 pm?

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. 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>.