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More than a quarter of registered voters in California are not certain they will respond to the 2030 Census and nearly half are not confident in the confidentiality of their responses.

The late October 2026 *Berkeley IGS Poll* of 2,787 California registered voters finds that many report that their household may not fill out the census in 2030. While 72% stated that their household is certain to fill out the 2030 census when they receive it, 16% report that they will "probably" fill it out, while 3% say that they are unlikely or certain not to fill out the census and another 5% say there is a 50-50 chance they will do so. There is a substantial gap across racial groups, with white Californians more likely to say they are certain to fill out the census than Latinos, Black Californians, and Asian Americans. There also are substantial differences across age and education groups, with younger Californians and those without a college degree much less likely to report that they are certain to fill out the census.

Reluctance to fill out the census is related to whether citizens are confident that their responses will be kept confidential. These responses are by law kept confidential. Nonetheless, only 21% of registered voters were very confident that all responses are kept confidential, while 30% were somewhat confident, and 43% were not confident. Of those who were not confident that their responses would be kept confidential, just 61% said they were certain to fill out the census – as compared to 91% of those who are very confident and 80% of those who are somewhat confident. Respondents who lacked confidence that their responses would be confidential consist disproportionately of Democrats (45%), No Party Preference voters (48%), those 18-29 and 30-39 (48% and 51% respectively), and Black voters (52%).

Respondents were also split about whether they would advise a friend or family member whom they knew is not a citizen to respond to the census. Although these responses are confidential, just 33% of Californians stated they would advise a non-citizen friend or relative to participate in the census, compared to 42% who would not do so and 25% who are not sure. Young voters, Black voters, and Republicans were less likely to recommend that a non-citizen participate in the census. Once again, lack of confidence that census responses will be kept confidential was associated with registered voters being less likely to recommend that a non-citizen participate in the census.

Observed Ditas Katague, who directed California's Census 2020 outreach and served as associate director for communications and engagement at the U.S. Census Bureau, "These findings are a warning, and we still have time to act. Doubt about confidentiality is an undercount in the making. Title 13 protections are strong, but a law people don't trust protects no one. That infrastructure has to be built now, not in 2029."

A substantial share of Californians are not certain they will fill out census; concerns about confidentiality associated with reluctance to do so

The poll asked respondents a series of questions regarding the 2030 census. Respondents were first reminded that,"By law, the census requires each household to answer questions about the people who live there," and asked "How likely would your household be to complete the census form when it comes to you in 2030?" A majority – 72% -- responded that they would be 100% certain to fill out the census, but the remaining respondents were not sure, with 16% saying they probably would do so, 5% reporting it is "50-50 – might or might not," 1% saying they probably would not, and 2% saying there was no chance they would do so. Another 4% were unsure.

There are large differences across racial groups in whether respondents expect their household to fill out the census: while 82% of white Californians say they are certain to fill out the census, just 65% of Latinos, 68% of Black respondents, and 57% of Asian Americans are similarly certain.

Younger registered voters are also less likely to be certain that they will fill out the census – just 46% of those 18-29 say that they will do so, as compared to greater than eight in ten of those 50 and older. Similarly, 52% of those with no college education say they are certain to fill out the census, as compared to 77% of those with a bachelor's degree and 81% of post-graduates. Partisan differences are more muted, but Republicans are more likely to say they are certain to fill out the census (79%) than are Democrats (73%) or No Party Preference / Other Party voters (65%).

Table 1

How likely would your household be to complete the census form when it comes to you in 2030?

	100% Certain %	Probably %	Might or Might Not – 50-50 %	Probably Not or 0% Chance %	Not Sure %
Total statewide	**72**	**16**	**5**	**3**	**4**
Party registration					
Democrat	73	17	5	1	4
Republican	79	12	3	3	3
No Party Preference/other	65	19	6	5	5
Race/ethnicity					
White	82	13	2	2	1
Latino	65	15	9	4	7
Black/African American	68	18	8	0	5
Asian American/Pac. Isl.	57	29	7	3	5
Age					
18-29	46	31	11	3	9
30-39	63	20	7	3	6
40-49	70	18	3	5	4
50-64	82	12	3	2	1
65 or older	88	6	2	2	1

The survey also asked registered voters about their beliefs regarding whether their census responses would be kept confidential. The question noted that "Title 13 of the U.S. Code says that all responses to the census are strictly confidential and are to be used for statistical purposes only. How confident are you that your household's responses to the next census will be kept confidential?" Strikingly, just 21% were very confident that responses would be kept confidential, with 50% either very or somewhat confident. Another 28% were "not too confident" and 15% were "not at all confident."

Confidence in the confidentiality of the census differed dramatically across age groups, with just 42% of 18-29 year olds and 40% of 30-39 year olds very or somewhat confident, as compared to 62% of those 65 and older. There also were some differences across racial groups, with 54% of non-Hispanic white voters very or somewhat confident, as compared to 47% of Latinos, 43% of Black Californians, and 51% of Asian Americans. Republicans were also more likely (62%) to say that they were very or somewhat confident, as compared to 48% of Democrats and 44% of No Party Preference/other voters.

Table 2

How confident are you that your household's responses to the next census in 2030 will be kept confidential?

	Very Confident %	Somewhat Confident %	Not too Confident %	Not at All Confident %	Don't Know %
Total statewide	**21**	**30**	**28**	**15**	**7**
Party registration					
Democrat	15	33	31	14	6
Republican	35	27	16	15	7
No Party Preference/other	17	27	31	17	8
Race/ethnicity					
White	19	35	26	14	6
Latino	24	23	26	19	8
Black/African American	22	21	25	27	6
Asian American/Pac. Isl.	20	31	34	10	5
Age					
18-29	15	27	34	15	10
30-39	17	22	29	23	9
40-49	21	27	30	14	8
50-64	24	30	24	17	5
65 or older	25	38	24	9	4

Lack of confidence in the confidentiality of census responses was associated with Californians' also expressing greater reluctance to fill out the 2030 census. Among respondents who were not too confident or only somewhat confident that their responses would be confidential, just 61% reported they were certain to fill out the census. By contrast, of those who were very confident their responses would be kept confidential, 91% stated they were certain to fill out the census. This 30-point gap strongly suggests that concerns about confidentiality could deter households from responding to the census.

Among the 28% of Californians who were not certain they would complete the census, only 6% were very confident their answers would remain confidential.

Californians split on whether they would advise a non-citizen to participate in the Census

Given the controversy about whether the census will ask about citizenship status, the survey asked respondents, "Would you advise a friend or family member whom you knew was not a U.S. citizen to participate in the census?" Although responses to the census are by law confidential, more California voters would recommend that a friend or family member not respond to the census than would do so. Only 17% said they would "definitely" recommend the individual respond, while 16% said they would "probably" do so, while 24% said they "definitely would not" recommend filling out the census and 18% said they "probably would not" recommend it. There is once again a large age gap, with just 20% of 18-29 year olds either definitely or probably likely to recommend filling out the census and 49% stating they definitely or probably would not recommend it. By contrast, a plurality

of voters 65 years and older – 43% -- say they would definitely or probably recommend it, as compared to 38% who would not do so. There also is a gap across racial groups, with Black voters (57%) especially reluctant to recommend that a non-citizen respond to the census, as compared to 44% of white registered voters, 40% of Latinos, and 37% of Asian Americans. Even so, it is worth noting that a plurality of each racial group stated they probably or definitely would *not* recommend that a non-citizen fill out the census. Interestingly, Republicans are also more likely than Democrats or NPP voters to advise a non-citizen friend or family member against filling out the census: 52% of Republicans, as compared to 37% of Democrats and 41% of NPP voters say they would probably or definitely not recommend filling out the census.

Table 3

Would you advise a friend or family member whom you knew was not a U.S. citizen to participate in the census?

	Definitely Would %	Probably Would %	Probably Would Not %	Definitely Would Not %	Not Sure %
Total statewide	**17**	**16**	**18**	**24**	**25**
Party registration					
Democrat	16	20	19	18	27
Republican	21	9	14	38	19
No Party Preference/other	15	15	18	23	28
Race/ethnicity					
White	17	17	17	27	23
Latino	21	12	18	22	26
Black/African American	9	16	17	41	18
Asian American/Pac. Isl.	13	21	20	17	30
Age					
18-29	8	12	26	24	30
30-39	14	15	19	22	30
40-49	18	16	14	23	29
50-64	19	15	15	30	20
65 or older	23	20	16	22	20

Among the 28% of Californians who were not certain they would complete the census, only 6% would definitely advise a non-citizen friend or family member to participate.

Finally, there is a strong relationship between confidence in the confidentiality of the census and the likelihood that registered voters would recommend that a friend or family member fill out the census. Of those who are very confident in the confidentiality of the census, 61% would definitely or probably recommend that a non-citizen friend or family member fill out the census. By contrast, of those not too confident in the confidentiality of responses, just 44% would recommend doing so and only 14% of those who are "not at all" confident in the confidentiality of the responses would recommend that a non-citizen friend or family member participate in the census.

IGS Co-Director Eric Schickler commented, "the political controversies surrounding the 2030 census appear to be leading to reduced trust in the process, which in turn could generate major disparities in who is ultimately counted—threatening the validity of a core governmental function that dates back to the founding era."

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 October 19-25, 2026, among 2,787 registered voters throughout California. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times* and the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund.

Data collection for the poll 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 was housed. Invitations were sent in Spanish to voters who requested that their official voting materials be sent to them in Spanish and given the choice of conducting the survey in English or Spanish. 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 state and local voter registration rolls, which are public documents. The sample was stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, the personally identifiable information of each voter that was listed on their voting record was purged from the data file prior to data analysis 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 data file to align the overall registered voter sample to population characteristics of all 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 an approximate sampling error of +/- 2.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

In 2030, the United States will again conduct a census of the nation's population. By law, the census requires each household to answer questions about the people who live there. How likely would your household be to complete the census form when it comes to you in 2030?

Title 13 of the U.S. Code says that all responses to the census are strictly confidential and are to be used for statistical purposes only. How confident are you that your household's responses to the next census in 2030 will be kept confidential?

Would you advise a friend or family member whom you knew was not a U.S. citizen to participate in the census?

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.