

# California Government and Politics Today

FIFTEENTH EDITION



**Mona Field**

# California Government and Politics Today

**FIFTEENTH EDITION**

**Mona Field**

*Glendale Community College*



New York, NY

**Portfolio Manager:** Bimbabati Sen  
**Portfolio Manager Assistant:** Anna Austin  
**Product Marketer:** Jessica Quazza  
**Content Producer Manager:** Maureen Richardson  
**Art/Designer:** Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.  
**Digital Studio Course Producer:** Tina Gagliostro  
**Full-Service Project Manager:** Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.  
**Compositor:** Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd.  
**Printer/Binder:** LSC Communications, Inc./North Chelmsford  
**Cover Printer:** LSC Communications, Inc./North Chelmsford  
**Cover Design:** Lumina Datamatics, Inc.  
**Cover Art:** Supersonart/Shutterstock

---

**Copyright © 2018, 2013, 2011, 2009, 2007 by Mona Field. All Rights Reserved.** Printed in the United States of America. This publication is protected by copyright, and permission should be obtained from the publisher prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise. For information regarding permissions, request forms and the appropriate contacts within the Pearson Education Global Rights & Permissions department, please visit <http://www.pearsoned.com/permissions/>.

PEARSON, ALWAYS LEARNING, and REVEL are exclusive trademarks owned by Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates, in the U.S., and/or other countries.

Unless otherwise indicated herein, any third-party trademarks that may appear in this work are the property of their respective owners and any references to third-party trademarks, logos or other trade dress are for demonstrative or descriptive purposes only. Such references are not intended to imply any sponsorship, endorsement, authorization, or promotion of Pearson's products by the owners of such marks, or any relationship between the owner and Pearson Education, Inc. or its affiliates, authors, licensees or distributors.

#### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Names: Field, Mona, author.

Title: California government and politics today / Mona Field, Glendale Community College.

Description: Fifteenth edition. | Boston : Pearson, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017010110 | ISBN 9780134627106 | ISBN 0134627105

Subjects: LCSH: California—Politics and government—1951-

Classification: LCC JK8716 .F54 2019 | DDC 320.4794—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2017010110>

*For the people of California, whose collective wisdom shines as  
a beacon of light into our nation.*

MONA FIELD

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Contents

## Preface

### 1 California Politics in Perspective

National Impact: Size Does Matter

The State and Its People: Power Blocs in Conflict

The State and the Federal System: A Complex Relationship

### 2 The Californians: Land, People, and Political Culture

Geographic Influences: Where Are We?

Demographic Influences: Who Are We?

California's Political Culture: How We Think

### 3 California's Historical Development

The Spanish Era: 1542–1822

Mexican Dominance: 1821–1848

Americanization and Statehood: 1848–1850

Consolidating Power: 1850–1902

The Progressive Legacy: 1902–1919

The Twentieth Century, California Style

California's Constitution: A Few Highlights

### 4 Freedom and Equality: California's Delicate Balance

Freedom and Social Responsibility: Juggling Between Extremes

Equality: A Continuing Challenge

Diversity in Representation: Identity Politics in Action

Gender Politics: Slow Change for the Underrepresented

ix

### 5 Media Influences, Social Media, and Interest Groups

1 Media: A Massive Influence 38

2 Economic Interest Groups: Pressure Where It Counts 38

3 Other Interest Groups: Less Money but Still a Voice 40

4 Lobbyists in Action: A High-Skill, High-Pay Career 41

### 6 Political Parties and Other Voluntary Organizations 45

10 Do Parties Matter? The Voters' Perspective 46

12 Minor Parties: Alternative Political Voices 48

14 Party Organization: Who Makes the Rules? 49

Outside Parties: Nonpartisan Political Organizations 50

### 7 Campaigns and Elections: Too Many? 53

20 California Politicians: See How They Run 54

22 Money and Politics: The Vital Link 55

22 Elections Without Candidates: Direct Democracy 56

23 Direct Democracy: Pros and Cons 58

24 Cleaning Up Politics: Campaign Reform 59

The Changing Electorate: Who Votes and Who Doesn't 60

### 8 The California Legislature 63

28 The State of the Legislature: Chaos in Motion? 64

29 Redistricting and Gerrymandering: Will the New System Make a Difference? 65

32 Legislative Functions and Procedures: How They Do Their Business 66

34 Presiding Officers: Each Party Gets Something 67

Committees: Where the Real Work Gets Done	69	The Judicial Council: Running a Complex System	100
Loyalties in the Legislature: Party, Public, or Personal?	71	Judicial Power: Who Has It and How They Use It	101
<b>9 California's Plural Executive: Governor Plus Seven</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>12 Criminal Justice and Civil Law</b>	<b>103</b>
Veto, Budget, and Appointments: The Key Powers	74	Criminal Justice: An Oxymoron?	103
Other Powers: New Ideas and "Life or Death" Choices	77	Crime and Its Victims: Technology Advances, Fears Remain	105
Unusual Circumstances: Military and Police Powers	78	The Criminal Justice Process: A System to Avoid	107
Appointment Powers: Jobs at the Top	78	Civil Law: Solving Problems Through the Courts	109
The Plural Executive: Training for Future Governors	81	Juries: The Citizen's Duty	109
<b>10 Paying the Bills: California's Budget Struggles</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>13 City Governments: Providing the Basics</b>	<b>112</b>
How the Budget Is Developed: A Two-Year Process	85	How Cities Are Created: It's Not Easy	112
Sources of Revenue: Never Enough	87	City Responsibilities: Many Tasks, Limited Revenues	114
Voter Decisions and State Finance: Democracy in Action?	90	Forms of City Government: Two Basics with Variations	114
Future Prospects: The Endless Debate	92	City Politics: Power Blocs in Competition	115
<b>11 California Courts and Judges</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>14 Counties, Special Districts, and K-Graduate Public Education</b>	<b>120</b>
California's Trial Courts: The First Round	95	Counties: Misunderstood but Vital Entities	121
Alternatives to the Courts: Buying Judicial Services	95	Special Districts: Doing What Only They Can Do	122
Where Appeal Rights Remain Intact: Courts in Action	96	Education Districts: K-12 and Community Colleges	122
California Supreme Court: The Last Resort (Almost)	96	Higher Education: CSU and UC—Are They Still Public Universities?	124
The Selection of Judges: A Mix of Appointments and Elections	96	Regional Agencies: Two Types, Similar Concerns	125
The Nonelectoral Removal of Judges: Rare but Possible	99		

**15** Challenges for California's  
Future

127

Interconnected Challenges: Economy,  
Environment, and Energy

127

What Is and What Could Be

130

Is California Governable?

133

**Appendix A** Directory of Organizations  
and Parties That Anyone Can Join  
or Support

136

**Appendix B** Communicating Your Views  
to Your Elected Officials

138

Endnotes

140

Glossary

147

Bibliography

150

Subject Index

152

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Preface

Welcome to the fifteenth edition of *California Government and Politics Today*. After over forty years in existence, this textbook's mission is still to explain California's ever-changing political situation in the context of social and economic trends. The focus remains on ethnic and cultural diversity, the global economy's impact on California (and vice versa), and the emphasis on political involvement as an essential component of achieving the California Dream. Readers are continuously offered the chance to "Debating the Issues" and reflect on the ways in which the political process impacts their lives. "Compared to California" boxes give perspective on how other states handle the same issues, to provide context for students.

The text still includes "Questions to Consider" at the end of each chapter. All of these tools can be used to stimulate class discussion or to develop themes for essays and term papers. The book continues to feature numerous updated charts and maps, a glossary (defining terms that appear in *italics* in the text), a section dedicated to "How to Communicate with Your Elected Officials," a bibliography for further reading, and a list of political organizations that students may wish to learn more about.

For the benefit of instructors, a complete test bank is available.

## New to This Edition

- Provides updated numbers, including state budget, lobbying expenditures, and campaign spending
- Explores impacts of recent and pending ballot measures (legalization of marijuana, reforms in sentencing, "Calexit," Prop. 13 reform)
- Gives critical data on contrasts between California and the nation after the 2016 presidential election
- Comments on new and continuing challenges of the cost of housing, the need for an educated workforce, and the role of Silicon Valley in California
- Explores the impact of a Democratic-controlled state government at a time of a Republican-controlled national government

## Acknowledgments

This edition has benefited from the input of colleagues from around the state, including Michael Bressler, Long Beach City College; Kathleen Holland, Los Angeles Pierce College; and Kimberly Naider, California State University–Sacramento. Thanks are also due to colleague Denise Munro Robb, Los Angeles Pierce College, who always reminds me that the goal is a student-friendly textbook, and Dr. Charles Marshak, UCLA, who assisted with data analysis.

I thank everyone for their important input, which has enabled me to improve the book. I remain personally responsible for the final product, including its strengths and weaknesses. Further ideas and suggestions from colleagues are most welcome, so feel free to contact me directly with your comments.

As always, the goal remains to enlighten our students and help them achieve their share of the California Dream—in whatever form available.

Mona Field  
mfield@glendale.edu

*This page intentionally left blank*

# Chapter One

# California Politics in Perspective



## Learning Objectives

- 1.1** Explain the impact of California population on state politics and federal funding
- 1.2** Explain how power blocs in California influence policy decisions
- 1.3** Describe the challenges posed by federalism on California politics

California is definitely special. At a time when the nation's electoral college system, despite a popular vote for Hillary Clinton, has heeded the populist message of Donald Trump, California is a very pale purple state—a place where coastal and urban areas, where most of the people live, are staunchly Democratic blue, while rural areas stay Republican red. After over 60 percent of Californians voted for Hillary Clinton, and less than 33 percent for Donald Trump (the remaining voters supported third-party candidates), some Californians felt that the United States had become too alien, and California too different—and formed a movement known as “Calexit,” an effort to vote the state out of the union and into separate nationhood.

California is indeed different in many ways from the rest of the nation. It is one of the few states that has both the governorship and legislature in the hands of Democrats, while voter registration indicates that the California Republican Party is disappearing (Democrats have 45 percent, Republicans 26 percent, and the remaining 30 percent are unaffiliated or members of tiny third parties). California is known for being the place where social and political movements begin and is home to many of the world's largest tech-industry corporations, which began in California as “startups.” And California has the most diverse population of any state, although the trend toward a more diverse America is now spreading all through the nation.

California, with its vast territory, large and diverse population, proximity to the Pacific Rim and Mexico, and diversified economy, is a powerhouse, one that attracts newcomers from all over the nation and the world. While secession is unlikely, the sense of California-ness is deep.

**Table 1.1** California's Population: Growth Since Statehood

Year	Population
1850	92,597
1860	379,994
1870	560,247
1880	864,694
1890	1,213,398
1900	1,485,053
1910	2,377,549
1920	3,426,861
1930	5,677,251
1940	6,907,387
1950	10,586,223
1960	15,717,204
1970	19,971,069
1980	23,667,902
1990	31,400,000
2010	37,253,956
2015	39,144,818

**SOURCE:** U.S. Census Bureau, “QuickFacts: California,” <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06/accessible>.

California still leads the nation in population, with a 5 percent growth rate between 2010 and 2015 (see Table 1.1), and is ranked as the world’s sixth largest economy based on gross domestic production (2016).

California is a state of many firsts: first in the nation to create legislation to reduce carbon emissions and help stop global climate change; first in the nation to ban the use of words like “Redskin” as a name for a sports team; first in the nation to end school suspensions for minor rules-breaking such as talking back or violating the dress code; first in the nation to require schools to teach about the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities; first in the nation to raise the minimum wage to \$15 (minimum wage goes up each year until it hits \$15 in 2021)—the list of firsts goes on and on.

## National Impact: Size Does Matter

Based on the numbers, California remains among the most powerful states in the nation. The U.S. Census has repeatedly confirmed that California is first in population and therefore has the most members in Congress. The state has 53 of the 435 members of the House of Representatives and 55 *electoral*

## Compared to California

### MINIMUM WAGE LAWS IN SELECT STATES, 2017

California	\$10.50
Arizona	\$10
Oregon	\$10.25
Wyoming	\$ 5.15

**SOURCE:** National Conference of State Legislatures, "2017 Minimum Wage by State," <http://www.ncsl.org/research/labor-and-employment/state-minimum-wage-chart.aspx#1>

**Think Critically:** Why does minimum wage differ from state to state? What are possible differences in the cost of living in different states? Does earning the minimum wage allow someone to live comfortably? Who sets the minimum wage?

*votes*, more than a fifth of the 270 necessary to elect a president. California has the largest congressional delegation, with Texas (32 seats) and New York (29 seats) far behind. California congressmembers have held leadership positions, with Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) serving many years as leader of her party and Adam Schiff (D-Burbank) serving as the ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee.

For those who seriously question whether California should become a separate nation, there is ample data to show that California benefits from being part of the United States. Federal dollars flow to California to support state services such as health care, public schools, public universities, law enforcement, unemployment insurance, aid to the poor, and much more.<sup>1</sup>

Of course, those federal dollars usually come with strings attached, and under President Trump, there may be ways in which California cities lose some federal funds if they insist on providing sanctuary to undocumented residents despite a federal crackdown on the undocumented.<sup>2</sup>

## The State and Its People: Power Blocs in Conflict

Like most Americans, Californians are impacted most directly by their state and local political systems. The state determines the grounds for divorce; traffic regulations; public college tuition fees; penalties for drug possession; and qualifications one needs to become a barber, psychologist, or lawyer. It establishes the amount of unemployment compensation, the location of highways, the subjects

to be taught in school, and the rates to be charged by telephone, gas, and electric companies. Along with the local governments under its control, it regulates building construction, provides police and fire protection, and spends about 15 percent of the total value of goods and services produced by California residents.

The policy decisions made in these and other areas are influenced by the distribution of political power among various groups with competing needs and aspirations. Some of the power blocs reflect the same conflicts of interest that the nation experiences: labor versus business, landlords versus tenants, and environmentalists versus oil companies. But, as in so many things, these battles are fought on a grander scale in California. With its incredibly complex array of local governments, including over 3,400 *special districts* to provide everything from streetlights to flood control, California's political system almost defies understanding. No wonder that voters have shown their overall mistrust of elected officials and turned to *ballot initiatives* to make new laws and even to amend the state constitution.

These ballot initiatives, or *propositions*, deal with everything from juvenile crime to educational policy, from Indian gaming rights to condom use in the state's pornography industry. While political experts despise the use of initiatives to set public policy, ballot measures are big business. Virtually all propositions are placed on the ballot by *special-interest groups*, either organizations or wealthy individuals. Profitable petition-gathering companies charge several dollars per signature to get issues on the ballot. The outcomes of these initiative battles usually depend on such factors as money, media, and the public mood.

## The State and the Federal System: A Complex Relationship

Like the other states, California is part of the American federal system. *Federalism* distributes power to both the national and state governments, thereby creating a system of dual authority. It is a complex arrangement designed to assure the unity of the country and at the same time permit the states to reflect the diversity of their people and economies. Although national and state authorities overlap in such areas as taxation and highway construction (examples of so-called concurrent powers), each level of government also has its own policy domain. The U.S. Constitution gives the national government its powers, including such areas as immigration law, interstate commerce, foreign policy, national defense, and international relations. The states are permitted to do anything that is not prohibited or that the Constitution does not assign to the national government. Serious conflicts may occur when states challenge federal laws, such as California's efforts to protect undocumented immigrants or the state's legalization of marijuana for both medical and recreational use. Differences between California's laws and federal law enforcement create a continuing state of uncertainty for those most directly impacted.

Within each state, the distribution of powers is *unitary*. This means that the cities, counties, and other units of local government get their authority from the state. States and their local bodies generally focus their powers on such services as education, public safety, and health and welfare.

Just as California has a mighty impact on the country as a whole, the national government exerts influence on the state. Because federal funds have various requirements that states must meet, California laws must at times be adjusted so that the federal dollars will come. For example, federal highway funds require specific safety laws, including seat-belt regulations, and even *mandate* the age at which individuals may purchase alcohol. In the San Joaquin Valley, California's enormous agricultural center, federal water policies have led to vast croplands going dry, creating "dustbowls" and high unemployment where crops once grew.<sup>3</sup>

In other cases, federal policy fuels the state's economy. During the last century, between World War II and the end of the Cold War, California's private defense industry relied heavily on federal contracts to create a thriving military-based economy. Major corporations, such as Lockheed, Hughes, and Rockwell, enjoyed high profits and provided well-paying, secure jobs to engineers, managers, secretaries, and assembly-line workers. When the Cold War ended in 1989, this entire military contract system was suddenly downsized and many military bases closed, leaving a huge hole in the California economy that created a recession in the early 1990s. Then the economy boomed, then again "went bust" during the nationwide Great Recession (2008–2012). Californians are constantly seeking new ways to create wealth, and California is known for many industries that spur economic growth, including both public and private investment in computer software development, entertainment, tourism, public transportation, and biotechnology, plus health care, law, and education.

While relations between the federal government and each state are complex and significant, the relations between states are also important. The U.S. Constitution requires every state to honor the laws of every other state, so that marriages and other contracts made in one state are respected in all states and criminals trying to escape justice cannot find safe haven by leaving the state in which they have been convicted.

Federalism's distribution of powers permits states to enact their diverse policy preferences into law on such matters as gambling, prostitution, trash disposal, and wilderness protection, and thus encourages experiments that may spread to other states. California has often served as the trial run on new political ideas that later spread to other states. *Conservative* themes such as tax revolts, anti-immigration sentiments, and the backlash against affirmative action all began as successful ballot propositions in California, while *liberal* ideas such as legalization of marijuana, same-sex restrooms in public places, "sanctuary" for undocumented immigrants, and government regulation of toxic chemicals all came forward in California, as well.

## Debating the Issues

### POPULATION GROWTH: HOW TO FACE THE FUTURE

**Viewpoint:** We must prepare California for the future by building roads, schools, water systems, and all the infrastructure for the projected future population.

- Immigration rates and birth rates will continue to increase, and the state must be able to provide for the people of the future.
- If we don't prepare now, future Californians will suffer from inadequate housing, heavy traffic, crowded schools, and a reduced quality of life.
- No walls, fences, or immigration agents will be able to keep out people whose alternative is to stay in their country living in poverty.
- People will risk everything for a better life, so we should adapt our laws and infrastructure to accept their presence.
- The labor of immigrants will be needed in the future.

**Viewpoint:** We must reduce population growth by tightening federal immigration laws and finding a way to keep people from coming to California.

- California cannot sustain the people it has, and cannot absorb more.
- California's congressional delegation and voters must insist on a tighter border using the latest technology to prevent illegal immigration.
- Developed nations cannot continue to absorb the world's poor; we must find ways for less-developed nations to advance their own economies so that their people can stay home.

**Ask Yourself:** How do today's decisions impact the future quality of life in California?

Because federalism allows states great autonomy, and because California has developed a complex web of local governments, the average California voter must make numerous decisions at election time. Each Californian, whether or not a U.S. citizen, lives in a number of election jurisdictions, including a congressional district, a state senate district, an assembly district, and a county supervisorial district, plus (in most cases) a city, a school district, and a community college district. (See Figure 1.1 for the officials elected by California voters.) This array of political jurisdictions provides many opportunities to exercise democracy. It also creates confusion, overlaps, and many occasions on which voters feel unable to fully evaluate the qualifications of candidates or the merits of ballot propositions.

Other problems linked to federalism include outdated state boundaries that have created some "superstates," with land masses and populations that may be ungovernable, and differences in resources between states. California's large territory could theoretically include two or three states. Meanwhile, variations in states' resources perpetuate inequality in schools, public hospitals, and other government facilities at a time when the nation as a whole is concerned about

**Figure 1.1** Federal and State Officials Elected by California Voters**SOURCE:** League of Women Voters.

Partisan Offices			
<b>National Level</b>			
President	Entire state	4 years	Years divisible by four
U.S. Senators	Entire state	6 years	Every six years counting from 1992
			Every six years counting from 1994
Members of Congress	Districts	2 years	Even-numbered years
<b>State Level</b>			
Governor <sup>1</sup>	Entire state	4 years	Even-numbered years when there is no presidential election
Lt. Governor <sup>1</sup>			
Secretary of State <sup>1</sup>			
Controller <sup>1</sup>			
Treasurer <sup>1</sup>			
Attorney General <sup>1</sup>			
Insurance Commissioner			
Members of Board of Equalization <sup>1</sup>	Districts	4 years	Same as governor
State Senators <sup>1</sup>	Districts	4 years	Same as governor for even-numbered districts
			Same as president for odd-numbered districts
Assembly members <sup>2</sup>	Districts	2 years	Even-numbered years
Nonpartisan Offices			
<b>State Level</b>			
Superintendent of Public Instruction	Entire state	4 years	Same as governor
Supreme Court justices	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
Court of Appeal justices	Entire state	12 years	Same as governor
Superior Court judges	Counties	6 years	Even-numbered years
<sup>1</sup> Limited to 12 years total (3 terms)			
<sup>2</sup> Limited to 12 years total (6 terms)			

how to provide these services. The federal system also promotes rivalry between states as they compete to attract new businesses (and jobs) or keep existing ones. Among the tactics used in this struggle are tax breaks, reduced worker compensation, and relaxed environmental protection standards. Even Hollywood, the historic center of the entertainment industry, has struggled with *runaway production*, meaning the decisions to produce films, television shows, and commercials in places where costs are lower. On the larger international scale, thanks to *globalization*, products such as automobiles, clothing, and many other goods are increasingly manufactured abroad, because cheap labor and international treaties combine to create inexpensive products, thus reducing domestic job opportunities. California is still a major economic force, yet it faces innumerable challenges to retain its strength.

---

## Enjoying Media

### Movies to See and Websites to Explore

California State Home Page [ca.gov](http://ca.gov)  
Portal to California's government, tourism, economy, and more.

Center for California Studies [csus.edu/calst/](http://csus.edu/calst/)  
California State University Sacramento's research institute, covering politics and more.

Public Policy Institute of California [ppic.org](http://ppic.org)  
A nonprofit, nonpartisan independent research institute with a focus on economic issues.

*Berkeley in the Sixties*, Mark Kitchell, 1990  
Documentary depicting the Free Speech Movement during the 1960s at UC Berkeley and

what happened to the student activists over the next two decades. Some of those student leaders ended up in the state legislature later in life.

*El Norte*, Gregory Nava, 1983  
Film in which Guatemalans flee their country's war by going north to California without documents (illegally). Gives a sense of what people are willing to endure in order to get to a better life in California.

---

## Summary

In Chapter 1, you've had an overview of California's current state political and economic circumstances, as well as information about some of the ways that federalism works. You've learned

about the complex relationship between the state and the federal government. California's population—the most of any other state—and its national political impact, were also discussed.

---

## Questions to Consider

### Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. What are some of the pros and cons of life in California? Do these depend in part on whether you live in a rural or an urban area?
2. What are some of the challenges facing our state? What can elected officials do to resolve these challenges? How do you fit into the challenges facing our state?
3. Take a class survey. How many students were born in California? How many are immigrants, either from another state or another nation? Team up so that an “immigrant” is paired with a “native” Californian. Teams or pairs can discuss the different experiences of those born here versus those who immigrated.

# Chapter Two

## The Californians: Land, People, and Political Culture



### Learning Objectives

- 2.1** Explain the impact of California's physical geography on its history
- 2.2** Analyze the effects of population diversity on California politics
- 2.3** Summarize the effects of socioeconomic inequity on California's political culture

The political process in California, as in other states, is conditioned by many geographic, demographic, and cultural influences. Whereas geography changes only slowly, population shifts and cultural influences can rather suddenly add new and unpredictable threads to the complex web that forms the state's identity and future prospects.

### Geographic Influences: Where Are We?

With an area of 156,000 square miles, California is larger than Italy, Japan, or England and is the third largest state in the United States, following Alaska and Texas. It curves along the western coast of the nation, with a length more than twice its width. If California were superimposed on the East Coast, it would cover six states, from Florida to New York.<sup>1</sup> Despite all the land available, the state's primary urban development has been coastal, with the Bay Area and the Los Angeles Basin as the first areas of growth. More recently, the "Inland Empire" (San Bernardino and Riverside counties) and the San Joaquin Valley have experienced growth, leading to the term "the Third California," and the northern

section of the state includes the “Redwood Coast” of Humboldt and Mendocino counties, as well as the area south of Oregon that some like to call “Jefferson State, the fifty-first state of the nation.”

While California’s size has contributed to its political dynamics, its location is equally important. As the leading state on what is called the Pacific Rim (those states bordering the Pacific Ocean and facing the Far East), California is the nation’s number one exporter. California is also one of only fifteen states that border a foreign nation. In part as a result of its proximity to Mexico, Californians of Mexican descent have become the largest ethnic group in the state, one that includes both first-generation Mexican immigrants and “Chicanos,” whose parents or ancestors originally came from that country. Nearly half of California’s immigrants in recent years have come from Mexico,<sup>2</sup> and as of 2015 California had the largest Hispanic (from all nationalities) population of any state (15 million).<sup>3</sup>

Two other geographic influences command attention: rich natural resources and spectacularly beautiful terrain. Between the majestic Sierra Nevada range along the eastern border and the Coastal Mountains on the west lies the Central Valley—one of the richest agricultural regions in the world. For generations, Central Valley farmers have used water supplies brought from the northern section of the state via the California Aqueduct, making California the nation’s leader in farm output, including the newly legal growing of marijuana (which has traditionally been grown on California’s “lost coast” in the northwest of the state).<sup>4</sup> However, unpredictable water supplies, especially during times of drought, make water distribution a fierce battleground, pitting north versus south, rural versus urban areas, and environmentalists versus farmers.<sup>5</sup> Over 40 percent of the state is forested, and this magnificent resource creates tension between those who want to protect forests and those who want to sustain some form of lumber industry, and, in one particular region, those who want Sonoma wine grapes grown on those same lands.<sup>6</sup> Our forests face the additional threats of severe tree loss and wildfires due to the drought. California has plentiful oil, some of which lies off the 1,000-mile-long coast in locations that have been protected for decades from drilling. Fracking, the process of extracting oil through the use of water, chemicals, and explosives, has brought to the surface new oil supplies, but its dangers have created a “ban fracking” movement in many communities.<sup>7</sup> Although agriculture, timber, and oil remain economically important as well as environmentally controversial, another natural resource has become the subject of continual political debate over how much to exploit it: California’s landscape. Ranging across arid deserts, a 1,000-mile shoreline, and remote mountain wilderness, the terrain itself is a continuing battlefield between conservationists and commercial recreation developers, with the state’s need for tourism competing with the preservation approach. Much of California is owned by the public; the state boasts 43 national parks, forests, recreation areas, and monuments, plus its own vast acreage of public lands, including

279 state parks and beaches, covering about 1.6 million acres and serving some 60 to 80 million visitors each year.<sup>8</sup> Although California includes vast undeveloped lands, Californians are the most urbanized of any state in the nation, with nearly 95 percent living in cities.<sup>9</sup>

## Demographic Influences: Who Are We?

With rare, short-term exceptions, modern California has a consistent pattern of population growth. Although lack of work or the high cost of housing sometimes push people to leave the state, the total number of Californians continues to increase as a result of birth rates (49 percent of population growth), domestic immigration (11 percent), and international immigration (40 percent of total growth).<sup>10</sup> The fastest-growing age group includes Californians between sixty-five and seventy-four years old,<sup>11</sup> with vast implications for health care and other services needed by seniors. Long-term predictions suggest that the state will have about 47 million people by the year 2025, creating enormous challenges regarding housing, education, health care, transportation, water supplies, and environmental quality. Demographers still predict that California will likely remain the most populous state, with over 12 percent of the nation's people, with Latinos possibly making up over half of the population by 2060. Latinos are currently the largest ethnic group in California, surpassing non-Latino whites as of 2014.<sup>12</sup> All population data and projections are questionable, however, because some people, for reasons ranging from their legal status to their lack of shelter, do not participate in the U.S. Census survey even though an accurate count is critical for federal funds to flow to the state.<sup>13</sup>

California also continues to be the most diverse state, with residents from virtually every nation and ethnic group on the planet. There is no “majority” group, and California has more people who identify themselves as “multiracial” than any other state.<sup>14</sup> About 27 percent of Californians were born in other nations, with the top three “sending nations” being Mexico, the Philippines, and China.<sup>15</sup> California has more undocumented immigrants (2.7 million) than any other state, but more recently, economic conditions have somewhat reduced illegal immigration, as the word gets out that there are fewer jobs for low-skilled workers.<sup>16</sup>

Ongoing international immigration adds to the state's socioeconomic gaps, since even two-parent working immigrant families are often living at poverty level, giving California the nation's highest poverty rates.<sup>17</sup> Immigrant communities (and even many individual families) are a complex combination of undocumented immigrants, legal residents, political refugees, and foreign-born *naturalized* U.S. citizens. Many immigrants spend years in paperwork as they wait for the federal Bureau of Citizenship and Immigration Services to process

their applications and move them from refugee status to legal resident, or from resident to citizen status. There are about 5 million immigrants who are either legal residents but not naturalized citizens or undocumented immigrants, and none of them can vote even though all of them are affected by electoral decisions.<sup>18</sup> During the transition years, *assimilation* takes place to varying degrees, as individuals decide whether to learn English, how much education to seek, and how much to “Americanize” their customs.

Whether they are citizens or residents, concentrations of immigrant ethnic groups have already altered the social and political landscape in many California communities. Out of choice or necessity, ethnic enclaves develop wherever a group puts down roots, their presence reflected in the language of storefront signs, distinctive architecture, and types of food available. Daly City is called “Little Manila,” and Fresno is home to 30,000 Hmong, members of a Laotian hill tribe. Sacramento has a large Slavic community; Stockton has 35,000 refugees from several areas of Indochina; Glendale has a substantial concentration of Armenians; Westminster, in Orange County, has a section known as “Little Saigon”; and Monterey Park, the first city in the continental United States with an Asian majority,<sup>19</sup> is now 67 percent Asian, predominately of Chinese heritage.<sup>20</sup> One-fourth of the children in California’s public schools are considered “English learners,” with some large school districts serving as many as eighty language groups.<sup>21</sup>

## Debating the Issues

### ASSIMILATION VERSUS DIVERSITY

**Viewpoint:** Immigrants should learn American customs, learn English, and adopt our ways of life quickly and thoroughly.

- Social harmony and basic daily communication suffer when people live in ethnic enclaves and speak only their original language.
- The costs to government and society of offering bilingual education, multilingual election materials, court interpreters, etc., should be eliminated and the money used for other needs.
- People who remain isolated in ethnic communities are more likely to be victims of crime because they lack knowledge of our laws and customs.

**Viewpoint:** Immigrants should retain their languages, their culture, and customs no matter how long they live in California.

- California’s rich culture is enhanced by the huge variety of languages, events, and traditions that exist here.
- People can retain their language and customs and still learn English, becoming multicultural.
- A “monotone” society of one huge blended culture would reduce economic and social options for all.

**Ask Yourself:** In your community, what is the current balance of diversity and assimilation? How do you feel about it? Why?

During *recessions*, when job losses and related fears of the future create anxiety, negativity against immigrants sometimes rises, and both immigrants and American-born ethnic minorities may become victims of harassment or prejudice. Because people often judge others based on appearance, American-born Latinos and Asians may be subject to prejudices and discrimination based on either ethnic stereotypes or anti-immigrant attitudes. California's Muslim communities, including both citizens and immigrants, also fear prejudice or even violence, especially those whose clothing (such as the hijab) indicates their faith. Meanwhile, African Americans, the third-largest ethnic minority group, continue to see their numbers decline in proportion to the fast-growing Latino and Asian communities, with resulting concerns about how blacks can compete successfully for educational, economic, and political opportunities while other ethnic groups begin to dominate numerically.

Population diversity, of course, embraces far more than ethnicity. Collectively, Californians seem to embody virtually the whole range of religious beliefs, including 27 percent who are unaffiliated with any religion. Californians who do affiliate with a religion include about 35 percent Christian, 28 percent Roman Catholic, 2 percent Jewish, 1 percent Muslim, and 9 percent "other." Like many Americans, a large number of Californians refer to themselves as "spiritual" rather than religious, and one-third of Californians seldom or never enter a house of worship.<sup>22</sup>

Another of California's diverse groupings is the gay community, whose desire for the right to marry went through many political battles, including an appeal to the United States Supreme Court, before being affirmed as a legal right under the U.S. Constitution. California is among the states with the most supportive laws regarding gay and lesbian rights to adopt children and also is a leader in the recognition of *gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT)* individuals. Despite the overall climate of tolerance, including one of the nation's most comprehensive "bathroom equity bills,"<sup>23</sup> gay bashing or trans bashing (attacks on persons based on their perceived gender) does occur, and California is one of sixteen states that has hate-crime laws that increase penalties for violent acts based on gender identity. Though still a distinct minority, the seven-member GLBT caucus of the state legislature includes legislators who are openly homosexual and who unite to represent this portion of the population.

## California's Political Culture: How We Think

Each state has a distinctive political style that is shaped not only by its geography and population characteristics, but also by the values and attitudes shared by most of its people. These elements constitute what is sometimes called the political culture. In a state so diverse, there are multiple worlds, subcultures

## Conservative versus Liberal Quiz

What do you think? Which is liberal and which is conservative (based on today's political parties)?

1. Government should reduce taxes so individuals can spend more of their money as they choose.
2. Government should regulate business in order to protect the environment.
3. Government should not regulate personal choices, such as sexual partners or abortion.
4. Individuals are responsible for their lives; government should not give help to those in need.
5. The private sector should provide for people, with government doing less.
6. Government should oversee working conditions to protect employees.

for everything from religious communities and ethnic groups to organizations bonded by their love of antique cars, native plants, folk dancing, or myriad other personal interests. Increasingly, these divergent groups do not share any political or social framework from which to make coherent public policy choices.

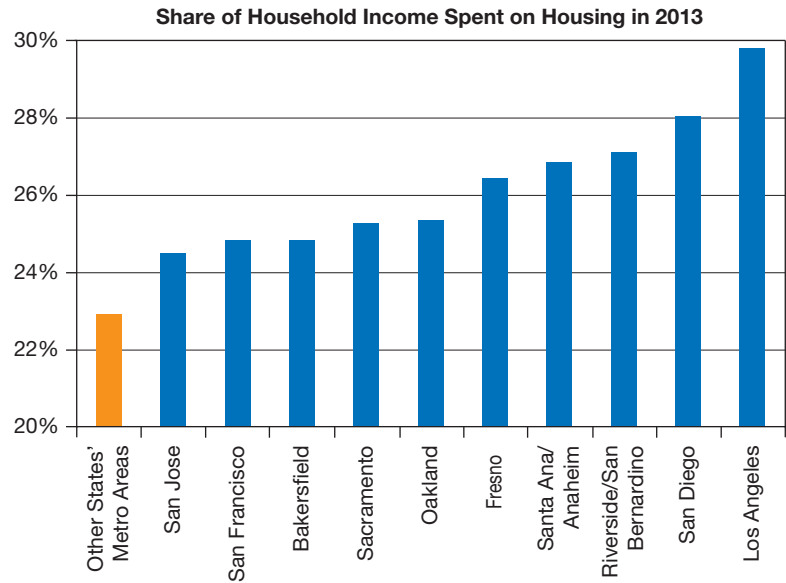
In terms of socioeconomic differences, California is more of a *two-tier* state than some others. In fact, California is multitiered, with huge gaps between those at the top and those at the bottom of the income levels. During both economic growth periods and declines, the major cause of vast inequalities in household incomes is the increasing gap between private corporate salaries and the low-wage working poor. Between 1979 and 2012, California's top 1 percent of earners nearly doubled their incomes, increasing by 189.5 percent, while incomes for the other 99 percent actually *fell* by 6.3 percent.<sup>24</sup> Over 15 percent of Californians live in poverty according to federal standards.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the highest income earners, Californians of modest or low incomes are challenged by the high cost of housing (Figure 2.1), inadequate health care for the 11 percent of Californians who are uninsured,<sup>26</sup> and the increasing cost of public higher education opportunities. Decisions made by Sacramento politicians have led to enormous increases in the cost of tuition at the University of California, California State University, and public community colleges. Policy experts warn that if California cannot educate its future workforce adequately, the state's economic strengths will be seriously undermined.<sup>27</sup>

With all the economic and social difficulties they face, it's no surprise that Californians may use their votes to show serious frustration with their political leaders. In 2003, voters used the *recall* process to remove Governor Gray Davis and replace him with Arnold Schwarzenegger. After Governor Schwarzenegger's time in office, voters chose to bring back Governor Jerry Brown (who also served as governor from 1975 to 1983), who now has served more years as California governor than any person in the state's history. California's *electorate* continues to be mostly white, older, and more affluent, even though the population of the state is diverse, young, and of moderate or low income. Even with improvements in the voter registration process, a large push for "vote by mail," in which

**Figure 2.1** Californians Spend More of Their Income on Housing

**SOURCE:** Legislative Analysis Office, <http://www.lao.ca.gov/reports/2015/finance/housing-costs/housing-costs.aspx>.



people vote by mailing in their ballots before election day, and some counties experimenting with touch-screen voting, potential voters too often ignore their opportunity to determine electoral outcomes.

Although not all eligible citizens bother to vote, the recognition of government’s power motivates many Californians to form political associations to represent their views. Because of the ethnic, socioeconomic, and cultural diversity of the state, California is home to a wide variety of political organizations. The ideologies behind many of the organizations can be simplistically summarized by the traditional labels of American politics: *conservative* and *liberal*. The *conservative* side of California politics is torn between those who support maximum freedom for both business and individuals, and those who like free enterprise but prefer government to regulate personal behavior such as sexuality and abortion. These uneasy partners form the basis of the California Republican Party, and their areas of agreement are primarily linked to limiting taxes and decreasing government activities through *privatization*. Moderate Republicans, especially women, often feel conflicted between their beliefs in smaller government and lower taxes and their desire for the right to abortion. The California Republican Party continues to lose members and voters as the party’s platform and its most recent presidential nominee, Donald Trump, continue to offend many Californians.

## Compared to California

### GENDER-NEUTRAL SINGLE-OCCUPANCY PUBLIC BATHROOMS

California is among the first states to have legislation requiring all public offices and facilities with single-occupancy bathrooms to change the signs to be gender-neutral. This enables transgender individuals to use restroom facilities without potential embarrassment or harassment. North Carolina: Bans individuals from using restrooms that do not correspond to their biological sex.

Canada: Transgender rights are protected at the national level.

**Think Critically:** Why do some people oppose gender-neutral bathrooms? What is the argument in favor of such restrooms? In your area, are there any places where gender-neutral bathrooms are available? What about in your home? Find out the status of the federal court cases regarding gender-neutral bathrooms.

On the other side of the political spectrum, the *liberal* movement in California has deep roots, holding firm to a belief in the value of government as a mechanism to improve people's lives. Liberals generally advocate positions that favor a woman's right to control her reproductive future; full gay rights, including gay marriage; and support for labor unions and universal health care. Being too liberal is probably just as bad for a California politician as being too conservative; the voters statewide trend toward the middle. But political labels are only one aspect of California's complex polity: Many Californians are uninterested in traditional political labels and, in the noble American pragmatic tradition, just want to solve problems. At the moment, the Golden State has plenty of problems to face and resolve.

## Enjoying Media

### Movies to See and Websites to Explore

U.S. Census Data [census.gov](http://census.gov)  
Massive amounts of statistics about demographics, population, and trends in society.

California Research Bureau [library.ca.gov](http://library.ca.gov)  
Data about California history, genealogy, public policy, and more.

*Sideways*, Alexander Payne, 2004  
Two friends take a trip through California's southern wine country, the Santa Ynez Valley, and interact with a variety of people. The film gives a taste of the ethnic diversity of California and the natural beauty of the Santa Barbara area.

*Crash*, Paul Haggis, 2004  
Traffic collisions and ethnic clashes express some truths about Los Angeles in this Oscar-winning film. The film leaves you wondering if we can ever learn to get along.

## Summary

Chapter 2 provided the geographic and demographic context for California's political culture. The size, diversity, and complexity of the state

were explored, including current views on what the terms "conservative" and "liberal" mean to Californians.

---

## Questions to Consider

### Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. What is the relationship between California's geography (size, location, topography, etc.) and its economic and political situation?
2. What are some of the pros and cons of the state's ethnic diversity?
3. Discuss the issue of social and economic inequality. What problems are caused by the vast gaps between rich and poor? Are there any advantages to having a two-tier society?

# Chapter Three

# California's Historical Development



## Learning Objectives

- 3.1** Outline the key events of the Spanish era
- 3.2** Describe the causes and effects of the Mexican-American war
- 3.3** Summarize the consequences of the U.S. military occupation on California statehood
- 3.4** Outline the impact of economic fluctuations on California's constitution
- 3.5** Outline the key Progressive-era reforms in California politics
- 3.6** Summarize California's contributions to American history throughout the twentieth century
- 3.7** Differentiate the key principles of the California Constitution versus the U.S. Constitution

California's human history begins with the native population of about 300,000 people in approximately 100 linguistic/cultural "tribelets," who lived on this land before the Europeans arrived.<sup>1</sup> Despite the unique culture of each of the dozens of Native California tribes, very little information exists regarding the diverse groups that inhabited California during this period. Perhaps that is because these first Californians were nearly exterminated. According to a New York newspaper in 1860, "in [other] States, the Indians have suffered wrongs and cruelties.... But history has no parallel to the recent atrocities perpetrated in California. Even the record of Spanish butcheries in Mexico and Peru has nothing so diabolical."<sup>2</sup> The hunter-gatherers of California were soon annihilated to make room for the *conquistadores*, whose desire for gold led them to murder and rape many of the people they found here.<sup>3</sup>

## The Spanish Era: 1542–1822

In 1542, only fifty years after Columbus first came to the “New” World, Spain claimed California as a result of a voyage by Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. More than two centuries passed, however, before the Spanish established their first colony. It was named San Diego and was founded by an expedition headed by Gaspar de Portolà, a military commander, and Junípero Serra, a missionary dedicated to converting the Indians to Roman Catholicism. Between 1769 and 1823, the Spanish conquerors built twenty-two missions from San Diego to Sonoma, each with its own military post and church. By the time the missions were completed, most of the Native Californians had been destroyed by overwork, disease, and brutality. Meanwhile, farther south, the *mestizo* residents of New Spain (primarily what is now Mexico, Central America, and many of the Spanish-speaking South American colonies) were ready to overthrow the Spanish colonial rulers and declare independence.

## Mexican Dominance: 1821–1848

In 1821, Mexico won independence from Spain. Soon after, the land now called California (as well as the modern states of Utah, Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona) officially became part of the new United States of Mexico. Civilian governments were established for the pueblos, or villages, but the distant government in Mexico City still viewed California as a remote and relatively unimportant colony.

American settlers began to arrive in the 1840s, lured by the inviting climate and stories of economic opportunities. Many were filled with the spirit of *manifest destiny*, a belief that Americans had a mission to control the whole continent. When the United States failed in its attempt to buy California, it used a Texas boundary dispute as an excuse to launch war with Mexico in 1846. The United States declared victory within a year, thus winning the right to purchase at bargain rates enormous lands including California, Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas, as well as large parts of Utah, Colorado, and Nevada. California came under American military rule, and in 1848 Mexico renounced its claims by signing the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, a document that promised the Mexican population of California that their language and property would be respected under the new government—a promise that was quickly broken. Within a short time, the ranchos of the *Californios* (people of Mexican descent) were grabbed by immigrants (mostly Anglos), and much of these lands were later granted to the owners of the railroads.<sup>4</sup>

## Americanization and Statehood: 1848–1850

The U.S. military occupation lasted three years while Congress battled over how to manage its vast new territories. The turning point was the discovery of gold in 1848, encouraging “Forty-niners” from all over the world to head to California.

By 1849, the population quadrupled, and the settlers adopted the first California constitution. Meanwhile, the U.S. Congress postponed the Civil War through enacting the Compromise of 1850 (which kept a balance of slave and free states) by admitting California as a free state. California became the thirty-first state and the first that did not border an existing state. (Figure 3.1 shows the county boundaries of California today.)

**Figure 3.1** Map of California

**SOURCE:** Los Angeles County Almanac, 1991.



Today the legacy of the Spanish and Mexican periods can be found in California's population itself, as well as in the missions, architecture, and city names. History does not easily erase itself; California's Spanish/Mexican roots pervade the culture.

## Consolidating Power: 1850–1902

During its first fifty years of statehood, California grew in both population and diversity. Newcomers from around the world came to seek their fortunes, and some were extraordinarily successful. Others, particularly during economic downturns, began to *scapegoat* less popular groups and call for their expulsion. Chinese immigrants, brought to this country to build the railroads cheaply, were major targets of overt racism and discrimination during the recession of the 1870s. Despite occasional downturns, the overall economy boomed during the 1880s and 1890s, although the *Californios* generally became impoverished and forgotten as white Americans took charge. The economy shifted from mining to agriculture, and the arrival of the transcontinental railroad brought people from across the nation eager to begin new lives and find a share of California's richness.

In 1879, at the close of a long economic downturn, the first state constitution was replaced by the one now in effect. In a preview of the prejudice and biases that seem to recur every time the state's economy sags, the second California constitution was loaded with anti-immigrant provisions (aimed at Asian immigrants), which were later declared invalid as violations of the U.S. Constitution.

## The Progressive Legacy: 1902–1919

The *Progressive movement* in California, led by Hiram Johnson, arose at the beginning of the twentieth century. Its goal was to reduce the power of corrupt political parties and rich corporations that spent large sums to control politicians. In California, the primary target was the Southern Pacific Railroad, a corporation that owned one-fifth of all nonpublic land in the state. Its major stockholders—Charles Crocker, Leland Stanford, Collis P. Huntington, and Mark Hopkins—were the “Big Four” of state politics. According to their critics, they had bought “the best state legislature that money could buy.”

Despite the power of the Big Four, the Progressives had remarkable success. Child labor laws and conservation policies were adopted. Political parties were weakened by imposing rigid legal controls on their internal organization and prohibiting candidates for city, county, and judicial offices and education boards from mentioning their party affiliation on the ballot. Today, all of these offices remain *nonpartisan*, with only names and occupations listed on the ballot.

## Compared to California

### CHANGING THE CONSTITUTION

**California:** Amendments to the state constitution require a majority vote in a statewide election. A proposal for a State Constitutional Convention also requires voter approval.

**United States:** There are several variations, but U.S. history shows that virtually all amendments to the U.S. Constitution have met the following requirements: a two-thirds vote of Congress, plus ratification by three-fourths of the state legislatures. (There is no popular vote required.)

**Think Critically:** Should it be easy or hard to change the basic document of a state or nation? Why do Californians amend their state constitution so frequently?

Possibly the most important legacies left by the Progressives were the *direct democracy* powers that permit voters to pass laws or amend the state constitution through the ballot box, as well as to recall elected officials from office through a special election. The Progressive reforms of 1911 also brought suffrage to California women, nine years before they won the right to vote in federal elections.

## The Twentieth Century, California Style

In the last century, California experienced many of the same major events as the rest of the nation did: the Great Depression (1930s), the World War II economic boom, and the boom/bust era linked to the rise of technology. California's contributions to American history of these periods include the near election of a socialist governor in 1934 (and the *redbaiting* campaign to defeat him), the Depression-era migration of hundreds of thousands of people from the Midwest Dust Bowl to the Golden State, and the *repatriation* of 600,000 U.S. citizens of Mexican descent who were deported from California as official scapegoats for the economic woes of the era.<sup>5</sup> During World War II, Japanese Californians were deported to detention "camps," and their homes and businesses were confiscated as they became the target of wartime scapegoating. When the economy boomed during the Cold War, new arrivals were once again welcomed to help develop the aerospace/defense industries. Throughout the twentieth century, through good and bad times, California's population continued to grow.

The long period of relative prosperity during the 1950s and 1960s did not touch everyone. When cheap labor was needed in the agricultural fields during World War II, for example, Mexican *braceros* entered the country with temporary work permits but were expelled when their labor was no longer needed.<sup>6</sup> People of color experienced discrimination in housing, employment, and education. By the early 1960s,

California's educational system was rocked by the street protests of UC Berkeley students protesting their own lack of free speech on campus as well as the unequal treatment of blacks in Bay Area businesses.<sup>7</sup> The 1960s, under Governor Pat Brown, also saw immense investment in California's *infrastructure*, and the enactment of the Master Plan for Higher Education, which guaranteed a free community-college opportunity and two low-cost public university options for all Californians.

During the *inflationary* period of the 1970s, Californians, enraged by the rapid increases in prices of everything from gasoline to property taxes, voted their frustration by supporting the deep property tax cuts of Proposition 13 (1978). By the 1980s, former California governor Ronald Reagan was president of the United States and the economy again boomed, although the promised "trickle-down" of economic improvements to the poor did not occur. In the twenty-first century, California has seen both *recession* and economic recovery, each with its immense impact on public budgets and services.

## California's Constitution: A Few Highlights

Like the national government, the California political system is characterized by a separation of powers, freedom, and democracy. Certain differences, however, deserve attention. Although the separation of powers involves the traditional three branches—legislative, executive, and judicial—each is marked by distinctive state characteristics. For example, the California legislature shares lawmaking authority with the people through the *initiative* process; the governor's power is diminished by the popular election of seven other executive officials; and California judges must be approved by voters. The federal system has none of these *direct democracy* features, nor do federal judges ever appear on the ballot.

Many of the freedoms guaranteed in the state constitution are identical to those protected by the U.S. Constitution. However, the state constitution includes additional rights for its residents. For example, Article I, Section 1 of the California constitution proclaims that "All people are by nature free and independent and have inalienable rights. Among these are enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining safety, happiness, and privacy." Similar references to property acquisition, safety, and privacy do not exist in the U.S. Constitution.

California's constitution is much easier to amend than the federal Constitution, and it has been amended (and thus lengthened) over five hundred times since 1879. The process involves two steps. First, amendments may be proposed either by a two-thirds vote in both houses of the legislature or by an *initiative* petition signed by 8 percent of the number of voters who voted in the last election for governor. Second, the proposed amendment must appear as a *proposition* on the ballot and must be approved by a simple majority of voters.

## Debating the Issues

### CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE: CALIFORNIA VERSUS THE UNITED STATES

**Viewpoint:** The U.S. Constitution is better because it requires enormous social and political agreement to be amended.

- A document that defines the governing structure of a society should be difficult to change.
- Supermajorities are important in making major changes to ensure real social agreement.

**Viewpoint:** The California constitution is better because it is easily amended by a vote of the people.

- Change occurs rapidly and should be easily adapted into constitutions.
- California's direct democracy provides power to the public as the most important voice in changing how our government operates.

**Ask Yourself:** Do most people know how constitutional change works? Should they? Explain your conclusion.

As a result of the options created by the Progressives, voters can amend the state constitution without any legislative action.

Having a long, complicated state constitution is not the most efficient way to operate a state. Among the many suggestions for future constitutional revisions (via ballot initiatives) are to allow local governments more options to impose taxes, to amend Proposition 13 so that corporate property can be taxed at current values, and to change the actual structure of California's direct democracy.

## Enjoying Media

### Movies to See and Websites to Explore

California Historical Society [calhist.org](http://calhist.org)  
The online guide to over three hundred years of California history.

California Studies Association  
[californiastudiesassociation.berkeley.edu](http://californiastudiesassociation.berkeley.edu)  
Nonprofit organization linked to major universities to produce conferences and documents about California issues.

#### *The Mask of Zorro*, 1998

A highly fictional action-adventure about California's early days and its struggle to free itself from Spanish colonial rule, aided by the masked crusader. Raises the issues of mythology versus reality in California's history.

#### *The Grapes of Wrath*, John Ford, 1940

The movie adaptation of John Steinbeck's classic tale of a midwestern family that comes to California during the Great Depression seeking a fresh start. Another illustration of the extraordinary pull of California.

#### *Come See the Paradise*, Alan Parker, 1991

A white labor organizer falls in love with a Japanese American girl in Los Angeles as World War II begins and she is sent to an internment camp. A film that helps us understand the personal impacts of the political panic that created the Japanese internment.

## Summary

Chapter 3 gave a historical perspective, starting with the original native tribes and moving through the Spanish, Mexican, independence, and

statehood eras. Chapter 2 also described some of the key elements of the state constitution, particularly the reforms of the Progressive era (1900–1920).

---

## Questions to Consider

### Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. Who were the first Californians? Why and how were they almost totally destroyed by those who came next?
2. What is the most important contribution of the Progressive movement in California?
3. What are some ways that California's history impacts life today, including culture, politics, ethnic diversity, and immigration?

How would the Progressives feel about contemporary California politics?

# Chapter Four

# Freedom and Equality: California's Delicate Balance



## Learning Objectives

- 4.1 Analyze California's stance on civil liberties versus civil rights
- 4.2 Describe the factors that contribute to social inequity in California
- 4.3 Describe the impact of ethnic diversity in California's political representation
- 4.4 Summarize the changes in minority group representation in California politics

People in California, as everywhere else in a capitalist democracy, must continually reassess choices regarding individual freedom and social justice. *Civil liberties*, such as freedoms of speech, press, and association (which restrict government powers), may conflict with *civil rights*, which often require government protections. California's appellate courts have often been asked to rule on the rights of individuals versus the rights of the community. Should homeless people be allowed to sleep on public streets, or does their presence create a risk for the community? In Santa Barbara and Laguna Beach, the American Civil Liberties Union has filed cases challenging those cities' antisleeping ordinances, resulting in Laguna Beach revoking its policy.<sup>1</sup> Should high school students be permitted to wear T-shirts with "offensive" language? And is it okay for a sixth-grade girl to do a class presentation about Harvey Milk, the gay San Francisco supervisor who was assassinated in 1978? All of these issues have resulted in court decisions; in the case of the sixth grader, after the court acted, she received an apology from the school district for its violation of her freedom of speech.<sup>2</sup>

## Freedom and Social Responsibility: Juggling Between Extremes

In numerous areas where individual freedom (or corporate profits) may conflict with public needs, California's policies have moved from supporting maximum personal freedom to placing some limits on that freedom in order to maximize the well-being of the larger society. Antismoking laws, helmet laws for motorcyclists and children on bicycles, and strict regulations for teen drivers all indicate the state's interest in protecting individuals from one another. In the area of personal privacy (often violated by telemarketers and other businesses), the legislature has struggled to create privacy protections as well to protect Californians from cyberstalking and identity fraud.<sup>3</sup> In the arena of environmental quality, the traditional struggle between public well-being and business profitability fluctuates between cooperative approaches and outright political battles. These competing interests advocate at nonelected bodies such as the California Coastal Commission, the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, and other appointed commissions whose decisions can impact virtually all Californians.

In another arena of personal rights, California courts have ruled that individual freedom includes the right *not* to hear a prayer at a public school graduation ceremony. In deference to the vast diversity of religious beliefs among Californians, the state Supreme Court determined that such prayers and

### Debating the Issues

#### FREEDOM VERSUS LICENSE

**Viewpoint:** Individuals should be allowed to live their lives with minimal government interference.

- The individual is the most important social actor and should have maximum power over his or her life.
- Government should not be a parent or “nanny” protecting people from their own freedom to choose.
- Laws that require people to wear helmets, use seatbelts, or drive without using a cell phone are all forms of government intrusion in private choices.

**Viewpoint:** Government should make laws to protect people, including protections they prefer not to have.

- People who don't adequately protect themselves (wearing helmets, seatbelts) may be injured and cost everyone tax dollars for their medical care.
- People don't have the right to hurt themselves and possibly others.
- Government must create laws that protect the public as a whole, even if those laws appear as limitations for individuals.

**Ask Yourself:** Which laws do you consider appropriate government involvement in personal life? Which laws are intrusive and need changing?

invocations are an establishment of religion in violation of the separation of church and state. Despite this ruling, many public schools still offer prayers at football games, graduations, and other tax-sponsored events.

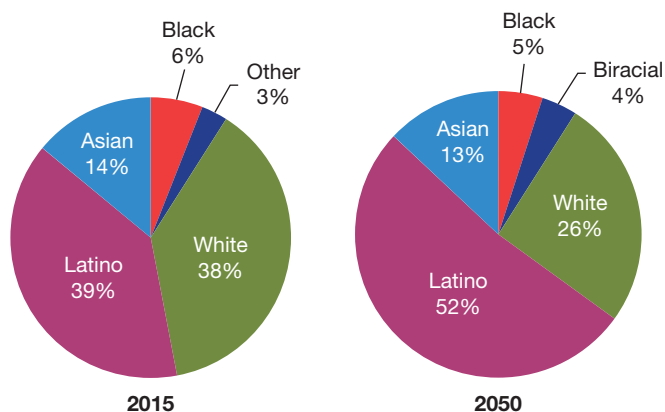
## Equality: A Continuing Challenge

California's large gaps between wealth and poverty inevitably create vast inequality among individuals. Compounding this socioeconomic inequality, Californians have also been forced to confront a long history of inequality based on racial bigotry. Prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory behaviors are older than the state itself. Only 10 percent of the Native Californians survived the Spanish era, and the first governor after statehood called for the extermination of those who remained. When the United States defeated Mexico in 1848, California Mexicans were gradually marginalized, losing much of the political and economic power they once wielded. Soon after, in the period of economic stagnation of the 1870s, the Chinese immigrants who helped build the transcontinental railroads during the 1860s became the targets of serious forms of racism, including lynchings and the "Chinese exclusion" provision of the 1879 state constitution (which attempted to prohibit Chinese from holding many kinds of jobs). The first official apology from the State Legislature to California's Chinese American community came in 2009.<sup>4</sup>

In today's multicultural California, the issues of equity are more complex than ever. (See Figure 4.1 for California's major population groups.) Although Proposition 209 ended all forms of *affirmative action* in public education and state systems, California is far from the "color-blind" utopia to which opponents

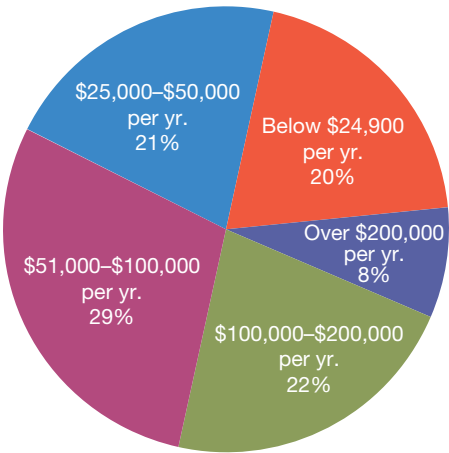
**Figure 4.1** Projected Ethnic Breakdown of California's Population

**SOURCE:** State of California, Department of Finance, Report P-1 (Race): State and County Population Projections by Race/Ethnicity, 2010–2060. Sacramento, California, December 2014.



**Figure 4.2** California Household Income Distributions

**SOURCE:** U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06>



of affirmative action aspire. Wage gaps clearly divide whites and Asians from African Americans and Latinos, with whites and Asians generally earning more than African Americans and Latinos, primarily owing to the lower educational attainments of the latter two ethnic groups. A vicious cycle in which lack of educational opportunities leads to continuing underemployment can extend from generation to generation.

Perhaps it is the underlying economic as well as the educational gaps that add to racial and ethnic tensions. These prejudices exist not only between whites and various minorities, but among minority groups themselves. In urban school districts, high schools may be home to competing ethnic gangs whose rivalry erupts in periodic violence between some combination of Latinos, African Americans, Asians, or Middle Eastern ethnic groups. Inside California’s vast prison system, inmates of different ethnic groups were segregated to avoid racial violence until the U.S. Supreme Court declared this racial separation unconstitutional in 2005.

The conflicts among many of California’s ethnic groups reflect in part the continuing difficulties created by competition for scarce opportunities. When Governor Brown signed the California DREAM Act (2011), which allows undocumented students with strong academic records to access private scholarships for college, protests came from groups who believe that giving such help to the undocumented will shortchange citizens. And in the world of work, especially in times of recession and a tight job market, subtle limitations exist for nonwhite groups. In the highly competitive entertainment industry, despite the handful of well-known blacks and Latinos in the field, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (think Academy Awards) have had to commit to a new membership

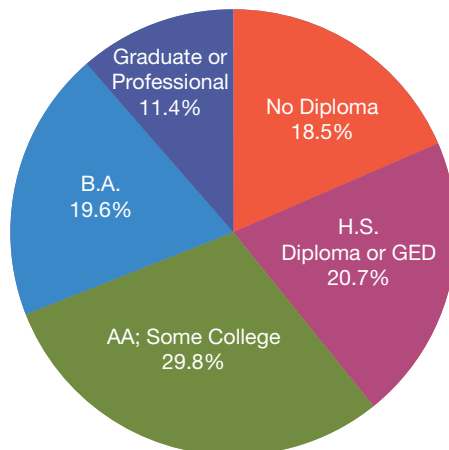
diversity policy because of the almost unbelievable lack of diversity in their ranks and due to public outcry over the lack of award nominees of color.<sup>5</sup> In a very different industry, a federal judge has ordered both corporate shippers and the longshore union to pay nearly \$3 million in damages to hundreds of minorities who failed a biased employment test used to determine who could become a dockworker.<sup>6</sup>

The high cost of housing in most parts of California has become a serious challenge for many Californians, especially impacting low-income ethnic communities. The average cost of a home is \$440,000 (the average national home price is \$180,000). Also, California's average monthly rent is about \$1,240, 50 percent higher than the rest of the country (\$840 per month).<sup>7</sup> See Figure 4.2 for California income distribution. As most Californians realize, costs are much higher in the coastal areas and lower in the Central Valley, the northern region, and the Inland Empire.

Housing may also determine educational opportunities, because public school quality varies in different neighborhoods. Education is the key to a lifetime of increased economic opportunity. The combination of underfunded schools, overcrowding in urban areas, and *white flight* leaves many public school systems with 90 percent nonwhite students, of whom large numbers may need English-language instruction as well as all the core courses. While the middle class and wealthy may afford private schools, low-income families must use local schools or find time and resources to seek magnet or *charter school* options for their children. The Los Angeles area has the highest number of charter schools (public schools that are exempt from many state and local regulations and are supposedly more creative) in the nation, but success rates for these schools vary enormously. Test scores, graduation rates, college admission data, and other

**Figure 4.3** Graduation Rates

**SOURCE:** US Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/table/PST045215/06>



indicators of educational success are almost always lower at underfunded public schools, which are attended predominantly by Latinos and African Americans (typically from low-income families).

Even if California's youth have the qualifications to enter universities, or the motivation to attend a public two-year college (where there are no academic admission requirements), huge fee increases at the two public university systems as well as the community colleges make it more challenging for low-income Californians to achieve higher education (Figure 4.3). Financial aid is available, but many eligible Californians do not know how to access financial aid services.

## Diversity in Representation: Identity Politics in Action

In a continuing American tradition, when ethnic and immigrant communities grow larger, they begin to fight for their share of political and economic power. California's growing ethnic communities have already shifted the demographic pattern: there is no longer any one majority group. As of 2015, non-Hispanic whites are about 38 percent of California's population, while Latinos of all backgrounds make up 39 percent, mostly due to higher birth rates and immigration. The African American population makes up about 6 percent, while Asian Pacific Islanders are about 14 percent.<sup>8</sup>

However, this *demographic shift* does not automatically create an equally rapid shift in political power. Gains for underrepresented groups depend on much more than their population count. Factors that influence access to political power include their rates of voter registration and turnout, their financial ability to support candidates, and their interest in the political process. As of the 2016 presidential election, California voters are trending toward greater nonwhite participation: 56 percent of voters were white, compared to about 75 percent white in the rest of the nation. Massive efforts to register the "emerging majority" Latino voters were enhanced by the Latino community's concerns about President Trump's campaign rhetoric targeting undocumented immigrants and Mexicans.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to the issues of citizenship and participation in voting, another factor in political success is the use of financial resources to support candidates and influence elections. Because average household income is lower in many ethnic communities, they do not have the disposable income to support or recruit their own candidates. Coalitions of ethnic groups, including whites, have emerged as a way to promote qualified candidates from a variety of ethnic groups. In keeping with their rapidly increasing population numbers, the number of Latino and Asian American elected officials has grown, and in some

## Compared to California

### FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS, PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL POPULATION (NOT INCLUDING UNDOCUMENTED IMMIGRANTS)

**California:** 27 percent

**New York:** 22 percent

**Florida:** 19 percent

**Texas:** 16 percent

**SOURCE:** Steven A. Camarota, "Immigrants in the United States, 2010: A Profile of America's Foreign-Born Population," August 2012, Center for Immigration Studies, <http://www.cis.org/2012-profile-of-americas-foreign-born-population#state>

**Think Critically:** How is California impacted by having over one-fourth of its people born in other nations? What are the positive and negative outcomes?

communities, city council and school-board members increasingly include immigrant politicians from diverse nations who are eager to be involved in their new country as elected leaders.<sup>10</sup>

One interethnic issue facing the growing number of politically active Latinos (and Asians to a lesser degree) is the high numbers of Latinos moving into formerly African American neighborhoods. Formerly black communities now often are numerically dominated by Latinos, particularly immigrant Latinos. Census data suggest that African Americans (like whites) will continue to decline numerically in proportion to the much faster growing Latino and Asian groups; African American leaders are therefore concerned about maintaining adequate electoral representation in places like South Los Angeles and Oakland. Some black politicians have made it a point to learn Spanish as a way to improve their connections with their Latino constituents.

Providing better political representation to Latinos through language acquisition is relatively simple because most Latinos have Spanish-language origins, although they may represent eighteen different nationalities. In contrast, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders represent over thirty distinct national and language origins, with the largest populations being Filipino, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese and substantial groupings of Hmong, Laotian, Samoans, and other smaller communities in different parts of the state. Because the diversity is so enormous, there will never be precise and proportional representation for every ethnic group. Therefore, elected officials, regardless of their own backgrounds, must learn to represent everyone and not appeal to narrow ethnic concerns.

In addition to the largest ethnic and racial groups, small but active minority communities are working toward gaining a greater share of political

power. Armenian Californians have seen a governor from their heritage elected, while California's growing Islamic population seeks better access to the political process, especially since negative stereotyping and hate crimes have created real fears among some Muslim communities. Native Californians, who comprise over 120 tribal groups, have focused their political attention and substantial campaign contributions on issues relating to economic development on tribal land (with a heavy emphasis on building casinos) and protection of their culture. With the state's social diversity likely to continue, political leadership in the twenty-first century will be a rainbow of cultures, all of which might retain their unique identities while also working to represent all Californians.

## Gender Politics: Slow Change for the Underrepresented

Women have made slow progress since the Women's Liberation movement of the 1960s raised concerns about women's equality and access to power. Although women account for 51 percent of the population, they are nowhere near holding half of the legislative seats, executive positions, judgeships, or local posts available. In one unusual exception, the state Supreme Court now has four (out of seven) women. However, the number of women in the state legislature has dropped since a peak in the 1990s, with fewer than 25 percent of state legislators being female,<sup>11</sup> and many cities have all-male or nearly all-male city councils. Meanwhile, at the nonelected level, thousands of women who are state employees in agencies ranging from the Department of Motor Vehicles to the Employment Development Department earn only about three-fourths as much as men doing the same jobs.<sup>12</sup> In one unfortunate measure of *parity*, the number of women has increased in the state prison system, and California has the two largest women's prisons in the world.<sup>13</sup>

California was the first state to elect two women to the U.S. Senate, Barbara Boxer (replaced in 2016 by Kamala Harris) and Dianne Feinstein, and the home of the first woman Speaker of the House, Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco). These three women are joined in Washington, D.C., by sixteen other California women in the House of Representatives (out of fifty-three). Since there are currently no term limits for federal officials, the women in Congress may remain in office for many years.

One often invisible and certainly underrepresented minority group (made up of individuals of all ethnicities) is the gay, lesbian, transgender, and queer community (LGBTQ). Currently the state legislature has seven men and women in its *Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender (GLBT)* caucus. While many local government bodies, including city councils, school boards, and county boards, have

LGBTQ members. But the GLBT community is not a political monolith; there are *partisan* differences, with gay Republicans fighting hard for respect in their party and gay Democrats emphasizing the supportiveness of their party's policies on same-sex marriage and other critical issues.

California's record of electing politicians with diverse backgrounds is certainly better than that of many other states. But perhaps it is inevitable that California will take the lead, since the demographic pattern of increasing ethnic diversity is projected to continue, and trends suggest that the nation will gradually become more like California.

---

## Enjoying Media

### Movies to See and Websites to Explore

#### Emerge California

<http://www.emergeca.org/about>

Emerge California is changing the face of California politics by identifying, training, and encouraging women to run for office, get elected, and seek higher office.

#### National Association of Latino Elected Officials

<http://www.naleo.org/history>

Headquartered in Los Angeles, providing resources to current or future Latino elected officials.

#### California Legislature GLBT Caucus

<http://lgbtcaucus.legislature.ca.gov/>

Information about the current members and their legislative priorities.

#### Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association

<http://www.apapa.org/>

The mission of the Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association (APAPA) is to empower Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Americans in civic and public affairs through education, active participation, and leadership development.

#### *Spanglish*, James L. Brooks, 2004

Comedy-drama about the cultural divide that occurs when a Mexican immigrant becomes housekeeper to a wealthy Jewish family in Malibu. A poignant illustration of the gaps between the haves and have-nots in California, and how human interactions can make a difference.

#### *Grand Canyon*, Lawrence Kasdan, 1991

A film about six diverse people living in Los Angeles during the 1990s. Shows the unlikely friendship of two men from different races and classes brought together when one finds himself in jeopardy in the other's rough neighborhood.

---

## Summary

Chapter 4 explored the challenges for Californians of finding the right balance between social equality and individual freedom. Issues of ethnic, gender,

and racial diversity were explored, including the gaps between who actually lives in the state and who is elected to govern it.

## Questions to Consider

### Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. Discuss some areas where individual freedom (or free enterprise) may conflict with social needs. What is your position on these issues?
2. In what arenas are ethnic minorities underrepresented? Why do these patterns persist even though California has no majority group?
3. What can be done to balance the needs of diverse ethnic groups with the needs of California as a whole?

# Chapter Five

## Media Influences, Social Media, and Interest Groups



### Learning Objectives

- 5.1 Describe the influence of media in California politics
- 5.2 Describe how economic interest groups influence California politics
- 5.3 Summarize how less-affluent interest groups participate in California politics
- 5.4 Explain how lobbyists influence public policy

In a democratic system, the attitudes of the public should be a primary basis for political decision making. These political attitudes are demonstrated in election results, in public opinion polls, and in the inbox of every politician receiving input from constituents. Political views are influenced by numerous factors, including families, friends, religious institutions, schools, life experiences, and the activities of *interest groups*. But perhaps the greatest influence is the media, which bombards us with input on a daily basis. Modern media is fragmented into hundreds of thousands of elements: broadcast media now include hundreds of television channels and radio stations as well as thousands of Websites, blogs, tweets, text messages, and other rapid-fire sources of information, all with varying degrees of validity. Concerns over “fake news” on social media have prompted Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg to offer methods to reduce this problem.<sup>1</sup> Media experts also worry that due to the immense number of media formats and sources, people are “self-siloing” into their own worlds and getting only the information they want to know, rather than being exposed to diverse viewpoints.<sup>2</sup> Finding accurate, useful information about California’s political process is indeed a challenge.

## Media: A Massive Influence

Perhaps nothing better illustrates the power of the media to influence politics than the election of political newcomer Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor of California. Although he had no experience in office, his years starring as “the Terminator,” who could solve problems with brute strength, apparently gave many California voters a sense of confidence in his political problem-solving ability. Entertainment merged with news coverage as the Schwarzenegger campaign caravan rolled through the state during the recall of 2003.

Fascination with “Arnold” created a brief media focus on state politics, but the broadcast media soon returned to its habits of occasional coverage of our state capitol. Most traditional broadcast media (television and radio) focus on national and international news, or churn out coverage of “news lite” stories of crime, freeway chases, and natural disasters. Ever-creative politicians have quickly adapted to the lack of news coverage of their activities by developing their own Websites, blogs, email blasts, tweets, and any form of media they think will enhance their image and future electability.

*Image making* is an expensive and essential business in California. The 2010 state election (Democrat Jerry Brown versus Republican Meg Whitman) holds the record for candidate spending, with Whitman spending over \$119 million of her own money, still to be defeated by Jerry Brown, with a total of \$36 million.<sup>3</sup> No candidate for any office is considered serious by media or voters unless he or she has sufficient financial resources to run. Campaign funds are spent on various forms of communication, including all forms of media, plus “robocalls,” text messages, emails, and even person-to-person precinct walks, all of which are coordinated by high-cost campaign consultants. The larger the electoral district, the less likely a campaign will include any personal contact but rather will depend on direct mail and mass-media advertising. Critics charge that political information conveyed by the media emphasizes personality factors, attacks, and scandals rather than significant policy issues, but despite “peace pledges” and other gimmicks, most candidates eventually use negative campaigning to attract voter attention.

## Economic Interest Groups: Pressure Where It Counts

Organized *interest groups*—also known as lobbies—are also important in shaping public opinion and have been unusually influential in California politics. These groups often spend money through their *political action committees (PACs)*, which collect money from their members to spend on campaign contributions. In addition to official campaign contributions, organizations may spend money on behalf of candidates or ballot measures that are known as *independent*

*expenditures* and may also involve hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition to financial support, interest groups aid individual candidates by providing them with publicity and campaign workers. The most powerful groups are usually those with the most financial resources, including the majority of business interests and some of the larger unions, such as those for public employees, schoolteachers, and state prison guards. When a group supports a successful candidate, it gains better access to that politician than most other individuals ever have.

Interest groups generally avoid direct affiliation with any political party, preferring instead to work with whichever politician is in office. Business groups usually prefer to help elect Republicans, whereas labor groups prefer Democrats. The influence of various interest groups is indicated, in part, by their wealth and the number of people who belong to or are employed by their organizations. Nearly all of California's most profitable corporations, including oil companies, insurance giants, utilities, banks, and telecommunications companies, are linked together in pressure groups such as the California Manufacturers and Technology Association, the Western States Petroleum Association, and the California Cable and Telecommunications Association.<sup>4</sup> Other major *private-sector* players in the lobbying game are the California Nations Indian Gaming Association, the California Association of Realtors, the California Medical Association, the Trial Lawyers Association, and the Agricultural Producers. The California Teachers Association, the California Correctional Peace Officers Association, the California State Employees Association, the California Labor Federation, and many other groups represent labor interests, though not necessarily in a unified manner. These same business and labor groups work to get laws passed that help them and to influence the state budget so that its outcome favors their members.

## Compared to California

### MONEY DONATED TO CANDIDATES AND BALLOT MEASURES 2016

**California:** \$767 million

**Texas:** \$114 million

**New York:** \$90 million

**Arizona:** \$50 million (Arizona has "clean money" public financing laws)

**SOURCE:** National Institute on Money in State Politics, "Election Overview," <http://followthemoney.org/election-overview?s=TX&y=2016>

**Think Critically:** Why is California a place where large campaign contributions are common? Do these large amounts impact public policy? How can people without money for political spending be represented in this system?

**Table 5.1** Top Lobbying Spenders in California 2015

Western States Petroleum Association	\$10.9 million
California Hospital Association	\$9 million
California State Council of Service Employees	\$6.2 million
California Chamber of Commerce	\$4.3 million
Chevron Corporation and subsidiaries	\$4 million
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan Inc.	\$2.6 million
California Teachers Association	\$2.3 million
American Civil Liberties Union (California)	\$2 million
Nextgen Climate Action	\$1.9 million
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association	\$1.9 million

**SOURCE:** California Secretary of State, Cal-Access, <http://cal-access.sos.ca.gov/>.

Repeated attempts to curb the spending and influence of special interests have had limited success. Under the free-speech rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution, courts have repeatedly ruled that limits on campaign contributions are a limit on free speech. This enables large organizations as well as affluent individuals to continue dominating campaign fund-raising (see Table 5.1 for the Top Lobbying Spenders). Californians may be dismayed by the role of huge campaign dollars and high costs of lobbying, but they have not figured out how to end this.

## Other Interest Groups: Less Money but Still a Voice

In addition to the business, professional, and labor groups that spend money to elect candidates and later make contact with elected officials to share their views, California’s political process has enabled less affluent interest groups to develop and participate. Such groups, discussed in Chapter 6, include those representing various ethnic communities, environmental organizations such as the Planning and Conservation League, Children Now (which concerns itself with the needs of youth), and single-issue groups such as the California Abortion Rights Action League, Handgun Control, the Fund for Animals, and Surfriders (whose primary interest is in protecting beaches). These groups may not provide much campaign funding, but they often offer volunteers whose election support activities gain credibility for the organizations.

In addition to an enormous array of nongovernmental lobbies, government agencies also lobby for their concerns, with numerous cities, counties, and *special districts*, such as water agencies and school districts, employing paid lobbyists in Sacramento. These government entities often seek funding or other legislative support from the state.

## Lobbyists in Action: A High-Skill, High-Pay Career

The term *lobbying* arose when those who wanted to influence elected officials would congregate in the lobbies of government buildings and wait to speak with a politician about their concerns. California's lobbyists, like those around the nation, gradually developed a pattern of wining and dining the politicians as well as giving them gifts and campaign contributions. Periodic scandals in which lobbyists and legislators are convicted of crimes involving trading votes for financial rewards create public demand for reform of the lobbying industry. The 1974 Political Reform Initiative requires each lobbyist to file monthly reports showing income, expenditures, and steps taken to influence government action. This initiative also created the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), which oversees campaigns and lobbying and monitors any possible wrongdoing by candidates or PACs. The Online Disclosure Act (1997) requires all lobbying expenditures to be posted online at <http://www.cal-access.ss.ca.gov> (a section within the secretary of state's Website); California has been cited as one of the best states in its public disclosure laws and regulations,<sup>5</sup> although even California still has many loopholes in its campaign financing laws.

The most recent successful effort to control campaign spending was Proposition 34 (November 2000). This ballot measure was written and passed by the legislature and then approved by voters. Many political experts question whether the provisions are strict enough and criticize the measure for leaving too many loopholes for wealthy special interests. Proposition 34 does not control spending by independent expenditure campaigns, in which special-interest groups run ads and send mailers without coordinating their efforts with the candidate. It also leaves room for political parties to give unlimited amounts to candidates, thus funneling campaign money in amounts that no individual donor can.

In addition to helping favorable politicians get elected, lobbyists perform an assortment of tasks to achieve their organization's goals. Many lobbyists are former lawmakers or legislative aides, whose personal contacts enable them to work successfully in the halls of power. They earn substantial salaries for handling the following:

1. Campaign efforts (primarily financial contributions) to elect sympathetic candidates, especially incumbents.
2. Testimony for or against bills being considered by legislative committees.
3. Informal contacts with lawmakers for purposes of providing them with information, statistical data, and expert opinions on pending legislation.
4. Ads and announcements in newspapers, on Websites, and through direct mail, which appeal to the public to take a position and convey their views to elected officials.

5. Sponsorship of initiative or referendum petitions to put propositions on the ballot for the approval of the voters.
6. Encouragement of interest-group members to write letters, send emails, text messages, or Tweets to lawmakers regarding particular bills.
7. Organization of protest marches and other forms of public demonstrations.
8. Favorable publicity and endorsements for cooperative lawmakers inserted in the internal publications of the organization.
9. Attempts to influence the appointment (by the governor) of sympathetic judges and administrative officials.

With the passage of *term limits* (Proposition 140) in 1990, amended by voters in 2012 (Proposition 28), the influence of lobbyists has changed. Before term limits, lobbyists could develop ongoing friendships with legislators, who often spent decades in office. Now legislators rotate out of office, usually after twelve years, and lobbyists must quickly develop relationships with newly elected officials and their new staff members. Those newly elected officials may be more susceptible to lobbyists, because lobbyists have much more experience in Sacramento than most new legislators.

## Debating the Issues

### INTEREST GROUPS

**Viewpoint:** Interest groups should remain free from restrictions and engage in campaign contributions and political advocacy in order to ensure multiple perspectives in political decision making.

- Freedom of speech should apply to everyone, including well-financed groups that may have messages to convey to the public or to elected officials.
- When multiple and diverse interest groups participate in politics, all views ultimately are represented in the dialogue.

**Viewpoint:** Interest groups must be carefully regulated by government to ensure that well-financed organizations do not dominate the political process. Campaigns should be publicly funded to avoid all forms of interest-group financial influence.

- Interest groups vary hugely in their financial resources, and the big-money players must not be allowed to dominate the political dialogue.
- Reducing interest-group dollars and using public dollars for campaigns enables more diverse candidates to enter politics.
- Money is power, and that power must be balanced by fair standards.

**Ask Yourself:** Am I represented by any organized interest group? If not, what can I do to have a voice in the political process?

Because lobbying still determines the outcome of almost all legislation, Californians who realize how much political decisions can affect their daily lives usually become interested in tracking the impact of lobbying on their elected officials. This involves checking campaign donation records as well as legislators' voting records in order to find out how a particular group has influenced a specific legislator. Two excellent sources of information are the secretary of state's Cal-Access Website and <http://www.followthemoney.org>. The best solution for individuals interested in more direct involvement may be to join the interest groups that reflect their values and political concerns. Many lobbies are open groups that welcome new members. These include organizations involved with environmental issues, ethnic concerns, health care, and many more. (See Appendix A for a directory of organizations anyone can join.) Members receive updates from lobbyists indicating what legislation is being considered and how the individual can phone or write in a timely, informed manner. (See Appendix B for information about contacting elected officials.) Any individual Californian can write a letter or send an email, but the most effective political action comes through organized groups.

---

## Enjoying Media

### Movies to See and Websites to Explore

#### California Chamber of Commerce

[calchamber.com](http://calchamber.com)

California's small businesses are represented by the State Chamber of Commerce, a powerful voice in Sacramento.

#### California Labor Federation

[calaborfed.org](http://calaborfed.org)

The coalition of most labor unions in the state is very active in Sacramento.

#### California League of Conservation Voters

[ecovote.org](http://ecovote.org)

Environmental issues are the core of this effective political-advocacy group.

#### Faculty Association of California Community Colleges

[facc.org](http://facc.org)

This active Sacramento lobby represents community college faculty from the 110 California community colleges.

#### California Secretary of State Power Search

[powersearch.sos.ca.gov/quick-search.php](http://powersearch.sos.ca.gov/quick-search.php)

This part of the secretary of state website allows you to put in a candidate's name and find out who gives money to him or her.

#### *The China Syndrome*, James Bridges, 1979

A thriller about corporate cover-ups when a reporter tries to investigate a dangerous incident at a California nuclear power plant. One of the first movies to explore environmental issues, the role of the media, and the power of corporations.

#### *Thank You for Smoking*, Jason Reitman, 2005

An inside look at the life of a tobacco lobbyist, whose job includes a trip to Hollywood to promote smoking in studio films. Fictional, yet almost like reality when it comes to the power of big money interests.

## Summary

Chapter 5 analyzed some of the impacts of media, both mass media and social media, on the state's political process. Chapter 5 also explained how advocacy groups function, including those

representing the private, public, and nonprofit sectors, and assessed the role of money in political influence.

---

## Questions to Consider

### Using Your Text and Your Own Experiences

1. In how many ways do mass media influence political attitudes? Give examples of those influences. Remember that media include both the information media and the entertainment media.
2. What makes a special-interest group powerful? Are there problems with how much power some of these groups have?
3. Is personal wealth an essential ingredient for individual political influence? If you are not wealthy, what can you do to have a voice in California's political process?