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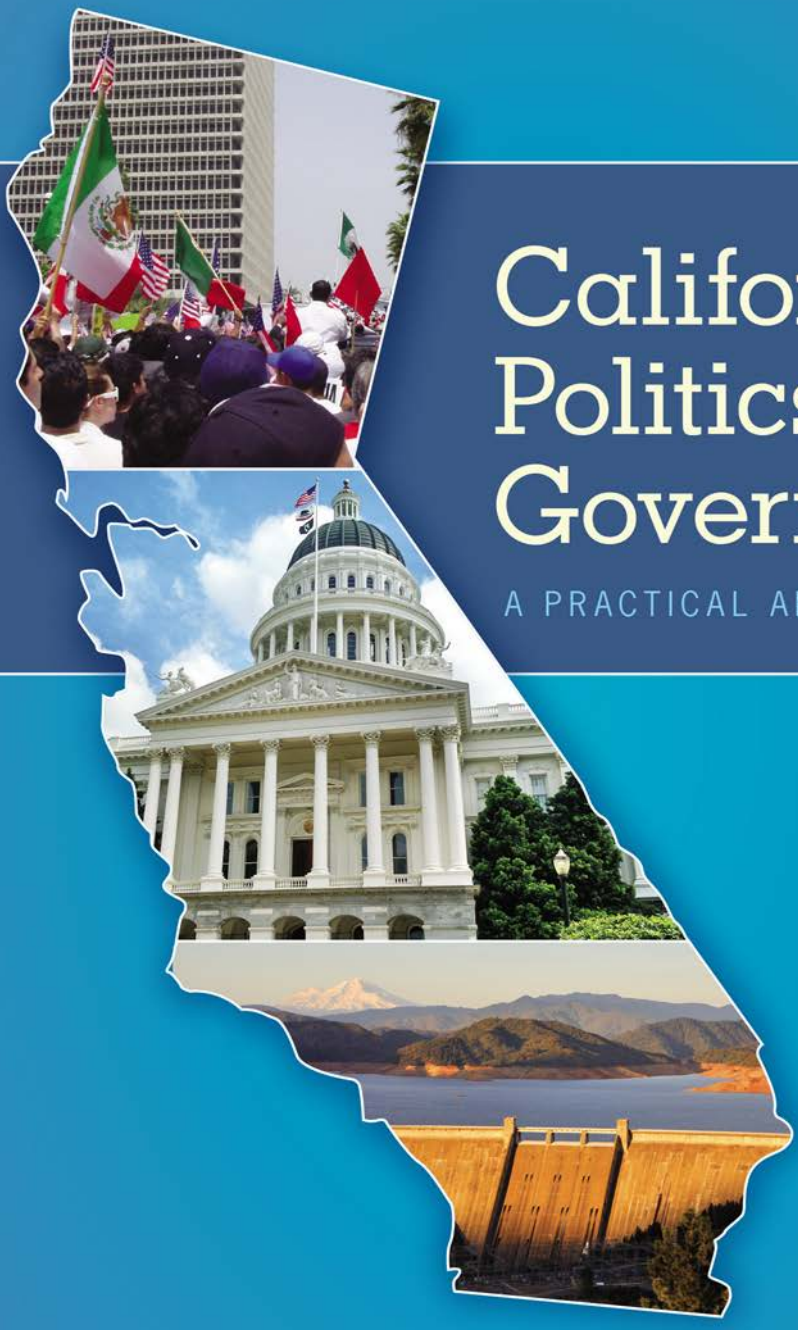

California Politics AND Government

A PRACTICAL APPROACH

Larry N. Gerston ▪ Terry Christensen

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Map of California

(by county)

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California Politics & Government

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California Politics & Government

A Practical Approach

FOURTEENTH EDITION

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To the future of Gia Gabriella Gerston and the memories of Anna and Teter Christensen and Tillie and Chester Welliever

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Preface

Imagine yourself strapped in on a rollercoaster that soars, dips, and turns at incredible speeds and gravitational force, leaving you breathless as it comes to a stop. That physical experience is not so far from the gyrations of California politics, except that our political rollercoaster never stops. The fast-changing political setting in California is almost mind boggling in depth and direction. Here, an endless cast of participants struggle to solve complex issues in an environment teeming with forces pushing and pulling for resolution.

People often ask us why we write *California Politics & Government* every two years. That's a fair question, given that few texts are typically written with such a short publication schedule. But California is hardly a typical place, where politics meander along a predictably slow-moving political river. Here, politics splash the state with fits and starts, clashes and confusion, urgency and resistance.

But there is so much more. Along with our bedrock institutions, California has a kaleidoscopic combination of policy issues that constantly compete for attention. Some issues, such as educational finance, seem to be resolved one moment, only to appear again at another. Other issues, such as the state's massive prison realignment program and recent sentence restructuring laws, seem to point the state in a new direction. Predictably, the state's most troublesome problems such as water, land use, taxation, and environmental protection, to name a few, stagger from one year to the next, with little agreement among the major stakeholders, which leaves the state in knots.

In addition to the panoply of resolved and unresolved issues, California's political colors continue to change. Today, California is less white and more blue. By that, we mean non-whites now form a solid majority of the state's residents and have benefited from increasing numbers of election victories. At the same time, Democrats have grown disproportionately compared to Republicans, making California virtually a one-party state. As we see it, the first trend is not likely to change; diversity will march on as a compelling state characteristic. But

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political party dominance is bit more fickle; only time will tell whether Democrats continue as the prevailing political party in the Golden State.

All of these factors and more provide the rationale for why we write this book every two years. Much like a public official running for reelection the day after he or she wins office, the day after we complete one edition, we are working on the next. It's the only way we know how to produce an up-to-date volume about an ever-changing state. In this way, the fourteenth edition of *California Politics & Government* is no different than its predecessors. As in the past, we cover the nuts and bolts of our state's political machinery, taking care to update the roles of our institutions at the state and local levels as well as their interaction with the federal government. Equally important, we focus on the current occupants of the state's offices, bearing in mind term limits for most. After all, it's hard to understand a state government if we don't know something about the officeholders, as well as the major players seeking to influence their decisions.

Virtually every election changes the state's leadership elements, which is yet another reason why we strive to be current, and why this book contains the results of the 2016 general election. If the past is any guide to the future, the most recent election outcomes, including Donald Trump's ascension to the presidency, will form the framework of what happens—or fails to happen—over the next two years.

Our goal is to better acquaint you with this place we know as California, for without understanding how the state works, there is little we can do about it. We have not embarked on this journey alone. Our colleagues in politics, the media, and elected office, as well as fellow academics, have offered valuable counsel, knowledge, and insights. We especially thank the following reviewers, whose comments have helped us prepare this edition: Paul E. Frank, Ph.D, Sacramento City College, and Maria Sampanis, California State University, Sacramento. Most of all, we continue to learn from our students, whose penetrating questions and observations inspire us to explore issues we might not have considered otherwise. Over the years, many have gone on to political careers in local, state, and federal offices, leaving us with the strong belief that California's best days are ahead.

Finally, we are indebted to the attentive team at Cengage, who artfully managed an incredibly tight production schedule that allowed the publication of the book within weeks of the November 8, 2016, election. They include Bradley Potthoff, Product Manager; Andrea Stefanowicz, Vendor Content Project Manager; and Andrea Wagner, Senior Content Project Manager. All of these people were instrumental in completing the project. Of course, we alone assume responsibility for the contents of the final product.

Larry N. Gerston and Terry Christensen

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About the Authors

Larry N. Gerston, professor emeritus of political science at San Jose State University, interacts with the political process as both an author and an observer. As an author, he has written eleven academic books in addition to *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach,* including *Making Public Policy: From Conflict to Resolution* (1983), *Politics in the Golden State* (with Terry Christensen, 1984), *The Deregulated Society* (with Cynthia Fraleigh and Robert Schwab, 1988), *American Government: Politics, Process and Policies* (1993), *Public Policy: Process and Principles (1987), Public Policymaking in a Democratic Society: A Guide to Civic Engagement* (2002), *Recall! California's Political Earthquake (with Terry Christensen, 2004), American Federalism: A Concise Introduction* (2007), *Confronting Reality: Ten Issues Threatening to Implode American Society and How We Can Fix It* (2009), *Not So Golden After All: The Rise and Fall of California* (2012), and *Reviving Citizen Engagement: Policies to Renew National Community* (2015). Gerston serves as the political analyst for NBC11, a San Francisco Bay Area television station, where he appears on a regular basis. He has written more than 125 op-ed pieces for newspapers throughout the nation and speaks often on issues such as civic engagement and political empowerment.

Terry Christensen is a San Jose State University professor emeritus of political science. Among his other awards for scholarship and service to the university, he was named Outstanding Professor in 1998. He is the author or co-author of nine books and frequent newspaper op-ed pieces. Local and national media regularly call on him for analysis of politics in California and Silicon Valley. In addition to other books co-authored with Larry Gerston, his works include *Projecting Politics: Political Messages in American Films* (2005), co-authored by Peter Haas, and *Local Politics: A Practical Guide to Governing at the Grassroots* (2006), co-authored by Tom Hogen-Esch. Christensen is experienced in practical politics at the local level as an advocate of policy proposals, an adviser to grassroots groups, and an adviser and mentor to candidates for local office—many of whom are his former

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students. He has served on numerous civic committees and commissions. He was the founding executive director of CommUniverCity San Jose (www.cucsj.org), a partnership between the City of San Jose, San Jose State University, and adjacent neighborhoods. Through CommUniverCity, hundreds of students are learning about life and politics in their community through service projects selected by neighborhood residents and supported by the city.

SUPPLEMENTS FOR INSTRUCTORS

Instructor's Manual with Test Bank Online for Gerston/Christensen *California Politics and Government: A Practical Approach*, **14e**

- ISBN: 9781305953512

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1

California's People, Economy, and Politics: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1.1 Describe changes in California's population in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

1.2 Discuss the rise and fall of California's political machine.

1.3 Explain how Progressive reforms shape California politics today.

1.4 Summarize demographic change in the twentieth century and its impact today.

1.5 Analyze the impacts of economic diversity and regional differences on California politics.

How can we understand the way a political system functions in a place like California? With a population of 39 million, California is larger than many independent nations. With an economy generating a gross domestic product (GDP) of $2.5 trillion in 2015, California would rank sixth in the world if it were a separate nation. And California is not just big; it's also the most ethnically diverse state in the United States (and one of the most ethnically diverse places in the world), and its economy is also highly diversified.

And that's just the beginning. The economy booms, then goes bust. Political leaders rise and fall precipitously. Wealthy candidates and special interests are accused of "buying" elections. State government stalls in gridlock, resulting in issues being referred to the voters, who are often asked to make decisions about complex and sometimes obscure issues. Our problems seem overwhelming—a

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failing education system, aging infrastructure (such as roads and water storage facilities), a shortage of affordable housing, crushing poverty, budget deficits, and political leadership that sometimes doesn't seem focused on solving these problem and others.[1]

But, however confusing California politics may seem, it is serious business that affects us all, and it can be understood by examining the history and present characteristics of our state. The basic structures of California government as it operates today, including the executive, legislature, and judiciary, were established in the state constitutions of 1849 and 1879. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Progressive movement constrained California's political parties and created direct democracy, the system that enables voters to make decisions about specific issues and policies. This history helps explain our present. But another part of that history is our constantly changing population and economy. Wave after wave of immigrants have made California a diverse, multicultural society, while new technologies repeatedly transform the state's economy. The resulting disparate demographic and economic interests compete for the benefits and protections conferred by government and thus shape the state's politics. We can understand California today—and tomorrow—by learning about its past and about the development of the competing interests within the state.

FROM THE FIRST CALIFORNIANS TO STATEHOOD[2]

The first Californians were probably immigrants like the rest of us. Archaeologists believe that the ancestors of American Indians crossed an ice or land bridge or traveled by sea from Asia to Alaska thousands of years ago, and then headed south. Europeans began exploring the California coast in the early 1500s, but colonization didn't start until 1769, when the Spanish established a string of missions and military outposts. The Native American population then numbered about 300,000, most living near the coast.

Many native Californians were brought to the missions as Catholic converts and workers, but violence, European diseases, and the destruction of the native culture reduced their numbers to about 100,000 by 1849. Entire tribes were wiped out, and the Indian population continued to diminish throughout the nineteenth century. Today, less than 1 percent of California's population is Native American, many of whom feel alienated from a society that has overwhelmed their peoples, cultures, and traditions. Poverty, a chronic condition in the past, has been alleviated somewhat by the development of casinos on native lands, a phenomenon that has also made some tribes major players in state politics.

Apart from building missions, the Spaniards did little to develop their faraway possession. Not much changed when Mexico (which by now included California) declared independence from Spain in 1822. A few thousand Mexicans quietly raised cattle on vast ranches and built small towns around central plazas.

Meanwhile, advocates of expansion in the United States coveted California's rich lands and access to the Pacific Ocean. When Mexico and the United States

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went to war over Texas in 1846, Yankee immigrants in California seized the moment and declared independence from Mexico. The United States won the war, and Mexico surrendered its claim to lands extending from Texas to California. By this time, foreigners already outnumbered Californians of Spanish or Mexican ancestry 9,000 to 7,500.

Gold was discovered in 1848, and the '49ers who started arriving in hordes the next year brought the nonnative population to 264,000 by 1852. Many immigrants came directly from Europe. The first Chinese people also arrived to work in the mines, which yielded more than a billion dollars' worth of gold in five years.

The new Californians soon took political action. A constitutional convention consisting of forty-eight delegates (only seven of whom were native Californians) assembled the **Constitution of 1849** by cutting and pasting from the constitutions of existing states; the convention requested statehood, which the U.S. Congress quickly granted. The constitutional structure of the new state approximated what we have today, with a two-house legislature; a supreme court; and an executive branch consisting of a governor, lieutenant governor, controller, attorney general, and superintendent of public instruction. The constitution also included a bill of rights, but only white males were allowed to vote. California's Chinese, African American, and Native American residents were soon prohibited by law from owning land, testifying in court, or attending public schools.

The voters approved the constitution, and San Jose became the first state capital. With housing in short supply, many newly elected legislators had to lodge in tents, and the primitive living conditions were exacerbated by heavy rain and flooding. The state capital soon moved on to Vallejo and Benicia, finally settling in 1854 in Sacramento—closer to the gold fields.

As the Gold Rush ended, a land rush began. Small homesteads were common in other states because of federal ownership and allocation of land, but California had been divided into huge tracts by Spanish and Mexican land grants. As early as 1870, a few hundred men owned most of the farmland. Their ranches were the forerunners of the agribusiness corporations of today, and as the mainstay of the state's economy, they exercised even more clout than their modern successors.

In less than fifty years, California had belonged to three different nations. During the same period, its economy and population had changed dramatically as hundreds of thousands of immigrants from all over the world came to claim their share of the "Golden State." The pattern of a rapidly evolving, multicultural polity was set.

RAILROADS, MACHINES, AND REFORM

Technology wrought the next transformation in the form of railroads. In 1861, Sacramento merchants led by Leland Stanford founded the company that would become the **Southern Pacific Railroad**. They persuaded Congress to provide millions of dollars in land grants and loan subsidies for a railroad linking

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California with the eastern United States, thus greatly expanding the market for California's products. Stanford became governor and used his influence to provide state assistance. Cities and counties also contributed—under the threat of being bypassed by the railroad. To obtain workers at cheap rates, the railroad builders imported 15,000 Chinese laborers.

When the transcontinental track was completed in 1869, the Southern Pacific expanded its system throughout the state by building new lines and buying up existing ones. The railroad crushed competitors by cutting shipping charges, and by the 1880s it had become the state's dominant transportation company, as well as its largest private landowner, with 11 percent of the entire state. With its business agents doubling as political representatives in almost every California city and county, the Southern Pacific soon developed a formidable political machine. "The Octopus," as novelist Frank Norris called the railroad,[3] placed allies in state and local offices through its control of both the Republican and Democratic parties. Once there, these officials protected the interests of the Southern Pacific if they wanted to continue in office. County tax assessors who were supported by the political machine set favorable tax rates for the railroad and its allies, while the machine-controlled legislature ensured a hands-off policy by state government.

People in small towns and rural areas who were unwilling to support the machine lost jobs, businesses, and other benefits. Some moved to cities, especially San Francisco, where manufacturing jobs were available. Chinese workers who had been brought to California to build the railroad also sought work in the cities when the railroad was completed. But when a depression in the 1870s made jobs scarce, the Chinese faced hostile treatment from those who came earlier. Irish immigrants, blaming economic difficulties on the Chinese and the railroad machine, became the core of a new political organization they christened the **Workingmen's Party**.

Meanwhile, small farmers who felt oppressed by the railroad united through the Grange movement. In 1879, the Grangers and the Workingmen's Party called California's second constitutional convention in hopes of breaking the railroad's hold on the state. The **Constitution of 1879** mandated regulation of railroads, utilities, banks, and corporations. An elected State Board of Equalization was set up to ensure the fairness of local tax assessments on railroads and their friends, as well as their enemies. The new constitution also prohibited the Chinese from owning land, voting, or working for state or local government.

The railroad soon reclaimed power, however, by taking control of the agencies that were created to regulate it. Nonetheless, efforts to regulate big business and control racial relations became recurring themes in California life and politics, and much of the Constitution of 1879 remains intact today.

The growth fostered by the railroad eventually produced a new middle class of merchants, doctors, lawyers, teachers, and skilled workers who were not dependent on the railroad. They objected to the corrupt practices and favoritism of the railroad's machine, which they claimed was restraining economic development in their communities. This new middle class demanded honesty and competence, which they called "good government." In 1907, some of these crusaders established the Lincoln-Roosevelt League, a reform group within the Republican Party, and became part of the national Progressive movement. Their leader,

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Hiram Johnson, was elected governor in 1910; they also captured control of the state legislature.

To break the power of the machine, the **Progressives** introduced a wave of reforms that shape California politics to this day. Predictably, they created a new regulatory agency for the railroads and utilities, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC). Most of their reforms, however, were aimed at weakening the political parties as tools of bosses and machines. Instead of party bosses handpicking candidates at party conventions, the voters now were given the power to select their party's nominees for office in primary elections. Cross-filing further diluted party power by allowing candidates to file for and win the nominations of more than one political party. City and county elections were made "nonpartisan" by removing party labels from local ballots altogether. The Progressives also created a civil service system to select state employees on the basis of their qualifications rather than their political connections.

Finally, the Progressives introduced direct democracy, which allowed the voters to amend the constitution, create laws through initiatives, repeal laws through referenda, and recall (remove) elected officials before their terms expired. Supporters of an initiative, referendum, or recall must circulate petitions and collect a specified number of signatures of registered voters before it goes to the voters.

Like the Workingmen's Party before them, the Progressives were concerned about immigration. Antagonism toward recent Japanese immigrants (who numbered 72,000 by 1910) resulted in Progressive support for a ban on land ownership by "aliens" and the National Immigration Act of 1924, which halted Asian immigration. Other, more positive changes by the Progressives included giving women the right to vote, passing child labor and workers' compensation laws, and implementing conservation programs to protect natural resources.

As a result of these reforms, the railroad's political machine eventually died, although California's increasingly diverse economy also weakened the machine, as the emerging oil, automobile, and trucking industries gave the state alternative means of transportation and shipping. These and other growing industries ultimately restructured economic and political power in California.

The reform movement waned in the 1920s, but the Progressive legacy of weak political parties and direct democracy opened up California's politics to its citizens, as well as to powerful interest groups and individual candidates with strong personalities. A long and detailed constitution is also part of the legacy. The Progressives instituted their reforms by amending (and thus lengthening) the Constitution of 1879 rather than calling for a new constitutional convention. Direct democracy subsequently enabled voters and interest groups to amend the constitution, constantly adding to its length.

THE DEPRESSION AND WORLD WAR II

California's population grew by more than 2 million in the 1920s (see Table 1.1). Many newcomers headed for Los Angeles, where employment

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TABLE 1.1 California's Population Growth

Year	Population	Percentage of U.S. Population
1850	93,000	0.4
1900	1,485,000	2.0
1950	10,643,000	7.0
1970	20,039,000	9.8
1990	29,733,000	11.7
2010	37,253,956	12.0
2016	39,309,017	12.2

SOURCE: U.S. Census.

opportunities in shipping, filmmaking, and manufacturing (of clothing, automobiles, and aircraft) abounded. Then came the Great Depression of the 1930s, which saw the unemployment rate soar from 3 percent in 1925 to 33 percent by 1933. Even so, more than a million people came to California in the 1930s, including thousands of poor white immigrants from the "dust bowl" of the drought-impacted Midwest. Immortalized by John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, rather than welcoming them, the state set up roadblocks and tried to ban indigent migrants. Many wandered through California's great Central Valley in search of work, displacing Mexicans—who earlier had supplanted the Chinese and Japanese—as farm workers. Racial antagonism ran high, and many Mexicans were arbitrarily sent back to Mexico. Labor unrest reached a crescendo in the early 1930s, as workers on farms, in canneries, and on the docks of San Francisco and Los Angeles fought for higher wages and an eight-hour workday.

The immigrants and union activists of this era changed California politics by voting for Democrats, thus challenging Republican dominance of the state. Thanks to the Depression and President Franklin Roosevelt's popular New Deal, Democrats become California's majority party in registration. Winning elections proved more difficult, however. The Democrats won the governorship in 1938, but their candidate, Culbert Olson, was the only Democratic winner between 1894 and 1958.

During the Depression, the state and federal governments invested heavily in California's future, building the Golden Gate Bridge (in just four years!) and the Central Valley Project, whose dams and canals brought water to the desert and reaffirmed agriculture as a mainstay of California's economy. Then, during World War II, the federal government spent $35 billion in California, creating 500,000 defense industry jobs. California's radio, electronics, and aircraft industries grew at phenomenal rates. The jobs brought new immigrants, including many African Americans, whose proportion of the state's population quadrupled during the 1940s.

Meanwhile, California's Japanese and Mexican American residents became victims of racial conflict. During the war, 120,000 Japanese Americans, suspected

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of loyalty to their ancestral homeland, were sent to prison camps (officially called "internment centers"). Antagonism toward Mexican Americans resulted in the Zoot Suit Riots in Los Angeles in 1943, when white sailors and police attacked Mexican Americans who were wearing the suits they favored, featuring long jackets with wide lapels, padded shoulders, and high-waisted, pegged pants.

Although the voters chose a Democratic governor during the Great Depression, they returned to the Republican fold as the economy revived. **Earl Warren**, one of a new breed of moderate Republicans, was elected governor in 1942, 1946, and 1950. Warren used cross-filing to win the nominations of both parties and staked out a relationship with the voters that he claimed was above party politics. A classic example of California's personality-oriented politics, Warren left the state in 1953 to become chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

GROWTH, CHANGE, AND POLITICAL TURMOIL

After Warren, the Republican Party fell into disarray due to infighting. Californians elected a Democratic governor, **Edmund G. "Pat" Brown**, and a Democratic majority in the state legislature in 1958. To prevent Republicans like Warren from taking advantage of cross-filing again, the state's new leaders quickly repealed that electoral device.

In control of both the governor's office and the legislature for the first time in the twentieth century, Democrats moved aggressively to develop the state's infrastructure. Completion of the massive California Water Project, construction of the state highway network, and creation of an unparalleled higher education system helped accommodate the growing population and stimulated the economy. Meanwhile, in the 1960s, black and Latino minorities became more assertive, pushing for civil rights, desegregation of schools, access to higher education, and improved treatment for California's predominantly Latino farm workers.

The demands of minority groups alienated some white voters, however, and the Democratic programs were expensive. After opening their purse strings during the eight-year tenure of Pat Brown, Californians became more cautious about the state's direction. Race riots precipitated by police brutality in Los Angeles, along with student unrest over the Vietnam War, also turned the voters against liberal Democrats such as Brown.

In 1966, Republican **Ronald Reagan** was elected governor; he moved the state in a more conservative direction before going on to serve as president. His successor as governor, Democrat **Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr.**, was the son of the earlier governor Brown and a liberal on social issues. Like Reagan, however, the younger Brown led California away from spending on growth-inducing infrastructure, such as highways and schools. In 1978, the voters solidified this change with the watershed tax-cutting initiative, Proposition 13 (see Chapter 8). Although Democrats still outnumbered Republicans among registered voters, California elected Republican governors from 1982 to 1998 (see Chapter 7).

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Democrat **Gray Davis** was elected in 1998 and reelected in 2002 despite voter concerns about an energy crisis, a recession, and a growing budget deficit. As a consequence of these crises and what some perceived as an arrogant attitude, Davis faced an unprecedented recall election in October 2003. The voters removed him from office and replaced him with Republican **Arnold Schwarzenegger**. Then, in 2010, former governor Jerry Brown was elected yet again in a dramatic comeback, making history as being both the youngest and the oldest governor of California.

While Schwarzenegger and other Republicans have managed to win gubernatorial elections, Californians have voted for Democrats in every presidential election since 1988, and Democrats have also had consistent success in the state legislature and the congressional delegation, where they have dominated since 1960. In addition to their legislative majorities, Democrats have controlled every statewide office since 2010.

Meanwhile, the voters have become increasingly involved in policy making by initiatives and referenda (see Chapter 2) as well as **constitutional amendments**, which can be placed on the ballot by a two-thirds vote of the state legislature or by citizen petition and which require voter approval. California's Constitution of 1879 has been amended over 500 times (the U.S. Constitution includes just twenty-seven amendments).

All through these years, the state's population continued to grow, outpacing most other states so much that the California delegation to the U.S. House of Representatives now numbers fifty-three—more than twenty-one other states combined. Much of this growth was the result of a new wave of immigrants facilitated by more flexible national laws during the 1960s and 1970s. Immigration from Asia—especially from Southeast Asia after the Vietnam War—increased greatly. A national amnesty for undocumented residents signed by President Ronald Reagan in 1986 also enabled many Mexicans to gain citizenship and bring their families from Mexico. In all, 85 percent of the 6 million newcomers and births in California in the 1980s were Asian, Latino, or black. Growth slowed in the 1990s, as 2 million more people left the state than came to it from other states, but California's population continued to increase as a result of births and immigration from abroad. In 1990, whites made up 57 percent of the state's population; by 2014, they were 39 percent.

Constantly increasing diversity enlivened California's culture and provided a steady flow of new workers, but it also increased tensions. Some affluent Californians retreated to gated communities; others fled the state. Racial conflict broke out between gangs on the streets and in prisons. As in difficult economic times throughout California history, many Californians blamed immigrants, especially those who were here illegally, for their problems during the recession of the early 1990s. A series of ballot measures raised divisive race-related issues such as illegal immigration, bilingualism, and affirmative action. The issue of immigration inflames California politics to this day, although the increasing electoral clout of minorities has provided some balance.

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CALIFORNIA TODAY

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, if California were an independent nation, its economy would rank sixth in the world, with an annual GDP of over $2.4 trillion. Much of the state's strength stems from its economic diversity (see Table 1.2). The elements of this diversity also constitute powerful political interests in state politics.

Half of California—mostly desert and mountains—is owned by the state and federal governments. Outside the cities, a few big corporations control much of the state's rich farmlands. These enormous agribusinesses make California the nation's leading farm state, with over 80,000 farms producing more than 400 commodities, including nearly half of the vegetables, fruits, and nuts and 21 percent of the dairy products consumed nationally. Grapes and wine are also top products, with thousands of growers and 4,285 wineries.

State politics affects this huge economic force in many ways, but most notably in labor relations, environmental regulation, and water supply. Farmers and their employees have battled for decades over issues ranging from wages to safety. Beginning in the 1960s, under the leadership of Cesar Chavez and the United Farm Workers union, laborers organized. Supported by public boycotts

TABLE 1.2 California's Economy

Industrial Sector	Employees	Amount (in millions of $)
Professional and business services	2,549,500	327,405
Education and health services	2,525,900	174,989
Leisure and hospitality services	1,887,300	98,830
Other services	550,800	51,468
Information	490,300	203,521
Government	2,495,200	300,275
Trade, transportation, and utilities	2,994,700	361,192
Manufacturing	1,286,900	278,584
Finance, insurance, and real estate	809,200	525,264
Construction	765,400	87,497
Mining and natural resources	26,300	10,509
Agriculture	445,100	39,000
Total, all sectors	16,826,500	2,458,535

SOURCE: California Employment Development Department, www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/data/industries.html (accessed June 16, 2016); and U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, "GDP by State," www.bea.gov (accessed June 16, 2016).

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of certain farm products, they achieved some improvements in working conditions, but the struggle continues today. California's agricultural industry is also caught up in environmental issues, including pesticide use and water pollution. The biggest issue, however, is always water supply. Most of California's cities and farms must import water from other parts of the state. Thanks to government subsidies, farmers claim 80 percent of the state's water supply at prices so low that they have little reason to improve inefficient irrigation systems. Meanwhile, the growth of urban areas is limited by water supplies. A drought beginning in 2012 and reaching crisis proportions in 2014 hit both farmers and city dwellers hard, with lost crops in some places and rationing or penalties for wasting water in others. Today, with agricultural and urban interests in conflict, water policy is in the forefront of California politics, as it has been so often in the past (see Chapter 10).

Agriculture is big business, but many more Californians work in manufacturing, especially in the aerospace, defense, and high-tech industries. Employment in manufacturing, however, has declined in California in recent years, especially after the federal government reduced military and defense spending in the 1990s when the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union brought an end to the Cold War. Jobs in California shifted to postindustrial occupations such as retail sales, tourism, and services, which usually pay less than manufacturing jobs did. Government policies on growth, the environment, and taxation affect all of these employment sectors, and all suffer when any one sector goes into a slump.

But the salvation of California's economy is innovation, especially in telecommunications, entertainment, medical equipment, international trade, and high-tech businesses spawned by defense and aerospace companies. By the 1990s, California hosted one-fourth of the nation's high-tech firms, which provided nearly a million jobs. Half of the nation's computer engineers worked in **Silicon Valley**, named after the silicon chip that revolutionized the computer industry. Running between San Jose and San Francisco, Silicon Valley became a center for innovation in technology from computers to software and Internet-based businesses, including iconic companies like Hewlett-Packard, Intel, Facebook, and Google, which are headquartered there. Biomedical and pharmaceutical companies also proliferated, further contributing to California's transformation. By 2016, the Silicon Valley region was leading the state and the country in job creation, but as high-tech firms expanded into San Francisco, issues of tax subsidies and gentrification arose, with affluent high-tech workers edging out local residents and driving up the price of housing there.

Computer technology also spurred expansion of the entertainment industry, long a key component of California's economy. This growth particularly benefited the Los Angeles area. Besides film and television production, tourism remains a bastion of the economy, with California ranking first among the states in visitors. Along with agriculture, high-tech, telecommunications, and other industries, these businesses have made California a leader in both international and domestic trade. All these industries are part of a globalized economy, with huge amounts of trade going through the massive port complex of Los Angeles/Long Beach, as well as the San Francisco Bay Port of Oakland.

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The California economy has been on a rollercoaster for the past few years, though. It has been in and out of recession—first in the early 1990s, and then again after the terrible events of September 11, 2001, when the California-centered Internet boom went bust as thousands of dot-com companies failed to generate projected profits. At about the same time, an energy crisis hit California; prices for gas and electricity rose, and parts of the state experienced shortages of electrical power. These factors combined to push California into another recession. Tax revenues declined precipitously, producing a huge state budget deficit. The energy crisis, the deficit, and other issues contributed to the recall of Governor Davis in 2003, but having a new governor didn't solve California's problems.

After a resurgence in 2006–2007, California's economy was hit by the Great Recession. Population growth slowed, and some Californians left. Unemployment reached 12.4 percent in 2010 (the U.S. rate at that time was 9.7 percent). Population growth slowed, and a significant number of Californians fled states with more jobs and a lower cost of living. Eventually, high-tech and Silicon Valley led the way to an economic comeback, hitting an unemployment rate of just 3.7 percent in 2016 while statewide unemployment was 5.2 percent—slightly higher than the national rate of 4.7 percent.

Throughout its history, California has experienced economic ups and downs like these, recovered, reinvented itself, and moved on, thanks to the diversity of its economy and its people and their ability to adapt to change. While some businesses have forsaken California for other states, complaining of burdensome regulation and the high cost of doing business in California, the skill and higher productivity of the state's workforce, access to capital, and quality of life compensate for such costs and keep the state attractive to many businesses.[4] Innovation continues to be an economic mainstay as well. Nanotechnology companies, for example, are concentrated in the San Francisco Bay Area, while biotechnology thrives in the San Diego region and green industry, such as solar power and electric cars, booms throughout California. Access to venture capital investment funds facilitates such innovation in California. Every year, over half of all venture capital in the United States is invested in California—especially Silicon Valley. Another strength of the California economy is an astounding and ever-growing number of small businesses—many of which are minority-owned. Most other states lack these advantages; some are dependent on a single industry or product, and none can match the energy and optimism brought by California's constant flow of immigrants eager to take jobs in the state's new and old industries.

California's globalized economy consistently attracts more immigrants than any other state, including great waves of newcomers from the 1880s to the 1920s, more during the Great Depression, and still more since the 1980s. As of 2014, 27 percent of the state's population was foreign-born, while 13 percent of the total U.S. population was from other countries. Fifty-two percent of California's immigrants are from Latin America (mostly Mexico), and 38 percent are from Asia (especially the Philippines, China, Vietnam, India, and Korea). Recently, however, immigrants from Asia have outnumbered those from Latin America. Significantly for the California economy, 80 percent of the state's immigrant population is of working age (18–64).[5] An estimated 2.7 million

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TABLE 1.3 California's Racial and Ethnic Diversity

	1990	2000	2014
Non-Latino white	57.1%	47.3%	38.8%
Latino	26.0	32.4	39.0
Asian/Pacific Islander	9.2	11.4	13.4
Black	7.1	6.5	5.8
Native American	0.6	0.5	0.4
Mixed race	N.A.	1.9	2.6

SOURCE: U.S. Census; California Department of Finance, www.dof.ca.gov (accessed June 10, 2016).

immigrants are in California illegally.[6] As a consequence of so much immigration, 44 percent of all Californians over the age of five speak a language other than English at home,[7] resulting in a major challenge for California schools. As in past centuries, immigration and language have been hot-button political issues in California in recent years.

Table 1.3 shows the extent of California's ethnic diversity. Non-Latino whites outnumbered other groups until 2014, when Latinos became the single largest group, a trend that is projected to continue. Overall, the black and white proportions of California's population have decreased, while Asian and Latino numbers have grown rapidly since the 1970s. Currently, 75 percent of students in California's public schools are nonwhite.[8]

The realization of the California dream is not shared equally among these groups. Although the median household income as of 2015 was $60,185 (U.S. median = $56,516), the income of 15.3 percent of Californians fell below the federal poverty level ($24,300 for a family of four). The rate is considerably higher when the cost of living, especially housing, is factored in. Over half the students in California schools qualify for free or reduced-price meals.[9] The gap between rich and poor in California is among the largest in the United States and is still growing. People of every race suffer from poverty in California, but it is worst among Latinos, blacks, and Southeast Asians, who tend to hold low-paying service jobs; other Asians, along with Anglos, predominate in the more comfortable professional classes.

As the poor grow in number, some observers fear that California's middle class is vanishing. Once a majority, many middle-class families have slipped down the economic ladder, and others have fled the state. Recent growth has been concentrated in low- and high-wage jobs. Many people are doing very well at the top of the ladder, but more are barely getting by at the bottom. The income gap continues to widen as California's middle class shrinks—faster than in any other state.[10]

The cost of housing is at the heart of this problem. Home prices dropped during the housing crisis of 2008–2011, briefly increasing affordability for some families, but others suffered losses of equity and some lost their homes to foreclosure. Home values in California began rising again in 2012 and hit a new

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median price of $509,100 in 2016, while the U.S. median was $321,100.[11] A family would need twice the median household income in California to qualify for a mortgage to purchase a home at the median price. Californians spend substantially more of their income on housing than the national average, and fewer families can afford to own homes, especially in the coastal counties from San Diego to San Francisco. Homes are more affordable in inland California, however. Overall, home ownership in California lags well behind the national average, especially for Latinos and blacks.

Access to health care has also a problem for many Californians, but the successful implementation Covered California—the state's version of the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare)—cut the percentage of residents without health insurance from 22 percent to 11 percent. Attempting to further expand coverage, the state extended Medi-Cal, an insurance program for the poor, to undocumented children in 2015 and, in 2016, applied for a waiver from the federal government to allow undocumented immigrants to purchase health insurance through Covered California.

Geographic divisions complicate California's economic and ethnic diversity.[12] In the past, the most pronounced of these divisions was between the northern and southern portions of the state. The San Francisco Bay Area tended to be diverse, liberal, and (in elections) Democratic, while southern California was staunchly Republican and much less diverse. However, with growth and greater diversity, Los Angeles also began voting Democratic. Today, the greatest division is between the coastal and inland regions of the state (see Figure 2.3). Democrats now outnumber Republicans in San Diego, and even traditionally conservative Orange County has elected a Latina Democrat to Congress.

But as the differences between northern and southern California fade, the contrast between coastal and inland California has increased. The state's vast Central Valley now leads the way in population growth, with cities from Sacramento to Fresno and Bakersfield gobbling up farmland. The Inland Empire, from Riverside to San Bernardino, has grown even more rapidly over the past quarter century. Although still sparsely populated, California's northern coast, Sierra Nevada, and southern desert regions are also growing, while retaining their own distinct identities. Water, agriculture, and the environment are major issues in all these areas. Except for Sacramento, inland California is more conservative than the coastal region of the state. Perhaps ironically, the liberal counties of the coast contribute more per capita in state taxes, and the conservative inland counties receive more per capita for social service programs.[13] While coastal California remains politically dominant, the impact of inland areas on California politics increases with every election.

These differences are such that parts of the state occasionally propose seceding, while many people lament California's underrepresentation in the U.S. Senate, where our two senators are matched by two from Wyoming with a population of less than 600,000. An initiative proposal to break California into six separate states provoked a lot of discussion in 2014, but despite $5 million spent to gather signatures, the measure failed to qualify for the ballot.

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CALIFORNIA'S PEOPLE, ECONOMY, AND POLITICS

All these elements of California's economic, demographic, and geographic diversity vie with one another for political influence in the context of political structures that were created more than a hundred years ago. Dissatisfaction with this system has resulted in dozens of reforms by ballot measure, a recall election, and even calls for a constitutional convention to rewrite the state constitution entirely. Public frustration reached a nadir in 2010, when only 16 percent of Californians felt that the state was "going in the right direction," but in 2016, as the economy improved, 54 percent were optimistic about the direction of the state.[14] In the chapters that follow, we'll see how the diverse interests of our state operate in the current political system and gain an understanding of how it all works, how some changes may have improved conditions in our state, and what challenges remain.

NOTES

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3. Frank Norris, *The Octopus*. New York: Penguin, 1901. A novel of nineteenth-century California.
4. Public Policy Institute of California, "California's Future: Economy," January 2016, www.ppic.org (accessed June 10, 2016), p. 16
5. Migration Policy Institute, "State Immigration Data Profiles," www.migationpolicy.org (accessed June 11, 2016).
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10. 24/7 Wall St., "States Where the Middle Class Is Dying," January 22, 2015, www.247wallst.org (accessed June 11, 2016).
11. California Association of Realtors, www.car.org; and U.S. Census, www.census.gov/construction/nrs/pdf/uspricemon.pdf (accessed June 13, 2016).
12. See Richard A. Walker and Suresh K. Lodha, *The Atlas of California*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013.

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13. Report from the Legislative Analyst's Office cited in "California's Unequal Give and Take," *San Jose Mercury News*, June 21, 2010.
14. Public Policy Institute of California, "Statewide Survey Time Trends," www.ppic.org (accessed June 15, 2016).

LEARN MORE ON THE WEB

Check out the complete California Constitution:
www.leginfo.ca.gov/const-toc.html

For population statistics on the state or your area:
www.dof.ca.gov/research/demographic
http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/06000.html

For historic images of California, including photographs, documents, newspapers, political cartoons, works of art, diaries, oral histories, advertising, and other cultural artifacts:
www.calisphere.universityofcalifornia.edu

GET INVOLVED

Choose an immigrant group from anywhere in the world and research the history of that group in California. If the group has a local advocacy organization or a festival celebrating its culture, consider volunteering and/or attending the festival to learn more about the issues affecting the group.

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2

California's Political Parties and Direct Democracy

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

2.1 Understand how the Progressives reformed California's political parties.

2.2 Describe the organizational structure of California's political parties.

2.3 Analyze the impact of the top-two primary on California politics.

2.4 Comment on the possibility of California becoming a one-party state.

2.5 Compare and contrast the supporters of California's political parties.

2.6 Explain the different forms of direct democracy.

2.7 Discuss the proliferation of ballot measures in recent years.

Is California becoming a one-party state? Democrats have controlled every statewide office since 2010 and command overwhelming majorities in both houses of the state legislature. Republican presidential candidates don't bother to campaign in California because they know they can't win here.

That's far from the ideal of two-party governance in which voters have a genuine choice between parties with different ideologies and platforms and the same party does not always win. So what is a political party, and what has brought California to the current dominance of one party?

Theoretically, political parties are organizations of like-minded individuals and groups that pursue public policies based on their political ideology, offer candidates for public office, and provide the candidates with organizational and financial support and hold them accountable if they are elected. In some states, parties do all these things, but in California parties are weak as organizations and perform none of these functions effectively. History tells us why: The **Progressive** reformers intentionally weakened political parties to rid California of the railroad-dominated political machine. In doing so, they unintentionally made

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candidate personalities, media manipulation, and fat campaign war chests as important in elections as political parties—and sometimes more so.

But if party organizations are weak in California, how can one party dominate? Largely because of the failure of the other major party to attract enough voters to prevail. An additional post-Progressive reform, the "top-two primary" introduced in 2012, has resulted in an increasing number of general election ballots pitting two candidates of the same party against one another rather than candidates of differing parties. This has reduced competition and voters' choices, but it has also resulted in competition within the dominant party between liberals and moderates—an emerging two-party system within a single party?

The Progressives also introduced **direct democracy**. Through the initiative, referendum, and recall, California voters gained the power to make or repeal laws and to remove elected officials between elections. The reformers' intent was to empower citizens, but in practice, interest groups and politicians are more likely to use—or abuse—direct democracy.

THE PROGRESSIVE LEGACY

To challenge the dominance of the **Southern Pacific Railroad**'s political machine, Progressive reformers focused on the machine's control of party conventions, where party leaders nominated their candidates for various offices. Republican reformers scored the first breakthrough in 1908, when they succeeded in electing many antirailroad candidates to the state legislature. In 1909, the reform legislators replaced party conventions with **primary elections**, in which the registered voters of each party chose the nominees. Candidates who won their party's primary in these elections faced the nominees of other parties in **general elections** in November. By instituting this system, the reformers ended the power of the machine—and the political parties—to pick candidates.

In 1910, Progressives won the office of governor and majorities in the state legislature. They quickly introduced direct democracy to give policymaking authority to the people. They also replaced the "party column ballot"—which permitted bloc voting for all the candidates of a single party by making just one mark—with separate balloting for each office. In addition, Progressive reformers introduced **cross-filing**, which permitted candidates of one party to seek the nominations of rival parties. Finally, the Progressives instituted **nonpartisan elections**, which eliminated party labels for candidates in elections for judges and local government officials.

These changes reduced the railroad's control of the political parties, but they also sapped the strength of party organizations. By allowing the voters to circumvent an unresponsive legislature, direct democracy paved the way for interest groups to make public policy. Deletion of the party column ballot encouraged voters to cast their ballots for members of different parties for different offices (**split-ticket voting**), increasing the likelihood of a divided-party government. Cross-filing enabled candidates of one party to win the nomination of what

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should have been the opposing party, effectively eliminating competition. Nonpartisan local elections made it difficult for the parties to groom candidates and build their organizations at the grassroots level.

In 1959, when Democrats gained control of the legislature for the first time in over forty years, they outlawed cross-filing, which had been disproportionately helpful to Republican incumbents. This marked a return to the **closed primary** in which candidates filed for nomination for their own party only.

CALIFORNIA'S POLITICAL PARTIES: SYSTEM AND SUPPORTERS

Because of the Progressive reforms, political parties in California operate under unusual constraints. Although the original reformers have long since departed, the reform mentality remains very much a part of California's political culture.

The Party System

By state law, political parties qualify to place candidates on the ballot if a number of voters equal to 1 percent of the vote in the most recent gubernatorial election sign up for the party when they register to vote; alternatively, parties can submit a petition with signatures amounting to 10 percent of that vote. Once qualified, if a party retains the registration of at least 1 percent of the voters or if at least one of its candidates for any statewide office receives 2 percent of the votes cast, that party remains qualified for the next election. By virtue of their sizes, the Democratic and Republican parties have been fixtures on the ballot almost since statehood.

Minor parties, sometimes called **third parties**, are another story. Some have been on the ballot for decades; others only briefly. In 2016, the American Independent, Green, Libertarian, and Peace and Freedom parties qualified for the ballot along with Democrats and Republicans. Breaking the hold of the two major parties is difficult, however. The Democratic and Republican candidates for governor and president typically win over 95 percent of the vote. Among the smaller parties, the Greens have elected a few city and county officials.

California voters choose their party when they **register to vote**, which, as of 2016, can be done right up to the day of the election. Beginning in 2017, citizens will be automatically registered to vote when they obtain or renew their driver's licenses (unless they opt out). Before the Great Depression, California was steadfastly Republican, but during the 1930s, a Democratic majority emerged. Since then, Democrats have dominated in voter registration (see Figure 2.1), although their proportion has declined from a peak of 60 percent of registered voters in 1942 to 44.9 percent in 2016. Republican registration has slipped to 26.0 percent, while only 4.8 percent signed up with other parties. "Independent" voters (those who designate **no party preference** when they register) hit an all-time high of 24.3 percent in 2016 (see Figure 2.2), up from just 9 percent

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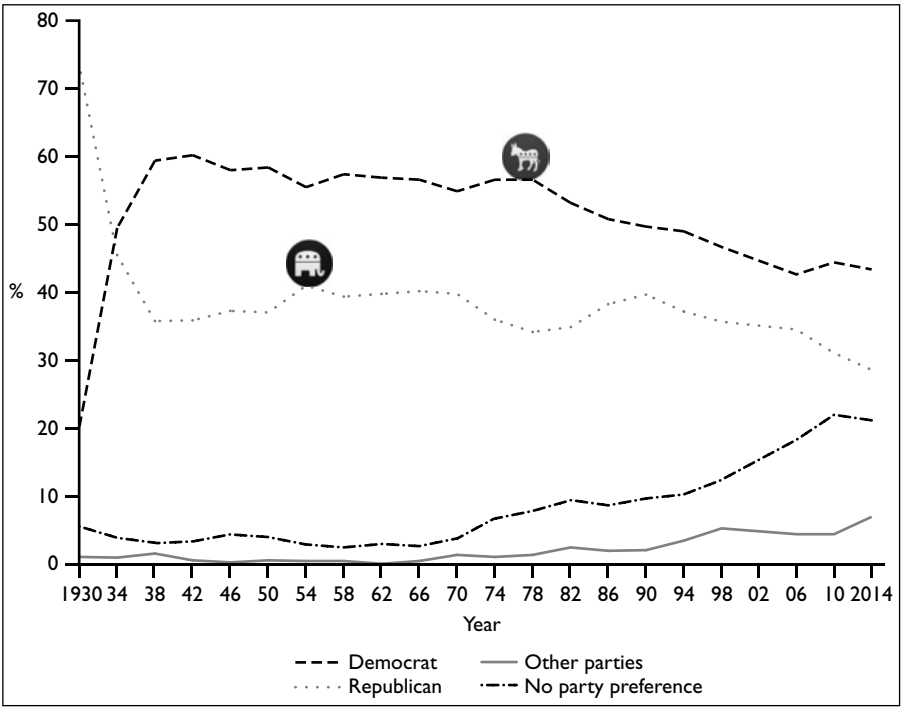

FIGURE 2.1 Party Registration during Gubernatorial Election Years.
SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

in 1986. Despite their advantage in registration, Democrats did not gain a majority in both houses of the state legislature until 1958 and Republican candidates have won six of the last twelve gubernatorial elections.

For most of its history, California used closed primary elections to select the nominees of each party for state offices and Congress. Voters registered with a political party could cast their ballots in the primary only for that party's nominees for various offices. The winners of each party's primary election faced off in the November general election, when all voters were free to cast their ballots for the candidates of any of the parties.

But in 2010, over the strenuous objections of the political parties (another indication of their weakness), voters approved a **top-two primary** system that went into effect in 2012. In a top-two primary, no matter what their own party affiliation, voters may choose their preferred candidate from any party; the two who win the most votes face off in the November election, even if they're from the same party. Advocates of this system hoped that instead of concentrating their appeals on the core of their own parties (liberals for Democrats and conservatives for Republicans), candidates would reach out to independent and moderate voters, which would mean that those elected would be more moderate and willing to compromise when they got to Sacramento, thus reducing the likelihood of partisan gridlock.

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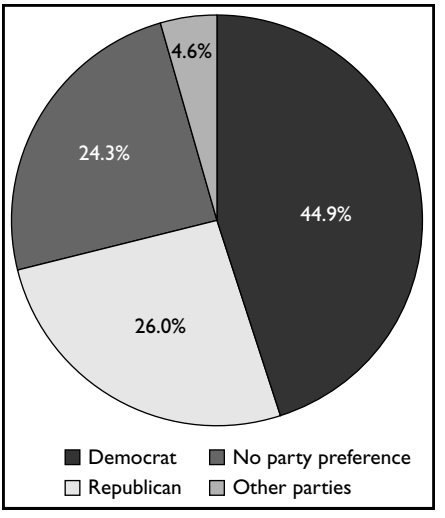

FIGURE 2.2 Party Registration in California, 2016. (Courtesy of Terry Christensen.)
SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

The June 2012, 2014, and 2016 elections were the first statewide top-two primaries. These elections were somewhat more competitive with more close races and more incumbent officeholders facing challengers from within their own parties than in the past. Perhaps most significantly, the top-two system resulted in twenty-eight runoffs between candidates of the same party in 2012, twenty-five in 2014, and twenty-seven in 2016, including the race for U.S. Senate. Whereas in the closed primary system, the general election choice was between the nominees of all the parties that had entered candidates in the primary, in these races voters chose between members of the same party.

In the U.S. Senate race, for example, voters in the November general election could select either Kamala Harris or Loretta Sanchez. Harris was considered more liberal and Sanchez more moderate, but both were Democrats, much to the dismay of many Republican voters, some of whom declined to vote at all in that race. Similar distinctions were common in races for the state legislature, often with traditional liberal Democrats challenged by more moderate "business" Democrats, many of whom attempted to appeal to Republican voters (as did Sanchez). Advocates of the top-two primary may be pleased that, as they hoped, more moderates have been elected to the legislature, but some voters are disappointed that they no longer have a choice between candidates of different parties while party leaders are alarmed by nasty and expensive battles within their parties. Democrats may be ascendant in California, making it virtually a one-party state, but the top-two primary has generated plenty of competition within the dominant party.

An additional impact of the top-two primary is the likely demise of the small parties. Not a single minor party candidate for legislative or statewide office has made it to the top two since the system was initiated in 2012. Surely these parties will eventually disappear under this system. Since none of the small parties secured the minimum 2 percent of the vote for one of their statewide

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candidates, they will appear on the next primary ballot only if they sustain a minimum registration of 1 percent of the 2014 voters.

State law dictates not only whether parties qualify for the ballot, but also party organization. The main parties have similar structures with the state **central committee** as the highest-ranking body. These committees are comprised of party candidates, officeholders, county chairpersons, and some appointed members. In addition, Democratic voters elect members from each assembly district, and Republican county central committees elect or appoint members. Each party's central committee elects a state chair who functions as the party spokesperson. Currently, Jim Brulte is the Republican chair and John Burton heads the Democrats; both are former leaders of the state legislature.

Beneath the state central committees are county central committees. Voters registered with each party choose committee members every two years during primary elections. The party's nominees for state legislature and officeholders are also members. The state and county party committees draft policy positions for party platforms, although candidates and elected officials often ignore these. Some county committees recruit volunteers and raise money for party candidates. Despite their low public profile, county committees are sometimes rife with conflict among activists. Avid liberals usually dominate Democratic county committees, whereas staunch conservatives rule Republican committees.

Party committees can endorse their preferred candidates in primary elections, which could become more important with the top-two primary system because party activists could support whichever candidate they view as most loyal. In the past, such party endorsements were rare, but both parties have endorsed more actively in recent elections. Voters don't always pay attention to such endorsements, however, and their influence is also limited by the inability of the parties to deliver organizational support to the chosen candidates and by high-spending campaigns and the media.

Party Supporters

Besides the official party organizations, many caucuses and clubs are associated with both major parties. The California Republican Assembly is a resolutely conservative statewide grassroots organization that has dominated the Republican Party, thanks to an activist membership. On the Democratic side, liberals dominate through the California Democratic Council, which comprises hundreds of local Democratic clubs organized by geography, gender, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation.

Party activists such as these are a tiny percentage of the electorate, however. The remaining support base comes from citizens who designate their party affiliations when they register to vote and usually cast their ballots accordingly. Public opinion polls[1] tell us that voters who prefer the Democratic Party tend to be sympathetic to the poor and immigrants; concerned about health care, education, and the environment; in favor of gay rights, gun control, and abortion rights; and supportive of tax increases to provide public services. Those who prefer the Republican Party are more likely to oppose these views and to worry more about big government and high taxes. Of course, some people mix these positions.

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Both major parties enjoy considerable support, but the more liberal Democratic Party fares better with blacks, city dwellers, union members, and residents of coastal California and the Sacramento area (see Figure 2.3) as well as young voters—especially Millennials. Latino voters also favor Democrats, a tendency that was strengthened by Republican support for several statewide initiatives relating to immigration and affirmative action. Voters among most Asian nationalities also lean Democratic, an inclination that has increased in recent years. As with Latinos, Asian interest in the California Republican Party has been weakened by policies and candidates perceived as anti-immigrant. The inability of Republican candidates to win support from minority voters is surely the major factor in Democratic dominance in California. More Latino and Asian voters participate every year, so unless Republicans can do more to win them over, the party may be doomed in California.

The more conservative Republican Party does better with whites, suburbanites, and rural voters, and in Orange County, the Central Valley, and inland California, as well as with older, more affluent voters, and with religious conservatives. These constituencies are more likely to turn out to vote than those that support Democrats, but some Republican leaders worry that the party has declined to such an extent that the advantage in turnout has been lost. "The California Republican Party has effectively collapsed," declared a prominent Republican political consultant. "It doesn't do any of the things that a political party should do. It doesn't register voters. It doesn't recruit candidates. It doesn't raise money.… The party is actually shrinking. It's becoming more white. It's becoming older."[2]

In the past, Republican candidates sometimes succeeded by winning the support of Democratic voters, thanks to charismatic candidates, clever campaigns, and split-ticket voting. But in the 1990s, ticket splitting declined, and instead, voters increasingly voted a straight party-line ticket—either all Democratic or all Republican. This includes no-party-preference voters, who, contrary to common wisdom, are not necessarily independent. Most tilt toward one party or the other, with Democrats enjoying greater support.[3] Some observers assert that the rightward thrust of the California's Republican Party drove independent voters to the Democrats and was even more important to Democratic dominance than was winning over minority voters.[4]

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Thanks to the Progressives, Californians who are frustrated by the outcome of candidate elections have another way to participate in the political process. To counter the railroad machine's control of state and local governments, the Progressive reformers guaranteed the people a say through the mechanisms of direct democracy: recall, referendum, and initiative. Referenda and initiatives appear on our ballots as "propositions," with numbers assigned by the secretary of state; local measures are assigned letters by the county clerk.

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FIGURE 2.3 California's Partisan Division by County, 2016. (Courtesy of Terry Christensen.)

SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

The Recall

The least-used form of direct democracy is the **recall**, which empowers voters to remove officeholders at all levels of government between scheduled elections. Advocates circulate a recall petition with a statement of their reasons for wanting a named official to be removed from office. They must collect a specific number of voter signatures within a certain time period. The numbers vary with the office in question. At the local level, for example, the number of signatures

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required ranges from 10 to 30 percent of those who voted in the previous local election; these signatures must be collected over periods that vary between 40 and 160 days. A recall petition for a judge or a legislator requires signatures equaling 20 percent of the vote for that office in the last election; while for state executive officeholders, the figure is 12 percent. In these cases, petitioners have 160 days to collect the signatures. If enough signatures are collected and validated by the secretary of state (for state officeholders) or by the city or county clerk (for local officeholders), an election is held. The ballot is simple: "Shall [name] be removed from the office of [title]?" The recall takes effect if a majority of voters vote yes, and then either an election or an appointment—whichever state or local law requires—fills the vacancy for the office. Elected officials who are recalled cannot be candidates in the replacement election.

Recalling state officeholders is easier in California than in the other seventeen states where recall is possible. Other states usually require more signatures, and while any reason suffices in California, other states require corruption or malfeasance by the officeholder. Nevertheless, recalls are rare in California. A dozen or so recalls are on local ballots in any given year (usually by parents angry with school board members); only about half of the officials who face recall are removed from office. Only four state legislators have been recalled. The most dramatic use of the recall came in 2003 when Governor **Gray Davis** became the first statewide official ever recalled.[5]

The Referendum

The **referendum** is another form of direct democracy, in this case allowing voters to nullify acts of the state government. Referendum advocates have ninety days after the legislature makes a law to collect a number of signatures equal to 5 percent of the votes cast for governor in the previous election (365,880 based on the 2014 vote). Referenda are even rarer than recalls. Of the fifty referenda on California ballots since 1912, voters have revoked acts of the government thirty times. In 2012, a referendum that would have repealed a redistricting plan for the state senate failed, and in 2016, a referendum to rescind a statewide ban on plastic bags was rejected despite massive campaign spending by the bag manufacturers.

The Initiative

Recalls and referenda are reactions to what elected officials do. **Initiatives** allow citizens to make policy themselves by drafting new laws or constitutional amendments and then circulating petitions to get them on the ballot. Qualifying a proposed law for a vote requires a number of signatures equal to 5 percent of the votes cast for governor in the last election; constitutional amendments require a number of signatures equal to 8 percent (585,407 based on California's 2014 election). If enough valid signatures are obtained within 180 days, the initiative goes to the voters at the next election or, on rare occasions, in a special election called by the governor. As of 2012, all citizen initiatives are on the November general election ballot only—a move advocated by Democrats because voter

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turnout is higher in November than in June primary elections. This means that more people participate in these decisions, but it also ensures the maximum turnout of Democratic voters.

2016 saw additional changes in the initiative process, including extending the amount of time for collecting signatures and referring initiative proposals to the legislature for consideration after petitioners collect 25 percent of the required signatures. If the legislature takes acceptable action on the initiative, its supporters can withdraw their proposal. Advocates of this change hoped it would mean more thoughtful consideration through the legislative process and, ultimately, better law. In 2016, a nasty and expensive election battle was avoided when the legislature and governor reached a compromise that satisfied the proponents of a ballot measure to raise the state's minimum wage, and the latter withdrew their initiative.

The subjects of initiatives vary wildly and are often controversial. In the past, voters have approved limits on bilingual education, banned same-sex marriage, and set standards for the size of chicken cages. Other recent propositions have dealt with gun control, requiring actors in adult films to use condoms, taxes on cigarettes, and legalizing the sale of marijuana as well as contradictory initiatives on the death penalty.

Twenty-three other states provide for the initiative, but few rely on it as heavily as California. Relatively few initiatives appeared on ballots until the 1970s, however (see Table 2.1). Then political consultants, interest groups, and politicians rediscovered the initiative, and ballot measures proliferated, peaking with eighteen initiatives on both the 1988 and 1990 election ballots. The numbers tapered off after that, but voters faced seventeen propositions in 2016—in part because the number of signatures required for a measure to qualify for the ballot was determined by voter turnout in 2014, which was historically low, thus reducing the number of signatures required and making qualifying for the ballot easier.

Legislative Initiatives, Constitutional Amendments, and Bonds

Propositions can also be placed on the ballot by the state legislature—on either the primary or general election ballots (unlike citizen initiatives). Such **legislative initiatives** can include new laws that the legislature prefers to put before the voters rather than enact on its own, or proposed **constitutional amendments**, for which voter approval is compulsory. The top-two primary measure, for example, was put on the ballot by the legislature as part of a deal to win the vote of a Republican senator for the proposed budget. In 2016, the legislature proposed and voters approved **Proposition 58**, which removed limits on bilingual education imposed by a 1998 initiative.

Voter approval is also required when the governor or the legislature seeks to issue **bonds** (borrowing money) to finance parks, schools, transportation, or other infrastructure projects. Few of these proposals are controversial, and more than 60 percent pass with minimal campaigning or spending. In 2014 (a drought year), voters approved $7.5 billion in bonds for water projects; in 2016, they consented to $9 billion in bonds for schools.

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TABLE 2.1 The Track Record of California Initiatives*

Period	Number	Number	
		Adopted	Rejected
1912–1919	31	8	23
1920–1929	34	10	24
1930–1939	37	10	27
1940–1949	20	7	13
1950–1959	11	1	10
1960–1969	10	3	7
1970–1979	24	7	17
1980–1989	53	25	28
1990–1999	61	24	37
2000–2009	60	21	39
2010–2016	31	15	16
Total	372	131 (35.2%)	241 (64.8%)

*Not including legislative initiatives.
SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

THE POLITICS OF BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

The recent proliferation of ballot propositions is hardly the result of a sudden surge in citizen action. Rather, it stems largely from the opportunism of special interests, individual politicians, and public relations firms.

Although intended as a mechanism for citizens to shape policy, even the most grassroots-driven initiative costs a million dollars to gather signatures and millions more to mount a successful campaign. "If you pay enough," declared a former chief justice of the California Supreme Court, "you can get anything on the ballot. You pay a little bit more and you get it passed."[6] The campaigns for and against the 2008 proposition banning same-sex marriage spent a total of $83 million—much of which came from out of state, because California is often seen as setting precedents for campaigns elsewhere. Health-care and insurance corporations spent over $110 million fighting consumer-oriented initiatives in 2014, and pharmaceutical companies ("big pharma") spent more than that to defeat a 2016 measure that would have required state agencies to pay the lowest prices for prescription drugs paid by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Energy, oil, and tobacco interests have also spent heavily fighting environmental- or consumer-oriented initiatives, and labor unions are big financial backers of tax measures and other initiatives that serve their interests.

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Total spending for campaigns for and against propositions in any given election year averages around $300 million, but spending on the 2016 proposition campaigns, topping $500 million, broke all records. Most of this money comes from corporations, unions, and obscure political action committees (PACs), sometimes from out of state. A study by the California Fair Political Practices Commission concluded that "a handful of special interests have a disproportionate amount of influence on California elections and public policy."[7]

Wealthy individuals also use their resources to influence public policy through initiative campaigns. Business magnate Charles Munger spent tens of millions of dollars advocating redistricting reform (successfully). Tom Steyer, a hedge fund manager, spent $21.9 million supporting a 2012 initiative to close a corporate tax loophole (successfully). Facebook cofounder Sean Parker was a major supporter of the 2016 initiative to legalize marijuana to the tune of $8.6 million. Similarly, politicians use initiatives to further their own careers or shape public policy. Movie star Arnold Schwarzenegger sponsored a 2002 initiative to fund after-school programs that launched his political career. As governor, he tried to use ballot measures to further his agenda when thwarted by the Democratic majority in the legislature, but the voters rejected his efforts at political and budget reform. Governor **Jerry Brown**, on the other hand, won voter approval for his 2012 initiative to increase state revenues, although Charles Munger (see above) contributed over $35 million to the campaign against the measure. In 2016, Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom, perhaps to keep himself in the public eye as a candidate for governor in 2018, sponsored a successful gun control measure even though the state legislature had already passed similar laws.

Others also take advantage of direct democracy. Public relations firms and **political consultants**, virtual "guns for hire," have developed lucrative careers managing initiative and referenda campaigns; they offer expertise in public opinion polling, computer-targeted mailing, and television advertising—the staples of modern campaigns. Some firms generate initiatives themselves by conducting test mailings and preliminary polls in hopes of snagging big contracts from proposition sponsors.

Political ideology and party politics also shape the initiative wars. Stymied by Democratic dominance of the state legislature for so long, Republicans, conservatives, and business interests have, often successfully, resorted to the initiative process to pursue their agendas, especially with regard to taxes (see Chapter 8). Democrats countered in 2011 by mandating that all citizen initiatives be voted on in November, when more Democrats participate, rather than June, when lower turnout produces a more conservative electorate.

Surely the Progressive framers of direct democracy didn't intend that moneyed interests should have the advantage over the efforts of regular citizens. But direct democracy still offers hope to those out of power by enabling them to take their case to the public. Grassroots groups have won some initiative battles in recent years, including funding mental health programs by increasing taxes on the rich and regulating the treatment of farm animals, despite the strong opposition of agribusiness. The 2016 ballot included propositions addressing

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juvenile justice, the death penalty, an increase in cigarette taxes to fund health care, and regulations on the price of state-funded drugs. Some passed and some failed, largely due to massive spending by opponents, but they all got on the ballot largely by grassroots efforts. Such grassroots-generated measures are often defeated by well-funded opponents, but at least direct democracy provides non-elites an opportunity to make their cases.

Besides the problem of big money, the initiative process sometimes doesn't result in good laws. Because self-interested sponsors draft initiatives and media masters run campaigns, careful and rational crafting of proposals is rare. Flaws or contradictions in the laws enacted by initiative may take years to resolve, sometimes in the process of implementation or through the legislative process—or by taking the issue back to the voters with successor initiatives. The recent reform that allows initiative proponents to withdraw their measures if the legislature enacts laws that meet their concerns may improve this situation by providing an opportunity for more thoughtful drafting of the laws and decreasing the likelihood that they'll be challenged in the courts. Disputes about initiatives that do go to the ballot are still likely to end up in court, however, as state and federal courts are asked to rule on whether the initiatives are consistent with other laws and with the state and federal constitutions. In recent years, courts have overturned all or parts of initiatives dealing with illegal immigration, campaign finance, and same-sex marriage (see Chapter 6). Such rulings may seem to deny the will of the voters, but the electorate cannot make laws that contradict the state or federal constitutions.

The increased use of direct democracy has also had an impact on the power of our elected representatives. Although we expect them to make policy, their ability to do so has been constrained by initiatives in recent decades. This is particularly the case with the state budget, much of which is dictated by past ballot measures rather than by the legislature or the governor.

The proliferation of initiatives, expensive and deceptive campaigns, flawed laws, and court interventions have annoyed voters and policy makers alike. Perhaps as a consequence, two-thirds of all initiatives are rejected (see Table 2.1). The recent reform allowing the legislature to modify and enact proposed ballot measures may result in somewhat fewer initiatives and sounder policy, but Californians still express frustration with the volume of initiatives they face and the expensive and often confusing campaigns. Opinion polls, however, consistently report a solid majority in support of direct democracy—in concept.

POLITICAL PARTIES AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY

So has California become a one-party state? Voter support for the Republican Party has wilted, especially among young people, minorities, and even independents. Meanwhile, competition between the two parties has declined—most notably in district or statewide contests where the top-two primary winners are of the same party. In an increasing number of races (nearly 20 percent), the final choice

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for voters is between a moderate or more liberal Democrat or in a few cases between a moderate or more conservative Republican—but not a choice between the two parties. And the parties, as organizations, do not have the power to control this intraparty competition. Republican candidates in California's 2016 U.S. Senate primary, for example, cumulatively won enough votes to make the top-two runoff against the top Democrat. But multiple candidates split the vote so a Democrat beat them all to the number two spot. Surely the parties will try to manage the number of candidates in future, but given their limited organizational power, they are unlikely to succeed.

All this does not make California a one-party state, however. Democrats may yet self-destruct through overconfidence or intraparty competition. And as Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger proved just a few years ago, the right Republican at the right time can win a statewide election. In 2014, a little known and minimally funded Republican challenger to popular Democratic Governor Jerry Brown scored 40 percent of the statewide vote. To increase that number, the party will need to win over young, minority, and independent voters, however, and the Republican candidate for president in 2016 may not have furthered that cause.

Genuinely competitive parties are surely better for voter choice and for democracy, but even if California becomes a one-party state, the mechanisms of direct democracy guarantee an alternative means of making policy and holding government accountable. Voters may be confounded by the proliferation of propositions and frustrated that powerful interest groups (see Chapter 4) with deep pockets so often win the initiative wars, but direct democracy still offers an engaged citizenry the opportunity to take action.

NOTES

1. Public Policy Institute of California, "California Voter and Party Profiles," *Just the Facts*, August 2015, www.ppic.org (accessed July 25, 2016).
2. Quoted in Adam Nagourney, "In California, G.O.P. Fights Steep Decline," *New York Times*, July 23, 2012.
3. Edward L. Lascher, Jr., and John L. Korey, "The Myth of the Independent Voter, California Style," *California Journal of Politics and Public Policy* 3, no. 1, 2011.
4. Morris P. Fiorina and Samuel J. Abrams, "Is California Really a Blue State?" in *The New Political Geography of California*, ed. Frederick Douzet, Thad Kousser, and Kenneth P. Miller. Berkeley: Berkeley Public Policy Press, Institute of Governmental Studies, University of California, 2008.
5. See Larry N. Gerston and Terry Christensen, *Recall! California's Political Earthquake*. Armonk: M. E. Sharpe, 2004.
6. Ronald George, "Promoting Judicial Independence," *Commonwealth*, February 2006, p. 9.
7. California Fair Political Practices Commission, *Big Money Talks: A Report*, Sacramento: California Fair Political Practices Commission, 2010.

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LEARN MORE ON THE WEB

For public opinion polls, including archives:
www.field.com/fieldpoll or "Statewide Survey," www.ppic.org

For information about California's political parties:
American Independent Party: www.aipca.org
California Democratic Party: www.cadem.org
California Republican Party: www.cagop.org
Green Party of California: www.cagreens.org
Libertarian Party of California: www.ca.lp.org
Peace and Freedom Party: www.peaceandfreedom.org

To find out more about elections and ballot measures:
Ballotpedia: www.ballotpedia.org
California Secretary of State: www.sos.ca.gov/elections
California Voter Foundation: www.calvoter.org
League of Women Voters: www.smartvoter.org and www.easyvoterguide.org

GET INVOLVED

Volunteer or intern for a political party by contacting your local county party offices. You'll get a chance to see what goes on in a party office and to observe the sorts of people who are active in the party you choose and their perspectives on the issues.

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3

California Elections, Campaigns, and the Media

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

3.1 Examine how variation in voter participation affects election outcomes.

3.2 Compare and contrast the diversity of California candidates and population.

3.3 Discuss the roles of money and media in campaigns.

3.4 Understand the changing role of media in California politics.

Do political campaigns matter? Most of us are just annoyed by political mailers, TV ads, robocalls (recorded messages), tweets, and Facebook posts. But how else can we learn about candidates and ballot measures? A typical California ballot requires voters to make decisions about over twenty elective positions and propositions. Even the best-informed citizens find it difficult to choose among candidates for offices they know little about and to decide on obscure and complicated propositions. Political party labels provide some guidance, but with the **top-two primary**, voters must choose between candidates of the same party with increasing frequency.

Like them or not, campaigns, along with the news media, are important sources of information for California voters—and the media and campaigns together are crucial in California elections. The mobility that characterizes California society enhances their influence. Nearly half of all Californians were born elsewhere, and many voters in every California state election are participating for the first time. Residents also move frequently within the state, reducing the political influence of families, friends, and peer groups and boosting that of campaigns and the media.

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THE VOTERS

California citizens who are eighteen years or older are eligible to vote unless they are convicted felons in prison or on parole or in mental institutions. Those eligible must **register to vote** by completing a form available at post offices, libraries, and other public places or online at registertovote.ca.gov. Under California's new "motor voter" law, citizens will be automatically registered to vote when they obtain or renew their driver's licenses (unless they opt out) beginning in 2017.

Altogether, nearly 24.8 million Californians are eligible to vote. Only 19.4 million (78 percent) were registered in 2016, however, and many of those who are registered don't vote. In the gubernatorial election of 2014, only 42.2 percent of registered voters participated. Turnout is higher in presidential elections, which are held in even-numbered years, alternating with gubernatorial elections. In 2016, 74 percent of the state's registered voters participated in the presidential election. Far fewer voters participate in June primary elections, however—47.7 percent in the 2016 presidential primary and 25.2 percent in the 2014 gubernatorial primary (see Figure 3.1).

Traditionally, voters go to designated precinct (or neighborhood) polling places to cast their ballots, but over the years, more and more Californians have opted to **vote by mail** because it's so much more convenient (see Figure 3.2). Voters sign up to do so when they register to vote, and then ballots are automatically sent to them for every election. All they have to do is complete their ballots and get them in the mail before the election or drop them off at their precinct polling place on Election Day.

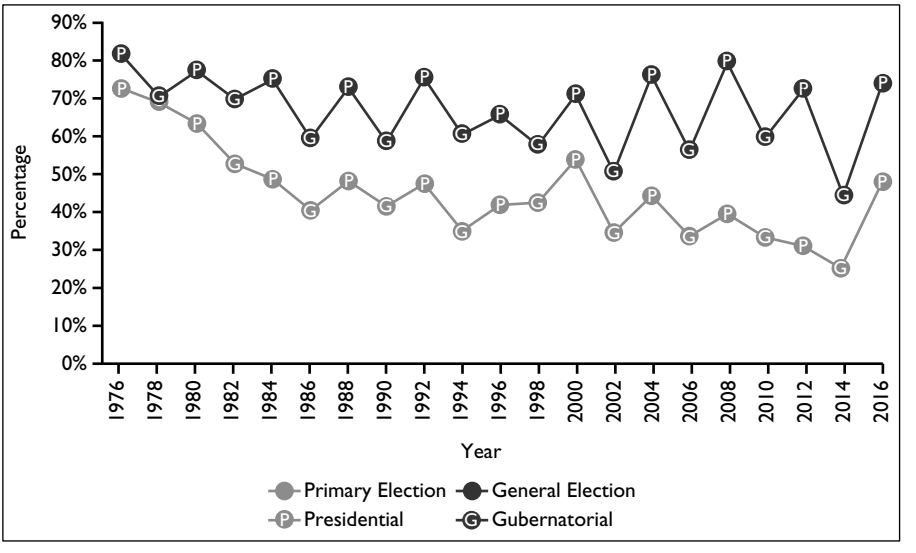

FIGURE 3.1 Participation of Registered Voters in Primary and General Elections, 1976–2016.

SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

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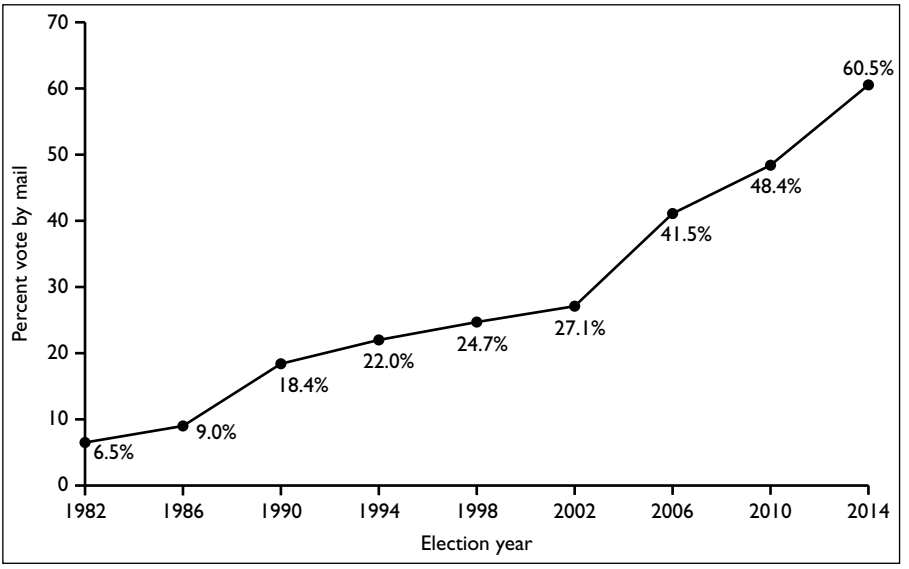

FIGURE 3.2 Voting by Mail in California's Gubernatorial Elections.
SOURCE: California Secretary of State.

Besides the convenience of voting by mail, many people prefer to deal with California's complex ballots at their leisure, and, increasingly, campaigns push identified supporters to vote by mail to ensure their participation. With many more people voting by mail—up to three weeks before Election Day—campaigns have had to change tactics. Rather than a big push in the last few days before the election, they must spread their resources over a longer period.

Voting by mail and easier registration may have increased voter participation slightly, and the new "motor voter" policy is expected to add two million more registered voters in 2017 alone,[1] but despite making registration and voting easier than most other states, voter participation in California ranked forty-third among the fifty states in 2014 and forty-second in 2012.[2] Why do so many Californians choose not to vote? Some still aren't registered, but millions who are registered nevertheless do not vote. Some are apathetic, some are unaware, and some feel uninformed. Others are cynical about politics and politicians. Most commonly, nonvoters say they're just not interested in politics or they're too busy.[3] Some say election information is too hard to understand, and others are bewildered by all the messages that bombard them during a typical California election.

Could voter turnout in California be improved? Registration can't be made much easier, but voting could be made more convenient by changing Election Day from Tuesday or voting entirely by mail like some other states and recently some California counties. Although ballots are already available in many languages, simplifying their content (in any language) could also help. Perhaps better civic education is needed, too. Better news coverage might also stimulate turnout and so would campaigns that inspire rather than alienate voters.

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The efforts of political campaigns to motivate voters to support candidates and causes are complicated, however, because those who do turn out to vote are not a representative cross section of the actual population. Non-Latino whites, for example, make up 42 percent of California's adult population but 60 percent of likely voters. Although Latinos, African Americans, and Asians constitute 58 percent of the state's adult population, they are only 40 percent of the voters in general elections.[4] This disparity in turnout means that California's voting electorate is not representative of the state's population.

Language, culture, citizenship status, and socioeconomic class are probable barriers to registration and voting among minority groups. This situation is changing, however. Latinos were just 8 percent of the state's registered voters in 1978 but are over 20 percent today, and the number continues to rise. Still, voter registration lags among Latino citizens, who comprise an astounding 59 percent of all unregistered voters in California.[5]

Differences in the levels of voter participation do not end with ethnicity. The people most likely to vote are suburban homeowners and Republicans, who tend to be wealthier, better educated, and older. Lower levels of participation are usually found among the less affluent and less educated, inner-city residents, the young, and Democrats.

According to recent reports, 48 percent of likely voters in California are over the age of fifty-five, although this group is 31 percent of the state population, while adults aged eighteen to thirty-four are 33 percent of the population and only 18 percent of likely voters.[6] All this adds up to a voting electorate that is more conservative than the population as a whole, which explains how Republicans sometimes win statewide elections despite the Democratic edge in registration and why liberal ballot measures often fail.

Of course, voting is only one form of political participation. Many people sign petitions, attend public meetings, write letters or e-mails to officials, and contribute money to campaigns. A recent report, however, found that California lags behind other states in "non-electoral civic engagement."[7] As with voting, those who participate most are white, older, more affluent, homeowners, and more highly educated. Does the differential in voting and other forms of participation matter? It seems self-evident that elected officials pay more attention to the concerns of those who participate than those who do not.

THE CANDIDATES

When we vote, we choose among candidates, but where do candidates come from? Some are encouraged to run by political parties or interest groups seeking to advance their causes. Political leaders looking for allies recruit others, although weak political parties make such overtures less common in California than elsewhere. The wide-open nature of the top-two primary—also called the "jungle primary"—further weakens the prospects of candidate recruitment by the political parties. In fact, many candidates are self-starters with an interest in politics

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who just decide to run and then seek support. The rising cost and increasing negativity of campaigns have discouraged some people from running, although wealthy individuals who can fund their own campaigns have offered themselves as candidates in recent years. Most candidates start at the bottom of the political ladder, running for school board or city council, and work their way up, building support as they go. Others gain experience as staff members for elected officials, eventually running for their boss's job. Wealthy candidates sometimes skip such apprenticeships and run directly for higher office, but the voters are often skeptical because of their lack of political experience.

Historically, candidates in California have been even less representative of the population than the electorate. Most have been educated white males of above-average financial means. The 1990s brought change, however. Underrepresented groups such as women, racial and ethnic minorities, and gay men and lesbians grew in strength and organization, and structural changes facilitated their candidacies. **Term limits** restricting the number of times legislators could be reelected were introduced, thus ensuring greater turnover in the state legislature. In addition, **redistricting** after the censuses of 1990, 2000, and 2010 resulted in redrawn legislative and congressional districts that gave minority candidates new opportunities.

These changes resulted in a surge of successful women and Latino candidates for the state legislature and Congress (see Chapter 5, Figure 5.3). Many women and Latino candidates have also been elected as county supervisors, city council members, mayors, and school board members. Although they form a smaller minority, African Americans gained a foothold in state politics earlier than Latinos, electing state legislators and winning statewide office, but black representation has shrunk as that of other minorities has increased and the state's African American population has not grown proportionately. However, California's new U.S. senator, Kamala Harris, is African American, Asian, and Native American. Asian Americans are currently the most underrepresented of California's racial minorities, although two statewide offices (treasurer and controller) are currently held by Asian Americans and seventeen are members of the state legislature. Electing candidates has been challenging for Asian Americans because many are recent immigrants who are not yet rooted in the state's political system and because there are cultural and political differences among the Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Koreans, Indo-Americans, and others. But like women and Latinos, these groups generate more candidates in every election and many Asians now serve on city councils and school boards.

Lesbians and gay men achieved elected office later than any of these groups. Greater bias may be a factor, and in the past, the closeted status of homosexual candidates and elected officials weakened organizing efforts and made gay and lesbian elective successes invisible. Nevertheless, over 100 openly gay and lesbian individuals have won election to local offices and as judges, and eight serve in the state legislature.

Despite recent electoral successes, all these groups remain underrepresented partly because of racism and sexism but also because many members of these groups are economically disadvantaged, which makes it hard to participate in politics, let alone to take on the demands of a candidacy. Women, minorities, and gay men and lesbians are usually not plugged in to the network of lobbyists,

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interest groups, and big donors that provide funds for California's expensive campaigns. Minorities also have difficulty winning support outside their own groups and may alienate their natural constituencies in the process. The fact that minorities are less likely to vote than whites further reduces their candidates' potential. Nevertheless, when someone from any of these groups becomes a candidate, members of the group are excited to see one of their own running and voter participation within the group increases. Recently, for example, Vietnamese candidates have galvanized their communities, and several have won public office. Meanwhile, organizations within each of these constituencies recruit, train, and support candidates, and the diversity of California candidates and elected officials increases with each election.

THE MONEY

The introduction of primary elections in 1909 shifted the focus of campaigns from political parties to individual candidates, and the introduction of the top-two primary in 2010 reinforced that trend. Thanks to these reforms in candidate selection, California's political parties have little or no control over who their candidates will be; and because the parties also contribute little money or staff, political aspirants must raise money, recruit workers, research issues, and plot strategy on their own—or with the help of expensive consultants.

Without significant help from the parties, candidates must promote themselves, and the cost of running for state assembly or senate often exceeds $1 million. Campaigns for statewide offices are even more expensive. Over $254 million was spent on the race for governor in 2010, although much less was spent in 2014 because Governor **Jerry Brown** was an overwhelming favorite to win reelection. Spending on races for all candidates for the legislature totaled over $135 million in the 2013–2014 election cycle.[8]

Interest groups, businesses, and wealthy individuals provide the money. Much campaign financing is provided by **political action committees (PACs)**, which interest groups use to direct money to preferred campaigns. For a list of the top organizational donors, see Table 4.1 in Chapter 4. Legislative leaders such as the speaker of the assembly and the president pro tem of the senate also raise huge sums from such sources and channel the money to their allies; individual candidates raise money by directly asking potential contributors for donations and by organizing special fundraising events, which range from barbecues to banquets and concerts. They also solicit contributions through targeted mailings and the Internet. Some wealthy candidates finance their own campaigns. Republican Meg Whitman broke state and national records by spending $142 million of her own money on her campaign for governor in 2010. Voters are skeptical about wealthy candidates who finance their own campaigns, however. Most such candidates, including Whitman, have lost.

Concerned about the influence of money and turned off by campaign advertising, Californians have approved a series of initiatives aimed at regulating campaign finance. The **Political Reform Act of 1974** required public disclosure

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TABLE 3.1 Proposition 34 Limits on Contributions to State Candidates, 2015–2016

Contributor	Legislature	Statewide, except Governor	Governor
Person	$4,200	$ 7,000	$28,200
Small contributor committee	$8,500	$14,100	$28,200
Political party	No limit	No limit	No limit

SOURCE: California Fair Political Practices Commission, www.fppc.ca.gov.

TABLE 3.2 Voluntary Expenditure Ceilings for Candidates for State Offices, 2013–2016

Office	Primary	General Election
Assembly	$564,000	$987,000
Senate	846,000	1,269,000
Governor	8,460,000	14,100,000
Other statewide offices	5,640,000	8,460,000

SOURCE: California Fair Political Practices Commission, www.fppc.ca.gov.

of all donors and expenditures through the **Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC)**. In 2000, voters approved **Proposition 34**, a legislative initiative setting contribution limits for individuals and committees (see Table 3.1).

Proposition 34 also set voluntary spending limits for candidates (see Table 3.2). Those who accept the limits have their photo and candidate statements published in the official ballot booklets that go to all voters; candidates who decline the limits are excluded from the booklet. Most candidates for the legislature and statewide offices other than governor comply with the spending limits; those who do not lose the moral high ground to those who do, which may influence some voters. There is no limit, however, on how much a candidate can contribute to his or her own campaign, which enables wealthy candidates to substantially fund their own campaigns.

Like most reforms, Proposition 34 has had unintended consequences. Money is given to political parties to spend on behalf of candidates rather than to the candidates themselves. In 2014, the Democratic Party spent $22.6 million while the Republican Party raised $19.3 million. More significantly, the new spending limits have been subverted by **independent expenditures** by PACs or groups specially organized by political consultants in support of candidates. Independent spending topped over $45 million for candidates in the competitive race for governor in 2010 and over $78 million in the 2014 legislative campaigns. Top independent expenditure groups include the Chamber of Commerce, teachers' and other unions, charter school advocates,

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