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PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY

CALIFORNIA

Californians & population issues

in collaboration with
The William and Flora
Hewlett Foundation

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PPIC

PUBLIC POLICY
INSTITUTE OF CALIFORNIA

The Public Policy Institute of California is dedicated to informing and improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research on major economic, social, and political issues. The institute's goal is to raise public awareness and to give elected representatives and other decisionmakers a more informed basis for developing policies and programs.

The institute's research focuses on the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including economic development, education, environment and resources, governance, population, public finance, and social and health policy.

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ABOUT THE SURVEY

The PPIC Statewide Survey provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, this is the 95th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 202,000 Californians. This survey is part of a PPIC Statewide Survey series on K–12 and higher education, environment, and population issues funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. This is the second PPIC Statewide Survey focusing on population issues; the first was conducted in December 2005.

The current survey focuses on public opinion about California’s population, which is expected to grow by 10 million residents in the next 20 years, from about 39 million to 49 million. The major component of the population increase is expected to be births, although immigration will also be a key contributor as it has in the past. The number of California births has been about 500,000 per year in the current decade and is projected to be at or above that annual number in the next decade. In this survey, we seek to understand the perceptions, attitudes, and policy preferences of Californians—across the state’s diverse racial/ethnic groups and geographic regions—concerning population and related policy issues. These include access to birth control, sex education in schools, abortion regulations, unplanned teenage pregnancies, and government funding of family planning programs for lower-income residents, all within the context of the current state budget situation.

This report presents the responses of 2,502 California adult residents, including 1,453 likely voters and 1,050 parents of children 18 or under, on these specific topics:

- The public’s perceptions of California’s population growth and its potential effects, perceptions of regional population growth, and views of the relative contribution of births to this growth compared to immigration and other components. We ask whether unplanned pregnancies among teens and young adults are considered a problem, about the importance of access to birth control and sex education in preventing teen pregnancy, about awareness and importance of sex education in public schools and beliefs about its effectiveness. We examine attitudes in different regions of the state about the importance of access to birth control in preventing unplanned pregnancies and knowledge about government funding for birth control for lower-income Californians.
- Californians’ policy preferences for government funding of birth control for teens, and for family planning and birth control programs for lower-income residents; levels of concern about cuts to health and human services and family planning programs because of the state’s current budget situation; views on abortion policy, the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, and parental notification; importance of statewide candidates’ positions on the issue of abortion; and personal beliefs about abortion, contraception, and ideal family size.
- Variations in perceptions, attitudes, and preferences regarding population issues across five major regions of the state (Central Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, Los Angeles County, Inland Empire, and Orange/San Diego Counties), among Asians, blacks, Latinos, and non-Hispanic whites, across socioeconomic and political groups (Democratic, Republican, and independent or “decline to state” voters), and among parents of children age 18 or younger.

Copies of this report may be ordered online (www.ppic.org) or by phone (415-291-4400). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org. View our searchable PPIC Statewide Survey database online at <http://www.ppic.org/main/survAdvancedSearch.asp>.

PRESS RELEASE

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND POPULATION ISSUES **Pro-Choice Views Prevail, But Californians Far From United on Abortion**

MOST SUPPORT SEX EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS,
GOVERNMENT-FUNDED BIRTH CONTROL FOR TEENS, POOR

SAN FRANCISCO, California, February 25, 2009—While Californians strongly favor pro-choice policies, their attitudes have shifted slightly in favor of abortion restrictions, according to a survey released today by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The statewide survey—the second on public opinions about the state’s population—finds that most Californians (66%) do not want the U.S. Supreme Court to completely overturn *Roe v. Wade*, the decision that established a woman’s constitutional right to abortion. They are far more likely to say that the government should not interfere with abortion access (61%) than they are to favor more restrictions on abortion (35%). But since January 2000, the percentage of Californians who oppose limits on access to abortion has declined 10 points (71%)—while the percentage who back abortion restrictions has increased 8 points (27%). Residents split sharply on this question along both party and racial/ethnic lines. Most Democrats (74%) and independents (66%) say the government should not interfere with abortion access, with Republicans more divided, 47 percent favoring more restrictions and 50 percent opposed. Black (71%), white (70%), and Asian (61%) residents do not want access to abortion limited, but half of Latinos (52%) would like greater restrictions.

A majority (68%) of Californians do favor one type of abortion restriction: a state law that would require parents to be notified before a woman under 18 can get an abortion. Although voters have narrowly rejected three state ballot initiatives that would have required parental notification, Californians today favor the idea when asked outside the context of a political campaign. Majorities across party lines (55% Democrats, 66% independents, 77% Republicans), regions, and ethnic and racial groups favor a parental notification law. Latinos (81%) are the most likely group (70% Asians, 68% blacks, 58% whites) to support the idea.

“There is no question that California is still a pro-choice state,” says Mark Baldassare, PPIC president, CEO, and survey director. “But there are strong elements of disagreement over abortion policy, whether because of political polarization or demographic changes.”

MOST BACK GOVERNMENT-FUNDED FAMILY PLANNING, BUT PARTISAN SPLITS EMERGE

While Californians overwhelmingly (89%) believe that access to birth control methods and contraceptives is important in reducing unplanned pregnancies, far fewer (46%) are aware that the government funds these services for lower-income residents.

Partisan divisions surface when it comes to support for these types of government-funded programs. A solid majority (79%) of Californians favor family-planning programs for lower-income residents. Republicans (56%) are far less likely to favor these programs than independents (79%) and Democrats (89%). Efforts to provide contraceptives and birth control methods to lower-income residents draw similar levels of support among Californians (77%) and across party lines (57% Republicans, 76% independents, 87% Democrats).

When asked whether they support government-funded programs that provide contraceptives to teens, 70 percent are in favor, down from 76 percent in December 2005. The partisan divide is even wider on this question. Solid majorities of Democrats (81%) and independents (71%) back these programs, but Republicans' views have shifted. While 54 percent supported these programs in 2005, only 44 percent do today.

In light of significant cuts in the state budget, three in four Californians are very (41%) or somewhat (35%) concerned about the impact on lower-income residents' access to family-planning and birth control programs. A majority of Democrats (53%) are very concerned; 40 percent of independents and 22 percent of Republicans are.

MOST SEE TEEN PREGNANCY AS BIG PROBLEM, STRONGLY BACK COMPREHENSIVE SEX ED

Although California has significantly reduced teen pregnancies since the early 1990s, 77 percent of its residents say teen pregnancy is a big problem (42%) or somewhat of one (35%) in their regions. Latinos (62%) are far more likely than blacks (49%), whites (30%), and Asians (27%) to say it is a big problem.

A strong majority of Californians (68%) say access to reproductive health care, birth control, and contraceptives is very important in preventing teen pregnancy in their region, and just 10 percent say it is not important. An even larger percentage of residents (78%) believe that giving teens comprehensive sex education, including information about abstinence, birth control, and healthy relationships is very important in preventing pregnancy.

HIV/AIDS prevention education is required in public middle and high schools, but sex education is not. School districts that provide sex education—most in the state do—must offer a comprehensive approach, rather than abstinence-only. Most Californians (76%) favor the comprehensive approach; 20 percent favor an abstinence-only program.

Although sex education is voluntary for school districts, 90 percent of residents view it as at least somewhat important to teach in local public schools. A strong majority (64%) say it should be taught in both middle and high school, while 19 percent say it should be required in high school only. Solid majorities across racial and ethnic groups favor offering it at both levels, with Latinos (76%) and blacks (75%) most likely to agree.

Only 9 percent say schools are doing more than enough when it comes to teaching sex education; 37 percent say schools are doing just enough, 34 percent say they are not doing enough, and 20 percent are unsure. Across ethnic and racial groups, blacks (49%) are more likely than others to say that sex education is inadequate in their schools.

About a third of Californians say that sex education is very effective (32%) in helping teens avoid HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases but they are less sure about whether it helps teens avoid pregnancy (21%) or abstain from sex (14%).

FEW CALIFORNIANS UNDERSTAND CAUSE OF POPULATION GROWTH

California's population is projected to grow by 10 million people to 49 million in the next 20 years. Births have been and are expected to be the single biggest factor in growth, with immigration a key contributor. However, Californians view population growth differently. Half (51%) say immigration is the biggest cause of population growth, and far fewer (15%) identify births as the top cause. A plurality of residents across regions, parties, and demographic groups cite immigration as the biggest factor, with those in the Inland Empire (60%) and whites (61%) most likely to say so.

Looking at their own regions, half of Californians (50%) think illegal immigration contributes a lot to population growth. Residents in Orange and San Diego counties (59%) and the Inland Empire (55%) are more likely to say so than are residents in Los Angeles (49%), the Central Valley (47%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (41%).

Half of Californians (52%) say the expected statewide population growth is a bad thing for them and their families, and only 13 percent call it a good thing—a finding similar to one in the December 2005 survey.

But Californians are divided in their opinions of regional population growth: 49 percent say it is a big (20%) or somewhat big (29%) problem, and half (50%) say it is not a problem. The view that regional population growth is a problem has declined 12 points since 2005. Despite projections of statewide population growth, only 41 percent think there will be rapid growth in their regions in the next 20 years, compared to 59 percent who thought so in 2005.

Baldassare says this finding has potentially important implications for California's future.

"The decline in perception that population growth is a big problem could make it more difficult to generate public support for infrastructure investment," he says.

MORE KEY FINDINGS

- **Abortion and the governor's race**—page 22

Looking ahead to 2010, most say the gubernatorial candidates' positions on abortion are very (44%) or somewhat important (35%). Evangelical Christians (60%) and those who would like the Supreme Court to make it harder to get an abortion (59%), to overturn *Roe v. Wade* (62%), and favor more restrictions on abortion (60%) are far more likely than others to say candidates' positions on this issue are very important.

- **How many children should families have?**—page 23

More residents (42%) choose two children as the ideal number for a family to have, although preferences vary by income and race and ethnicity.

- **Schwarzenegger approval rating hits 33 percent, Obama's is 70 percent**—pages 27, 32

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's approval rating drops to 33 percent from 40 percent in January, and the state legislature's stays at a record low 21 percent. Californians give President Barack Obama a 70-percent approval rating in the first month of his term.

ABOUT THE SURVEY

This survey is the 95th PPIC Statewide Survey in a series that has generated a database of the responses of more than 202,000 Californians. The survey is part of a series on education, environment, and population issues funded by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. Findings are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents, on landline and cell phones. Interviews were conducted from February 3–17, 2009, in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean. The sampling error for the total sample is ± 2 percent. It is larger for subgroups. For more information on methodology, see page 25.

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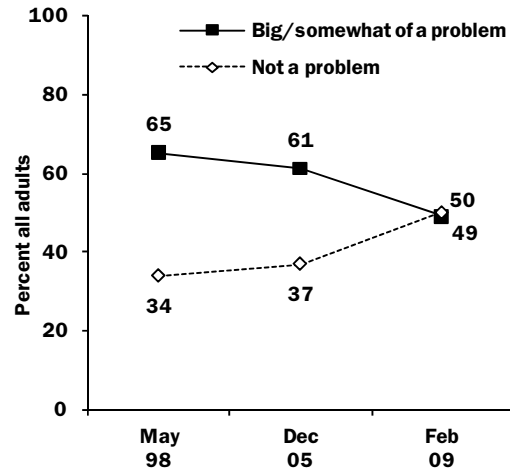
Mark Baldassare is president and CEO of PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998.

PERCEPTIONS, ATTITUDES, AND PUBLIC POLICIES

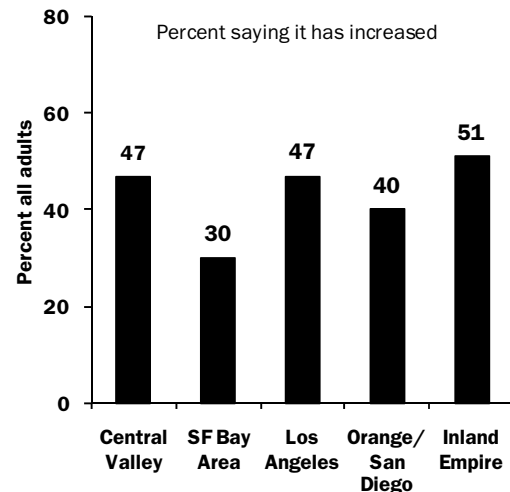
KEY FINDINGS

- Most Californians point to immigration as the leading cause of population growth in the state and say illegal immigration greatly contributes to regional growth; far fewer attribute growth to births of new California residents. The perception that regional population growth is a problem is decreasing. (pages 8, 9)
- Forty-two percent of Californians say teen pregnancy is a big problem in their region; perceptions vary widely across regional and racial/ethnic groups. (page 10)
- Black and Latino residents are especially likely to say access to birth control and sex education are very important in preventing teen pregnancy. (page 11)
- Overwhelming majorities of Californians believe sex education should be required in schools; black residents are the most likely to say schools are falling short in this area. (pages 12, 13)
- Californians are more likely to say sex education is effective in helping teens avoid sexually transmitted diseases than in helping them avoid pregnancy; they are even less likely to think that sex education is helping teens abstain from sex. Majorities across regions and demographic groups support comprehensive sex education over abstinence-only sex education. (pages 14, 15)
- Many Californians are unaware that the government funds birth control programs for lower-income residents, but majorities, especially lower-income residents, say that access to birth control is very important in preventing unplanned pregnancies. (page 16)

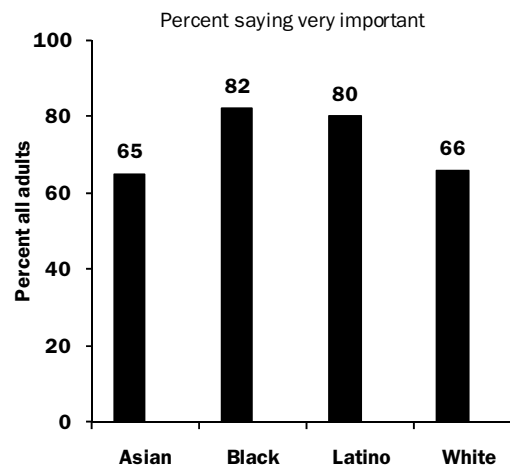
Attitudes Toward Regional Population Growth



Perceptions of Regional Teen Pregnancy Rate



Importance of Having Sex Education in Local Schools



POPULATION GROWTH

The state’s population is poised to increase by 10 million people during the next 20 years. Demographic statistics indicate that births account for most of the state’s population growth; in recent years just under half of all births in the state have been to immigrant women. What do Californians view as the single biggest factor causing this growth? Half say immigration from other countries (51%). Far fewer name children born to current residents (15%), migration from other states (14%), or state and local policies (9%). The perception that immigration from other countries is the biggest factor in population growth is similar to findings in December 2005 (53%).

Today, a plurality of residents across regions, parties, and demographic groups view immigration from other countries as the biggest factor, with residents in the Inland Empire (60%) and whites (61%) most likely to hold this view. This perception rises with increasing age and income.

“Which of the following do you think is the single biggest factor that is causing the state’s population to grow?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Immigration from other countries	51%	47%	46%	47%	55%	60%	53%	45%	35%	61%
Children born to current residents	15	18	17	17	12	10	13	12	19	12
Migration from other states	14	14	18	12	13	18	15	19	17	12
State and local policies	9	9	8	11	11	4	14	11	13	5
Other	4	2	4	4	4	5	1	3	6	3
Don't know	7	10	7	9	5	3	4	10	10	7

Californians hold negative views about the expected population growth over the next 20 years; half call it a bad thing (52%) for them and their families, 13 percent call it a good thing, and three in 10 say it makes no difference (31%). Findings were similar in 2005. Today, a plurality of Californians across regional, political, and most demographic groups say the projected growth is a bad thing.

Californians are divided when it comes to the seriousness of the problem of population growth in their own regions—49 percent say it is a problem (20% big, 29% somewhat), but half say it is not. Since 2005, the perception that regional population growth is a problem has declined 12 points. Today, residents in the state’s southern regions are more likely than others to view population growth as a problem. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos are most likely to say it is not a problem (62%).

“We are interested in your opinions about the region or broader geographic area of California that you live in. How much of a problem is population growth in your region?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Big problem	20%	17%	16%	24%	22%	22%	17%	24%	12%	23%
Somewhat of a problem	29	28	30	28	34	31	31	26	25	32
Not a problem	50	53	52	47	42	47	50	49	62	42
Don't know	1	2	2	1	2	–	2	1	1	3

Four in 10 Californians (41%) think the population in their region will grow rapidly over the next 20 years, 34 percent say it will grow slowly, and 19 percent say it will stay about the same. The belief that regional population will grow rapidly has declined 18 points since 2005 (59% 2005, 41% today).

CONTRIBUTIONS TO POPULATION GROWTH

When it comes to the factors that may contribute to population growth in their region, half of Californians think illegal immigration from other countries contributes a lot (50%). Far fewer Californians identify legal immigration from other countries (25%), migration from other states (21%), and births to residents (26%) as contributing a lot. Findings in 2005 were similar for illegal immigration (49%), legal immigration (26%), and births (27%); residents were slightly more likely to say migration (27%) greatly contributed to growth.

Half of Californians (50%) think that illegal immigration contributes a lot to regional population growth. Residents in Orange/San Diego Counties (59%) and the Inland Empire (55%) are the most likely to say illegal immigration contributes a lot to their population growth, while fewer in Los Angeles (49%), the Central Valley (47%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (41%) hold this view. Republicans (63%) are far more likely than independents (44%) and Democrats (43%) to say illegal immigration contributes a lot. Among racial/ethnic groups, whites (54%) and blacks (53%) are more likely than Latinos (44%) and Asians (40%) to hold this view.

Californians have a different view when it comes to legal immigration from other countries. One in four (25%), including fewer than three in 10 across regional and political groups, say that legal immigration contributes a lot to regional population growth. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (32%) are the most likely to hold this view, followed by blacks (24%), Asians (23%), and whites (20%).

Even fewer Californians think that migration from other states contributes a lot to regional population growth. One in five Californians (21%) hold this view, including three in 10 or fewer across parties, regions, and demographic groups. Democrats (24%), residents of Los Angeles (25%), and Latinos (30%) are the most likely to identify migration from other states as contributing a lot to this growth.

“I am going to read you a list of factors that may contribute to population growth in your region. For each one, please tell me if you think it contributes a lot, some, or not much to population growth. How about...”

	...illegal immigration from other countries?	...births to residents?	...legal immigration from other countries?	...migration from other states?
A lot	50%	26%	25%	21%
Some	31	47	40	37
Not much	17	23	31	37
Not at all (volunteered)	1	1	1	2
Don't know	1	3	3	3

One in four Californians (26%) think births to residents contribute a lot to population growth. Across regions, residents in Los Angeles (33%) are most likely to hold this view, with residents in the San Francisco Bay Area and Inland Empire (21% each) least likely. Latinos (34%) are much more likely than others to hold this view.

“How about births to residents?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/ San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
A lot	26%	29%	21%	33%	22%	21%	21%	23%	34%	21%
Some	47	40	50	42	52	57	41	52	45	49
Not much	23	27	23	22	22	20	33	24	18	25
Not at all (volunteered)	1	–	–	1	1	1	1	–	–	1
Don't know	3	4	6	2	3	1	4	1	3	4

UNPLANNED PREGNANCIES

According to the nonprofit National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy, half of pregnancies in the nation are unintended, and more than half of these are among women in their twenties. Still, just 25 percent of Californians see unplanned pregnancies among this group as a big problem, with 34 percent saying it is somewhat of a problem, and 35 percent saying it is not really a problem.

When it comes to teenage pregnancy, the United States has one of the highest rates among developed countries. In California, significant strides have been made in reducing the number of teen pregnancies since the early 1990s; 2006 saw a slight uptick for the first time in 15 years, but the teen pregnancy rate returned to its earlier levels in 2007. How do Californians perceive teen pregnancy? Three in four (77%) call it a big (42%) or somewhat of a problem (35%); 19 percent say it is not really a problem. Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (30%) are the least likely to view teen pregnancies in their region as a big problem, followed by residents in Orange/San Diego Counties (38%), the Inland Empire (45%), the Central Valley (49%), and Los Angeles (51%). Latinos (62%) are far more likely than blacks (49%), whites (30%), and Asians (27%) to view teen pregnancy as a big problem. This perception decreases sharply as age, education, and income increase. Parents with children age 18 or younger are somewhat more likely than others (45% to 39%) to call regional teen pregnancy a big problem.

“Please tell me if you think each of the following is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem in your region. How about unplanned pregnancies among teens?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Big problem	42%	49%	30%	51%	38%	45%	27%	49%	62%	30%
Somewhat of a problem	35	34	36	28	39	36	43	34	25	40
Not really a problem	19	15	26	17	17	16	26	12	10	24
Don't know	4	2	8	4	6	3	4	5	3	6

A plurality of Californians say that the teen pregnancy rate in their region has increased (42%) over the past few years, while 45 percent think it has decreased (11%) or stayed the same (34%). Today, pluralities in all regions except the San Francisco Bay Area think the regional teen pregnancy rate has increased. Residents in the Inland Empire (51%) are the most likely to think the teen pregnancy rate has increased, followed by the Central Valley (47%), Los Angeles (47%), and Orange/San Diego County (40%) residents. Latinos (58%) and blacks (52%) are far more likely than whites (32%) and Asians (29%) to hold this view. The perception that the teen pregnancy rate has increased is more widely held among younger, less educated, and less affluent Californians, and parents (43%) are about as likely as others (40%) to express this view. Evangelical Christians are far more likely than others (55% to 37%) to think the number of teen pregnancies has gone up; they also are far more likely than others to call teen pregnancy a big problem (54% to 38%).

“In the past few years, would you say that the teen pregnancy rate in your region has...?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Increased	42%	47%	30%	47%	40%	51%	29%	52%	58%	32%
Decreased	11	11	13	10	11	9	9	14	8	13
Stayed the same	34	32	38	30	34	30	40	26	29	37
Don't know	13	10	19	13	15	10	22	8	5	18

TEEN PREGNANCY

Nearly seven in 10 Californians think providing access to reproductive health care, birth control methods, and contraceptives is very important in preventing teen pregnancy in their region; just 10 percent say it is not too (5%) or not at all important (5%). Across regions, more than six in 10 say this access is very important, with Los Angeles residents most likely to agree (74%). Among residents who call teen pregnancy a big problem, 75 percent say access to reproductive health care is very important in preventing teen pregnancy.

Across racial/ethnic groups, differences exist in the perceptions of access to reproductive health care for teens. Latinos (80%) and blacks (76%) are more likely than whites (62%) and Asians (55%) to say that providing teens with access to reproductive health care, birth control methods, and contraceptives is very important in preventing teen pregnancy. Women (72%) are more likely than men (63%) to say access is very important. The belief that access is very important in preventing teen pregnancy declines sharply as age, education, and income increase. Parents with teenage children (71%) are as likely as parents of younger children (70%) to say access is very important.

“Please tell me if you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important in preventing teen pregnancy in your region....How about providing teens with access to reproductive health care, birth control methods, and contraceptives?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Very important	68%	67%	66%	74%	63%	67%	55%	76%	80%	62%
Somewhat important	20	20	21	16	22	20	38	18	13	21
Not too important	5	5	6	4	6	8	4	2	3	7
Not at all important	5	6	6	5	7	4	2	3	3	7
Don't know	2	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	3

Californians think that providing teens with comprehensive sex education, including information about abstinence, birth control methods, contraceptives, and healthy relationships, is very important (78%) in preventing teen pregnancy in their region. More than seven in 10 across regions say comprehensive sex education is very important in preventing teen pregnancy, and across racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (87%) and blacks (82%) are the most likely to agree. Among residents who say teen pregnancy is a big problem, 83 percent say comprehensive sex education is very important in preventing teen pregnancy. Parents of teenage children (80%) are as likely as parents of younger children (79%) to say it is very important. Eight in 10 public school parents (82%) agree.

“...How about providing teens with comprehensive sex education, including information about abstinence, birth control methods, contraceptives, and healthy relationships?”

	All Adults	Region					Race/Ethnicity			
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites
Very important	78%	77%	78%	83%	77%	73%	70%	82%	87%	74%
Somewhat important	15	15	16	11	16	20	24	14	9	17
Not too important	3	4	3	2	3	3	2	4	1	4
Not at all important	3	3	2	3	3	4	1	–	2	4
Don't know	1	1	1	1	1	–	3	–	1	1

AWARENESS OF SEX EDUCATION IN LOCAL SCHOOLS

Although the state education code does not require sex education in California public schools, it does require school districts to provide instruction in HIV/AIDS prevention to students, once in middle school and once in high school. If school districts do choose to teach sex education—and most do—it cannot be an abstinence-only program; it must be comprehensive in nature, including information about abstinence, contraceptives and birth control, and healthy relationships. How much do California residents know about sex education as part of the curriculum of their local public schools?

Sixty percent of residents say sex education is included in their local public school curriculum, one in 10 say it is not included, and three in 10 are unsure. Among racial/ethnic groups, Latinos (63%) are the most likely to say sex education is included, followed by whites (59%), Asians (54%), and blacks (54%). Not surprisingly, public school parents (69%) and parents of teenagers (75%) are more likely than others to say that sex education is taught in their local public schools. Knowledge of sex education curricula in public schools declines with increasing age.

“As far as you know, do the local public schools in your area currently include sex education as part of the curriculum, or not?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Yes, included	60%	54%	54%	63%	59%	69%
No, not included	11	8	14	17	7	13
Don't know	29	38	32	20	34	18

Only one in 10 Californians say their local public schools are doing more than enough when it comes to teaching sex education. Thirty-seven percent of Californians say schools are doing just enough and 34 percent say not enough; 20 percent say they are unsure. Findings are similar to those of December 2005.

Among racial/ethnic groups, blacks (49%) are most likely to say the local public schools in their area are not doing enough. When it comes to teaching sex education, a plurality of public school parents (42%) say schools are doing just enough. Among those who call teen pregnancy big problem, 44 percent say public schools are not doing enough, and among residents who believe the teen pregnancy rate has increased over the past few years, 45 percent say their local public schools are not doing enough.

“Is it your impression that when it comes to teaching sex education, the local public schools in your area are doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
More than enough	9%	6%	3%	12%	8%	11%
Just enough	37	39	27	41	35	42
Not enough	34	30	49	37	32	36
Don't know	20	25	21	10	25	11

IMPORTANCE OF SEX EDUCATION

Despite the lack of a mandate to teach sex education in California's public schools, Californians are deeply committed to sex education. Ninety percent of residents say it is at least somewhat important to have sex education as part of the curriculum in their local public schools, with 71 percent saying it is very important—similar to findings in December 2005.

Strong majorities of residents across all regions and demographic groups say making sex education part of the curriculum is very important. Residents in Los Angeles (75%) are the most likely to say sex education is very important, while their neighbors to the south and east are somewhat less likely to agree (68% Orange/San Diego Counties, 69% Inland Empire). Public school parents (75%) are somewhat more likely than others to say it is very important, and women (74%) are more likely than men (67%) to agree. The belief that sex education is very important declines as age, education, and income rise.

“How important do you think it is to have sex education as part of the curriculum in the local public schools in your area?”

	All Adults	Region					Public School Parents
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	
Very important	71%	70%	72%	75%	68%	69%	75%
Somewhat important	19	19	19	17	21	21	18
Not too important	7	7	7	6	8	8	6
Should not be taught at all (volunteered)	1	2	1	1	1	1	1
Don't know	2	2	1	1	2	1	–

Californians clearly think that sex education is an important part of their local public schools' curriculum, but when in a child's education do they think sex education should begin? A strong majority of Californians (64%) say their local public school district should require sex education in both middle school and high school, another 19 percent think it should be required only in high school, and 8 percent say only in middle school. Just 8 percent say it should not be required at any level. Findings today are similar to December 2005 (4% middle school, 17% high school, 68% both, 9% neither). Among public school parents, 94 percent think sex education should be required (7% middle school, 17% high school, 70% both), while only 6 percent say it should not be required at all.

Solid majorities across racial/ethnic groups say that local public schools should require sex education at both levels, with Latinos (76%) and blacks (75%) the most likely to agree. Belief that sex education should be taught at both middle and high school levels decreases with rising age, education, and income.

“Do you think sex education should be required in your local public school district for middle school students, high school students, both, or neither?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Public School Parents
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	
Middle school students	8%	6%	8%	8%	8%	7%
High school students	19	23	14	12	23	17
Both	64	62	75	76	58	70
Neither	8	8	3	4	11	6
Don't know	1	1	–	–	–	–

SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM

Californians place great importance on sex education as part of the curriculum in public schools, but how effective do they think it is in helping teens avoid pregnancy and HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

Sixty-eight percent of residents believe sex education in schools is either very (21%) or somewhat effective (47%) in helping teens avoid pregnancy, three in 10 believe it is not too effective (20%) or not at all effective (9%). Residents today are somewhat more likely now to say sex education helps teens avoid pregnancy than they were in December 2005 (17% very effective, 45% somewhat effective, 21% not too effective, and 9% not at all effective).

Among public school parents, 70 percent believe sex education is very (24%) or somewhat (46%) effective in helping teens avoid pregnancy. Belief in the difference that sex education can make in helping teens avoid pregnancy is high across regional and demographic groups of the state, and about two in three residents across income groups say it is at least somewhat effective. Among parents of teenage children, 66 percent believe sex education is at least somewhat effective; parents with younger children (71%) are somewhat more likely to agree.

When it comes to helping teens avoid getting HIV/AIDS and other STDs, Californians are even more likely to say that sex education in schools is effective for this purpose (32% very, 44% somewhat). They are somewhat more likely today to say so than they were in December 2005 (26% very effective, 45% somewhat effective, 15% not too effective, 7% not at all effective).

Public school parents (77%) are as likely as others (75%) to say sex education is effective in preventing disease among teens. Belief that sex education is effective for this purpose is high across all demographic and regional groups. However, belief in the effectiveness of sex education in helping teens avoid HIV/AIDS and other STDs is highest among residents with household incomes under \$40,000 (81%), residents with a high school diploma or less (80%), and among residents aged 18–34 (80%).

“Overall, how effective do you think sex education in schools is in helping teens...”

		All Adults	Income			Public School Parents
			Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
<i>...avoid pregnancy?</i>	Very effective	21%	25%	19%	16%	24%
	Somewhat effective	47	44	50	50	46
	Not too effective	20	20	19	21	18
	Not at all effective	9	8	11	9	9
	Don't know	3	3	1	4	3
<i>...avoid getting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases?</i>	Very effective	32	39	28	24	34
	Somewhat effective	44	42	45	49	43
	Not too effective	14	12	17	15	14
	Not at all effective	6	4	7	7	6
	Don't know	4	3	3	5	3

SEX EDUCATION CURRICULUM (CONTINUED)

Californians are much less likely to believe in the efficacy of sex education in helping teens abstain from sexual activity. Fifty-two percent of residents say sex education is very (14%) or somewhat (38%) effective for this purpose. Forty-five percent say sex education is not too (25%) or not at all effective (20%) in helping teens abstain from sexual activity. We do not have a past comparison for this question.

Public school parents (56%) are somewhat more likely than others (50%) to say sex education is at least somewhat effective in helping teens abstain from sexual activity. Across income groups, residents with household earnings under \$40,000 (60%) are much more likely than others to say sex education is at least somewhat effective for this purpose. The belief in the effectiveness of sex education for this purpose is much lower among residents with at least some college education than among those with a high school education or less.

“Overall, how effective do you think sex education in schools is in helping teens abstain from sexual activity?”

	All Adults	Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Very effective	14%	20%	12%	7%	18%
Somewhat effective	38	40	37	35	38
Not too effective	25	20	26	32	22
Not at all effective	20	16	21	23	19
Don't know	3	4	4	3	3

So what would Californians like sex education programs to include? Seventy-six percent say sex education programs should include information on abstinence and information on how to obtain and use condoms and contraceptives, while 20 percent would prefer programs that have abstaining from sexual activity as their only purpose. Findings today are similar to those of December 2005.

Three in four public school parents (75%) would like to see schools teach about abstinence and condoms and contraceptives, and 22 percent prefer abstinence-only sex education programs. More than seven in 10 across income groups prefer that schools go beyond abstinence-only in their teaching, and preference for the more comprehensive program is favored by more than two in three across all demographic groups and regions. Support for comprehensive sex education programs decreases with increasing age, but increases with higher education and income.

“Which of the following statements comes closer to your views? Sex education programs should...”

	All Adults	Income			Public School Parents
		Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
...have abstaining from sexual activity as their only purpose.	20%	23%	18%	18%	22%
...include abstaining from sexual activity and information on how to obtain and use condoms and contraceptives.	76	74	77	80	75
Don't know	4	3	5	2	3

ACCESS TO BIRTH CONTROL

Nine in 10 Californians (89%), including more than 85 percent across regions and racial/ethnic groups view access to birth control methods and contraceptives as very (68%) or somewhat important (21%) for reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies in their region. This view is held by more than eight in 10 across demographic groups, and is widely held across parties (94% Democrats, 89% independents, 77% Republicans). Findings today among all adults are similar to 2005 (71% very, 18% somewhat).

With nearly all Californians saying that access to birth control methods and contraceptives is important in reducing unplanned pregnancies, do they know that programs are available to provide lower-income residents with these services? Only 46 percent of Californians say they are aware that the government funds these types of programs, while 17 percent say they are not aware, and 37 percent say they are unsure. Residents in the Central Valley (54%) are the most likely to say they know about these programs, followed by those in Orange/San Diego Counties (50%), the Inland Empire (49%), Los Angeles (46%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (37%). Lower-income residents are more likely than those with household incomes of \$80,000 or more, and Latinos (59%) are much more likely than Asians (42%), whites (40%), and blacks (38%), to say they know about these programs.

“As far as you know, does the government fund programs that provide lower-income residents with birth control methods and contraceptives, or not?”

	All Adults	Region					Income		
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Yes	46%	54%	37%	46%	50%	49%	53%	48%	39%
No	17	12	19	19	16	18	20	16	13
Don't know	37	34	44	35	34	33	27	36	48

Californians are divided on whether lower-income residents in their region are less likely than others to have access to birth control methods and contraceptives, and more divided on this issue than they were four years ago (51% yes, 41% no in December 2005; 46% yes, 44% no today).

Today, half of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area think lower-income residents have less access to birth control methods and contraceptives, and a majority of Orange/San Diego County residents (53%) think they are not less likely. Residents elsewhere are divided. Californians across income and most racial/ethnic groups hold similarly divided opinions; many Asians are unsure about possible disparities (44% yes, 33% no, 24% unsure). Democrats (55%), more than independents (41%) and Republicans (37%), say that lower-income residents are less likely to have access to birth control methods.

“Do you think that lower-income residents in your region are less likely than others to have access to birth control methods and contraceptives?”

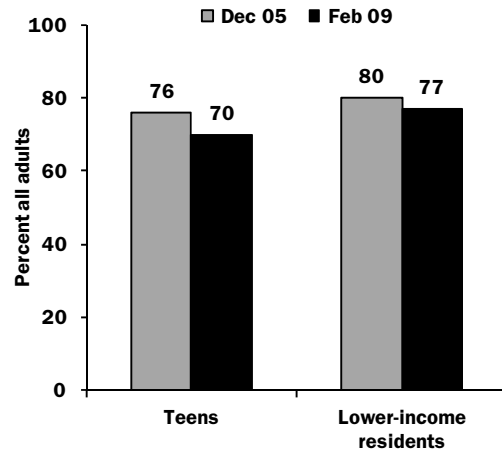
	All Adults	Region					Income		
		Central Valley	San Francisco Bay Area	Los Angeles	Orange/San Diego	Inland Empire	Under \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
Yes, less likely	46%	47%	50%	47%	38%	45%	47%	44%	47%
No, not less likely	44	43	36	44	53	46	44	48	43
Don't know	10	10	14	9	9	9	9	8	10

FISCAL PREFERENCES AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

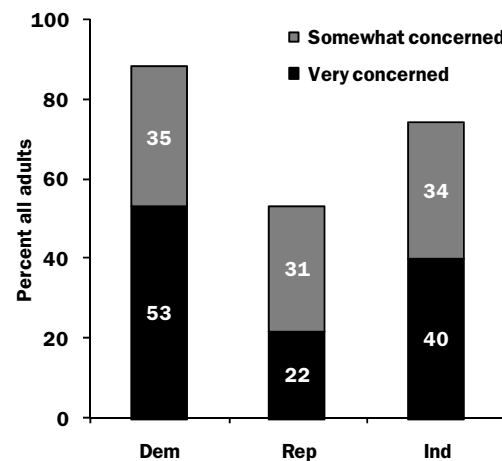
KEY FINDINGS

- Strong majorities of Californians continue to support government funding of birth control programs for teens and birth control and family planning programs for lower-income residents, but this support is divided sharply along partisan lines. (page 18)
- Concern about the effect of the budget deficit on health and human services and family planning programs also divides voters along party lines. (page 19)
- Solid majorities of residents, including at least half across political parties, express pro-choice abortion policy preferences, but over time these preferences have shifted slightly in the direction of greater restriction; two in three would favor a parental notification law. Latinos are more likely than other racial/ethnic groups to favor abortion restrictions. (pages 20, 21)
- Nearly eight in 10 likely voters say candidates' positions on abortion will be at least somewhat important in the 2010 gubernatorial and U.S. Senate elections. (page 22)
- Nine in 10 residents, including strong majorities across political, regional, and demographic groups, express no religious or moral objections to contraceptives. A majority of residents also say they do not have objections to abortion, but residents are deeply divided along religious and political lines on this issue. (page 23)

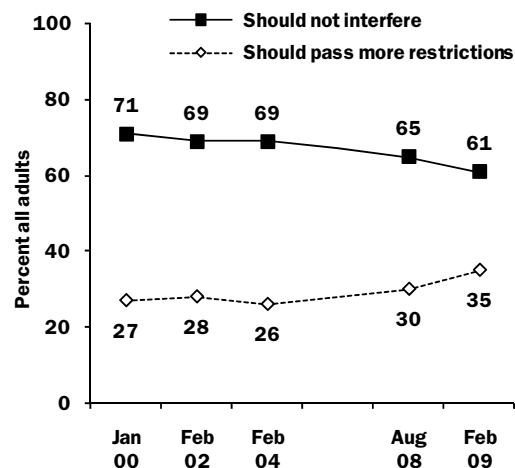
Support for Government Funding of Birth Control Methods and Contraceptives for...



Concern About Budget Affecting Lower-income Residents' Access to Family Planning



Government's Role on Abortion



GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS

Qualifying lower-income Californians are currently eligible to receive family planning services, including birth control and contraception, through a program funded with both state and federal money. Solid majorities of residents (79%) and likely voters (74%) express support for government funding of family planning programs for lower-income residents. Majorities across parties favor this idea, but Republicans (56%) are far less likely than independents (79%) and Democrats (89%) to do so. More than seven in 10 across regional and demographic groups favor funding these programs, but support declines as income and age increase, and is lower among those who have health insurance (77%) than among the uninsured (86%). Latinos (88%), blacks (87%), and Asians (84%) are more in favor than whites (73%).

Findings are similar when it comes to support for government funding of programs that provide lower-income residents with birth control methods and contraceptives (77% all adults, 73% likely voters). In December 2005, support was slightly higher among both groups (80% all adults, 79% likely voters). Today, there are considerable differences in support across parties (87% Democrats, 76% independents, 57% Republicans). Strong majorities across regional and demographic groups favor funding for contraception, but support declines as income and age increase and is somewhat lower among the insured (76%) than among the uninsured (85%). Blacks and Latinos (86% each) are more supportive than Asians (77%) and whites (72%). Eighty-seven percent of those who think access to birth control is very important in reducing unplanned pregnancies support government funding for such programs.

“Do you favor or oppose the government funding...”

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>... family planning programs for lower-income residents?</i>	Favor	79%	89%	56%	79%	74%
	Oppose	18	9	39	18	23
	Don't know	3	2	5	3	3
<i>...programs that provide lower-income residents with birth control methods and contraceptives?</i>	Favor	77	87	57	76	73
	Oppose	20	11	39	22	24
	Don't know	3	2	4	2	3

Teenagers may also receive family planning services in California, including birth control and contraceptives, as long as they meet other eligibility criteria. When it comes to teens, 70 percent of residents and 64 percent of likely voters favor government funding for birth control methods and contraceptives. In 2005, support was higher among residents (76%) and likely voters (73%). Today, solid majorities of Democrats and independents continue to favor these programs, but Republican support has shifted (54% 2005, 44% today). Latinos (81%) and blacks (78%) are more likely to express support than Asians (70%) and whites (63%). Parents of teenagers are somewhat less likely to express support than parents of younger children.

“Do you favor or oppose the government funding programs that provide teens with birth control methods and contraceptives?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	70%	81%	44%	71%	64%
Oppose	28	16	53	27	34
Don't know	2	3	3	2	2

STATE BUDGET AND FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS

As part of the recent legislative agreement to resolve the state's \$42 billion budget deficit, all of the state's major budget areas, including health and human services, are facing significant spending cuts. The Health and Human Services Agency includes the Department of Public Health, which houses the Office of Family Planning. Nearly nine in 10 residents are concerned (58% very concerned, 30% somewhat concerned) about spending cuts in health and human services, including 87 percent of likely voters (58% very concerned, 29% somewhat concerned). Across parties, Democrats (71%) are much more likely than independents (59%) and far more likely than Republicans (41%) to say they are very concerned. The percentage saying they are very concerned declines with higher income. Across regions, six in 10 residents in Los Angeles (61%), the Central Valley (60%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (60%) are very concerned about spending cuts in health and human services, while 55 percent of Inland Empire residents and 50 percent of Orange/San Diego residents say the same. Blacks (66%), Latinos (64%), women (65%), and the uninsured (65%) are more likely than Asians (55%), whites (53%), men (51%), and the insured (56%) to be very concerned.

“How concerned are you that the state's budget gap will cause significant spending cuts in health and human services?”

	All Adults	Party			Income			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Very concerned	58%	71%	41%	59%	63%	60%	51%	58%
Somewhat concerned	30	24	36	27	30	29	30	29
Not too concerned	6	3	10	6	4	6	8	5
Not at all concerned	6	2	12	8	3	5	11	8
Don't know	–	–	1	–	–	–	–	–

When it comes to lower-income residents' access to family planning programs, birth control methods, and contraceptives, three in four of all adults are concerned (41% very concerned, 35% somewhat concerned) about the effects of the state budget situation. Seven in 10 likely voters are concerned (38% very concerned, 33% somewhat concerned). A majority of Democrats (53%) are very concerned about this issue, compared to 40 percent of independents and 22 percent of Republicans. Again, the percentage that is very concerned declines with higher income levels. Across racial/ethnic groups, blacks (66%) are far more likely than Latinos (48%), whites (35%), or Asians (33%) to be very concerned, and across regions, Los Angeles residents (49%) express the most concern. Those without health insurance are far more likely than those with insurance (52% to 38%) to be very concerned about this issue.

“How concerned are you that the state budget situation will affect lower-income residents' access to family planning programs, birth control methods, and contraceptives?”

	All Adults	Party			Income			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more	
Very concerned	41%	53%	22%	40%	50%	40%	33%	38%
Somewhat concerned	35	35	31	34	35	34	35	33
Not too concerned	14	7	25	15	10	16	16	15
Not at all concerned	9	4	20	10	5	9	14	12
Don't know	1	1	2	1	–	1	2	2

U.S. SUPREME COURT AND ABORTION RULINGS

Strong majorities of residents (66%) and likely voters (72%) would not like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision, which established a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion; far fewer residents (30% adults, 26% likely voters) would like to see *Roe v. Wade* overturned. Since first asking this question in August 2005, the percentage preferring not to see the decision completely overturned has declined slightly (70% August 2005, 66% today). Nationwide, a May 2007 Gallup poll found that 35 percent wanted to overturn the decision and 53 percent did not.

Across California’s parties today, an overwhelming majority of Democrats (79%) and most independents (67%) and Republicans (56%) do not want to completely overturn *Roe v. Wade*. While majorities across regions do not want to completely overturn the decision, San Francisco Bay Area residents (80%) are by far the most likely to express this view (66% Los Angeles, 63% Inland Empire, 59% Orange/San Diego, 58% Central Valley). Majorities across demographic groups do not want to completely overturn *Roe v. Wade*, but Latinos (55%), Asians (63%), and immigrants (54%) are less likely than whites (73%), blacks (78%), and U.S.–born residents (72%) to do so, and the proportion who do not want to completely overturn the court decision increases sharply with higher education and income levels. A majority (52%) of evangelical Christians would prefer to completely overturn this landmark court decision.

“In 1973, the *Roe v. Wade* decision established a woman’s constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn the *Roe v. Wade* decision, or not?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, overturn	30%	18%	42%	28%	26%
No, do not overturn	66	79	56	67	72
Don't know	4	3	2	5	2

Forty-six percent of Californians would like the Supreme Court to leave access to abortion the same as it is now, while 15 percent would like the court to make it easier and 36 percent would like to make it harder for a woman to get an abortion. Likely voters prefer the status quo (50%) or to ease restrictions (17%). In past PPIC Statewide Surveys, solid majorities said the court should either leave access to abortion alone or make it easier. Across parties today, Democrats (55% same, 20% easier) and independents (50% same, 15% easier) favor more lenience from the court than Republicans do (49% harder, 40% same, 8% easier). And while Latinos are divided on this issue, Asians (66%), whites (67%), and blacks (70%) prefer leaving access the same or making it easier. The percentage preferring to leave access to abortion the same or make it easier increases sharply with higher education and income levels, and increases somewhat with age.

“Would you like to see the Supreme Court make it harder to get an abortion than it is now, make it easier to get an abortion than it is now, or leave the ability to get an abortion the same as it is now?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Harder	36%	23%	49%	32%	31%
Easier	15	20	8	15	17
Same	46	55	40	50	50
Don't know	3	2	3	3	2

LAWS ON ABORTION ACCESS AND RESTRICTIONS

Most Californians say the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion (61% all adults, 68% likely voters) rather than pass more laws restricting access (35% all adults, 29% likely voters). Since we first asked this question in January 2000, our surveys show that the percentage saying the government should not interfere has declined 10 points (71% 2000, 61% today), while the percentage saying the government should pass more restrictions has increased 8 points (27% 2000, 35% today).

Most Democrats (74%) and independents (66%) believe the government should not interfere, but Republicans are divided (47% more restrictions, 50% no interference). Across regions, San Francisco Bay Area residents (77%) are the most likely to say the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion, followed by Los Angeles (59%), Central Valley (57%), Inland Empire (54%), and Orange/San Diego (53%) residents. Across racial/ethnic groups, majorities of blacks (71%), whites (70%), and Asians (61%) prefer no government intervention, while half of Latinos (52%) prefer greater restrictions. Support for increased abortion restrictions declines sharply with higher education and income, and declines somewhat with age. Fifty-eight percent of evangelical Christians prefer more laws to restrict the availability of abortion.

“Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion.	35%	23%	47%	31%	29%
The government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion.	61	74	50	66	68
Don't know	4	3	3	3	3

One type of abortion restriction would be a law requiring parental notification before a woman under age 18 could get an abortion. In recent years, citizens' initiatives that would amend the state constitution to require parental notification have appeared on the ballots of three statewide elections and lost by a fairly narrow margin each time (November 2005, 2006, and 2008). Today, when asked about this subject outside an election context, 68 percent of residents and 61 percent of likely voters say they would favor a parental notification law—including majorities across parties (55% Democrats, 66% independents, 77% Republicans). Majorities across regions and demographic groups also express support, although San Francisco Bay Area residents (56%) are less likely than others to hold this view (69% Los Angeles, 71% Orange/San Diego Counties, 74% Central Valley, 76% Inland Empire). Latinos (81%) are the most likely racial/ethnic group to support parental notification (70% Asians, 68% blacks, 58% whites). Support declines sharply as education and income levels rise. Parents of children 18 or younger (74%) are more supportive than others (63%). National polls have also indicated strong majority support for laws that would limit access to abortion among minors.

“Would you favor or oppose a state law requiring parental notification by the physician before a woman under age 18 can get an abortion?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	68%	55%	77%	66%	61%
Oppose	30	42	21	32	36
Don't know	2	3	2	2	3

STATEWIDE CANDIDATES AND ABORTION POSITIONS

How important will candidates' positions on abortion be for the state's 2010 gubernatorial election? Nearly eight in 10 of all adults say candidates' positions are very (44%) or somewhat important (35%), and likely voters express similar views (42% very, 36% somewhat). Prior to Governor Schwarzenegger's re-election in 2006, a similar proportion of residents and likely voters called gubernatorial candidates' stances on this issue at least somewhat important. Across parties today, Democrats (45%) are more likely than independents (40%) or Republicans (39%) to say positions on abortion are very important. Inland Empire residents (51%) are most likely to call positions on abortion very important, followed by those in the Central Valley (45%), Los Angeles (45%), Orange/San Diego Counties (43%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (39%). Latinos (55%) and blacks (52%) are much more likely than whites (38%) and Asians (35%) to say very important, and women (51%) are more likely than men (37%) to say so. Evangelical Christians (60%) and those who would like the Supreme Court to make it harder to get an abortion (59%), to overturn *Roe v. Wade* (62%), and have the government pass more restrictive abortion laws (60%) are far more likely than others to say candidates' positions on abortion are very important.

“In thinking about the upcoming California governor’s election in 2010, how important to you are the candidates’ positions on the issue of abortion?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	44%	45%	39%	40%	42%
Somewhat important	35	36	35	36	36
Not too important	11	11	14	11	12
Not at all important	8	6	10	11	8
Don't know	2	2	2	2	2

Findings are similar when it comes to the 2010 U.S. Senate election. Among residents and likely voters, 79 percent say candidates' positions on abortion are important (45% very, 34% somewhat). Findings were nearly identical prior to the 2006 election, in which Senator Dianne Feinstein was reelected. Democrats (48%) are more likely than Republicans (41%) and independents (40%) to say this issue is very important, and we find similar regional and demographic trends in the Senate race as in the gubernatorial race. Those who favor passing more restrictive abortion laws (60%), favor the Supreme Court making it harder to get an abortion (60%), and favor overturning *Roe v. Wade* (63%) are far more likely than others to call candidates' positions on abortion very important.

“In thinking about the upcoming California U.S. Senate election in 2010, how important to you are the candidates’ positions on the issue of abortion?”

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very important	45%	48%	41%	40%	45%
Somewhat important	34	35	34	36	34
Not too important	11	9	15	12	12
Not at all important	8	6	9	11	9
Don't know	2	2	1	1	–

PERSONAL BELIEFS

Six in 10 Californians (62%) say it would be a good thing to reduce the number of abortions performed in this country, regardless of whether or not they think abortion should be legal, but 31 percent do not feel this way. The percentage saying it would be good to reduce the number of abortions has increased 6 points since December 2005 (56% 2005, 62% today). Today, majorities across parties, regions, and demographic groups agree it would be good to reduce the number of abortions performed. Still, this does not mean that residents necessarily have a religious or moral objection to abortion.

Majorities of Californians and likely voters (55% each) say they do not have religious or moral objections to abortion. In December 2005, a similar 58 percent of Californians said they did not have objections. Today, most Democrats (64%) and independents (54%) do not have objections, but 60 percent of Republicans do. Across racial/ethnic groups, majorities do not have religious or moral objections to abortion. Religion also plays a role: 70 percent of evangelical Christians object religiously or morally to abortion compared to 35 percent of other residents; 85 percent of those with no religion have no moral objections to abortion. Regarding contraceptives, even higher percentages of residents (89%) and likely voters (92%) say they do not have religious or moral objections. Overwhelming majorities across regions, demographic groups, and religions express this view. Findings were similar in December 2005.

“In thinking about your personal beliefs, do you have any religious or moral objections to ...”

		All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Religion	
			Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Evangelical Christians	Other/None
<i>...abortion, regardless of whether or not you think abortion should be legal?</i>	Yes	44%	38%	40%	46%	44%	70%	35%
	No	55	59	59	53	54	29	63
	Don't know	1	3	1	1	2	1	2
<i>...contraceptives, that is, to using a condom, taking the pill, or using some other method of birth control?</i>	Yes	11	21	13	16	6	14	10
	No	89	78	87	84	94	85	90
	Don't know	–	1	–	–	–	1	–

A plurality of Californians (42%) think that two is the ideal number of children for a family to have; 27 percent say three, and 13 percent say four or more. Among the 9 percent who gave another answer, most say families should have as many children as they want or can afford. Findings were similar in December 2005, and preferences today vary by race/ethnicity and income level. A national Gallup poll in 2007 found that 52 percent of Americans said two was the ideal number of children for a family to have.

“In your opinion, what do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?”

	All Adults	Race/Ethnicity				Income		
		Asians	Blacks	Latinos	Whites	Less than \$40,000	\$40,000 to under \$80,000	\$80,000 or more
None	1%	–	–	–	1%	1%	–	1%
One	2	–	–	2%	3	1	3%	2
Two	42	53%	27%	34	47	36	43	50
Three	27	27	21	37	21	34	27	18
Four or more	13	17	28	19	8	20	13	5
Other answer	9	1	12	3	12	4	9	14
Don't know	6	2	12	5	8	4	5	10

REGIONAL MAP



METHODOLOGY

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, president and CEO and survey director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with research support from Sonja Petek, project manager for this survey, and survey research associates Dean Bonner and Jennifer Paluch. This survey was conducted with funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as part of a three-year grant on K–12 and higher education, environment, and population issues. We benefited from discussions with PPIC staff, foundation staff, and other policy experts; however, the methods, questions, and content of this report were solely determined by Mark Baldassare and the survey staff.

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 2,502 California adult residents, including 2,252 interviewed on landline telephones and 250 interviewed on cell phones. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days from February 3–17, 2009. Interviews took an average of 18 minutes to complete.

Landline interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted numbers were called. All landline telephone exchanges in California were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as six times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender.

Cell phone interviews were included in this survey to account for the growing number of Californians who use them. These interviews were conducted using a computer-generated random sample of cell phone numbers. All cell phone numbers with California area codes were eligible for selection and the sample telephone numbers were called as many as eight times to increase the likelihood of reaching an eligible respondent. Once a cell phone user was reached, it was verified that this person was age 18 or older, a resident of California, and in a safe place to continue the survey (e.g., not driving). Cell phone respondents were offered a small reimbursement for their time to help defray the potential cost of the call. Cell phone interviews were conducted with adults who have cell phone service only and with those who have both cell phone and landline service in the household.

Landline and cell phone interviewing was conducted in English, Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese), Vietnamese, and Korean, according to respondents’ preferences. We chose these languages because Spanish is the dominant language among non-English speaking adults in California, followed in prevalence by the three Asian languages. Accent on Languages, Inc. translated the survey into Spanish, with assistance from Renatta DeFever. Abt SRBI Inc. translated the survey into Chinese, Vietnamese, and Korean, and conducted all interviewing.

With assistance from Abt SRBI, we used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. Abt SRBI used data from the 2007 National Health Interview Survey and data from the 2006–2007 American Community Survey for California, both to estimate landline and cell phone service in California and to compare it against landline and cell phone service reported in the survey. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any differences in demographics and telephone service.

The sampling error for the total of 2,502 adults is ± 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger: For the 1,981 registered

voters, it is ± 2.2 percent; for the 1,453 likely voters, it is ± 2.5 percent, for the 1,050 parents of children 18 or under it is ± 3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to five geographic regions that account for approximately 90 percent of the state population. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “San Francisco Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, “Inland Empire” refers to Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, and “Orange/San Diego” refers to Orange and San Diego Counties. Residents from other geographic areas are included in the results reported for all adults, registered voters, and likely voters, but sample sizes for these less populated areas are not large enough to report separately in tables and text.

We present specific results for respondents in four self-identified racial/ethnic groups: Asian, black, Latino, and non-Hispanic white. We also compare the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents (i.e., those registered as “decline to state”). We also analyze the responses of likely voters—those who are the most likely to participate in the state’s elections. We compare current PPIC Statewide Survey results to those in earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys and to results from surveys conducted by ABC News/*Washington Post*, CBS News, CNN/*USA Today*/Gallup, Gallup, National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association, National Public Radio/Kaiser Family Foundation/Kennedy School of Government, and the Pew Research Center.

QUESTIONNAIRE AND RESULTS

CALIFORNIANS AND POPULATION ISSUES

February 3–17, 2009

2,502 California Adult Residents:

English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese

MARGIN OF ERROR $\pm 2\%$ AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. First, thinking about the state as a whole, what do you think is the most important issue facing people in California today?
[code, don't read]
 - 63% jobs, economy
 - 15 state budget, deficit, taxes
 - 4 education, schools
 - 3 immigration, illegal immigration
 - 2 housing costs, housing crisis
 - 11 other
 - 2 don't know
2. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?
 - 33% approve
 - 56 disapprove
 - 11 don't know
3. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California Legislature is handling its job?
 - 21% approve
 - 65 disapprove
 - 14 don't know
4. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?
 - 18% right direction
 - 75 wrong direction
 - 7 don't know
5. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?
 - 22% good times
 - 73 bad times
 - 5 don't know
6. Changing topics, which of the following do you think is the single biggest factor that is causing the state's population to grow?
[read rotated list]
 - 51% immigration from other countries
 - 15 children born to current residents
 - 14 migration from other states
 - 9 state and local policies
 - 4 other (*specify*)
 - 7 don't know
7. Over the next 20 years, California's population is estimated to increase by 10 million people from 39 million to 49 million. On balance, do you think this population growth is a good thing or a bad thing or does it make no difference to you and your family?
 - 13% good thing
 - 52 bad thing
 - 31 no difference
 - 4 don't know

8. Next, we are interested in your opinions about the region or broader geographic area of California that you live in. How much of a problem is population growth in your region—is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not a problem?

- 20% big problem
- 29 somewhat of a problem
- 50 not a problem
- 1 don't know

9. Thinking about the next 20 years, do you think that the population in your region will grow rapidly, grow slowly, stay about the same, or decline?

- 41% grow rapidly
- 34 grow slowly
- 19 stay about the same
- 4 decline
- 2 don't know

I am going to read you a list of factors that may contribute to population growth in your region. For each one, please tell me if you think it contributes a lot, some, or not much to population growth.

[rotate questions 10 to 13]

10. How about legal immigration from other countries?

- 25% a lot
- 40 some
- 31 not much
- 1 not at all (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

11. How about illegal immigration from other countries?

- 50% a lot
- 31 some
- 17 not much
- 1 not at all (*volunteered*)
- 1 don't know

12. How about migration from other states?

- 21% a lot
- 37 some
- 37 not much
- 2 not at all (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

13. How about births to residents?

- 26% a lot
- 47 some
- 23 not much
- 1 not at all (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

Next, please tell me if you think each of the following is a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not really a problem in your region.

[rotate questions 14 and 15]

14. How about unplanned pregnancies among adults in their twenties?

- 25% big problem
- 34 somewhat of a problem
- 35 not really a problem
- 6 don't know

15. How about unplanned pregnancies among teens?

- 42% big problem
- 35 somewhat of a problem
- 19 not really a problem
- 4 don't know

16. In the past few years, would you say that the teen pregnancy rate in your region has increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

- 42% increased
- 11 decreased
- 34 stayed the same
- 13 don't know

Next, please tell me if you think each of the following is very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important in preventing teen pregnancy in your region.

[rotate questions 17 and 18]

17. How about providing teens with access to reproductive health care, birth control methods, and contraceptives? (Is this very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important in preventing teen pregnancy?)

68% very important
20 somewhat important
5 not too important
5 not at all important
2 don't know

18. How about providing teens with comprehensive sex education, including information about abstinence, birth control methods, contraceptives, and healthy relationships? (Is this very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important in preventing teen pregnancy?)

78% very important
15 somewhat important
3 not too important
3 not at all important
1 don't know

19. Do you favor or oppose the government funding programs that provide teens with birth control methods and contraceptives?

70% favor
28 oppose
2 don't know

20. Next, how important do you think it is to have sex education as part of the curriculum in the local public schools in your area?

71% very important
19 somewhat important
7 not too important
1 should not be taught at all
(volunteered)
2 don't know

[rotate questions 21 to 23]

21. Overall, how effective do you think sex education in schools is in helping teens abstain from sexual activity?

14% very effective
38 somewhat effective
25 not too effective
20 not at all effective
3 don't know

22. Overall, how effective do you think sex education in schools is in helping teens avoid pregnancy?

21% very effective
47 somewhat effective
20 not too effective
9 not at all effective
3 don't know

23. Overall, how effective do you think sex education in schools is in helping teens avoid getting HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases?

32% very effective
44 somewhat effective
14 not too effective
6 not at all effective
4 don't know

24. As far as you know, do the local public school schools in your area currently include sex education as part of the curriculum, or not?

60% yes, included
11 no, not included
29 don't know

25. Is it your impression that when it comes to teaching sex education, the local public schools in your area are doing more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

9% more than enough
37 just enough
34 not enough
20 don't know

26. Do you think sex education should be required in your local public school district for middle school students, high school students, both, or neither?

- 8% middle school students
- 19 high school students
- 64 both
- 8 neither
- 1 don't know

27. Which of the following statements comes closer to your views? **[rotate]** [1] sex education programs should have abstaining from sexual activity as their only purpose, **[or]** [2] sex education programs should include abstaining from sexual activity and information on how to obtain and use condoms and contraceptives.

- 20% abstaining from sexual activity
- 76 abstaining and obtaining and using condoms and contraceptives
- 4 don't know

Next, thinking about your region overall...

28. How important is access to birth control methods and contraceptives for reducing the number of unplanned pregnancies in your region?

- 68% very important
- 21 somewhat important
- 7 not too important
- 1 not at all important (*volunteered*)
- 3 don't know

29. As far as you know, does the government fund programs that provide lower-income residents with birth control methods and contraceptives, or not?

- 46% yes
- 17 no
- 37 don't know

30. Do you think that lower-income residents in your region are less likely than others to have access to birth control methods and contraceptives?

- 46% yes, less likely
- 44 no, not less likely
- 10 don't know

31. Do you favor or oppose the government funding programs that provide lower-income residents with birth control methods and contraceptives?

- 77% favor
- 20 oppose
- 3 don't know

32. Do you favor or oppose the government funding family planning programs for lower-income residents?

- 79% favor
- 18 oppose
- 3 don't know

33. Changing topics, as you may know, the state government has an annual budget of around \$100 billion and currently faces a multibillion-dollar gap between spending and revenues. How concerned are you that the state's budget gap will cause significant spending cuts in health and human services?

- 58% very concerned
- 30 somewhat concerned
- 6 not too concerned
- 6 not at all concerned

34. How concerned are you that the state budget situation will affect lower-income residents' access to family planning programs, birth control methods, and contraceptives?

- 41% very concerned
- 35 somewhat concerned
- 14 not too concerned
- 9 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

35. On another topic, in 1973, the *Roe versus Wade* decision established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion, at least in the first three months of pregnancy. Would you like to see the Supreme Court completely overturn the *Roe versus Wade* decision, or not?

30% yes, overturn
66 no, do not overturn
4 don't know

36. Would you like to see the Supreme Court make it harder to get an abortion than it is now, make it easier to get an abortion than it is now, or leave the ability to get an abortion the same as it is now?

36% harder
15 easier
46 same
3 don't know

37. Which of the following statements comes closest to your own view, even if neither is exactly right? **[rotate]** [1] The government should pass more laws that restrict the availability of abortion, **[or]** [2] the government should not interfere with a woman's access to abortion.

35% pass more laws
61 should not interfere
4 don't know

38. Regardless of whether or not you think abortion should be legal, do you think it would be a good thing to reduce the number of abortions performed in the United States, or don't you feel this way?

62% good thing
31 don't feel this way
7 don't know

39. Next, would you favor or oppose a state law requiring parental notification by the physician before a woman under age 18 can get an abortion?

68% favor
30 oppose
2 don't know

40. In thinking about the upcoming California governor's election in 2010, how important to you are the candidates' positions on the issue of abortion?

44% very important
35 somewhat important
11 not too important
8 not at all important
2 don't know

41. In thinking about the upcoming California U.S. Senate election in 2010, how important to you are the candidates' positions on the issue of abortion?

45% very important
34 somewhat important
11 not too important
8 not at all important
2 don't know

Next, in thinking about your personal beliefs...

[rotate questions 42 and 43]

42. Do you have any religious or moral objections to abortion, regardless of whether or not you think abortion should be legal?

44% yes, objections
55 no, no objections
1 don't know

43. Do you have any religious or moral objections to contraceptives—that is, to using a condom, taking the pill, or using some other method of birth control?

11% yes, objections
89 no, no objections

44. In your opinion, what do you think is the ideal number of children for a family to have?

1% none
2 one
42 two
27 three
13 four or more
9 other answer (*specify*)
6 don't know

Californians and Population Issues

45. Next, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote in California?

- 80% yes [ask q45a]
- 20 no [skip to q46b]

45a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 45% Democrat [ask q46]
- 32 Republican [skip to q46a]
- 3 another party (specify) [skip to q47]
- 20 independent [skip to q46b]

46. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 57% strong
- 41 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[skip to q47]

46a. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 55% strong
- 42 not very strong
- 3 don't know

[skip to q47]

46b. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 23% Republican Party
- 47 Democratic Party
- 23 neither (volunteered)
- 7 don't know

47. Next, would you consider yourself to be politically: **[read list, rotate order top to bottom]**

- 11% very liberal
- 18 somewhat liberal
- 32 middle-of-the-road
- 23 somewhat conservative
- 14 very conservative
- 2 don't know

48. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics?

- 32% great deal
- 38 fair amount
- 24 only a little
- 5 none
- 1 don't know

49. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Barack Obama is handling his job as president of the United States?

- 70% approve
- 16 disapprove
- 14 don't know

[d1-d6a: demographic questions]

d6b. Next, how much do you feel you know about long-term reversible birth control methods, such as IUDs or implants?

[if needed: an IUD is an intrauterine device]

- 20% a lot
- 31 some
- 26 not too much
- 22 nothing at all
- 1 don't know

[d7-d17: demographic questions]

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