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Author

DiCamillo, Mark

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University of California, Berkeley
Institute of Governmental Studies
109 Moses Hall, #2370
Berkeley, CA 94720-2370
Tel: 510-642-1473
Fax: 510-642-3020
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

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A majority of voters oppose the state's new gas tax law, 39% strongly.

By Mark DiCamillo, Director, Berkeley IGS Poll (o) 510-642-6835 (c) 415-602-5594

One of the major pieces of new legislation to come out of Sacramento in recent months was an increase in state taxes on gasoline and vehicle registration fees to repair the state and local roads and highways. Because the law was a tax increase, its passage required a two-thirds majority in both houses of the legislature and the approval of Governor Jerry Brown. In April, backers achieved their goal.

Registered voters in the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* were read a summary of the new law and asked whether they favored or opposed it. The results indicate that opponents of the new law outnumber supporters by twenty-three points, 58% to 35%. In addition, nearly three times as many voters strongly oppose the law (39%) as are strongly supportive (14%).

Opposition is broad-based and includes large majorities of Republicans and No Party Preference voters, political conservatives and moderates, voters in all major regions of the state other than the Bay Area, all major races and ethnic subgroups, men and women, and all age categories over 30. Strongly liberal voters are the only segment in which a large majority backs the law. Democrats and voters with a post-graduate degree are also more likely to support than oppose the law, but by narrow margins.

The *Berkeley IGS Poll*, now housed within IGS's newly established Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research, also finds that voter opinions of the overall job performance of Governor Jerry Brown remain very positive, with 59% approving and 41% disapproving. These findings are very similar to those observed in March. However, voter assessments of the legislature have declined since March, with as many voters now disapproving as approving of its performance.

Table 1
Voter opinions of the state’s new gas tax law increasing taxes on gasoline and vehicle registration fees for the repair of state and local roads and highways
(among registered voters statewide)

	%
Favor	<u>35</u>
Strongly	14
Somewhat	21
Oppose	<u>58</u>
Somewhat	19
Strongly	39
No opinion	7

Opposition to the new gas tax law spans most major subgroups of the state’s electorate

Opposition to the new gas tax law is very broad-based and spans most major subgroups of the state’s registered voter population. Opposition is greatest among Republicans, conservatives, voters in the South Coast, Inland Empire and Central Valley regions, voters age 50 or older, and those who do not have a college degree.

The law is also opposed by majorities of voters across all major races and ethnic subgroups, both genders, all age categories above 30, among political moderates and No Party Preference voters, as well as among voters in Los Angeles County.

Strongly liberal voters are the only segment in which a large majority backs the law. Democrats and voters with a post-graduate degree are also more likely to support than oppose the law, albeit by narrow margins. Voters in the San Francisco Bay Area, voters age 18-28, and college graduates are about evenly divided.

Table 2 following summarizes voter reactions to the new law across a wide range of the state’s major voting populations.

Table 2
Opinions of the new gas tax law across major subgroups of the state's registered voters

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
Total registered voters	35	58	7
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	50	43	7
Republicans	18	80	2
No Party Preference/other	28	63	9
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Strongly conservative	11	86	3
Moderately conservative	21	77	2
Middle-of-the-road	36	60	4
Moderately liberal	43	50	7
Strongly liberal	73	25	2
<u>Section of state</u>			
Southern California	32	62	6
Northern California	39	54	7
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	41	54	5
South Coast	31	67	2
Inland Empire	18	72	10
Central Valley	29	65	6
San Francisco Bay Area	45	46	9
Other regions	34	58	8
<u>Education</u>			
High school graduate or less	29	64	7
Some college/ trade school	27	66	7
College graduate	48	48	4
Post graduate degree	52	44	4
<u>Marital status</u>			
Married	32	64	4
Not married/live together	37	56	7
Single/never married	48	46	6
Separated/divorced/widow	27	60	13
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	35	62	3
Female	36	55	9
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	35	59	6
Latino	34	60	6
Asian American	34	58	8
African American*	38	54	8
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	48	48	4
30-49	39	56	5
50-64	27	65	8
65 or older	27	65	8

* small sample base

No change in Governor Brown's very positive job performance ratings

Despite the fact that Governor Brown lobbied hard to secure the passage of the new gas tax law, voter opinions of the job the governor is doing remain strong, and are statistically unchanged from a March *Berkeley IGS Poll*, conducted prior to the passage of the gas tax law. At present, 59% approve the job Brown is doing overall, while 41% disapprove.

Table 3
Trend of voter assessments of the job Jerry Brown is doing as governor
(among registered voters statewide)

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No Opinion %
May 2017	59	41	-
March 2017	61	39	-
September 2016	60	40	-
July 2016	56	30	14
April 2016	55	36	9
January 2016	56	30	14
October 2015	56	32	12
May 2015	58	26	16
February 2015	56	32	12
September 2014	58	36	6
June 2014	54	29	17
April 2014	59	32	9
December 2013	58	33	9
July 2013	51	33	16
February 2013	57	31	12
October 2012	46	37	17
September 2012	46	37	17
July 2012	44	42	14
Late May 2012	43	40	17
February 2012	45	38	17
November 2011	47	36	17
September 2011	49	32	19
June 2011	46	31	23
March 2011	48	21	31
Party registration (May 2017)			
Democrat	84	16	-
Republican	25	75	-
No Party Preference/other	52	48	-

Note: For comparative purposes, the results reported in Tables 3 and 4 of this report are based on all voters polled who could offer an opinion of the governor's performance or the performance of the state legislature. All measures prior to 2017 come from The Field Poll, as reported in Release #2552, published September 29, 2016 by Field Research Corporation and IGS.

Decline in voter assessments of the job the legislature is doing

The poll registers a decline in voter assessments of the job performance of the state legislature since the last *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted in March, prior to the passage of the gas tax law. In that poll, more voters said they approved than disapproved of the legislature's performance by a fourteen-point margin (57% to 43%). However, the current poll finds voters offering a more divided assessment, with as many voters now disapproving (50%) as approving (50%) of the job it is doing.

Table 4
Trend of voter assessments of the job performance of the state legislature
(among registered voters statewide)

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No Opinion %
May 2017	50	50	-
March 2017	57	43	-
September 2016	50	49	1
May 2015	37	38	25
February 2015	42	44	14
September 2014	34	42	24
June 2014	35	47	18
2013 (average)	38	48	16
2012 (average)	22	62	16
2011 (average)	20	65	15
2010 (average)	14	76	10
2009 (average)	15	75	10
2008 (average)	24	62	14
2007 (average)	38	43	19
2006 (average)	30	50	20
2005 (average)	28	55	17
2004 (average)	28	53	19
2003 (average)	25	59	16
2002 (average)	40	40	20
2001 (average)	43	37	20
2000 (average)	48	25	27
1999 (average)	45	28	27
1998 (average)	45	33	22
1997 (average)	38	40	22
1996 (average)	41	49	10
1995 (average)	34	59	7
1993 (average)	28	64	8
1992 (average)	32	64	4
1990 (average)	45	48	7
1988 (average)	57	36	7
1983 (average)	43	49	8
Party registration (May 2017)			
Democrat	77	23	-
Republican	19	81	-
No Party Preference/other	41	59	-

About the Survey

The findings in this report come from a telephone survey completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies, at the University of California, Berkeley. The survey was conducted among 1,628 California adults, of whom 1,271 reported being registered to vote. To capture the diversity of the California adult population, the survey was administered in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese and Korean. Interviewing was completed May 4-29, 2017.

All interviews were administered by professionally trained and supervised interviewers calling from Davis Research's central location call center in Calabasas (Los Angeles County), California. The survey was administered with voters either on their cell and landline telephone using a dual frame random digit dial cell and landline sampling methodology. In this survey over 85% of the interviews were conducted with residents on their cell phone. Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected adult on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to align it to known demographic, regional and political parameters of the state's adult population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size and the percentage distributions being examined. The maximum sampling error for results from the overall registered voter sample is +/- 2.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The results from the poll's subsamples, as well as those of subgroups of the registered voter population, would be subject to larger margins of sampling error.

Questions Asked

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Jerry Brown is handling his job as Governor of California?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way the state legislature is doing its job?

Last month the state legislature passed and Governor Brown signed into law a \$5 billion per year plan devoted to repairing state and local roads and highways. To pay for the plan, state taxes on gasoline will increase by 12 cents per gallon while taxes on diesel fuels will increase by 16 cents per gallon. State vehicle registration fees will also go up by \$25 to \$175 depending on the value of the vehicle. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose the new transportation funding law? (IF FAVOR, ASK) Do you favor it strongly or somewhat? (IF OPPOSE, ASK) Do you oppose it strongly or somewhat?

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. The *Berkeley IGS Poll* is housed within IGS's newly established Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. For a complete listing of all poll stories issued by the Berkeley IGS Poll, go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.