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Release #2017-16: Half say housing affordability an “extremely serious” problem in their area. Majority have considered moving because of high housing costs, 25% out of state.

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Half say housing affordability an “extremely serious” problem in their area. Majority have considered moving because of high housing costs, 25% out of state.

Early backing for proposed multi-billion dollar statewide bond for low-income housing. Six in ten voters also support local rent control.

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According to the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll*, 48% of the state’s registered voters describe the problem of housing affordability as an “extremely serious” problem in the area where they live, and another 36% say it is somewhat serious. The problem is leading many voters (56%) to consider moving, with one in four (25%) saying that if they did decide to move, they would most likely relocate out of state.

The poll also finds early backing for a multi-billion-dollar statewide bond that has been proposed for the November 2018 general election ballot to help finance the construction of more low-income housing in California. When asked how they would vote if such a bond were to appear on next year’s ballot, 51% say they would favor the bond, while 27% would be opposed. Another 22% were undecided.

The seriousness with which voters view the problem of housing affordability is also demonstrated when Californians are asked their opinions about rent control. According to the poll, a 60% majority of voters support giving local governments the ability to set limits on how much rents can be increased as a way to help low- and middle-income people remain in their communities. Support for local rent control ordinances includes 76% of Democrats, 55% of non-partisans and 34% of Republicans.

These results come from a *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online by YouGov in English and Spanish among 1,200 registered voters in late August and early September.

Seriousness of the problem of housing affordability

About half of the state’s registered voters (48%) consider housing affordability to be an extremely serious problem in the area where they live. This view is most prevalent in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, where 65% describe housing costs as an extremely

serious problem, and in the South Coast counties of Orange and San Diego, where 55% say this. Renters statewide are more likely than homeowners to feel this way.

Table 1
Seriousness of the problem of housing affordability in your area
(among California registered voters)

	Extremely serious %	Somewhat serious %	Not serious %	No opinion %
Total statewide	48	36	13	3
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	42	44	13	1
South Coast	55	30	10	5
Other Southern California	41	42	12	5
Central Valley	38	37	20	5
San Francisco Bay Area	65	27	6	2
Other Northern California*	43	31	26	**
<u>Tenure</u>				
Homeowner	42	40	15	3
Renter	55	32	10	3

* small sample size ** less than 1/2 of 1%

High housing costs causing many Californians to consider moving

Voters in the survey were also asked whether they had given any consideration to moving out of their area because of the rising costs of housing, and a 56% majority reports that they have. One in four voters statewide (25%) say that if they did decide to move, they most likely would relocate out of state. Another 23% say they would most likely move to another part of the state or to another place in their same general area.

Table 2
Consideration given to moving because of rising housing costs in your area
and place where these voters would most likely relocate
(among registered voters)

	%
Have not considered moving	44
Have considered moving	<u>56</u>
<u>Where you would most likely relocate</u>	
Another state	25
Another part of California	14
Another place in same area	9
Another country	2
Don't know	6

Voters across all major regions of the state admit to having considered moving

Majorities of voters in all parts of the state say they have considered moving due to the high costs of housing. Renters and voters under the age of 50 are the segments most likely to say this, with two in three admitting to having given consideration to moving.

Table 3
Consideration given to moving out of your area because of rising housing costs --
across major subgroups of the registered voter population

	Have considered moving %	Have not considered moving %
Total statewide	56	44
<u>Region</u>		
Los Angeles County	59	41
South Coast	57	43
Other Southern California	60	40
Central Valley	52	48
San Francisco Bay Area	51	49
Other Northern California*	56	44
<u>Age</u>		
18-29	65	35
30-39	69	31
40-49	64	36
50-64	53	47
65 or older	38	62
<u>Tenure</u>		
Homeowner	47	53
Renter	67	33

* *small sample size*

Early backing for multi-billion dollar statewide bond for low-income housing

Last week the state legislature passed legislation to put a multi-billion dollar bond for the construction of more low-income housing on the November 2018 ballot. When voters were asked how they would vote if a bond like this were to appear on next year's election ballot, 51% say they would be inclined to vote Yes, 27% would be inclined to vote No, while 22% were undecided.

Voting preferences are highly partisan, with nearly seven in ten of the state's registered Democrats (69%) in support of the bond, compared to just 24% among Republicans.

Table 4
Voter preferences regarding a proposed multi-billion dollar statewide bond issue
for the construction of more low-income housing in California
(among registered voters)

	Yes %	No %	Undecided %
Total statewide	51	27	22
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	69	11	20
Republicans	24	58	18
No party preference/others	46	24	30

Majority support for local rent control laws

The seriousness with which voters view the cost of housing is also demonstrated when they are asked their opinions about rent control. Six in ten voters (60%) support local laws that would set limits on how much rents could be increased as a way to help more low- and middle-income people remain in their communities. Just 26% side with an opposing view that such laws lead to fewer rentals being built, making the problem worse.

Support for local rent control laws is strongest among Democrats (76%), renters (65%), and voters in Los Angeles County (68%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (63%).

Table 5
Opinions of local rent control laws among California registered voters

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
Total statewide	60	26	14
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrat	76	13	11
Republican	35	51	14
No party preference/others	55	25	20
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	68	22	10
South Coast	53	32	15
Other Southern California	59	26	15
Central Valley	51	30	19
San Francisco Bay Area	63	22	15
Other Northern California*	49	27	24
<u>Tenure</u>			
Homeowner	55	34	11
Renter	65	17	18

* small sample size

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of California registered voters by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The *Berkeley IGS Poll* was conducted online by YouGov August 27-September 5, 2017 in English and Spanish. The survey was completed among a statewide sample of 1,200 registered voters, and included an oversampling of 200 voters who were the parents of children under age 18. According to YouGov, results from the overall sample have a margin of error of +/- 4%.

YouGov administered the survey by inviting California registered voters who are included among its online panel of over 1.5 million Americans to participate in the poll. Panelists were recruited using a variety of methods, including telephone-to-web and mail-to-web recruitment, partner-sponsored solicitations, web-based advertising and email campaigns, as well as through past telephone and mail surveys. Eligible voters were selected to participate in the poll using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking demographic and regional targets, so that the characteristics of those polled approximate the profile of the state's overall registered voter population. After survey administration, YouGov also applied statistical weights to align the statewide voter sample and the parent oversample to their proper population proportions, and, following this, to a wide range of political, demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population. IGS was responsible for the development and translation into Spanish of all survey questions.

Questions asked

In your opinion, how serious of a problem is housing affordability in your area of California – extremely serious, somewhat serious, not too serious or not at all serious?

Have you given any consideration to moving because of the rising costs of housing in your area? (IF YES) If you did decide to move, where would you be most likely relocate?

Some people believe rent control laws that give local governments the ability to set limits on how much rents can be increased are a way to help middle and lower income people remain in their communities. Others say rent control leads to fewer rental units being built and this makes the problem worse in the long run. What is your opinion? Do you favor or oppose rent control laws in your area?

The state legislature is considering placing a \$3 billion bond on California's 2018 election ballot to finance the construction of more low-income housing and to preserve existing units. If the election were today, would you vote Yes or No on this proposed bond?

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. IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within its newly established Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. A complete listing of poll stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* can be found at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.