



What Californians Think About Voting

New poll finds knowledge gaps, confusion, strong support for reforms

Overview

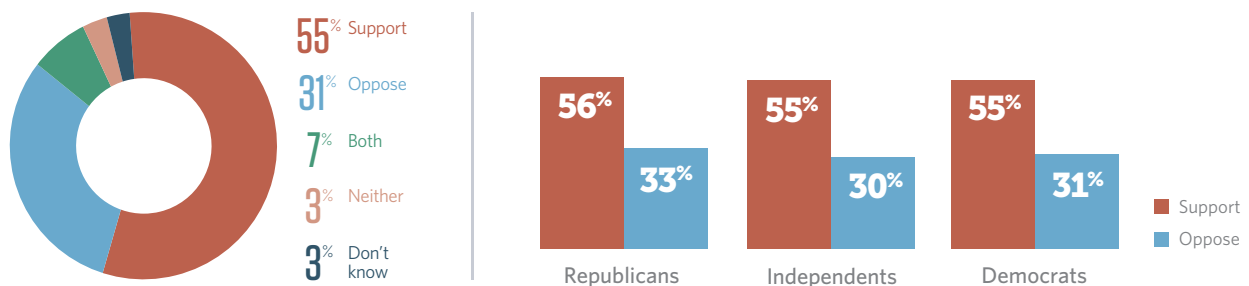
In 2014, The Pew Charitable Trusts conducted polling to help election officials and policymakers better understand what voters know about registration requirements and opportunities in their states. Voters in California:

- Strongly support reforms to make registration lists more accurate.
- Have major gaps in their knowledge of voter registration opportunities and policy.
- Do not know which office is responsible for managing and conducting elections.
- Primarily use online search engines for information about elections.

Figure 1

Most California Voters Support Keeping Voter Records Up to Date by Letting States Compare Data

After hearing arguments for and against such a policy, the majority supported interstate comparisons of official records, such as driver's license, change-of-address, and death records



Argument in support: People who support this say that nationally approximately 24 million voter registrations are inaccurate or no longer valid and nearly 2 million dead people are still listed as voters. Upgrading the system would help voters keep their voter registrations up-to-date. It's time to improve the integrity of the system and use technology to make voter registration easier and kept up-to-date.

Argument in opposition: People who oppose this say a person's information, even if it's anonymous, should not be shared, and using records from other states could result in eligible voters being mistakenly taken off the rolls. The voter registration system is working well, and there is no need to risk our privacy and our eligibility to vote.

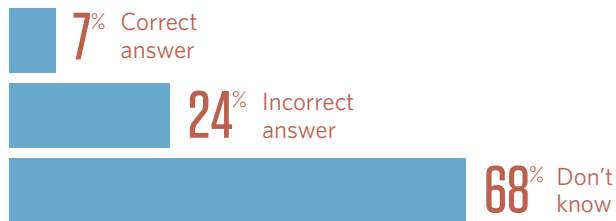
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32% 21 years after passage of the Motor Voter law, 32 percent of California voters polled don't know they can register to vote through the state motor vehicle agency.

Figure 2

92% of Voters Don't Know That the Secretary of State's Office Manages Elections in California

Which office in your state is responsible for managing and conducting elections?



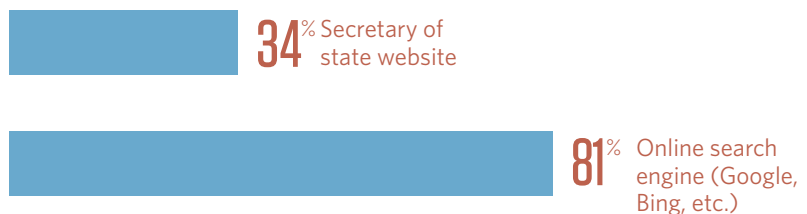
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40% 40 percent of California voters did not know that the Postal Service does not automatically update their registration when they move.

Figure 3

Search Engines Were the Most Popular Options for California Voters Searching Online for Election Information

Would you definitely use this online source to find information about your polling place or other election information?



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Methodology

On behalf of The Pew Charitable Trusts, Public Opinion Strategies and the Mellman Group conducted a survey of 820 registered voters in California. Interviews were conducted Jan. 25-30, 2014. The margin of error on a sample size of N=820 is plus or minus 3.4 percent.

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