



November 2016

California Elections Results

With the dust from more than 4 million uncounted ballots still settling, there are a small handful of close races where the outcome may remain unknown for a few more weeks. But here is what we do know.

Federal Races

California is the bluest of “blue” states, with registered Democrats outnumbering Republicans by almost two million voters. Thus, in the race for **President**, once the primary was over the only question in the general election was how large would be the margin by which Clinton beat Trump. Clinton carried the state easily 62 percent to 33 percent garnering at least 2.5 million votes more than her Republican opponent and making her the popular vote winner not just in California, but also nationally.

In the race for the open **U.S. Senate seat**, notable for its Democrat on Democrat contest, Attorney General (AG) Kamala Harris defeated congresswomen Loretta Sanchez by a similar (63 percent-38 percent) margin as the presidential contest. Before the election, Sanchez was viewed as better positioned to receive a significant portion of the state’s Republican vote. However, it now appears many Republicans simply sat out and did not vote on election day. In light of the vacancy created by the election of Harris, Governor Jerry Brown now has the opportunity to appoint a replacement who will serve at least through 2018. While there’s much speculation as to who the Governor might appoint, no one has yet emerged as the most likely candidate to get this coveted appointment.

In the race for U.S. Congress, while there are a couple of races still too close to call, there will be no net change in the 39-14 partisan split of California’s 53 seats.

State Races

In state legislative races, the most drama revolved around a handful of Senate and Assembly contests where Democrats focused their efforts to achieve two-thirds super majorities. Democrats held a super majority in both houses briefly in 2013, but three members of the Senate Democratic caucus were forced from office due to criminal indictments and then the Republicans picked up a few seats in 2014. Achieving a two-thirds majority enables the majority party to overturn vetoes by the governor, pass emergency legislation, general tax increases and to place constitutional amendments or bond measures on the ballot in California, all without any votes of minority Republicans.

In the **Assembly** races, California Democrats appear to have recaptured several seats that Republicans took from them two years ago, when the GOP had rare success in picking up a handful of “swing” districts in a non-presidential election year with lower turnout numbers. The Democrats need a net gain of two Assembly seats and one Senate seat to give them a working super majority in both houses. To do this, they targeted a handful of Republican-held districts in Orange County, the Inland Empire and the East San Francisco Bay Area. These races include first-term Republicans in districts where the parties are closely matched. Democrats and their allies poured millions of dollars into efforts to defeat freshman Republican assembly members Catharine Baker of Dublin, David Hadley of Torrance, Young Kim of Fullerton and Marc Steinorth of Rancho Cucamonga, as well as second-term Republican Eric Linder of Corona. Their efforts appear to have worked– at least in the assembly where Democrats need 54 out of 80 seats to get the super majority. The Democrats picked up a “net” three seats on Nov. 8 with Linder, and Hadley all losing their races, and Kim narrowly losing election day and very unlikely to make up the difference with absentee ballots. Baker remains the lone Republican in the San Francisco Bay Area delegation. This makes the partisan make up in the Assembly 55 Democrats and 25 Republicans, and is a working super majority.

In the **Senate**, however, it appears that Democrats may have failed to pick up any seats. Both Scott Wilk of Lancaster and Ling Ling Chang of Diamond Bar closed out election day with winning margins. Assuming Chang is able to retain her slim margin after all of the absentee ballots are counted, the partisan makeup of the senate will remain 26-14 and leave Democrats one short of the 27 seats needed for a two-thirds majority. In San Francisco, the more moderate of the two Democrat candidates, Scott Wiener, prevailed in an expensive contest where his opponent had been endorsed and actively supported by Bernie Sanders.

On the **initiative** front, California had a record 17 initiatives and referenda to vote on making the state’s voter booklet as thick as some school text books! Recent state law changes moved all initiatives from state primary and general elections to general elections only thus cramping the already crowded ballot. (San Franciscans had another 25 local propositions, creating the longest ballot in recent history.) Of most interest were:

- > Proposition 53, would have required voter approval before the state could issue more than \$2 billion in public infrastructure bonds that would require an increase in taxes or fees for repayment. This measure was aimed at two of Governor Brown’s “legacy projects” High Speed Rail and California Water Fix (tunnels for water transport.) The measure was defeated 51.45 percent to 48.55 percent.
- > Proposition 55, which extends by 12 more years a higher tax rate on the household incomes of \$500,000 or more, \$250,000 for individuals, passed.
- > Proposition 56 adds \$2 per pack of cigarettes sold in the state passed.
- > Proposition 67 was a referenda on a previously passed state law banning single use plastic bags. The referenda failed, thus allowing the state’s ban to go forward.
- > Proposition 54 passed and will add transparency to the legislative process by requiring all bills to be in print for 72 hours before a vote can be taken by the Legislature.
- > Proposition 62 – Californians upheld the death penalty by voting it down and approving a process to expedite carrying out the death sentence when they passed Proposition 66.
- > Proposition 61 – Big pharma came out against Prop 61, which would have placed new government regulations on how prescription drugs are sold in the state. This initiative failed to pass by 46 percent to 54 percent.

- > Proposition 63 – A gun control initiative that outlaws the possession of ammunition magazines that hold more than 10 rounds, requires background checks for people buying bullets, makes it a crime not to report lost or stolen guns, and provides a process for taking guns from people upon their conviction for a felony passed by a significant margin, 63 percent to 37 percent.
- > Proposition 64 – California adds to an increasingly long list of states that are approving recreational marijuana by passing Proposition 64 by 56 percent to 44 percent. California had previously made medical marijuana legal by being one of the first states to pass that in 1998.

Local/Regional Measures that have broader significance/interest:

San Francisco Bay Area passed the Regional Measure RR authorizing the Bay Area Rapid Transit to increase its debt by \$3.5 billion through issuing general obligation bonds in that amount. These funds will be used for modernization and infrastructure improvements.

San Francisco

(With 25 Propositions on the ballot, only the following few are noted. For more information, visit the [Department of Elections website](#).)

Proposition V, the effort to pass a soda tax, was watched nationally (significant financial support for the measure came from former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.) The measure passed with about 62 percent of the vote. Attempting to follow New York City, Measure H would have created the Office of Public Advocate, but the measure, opposed by San Francisco Mayor Ed Lee, was defeated with 53 percent of the vote. With the defeat of Measure F, sixteen year olds will not be able to vote in San Francisco elections, but non-citizen parents and guardians may vote in local school board elections. (A legal challenge is likely.) Tents on sidewalks will no longer be permitted and will be removed upon 24-hour notice after the passage of Proposition Q.

In **Oakland**, it appears that voters passed a soda tax (Measure HH) and approved the Mayor’s infrastructure bond (Measure KK.)

County of Los Angeles voters approved new taxes proposed by Measures A and M.

Measure A created a 1.5-cent parcel tax on built square-footage. Measure A earmarked the revenue for parks, recreation, open space, and cultural amenities. The funds will be dispersed as competitive grants to cities and other organizations for their projects.

Measure M created a permanent half-cent sales tax increase for the county. Measure M funds will be used to build out new light rail, expand the bus system, service dozen of highway projects, and help cities with local transportation needs.

City of Los Angeles voters approved a new bond proposed by Measure HHH.

Measure HHH allows the City of Los Angeles to issue a \$1.2 billion general obligation bonds. The bond revenue will be used to provide below market rate housing for the homeless, and others in danger of becoming homeless. Also, the revenue will provide facilities to increase access to mental health care, drug and alcohol treatment.

The election results in this document are the Unofficial Results. For the most up-to-the-minute results, please visit the California Secretary of State’s [website](#).

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