



TO The California Endowment

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RE: Key Findings from a Survey of California Voters on the Impact of Coronavirus

DATE June 25, 2020

Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a survey of 1,240 California voters, with an oversample of independent voters and moderate Republican voters, to assess views of the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic and possible policy responses.¹ The results show that voters are broadly concerned about the impacts of the pandemic; strongly approve of the job being done by public health officials in addressing the it; and are highly supportive of the idea of a “New California Social Contract” to respond to the pandemic and ensure that all residents of the state have the opportunity to live safe, healthy, and prosperous lives.

Key specific findings of the survey include:

- **The economic impacts of coronavirus are among voters’ top concerns.** Eighty percent say the “economic impacts of coronavirus” are an “extremely” or “very serious” problem in their community. Nearly two-thirds say the same for the public health impacts of the virus (65%). Other problems ranking high on the list of voter concerns include low wages, the cost of healthcare, the cost of housing, the cost of living, and unemployment.

Figure 1: Problems Facing California Communities

I'd like to read you some problems facing your community that people have mentioned. For each one I read, please tell me whether you think it is an extremely serious problem, a very serious problem, somewhat serious problem, or not too serious a problem in your community.

Problem	% Extremely/ Very Serious
Economic impacts of the coronavirus	80%
Homelessness	75%
The cost of housing	72%
The cost of healthcare	72%
The cost of living	71%
Unemployment	68%
Public health impacts of the coronavirus	65%
The economy	64%
School closures due to the coronavirus	59%

Problem	% Extremely/ Very Serious
Divisions and tensions between people of different races or ethnicities	57%
Climate change	55%
Racial discrimination and prejudice	53%
The quality of public schools	52%
Police abuse against people of color	50%
Access to healthcare	50%
Low wages	47%
Police abuse	44%

- Voters believe the impacts of the pandemic are likely to persist.** The survey data show that voters continue to have significant concerns about the impact that the pandemic will continue to have in California:
 - ✓ Fifty-three percent say “the worst is yet to come,” compared to just one-third who believe “the worst is over.”
 - ✓ Nearly half are extremely or very concerned about themselves or a family member getting sick (45%).
 - ✓ A clear majority (61%) is more worried about the possibility of infection than about economic losses from the pandemic (25%).
 - ✓ However, more than one-quarter (28%) are “uneasy” about meeting their living expenses in the months ahead.
- Voters offer strong approval for the way the Governor and local public health officials have been handling the pandemic.** As detailed in **Figure 2** below, two-thirds say they approve of the job being done by public health officials (both generally and in their area) and by Governor Newsom in handling the pandemic. In contrast, only about one-third approve of the job being done by Congress and the President.

Figure 2: Evaluations of Responses to the Pandemic

Next, for each of the following, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the job they are doing in handling the pandemic.

Public Organization/Individual	Total Approve	Total Disapprove
Public health officials	68%	29%
California’s governor	67%	31%
Public health officials in your area	66%	24%
Your local public school district	60%	20%
California state government, in general	59%	38%
The federal government, in general	40%	56%
The United States Congress	36%	59%

- **Voters are highly aware of the idea of contact tracing, and very willing to comply with its terms.** Three-quarters of California voters have heard something about contact tracing efforts and, as shown in **Figure 3**, sizable majorities are willing to comply with them. Most are willing to self-quarantine for 14 days if they are notified they came into contact with someone who tested positive, and to provide contact tracing officials a list of people with whom they’ve recently come into contact.

Figure 3: Likelihood of Complying with Contact Tracing

Next, I am going to read you some things a contact tracer may ask you to do. After hearing each one, please tell me if you’d be very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or very unlikely to take that action.

Contact Tracing Steps	Total Likely	Total Unlikely
Agree to self-quarantine for 14 days if you are notified that you came into contact with someone who tested positive	87%	11%
Give contact tracing officials a list of all the people you’ve recently come into contact with if you test positive	82%	16%
Volunteer for weekly testing to track the progression of the coronavirus pandemic	69%	27%
Give contact tracing officials access to your cellphone location data if you test positive	58%	39%

Additionally, 47% said they would be more likely to provide information requested if they knew the contact tracers worked for a public health department and not a private company; 19% said they’d be less likely to provide information in this case.

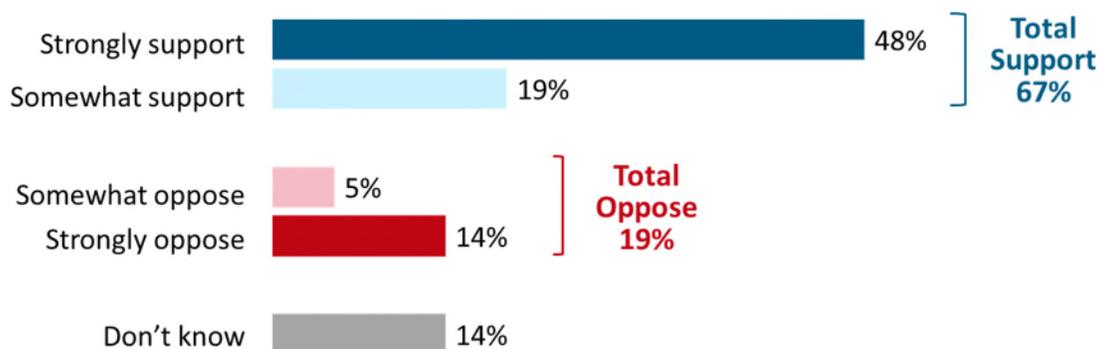
- **Voters recognize broad inequities in the impacts the virus has had, and acknowledge a collective responsibility to address them and to expand opportunity for Californians more broadly.** Specifically:
 - ✓ More than nine in ten (93%) agree that “all Californians have a shared responsibility to prevent the spread of the coronavirus;”
 - ✓ Two-thirds agree that people of color are disproportionately harmed by the health (70%) and economic (67%) impacts of the coronavirus;
 - ✓ More than three-quarters agree that low-income Californians are disproportionately harmed by the health (78%) and economic (82%) impacts of the coronavirus;
 - ✓ Fully 77% agree that “we need a more active government that supports more positive change in our communities (77%); and
 - ✓ Over four in five (82%) say that “it is the responsibility of all Californians to ensure that all people living in the state have the opportunity to live healthy, safe, and economically secure lives.”

- **In this context, two-thirds offer support for a proposed New California Social Contract.** Voters were offered a description of a “New California Social Contract” that would support Californians in the recovery from the pandemic and in the face of future challenges as well.

This approach is called the New California Social Contract. It is a new vision for the future of California between government, corporations, and residents of California, grounded in a fundamental belief that: we are linked by our common humanity, that a fair and inclusive democracy is critical to our collective progress, and that we are united in our commitment to care for the health and well-being of all Californians. This Social Contract will inform California’s approach to policymaking, governing and coronavirus recovery to ensure that every Californian has access to the basic opportunities necessary for long, happy, and prosperous lives. This includes: affordable and dignified housing, safe and good paying jobs, clean air and well-kept parks, quality childcare and state-of-the-art schools, fair access to information, and peaceful streets free from police and community violence. Does this New California Social Contract sound like something you would support or oppose?

Fully 67% back the idea, with 48% offering “strong support” and only 19% opposed (Figure 4). When asked about specific objectives of the social contract, voters place the greatest priority on protecting voting rights, ensuring public health initiatives protect Californians regardless of race or ethnic background, providing affordable high-quality healthcare, and ensuring public health initiatives protect Californians regardless of income.

Figure 4: Support for the New California Social Contract



Support for the New California Social Contract cuts across most major demographic groups within the California electorate, including:

- ✓ 72% of voters under 50, 63% of voters ages 50-64, and 62% of those ages 65 and over;
- ✓ 86% of Democrats and 69% of independents;
- ✓ 80% of African American voters, 79% of Latino voters, 69% of Asian/Pacific Islander voters and 64% of white voters; and
- ✓ 74% of voters in LA County, 73% in the Bay Area, 70% in San Diego, 65% in the Central Valley, 57% in the counties surrounding Los Angeles, and 55% in Sacramento and the rural north.

Taken together, the findings of the survey show that Californians have experienced significant impacts from the pandemic and are apprehensive about the toll it will take on public health and the economy in the months to come. Further, they recognize the disproportionate toll the pandemic has had on low-income Californians and communities of color – impacting both their health and economic well-being. Though they approve of the responses offered by state and local public health officials, they feel a collective responsibility to do more – and embrace the idea of a “New California Social Contract” that will both aid recovery from the pandemic and lay the foundation for all Californians to live safe, healthy, and prosperous lives.

ⁱ **Methodology:** From June 13-21, 2020, FM3 completed 1,240 online and telephone (landline and wireless) interviews with California voters, 840 interviews were among voters statewide, 200 among an oversample of independent voters, and 200 among an oversample of moderate Republican voters. The survey was conducted in English and in Spanish. The margin of sampling error for the study is +/-3.5% at the 95% confidence level; margins of error for population subgroups within the sample will be higher. Due to rounding, not all totals will sum to 100%.