

**Chapter 1:**

**The Golden State**

Politics in the Golden State

Rules of the Game

Campaign Strategy

Interactive Quiz:  
Could YOU be a Campaign Consultant?

## **Politics in the Golden State**

Who are California's Voters?

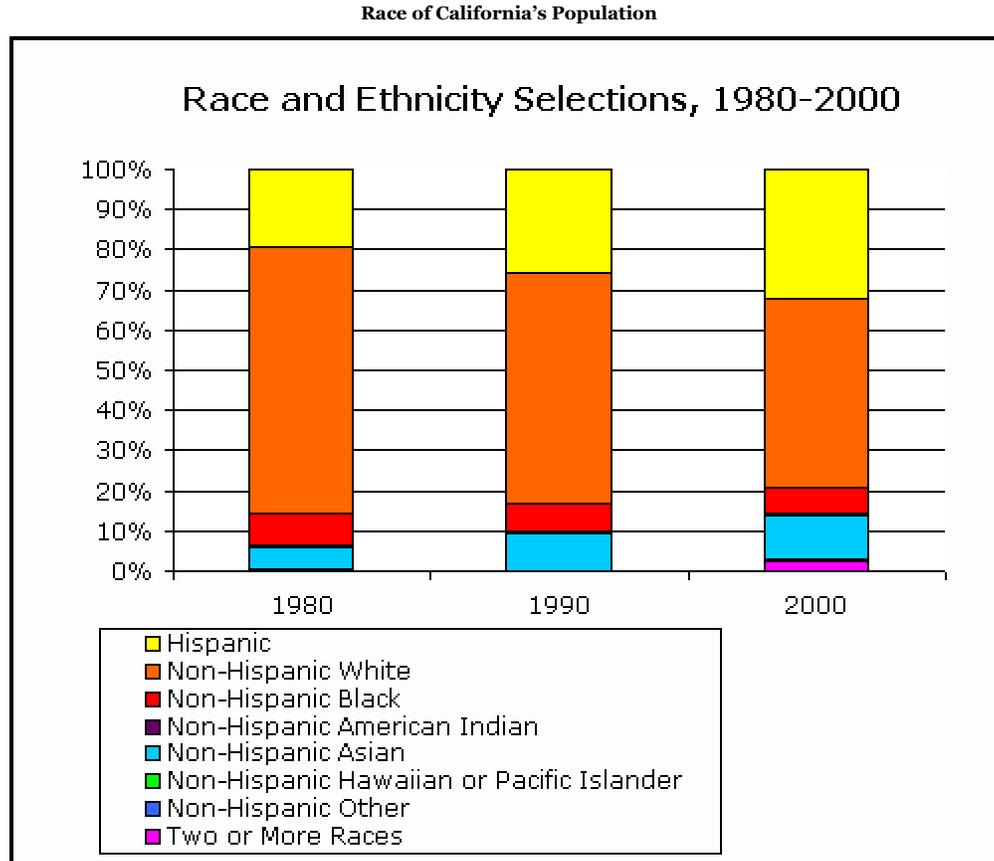
Voters and Parties

California on the National Stage

The California Governorship

## Who are California's Voters?

California is by far the nation's most populous state. With almost 34 million residents in 2000, the state by itself makes up 12% of the total U.S. population. In comparison, the second largest state – Texas – has fewer than 21 million residents. California is also one of the most diverse states, with the proportion of “white only” California residents decreasing rapidly in recent years, from 67% in 1980 to just 47% in 2000. 32% of the state's residents are of Latino/Hispanic origin, 11% are Asian, and 7% are African-American.

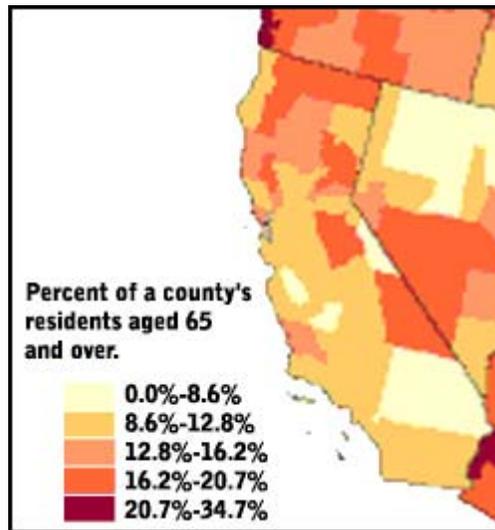


Source: Census Scope

And Californians are young compared to Americans generally, with 27.3% of the state aged under 18 as compared to 25.7% of the nation, and only 10.6% of Californians over age 65, as compared to 12.4% of Americans. The median age of California residents

is just 33 years.

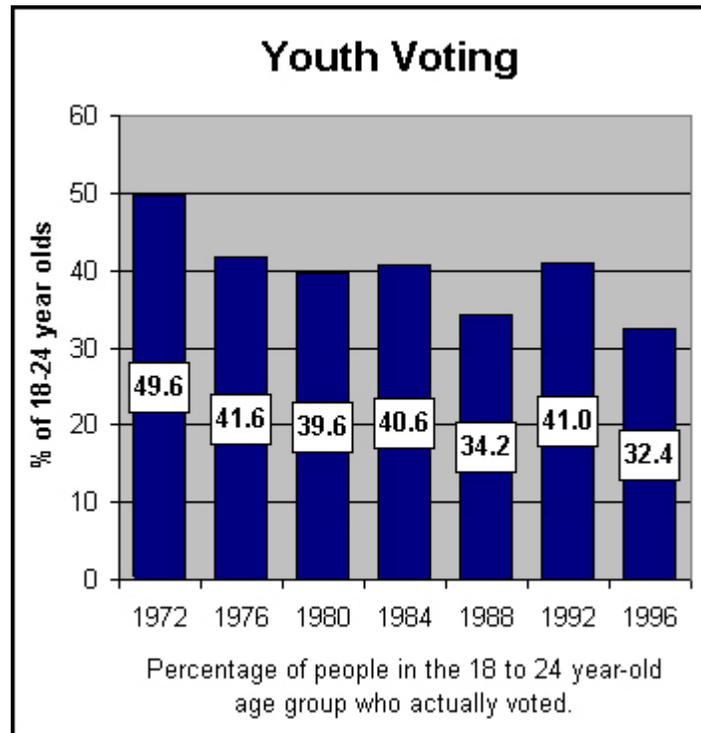
Distribution of people aged 65+ in California counties



Source: Census Scope

Of course, people who vote or register to vote are not an exact mirror of the general population. Of 21.5 million eligible voters in California, just over 71% (or 15.3 million) are registered, according to the Secretary of State. Voters tend to be whiter, older, more educated and wealthier than the general population. Age barriers to voting are especially important. A recent study by the Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), showed that, while 51% of the adult population turned out to vote in the 2000 election, only 37% of people aged 18 to 24 did so. In fact, turnout among young voters has been lower than general voter turnout in almost every presidential election in the past 30 years.

#### Turnout among young voters

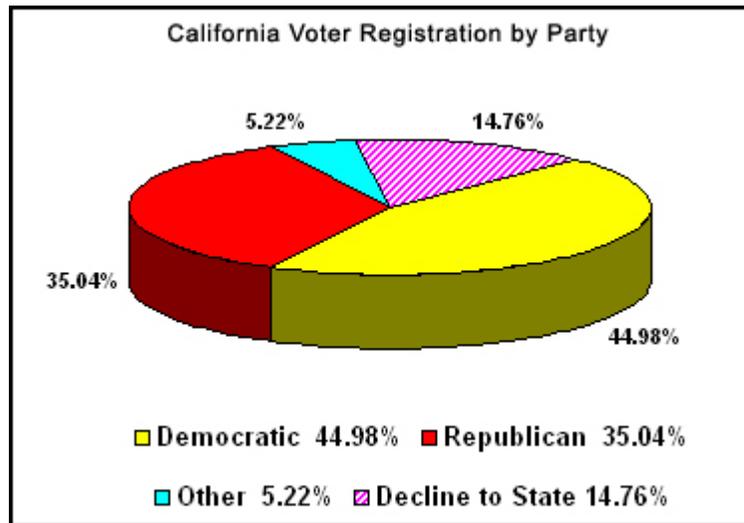


Source: Center for Voting and Democracy

### Voters and Parties: Partisanship in California

Not only are Californians younger and more diverse than the general U.S. population, but they are also more heavily Democratic than the nation as a whole. While the national vote for President in 2000 was split almost evenly between George W. Bush and Al Gore (48% of the vote each), California voted 53% to 42% for Gore. In fact, 45% of the state's registered voters are registered as Democrats, compared to 35% registered as Republicans. California also has a high proportion (15%) of non-affiliated voters, registered as "Decline to State." In addition, several minor parties, including the Green Party and the Reform Party, together garner a small share (5%) of registered voters.

Affiliation of registered voters in California



Source: California Secretary of State

The “Decline to State” category of registered voters has shown a sharp increase in recent years (from 11% in 1996 to 15% in 2002), while both the Democratic and Republican parties have been losing registered voters. California voted Republican in every presidential election between 1972 and 1988. 1992 reversed this trend with Clinton taking 46% of the vote to George Bush, Sr.’s 33%. Clinton won again in 1996 and the Democrats’ success continued in the 1998 gubernatorial race, when Democrat Gray Davis took 58% of the vote to Republican Dan Lungren’s 38%.

Politics in California has traditionally followed a geographic “fault line,” with Northern California, and particularly the San Francisco Bay Area, being Democratic/liberal, and Southern California, and particularly Orange County, being Republican/conservative. This split has become less pronounced in recent years, however. In 1988, George Bush, Sr. carried Orange County 68% to 31%, and Southern California 63% to 36%. In 2000, George W. Bush received only 56% of the Orange County vote, and 52% of the Southern California vote.

What accounts for the recent Democratic victories? A major contributing factor is ethnic diversity. People of Hispanic/Latino origin make up an increasingly large

proportion of California's population (32% in 2000), and they vote overwhelmingly Democratic. In the 1998 gubernatorial race, for example, Democrat Gray Davis got 78% of Hispanic vote compared to 16% received by Republican Dan Lungren. Of course, the Republican Party has recognized the importance of the Hispanic/Latino vote and it has begun to make overtures to this crucial constituency

### **California on the National Stage**

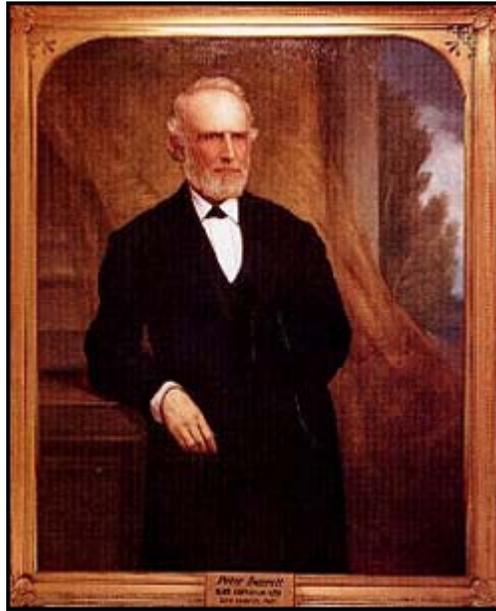
California's size guarantees its strong influence on the national political scene. As the largest state, California naturally has the largest number of Electoral College votes (55). California is therefore essential to presidential candidates, who need 270 electoral college votes to win. California also has the largest congressional delegation of any state, holding 53 of 435 seats in the House of Representatives. If might is right, the interests of California are well taken care of in Congress!

But California's influence is more than just proportional to its size. As the home of Hollywood, the state is the capital of popular culture for the United States and perhaps for the world. And Northern California's Silicon Valley, the birthplace of modern technology, is the chief driving force behind the new economy. It is not surprising, then, that politicians from California have gone on to have a major impact on both the national and global stages.

### **The California Governorship: History of the Governorship**

The very first elected Governor of California was an "Independent Democrat" named Peter H. Burnett. He was elected in 1849, at a time when the state capital was San Jose and California had yet to be admitted as a state of the Union.

Peter H. Burnett



Source: State of California's "Governor's Gallery"

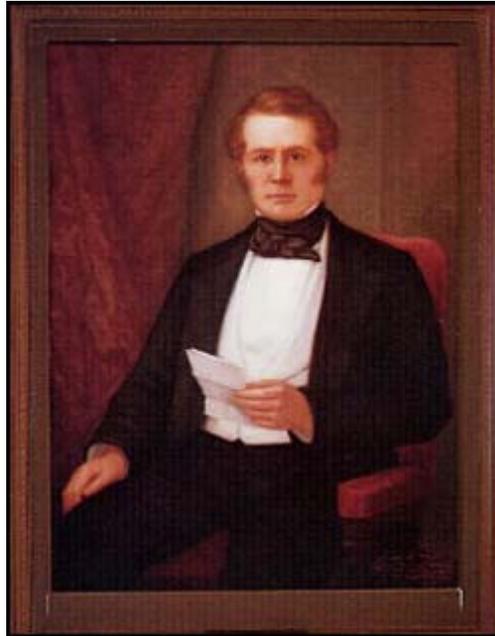
Prior to 1849, California had been governed first by the Spanish, then by Mexico, and finally, after California was ceded to the U.S. following the Mexican-American war, by a series of military governors. As the State's first civilian Governor, Burnett did not last long. He resigned in 1851 after his first annual address was criticized by the legislature.

You can read the inaugural address of California's very first Governor, delivered on December 20, 1849.

As California established itself during the 1850s and 1860s, so did the State's government, with the State Capitol being built in Sacramento in 1869, and the term of the Governorship being increased from two to four years during the term of Leland Stanford, California's 8<sup>th</sup> Governor, who held the office from 1862 to 1863. The Governors of those early days were an interesting bunch; for example, John McDougall, who was elevated from Lt. Governor to Governor when Burnett resigned in 1851, opposed legislation that would outlaw dueling, on the basis that those who dueled weren't fit to live and that by allowing them to continue to duel they would eventually kill

each other off. After his term as Governor, interestingly, he went on to wound a newspaper editor in one duel and to be arrested as he was about to take part in another.

**John McDougall**



Source: State of California's "Governor's Gallery"

Recent Governors, many of whom have gone on to play important roles on the national stage, have been a little more conventional than their early counterparts. 1943 saw the inauguration of the 30<sup>th</sup> Governor, Earl Warren, who became the only Governor ever to be elected for three terms. Warren did not finish out his third term, however, because President Eisenhower appointed him Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in 1953. You can read more about Earl Warren's career shortly. Warren's successor, Goodwin Knight, was the last Governor to serve fewer than eight years. Every Governor since Knight has served two full terms, though we will not know until November whether Gray Davis will continue this trend.

After Knight came Democrat Edmund G. "Pat" Brown, the first half of the only father-son team to hold the Governorship. Brown beat Republican gubernatorial candidate and future president, Richard Nixon, to be reelected as Governor in 1962, but was himself unseated by another future president, Ronald Reagan, when he ran for a

third term in 1966. After Reagan's two terms, the Governorship reverted to the Brown family when Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown won the office for the Democrats just eight years after his father had left it. Both Ronald Reagan and Jerry Brown stayed in the spotlight after their terms as Governor and you can read more about their careers below.

In 1982 the Republican Party took back the Governorship for sixteen years, with both George Deukmejian and Pete Wilson each serving two terms. Wilson, who had been Mayor of San Diego and a U.S. Senator prior to becoming Governor, was the first Governor to have a website. When Wilson was termed out in 1998, Gray Davis beat Republican Dan Lungren to reclaim the Governorship for the Democrats.

## **The California Governorship: A Who's Who of Past Governors**

Earl Warren



Source: State of California's "Governor's Gallery"

Earl Warren was California's 30<sup>th</sup> Governor and the only Governor to be elected for three terms. A Republican, Warren had been Deputy District Attorney for Oakland and then for Alameda County before being elected State Attorney General in 1938 and

Governor in 1942. As Governor, Warren supported the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War Two, a position he later came to regret. In his first reelection bid in 1946, he became the only California Governor ever to be nominated by both parties, winning both the Democratic and Republican primaries, and he went on to win 92% of the popular vote in the general election. He defeated James Roosevelt, Franklin Roosevelt's son, to win reelection for a second time in 1950.

Warren left the Governorship two years into his third term when President Eisenhower appointed him as Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. As Chief Justice, he presided over some of the most important cases ever to come before the Supreme Court. Most notably, his court's unanimous decision in *Brown V. Board of Education* in 1954 signaled the end of segregation in schools and of all forms of state-maintained racial separation.

Warren retired from the court in 1970 and died in Washington, D.C., in 1974. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

**Ronald Reagan**



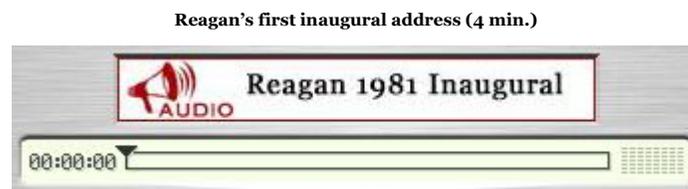
Source: State of California's "Governor's Gallery"

Ronald Reagan was California's 33<sup>rd</sup> Governor, serving from 1967 to 1975.

Reagan had started out life as a liberal Democrat, but shifted to being a strict conservative when he became concerned about the negative influence he believed communism was having in America. Having enjoyed a successful career as a radio broadcaster and movie star, Reagan entered the political arena in 1964 when a group of Republicans suggested he should run for Governor after he gave a televised speech in support of Republican presidential candidate Barry Goldwater.

Reagan won a resounding victory over Pat Brown in the 1966 gubernatorial election. Following his reelection in 1970, he decided not to run for a third term because he wanted to concentrate on securing the Republican nomination for President in 1976. He had already tried to do so, unsuccessfully, in 1968, and he was beaten again in 1976 by incumbent Gerald Ford. In 1980, however, Reagan won the Republican nomination and went on to beat incumbent Democratic President Jimmy Carter.

You can listen to an excerpt from Reagan's first presidential inaugural address here:

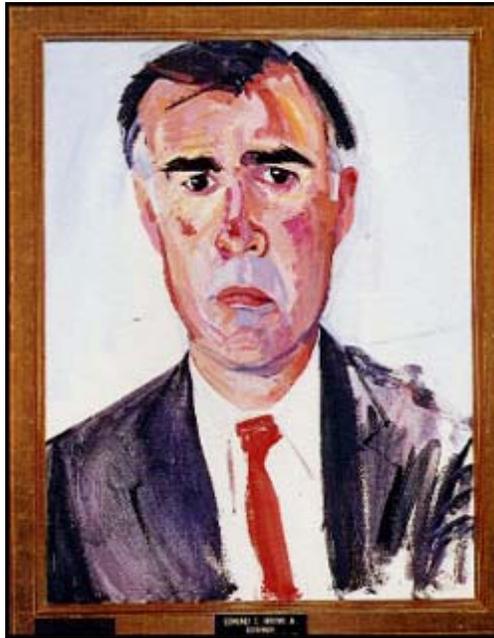


Reagan served two terms as president, during which time he increased defense spending and cut domestic social programs. He signed a historic treaty with the Soviet Union that cut back on nuclear weapons. He was known as the “Teflon President,” because despite presiding over a number of scandals such as the Iran-Contra affair, he retained his popularity with the public. Reagan retired at the end of his second presidential term in 1993, and lives in Southern California with his wife, Nancy. He suffers from Alzheimer's disease and does not appear in public.

**Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown**

Jerry Brown, son of Governor Pat Brown, became Governor in 1975, just 8 years after his father had lost the office to Ronald Reagan, and he was reelected to a second term in 1978.

**Jerry Brown's Official Portrait**



Source: State of California's "Governor's Gallery"

As his official portrait illustrates, Brown was a somewhat unconventional Governor; he refused to live in the huge new Governor's mansion that Reagan had built, renting a modest apartment instead. His unusual ideas earned him the nickname "Governor Moonbeam." Gray Davis, California's current Governor, was Brown's Chief of Staff.

Brown competed for the Democratic nomination for president in 1976 and again in 1992, but was unsuccessful on both occasions. He also ran for U.S. Senate in 1982, but lost to Republican Pete Wilson, who went on to become California's 36<sup>th</sup> Governor in 1991. Brown is currently in his second term as Mayor of Oakland, California, but he has expressed interest in running for one of California's U.S. Senate seats and he has not ruled out another presidential bid.

**Richard Nixon**



Source: Grolier's "American Presidency" series

Ok, so Richard Nixon was never Governor of California, but he wanted to be. Nixon, who had already been a U.S. Congressman and Senator, Vice-President under Eisenhower, and unsuccessful presidential candidate, ran for the California Governorship in 1966 against Democrat Pat Brown, but he was defeated soundly. It was after this defeat that Nixon made his famous remarks to the press, telling them, "You won't have Nixon to kick around anymore, because, gentlemen, this is my last press conference." Nixon went on to win the presidential race in 1968, disproving those who thought his remarks to the press had constituted political suicide. After being re-elected to a second term as President, Nixon resigned in 1974 in the midst of the Watergate scandal.

## **Rules of the Game**

Rules for Voters

Rules for Candidates

## **Rules for Voters**

### **Registering to Vote**

#### **Who is eligible to vote?**

To register to vote in California, you must:

- Be a United States citizen
- Be a resident of California
- Be at least 18 years of age (or will be by the date of the next election)
- Not be in prison or on parole for conviction of a felony
- Not have been judged by a court to be mentally incompetent to register and vote

#### **How do I register to vote?**

The National Voter Registration Act of 1993, known as the "motor voter" law, made registering to vote more convenient than ever before. States are now required to allow citizens to register to vote by mail, and they must make voter registration available in many public agencies where it was previously not available. At the Department of Motor Vehicles, for example, voter registration must be incorporated into the process of applying for or renewing your driver's license.

To register, you'll need to complete a voter registration form:

The voter registration form

# Voter Registration Application

For U.S. Citizens

You can use this form to: <input type="checkbox"/> register to vote <input type="checkbox"/> report that your name or address has changed <input type="checkbox"/> register with a party		This space for office use only.			
Please print in blue or black ink					
<b>1</b>	Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	(Circle one) Jr Sr II III IV
<b>2</b>	Address (see instructions)— Street (or route and box number)		Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State
<b>3</b>	Address Where You Get Your Mail If Different From Above (see instructions)		City/Town	State	Zip Code
<b>4</b>	Date of Birth	<b>5</b>	Telephone Number (optional)	<b>6</b>	ID Number (see item 6 in the instructions for your State)
		/ / Month Day Year			
<b>7</b>	Choice of Party (see item 7 in the instructions for your State)				<b>8</b>
				Race or Ethnic Group (see item 8 in the instructions for your State)	
<b>9</b>		Please sign full name (or put mark) ↓			
I swear/affirm that: <input type="checkbox"/> I am a United States citizen <input type="checkbox"/> I meet the eligibility requirements of my state and subscribe to any oath required. (See item 9 in the instructions for your state before you sign.) <input type="checkbox"/> The information I have provided is true to the best of my knowledge under penalty of perjury. If I have provided false information, I may be fined, imprisoned, or (if not a U.S. citizen) deported from or refused entry to the United States.		<div style="border: 1px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%;"></div>			
		Date: / / Month Day Year			
<b>10</b>	If the applicant is unable to sign, who helped the applicant fill out this application? Give name, address and phone number (phone number optional).				

Fold here

## Please fill out the sections below if they apply to you.

If this application is for a change of name, what was your name before you changed it?

<b>A</b>	Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name(s)	(Circle one) Jr Sr II III IV
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If you were registered before but this is the first time you are registering from the address in Box 2, what was your address where you were registered before?

<b>B</b>	Street (or route and box number)	Apt. or Lot #	City/Town	State	Zip Code
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If you live in a rural area but do not have a street number, or if you have no address, please show on the map where you live.

<b>C</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Write in the names of the crossroads (or streets) nearest to where you live.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Draw an X to show where you live.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Use a dot to show any schools, churches, stores, or other landmarks near where you live, and write the name of the landmark.</li> </ul>	NORTH ↑									
<table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Example</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">Route #2</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">● Grocery Store</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Woodchuck Road</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">Public School ●</td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"></td> <td style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;">X</td> </tr> </table>			Example	Route #2	● Grocery Store			Woodchuck Road	Public School ●		X
Example	Route #2	● Grocery Store									
		Woodchuck Road									
Public School ●		X									

**To Mail:** 1. Address the back of this application (see address under your state). 2. Remove plastic strip below. 3. Fold form at middle and seal at top. 4. Put on a first-class stamp and mail.

Revised 9/4/97

Source: California Secretary of State

The application form can be downloaded from the [Voter Information page](#) on the Secretary of State's website. It is accompanied by instructions that explain the information you must provide to register in California. Just complete the form and mail it to the California Secretary of State at the address provided in the instructions (1500 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Sacramento, CA 95814) or to your county Registrar of Voters.

Political parties and campaigns often send out volunteers to register voters in public places. You may request a voter registration form from these people too. They are required by law to supply you with a form regardless of which political party you want to register with, so don't be put off by signs that say "Republicans Register Here" or "Democrats Register Here".

### **How do I fill out the registration form?**

The form asks for basic information, including your name and address, date and place of birth, and the county in which you reside. If you have been registered in California before, there is a place on the form for you to provide the address at which you were previously registered. The form also asks for your driver's license number. This information helps election officials to distinguish between voters with similar names when they are cleaning the voter rolls.

Be sure to sign and date your form! Election officials will not process registration forms that are not dated and signed.

### **Do I have to join a political party?**

The registration form, asks if you want to select a political party. You may choose to enter the name of a political party or you may select "decline to state", which essentially means you are an "independent". When deciding whether to register as a member of a particular party, you should bear in mind that your choice will affect your ability to vote in primary elections. If you register Democrat or Republican, you will only

be able to vote in that party's primary election. However, if you register "decline to state," you can request a ballot from any political party that allows independent voters to participate in its primary. Four parties allow primary participation by independents: the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, the American Independent Party and the Natural Law Party.

### **When must I re-register?**

You need to re-register to vote if:

- You move
- You change your name
- You change your political party affiliation

### **When must I be registered for an election?**

In California, the deadline to register or re-register in time to vote in an election is 15 days prior to the date of the election. The deadline for registering or re-registering for the November 5, 2002 General Election is October 21, 2002.

### **If I register to vote, will I be called for jury duty?**

Juries are drawn from a variety of public records, including voter registration and DMV records, among others. You could be called to serve on a jury even if you are not registered to vote.

## **Voting**

### **When is the election?**

The general election for Governor takes place on the first Tuesday of November in a gubernatorial election year (every 4<sup>th</sup> year). This year's gubernatorial election will be held on November 5. (The primary election, in which parties select their nominee for

Governor, takes place on the first Tuesday in March of that year.)

### **Where do I get official information about an election?**

All registered voters receive a "Sample Ballot" from their county elections office, which shows what measures and candidates will appear on your ballot. Registered voters also receive an official voter information guide from the California Secretary of State. This booklet tells you about statewide ballot issues and candidates. Those who register close to the registration deadline (15 days before an election) may not receive these, however. Extra "Sample Ballots" will be available at all polling places. State Voter Information guides can also be viewed on the Secretary of State's website.

### **Where do I go to vote?**

As mentioned above, your polling place should be displayed on the "Sample Ballot" which your county elections office sends to you. Alternatively, you can find your polling place by calling your county elections office, or looking it up on their website (if your county office's website offers this feature). Your local political party office will probably also be able to help you locate your polling place. Your party, or political campaigns in your area, may even proactively contact you to make sure you know where to go to cast your vote.

### **How do I vote by absentee ballot?**

If you won't be able to get to the polls on election day, you may apply for an absentee ballot. All registered voters are eligible to cast an absentee ballot, and about twenty percent of California's voters do so.

To apply for an absentee ballot, you may use the application printed on your Sample Ballot or request an absentee ballot application from your county elections office. Your completed application must be submitted to your county elections office between

29 days and 7 days before the election.

Once your application is processed, an absentee ballot will be sent to you. After you have voted, insert your ballot in the envelope provided, making sure you complete all required information on the envelope. You may return your completed absentee ballot by 1) mailing it to your county elections office 2) returning it in person to a polling place or elections office within your county on election day; or 3) authorizing a legally-allowable third party (relative or person residing in the same household as you) to return the ballot on your behalf. Regardless of how the ballot is returned, it must be received by the county elections office by the time polls close (8 p.m.) on election day or it will not be counted.

### **Can I vote absentee in every election?**

Any registered voter may apply for permanent absentee voter status. If you are a permanent absentee voter, you will automatically receive an absentee ballot for each election. To become a permanent absentee voter, you must complete an application, which is available from your county elections office.

### **Is my employer required to give me time off to vote?**

Yes. California law requires that your employer give you time off to vote in statewide elections if you do not have time to vote outside of your normal work schedule. The law provides for a maximum of two hours of paid leave for the purposes of voting, and in some cases, employers may require advance notice of the need to take time off to vote.

## **Rules for Candidates**

### **How do candidates secure their party's nomination for Governor?**

To become a party's nominee for Governor of California, a candidate must win a plurality (a greater share of the vote than any other candidate) in his/her party's primary election, which takes place in March of the gubernatorial election year. Potential candidates must meet a number of qualifications to be eligible to run in a party's primary:

- Be a U.S. Citizen
- Be qualified to vote and be a registered voter
- Be a registered member of the party for at least three months immediately prior to filing a declaration of candidacy with election officials, or, if eligible to register for less than three months, be registered for as long as he/she has been eligible
- Not have been a registered member of any other qualified political party within twelve months prior to filing the declaration of candidacy
- Not have served two terms as Governor since November 6, 1990

This last qualification is a result of California's "term limits" regulation. Established by a 1990 ballot initiative approved by 52% of voters (and later upheld by the Supreme Court), "term limits" restrict to two the number of terms any individual can serve as Governor. (State Senators are also restricted to two four-year terms, while members of the State Assembly are restricted to three two-year terms.) Term limits apply to all holders of these offices, whether they are partisan or independent.

The winner of each party's primary election goes forward as that party's candidate for Governor in the general election.

### **How does an independent become a candidate for Governor?**

Independents do not have to go through a primary election in order to become a

candidate for Governor, but they must still meet a number of qualifications. Like a partisan candidate, an independent candidate must be a U.S. citizen and a registered California voter, and must not have previously served two terms in the office. In addition, he/she must not have filed as a partisan or write-in candidate for any office in the primary election, and must not have been a registered member of any qualified party within the thirteen months preceding the general election.

**Is there any limit to how much a candidate for Governor can spend on a campaign?**

The only limit to how much money candidates can spend on their campaigns is how much money they have to spend. There was an attempt in 1996, sponsored by groups such as Common Cause and the League of Women Voters, to limit campaign expenditures and donations through a state ballot initiative, Proposition 208. Although Prop 208 passed, it was later found to be unconstitutional.

Candidates and campaigns are, however, required to provide detailed reports of their expenditures and the donations they receive. This information is made publicly available online at the website of the Political Reform Division of the Secretary of State's office.

# **Campaign Strategy**

Importance of the Media

Media Strategy

Advertising Tactics

## **Importance of the Media**

Political campaigns today revolve around the media: newspapers, television and, increasingly, the internet. This was not always the case, however. Until the 1960s, campaigns were controlled and operated by political parties. In what has been called the “smoke-filled room” model, party leaders handpicked candidates and managed their campaigns. For a variety of reasons, but chiefly due to the spread of primary elections as the means by which parties selected their nominees, control of political campaigns shifted in the 1960s from the parties to individual candidates, who in turn became dependent on the media to reach voters who would previously have been reached by the parties’ grassroots efforts.

This shift in control of campaigns had serious implications for campaign strategy. Candidates now operated as individuals, trying to maximize their own chances for election rather than acting as servants of their party. This resulted in an entirely different approach to campaigning. When political parties controlled campaigns, for example, they were interested in electing as many of their candidates as possible. Parties therefore put considerable effort into “Getting Out the Vote” -- trying to increase turnout among their supporters. Today, because candidates only care about their own election, they are less concerned with getting out the vote. They need only secure a majority (or plurality) of votes to win the election, regardless of how many or how few votes are cast in total. In fact, in some instances, candidates may actively seek to depress turnout among voters who are least likely to vote for them.

The media have come to fill the void left by the decline of the parties’ role in campaigns. Candidates are entirely dependent on the media to reach voters and voters are entirely dependent on the media to provide them with information about the candidates. This is especially true in a state as big as California, where the sheer size of the population rules out the possibility of one-on-one contact between the candidates and most voters. How, then, do candidates use the media to win?

## **Media Strategy**

There are two main components to candidates' media-strategy -- free media and paid media. Free media consists of news coverage of the campaign and media coverage of campaign events such as debates. Paid media consists of candidates' advertising. Both types of media are essential to success. Free media tends to have more credibility with voters than does paid media, but candidates have far less control over the message in free media than in paid media. Voters are more likely to believe something they hear about the candidate on the news than something they hear about the candidate in his TV ad. But the candidate obviously has much greater control over his ad than over the news.

For mainly commercial reasons, however, media coverage of the Governor's race (or for that matter of any race other than the presidential race) is so limited that candidates have no choice but to invest heavily in paid advertising in order to get their message out. For example, a USC study of local television news coverage of the 1998 gubernatorial race found that, in the three months before the election, less than one half of one percent of news time (approx. 35 out of 7,668 hours) contained information about the Governor's race (Kaplan & Hale, 2000). Thus because the race for Governor attracts so little news coverage, advertising is the lifeblood of the modern gubernatorial candidate.

## **Advertising Tactics**

Advertising costs money. Lots of money. In a big market such as San Francisco, the cost of a thirty-second ad during prime time can exceed \$100,000. Thus the more candidates depend on advertising to reach voters, the more expensive campaigns become. In the 1998 California gubernatorial race, for example, the two major candidates spent a total of \$51 million. This represented a huge increase over the 1994 race in which their counterparts spent a total of \$31 million.

Because of the huge cost, candidates must take care to maximize the impact of

the dollars they spend on advertising. They rely on media consultants who design and run their ad campaigns. Some of their strategies are described below.

### **Targeting**

The most basic decision about campaign advertising is where and when to run ads. Campaigns “target” their advertising, concentrating their ads in areas where they are most likely to make a difference. What this means is that advertising occurs primarily in areas where the candidates are evenly matched in terms of voter support. Voters living in San Francisco, for example, typically encounter few political ads because the Bay Area is so heavily Democratic that neither Democratic nor Republican candidates bother to advertise there. For Democrats, it is a waste of money because they will most likely win regardless; for, Republicans it is a hopeless cause no matter how much they advertise.

Campaigns must also choose when to run their ads. Candidates typically do not run their ads during primetime because the costs are prohibitive. Most political ads air during early evening programming. The most popular time slot is during, or directly before or after, local newscasts. The local news is a good place to advertise because people who watch the news are more likely to be politically interested and therefore to vote.

### **Advertising Content**

Political ads tend to fall into a few common content categories:

- **Recognition ads.** Voters must know who a candidate is – at least be familiar with the candidate’s name – before they will vote for him or her. Recognition ads therefore place repeated emphasis on the candidate’s name. Here is one example of a recognition ad:

## Mel Levine for Senate

Recognition Ad (Excerpt)



- **Image ads.** Image ads focus on a candidate's personality or family background as a qualification for the office.

## Rick Lazio for Senate

Image Ad (Excerpt)



- **Issue ads.** Issue ads address the candidate's policy positions, general political philosophy, or track record in office.

## Hilary Clinton for Senate

Issues Ad (Excerpt)



Most political ads in recent years have tended to focus on issues, e.g. crime, the state of the economy, etc.

### **Advertising Tone**

Political advertisements can be:

- **Positive.** Making a positive appeal to voters by saying nice things about the candidate. Typically, the appeal concerns the candidate's credentials or his personal background.
- **Negative.** Making a negative appeal to voters by attacking the candidate's opponent. The negative appeal can either be about the opponent's character - "Ms. X is a bad person" - or about the opponent's record or issue positions - "Mr. Y was a terrible Governor." A third possibility for an attack ad, particularly if the opponent is not well-known, is the 'guilt by association' message: "You don't know Ms. Z, but she is best friends with the devil."
- **Comparative.** Mixed ads contrast a positive message about the candidate with a negative message about the candidate's opponent.

Negative political advertising has become increasingly prominent in recent years. This is controversial because research suggests that negative campaigns tend to discourage some voters (especially independents) from voting.

### **Sequencing**

A candidate's advertising strategy must be coordinated over the length of the campaign to maximize the impact of the ads. Typically, the advertising sequence starts with recognition spots at the beginning of the campaign, especially if the candidate is not well-known. Next, the candidate will try to give people a rationale for his/her candidacy, explaining why he/she is running and deserves a vote. The final phase of the advertising sequence typically involves attacks of the candidate's opponent. Over the course of the

sequence, therefore, the candidate makes his/her name familiar to voters, gives voters a reason to vote for him/her, and finally gives them a reason not to vote for his/her opponent.

### **Who Says What? The Theory of Issue Ownership**

Voters have stereotyped views of candidates corresponding to the candidates' party affiliation. Over the years, the Democratic and Republican parties have built up distinctive reputations as advocates or opponents of particular policies or positions. Republicans, for example, have consistently favored business interests and smaller government while Democrats have stood for workers and for a more active role for government. These party reputations give rise to stereotyped views of candidates. A Republican is seen as pro-business and a Democrat as pro-worker. Sometimes these stereotypes grant candidates a credibility advantage or disadvantage. A Democrat who runs an ad proclaiming his support for business, for example, may not be taken seriously because his position is so different from the stereotype of his party. The same logic applies to other attributes of candidates, such as their age or gender. A woman may be seen as more compassionate or more likely to care about education than defense just because she is a woman. Because of their masculine status, male candidates may be considered "tough" on crime. In general, candidates try and live up to voter stereotypes in their advertising. The idea is to confirm rather than contradict what people expect.

The theory of issue ownership suggests that candidates should capitalize on their stereotypes when they advertise, emphasizing the issues on which they are thought to have an advantage and avoiding those issues on which their opponent is thought to have an advantage. Because of this logic, in many campaigns the candidates prefer not to engage in a real dialogue, but instead talk past each other.

## **Responding to the Opponent's Ads**

One of the maxims of political advertising is “when you’re punched, punch back.” But what if your opponent attacks you on an issue on which she enjoys a favorable reputation? If you answer on the same topic, you would fall into a trap – debating your opponent on her terms. So generally, counter-attacks focus on more general themes: “my opponent is using scare tactics,” “she can’t run on her own record so she distorts mine,” etc.

What candidates say in their ad campaigns affects how voters think about the candidates. The issues emphasized in a campaign become the issues voters consider when deciding whom to vote for. That is why candidates often use their ads to try and bait their opponent into a discussion of an issue on which they have a strategic advantage. In 1998, for example, Republican Pete Wilson attacked Kathleen Brown as being soft on crime. Brown responded by citing her own record on crime and by questioning the accuracy of Wilson’s ads. By doing so, Brown initiated a debate about which candidate was tougher on crime. As a woman and a Democrat, this was a debate she was bound to lose.

Wilson ad attacking Brown on crime issue



Another common ploy in the design of political ads is to make the ads newsworthy. Candidates frequently create controversial ads solely to provoke news coverage, with no intention of actually paying to air them anywhere, or perhaps paying to air them only once. By announcing a new attack on their opponent, they achieve free

media coverage of their ads and focus the spotlight on an issue in which they enjoy an advantage. One example of this is the ad announced (but not run) by the Republican National Committee against President Clinton in 1996.

**Controversial Dole Ad**



### **The Campaign Context**

In general, candidates can't just decide out of thin air what a campaign should be about. Instead, they must respond to major events and issues. Candidates must synchronize their message with the events of the day, so that they make themselves credible on the issues that are important at the time of the campaign. After Sept. 11, security and the war on terrorism became the catchwords of every candidate. That is why former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani is seen so often in ads for Republicans, including Bill Simon. You can see examples of Simon's ads featuring Giuliani in the chapter on "The Candidates."

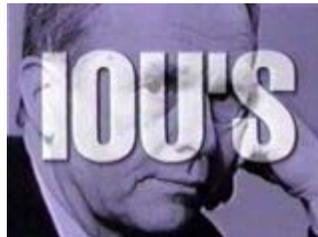
Sometimes candidates may try to take advantage of an especially hot issue and piggyback their campaign onto that issue. This is what the Pete Wilson campaign did in 1998 when they coordinated their advertising with the advocates of Proposition 187 – which cracked down on illegal immigration with measures such as making illegal aliens ineligible for public education and health care services.

**Wilson ad on illegal immigration issue**



Similarly, candidates challenging an incumbent during bad economic times will take advantage of the downturn and use advertising to attack the incumbent's performance on the economy. This is particularly true in the case of executives such as the Governor and the President because voters tend to blame the chief executive rather than the less visible legislature when things go bad.

**Brown ad attacking Wilson on economy**



Today candidates are entirely dependent on the media to reach voters. They rely on the various strategies described above to maximize the impact of their free media (news coverage) and paid media (advertising). The success or failure of their strategies become clear on election day, and often before, as strategy has become a major topic of campaign news and candidates' strategies are analyzed and evaluated by journalists throughout the course of the campaign.

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1 of 4: Clinton



2 of 4: Clinton



3 of 4: Dole



4 of 4: Dole



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