

California Voters' Reaction to Proposed Cuts in the State's Medi-Cal Budget

Survey Questionnaire and Results

prepared for the
California HealthCare Foundation

by
The Field Institute

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(N = 1,052)

What is your impression of the financial condition of state government compared to a year ago? Do you think that financially the state government is better off, about the same or worse off than it was last year?

BETTER OFF	7%
ABOUT THE SAME.....	29
WORSE OFF	58
NO OPINION	6

On the whole, do you feel that the level of state and local taxes that the average citizen like yourself pays is much too high, somewhat high, about right, or low?

MUCH TOO HIGH	32%
SOMEWHAT HIGH	30
ABOUT RIGHT.....	34
LOW	2
NO OPINION	2

As you may know, Governor Davis and the state legislature are trying to deal with a large state budget deficit. How serious do you think the state's current budget deficit situation is – very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious, or not at all serious?

VERY SERIOUS.....	49%
SOMEWHAT SERIOUS	39
NOT TOO SERIOUS	7
NOT AT ALL SERIOUS	1
NO OPINION	4

Do you think that the state's budget deficit can be resolved this year without having to raise taxes or do you think that taxes will have to be raised?

RESOLVED WITHOUT RAISING TAXES	39%
TAXES WILL HAVE TO BE RAISED	49
DON'T KNOW	12

As a way to reduce the deficit, the Governor and the state legislature are proposing to make cuts to various areas of state government spending. I am going to read some of these and for each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose making cuts to this area of state spending. **(READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:)** Do you favor or oppose making cuts to this area in order to reduce the state budget deficit?

	<u>FAVOR</u>	<u>OPPOSE</u>	<u>NO OPINION</u>
[] a. higher education, including the state's public universities, colleges and community colleges	32%	66	2
[] b. the public schools.....	20%	78	2
[] c. law enforcement and police	23%	74	3
[] d. state prisons and correctional facilities	46%	49	5
[] e. state road and highway building and repair	37%	59	4
[] f. state parks and recreational facilities.....	41%	55	4
[] g. state energy contracts that help supply California with electricity	43%	47	10
[] h. health care programs for low income Californians and the disabled	21%	76	3
[] i. mental health programs	25%	72	3
[] j. public transportation	34%	62	4
[] k. environmental regulation.....	40%	55	5
[] l. child care programs.....	25%	70	5
[] m. water storage and supply facilities.....	27%	65	8

I am going to read some statements that have to do with providing medical care to low income Californians and the disabled under the state's Medi-Cal program. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree. **(READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:)** Do you agree or disagree?

		AGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION
[] a.	Government should provide basic <u>medical</u> coverage to low income or disabled <u>adults</u> who can not afford health insurance	76%	20	4
[] b.	Government should provide basic <u>medical</u> coverage to the <u>children</u> of low income families who can not afford health insurance	84%	13	3
[] c.	Government should provide basic <u>dental</u> coverage to low income or disabled <u>adults</u> who can not afford dental insurance.....	66%	31	3
[] d.	Government should provide basic <u>dental</u> coverage to the <u>children</u> of low income families who can not afford dental insurance	78%	19	3

As a way to reduce the deficit, the Governor and the state legislature are considering several proposals to reduce the amount of money the state spends in providing medical care to low income Californians and the disabled. I am going to read some of these proposals and for each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it. **(READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:)** Do you favor or oppose this proposal as a way to reduce the state budget deficit?

		FAVOR	OPPOSE	NO OPINION
[] a.	eliminate some health benefits now available to low income families and disabled persons such as dental services	30%	64	6
[] b.	make fewer low income families eligible to receive medical coverage under Medi-Cal by tightening income requirements	53%	41	6

California now ranks 42nd among the 50 states in how much it pays doctors to treat low income families and the disabled for health services covered under Medi-Cal, and nearly half of doctors choose not to treat such patients. Another proposal being considered by the legislature to reduce the state's budget deficit is to reduce the payments made to doctors and hospitals who treat low income families and the disabled under Medi-Cal. Do you favor or oppose this proposal?

FAVOR	29%
OPPOSE	62
NO OPINION	7

The Governor has proposed cutting over 1 point 4 billion dollars from the state budget in medical care services currently provided to low income families and the disabled under the state's Medi-Cal program. To avoid these cutbacks, it may be necessary to increase taxes. I am going to read some things that could be considered. For each, please tell me whether you favor or oppose it as a way to avoid making major cutbacks in medical care services to low income Californians and the disabled. **(READ ITEMS IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:)** Do you favor or oppose this as a way to avoid major cutbacks in medical care services to low income Californians and the disabled?

		FAVOR	OPPOSE	NO OPINION
[] a.	Temporarily increase the top state personal income tax rate for individuals earning more than \$37,000 and for couples earning more than \$75,000 after deductions.....	34%	63	3
[] b.	Cancel the scheduled cuts in registration fees on motor vehicles, returning them to their former levels.....	53%	42	5
[] c.	Temporarily increase state sales taxes by 1%	40%	59	1
[] d.	Increase state taxes on beer, wine and alcohol by 5 cents per serving	78%	21	1
[] e.	Increase state taxes on cigarettes by 50 cents per pack	74%	25	1
[] f.	Temporarily increase state gasoline taxes by 5 cents per gallon	28%	70	2
[] g.	Temporarily increase state business income taxes	45%	50	5
[] h.	Temporarily increase the top state personal income tax rate for individuals earning more than \$130,000 and for couples earning more than \$260,000 after deductions	68%	30	2

Do you have any kind of health care coverage, including health insurance, prepaid plans such as HMOs (IF NEEDED, SAY: health maintenance organizations) like Kaiser or government plans such as Medicare or Medi-Cal?

YES.....90%
 NO8
 DON'T KNOW/NOT SURE2
 REFUSED.....*

IF YES ASK:

Which of the following best describes from whom you receive your health care coverage – (READ LIST BELOW)? (PROBE) Are you covered for health insurance through any other source? (IF AGE 65 OR OLDER, SAY:) Please do not count any Medigap or long-term care health plans that you may have purchased separately. (ANSWER CAN BE A MULTIPLE)

IF NO, DK OR REF, ASK:

There are some types of coverage you may not have considered. Do you have health insurance coverage through any of the following ... (READ LIST BELOW)?

Your current or former employer, business, union or trade association46%
 Someone else's current or former employer, union or trade association18
 A plan that you or someone else buys on your own12
 Medicare13
 Medi-Cal (IF NEEDED, SAY: or Medicaid)5
 The military, CHAMPUS, Tri-care, or the VA (IF NEEDED, SAY: or CHAMP-VA)4
 Some other source (SPECIFY)*
 None.....8
 Don't know2
 Refused.....*

IF UNINSURED, ASK:

(N=90)

Did you have health insurance coverage at any time during the past two years?

YES.....49%
 NO50
 DON'T KNOW1

IF INSURED, DON'T KNOW, OR REFUSED, ASK:

(N=962)

Was there any time in the past two years when you were completely without any health plan or medical insurance coverage?

YES.....14%
 NO86
 NO ANSWER.....*

How concerned are you that there could be a time in the near future when you or someone close to you will be without health insurance – very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

VERY CONCERNED.....35%
 SOMEWHAT CONCERNED26
 NOT TOO CONCERNED16
 NOT AT ALL CONCERNED.....23
 NO OPINION.....*

Is there someone close to you, for whom you feel financially responsible, who has been without health insurance at any time in the past two years?

YES.....26%
 NO73
 NO ANSWER.....1

* Less than 1/2 of 1%