

WHO'S WHO?

in California Politics



IMPORTANT ELECTION DATES

ELECTION DAY Tuesday, November 8, 2016

Last Day to Register to Vote (electronically or mail post-mark): **Monday, October 24, 2016**

EARLY VOTING

- First Day: **October 10, 2016**
- Last Day: **November 7, 2016**

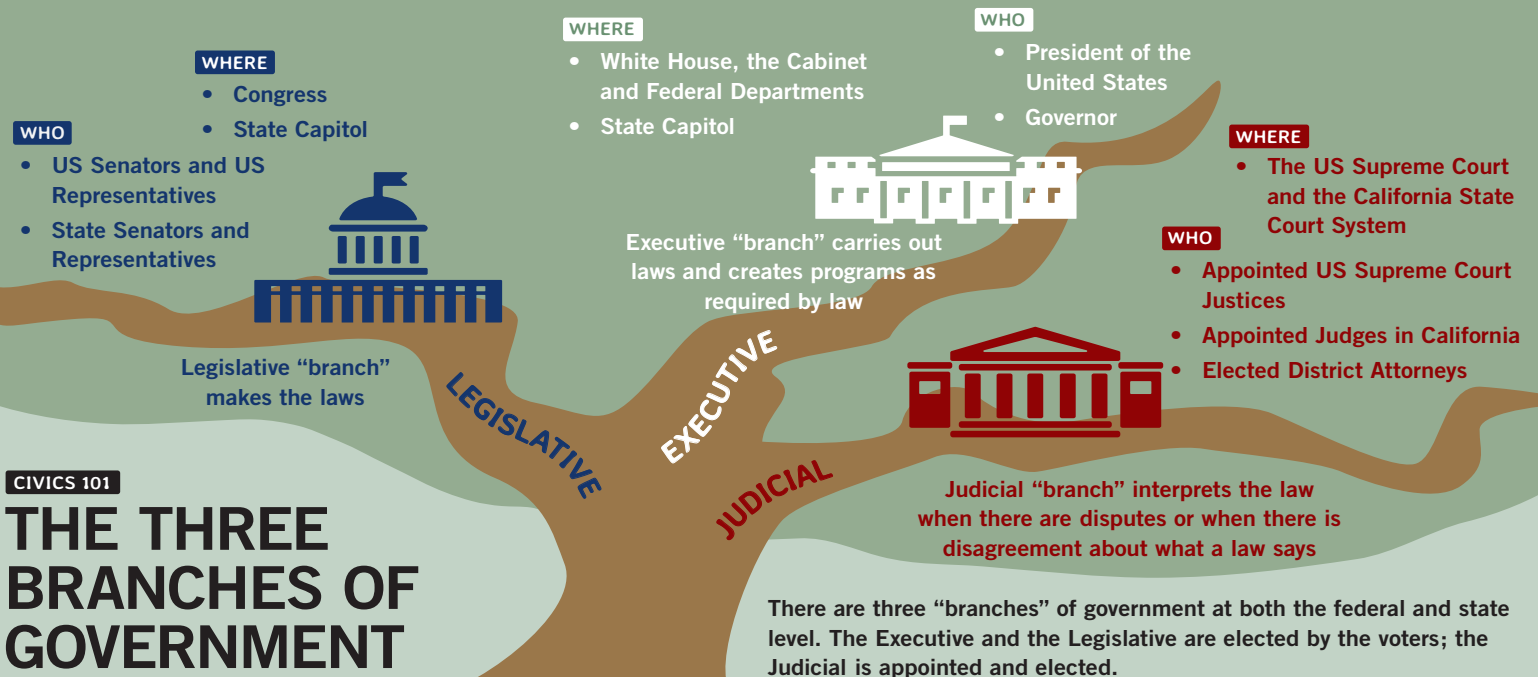
ABSENTEE VOTING (Vote-by-Mail): The last day to apply for an absentee ballot is Tuesday, November 1, 2016. If you have questions about voting early, please call **1-866-OUR-VOTE** or visit: www.866ourvote.org

Voting is a public way of saying, "Our families count, and our voices matter!"

Civic participation means getting everyday folks involved in the decisions that affect our families and communities. Election season is an especially important time for us to speak up, and there are many ways we can all get involved in the process, regardless of our citizenship status or whether we can vote.

Elections matter because elected leaders can make decisions that can either help or hurt our families. Politicians pay more attention to communities who participate in elections. Voting is a public way of saying, "Our families count, and our voices matter!"

To make it easier to vote, Californians can vote on Election Day, before Election Day at early voting locations, or by mail by requesting a vote-by-mail absentee ballot to be mailed to your home. You can choose to vote early or by mail for any reason.



FEDERAL ELECTED POSITIONS

US PRESIDENT

Heads the executive branch of the federal government. Serves for four years with a two-term (eight years) maximum.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Nominates the heads of all executive departments and federal agencies, including Department of Homeland Security.
- Proposes the federal budget for approval by Congress.
- Has the power to veto (reject) bills passed by Congress; Congress can overturn a veto with a two-thirds majority vote.
- Serves as the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces.
- Nominates federal judges and Supreme Court justices.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



The President sets enforcement priorities for immigration laws. For decades, presidents of both parties have deferred the deportation of millions of people who entered the country without documentation.



Recommends funding levels for programs such as childcare, health-care, and domestic violence services.



Nominates lifetime appointments of federal judges and justices, who rule on issues such as equal rights and privacy.

US CONGRESS • Congress is made up of two separate bodies: The US House of Representatives and the US Senate. Together they form the legislative (law-making) branch of the Federal Government. There are no limits on the number of terms that a member of Congress can serve.

US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

There are 435 members of the US House of Representatives. All seats in the House are up for re-election every two years. The number of representatives from each state is based on population. Currently California has 53 representatives.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Makes and passes federal laws.
- Decides the budget for federal programs.
- Determines federal tax guidelines.
- Can propose changes to the Constitution.
- Has the power to declare war

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU



Decides whether to expand or cut funding for programs such as Head Start, Medi-Cal, Cash Assistance, Social Security, relief for victims of natural disasters, military spending, childcare, healthcare and domestic violence services.



Creates federal laws governing immigration, healthcare, education, criminal justice, student loan interest rates, and labor and environmental protections.

US SENATE

There are 100 members of the US Senate. Each state elects two senators in a statewide election for six-year terms. Senate races are staggered so that only one senator in a state is up for election at a time.

- *In addition, the Senate approves the President's appointments to important positions, including the US Supreme Court and the Cabinet (the board that advises the President made of the heads from key departments).*

WHAT TO BRING TO VOTE

In California, voters are not generally required to present photo identification at the polls, however in some cases new voters may be asked to show some form of identification

CAN I VOTE?

You must be 18 and a US citizen to vote. You must also be a resident of the county where you submit the application.

- If you were convicted of a misdemeanor, you can vote.
- In California, voting rights are restored to a person convicted of a felony or on parole immediately after completion of prison and parole time.

As of January 1, 2017: Voting rights will be restored to persons convicted of a felony serving time in county jails, as well as persons on probation or under supervision.



WHAT IF I CAN'T VOTE?

Regardless of your voting status, you can still make a difference!

- Encourage and educate people who can vote.
- Share this guide at your place of worship or with your neighbors.
- Write letters to your local paper about issues you care about.
- Volunteer with your local Registrar of Voters or community-based organization to support voter engagement and education.

CALIFORNIA ELECTED POSITIONS

CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATURE • The California legislature is divided into two parts: the California State Senate and the California State Assembly. Proposed laws must be approved by both bodies and signed by the Governor to become law.




CALIFORNIA STATE SENATE

The state is divided into 40 Senate districts and each district elects one senator. State Senate seats are up for election every four years, with a two-term limit (eight years). If elected after June 2012, the limit is three-terms (twelve years).

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Initiates state laws in areas such as state taxes, business regulation, education, childcare, and conservation of natural resources.
- Shares budget-making responsibilities with the Governor.
- Can override a veto by the Governor with a two-thirds majority vote in the legislature.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

-  Decides how much of the state budget should support public schools, higher education, or the health insurance program for low-income children.
-  Can propose to expand Medi-Cal, allowing low-income people to receive federal subsidies for health insurance.
-  Can propose laws to limit or expand access to healthcare, including reproductive healthcare; the minimum wage; equal pay; and discrimination.

CALIFORNIA STATE ASSEMBLY

The state has 80 Assembly districts. Each district elects one Representative. All Assembly seats are up for election every two years, with a three-term limit (six years). If elected after June 2012, the limit is six-terms (twelve years).

LOCAL ELECTED POSITIONS




LOCAL CITY COUNCIL

City council members are usually elected by residents living in specific “districts,” or are elected “at large” by voters in the entire city. In some cities, this body is called the Board of Supervisors.

KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

- Creates city policies and ordinances.
- Sets city taxes and manages the city budget.
- Oversees all construction and improvement projects in the city.
- Works with the mayor and city staff to develop city’s strategic plan.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

-  Can provide financial support to community services, which may support low-income women and families.
-  Can hire or supervise police chief, who then determines what training new police officers receive.
-  Passes local laws that affect housing options, such as affordable, low-income housing, renter protections, and worker issues such as minimum wage.


LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD


KEY RESPONSIBILITIES


WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 1,025 California school districts, and each one has a locally elected school board.

- Adopts policies to guide the school district.
- Approves the annual school budget.
- Serves as the public voice in the school system.

 Must include parent and student input on local school budget issues, including non-academic programs and support. Approves overall budget that each school receives.

 Approves curriculum on all subjects and school staffing including principals, teachers, and counselors.

 Determines policies on student discipline, harassment, and how school environment impacts learning.


COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION


KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

There are 58 county offices of education.

- Responsible for reviewing and approving school district budgets and expenses.
- Calls school district elections.
- Provides or helps create/develop new curricula, staff development and training programs, and instructional procedure.

 Approves school district budgets and expenses.

 Responsible for making sure that districts have adequate textbooks, facilities and qualified teachers.

2016 BALLOT MEASURES

In California, both the State Legislature and voters may introduce legislation or refer any constitutional amendment to a vote of the people. Because they often have confusing language, it can be hard to tell what you are voting for or against. We want to highlight two important measures for our families:

MEASURE

WHAT IT WOULD DO

IMPACT

PROPOSITION 55

Extends the tax on CA's wealthiest until 2030. All revenues go directly to K-12 schools and community colleges.

Extends funding for teacher salaries, school programs and fewer students per classroom.

PROPOSITION 57

Youth must have a hearing in juvenile court. Early release, additional credits for good behavior and rehabilitative/educational achievements could be awarded to certain state inmates.

Judges have flexibility to decide if youth are tried in juvenile courts or as adults. Early release for some individuals who earn credits.



CALIFORNIANS FOR JUSTICE

ensures that students have the opportunity to grow as leaders by working with them to win campaigns so that every school and community can thrive. www.caljustice.org

OUR FAMILY COALITION

advances equity for LGBTQ families through direct support, education, and advocacy. www.ourfamily.org

CFJ and OFC are part of **STRONG FAMILIES**, a national initiative to change how we think, feel, act, and make policy about families. Strong Families is a project of **FORWARD TOGETHER**.

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