

How Can California Modernize Voter Education & Outreach: *Lessons Learned From New Media Pioneers*

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About the California Voter Participation Survey

- Year-long research project
- Funded with a grant from The James Irvine Foundation
- Goal of the survey: facilitate greater awareness of California voter participation barriers and incentives
- Findings were issued in April 2005
- available online in HTML and PDF formats

California Voter Participation Survey



A report by the
California Voter Foundation

www.calvoter.org

<http://www.calvoter.org/issues/votereng/votpart/index.html>

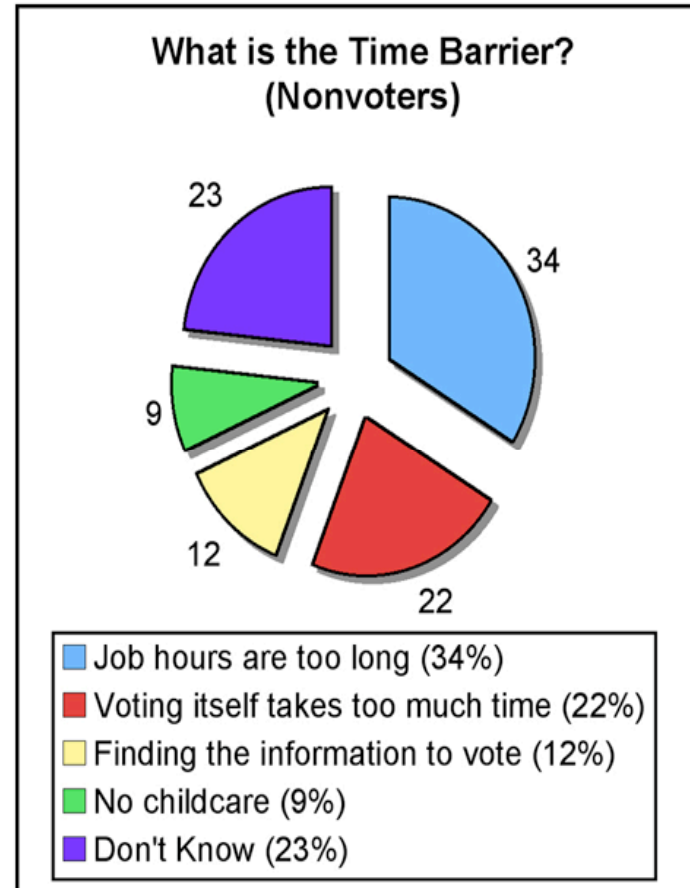
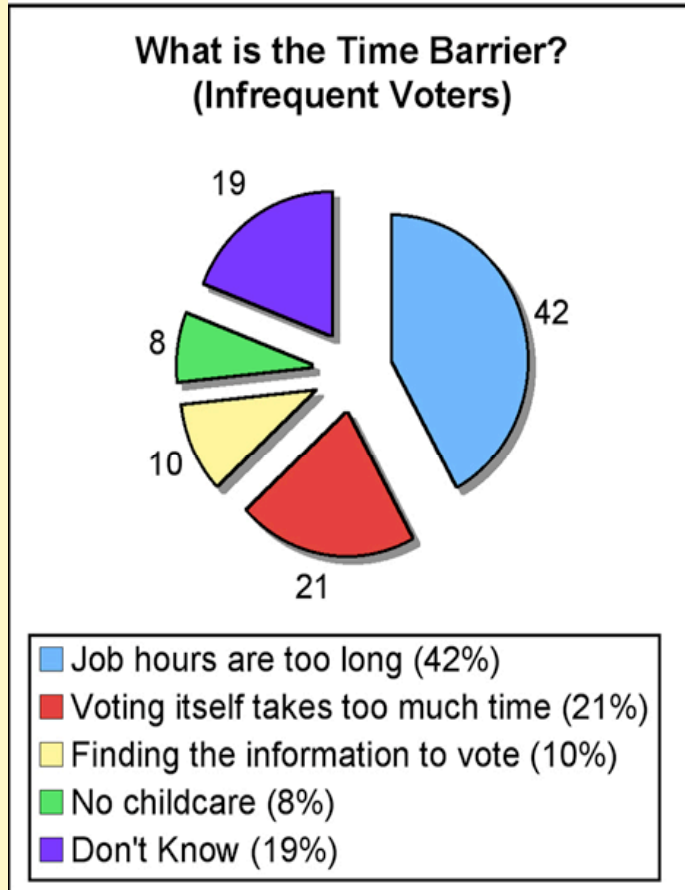
Survey Methodology

- The survey was conducted in Summer 2004
- Two samples:
 - 1,000 infrequent California voters (registered voters who have voted in zero or one of the last four statewide elections.)
 - 1,000 California nonvoters
- Each sample has a margin of error of 3.1 percent.
- The survey was conducted in English, Spanish, and Cantonese.

Top Five Reasons People Don't Vote

	Infrequent Voters		Nonvoters	
	Agree	Disagree	Agree	Disagree
Politics are controlled by special interests	66	28	69	23
I don't feel that candidates really speak to me	49	48	55	37
It is too hard to sift through all the information available to make good decisions on how to vote	45	54	52	42
I am too busy with work or my family	43	56	46	52
The issues are too confusing	42	57	48	48

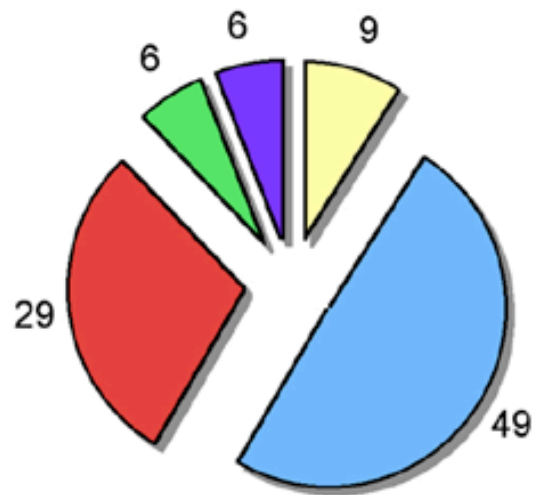
The Time Barrier



- **Work hours:** 52 percent of infrequent voters and nonvoters work more than 40 hours per week
- 16 percent of infrequent voters and 15 percent of nonvoters work more than 50 hours per week.

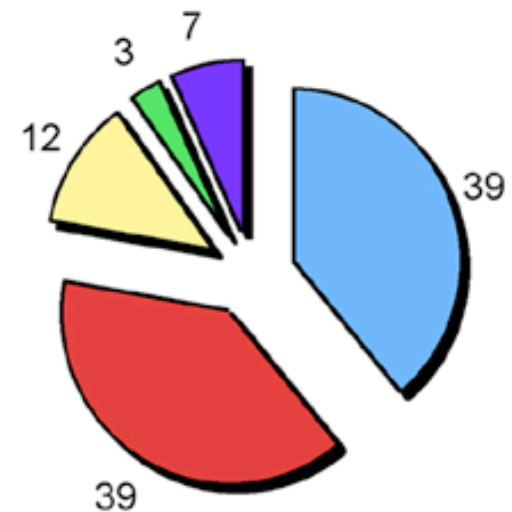
The Information Barrier

What is the Information Problem?
(All Infrequent Voters)



- Hard to Understand (49%)
- Untrustworthy (29%)
- Unavailable (9%)
- Other (6%)
- Don't Know (6%)

What is the Information Problem?
(Nonvoters)



- Hard to Understand (39%)
- Untrustworthy (39%)
- Unavailable (12%)
- Other (3%)
- Don't Know (7%)

Sources of Information and Influence

Infrequent voters find local newspapers and conversations with family to be the most influential information sources in helping them make voting decisions when they do vote.

Friends are also an important source of information.

The following sources are viewed as the most influential among infrequent voters:

- Local newspaper: 65 percent
- Conversations with family: 65 percent
- Network TV news: 64 percent
- Cable TV news: 60 percent
- Conversations with friends: 59 percent

Attitudes about Registering to Vote

Registering to Vote (Nonvoters)			
	Agree	Disagree	Don't Know
I know where to find voter registration forms	68	29	3
I have been registered before, but not at my current address.	44	53	3
I have filled out a voter registration form	30	66	4
I don't want to register because I don't want to get called for jury duty	24	73	3
I move around so frequently that it is difficult to stay registered	24	74	2
I don't want to register because I want my information to be private	23	74	3
I thought I was registered through the DMV	18	76	6

Most Important Reason to Vote

The two most important reasons for voting among infrequent voters are “to make your voice heard/ express your opinion” (43 percent) and “to support a particular candidate” (24 percent). These two reasons also rated highest among nonvoters (32 percent and 19 percent, respectively).

	Infrequent voters	Nonvoters
Make your voice heard / express your opinion	43	32
To support a particular candidate	24	19
Civic duty	9	9
To support a particular ballot issue	6	5
Can't complain unless you vote	5	10
Something on ballot affects my family	3	2
People struggled for the right to vote	3	4
To oppose a particular candidate	2	3
Pressure from family & friends	1	1
Something on ballot affects pocketbook	1	2
To oppose a particular ballot issue	*	1
As long as people don't vote, government will be controlled by corporations/special interests	*	1

**Less than one percent*

Voting Attitudes & Experiences

Absentee voting:

More than half of infrequent voters are not familiar with absentee voting. 50 percent said they had never voted absentee, and 2 percent said they didn't know whether absentee voting was easy or difficult.

Friends and family:

Among infrequent voters, about two-thirds say their friends vote in most or all elections; among nonvoters, only half say their friends vote.

40 percent of infrequent voters and 51 percent of nonvoters grew up in families that do not discuss political issues and candidates. Latino, African American and API nonvoters were less likely to live in a pro-voting culture than nonvoters generally.

Among Spanish-speaking infrequent voters, two-thirds say their friends hardly ever talk about politics.

Get-Out-The-Vote Messages

“Voting is an important part of being a good citizen”

Resonates strongly with infrequent voters. 76 percent said they strongly agree with this statement; overall, 93 percent agree.

This was especially true of Asian Pacific Islander (API) and Latino infrequent and nonvoters, indicating that potential voters who are immigrants or whose families immigrated are more responsive to citizenship as a motivating factor in voting.

“Voting is an important way to voice your opinions on issues that affect your family and your community”

Resonates strongly with both infrequent voters and nonvoters. 93 percent of infrequent voters agreed with this statement, with 74 percent saying they strongly agree.

Among nonvoters, 81 percent agreed, with 55 percent saying they strongly agree.

Strategies for Improving California Voter Participation

1. *Increase awareness about the availability of absentee voting*
2. *Educate employers and employees about taking time off from work to vote*
3. *Develop and promote social and personal networking strategies*
4. *Review the Department of Motor Vehicles' handling of voter registration data*
5. *Review the U.S. Postal Service's handling of election-related materials*
6. *Review and publicize jury pool selection practices*
7. *Improve voter data privacy*

Election House Parties



The Commonwealth Club of California's

VOICES OF REFORM PROJECT

*Promoting State Governance that is Responsive,
Representative and Fiscally Sound*

- ★ ABOUT
- ★ EDITORIAL BOARD PARTNERSHIP
- ★ ON THE ISSUES
- ★ AUDIO AND TEXT ARCHIVE
- ★ REGISTER TO VOTE
- ★ HOUSE PARTIES

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WHAT'S GOING ON NOW?

01/09/07
Gov. Schwarzenegger
reaffirmed his continued



HOST A HOUSE PARTY FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION THIS NOVEMBER 7TH

What is an Election House Party?

An Election House Party means inviting friends, neighbors, or colleagues to discuss information on candidates or ballot measures prior to voting. House Parties don't need to cost the host more than a bag of chips to pass around, gatherings can be of any size, and they are a fun way to prepare to vote!

Election House Parties provide an opportunity for people to seek an honest and accurate understanding of what they will be voting on. Discussing what you've heard and read with others is often a great way to gain a fuller picture of the issues. Particularly in the case of ballot measures that are complex, poorly drafted, or even intentionally misleading, it is critical for people to know what they are being asked before arriving at the polls or completing an absentee ballot.

[Election House Party Home](#)

[Host Your Own House Party](#)

[Election/Ballot Information](#)

[House Party Guide \[pdf\]](#)

[Guía para la reunión \[pdf\]](#)

[One Page Flyer \[pdf\]](#)

[Folleto de una página \[pdf\]](#)

<http://www.voicesofreform.org/houseparty/>

The Proposition Song

You Tube Hello, [kim](#)
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The Proposition Song



**Oh, there once was a proposition,
its number was One-A**

00:14 / 02:45

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Voter Resources

The California Voter Foundation has been developing innovative voter education materials for voters and providing Californians with nonpartisan election and government resources since 1994. Follow the links below to get to all of CVF's current and archived voter and civic education resources.

[Elections](#)

Current and archived *California Online Voter Guide*, local ballot measures, and other election-related materials.



[California Map Series](#)

CVF's Map Series is made possible by a grant from the James Irvine Foundation and features regional, county and political district maps.

[Voting FAQ](#)

Information on registering to vote, voting absentee, and locating your districts or polling place.

[California Government](#)

This section features basic information about federal, state and local government in California, and a collection of links to additional online resources.

[California Politics & Policy](#)

Visit this section for directories of California political parties, interest groups, news media organizations, and polling and research resources.

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