



NEWS MEDIA CONTACT

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MEDIA RELEASE

Student Survey Assesses Support for State Budget Process

UC Riverside undergraduates find that California voters favor the initiative process and two-thirds requirement for deciding budgets, but oppose teacher layoffs.

(May 29, 2009)

RIVERSIDE, Calif. – California voters favor retaining the two-thirds supermajority requirement for passing budgets and using the initiative process to decide budget matters, a May survey by political science students at the University of California, Riverside has found.

Voters oppose laying off teachers to solve the budget crisis, however, and blame the Legislature more than Gov. Schwarzenegger for the current deficit, according to the survey.

“The survey is a general assessment of the political climate of California based on fiscal issues,” said David Crow, associate director of UCR’s Survey Research Center. “It also gave our students a chance to study survey research methods through experiential learning.”

Undergraduate students in the political science class, “Mass Media and Public Opinion,” interviewed a sample of registered California voters between May 11 and May 24. There were 276 respondents, with a margin of error of +/-5.9% at a confidence level of 95 percent. Despite the relatively low number of respondents, the differences reported are so great that they remain statistically significant, said Crow, who teaches the class. The course covers all aspects of survey design, including sample selection, questionnaire development, data collection, data analysis, and statistical hypothesis testing.

Among the survey’s findings:

- **Voters favor a two-thirds vote to pass the state budget.**

In spite of legislative gridlock over this year’s budget, California voters overwhelmingly favor retaining the two-thirds supermajority requirement for passing budgets. 56.9 percent of registered California voters favored the two-thirds requirement, 23.9 percent favored lowering the threshold to a simple majority, and 15 percent gave another answer or did not know. Survey respondents with a college education favored keeping the two-thirds supermajority requirement more than did their less-educated counterparts (94 percent compared to 77 percent).

- **Voters favor propositions to decide budget matters.**

Registered California voters overwhelmingly favor retaining the right to decide on budget matters via the citizen initiative process by more than a 2-to-1 margin. 58.3 percent said they feel people should be allowed to vote on propositions concerning budget matters, as opposed to 26.4 percent who felt budgeting should be left exclusively to the Legislature. The remainder did not know or gave another answer to the question. Of the 93 Republicans who answered the question substantively, 76 percent said they favored using citizen initiatives for budgeting, compared to just 62 percent of the 103 self-identified Democrats who answered the question. Fewer highly educated voters (60 percent) supported citizen initiatives than did less-educated voters (79 percent).

- **Legislature blamed for budget deficit.**

Of California registered voters, 43.5 percent blame the Legislature more for the budget deficit, 41.7 percent blame the Legislature and the governor equally, and just 5.8 percent say the governor is more at fault. 9 percent did not know or gave another answer. Voters also apportioned blame across the predictable fault line of party preference, Crow said. Of registered Democrats, 33.9 percent blamed the Democratic-controlled Legislature for the deficit (compared to 57.7 percent of registered Republicans), whereas 47 percent divided blame equally between the Legislature and the governor (compared to 35.6 percent of Republicans).

Though voters give low marks to both Gov. Schwarzenegger and legislators, they approve of the job the governor is doing more than they do the Legislature. On a scale of 1 to 10, Gov. Schwarzenegger garnered a 4.1 approval rating, compared to 2.9 for the Legislature. Though Democrats gave the Legislature higher marks (3.4 approval on a 1-to-10 scale) than Republicans (2.2 average approval), there were no significant differences between adherents of the two parties in evaluating the governor's performance.

- **Californians oppose teacher layoffs.**

Half of the survey respondents (50.7 percent) believed that teacher layoffs should be avoided to solve the budget crisis by making cuts elsewhere, and 35.1 percent said layoffs were unfortunate but necessary. 14.1 percent did not know or gave another answer. Support for teachers crossed party, income, education, and gender lines, with Democrats and Republicans, high-income and low-income, highly educated and lesser-educated, and men and women evidencing equal levels of support for teachers.

“In spite of the tough times in California, voters remain committed to these state institutions – notably direct citizen involvement in the state budget decision-making and the legislative supermajority for passing the state budgets,” said Martin Johnson, faculty director of the UCR Survey Research Center and associate professor of political science.

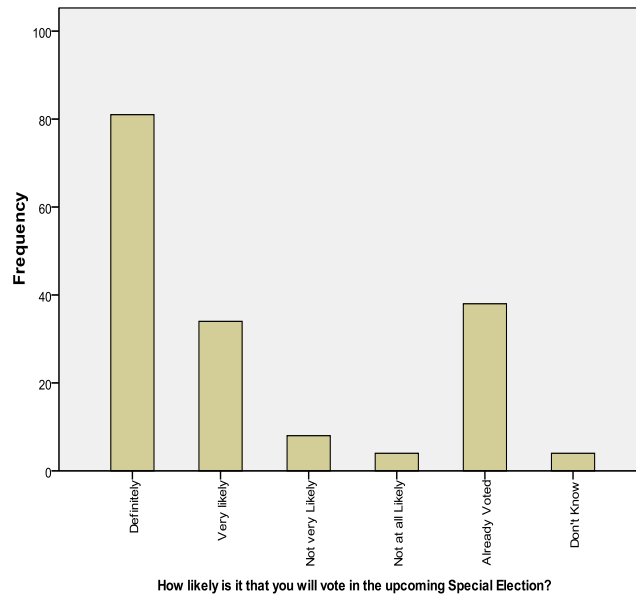
The UCR Survey Research Center is part of the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. The center conducts applied and theory-driven research. It maintains a state-of-the-art Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing facility for telephone and Internet-based survey research. The center also recently worked with students in “Methods of Sociological Inquiry” taught by Vanesa Estrada, assistant professor of sociology, to conduct a telephone survey of Riverside County residents about local policy issues.

**UCR Survey Research Center Report
California Voter Survey
May 11-24, 2009**

Undergraduate students in the Political Science 146 class, “Mass Media and Public Opinion,” interviewed a sample of registered California voters between May 11 and May 24. There were 276 respondents, with a margin of error of +/-5.9% at a confidence level of 95 percent. Despite the relatively low number of respondents, the differences reported – particularly for opinions about the ballot initiatives and state political institutions – are so great that they remain statistically significant.

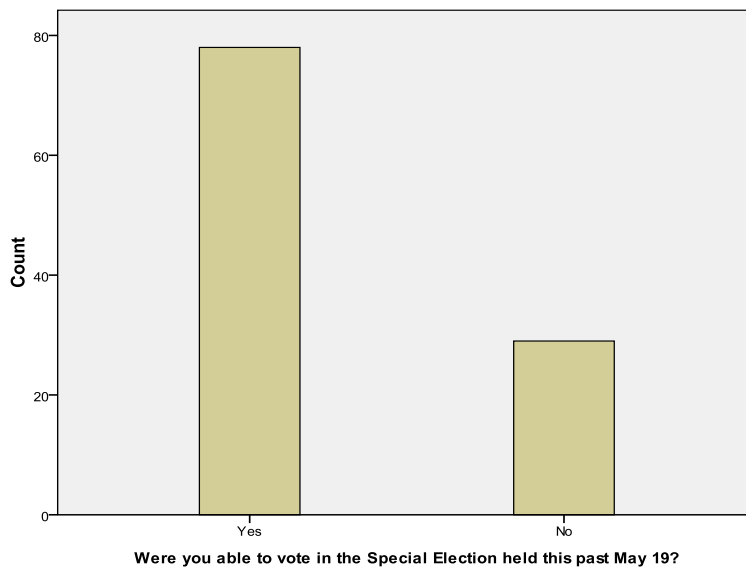
Q1 (pre-election). How likely is it that you will vote in the upcoming Special Election?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Definitely	81	29.3	47.9
Very likely	34	12.3	20.1
Not very Likely	8	2.9	4.7
Not at all Likely	4	1.4	2.4
Already Voted	38	13.8	22.5
Don't Know	4	1.4	2.4
Total Valid	169	61.2	100.0
Missing	107	38.8	
Total	276	100.0	



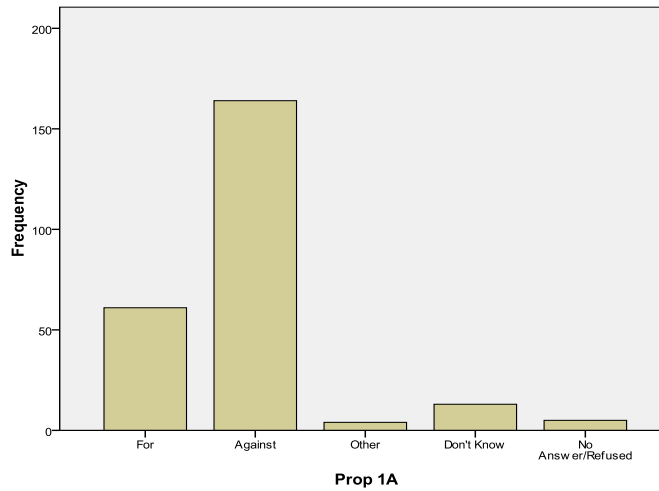
Q1 (post-election). Were you able to vote in the Special Election held this past May 19?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Yes	78	28.3	72.9
No	29	10.5	27.1
Total Valid	107	38.8	100.0
Missing	169	61.2	
Total	276	100.0	



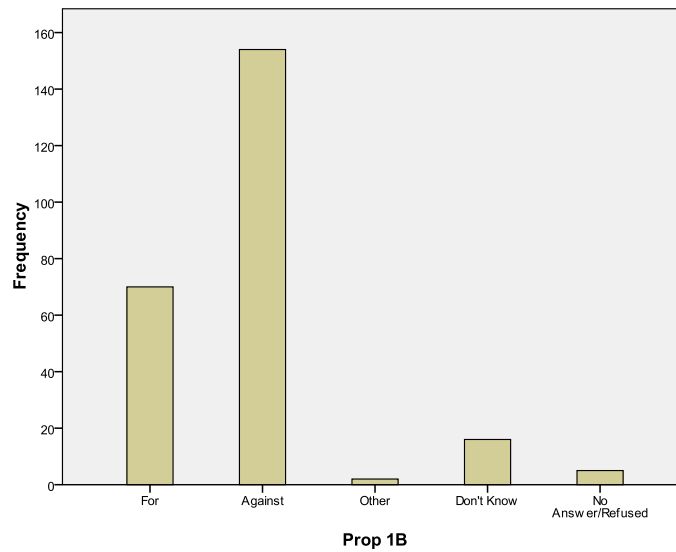
Q2. Proposition 1A sets aside money for a "rainy day" fund. People in favor of Prop 1A say it will protect against future deficits and help pay for important government services. People against it say it will raise taxes without imposing controls on government spending. *Would you/ did you vote for or against Proposition 1A, which sets aside money for a "rainy day" fund?*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	61	22.1	24.7
Against	164	59.4	66.4
Other	4	1.4	1.6
Don't Know	13	4.7	5.3
No Answer/Refused	5	1.8	2.0
Total Valid	247	89.5	100.0
Missing	29	10.5	
Total	276	100.0	



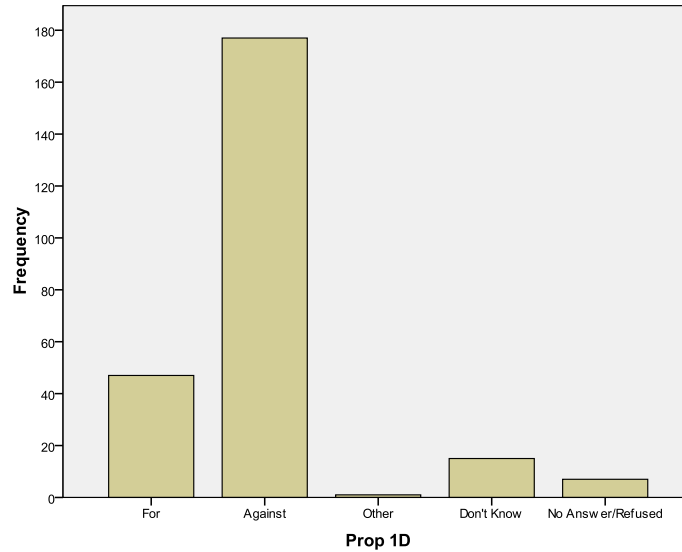
Q3. Proposition 1B would divert money currently budgeted for other services to schools and community colleges. People in favor of Prop 1B say it is necessary to avoid education budget cuts and teacher layoffs. People against Prop 1B say it would take money from other services. *Would you/did you vote for or against Proposition 1B?*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	70	25.4	28.3
Against	154	55.8	62.3
Other	2	.7	.8
Don't Know	16	5.8	6.5
No Answer/Refused	5	1.8	2.0
Total Valid	247	89.5	100.0
Missing	29	10.5	
Total	276	100.0	



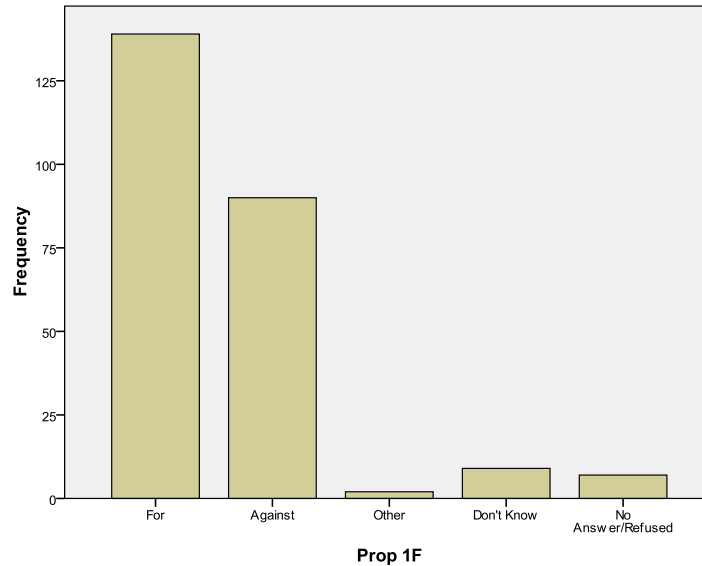
Q4. Proposition 1D transfers around \$600 million dollars out of the California Children and Families Program into the State General Fund. People in favor of Prop 1D say shifting money is necessary to reduce the budget deficit without hurting children's services. People against Prop 1D say it will take money away from vital children's programs. *Would you/Did you vote for or against Proposition 1D?*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	47	17.0	19.0
Against	177	64.1	71.7
Other	1	.4	.4
Don't Know	15	5.4	6.1
No Answer/Refused	7	2.5	2.8
Total Valid	247	89.5	100.0
Missing	29	10.5	
Total	276	100.0	



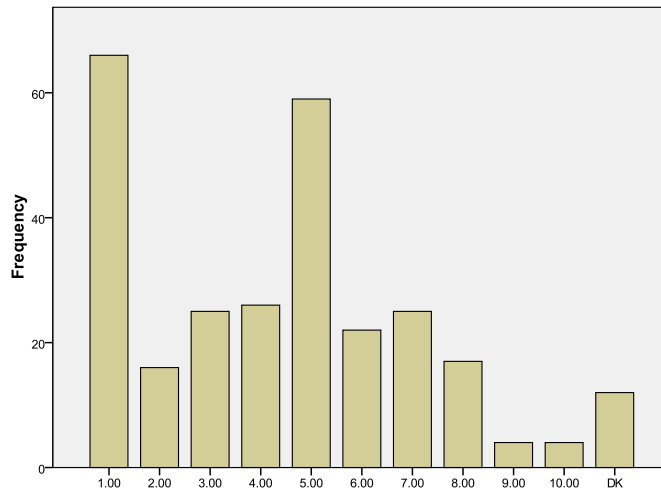
Q5. Proposition 1F prevents legislators, the governor, and other statewide officials from receiving pay raises in deficit years. People in favor of Prop 1F say pay raises for politicians in deficit years are fiscally irresponsible and undeserved. People against Prop 1F say that it won't fix the problem and will punish some officials who have nothing to do with the budget deficit. Would you/did you vote for or against Proposition 1F?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	139	50.4	56.3
Against	90	32.6	36.4
Other	2	.7	.8
Don't Know	9	3.3	3.6
No Answer/Refused	7	2.5	2.8
Total	247	89.5	100.0
Missing	29	10.5	
Total	276	100.0	



Q6. On a scale of 1 to 10, where "1" is "totally disapprove" and 10 is "totally approve", how much do you approve of the job Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as governor?

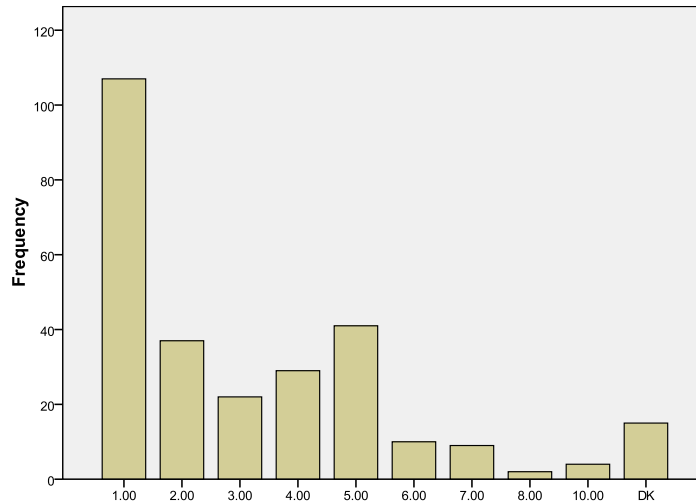
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.00	66	23.9	23.9
2.00	16	5.8	5.8
3.00	25	9.1	9.1
4.00	26	9.4	9.4
5.00	59	21.4	21.4
6.00	22	8.0	8.0
7.00	25	9.1	9.1
8.00	17	6.2	6.2
9.00	4	1.4	1.4
10.00	4	1.4	1.4
DK/Refused	12	4.3	4.3
Total	276	100.0	100.0



On a scale of 1 to 10, (1 = totally disapprove, 10=totally approve), how much do you approve of the job Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as governor?

Q7. On a scale of 1 to 10, where again "1" is "totally disapprove" and 10 is "totally approve", how much do you approve of the job the California state Legislature is doing?

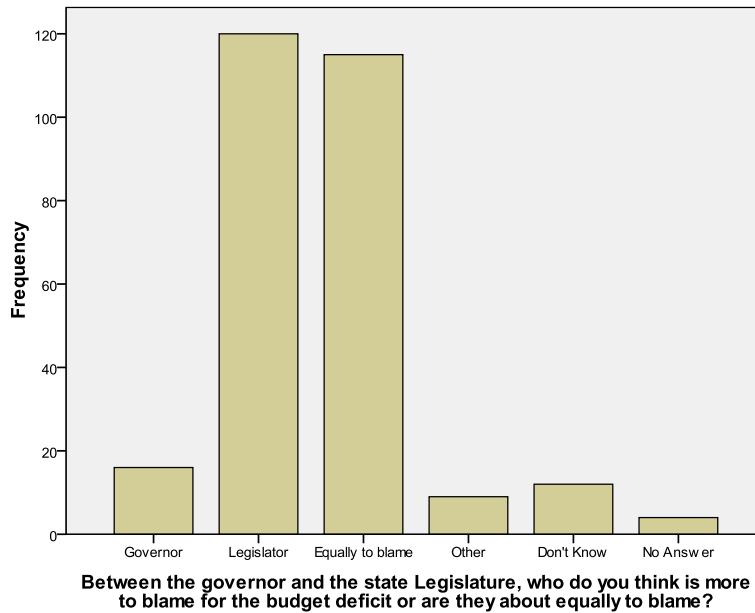
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
1.00	107	38.8	38.8
2.00	37	13.4	13.4
3.00	22	8.0	8.0
4.00	29	10.5	10.5
5.00	41	14.9	14.9
6.00	10	3.6	3.6
7.00	9	3.3	3.3
8.00	2	.7	.7
10.00	4	1.4	1.4
DK/ Refused	15	5.4	5.4
Total	276	100.0	100.0



And on a scale of 1 to 10,
(1= totally disapprove, 10 = totally approve) how much do you approve of the job
the California state Legislature is doing?

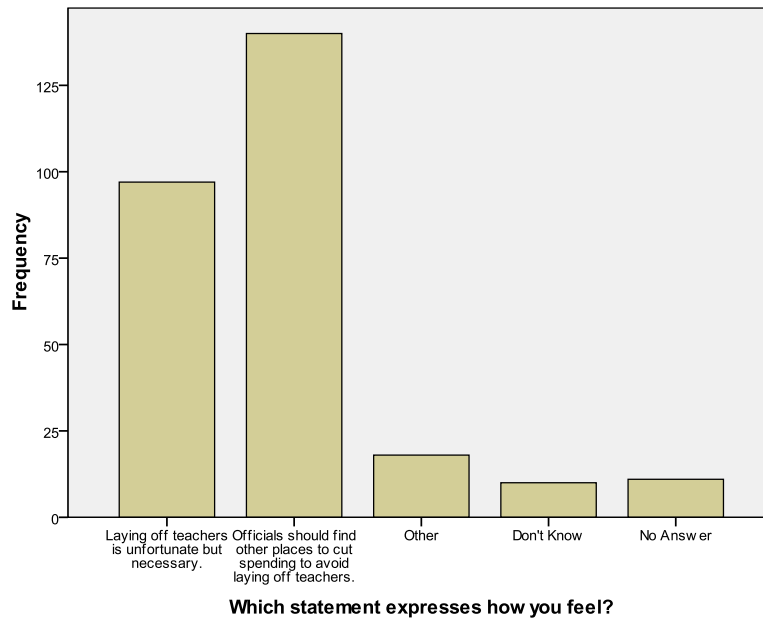
Q8. California currently has a budget deficit of about 41 billion dollars. Between the governor and the state Legislature, who do you think is more to blame for the budget deficit or are they about equally to blame?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Governor	16	5.8	5.8
	Legislator	120	43.5	43.5
	Equally to blame	115	41.7	41.7
	Other	9	3.3	3.3
	Don't Know	12	4.3	4.3
	No Answer	4	1.4	1.4
	Total	276	100.0	100.0



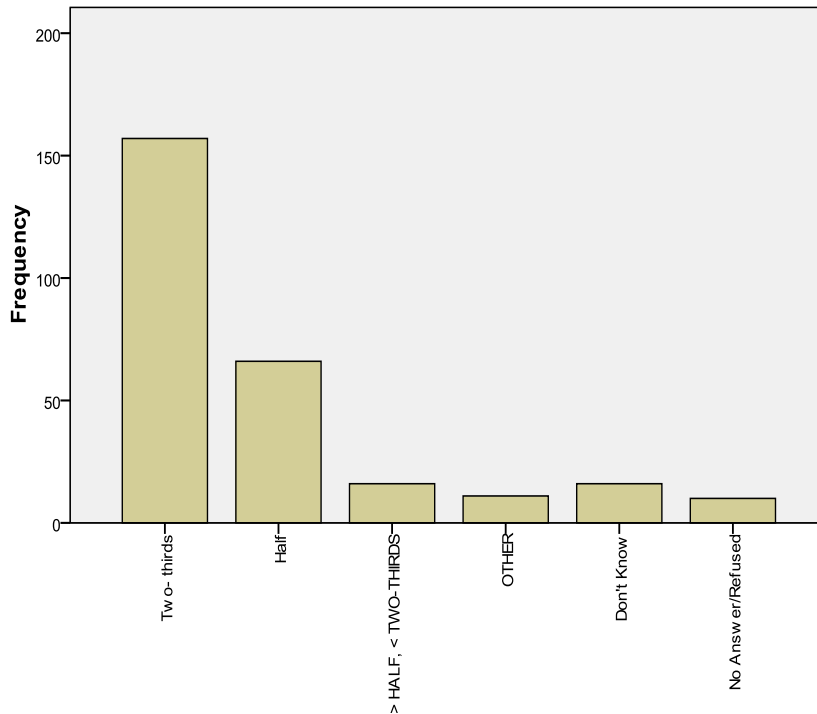
Q9. School districts around the state are laying off teachers. Some say layoffs are regrettable but necessary to deal with budget cuts. Others say education should take priority over other spending. Which of these two statements comes closest to how you feel about this?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Laying off teachers is unfortunate but necessary.	97	35.1
Officials should find other places to cut spending to avoid laying off teachers.	140	50.7
Other	18	6.5
Don't Know	10	3.6
No Answer	11	4.0
Total	276	100.0



Q10. Currently, a two-thirds vote of the state Legislature is required to pass a budget. Some people feel that requiring a two-thirds vote makes sure that there is greater agreement among legislators, while others say that the two-thirds requirement makes it too hard to pass budgets. Do you think two-thirds of the Legislature should be required to pass a budget, or only half?

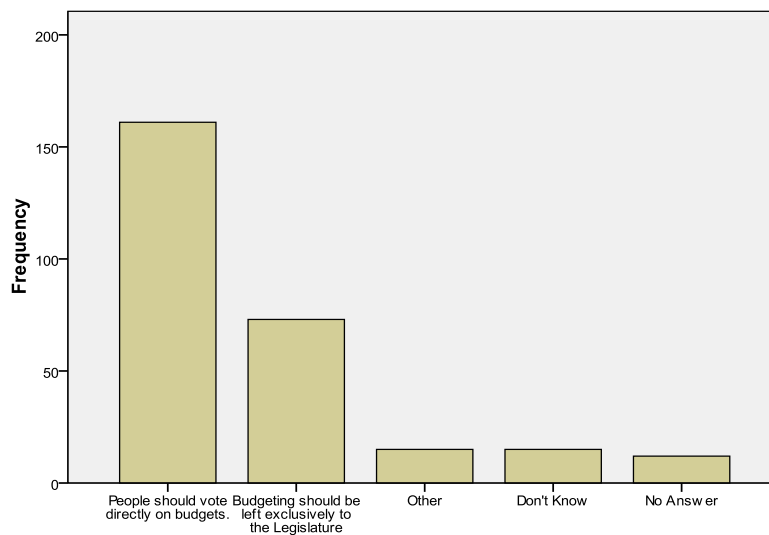
	Frequency	Valid Percent
Two- thirds	157	56.9
Half	66	23.9
More than Half but not as many as Two-thirds	16	5.8
OTHER	11	4.0
Don't Know	16	5.8
No Answer	10	3.6
Total	276	100.0



Do you think two-thirds of the Legislature should be required to pass a budget, or only half?

Q11. California law allows voters to change the budget directly through propositions like the ones to be voted on. Some people say that budgets are too complex to be voted on directly by the people, while others say that people should have direct control over taxes and spending. Do you think that the people should be allowed to vote on propositions concerning budget matters, or should budgeting be left exclusively to the Legislature?

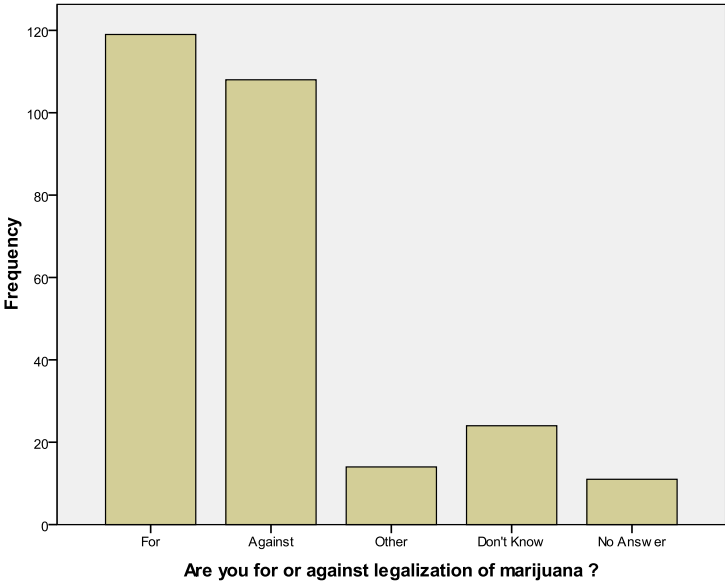
	Frequency	Valid Percent
People should vote directly on budgets.	161	58.3
Budgeting should be left exclusively to the Legislature	73	26.4
Other	15	5.4
Don't Know	15	5.4
No Answer	12	4.3
Total	276	100.0



Do you think that the people should be allowed to vote on propositions concerning budget matters, or should budgeting be left exclusively to the Legislature?

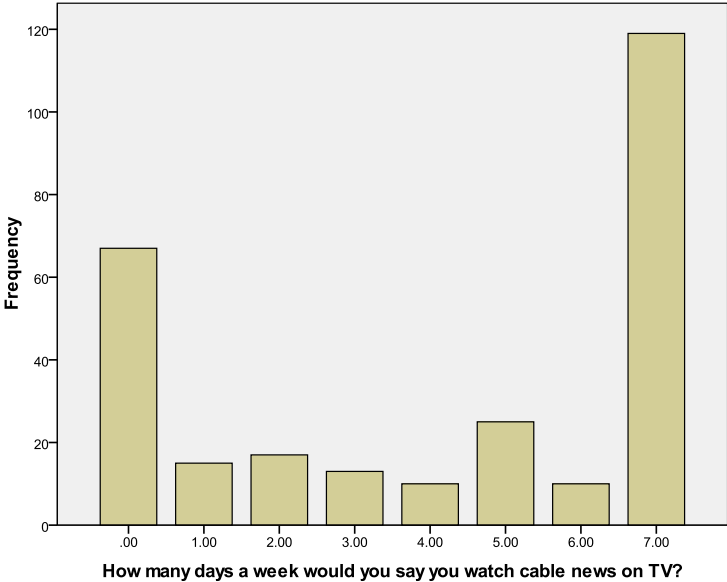
Q12. Are you for or against legalization of marijuana?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
For	119	43.1
Against	108	39.1
Other	14	5.1
Don't Know	24	8.7
No Answer	11	4.0
Total	276	100.0



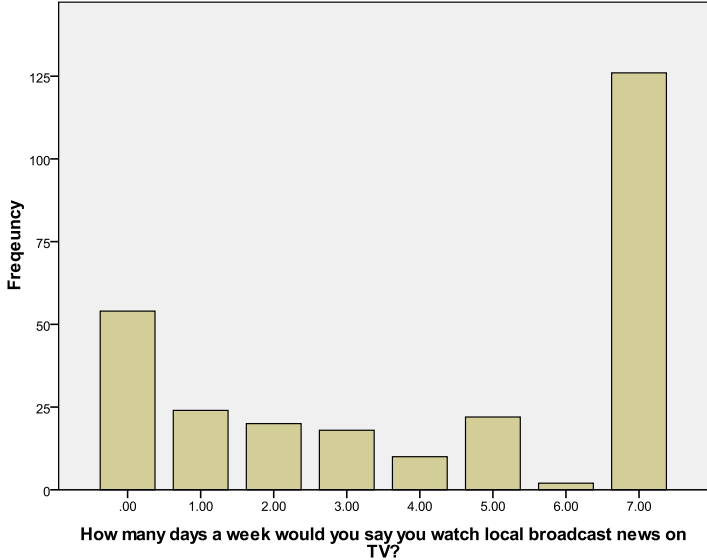
Q13. How many days a week would you say you watch cable news on TV?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
.00	67	24.3
1.00	15	5.4
2.00	17	6.2
3.00	13	4.7
4.00	10	3.6
5.00	25	9.1
6.00	10	3.6
7.00	119	43.1
Total	276	100.0



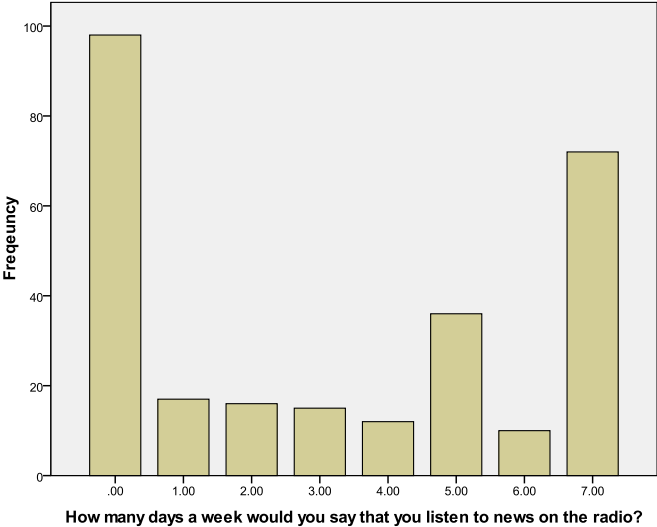
Q14. How many days a week would you say you watch local broadcast news on TV?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
.00	54	19.6
1.00	24	8.7
2.00	20	7.2
3.00	18	6.5
4.00	10	3.6
5.00	22	8.0
6.00	2	.7
7.00	126	45.7
Total	276	100.0



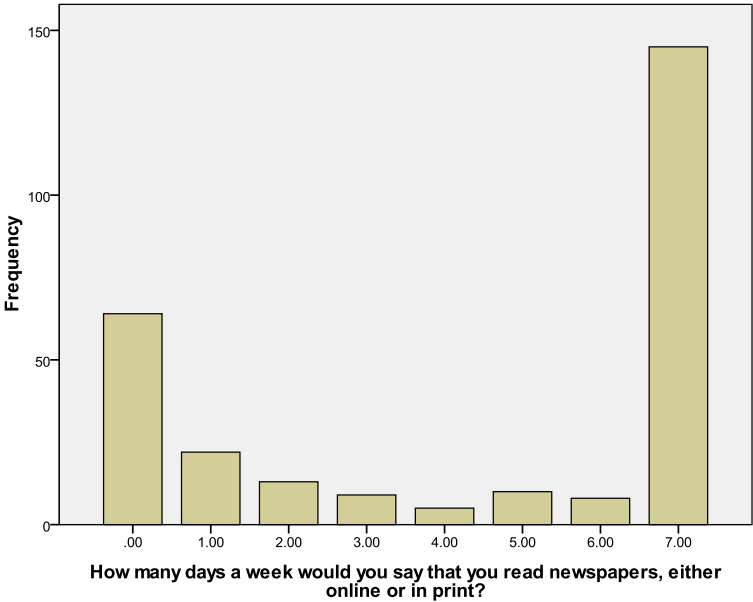
Q15. How many days a week would you say that you listen to news on the radio?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
.00	98	35.5
1.00	17	6.2
2.00	16	5.8
3.00	15	5.4
4.00	12	4.3
5.00	36	13.0
6.00	10	3.6
7.00	72	26.1
Total	276	100.0



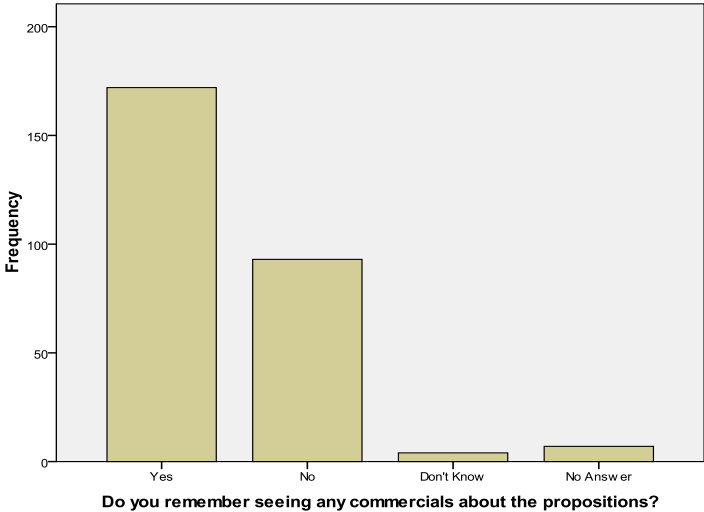
Q16. How many days a week would you say that you read newspapers, either online or in print?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
.00	64	23.2
1.00	22	8.0
2.00	13	4.7
3.00	9	3.3
4.00	5	1.8
5.00	10	3.6
6.00	8	2.9
7.00	145	52.5
Total	276	100.0



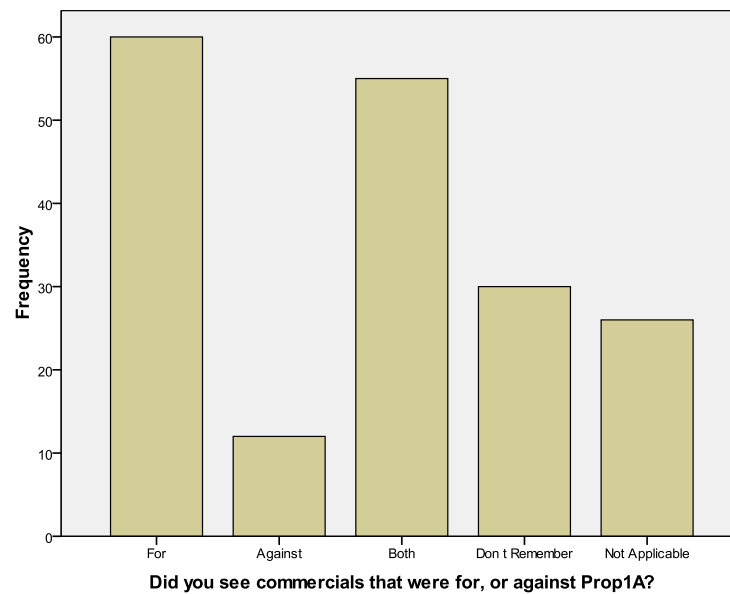
Q17. Do you remember seeing any commercials about the propositions?

	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	172	62.3
No	93	33.7
Don't Know	4	1.4
No Answer	7	2.5
Total	276	100.0



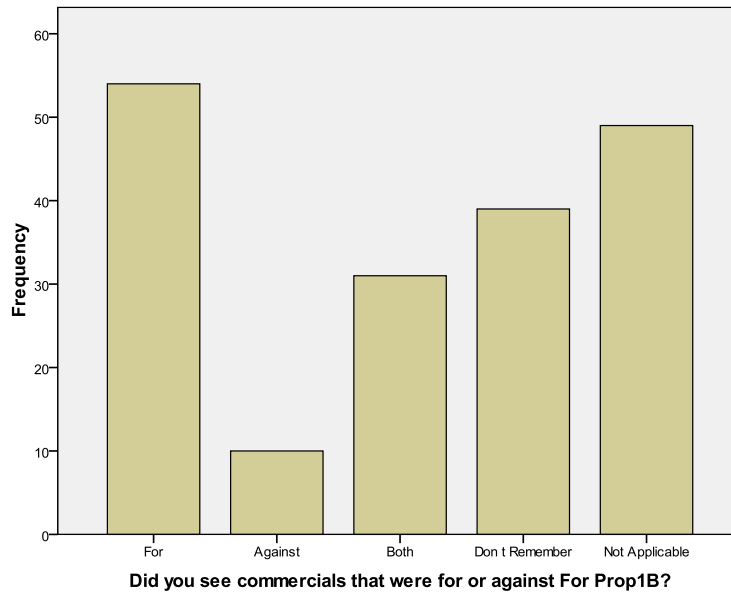
Q17a_1. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1A, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	60	21.7	32.8
Against	12	4.3	6.6
Both	55	19.9	30.1
Don t Remember	30	10.9	16.4
Not Applicable	26	9.4	14.2
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



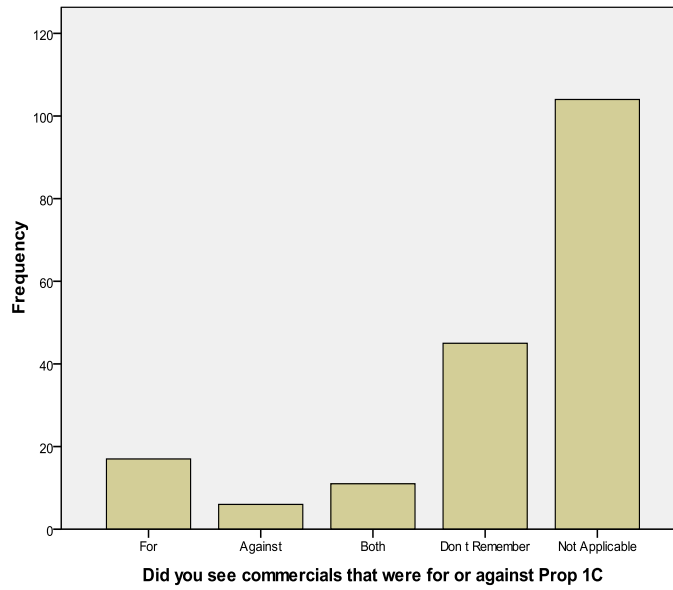
Q17a_2. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1B, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	54	19.6	29.5
Against	10	3.6	5.5
Both	31	11.2	16.9
Don t Remember	39	14.1	21.3
Not Applicable	49	17.8	26.8
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



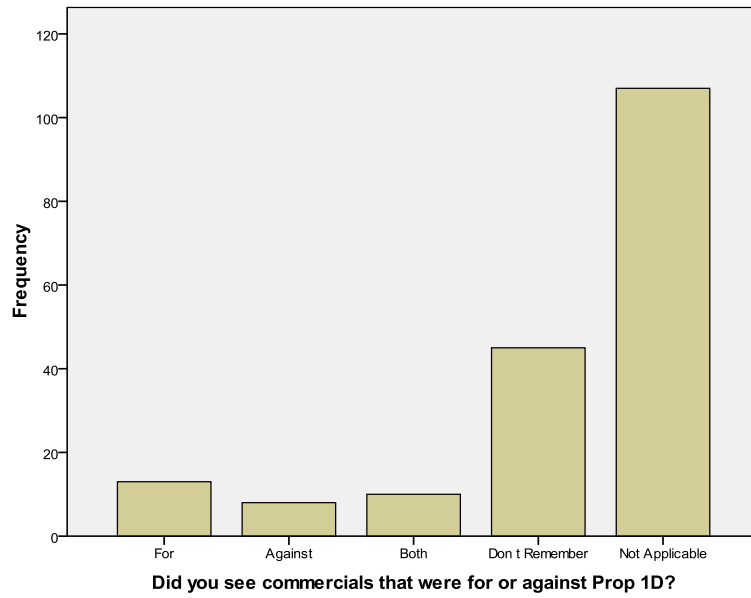
Q17a_3. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1C, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	17	6.2	9.3
Against	6	2.2	3.3
Both	11	4.0	6.0
Don t Remember	45	16.3	24.6
Not Applicable	104	37.7	56.8
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



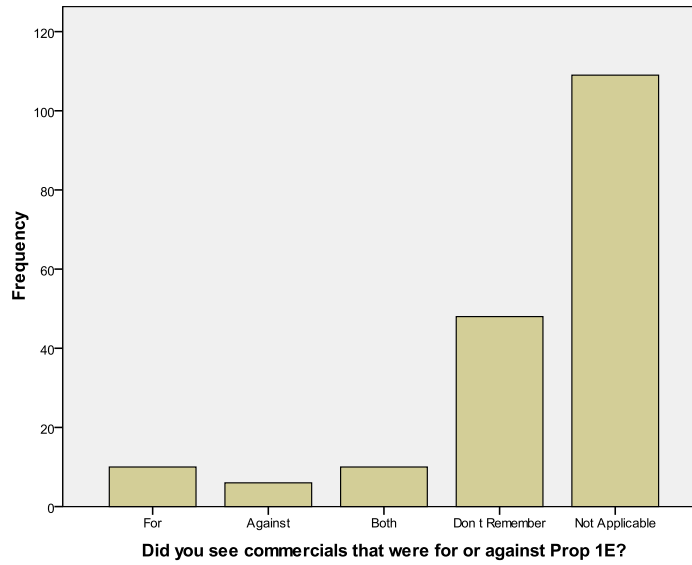
Q17a_4. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1D, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	13	4.7	7.1
Against	8	2.9	4.4
Both	10	3.6	5.5
Don t Remember	45	16.3	24.6
Not Applicable	107	38.8	58.5
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



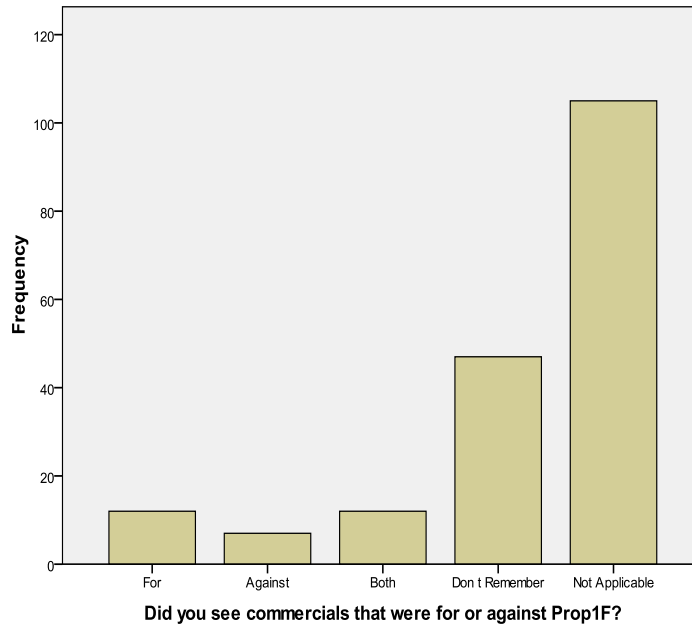
Q17a_5. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1E, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	10	3.6	5.5
Against	6	2.2	3.3
Both	10	3.6	5.5
Don t Remember	48	17.4	26.2
Not Applicable	109	39.5	59.6
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



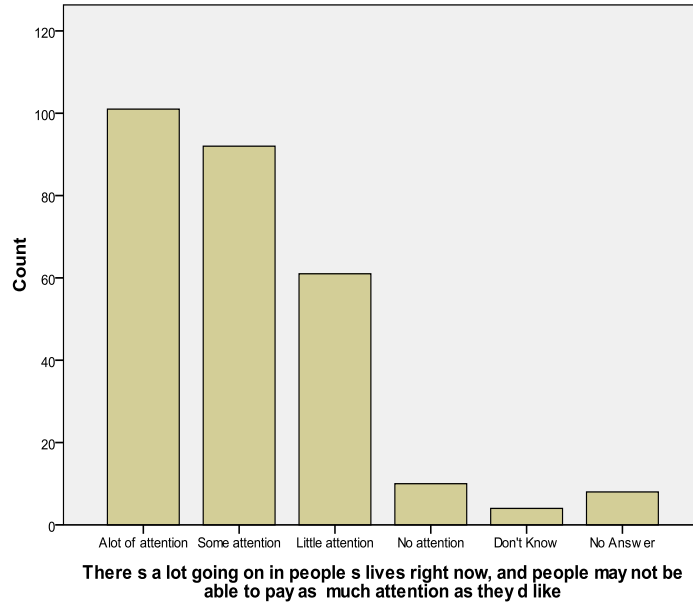
Q17a_6. Do you remember if you saw commercials for Prop 1F, against it, or both?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
For	12	4.3	6.6
Against	7	2.5	3.8
Both	12	4.3	6.6
Don t Remember	47	17.0	25.7
Not Applicable	105	38.0	57.4
Total Valid	183	66.3	100.0
Missing	93	33.7	
Total	276	100.0	



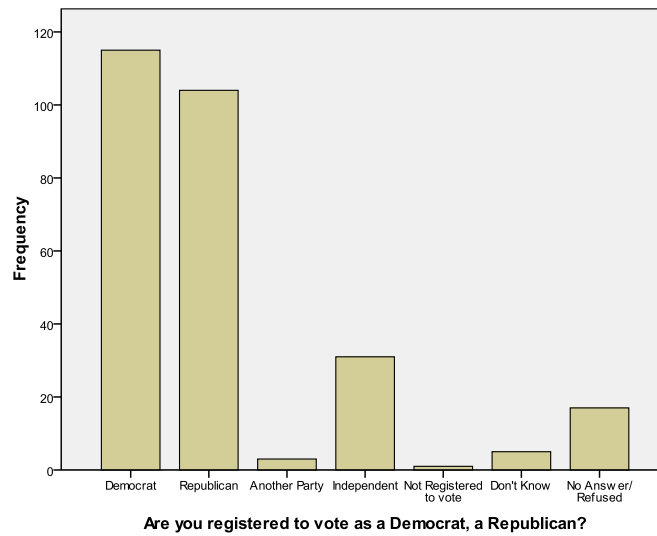
Q18. There's a lot going on in people's lives right now, and people may not be able to pay as much attention as they'd like to this Special Election. Would you say that you are paying a lot of attention, some attention, little attention, or no attention to the Special Election?

	Frequency	Percent
Alot of attention	101	36.6
Some attention	92	33.3
Little attention	61	22.1
No attention	10	3.6
Don't Know	4	1.4
No Answer	8	2.9
Total	276	100.0



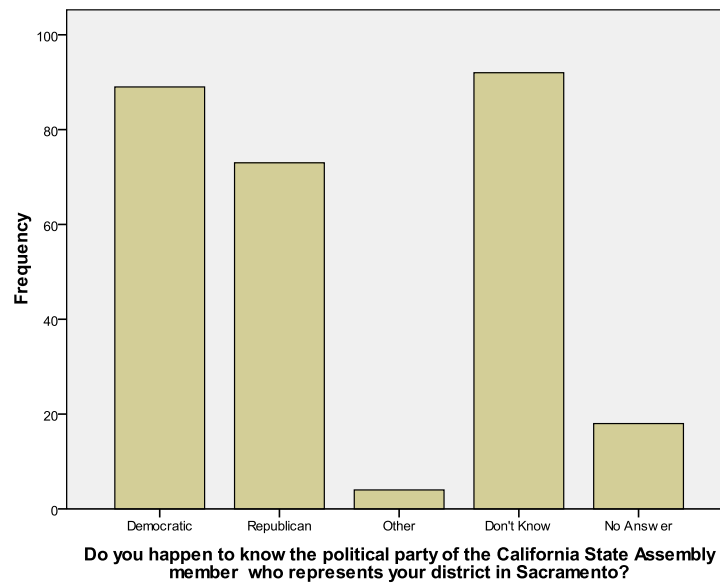
Q19. Finally, I'd like to ask you a few questions about yourself. Are you registered to vote as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

	Frequency	Percent
Democrat	115	41.7
Republican	104	37.7
Another Party	3	1.1
Independent	31	11.2
Not Registered to vote	1	.4
Don't Know	5	1.8
No Answer/ Refused	17	6.2
Total	276	100.0



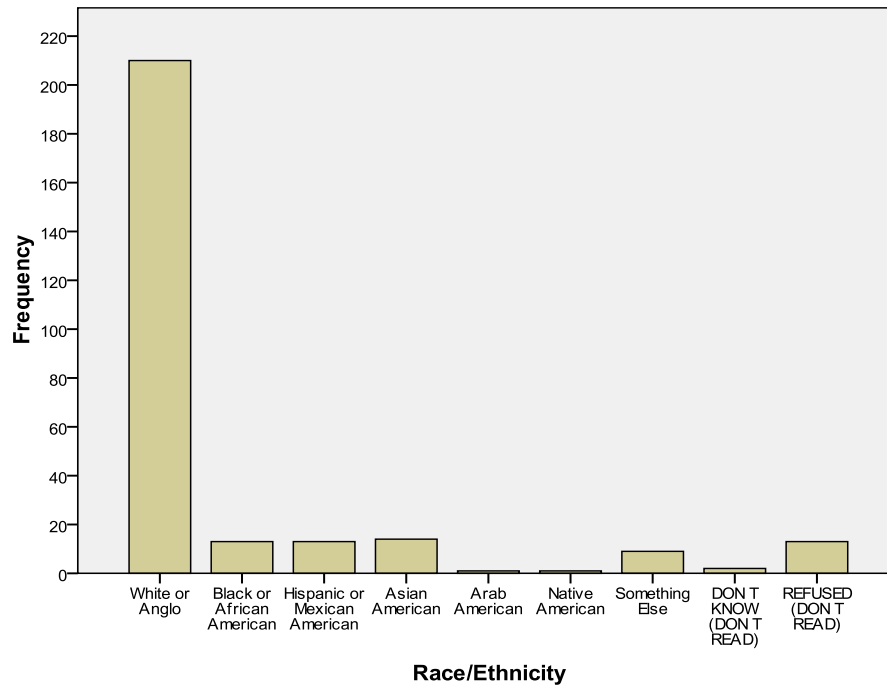
Q20. Do you happen to know the political party of the California State Assembly member who represents your district in Sacramento?

	Frequency	Percent
Democratic	89	32.2
Republican	73	26.4
Other	4	1.4
Don't Know	92	33.3
No Answer	18	6.5
Total	276	100.0



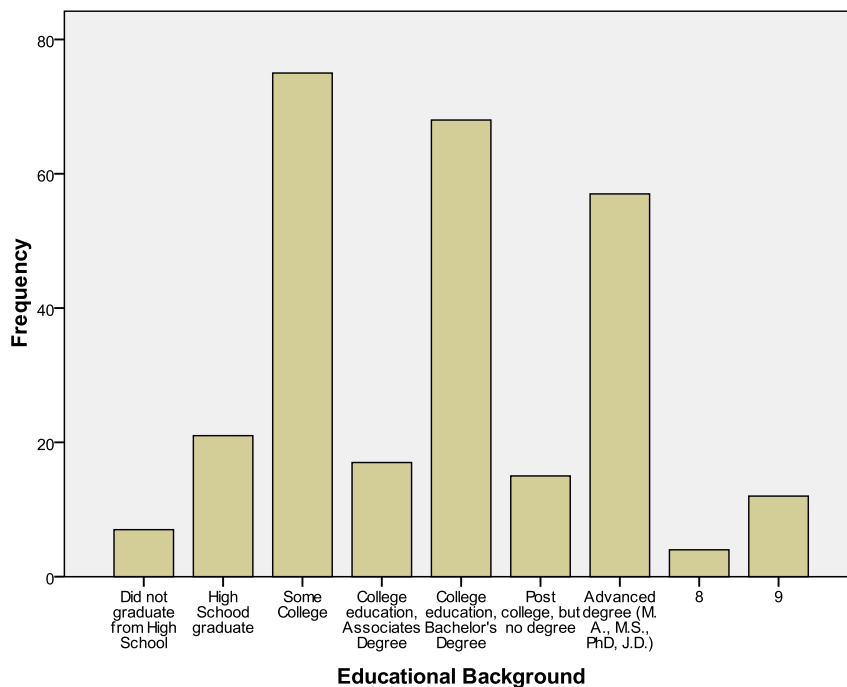
Q21. In which one of the following racial or ethnic categories would you place yourself?

	Frequency	Percent
White or Anglo	210	76.1
Black or African American	13	4.7
Hispanic or Mexican American	13	4.7
Asian American	14	5.1
Arab American	1	.4
Native American	1	.4
Something Else	9	3.3
DON T KNOW (DON T READ)	2	.7
REFUSED (DON T READ)	13	4.7
Total	276	100.0



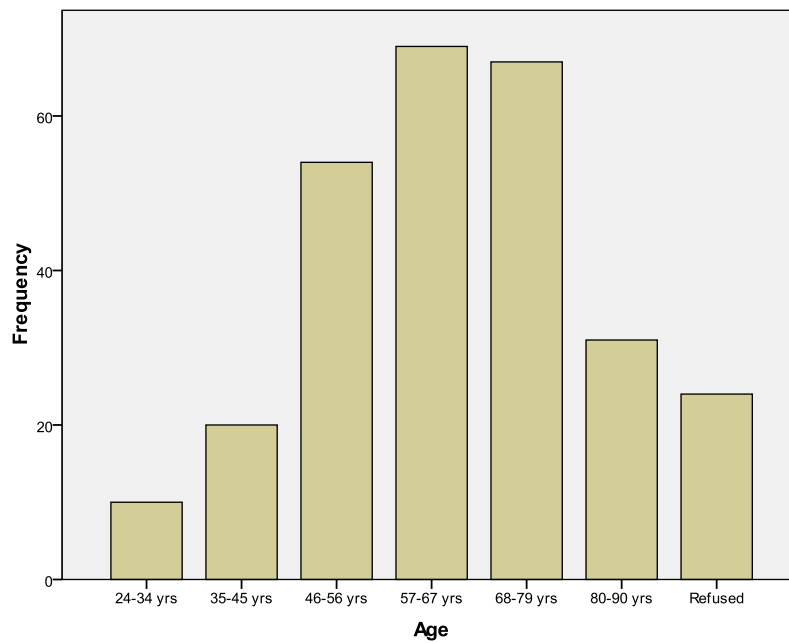
Q22. Please tell us which of the following best reflects your educational background:

	Frequency	Percent
Did not graduate from High School	7	2.5
High School graduate	21	7.6
Some College	75	27.2
College education, Associates Degree	17	6.2
College education, Bachelor's Degree	68	24.6
Post college, but no degree	15	5.4
Advanced degree (M.A., M.S., PhD, J.D.)	57	20.7
Don't Know	4	1.4
No Answer	12	4.3
Total	276	100.0



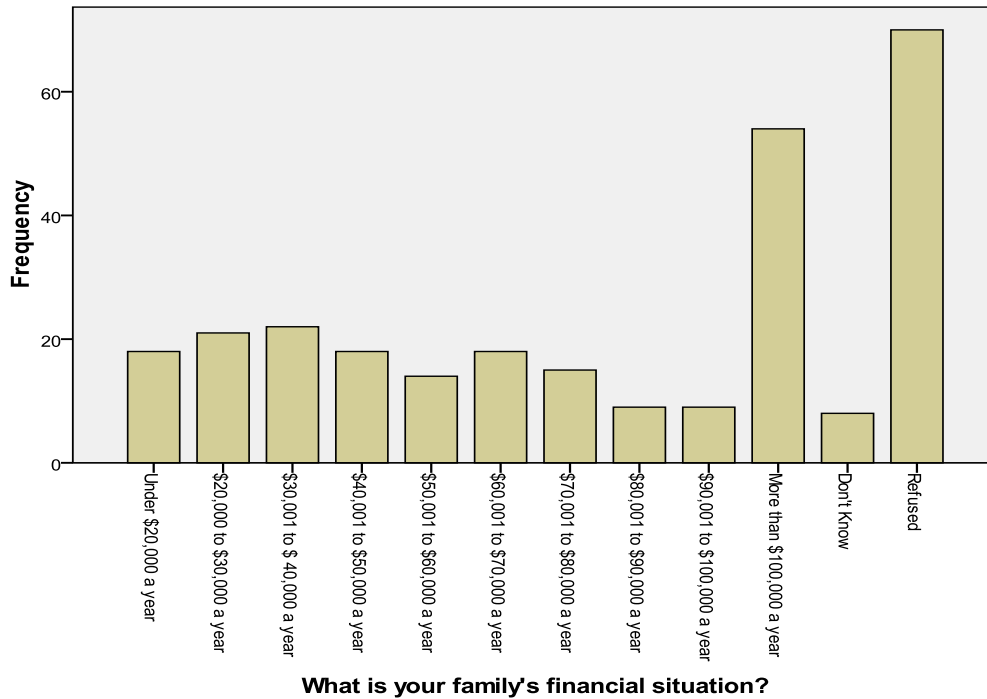
Q23. Age. (In what year were you born?)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
24-34 yrs	10	3.6	3.6
35-45 yrs	20	7.2	7.3
46-56 yrs	54	19.6	19.6
57-67 yrs	69	25.0	25.1
68-79 yrs	67	24.3	24.4
80-90 yrs	31	11.2	11.3
Refused	24	8.7	8.7
Total Valid	275	99.6	100.0
Missing	1	.4	
Total	276	100.0	



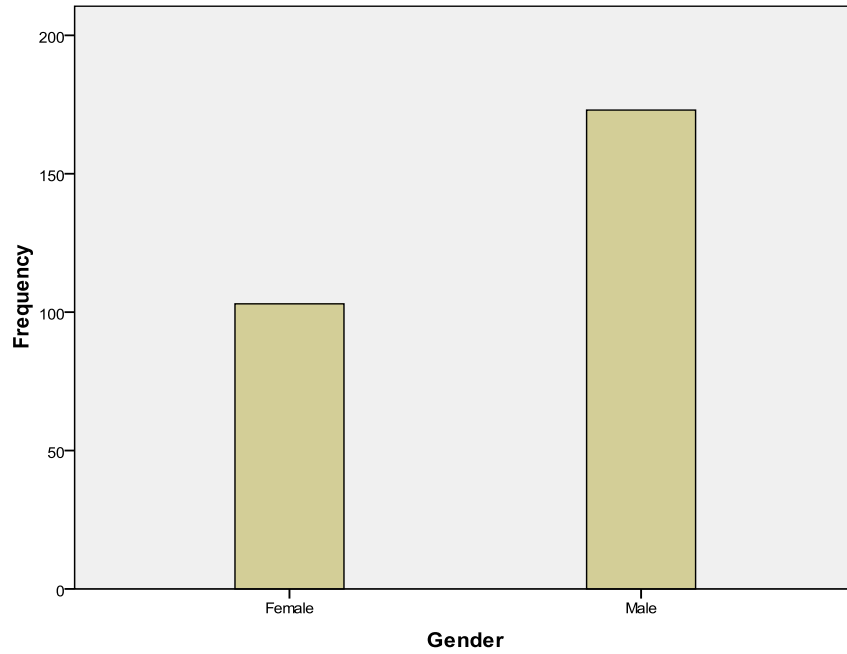
Q24. Income. (what is your family's financial situation is?)

	Frequency	Percent
Under \$20,000 a year	18	6.5
\$20,000 to \$30,000 a year	21	7.6
\$30,001 to \$ 40,000 a year	22	8.0
\$40,001 to \$50,000 a year	18	6.5
\$50,001 to \$60,000 a year	14	5.1
\$60,001 to \$70,000 a year	18	6.5
\$70,001 to \$80,000 a year	15	5.4
\$80,001 to \$90,000 a year	9	3.3
\$90,001 to \$100,000 a year	9	3.3
More than \$100,000 a year	54	19.6
Don't Know	8	2.9
Refused	70	25.4
Total	276	100.0



Q25. Gender.

	Frequency	Percent
Female	103	37.3
Male	173	62.7
Total	276	100.0



For further information, contact David Crow, Associate Director, Survey Research Center, at (951) 827-4028 or david.crow@ucr.edu.