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Voters offer some but not overwhelming support for the idea of legalizing sports betting in California.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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Later this year it is likely that voters around the state will be asked to weigh in on a proposed constitutional amendment to legalize sports betting in California. In its latest survey of the state's registered voters, the *Berkeley IGS Poll* asked voters their initial opinions about the idea.

The findings show that while supporters outnumber opponents at this early stage, Yes side support is not overwhelming, with 45% initially inclined to vote Yes, and 33% inclined to vote No. A relatively large 22% of voters say they are undecided.

Opinions are directly tied to the level of interest that voters have in professional sports. Voters who express a lot of interest in pro sports support the idea almost three to one (63% to 22%), while among those with no interest just 33% favor the amendment.

Men are more open to the idea than women. Support is also greater among younger and middle-aged voters than older voters. There is less support among voters with a post graduate education and those who identify as strongly conservative in politics.

Opinions at this stage do not vary a great deal by party registration, with about four in ten of both Democrats and Republicans inclined to support the legalization of sports betting in the state, while somewhat smaller proportions are opposed.

Observed IGS co-director Eric Schickler, "It is rare these days for a political issue to not be seen as partisan. But legalizing sports betting in California appears to be one of them, at least for the time being."

Table 1			
Initial opinions about a proposed statewide constitutional amendment to allow sports betting in California (among registered voters)			
	Would vote . . .		
	Yes %	No %	Undecided %
Total registered voters	45	33	22
Interest in professional sports			
A lot	63	22	15
Some	48	35	17
Only a little	42	32	26
None at all	33	39	28
Gender			
Male	55	29	16
Female	35	37	28
Age			
18-29	45	25	30
30-39	56	27	17
40-49	52	29	18
50-64	43	36	24
65 or older	32	45	23
Race/ethnicity			
White	44	33	23
Latino	45	32	23
Asian/Pacific Islander	42	36	22
Black	54	31	15
Party registration			
Democrats	44	32	24
Republicans	41	37	22
No Party Preference/others	47	33	20
Political ideology			
Strongly conservative	35	44	21
Somewhat conservative	49	31	20
Moderate	46	33	21
Somewhat liberal	47	27	26
Strongly liberal	41	36	23
Education			
High school graduate or less	45	30	25
Some college/trade school	48	31	21
College Bachelors' degree	43	35	22
Post graduate education	37	40	23

Who’s a fan of professional sports in California?

Blacks, Latinos, and men are the segments of the California registered voter public who express the greatest interest in professional sports, with majorities expressing some or a lot of interest. Women, whites, and voters who say they are strongly liberal in politics are the least likely to be close followers of pro sports.

Table 2
Interest in professional sports among California registered voters

	A lot %	Some %	Only a little %	None at all %
Total registered voters	21	25	24	29
Gender				
Male	28	25	22	24
Female	14	24	26	33
Age				
18-29	20	21	22	35
30-39	22	23	23	30
40-49	24	26	26	23
50-64	21	25	23	30
65 or older	18	28	27	26
Race/ethnicity				
White non-Hispanic	17	23	26	33
Latino	25	27	20	25
Asian/Pacific Islander	23	25	26	23
Black	34	27	16	21
Party registration				
Democrat	21	24	23	31
Republican	20	23	26	29
No Party Preference/other	20	28	25	26
Political ideology				
Strongly conservative	21	24	22	30
Somewhat conservative	24	26	22	26
Moderate	23	27	25	23
Somewhat liberal	20	23	25	29
Strongly liberal	13	20	25	41
Education				
High school graduate or less	22	19	23	32
Some college/trade school	20	27	23	28
College Bachelors’ degree	20	24	26	28
Post graduate education	20	24	24	30

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish February 3-10, 2022, among 4,477 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* is administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. The latest poll also included an oversampling of registered voters in the City of Los Angeles, administered using the same methods, to enable the poll to examine specific issues of interest to voters in that City and to the *Times*. After the completion of data collection, the results were weighted to realign the Los Angeles City sample to its actual share of the statewide voter population.

Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California and were derived from information contained on the voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters responding to the survey to population characteristics of the state's registered voters.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Detailed tabulations reporting the results to each question can be found at the *Berkeley IGS Poll* website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.

Question wording

How much interest do you personally have in professional sports, such as football, basketball, baseball, hockey, soccer, tennis, or golf?

Various groups have proposed allowing sports betting in California, either online or in places such as in Indian casinos, racetracks, and other gaming venues, and have the state tax a portion of the proceeds. If you were voting on a constitutional amendment to allow sports betting in California would you be inclined to vote Yes or No?

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication, and public service. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS's co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a copy of the detailed tabulations to this report or a listing of past poll reports issued by the poll, please visit <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.