

Chapter 9: Political Parties, Elections, and Campaigns

Test Bank

Multiple Choice

1. Although parties may seem strong in California because three-quarters of registered Californians belong to a political party, the number is deceiving because _____.
A. polls show that a majority of Californians would rather be unaffiliated with any party
B. Democrats win all the elections, so it is really a “blue state”
C. third parties are thriving, and more than 20% of voters affiliate with them now
D. most who register with major political parties are independents who have no other choice but to register with a party so that they can vote in elections

Answer Location: Introduction

2. Without _____, citizens would lack the means to hold their representatives accountable.
A. limitations on independent campaign spending
B. elections
C. campaign donations
D. term limits

Answer Location: Introduction

3. In thinking about California’s political geography, one of the most significant developments with respect to partisan politics is _____.
A. a noticeable split between a heavily liberal, Democratic north and a conservative, Republican south
B. a checkerboard of Republican and Democratic counties across the state, making it difficult to identify any geographic areas where partisans concentrate
C. solid Democratic majorities across all 58 counties
D. an east–west divide, whereby coastal regions are more liberal and Democratic, and inland regions are more conservative and Republican

Answer Location: Introduction

4. Historically speaking, political parties in California have _____.
A. always thrived
B. struggled for survival, not prospered

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

5. With respect to political party politics, California historically has been considered a _____.
A. strong party state
B. weak party state

- C. one-party state
- D. nonpartisan state

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

6. What early 20th-century Progressive electoral innovation is still in place today?
- A. nonpartisan elections at the local level
 - B. primaries that are closed to independents
 - C. party bosses aren't allowed to endorse candidates at any point during the election season
 - D. none are still visible today; Progressive "innovations" have been effectively eliminated or invalidated over the years

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

7. The category of registered voters that has been steadily rising since the 1960s is _____.
- A. Democratic
 - B. Republican
 - C. green
 - D. no party preference (independent)

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

8. When a person registers to vote, he or she actually registers with _____.
- A. a party's state organization (nationwide there are 50 Democratic Party organizations, 50 Republican Party organizations, and so forth)
 - B. the national party organization (such as the RNC or DNC)
 - C. the local party
 - D. the DMV

Answer Location: Party Organizations

9. A political party can be conceptualized as having at least three interconnected parts: party in the electorate, party as an organization, and _____.
- A. party in the house
 - B. party in government
 - C. party conventions
 - D. party affiliation

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

10. Which of the following is NOT a conservative position?
- A. government should be limited in size and scope
 - B. keep taxes low/don't raise taxes
 - C. abortion rights should be protected

D. strongly restrict illegal immigration

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

11. Which of the following is NOT a liberal position?

- A. favor business over labor interests
- B. support gay marriage
- C. promote equal opportunity in education
- D. favor universal health care

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

12. Which of the following is a conservative position?

- A. government should be limited in size and scope
- B. raise taxes on the wealthy
- C. favor abortion rights
- D. support drivers' licenses for undocumented immigrants

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

13. If a person is more sympathetic to the concerns of employees and laborers than those of business owners, that person is most likely a _____.

- A. Libertarian
- B. Democrat
- C. Republican
- D. all of these

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

14. Regarding the state's overall political party leanings, which of the following is evidence that California is slightly "purple" rather than "solidly blue?"

- A. Republicans and Democrats usually work together in a bipartisan spirit of compromise.
- B. There's strong electoral competition, demonstrated by the closeness of most races for the Assembly and the Senate, and the close party split in both the Assembly and Senate (almost as many Republicans as Democrats).
- C. Rising number of people who register as "no party preference" (24%) and only a plurality are Democratic (44%); polls show voters would choose a viable third party if given the chance, indicating weak connections to parties.
- D. There's no evidence that the state is anything other than overwhelmingly Democratic.

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

15. Which of the following statements characterizes current party registration in California?

- A. Democrats have an absolute majority.

- B. Independents have been declining as Republican and Democratic party registration have risen steadily over time.
- C. Independent category is slowly increasing, and Republican registration has dropped below 30% for the first time in modern history.
- D. Californians are evenly split among the Democratic, Republican, and no party preference categories (about 30/30/30, plus a few third parties).

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

16. California independents (those in the “no party preference” category) tend to vote more often for _____.
- A. Republican candidates
 - B. Democratic candidates
 - C. Green Party candidates
 - D. other third party candidates (such as Libertarians)

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

17. When elected officials advance their political party’s “brand name” through policymaking and lawmaking, they represent the dimension of political parties known as _____.
- A. party in the electorate
 - B. party in government
 - C. party in informal groups
 - D. party as an organization

Answer Location: Party in Government

18. Of the 20,000 or so elected officials in California, _____ hold statewide office, and _____ are in Washington, DC serving as U.S. Senators or Representatives.
- A. 50; 50
 - B. 120; 60
 - C. 132; 55
 - D. 155; 66

Answer Location: Party in Government

19. Which party or parties has/have held majorities almost continuously in both the Assembly and Senate for nearly 40 years?
- A. Republican
 - B. Democratic
 - C. neither; power shifts regularly
 - D. it doesn’t matter because the two chambers operate on a nonpartisan basis, so majority party status is irrelevant

Answer Location: Party in Government

20. California no longer allows the legislature to draw its own Assembly and Senate seats. Instead, which group is responsible for drawing the lines?
- A. a panel of five retired judges
 - B. the governor's staff
 - C. an independent commission composed of citizens
 - D. three voter-approved nonprofit voter organizations: Common Cause of California, the Women's League of Voters, and NexTen

Answer Location: Party in Government

21. Who is in charge of redrawing California's 53 Congressional districts?
- A. the legislature, through the Assembly and Senate Elections & Redistricting Committees
 - B. the Fair Political Practices Commission
 - C. Congress
 - D. The Citizens Redistricting Commission

Answer Location: Party in Government

22. Who is in charge of redistricting California Assembly and Senate districts?
- A. the legislature, through the Assembly and Senate Elections & Redistricting Committees
 - B. the Fair Political Practices Commission
 - C. Congress
 - D. The Citizens Redistricting Commission

Answer Location: Party in Government

23. What is the main function of a political party?
- A. to grant equal representation to all groups in a society
 - B. to win elections and organize government to achieve their policy aims
 - C. to gerrymander district maps to win elections
 - D. to carry out orders from the national party organization, such as the RNC and DNC

Answer Location: Party in Government

24. The highest level of the state party apparatus is _____.
- A. the national party organization, such as the RNC or DNC
 - B. the state party convention committee
 - C. the county central committee
 - D. the state central committee

Answer Location: Party Organizations

25. The federal funds generated by the Help America Vote Act of 2002 were used to

- _____.
- A. replace outdated punch card voting systems with touch-screen or optical scan machines
 - B. hire more people to count and verify punch card voting systems
 - C. standardize all the rules regarding voting among the 58 counties in California
 - D. fix and bring punch-card systems up-to-date in remote areas, open more polling stations in remote places, and extend the absentee voting system

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

26. In the Top-Two primary system _____.
- A. third party candidates' chances for winning are enhanced
 - B. the top Democrat and the top Republican move on to the general election
 - C. voters choose from among all candidates, and the top two winners go on to compete in the November general election
 - D. voters choose from a general list of candidates, but political parties ultimately maintain control over who gets their party's nomination (it's their Constitutional right to freely associate)

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

27. To what does the "permanent campaign" refer?
- A. the governor's desire to establish a legacy
 - B. political parties' efforts to obtain higher voter registration numbers
 - C. politicians' need to campaign and fundraise year-round in order to be reelected
 - D. politicians' websites

Answer Location: California Campaigns

28. Open seat elections are elections in which _____.
- A. no one knows the party affiliation of the candidates
 - B. an incumbent faces a "sacrificial lamb," an opponent virtually guaranteed to lose
 - C. an incumbent faces a serious, well-funded challenger
 - D. no incumbent is running for reelection

Answer Location: California Campaigns

29. Why are races for statewide offices, such as the Assembly and Senate, so expensive?
- A. money is easy to obtain, so politicians spend it
 - B. the most efficient, but also the most expensive, way to reach large numbers of voters is through paid media (such as television advertisements)
 - C. campaign managers demand exorbitant fees, which drives up the cost of elections
 - D. wealthy candidates always participate in enough campaigns so that they drive up the cost of all elections

Answer Location: California Campaigns

30. More of California's governors in modern times (since WWII) have been _____.
- A. Republicans
 - B. Democrats
 - C. (not relevant:) there have been an even number of Republicans and Democrats
 - D. Progressives and Democrats

Answer Location: Party in Government

31. The top two industries (or "special interest groups") that contributed the most money to state campaigns in 2014 were _____.
- A. labor unions and business interests
 - B. single-issue groups and nonprofits
 - C. lawyers/attorneys and top law firms
 - D. agriculture and party committees

Answer Location: California Campaigns

32. Independent spending on campaigns usually takes the form of _____.
- A. direct donations to candidates
 - B. mailers or television ads trying to promote a candidate or discredit the opponent(s)
 - C. radio spots and radio shows promoting a candidate
 - D. billboard advertising

Answer Location: California Campaigns

33. Wholesale campaigning involves _____.
- A. enlisting many campaign volunteers to knock on the doors of potential voters
 - B. passing out brochures promoting a candidate to shoppers in a mall
 - C. "meet-and-greets" where the candidate personally introduces him or herself
 - D. television ads and other messages broadcast to contact voters indirectly

Answer Location: California Campaigns

34. Retail campaigning involves _____.
- A. billboard advertising
 - B. personal, face-to-face meetings or exchanges with potential voters
 - C. radio ads on Spanish television
 - D. campaigning through the Home Shopping Network

Answer Location: California Campaigns

35. The most expensive individual political campaign in California history was run by _____, who spent almost \$178 million in (his/her) bid for the governorship, ultimately losing to Jerry Brown in 2010.

- A. Willie Brown
- B. Carly Fiorina
- C. Meg Whitman
- D. Abel Maldonado

Answer Location: California Campaigns

36. Candidates must report all contributions received and how they've spent their money, and lobbyists must register and report their spending. The entity responsible for making that information public, and also investigating and enforcing campaign finance laws is _____.

- A. the Fair Political Practices Commission, FPPC
- B. the Assembly and Senate Government Oversight Committees
- C. the courts
- D. the attorney general

Answer Location: California Campaigns

37 Which one of these is a nonpartisan office, meaning that no party labels appear next to the candidate's name on the ballot?

- A. state Assembly
- B. state Senate
- C. governor
- D. city council and county board of supervisors

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

38. "No party preference voters," or independents who are not registered with a political party, tend to vote for candidates representing which political party in California elections?

- A. Democratic
- B. Republican
- C. the Independent Party
- D. they evenly split their votes between Republicans and Democrats

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

39. What is true of special elections in California?

- A. They are less prevalent now that term limits are in place.
- B. They typically attract fewer than 15% of eligible voters.
- C. Statewide special elections attract more voters than regular elections.
- D. They don't cost counties and cities very much money to run, because most voters participate by absentee ballot.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

40. Under the “Motor Voter” law, citizens _____.
- A. will automatically be registered to vote when they apply for or renew a driver’s license
 - B. must show a valid California driver’s license or California identification card to vote in person at a polling place
 - C. can use an expired California driver’s license or California identification card to vote in person at a polling place
 - D. when they vote in person at a polling place, must show some form of personal identification which includes any official document or utility bill with their name and address

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

41. Do citizens of California need to show a valid form of identification when they vote in person at a polling place?
- A. Yes
 - B. No

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

True/False

1. According to a (2017) poll by the PPIC, a large majority of Californians are strongly associated with one of the two major political parties, Republican or Democratic.

Answer Location: Introduction

2. In California, a person can register to vote online through the Secretary of State’s website.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

3. California is a Democratic stronghold, but is weakly partisan overall.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

4. In California, the two parties are very competitive when it comes to elections; that is, in most districts there is a roughly equal chance for a candidate of either party to win.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

5. As of 2017, there were about 20% more Democrats than Republicans (by party registration) in California.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

6. To qualify a new political party in California, no more than 100 signatures need to be

gathered during the process.

Answer Location: Box 9.1 How to Party in California

7. California legislators draw their own district boundaries, as is the case in the majority of states.

Answer Location: Party in Government

8. California is the only state that entrusts redistricting to a citizens' commission.

Answer Location: Party in Government

9. More than half of all voters cast their ballots by mail in 2016.

Answer Location: Figure 9.2 Vote-by-Mail Statistics, 1976–2016

10. It will be impossible for two Democrats to run against each other in the general election under the new open primary election system.

Answer Location: Party in Government

11. On average, open seat elections are far costlier than races where incumbents are defending their seats.

Answer Location: California Campaigns

12. Based on party registration, no political party has absolute majority status in California; that is, no party can claim over 50% of registered voters.

Answer Location: Figure 9.1 Party Registration in Presidential Election Years, 1924–2016

13. California is one of several states to have signed onto the “national popular vote” law, meaning that its (presidential) electoral college votes will go to the winner of the popular vote rather than the state vote (when enough states sign onto the plan, which probably will not go into effect until 2020).

Answer Location: California Campaigns

14. Special elections are not on the rise because of term limits; there have always been many special elections because legislators periodically leave due to death, incarceration, resignation to take higher-paid positions, and so forth.

Answer Location: California Campaigns

15. By law, out-of-state individuals and special interests may not donate to state or local candidates in California.

Answer Location: California Campaigns

16. Elections involving judges are nonpartisan, meaning that a judicial candidate's party affiliation is not indicated on the ballot as it would be for other statewide elected officials.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

17. Thanks to the Top-Two primary, moderates from both political parties now dominate the legislature, and party polarization has almost been eliminated.

Answer Location: Party in Government

18. Democrats dominate state government today because of gerrymandering which unfairly favors their political party as well as Democratic incumbents.

Answer Location: Party in Government

19. Both the Democratic and Republican state political party organizations have virtually no control over California elections, because the national party organizations, the DNC and RNC, dominate politics so thoroughly.

Answer Location: Party Organizations

20. When it comes to spending money on campaigns, only California residents may spend money to elect or defeat California candidates who are running for office.

Answer Location: California Campaigns

21. California state elections were only minimally affected by the 2010 *Citizens United v FEC* ruling, because permissive independent spending laws were already in effect.

Answer Location: California Campaigns

Short Answer

1. If a person in California wants to register to vote but does not want to affiliate with a party, what category would that person "check" on the registration form?

Ans: no party preference (independent)

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

2. Another label for California's current open primary system is _____.

Ans: "Top-Two" primary or "top-two candidate" primary ("top two vote-getters" would

also be acceptable; the colloquial referent is “jungle primary”)
Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

3. There are _____ U.S. House districts in California.
Ans: 53

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan | Box 1.1 Comparative FAST FACTS on California

4. The top two industries (or “special interest groups”) that spent the most money to state campaigns in 2014 were _____.

Ans: public employee unions (labor unions, or unions would be acceptable), and business

Answer Location: California Campaigns

5. An election is one in which no party labels appear next to the candidate’s name on the ballot is considered to be _____.

Ans: nonpartisan

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

6. Counting state legislators and state constitutional executive officers, how many state elected officials are there in California?

Ans: 120 legislators, plus 12 executive officials (total of 132)

Answer Location: Chapter 4 | Chapter 5

7. How often are Assembly, Senate, and Congressional district boundary lines redrawn?

Ans: once every 10 years (based on the U.S. Census)

Answer Location: Party in Government | Chapter 4: Design, Purpose and Function of the Legislature

8. The state has strong disclosure laws, meaning _____.

onors to and independent spenders in campaigns must report their sources to the secretary of state (the Fair Political Practices Commission enforces the campaign finance rules specifically, and that is also an acceptable answer)

Answer Location: California Campaigns

Essay

1. To what does “party in the electorate” refer?

he term refers to the generalized sentiment a party’s members share about what it means to be a Republican, a Democrat, or any other party. This sentiment reflects people’s values, leads them to vote for certain officials, and reinforces their attachment to the party’s “brand name.”

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

2. Describe the demographic characteristics of those who tend to affiliate with the two major parties in California.

here is more ethnic diversity among Democratic Party members; they are in the low-to-middle income bracket, and younger than in the past. About a quarter are renters rather than homeowners; they tend to live near urban centers or the coast. Women favor the Democratic Party, and it is about 50% White. Republicans tend to be White (about 77%), middle- to upper-class, college-educated, and on average are slightly older than Democrats. About half of likely Republican voters make over \$80,000 per year.

Answer Location: Party in the California Electorate

3. Why are state legislative districts generally uncompetitive?

Ans: Varies. Answers should focus on two phenomena: historical gerrymandering and natural sorting. Gerrymandering occurs when a party manipulates boundaries to benefit an incumbent or their overall party strength. (They try to guarantee the outcomes for a party in each district, with the overall goal of winning as many districts as possible.) The majority party prefers not to draw districts to be competitive, because the outcomes there are unpredictable; no win is guaranteed. So far there is little evidence that the Citizens Redistricting Commission (2010s) engaged in active gerrymandering. Natural sorting refers to the fact that like-minded people tend to live near each other, and settlement patterns have resulted in an elongated coastal region that is more “blue” Democrat and “red” inland Republican. Because mapmakers are still bound to draw districts containing numerically equal populations that are as compact as possible, respect city and county lines, and do not split communities of interest, and because Democrats outnumber Republicans in party registration, it is difficult to draw districts that include even, or nearly even, numbers of partisans.

Answer Location: Party in Government

4. Why is it difficult for mapmakers to draw competitive districts in California?

Ans: In creating new districts, mapmakers must draw districts containing numerically equal populations that are as compact as possible; they must respect city and county lines; and must not split communities of interest. Because most people sort themselves into communities and regions that are more Democratic or more Republican, and because Democrats outnumber Republicans in party registration overall, it is difficult to draw districts to include enough of both (i.e., roughly even numbers of both parties) to make them competitive.

Answer Location: Party in Government

5. How have term limits for statewide officials affected elections around the state?

Term limits create a pool of experienced candidates who seek to continue their career in politics. The game of political office “musical chairs” extends to all levels of government: competition for “downticket” offices such as county boards of supervisors and big-city mayors has increased, and so has rivalry for congressional seats. About two thirds of all statewide officials will attempt to run for another office within 2 years of being termed out. Also, incumbents continue to be reelected at near-perfect rates--so the implication is that open-seat elections are more competitive, but incumbent reelections are not.

There are many more open seat elections because legislators are regularly termed out, and these tend to be expensive campaigns. Furthermore, special elections are on the rise as politicians leave one office for another, creating a “domino effect” as one person

leaves an office to run for another, another person leaves her post for that one, and so on.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

6. What is a primary election?

Ans: Generally speaking, party members participate in a preliminary election to nominate candidates for various offices. Primary election winners will go on to compete head to head with the other party's nominees in the November general election. In California, all voters are allowed to choose from among a list of all candidates for an office, and the top two vote-getters compete against each other in order to win the November general election. The top two candidates can be from any party, which means that in some districts, the top two candidates will be from the same party. Technically the top-two primary is not a traditional political party primary, but a "voter preference" primary election.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

7. What types of primary elections has California tried?

The state used a closed primary system until 1996. In that system, only voters who declared their party affiliation prior to the election could participate in the own party's election. At the voting station, a voter would receive a Republican or Democratic ballot with their own party candidates' names listed for each office. Independents could not participate. Voters then approved Prop 98 in 1996, a blanket primary that allowed all registered voters to vote for any candidate. All candidates' names appeared on the ballot for every office. It was ruled unconstitutional, and the state reverted to a modified closed primary system, whereby voters in a party participated in their own party's primary, and independents (now called "no party preference voters") had their votes counted if a party authorized it. In June 2010, state voters approved the Top-Two candidate version of the open primary (Prop 14). Under the new rules, all voters are allowed to choose from among a list of candidates, and the top two vote-getters compete against each other to win the November general election. Potentially, the top two candidates will be from the same party in some districts.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

8. Trace the history of the primary (party nominating) system in California.

About 100 years ago, Progressives wanted to take power away from party bosses because they controlled elections by being able to select the candidates and nominees for their parties. Progressives put the power to select party nominees in voters' hands when they created the *direct primary*, which prevented party bosses from pre-selecting candidates. Progressives banned party bosses from endorsing individuals (a preprimary endorsement ban), and instituted *cross-filing*, which helped promote nonpartisanship by allowing all candidates to run in any party's primary, and their own partisan affiliation wouldn't be printed alongside their names. This system was in place until the 1950s, when cross-filing came to an end. The state then had *closed primaries*, whereby voters had to be registered members of a party to vote in a party's primary. That system was in place until the late 1990s, when voters approved the *blanket primary* (a form of the open primary), a system whereby all candidates would appear on the same ballot, and voters

could choose whomever they wanted. Under the blanket primary, each party would end up with a nominee for each office, but couldn't ensure that their own party's voters had chosen them. The U.S. Supreme Court declared this system to be an unconstitutional breach of the party's right to freely associate. Afterward, the system reverted to a *semi-closed party primary* (a modified system) in which only registered voters, and independents if the parties allowed their votes to be counted, could participate. Finally, the *Top-Two primary* was adopted by voters and went into effect in 2012. The primary is now a "voter preference primary" in which all candidates appear on the same ballot (with their parties indicated), and the top two vote-getters, regardless of party affiliation, will move on to the general election. This means two Democrats or two Republicans might go on to the November general election where they face off against each other.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

9. What is a "gerrymander"?

he act of manipulating district boundaries to include or exclude certain groups in order to benefit a group (which can be a party) or an incumbent. An acceptable but under-specified answer would be that it is "drawing boundaries to help a party," which captures the notion of drawing (district) boundaries, but misses the idea that the deliberate manipulation may be intended to disadvantage others, such as ethnic/racial groups.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

10. What do you consider to be the two most important electoral reforms of the past 100 years? Explain your answer.

Ans: Varies. Students may refer to initiatives or rule changes that were established as far back as the Progressive era. Major reforms, such as the adoption of direct democracy, have redistributed political power in significant and lasting ways; an argument and supporting evidence (examples or logic) must be presented to support the conclusion that the reform is significant. Direct democracy transformed citizens into lawmakers, for example. Students might embellish their answer with examples of how the initiative process has continued to be a source of power for citizens. Other key reforms have targeted the primary process, which has been reshaped periodically. The state has experienced the closed primary for most of its existence, but has flirted with the blanket primary and recently adopted the open primary in 2010; this allows independent voters to take part, though the effects have not been "earth-shattering" (it was hoped that fewer ideological extremists and more moderates would be elected, but moderates have not been dominating elections). Proposition 11, an initiative that moved redistricting into the hands of an independent commission, led to the creation of maps that were not gerrymandered and led to several elections where incumbents had to run against each other. Term limits also qualify as an electoral reform, as representatives are prevented from running for office after a specified period of time (outcomes are discussed), and have led to an increase in special elections. Another reform is the Help America Vote Act passed by Congress in 2002, which led to the replacement of punch-card voting machines in the state. More recently, there have been other potentially important changes: online voter registration became active just prior to the 2012 November election, and another law clarifies that ballot initiatives will now only be allowed to appear on general or special election ballots, not on primary election ballots.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

11. What is the “national popular vote” law?

Ans: In order to avoid the situation where a presidential candidate receives a majority of the popular vote but loses the electoral college (a winner must receive at least 270 to win), California joined eight other states (note: up to 11 total in 2017) in stipulating that its electoral college votes will go to the winner of the presidential popular vote rather than the state vote. This plan will go into effect when enough states sign onto the plan (their votes must add up to 270 at least), which probably will not go into effect until 2020.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

12. What is a nonpartisan election?

nonpartisan election is one in which no party labels appear next to the candidate’s name on the ballot.

Answer Location: Democratic Stronghold, but Weakly Partisan

13. Explain how the Top-Two primary works in California.

Il registered voters are allowed to choose from among a list of all candidates for an office, and the top two vote-getters compete against each other in order to win the November general election. The top two candidates can be from any party, which means that in some districts, the top two candidates will be from the same party (two Republicans or two Democrats). This type of election is not a traditional political party primary, because all voters--not just one party’s members--may participate in selecting the nominees who will go on to compete in the general election. Thus, the Top-Two is a “voter preference primary.” (Voters in June 2010 approved this as Prop 14).

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change

14. What rules, reforms, and planned reforms are intended to make it easier for Californians to register to vote and to vote?

Ans: Varies. The Top-Two primary enables independents to participate in primary elections. In the coming years, all vote-by-mail elections and regional voting centers will replace neighborhood polling places; these will be open for 30 days before election day, and voters will be able to drop in or drop off their mail-in ballots. Starting in 2018, voters will be able to register to vote on the day that they cast a ballot--also known as same-day registration--without running afoul of laws designed to prevent voter fraud. The new VoteCal database also allows 16- and 17-year-olds to preregister to vote. In addition, an existing motor voter law reduces barriers to vote even further: effective January 1, 2016, Californians are automatically registered to vote when they renew their driver licenses or register their cars with the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) unless they opt out. As of 2012, Californians can register to vote via the Internet; online voter registration is a service offered in 34 other states and DC.

Answer Location: Elections: Continuity and Change