

BUILDING CALIFORNIA'S FUTURE

A voter guide to championing policies that improve the lives of California's children



2020 ELECTION GUIDE

This voter education material is nonpartisan and is in no way intended to reflect an endorsement for, or opposition to, any candidate or political party.



Mayra Alvarez
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Mayra Alvarez

All of our newly elected leaders will face critical policy decisions that have the power to improve the lives of children of color and children living in poverty. Leaders across the political spectrum have a responsibility to prioritize our future by protecting children and families and their health, rights, and well-being. Perhaps unlike any time before, this election requires us all to elect leaders with a vision for creating a just and equitable world for every child in California and in our nation. Our dual pandemic: structural racism in education, justice, poverty, health, and immigration preventing children from reaching their full potential; and, COVID-19 amplifying the long existing racial inequities in health - creates urgency for all our leaders.

This sense of urgency for things to change, to get better, has always been a part of the lives of families living in poverty and families of color. Our new collective awakening to the experience of urgency for things to get better must be reflected in the choices we make at the ballot box. We need leaders who will address our mutual experience of hoping for a better future, but especially now, for families who have always had a desperate need for life to improve.

Shimica Gaskins
Executive Director
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Shimica Gaskins

California has made big strides in opportunities for children but we risk not only failing to advance these efforts to build a better future, we are also in danger of losing ground in many of the areas children and families need to thrive. In health care coverage, California once led the nation with laws and policies ensuring that every child, in every home, in every classroom or distance learning environment is eligible for health insurance, either through Medi-Cal, private or employer-based coverage; however, the number of children uninsured are increasing again. We are not helping all families address this basic human need of having access to health care and are moving backward.

The goal of this election guide is simple: to foster thought and dialogue around policies that improve the lives of California’s children, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. We hope the information in this election guide will inform the conversations you have with your friends, neighbors and especially candidates for office. Most importantly, we hope this guide will make it easier to identify worthy candidates who understand the challenges facing children and families, and who commit to taking action to level the playing field for California’s children, particularly poor children and children of color.

Demographics

9,026,052 Children

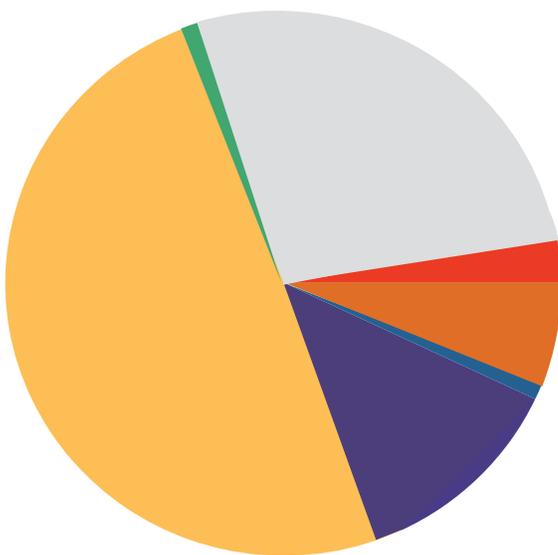
— live in California —

Children in immigrant families are a core part of our state, **with nearly half of California's children** — approximately **4 million** — having at least one immigrant parent.

An estimated

1,100,000

children live in families where one or more of their parents are undocumented immigrants



CHILDREN OF COLOR ACCOUNT FOR THE MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIA'S CHILD POPULATION.

American Indian/Alaska Native - 0.4%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander - 0.3%
Black - 5.4%
Multiracial - 4.0%
Asian American - 12.7%
White - 29.2%
Latinx - 47.9%

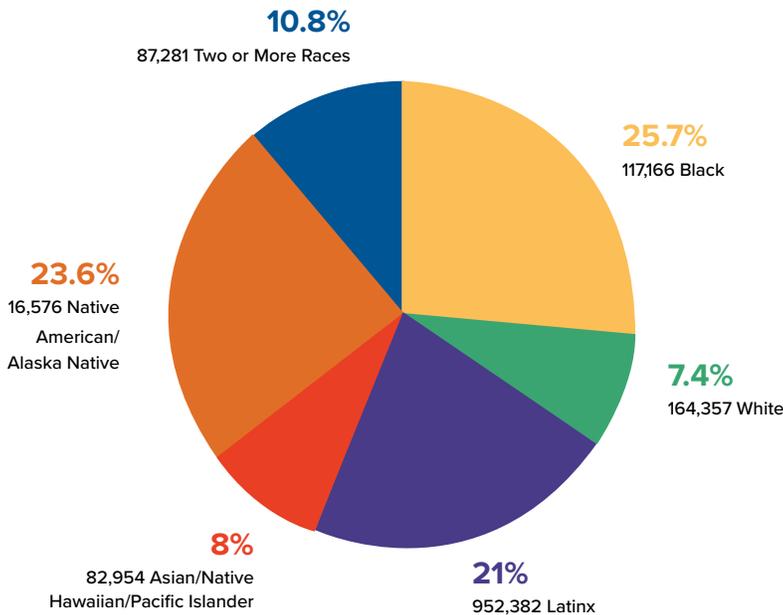
Poverty

Ending the Cycle of Poverty for Children in California

1.3 MILLION CHILDREN IN CALIFORNIA LIVE IN POVERTY.

Despite the state's prosperity, California has one of the highest child poverty rates in the nation. Nearly 1 in 5 children live in poverty. Ninety percent of children in poverty are children of color. Whereas 1 in 4 Black children live in poverty and 1 in 4 American Indian/Alaska Native children live in poverty - out of 100 White children - 7 live in poverty. The differences in how prevalent poverty is between one racial group and another is a result of our nation's history of genocide, slavery, racial discrimination, and structural exclusion of indigenous, immigrant, and Black communities. Poverty has a devastating impact on child health and well-being, and undermines academic and future economic success.

CHILD POVERTY RATES BY RACE/ETHNICITY IN 2019.



CHILD POVERTY NEGATIVELY IMPACTS:

- Brain Development
- Income as an adult
- Health
- Educational Outcomes
- Graduation Rates

Questions for Voters

1

Is reducing poverty a priority for this candidate? What proposals does this candidate have to eliminate child poverty?

2

Even though California is experiencing an economic recession and budget shortfall, how will this candidate protect and prioritize critical public assistance programs like CalWORKS, CalFRESH, and the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) to ensure families have their basic needs met?

3

Does this candidate fully appreciate that preventing child poverty is critical to protect our young people and has substantial economic benefits in both productivity and earnings, and increased health outcomes?

4

Is this candidate prepared to address child poverty even though poverty measures are limited in capturing the full benefits needs of all children and more efforts to eliminate child poverty needs to be examined, designed, and proposed?

Health

Ensuring All Children Have Access to Quality, Affordable Health Coverage and Care

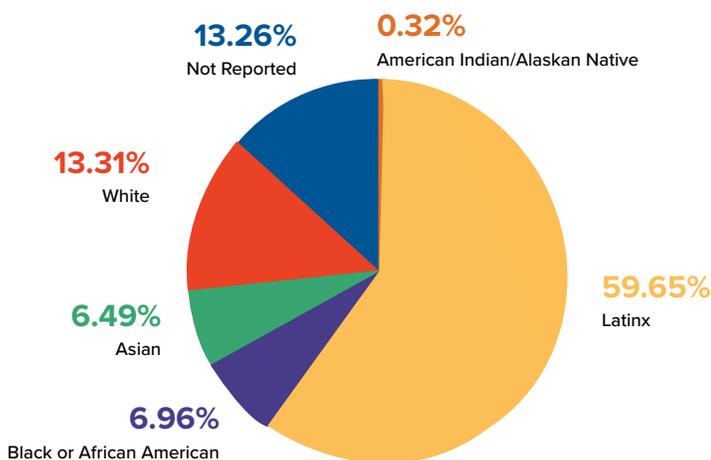
California has made excellent progress towards enrolling nearly all children in health coverage, either private or public. In 2016, Health4AllKids (SB75) passed and California provided a path to coverage for all income-eligible children, regardless of immigration status. As a result of the Affordable Care Act, Medi-Cal, and this expansion, in 2016, the number of uninsured children fell to a historic low of 2.2% - roughly 202,000 children in California.

Unfortunately, between 2016-2019, the state saw an 11% increase in the number of uninsured children - an estimated 35,000 additional children became uninsured, leaving a total of 334,000 California children without coverage. We are losing ground in the battle to get every child enrolled in coverage and accessing health care, when and where they need it. Much of this can be attributed to confusions and fear connected to an anti-immigrant national climate. California must make it simple and safe to keep coverage that is affordable and meaningful for all our children, as well as ensure timely access to the comprehensive pediatric care children need to thrive. More than half of California's children (5.2 million) are enrolled in Medi-Cal. The majority of children enrolled in Medi-Cal are children of color and children living in poverty. Strengthening the Medi-Cal program will put California's children on the path to a better future.

CALIFORNIA'S COVERED CHILDREN 2018-2019

Uninsured Children 0-6 in 2019	Uninsured Children 6-18 in 2019	Uninsured Children 0-18 in 2019	Uninsured Children 0-18 in 2018	Children that lost coverage in 2018-2019
75,758	258,276	334,034	298,699	35,335

RACE/ETHNICITY OF CHILDREN IN MEDI-CAL



Questions for Voters

- 1 What will this candidate do to guarantee health coverage and access to care for children and families that have disproportionately lacked it in California, especially in light of COVID-19 impact and recent increases in the number of uninsured children?
- 2 Many adults in California, including parents, lack health insurance. Research shows that when parents have health insurance, their children are more likely to have health coverage and use it. How will this candidate enroll more families including undocumented, mixed status and/or immigrant adults in health insurance?
- 3 How will this candidate support community-based health providers, like home visitors, community health workers, and promotores, and strengthen their involvement in the health care workforce?

Mental Health

Prioritizing Mental Wellness and a Path for Healing for all California Children

Medi-Cal for children lacks a cohesive, easily accessible mental health service delivery system. Families with children enrolled in the Medi-Cal program report difficulty finding a provider and receiving high quality mental health care services for their children. These services are guaranteed to families under federal Medicaid law, which guarantees that children must receive “any medically necessary service.” Mental health services are required to be as easily accessible for families as physical health care. There are problems with provider recruitment and complications around providers receiving reimbursement for the services they provide.

All of this creates a failing system. This is happening as we are learning the true cost of toxic stress and trauma, particularly in the wake of the global COVID-19 pandemic which has led to extreme levels of social isolation and unprecedented practical barriers to accessing in-person and virtual services, particularly for people with low incomes. The long-term health benefits of trauma-informed mental health care and helping children build resilience are well-established. Over the last decade, California’s children are faring far worse in mental health access and services. More must be done to ensure California children receive the mental health supports and services they need and to reimagine the way California and our nation prioritize children’s healthy development and social and emotional well-being.

Questions for Voters

1

How will this candidate ensure that children have access to health services, including mental and oral health, in community settings like schools and child care centers?

2

How will this candidate mitigate the effects of toxic stress or trauma and build resilience in children?

3

How will this candidate improve the mental health service delivery system in Medi-Cal for children in our state?

Only 5% of children with Medi-Cal receive a behavioral health service.

Only 35% of youth in California who report needing mental health support actually receive it.

California ranks **43rd** among states in providing behavioral, social and developmental screenings, which are key to identifying early signs of challenge.

70% of youth involved in California’s juvenile justice system have unmet behavioral health needs.

24% of children did not receive necessary mental health care in 2017, reflecting a sharp increase from 16% in 2016 and putting California in the bottom quartile of states for children’s mental health access.

Education

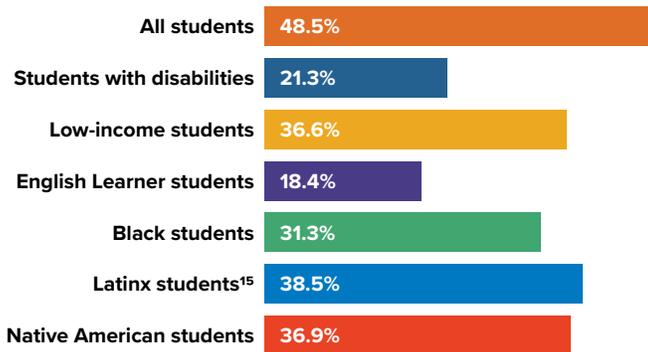
Adequately and Equitably Investing in Public Education to Activate the Potential of Every Child

Even though public school funding has increased considerably since the passage of Proposition 30 and the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), California lags behind many states in per pupil funding. On average, California spends \$12,498 per pupil, compared to over \$20,000 per pupil in places like New York, New Jersey, and Washington DC. Educational outcomes are low, and troubling disparities by race/ethnicity, gender, language, and disability persist.

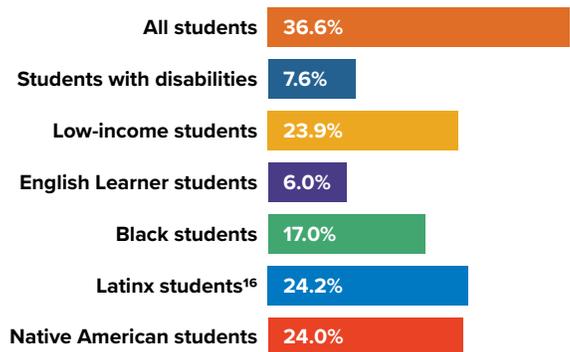
There are **6.2 million** students attending public schools in California. **62%** of all students are lower-income, English Learner students, or foster youth.

EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES VARY SUBSTANTIALLY ACROSS RACE, INCOME, LANGUAGE, AND OTHER FACTORS.

PERCENTAGE OF THIRD GRADERS THAT MET OR EXCEEDED THE STATE'S LITERACY STANDARDS IN 2019



PERCENTAGE OF 8TH GRADERS THAT MET OR EXCEEDED THE STATE'S LITERACY STANDARDS IN 2019



California is home to the nation's largest population of students classified as English Learners in K-12 schools, and Dual Language Learners (DLLs), who are children, birth to age five, learning two or more languages simultaneously. **Twenty percent** of all K-12 students are English Learners and **60%** of children under age six are from homes in which languages other than English are spoken. Overall, **41% or 2.5 million** students speak a language other than English in their homes. Students in California speak over 75 different languages.

Questions for Voters

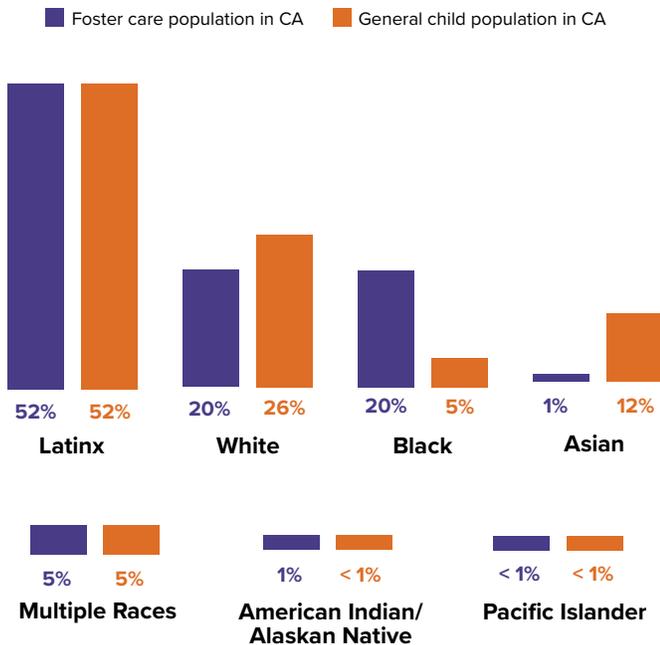
- 1 What is the candidate's plan for improving school accountability, transparency, and community engagement to better meet the needs of low income students, foster youth and English learners?
- 2 How does the candidate plan to support counties and districts in providing academic and social-emotional supports to students, especially to students who face the greatest barriers to success?
- 3 How does the candidate plan to transform the culture and climate of public schools and early learning programs to address racial bias that leads to the disproportionate disengagement and pushout of Black students and other students of color?
- 4 How do the candidate's policy priorities incorporate early childhood learning and care programs so that they better serve the needs of children of color and other marginalized groups?

Child Welfare

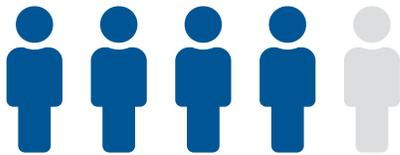
Improving Outcomes for Children Involved in California's Child Welfare System

California's child welfare system has historically been overly reliant on foster care, group homes, and congregate care resulting in adverse outcomes for children and youth. Positive investments in prevention, early intervention, and communities are needed to strengthen families and support the development of all children.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH OF COLOR — ESPECIALLY BLACK CHILDREN — ARE DISPROPORTIONATELY REPRESENTED IN CALIFORNIA'S FOSTER CARE SYSTEM.



LGBTQ+ YOUTH ARE 3X MORE LIKELY TO LIVE IN A FOSTER HOME OR GROUP CARE, OR AWAITING PLACEMENT THAN NON-LGBTQ+ YOUTH.



In L.A. County, an estimated **4 out of 5** youths in probation placement or camp had been referred to child protective services for maltreatment at least once.

Questions for Voters

- 1 Children and families who come into contact with the child welfare system have experienced intergenerational trauma. How does the candidate ensure that our most vulnerable children are receiving the appropriate trauma-informed care?
- 2 How does the candidate ensure that the child welfare system has the capacity and resources to recruit and train prospective foster parents?
- 3 Does the candidate have ideas for the role that technology play in facilitating information exchange efforts to support providers, youth, and others involved with California's child welfare system?

In 2018, an estimated _____

486,634 Children

in California were abused and neglected.

Approximately _____

59,172 Children

were placed in foster care, group homes, or congregate care settings - often as a result of systemic factors like racism and poverty.

Immigration

Standing by Children in Immigrant Families

Anti-immigrant rhetoric; executive orders to expand immigration enforcement and limit immigration; the decisions to end Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) programs; and changes to long-standing public charge rules that limit access and utilization of public benefits for children in immigrant and mixed-status families are damaging and placing immigrant families and their children across the state at risk.

Children in immigrant families are the driving force behind future growth of the population, labor force, and economy. California needs to do more to ensure that all children—regardless of immigration status—are safe, healthy, and able to thrive.



Nearly half of all California children (about 4 million) live in immigrant families.



California is home to over **200,000 DACA-enrolled individuals** of the estimated 800,000 living in the U.S.

Questions for Voters

1

Research shows that heightened immigration enforcement has harmful effects on children's well-being. How does the candidate ensure that children in immigrant families are better supported?

2

What is the candidate's stance on safe havens for immigrants in community spaces like hospitals, schools, and churches?

3

As the federal government moves to limit access and utilization of public benefits for children in immigrant and mixed-status families, how will the candidate ensure that the basic needs of these children are met?

About **1 in 6 children** in California have at least one parent who is undocumented.



Heightened immigration enforcement that leads to deportation or detainment shatters families and may result in significantly reduced incomes, housing and food insecurity, and increased risk of entering the child welfare system for children.

Technology

Leveraging Technology to Improve the Future for California Children

Advances in technology have the potential to enhance health care, education, child welfare, and other fields that touch the lives of California's children. But the state has been slow in promoting innovations such as telehealth and virtual dental homes, and in securing other digital priorities such as STEM education and affordable broadband access for every child. In the midst of a pandemic, there has been an increased awareness about disparities in access to technology across the state. More needs to be done to ensure advances in technology benefit the health and opportunities for advancement for all youth and families.



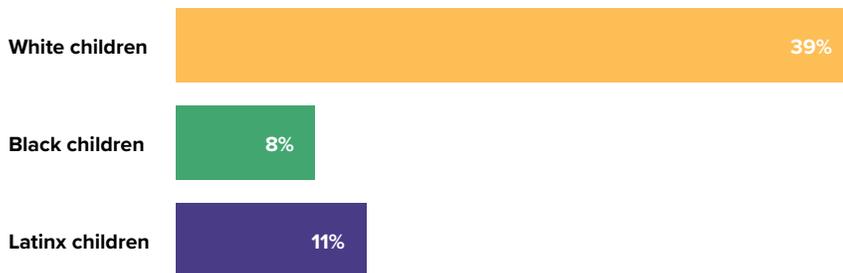
Only **one in ten** California elementary students receives interactive and engaging science instruction on a regular basis.



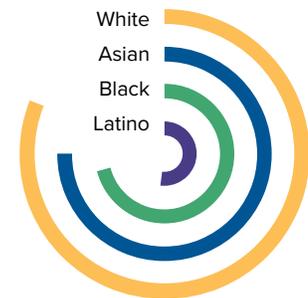
In rural areas of California, approximately **43 percent** of households reported internet access was unavailable, or unreliable.

DISPARITIES PERSIST FOR CHILDREN OF COLOR IN TERMS OF STEM EDUCATION AND CAREERS

In 2011, 39 percent of White eighth graders reached the proficiency level in science while only 8 percent of Black students and 11 percent of Latinx students reached that level. 20% of California public school students do not have access to internet at home



Latinx families are still much less likely to use broadband than Black, Asian, and White families.



Questions for Voters

- 1 How will this candidate work to increase equitable access to broadband and information technology resources to help children learn and thrive?
- 2 How would this candidate increase STEM opportunities for families in low-income communities?
- 3 Telehealth has been proven to increase access and outcomes for children and youth where there are healthcare access issues or provider shortages. How does the candidate prioritize advancing telehealth technologies, updating Medi-Cal reimbursement and other policies to address children's needs?

Youth Justice

Transforming Our Youth Justice System to Promote the Well-Being of Youth, Families and Their Communities

Despite recent historic reductions in crime across the state, police officers, probation officers, prosecutors, judges, and public officials continue to over-criminalize predominantly Black, Indigenous youth of color and invest in harmful and ineffective punitive approaches to address youth behavior. Transformation of the juvenile justice system—particularly through local and statewide reinvestment in oversight and community, health and school-based youth development services—is essential to advance the well-being of youth, families and their communities.



As of June 2020, Latinx youth accounted for 59% of youth incarcerated in the state-run youth prison system (CA Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Division of Juvenile Justice, “DJJ”) and Black youth accounted for 29%. Black youth are 31 times more likely to be committed to DJJ than their white peers.



Among California’s incarcerated youth, about 1 in 10 boys and 1 in 2 girls are LGBTQ+. Over 90% of incarcerated LGBTQ youth are children of color.



From 2010-2019, statewide crime rates fell by 12%, including a 5% decrease in violent crimes and a 13% decline in property crimes. California’s 2019 crime rate was the lowest since 1969 when the state first began to compile statewide crime statistics.

Questions for Voters

- 1 How does the candidate demonstrate an authentic understanding of how racism influences decisions made by police officers, probation officers, prosecutors and judges throughout the juvenile justice process, and what actions has the candidate taken in response?
- 2 How does the candidate define public safety in terms of law enforcement, surveillance, punishment, and incarceration?
- 3 How does the candidate relate public safety to investments in people and communities, particularly in education, healthcare, housing, conflict resolution and recreational and job opportunities?
- 4 How does the candidate prioritize direct communication with community members, particularly youth and families directly impacted by the juvenile justice system, to gather substantive ideas and feedback?

Ballot Initiatives & How/Where to Vote

Building a Better State and Nation for Children: The Power of our Vote

Voting is the most effective way to make your voice heard on the issues that matter most to you. The 2020 Election serves as a critical opportunity to impact the lives of California's children, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. Our organizations have come together to educate voters and advocate for policies that ensure every child has the same chance for a healthy and bright future - a future that is only possible when we all vote.

To check your voter status click [here](#).

To learn about Same Day Voter Registration click [here](#).

Official California Voter information [Guide](#)



BALLOT INITIATIVES

In California, citizens have the right to initiate legislation through the ballot initiative process or repeal legislation through the veto referendum. This General Election will include multiple statewide propositions on the ballot for the General Election. To learn more about the multiple ballot initiatives, visit the California Secretary of State site [here](#).

Proposition 15

Ballot title as it appears: Increases Funding for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property

What it Does:

Increases funding for K-12 public schools, community colleges, and local governments.

Increased property taxes on commercial properties worth more than \$3 million will provide \$6.5 billion to \$11.5 billion in new funding to local governments and schools.

Commercial industrial real property will be taxed based on current market value instead of the property value when they purchased it.

Exempts from this change:

Residential properties; agricultural properties; and owners of commercial and industrial properties with combined value of \$3 million or less. Small businesses from personal property tax; for other businesses, exempts \$500,000 worth of personal property.

The initiative is a constitutional amendment and requires a majority of voters to approve Prop. 15 to go into effect.

1 minute video on Prop. 15: <https://youtu.be/UiXekiTyXlq>

Proposition 16

Ballot title as it appears: Allows diversity as a factor in public employment, education, and contracting decisions.

What it Does:

Restores affirmative action in California by allowing government decision-making policies to consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in order to address diversity.

It repeals the constitutional provision prohibiting such policies.

Since affirmative action was banned, the sheer number of Black and Latinx students admitted as freshmen to the UC has quadrupled. But while Black and Latinx students make up 60% of California's high school enrollment, they comprise just 28% of UC freshmen admits in 2019.

The effects of the measure depend on the future choices of state and local government entities and are highly uncertain.

1 minute video on Prop. 16: <https://youtu.be/lsR3s-rCmXM>



Voter Information: Key Dates To Remember



October 5, 2020

California counties will begin mailing vote-by-mail ballots to **ALL** registered voters. This year, everyone who is registered to vote will get a mail-in ballot



October 19, 2020

Deadline to Register to Vote.
Register: <https://registertovote.ca.gov/>



November 3, 2020

Election Day
Polls are open from 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.



Conclusion

While children experience different starting points in life, we must recognize that all children in California should have access to opportunities that lead to prosperity for themselves, our state, and our nation. Children whose daily lives are disrupted by the negative outcomes associated with economic instability are less likely to grow into the adults California and the nation needs to ensure a bright future. This is true regardless of their zip code, their family structure, their race and ethnicity, or the immigration status of their families.

We know investments in public programs that support health, education, and equity for all children produce returns into adulthood in the form of productivity and contributions to society. As our child population becomes even more diverse, it becomes even more critical for California's leaders to develop policies and systems that reduce the number of children who are economically and socially disadvantaged - only then will we be able build a brighter future for all of us.



Resources and citations available at www.childrenspartnership.org/tools-list/voter-guide-2020



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