



## Deliberative Poll Affirms Californians' Desire For Change

08/22/11 by What's Next California



Californians are eager for change and they are ready to take ownership to ensure that it happens.

This is the key takeaway from What's Next California's [Deliberative Poll results](#), which were released on Monday.

The poll took place on a sunny, late-June weekend in Torrance. Four hundred Californians from all walks of life were carefully chosen to best represent California's entire voting population and given accommodations for the weekend.

They were polled on the same set of issues before and after spending two days discussing those issues in moderated small group session and large plenary Q & A's. It was a massive undertaking meant to provide some of the most viable polling data around.

Monday at a news conference in Sacramento, [What's Next California](#) released a detailed analysis of the differences between the before and after polls. Here is what we found:

There was a significant increase (+47%) in the desire for longer state legislative terms, a decrease in the desire for a part-time legislature (-18%), and an increase in support for expanding the legislature (+13%). "The participants clearly thought that legislators needed to spend less time campaigning and more time legislating if they were to represent their districts effectively," said the authors of the analysis.

On the ballot initiative process, attendees were heavily against allowing lawmakers the power to amend an approved initiative (24% in favor), and even more so at the end of the weekend (18% in favor). They were, however, in favor of allowing the authors of the initiative to make changes after the fact (76% wanted this, a +17% change). And finally, they wanted the Top 5 financial backers of the pro and con campaigns for each initiative to be made public (91% of attendees in favor).

James Fishkin, who spearheaded this effort and has conducted deliberative polls all over the world through Stanford's Center for Deliberative Democracy took this to mean one thing: "They believe this is the people's process."

Hear more on the results from Fishkin, as well as Lenny Mendonca, who was another primary sponsor of the poll, in the video below. You'll also hear from Pastor Joyce Cooksey James, who was a participant in the polling weekend. She echoed the sentiment of many who attended: that it inspired them to think differently about their relationship with government and their community.