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Voters unhappy with politicians, but ambivalent on reforms

California voters are unhappy with their political figures' performance and want change, but are ambivalent that would improve government efficacy, a new "deliberative poll" has found.

The poll was organized and financed by a consortium of foundations and think tanks under the rubric of "**What's Next California?**" and brought together a cross-section of more than 400 voters in Torrance two months ago.

Their attitudes were tested at the onset and then again after they received briefings on legislative representation, the initiative process, local government and tax and budget policy. The results were released Monday at a Sacramento news conference.

While there were marked attitudinal changes on some issues, the net results largely mirrored results of recent telephone surveys by the Field Poll, the Public Policy Institute of California and the USC/Los Angeles Times poll.

The participants were willing to lengthen legislators' terms, but not allow them to fiddle with pending ballot measures. They want reforms in the initiative system - mostly giving voters more information - but "had little interest in reforms that would enable the Legislature to affect initiatives' content."

The cross-section has more faith in local governments than in the state's political apparatus, and seem to be willing to give local officials more control over revenues. And while participants expressed general support for adequately financing public services, they were not supportive of tax changes that might cost them more money. They supported only modifying Proposition 13 to allow non-residential property to be assessed more frequently.

The full report on the session is available [here](#).

Posted by **Dan Walters**

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