

A QUIET REVOLUTION

The Early Successes of California's Top Two Nonpartisan Primary

August 2015

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**The Early Successes of California's
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by Jason Olson and Omar Ali

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Summary

The enactment of the Top Two Nonpartisan Primary in California has had three significant consequences since it went into effect in 2012:

1) **More competitive elections.** California elections are now the most competitive in the nation, with a record number of incumbents defeated under the new system. Additionally, the nonpartisan nature of Top Two has created competition even in districts where one major party holds a significant advantage over the other with the introduction of “same-party” races.

2) **All voters have the right to equal participation.** Under the old partisan system, nearly 80% of California’s legislative and Congressional races were decided in the primary. This discouraged participation from or outright excluded voters not associated with the majority party of their district. Under the new system, all voters now have full access to both the first and final round of the election process. This has forced candidates to appeal beyond their party’s base.

3) **A functional legislature.** California is no longer a national symbol for legislative dysfunction. Members of the legislature, who must now be elected by building diverse coalitions of voters rather than toeing the party line, head to Sacramento incentivized to continue similar outreach while in office.

We believe that the rapid and transformative impact of Top Two in California can serve as a blueprint for others looking to reduce legislative dysfunction and voter disengagement.

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Background

California voters enacted comprehensive campaign finance and disclosure regulations in 1974 after the Watergate scandal.¹ While these regulations provided voters, academics, and journalists with a comprehensive view of the individuals and organizations funding electoral activity in California, they did not prevent or diminish the “partisanization” of the political and legislative environment. To the contrary, by 2009, California’s Legislature was ranked among the most dysfunctional in the nation and voter approval was in the teens.

Still, members of the legislature enjoyed a very high incumbency return rate. Party leaders used a complicated system of gerrymandering and semi-closed partisan primaries to ensure that incumbents were guaranteed re-election and would vote the party line.

Seeking an answer to partisan tensions and gridlock in the 1990s, Californians had enacted a blanket primary measure via ballot in 1996. The blanket primary allowed all voters to participate in any party primary race.² However in 2000, the U.S. Supreme Court rejected the blanket primary design ruling that parties, as private entities, had a right to exclude non-party members from participating in their nominating process.

After the blanket primary was dismantled in 2000, public confidence in the state’s governing institutions plummeted. The impact was negative and far reaching.³ There were protracted budget battles, near government shutdowns, and other crises manufactured for partisan gain. During this time, elections were largely noncompetitive. Only two incumbents in the entire state were defeated in all elections between 2002 and 2010.⁴ The legislature’s public approval rating sunk to a record low of 14% by 2010.⁵

In 2003, California voters revolted. In that year, Governor Gray Davis was recalled. He was replaced by the iconoclastic and nonpartisan Arnold Schwarzenegger.

A broad left/right reform coalition evolved to eliminate the structural partisanship built into the electoral system. This coalition remade California politics by creating a nonpartisan and fully independent redistricting commission and enacting a nonpartisan Top Two primary.⁶

The Top Two Nonpartisan Primary coalition included independent voter associations, business leaders, the AARP, Chamber of Commerce, Common Cause, issue advocacy organizations, philanthropists and reform-minded elected officials—most notably State Controller Steve Westly, Governor Schwarzenegger, Lt. Governor Abel Maldonado, and former Assemblyman Steve Peace. These disparate forces came together to bring a constitutionally sound open primary system back to California. They recruited nationally known constitutional scholars and election law experts, studied the Supreme Court’s decision, and drafted a new open primary initiative to meet the Court’s specific tests. In 2010, despite being opposed by every political party in California, the California Top Two Primaries Act (Proposition 14) passed with 54% of the vote.⁷ The state has used the system to conduct all statewide and congressional elections since 2012.

Understanding California's Political Dysfunction Under the Old Partisan System

Prior to the implementation of Top Two nonpartisan primaries, California was considered one of the most partisan political environments in the nation. Run-away deficits and gridlocked budgets were standard. Lawmakers brave enough to work across party lines found a system rigged against them.

When former Assemblymembers Joe Canciamilla, a Democrat, and Keith Richman, a Republican, established a bipartisan working group to discuss solutions for pressing problems facing the state, they were forced to meet in secret. Members of the group refused to publicly acknowledge their participation in the effort for fear of retribution from party leadership. The working group was ultimately forced to dissolve.⁸

Partisan Dysfunction in the Legislature...

The performance of the legislature was described by analysts and the general public as dysfunctional and extremely partisan:

- A 2005 Government Performance Project of the Pew Charitable Trust graded the California government a “C-minus;” the lowest grade in the nation.⁹
- A 2009 National Journal review of state governments named California among the most dysfunctional state governments.¹⁰
- In 2010, the California State Legislature broke a record for consecutive days without a budget and missed its constitutional budget deadline in 16 of the previous 20 years, largely due to partisans acting as a bloc to take advantage of the state’s two-thirds budget requirement.¹¹
- The 2010 Legislature had a record-low 14% public

approval rating and record-high 72% disapproval rating.¹²

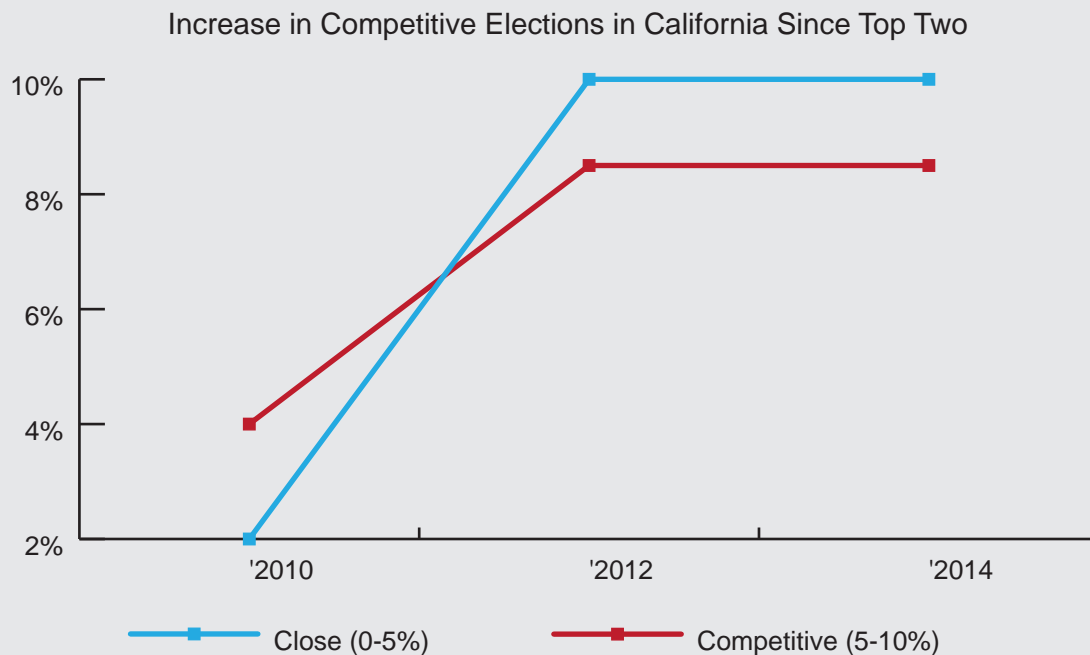
- An analysis of the 2011-2012 State Legislature, the last elected under the old system, showed that Democratic officials voted “the party line” 99% of the time while Republican officials similarly took a partisan position 94% of the time.¹³

...Caused by Partisan Control of Elections

Under the old system, partisan gerrymandering and long-term demographic shifts had solidified most of California’s election districts as one-party districts. For instance in 2010, 79% of the members of the California Legislature and the California Congressional delegation did not face competitive November elections.¹⁴ This meant that once the candidate of the dominant major party in a district won their primary, which under the old system was limited primarily to members of their own party, they did not face a real challenge in the November election.

Essentially, in realpolitik terms, 79% of California elected officials won office without having to communicate with voters outside of their own party. Furthermore, this led to a system that incentivized toeing “the party line” over what was best for all voters. This was a structural flaw—not a personal failing on behalf of individual elected officials.

Competitive Top Two Nonpartisan Elections Break the Partisan Gridlock



Source: Statewide Election Results for 2010, 2012, and 2014, *California Secretary of State*

Since enacting the Top Two primary system, political observers around the country have been impressed with the relative lack of acrimony in California's Legislature compared with both Congress and California's own recent history. As we will discuss later, the state has passed balanced budgets on time in each year since 2012 and has enacted legislation on issues that previously would have triggered partisan intransigence. Such issues include education financing, immigration, and gun control.¹⁵

What changed? In a word, "competition." California's Legislature transformed because a growing number of its members are elected in competitive elections. This may sound like a trivial point. It is not.

Under Top Two California Boasts Most Competitive Elections in America

An annual study by the Lucy Burns Institute of all state legislative elections in the country from 2008 to 2014 shows California as the most competitive for the 2012-2014 period and shows a 25% increase in competition over California's 2010 score (the last year of partisan elections), which ranked the state ninth.¹⁶

Analyzing elections based on the margin of victory also shows a dramatic increase in electoral competitiveness. The number of races deemed "close," with a margin of victory of less than 5%, increased from less than 3% in 2010 to about 10% in both 2012 and 2014. Races deemed "competitive," with a margin of victory between 5% and 10%, more than doubled from 4%

in 2010 to 8.5% in both 2012 and 2014.

Moreover “blowouts,” races with margins of victory of more than 20% and uncontested races, decreased significantly from 79% in 2010 to 56% in 2012 and to 63% in 2014.¹⁷ Similarly, a Public Policy Institute of California study of the 2012 election found a significant increase in competitiveness—especially among Congressional races.¹⁸

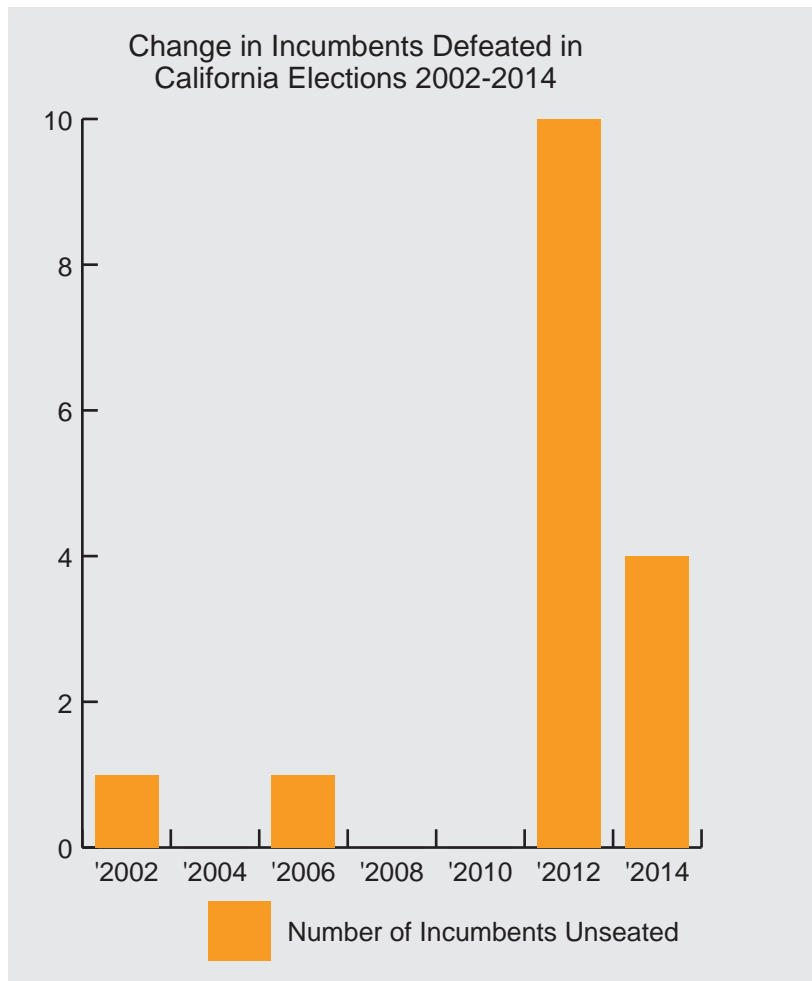
Today, approximately 50% of all races in California are competitive.¹⁹ The legislature is filled with elected officials who have, by virtue of the design of the Top Two system which allows all voters to participate in both the primary and the general election, built broad coalitions in order to win their seats.

Record Number of Incumbents Defeated Under Top Two

The switch from semi-closed, partisan primaries to Top Two nonpartisan primaries has led to a dramatic increase in the number of unseated incumbent elected officials.

Under California’s old partisan system, only two incumbents were defeated in all State Legislative and Congressional elections between 2002 and 2010 (five election cycles). The “unlucky” two included Democratic Congressman Gary Condit, who was caught up in the Chandra Levy murder investigation in 2002 (he was later exonerated), and Republican Congressman Richard Pombo, who was caught up in the 2006 Jack Abramoff bribery scandal. During this period in California, unless they were being investigated for murder or caught in a national bribery scandal, a political incumbent’s chance of re-election was 100%.

The implementation of Top Two saw incumbents defeated in record numbers. In 2012, 10 incumbents lost their re-election bids, including Pete Stark, who was unseated by fellow Democrat Eric Swalwell in a same-party general election. He had never once faced a competitive November re-election during his nearly 40 years in Congress. In 2014, another four incum-



Source: Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, California Secretary of State

bents were defeated.²⁰ In addition, many long serving incumbents retired ahead of the 2012 elections rather than face the new political landscape.²¹

Top Two “Same Party” Races Bring Competition to Formerly Noncompetitive Districts

Same-party races, a new feature under Top Two, also significantly increased competitiveness by introducing actual contests in districts where one major party holds a significant advantage over the other (e.g., election districts in the largely Democrat-held San Francisco Bay Area). Ironically, while opponents of Top Two often point to same-party races as evidence of a lack of competition under the system, same-party races actually produced 50% of the total incumbent defeats from

2012 to 2014 and forced many formerly “safe” elected officials to face legitimate challenges.

Under the old partisan system, election districts controlled by a single political party (a significant number under the previously gerrymandered 2001 district boundaries) produced completely noncompetitive general elections and effectively sidelined any voter not registered with that majority party. Under the new Top Two system, election districts with high Democratic or Republican voter registration now have a significant chance of producing a general election between two candidates of the dominant party, thus forcing those candidates to reach beyond their party’s base and speak to all the voters.

The results have been dramatic. In 2012, incumbents in districts dominated by one party were more than twice as likely to face an intra-party challenge than in prior elections when a closed primary system was in place.²² In 2012, there were 28 same-party general elections in California (18.3% of all U.S. House and State Legislative races) and same-party general elections accounted for six out of the ten incumbents defeated that year.²³ According to the Public Policy Institute of California, all but one of the same-party general election races occurred in districts that were unlikely to have hosted competitive races in the past.²⁴ In 2014, there were 25 same-party general elections in California (16.3%), and they accounted for one of the four incumbents defeated.²⁵

Opponents of the Top Two nonpartisan primary point to the races illustrated above and the growing number of Democrat-on-Democrat and Republican-on-Republican general elections as evidence that Top Two restricts voter choice. They assert that a general election in which the two candidates are registered members of the same party is, by definition, restrictive. This is false and misleading. In fact, the incumbency rates previously cited show that under the old system, the Democrat vs. Republican general elections in the vast majority of California legislative districts were the very definition of restrictive and noncompetitive. Same-party general elections actual-

ly allow the voters, rather than party insiders, to decide who represents a particular district.

Same-party contests of this kind also demand more from the electorate. The California Journal of Politics and Policy notes that Internet searches about candidates on Google increased 15% in areas with same-party races. The researchers concluded that without the ability to rely solely on party identification, “many California residents subsequently searched online for additional information.”²⁶

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Top Two Allows All Voters to Participate Equally

While the old, partisan system was highly restrictive in terms of which voters were able to cast meaningful votes, Top Two has expanded that universe to include all voters. This is especially impactful as the number of independent voters (called “No Party Preference”) continues to overtake both major parties in total share of the electorate.²⁷ Close to 43% of Americans currently self-identify as independent.²⁸

The percentage of California voters that identify as independent has been rising steadily for the last fifteen years. In 2007, independent voters comprised 18% of the California electorate. Today, they represent close to 25%.²⁹ The growth of minority voters identifying as independent has followed a similar course with the fastest growth among Latinos; 17% of Latino voters now identify as independent.³⁰

Under the old system, these voters were second-class citizens. Their tax dollars were used to conduct semi-closed primary elections that they, themselves, could not participate in, or else faced significant hurdles to do so.³¹ In practice, only major-party voters living in a district that their party controlled could have a meaningful vote. Major-party voters “marooned” in districts controlled by the opposite party, as well as third-party voters, almost never had a meaningful opportunity to participate under the old system.

All voters in California are now able to participate meaningfully, whether they opt to join a political party or not. Every voter has access to the primary round where the issues are often shaped and the two front runners are selected. Every voter can select from among all the candidates, not just members of their own party. Voters are afforded general elections which are increasingly competitive. Moreover, the votes of independents and minority party members matter in ways that they did not before because all voters are

able to join the political conversation during the first round.

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Case Studies: Competitive Elections and Equal Voter Participation Impact Politics

Two vivid examples of Top Two's dramatic impact are the 2012 election between Democratic incumbent Michael Allen and Democrat Marc Levine, vying for the 10th Assembly District seat in Marin County, and in the 2015 special election between Democrats Steve Glazer and Susan Bonilla for the 7th State Senate District seat in the East Bay region of the San Francisco Bay Area.

2012 Assembly District 10: Incumbent Michael Allen (D) vs. Insurgent Marc Levine (D)

Under the old partisan system, incumbent Democrat Michael Allen would have been assured an easy general election victory against an “also-ran” Republican in his majority Democratic district in Marin County. Instead in 2012, under the new Top Two system, Allen found himself facing fellow Democrat Marc Levine in the general election. Levine had finished second in the primary. In addition to speaking to Democrats, Levine reached out to the independents and Republicans in his district; voters who had been ignored for the past decade. Allen conducted a highly partisan general election campaign by labeling Levine “not a real Democrat” for his outreach efforts among non-Democrats. Levine’s broad outreach proved the winning strategy. He was able to win the race by creating a coalition of Democrats, Republicans and independents.³²

2015 Special Election: Steve Glazer (D) vs. Party-Endorsed Susan Bonilla (D)

The special election for State Senate District 7, located in the Democratic Party-dominated San Francisco Bay Area, produced a similar dynamic to the Levine vs. Allen race. The election featured a Top Two showdown between Democrat Steve Glazer and Democrat Susan Bonilla.³³ In the primary campaign, Glazer reached out to independents and Republicans, as well

as Democrats while Bonilla campaigned exclusively to Democratic voters. After Bonilla and Glazer finished in the top two, Glazer increased his outreach to independents and Republicans by appealing as widely as possible. The State Democratic Party endorsed Bonilla. The party and select unions spent millions of dollars attacking Glazer as “not a real Democrat” for conducting a campaign designed to appeal to a diversity of voters. Bonilla ran a traditional campaign designed primarily to appeal to the Democratic Party base, a strategy which would have been more than sufficient to assure her victory under the old system against an “also-ran” Republican challenger. Glazer won the race by 10 points.

Both these examples demonstrate that the Top Two primary system in California is offering candidates more independence from party leaders and more opportunities to build coalitions which not only win elections but better represent, and are more accountable to, the actual make-up of their districts. Neither major party has been immune from such forces; 2012 races for California State Assembly alone saw seven districts with Republican same-party races.³⁴

A Functioning Legislature

The impact of Top Two's competitive elections and voter inclusion on the behavior of the State Legislature was immediate. While legislative performance is extremely difficult to quantify, political observers and legislators themselves have pointed to a number of examples of functional governance replacing partisan dysfunction. In addition to those examples and statements made by key political figures, the legislature's public approval ratings have soared.

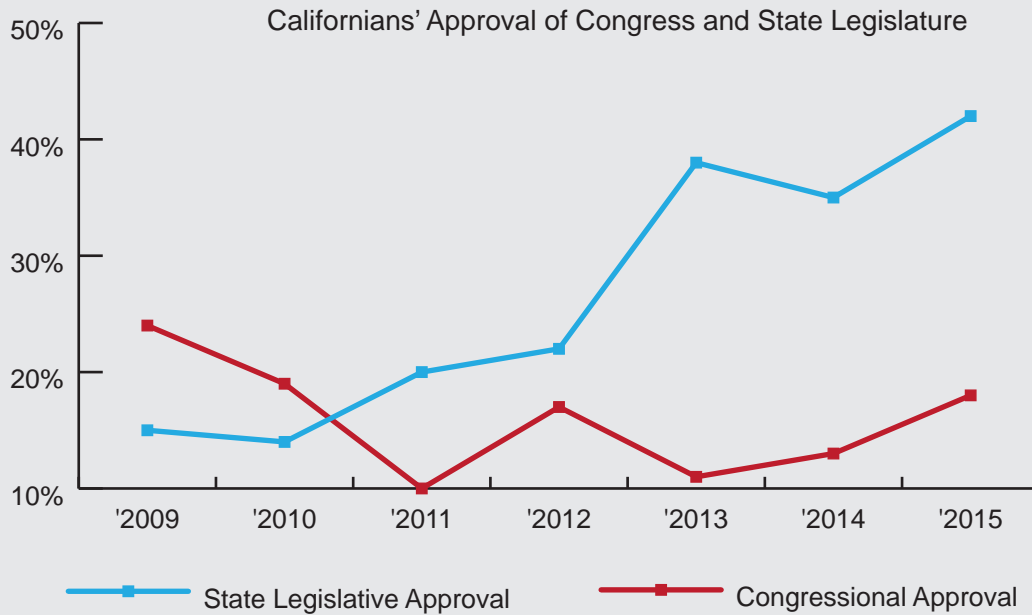
Governance, Not Partisanship, in the Legislature

The Legislature that took office in January 2013, while two-thirds Democratic (California's first two-thirds majority since 1933), was populated by many Democratic legislators who owed no debt to party insiders and special interest groups. Similarly, many Republicans in the chamber were, by virtue of the diverse coalitions they had constructed during their election campaigns, able to challenge their own party leadership and enter into issue-by-issue conversations and coalitions with their Democratic colleagues.

Quantifying the performance of a state legislature is a notoriously difficult task. "Performance" is, by definition, subjective. We can assert that legislators who win office by building broad coalitions do the same once in office. An electoral system that incentivizes candidates to reach beyond the activist base of their own party produces similar behavior once in office.

Without attempting to pass judgment on whether the bills passed by California's new cooperative legislature are beneficial to the state (which is an ideological question), we can cite accomplishments noted by political observers and politicians as evidence of a new environment in the legislature. Some of these include:

- Several legislators publicly broke with their party on critical votes. Democrat Marc Levine, who had defeated fellow Democratic incumbent Michael Allen in a same-party general election, angered environmentalists (a strong Democratic constituency) when he helped scuttle a measure that would have given the Coastal Commission authority to levy additional fines. Three Assembly Democrats broke with the labor unions when they voted against new regulations aimed at curtailing additional big box stores, defeating the measure.³⁵
- The California Legislature has met its constitutional deadline for budget approval in each year under Top Two. While some might assert that is due to the lowering of the number of votes required to pass a budget, it should be noted that many government functions can be "hijacked" by partisans for partisan gain (for instance judicial and cabinet post approvals currently held up by Republicans in Congress), and that Top Two has removed both the incentive to do so as well as the power of the party leadership to command it because legislators must now answer to all voters.³⁶
- Republican State Senator Anthony Cannella put it bluntly when he stood with Democrats to co-sponsor legislation allowing undocumented immigrants to obtain drivers licenses. He remarked that the redistricting and nonpartisan election changes were freeing lawmakers from obedience to their party bases and allowing them to engage more broadly on specific issues. "It's given more courage to my Republican colleagues," he said. "They were afraid of getting primaried. Now, it's not just their base they have to appeal to."³⁷



Source: Field Research Corporation, The Field Poll #2498 and #2500, February 21-25, 2015.

Legislature's Public Approval Ratings Rebound

California's new legislative environment, which is less partisan-controlled and more cooperative, has led to a dramatic increase in public approval ratings for its state legislature. Public approval has risen to its highest levels since 2001. So, while Congressional approval ratings among Californians remain low at 18% approval and 73% disapproval (virtually unchanged since 2010), 42% of Californians now approve of their state legislature (up from 14% in 2010) and 44% now disapprove (down from 72% in 2010).³⁸

Current and Former Legislators See Top Two Change

In addition to Senator Canella, other members of the Legislature, both past and present, have commented upon the culture change in Sacramento.

- Assemblywoman Autumn Burke of the California Legislative Black Caucus, which has expanded its membership from eight to twelve under the Top Two primary system recently stated, "as challenging as

the open primary system has been for many of us, it's kept us in touch with our constituents."³⁹

- Democratic Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins told one reporter that the combination of Top Two and term limits has created "wholehearted change in how the legislature is structured and comes together."⁴⁰
- Legendary Democratic politician Willie Brown, the former Assembly Speaker and the 41st Mayor of San Francisco, declared Top Two a game-changer for the state. "Like it or not," notes Brown, "the Glazer-Bonilla battle is likely to be the template for future elections statewide. The top-two primary system has taken elections out of the hands of party insiders and allowed competing Democrats and Republicans to strike out on their own to attract crossover voters."⁴¹

Conclusion

Since Top Two's implementation in the 2012 election cycle, California's elections have (1) become the most competitive in the nation, (2) expanded the power of meaningful voting to all citizens, and (3) transformed the state's once hostile partisan climate into one focused on functional governance. California's Top Two experience offers a path forward to transform America's partisan paralysis into a system focused on functional governance that benefits the people, not the political parties.

The increase in electoral competitiveness in California has been significant. Independent studies cite California's elections as the most competitive in the nation. Incumbents have been defeated in record numbers after decades of near-invulnerability. Same-party races, despite being cited by opponents of Top Two as a sign of lack of competition, have empowered voters, especially those in election districts dominated by one party, compelling candidates to appeal to all voters. Moreover under Top Two, not only has California's Legislative Black Caucus grown, but Latino voters, a growing number of whom are registered independents, now have full access to the electoral system.⁴²

For those seeking a way forward from the partisanship and polarization that has enveloped Congress, state legislatures and the country as a whole, the early success of Top Two in California can serve as a national model. In a number of ways such structural political reform efforts are part of the nation's long struggles, from the Populists, Women's Suffragists, and Civil Rights activists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to expand democracy in the nation.⁴³

The empowerment of all voters, particularly independents, to participate equally in the process has had profound effects on the state's political culture. In several case studies, candidates in same party races who pursued strategies to engage all voters won significant victories over party endorsed candidates who conducted partisan campaigns. Voters, independents and members of parties alike, now have full

access to the first round of elections and the opportunity to cast ballots in genuinely competitive contests in November.

The direct impact of increased electoral competitiveness and equal participation among all voters has changed the environment in the State Legislature. A number of examples have been cited by politicians and political observers as signs of governance winning out over partisanship: passage of on-time budgets, legislators breaking with their parties on key votes, and bipartisan measures to solve formerly intractable problems. In addition to the many current and former legislators commenting positively on the new environment, the Legislature's public approval ratings have significantly rebounded from their rock-bottom lows under the old partisan system to the highest level since 2001.

In conclusion, it can be confidently asserted that the old system sent elected representatives to Sacramento and Washington with no incentive to cooperate with representatives from the opposing major party. The new system, by contrast, rewards candidates who build diverse coalitions during their election campaigns and who arrive in Sacramento and Washington with a mandate from their constituents to do more than toe the party line.

For Americans fed up with the partisan paralysis of their government, the Top Two Nonpartisan Primary offers real hope for the future. The early success of Top Two in California, what the San Francisco Chronicle has described as a "quiet revolution," serves as an important model nationally to engage partisanship and government dysfunction. However, given the degree of partisan control of government and the political parties' hostility toward relinquishing their power to voters, it will require a concerted long-term effort to win this reform across the nation. The benefits of that labor, however, are promising.⁴⁴



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¹ California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, “Campaign Finance and Lobbying Activities.” <http://www.sos.ca.gov/campaign-lobbying/history-political-reform-division>

² Over 433,000 valid signatures were required to place the measure on the ballot. See California Constitution, Article II, Section 8 (b).

³ “The State of California Voters”, *Public Policy Institute of California*, September, 2008.

⁴ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

⁵ “Californians and their government”, *Public Policy Institute of California*, March, 2010.

⁶ Closed primaries are part of several ways in which competition has been limited by party control of the electoral process through legal measures. For a detailed history and analysis of the structural barriers placed on voters, see Mickey Edwards, *The Parties Versus the People* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2012), Jacqueline S. Salit, *Independents Rising: Outsider Movements, Third Parties, and the Struggle for a Post-Partisan America* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), and Omar H. Ali, *In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third-Party Movements in the United States* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008).

⁷ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

⁸ Daniel Weintrub, “Working across the Aisle: Stories from the California State House,” *Saint Mary’s Magazine*, June 30, 2011.

⁹ Government Performance Project, “Grading the States 2005: A Look Inside,” *Pew Charitable Trust*, 2004-2006. http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pes_assets/2004-2006/GPPReport2005pdf.pdf

¹⁰ Louis Jacobson, “The Six Most Dysfunctional State Governments,” *National Journal*, July 13, 2009. <http://www.nationaljournal.com/njonline/the-six-most-dysfunctional-state-governments-20090713>

¹¹ Chris Weigant, “‘No Budget, No Pay’ Works Once Again in California,” *Huffington Post*, June 16, 2014.

¹² “Californians and their government”, *Public Policy Institute of California*, March, 2010.

¹³ Phillip Reese, “California legislators rarely break from party line in floor votes,” *Sacramento Bee*, October 11, 2012.

¹⁴ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

¹⁵ Chris Weigant, “‘No Budget, No Pay’ Works Once Again in California,” *Huffington Post*, June 16, 2014.

¹⁶ Carl Klarner, “Democracy in Decline: the Collapse of the ‘Close Race’ in State Legislatures,” *Lucy Burns Institute*, May 6, 2015. http://ballotpedia.org/Competitiveness_in_State_Legislative_Elections:_1972-2014

¹⁷ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

¹⁸ “California’s New Electoral Reforms: The Fall Election,” *Public Policy Institute of California*, November 2012. http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1039

¹⁹ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

²⁰ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

²¹ Michael B Marois, “California Nonpartisan Districting Ousts Life Incumbents,” *Bloomberg*, March 19, 2013.

²² “Test-driving California’s Election Reforms,” *Public Policy Institute of California*, September 2012.

²³ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

²⁴ “California’s New Electoral Reforms: The Fall Election,” *Public Policy Institute of California*, November 2012. http://www.ppic.org/main/publication_show.asp?i=1039

²⁵ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

²⁶ Sinclair, Betsy; & Wray, Michael. (2015). “Googling the Top Two: Information Search in California’s Top Two Primary.” *California Journal of Politics and Policy*. <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/1fg8b858>

²⁷ In 2010, the last year under which the old partisan primary system in California was in place, of the state’s approximately 17 million registered voters, around 44% were registered Democrat, 31% Republican, 20% independent (previously termed “Decline to State”), and 5% third party voters. “Report of Registration–October 18, 2010,” *California Secretary of State*. <http://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/report-registration/15day-gen-10/>

²⁸ Jeffrey M. Jones, “In U.S., New Record 43% Are Political Independents,” *Gallup*, January 7, 2015.

²⁹ California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, Odd-Numbered Year Report of Registration, February 10, 2015. <http://elections.cdn.sos.ca.gov/ror/ror-pages/ror-odd-year-2015/hist-reg-stats.pdf>

³⁰ “Latino Likely Voters in California,” *Public Policy Institute of California*, August 2014.

³¹ Kim Alexander, “The California Voters’ Experience”, *California Voter Foundation*, October 29, 2008. http://www.calvoter.org/issues/votereng/calvoters/calvoter_experience.html

³² Nicole Ely, “Levine Holds Edge on Allen in Tight State Assembly Race,” *San Rafael Patch*, November 7, 2012; Barry Donegan, “Partisan Attack in California 10th Assembly District Race,” *Independent Voter Network*, October 3, 2012.

³³ John Wildermuth, “Glazer wins easy victory over Bonilla in state Senate runoff,” *SF Gate*, May 19, 2015.

³⁴ Statewide Election Results for 2002-2014, *California Secretary of State*.

³⁵ Gary Cohn, “In Plain Sight: The Rise of Corporate Democrats in California,” *Capitol and Main*, April 15, 2014

³⁶ Chris Weigant, “No Budget, No Pay’ Works Once Again in California,” *Huffington Post*, June 16, 2014.

³⁷ Adam Nagourney, “California Sees Gridlock Ease in Governing,” *New York Times*, October 18, 2013.

³⁸ *Field Research Corporation*, The Field Poll #2498 and #2500, February 21-25, 2015

³⁹ Hannah Glover, “Black Caucus Grows Stronger under Calif.’s Nonpartisan Primary System,” *Independent Voter Network*, April 28, 2015.

⁴⁰ Jeremy B. White, “California campaign spending boosts business-friendly Democrats,” *Sacramento Bee*, November 23, 2014.

⁴¹ Willie Brown, Jr., “Wake up, Democrats: Steve Glazer’s win is no fluke,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 22, 2015.

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⁴⁴ John Diaz “California’s old political machine is losing steam,” *San Francisco Chronicle*, May 23, 2015 <http://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/diaz/article/California-s-old-political-machine-losing-steam-6282052.php>

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