

**A Study of California Initiatives
1976 - 1986**

by

Michael D. Meyers

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Foreword

The California Constitution gives the electorate the "initiative" power to propose statutes and constitutional amendments, as well as the "referendum" power to reject or approve statutes and parts of statutes enacted by the State Legislature. Scrutiny of Article II of the California Constitution (Sections 8-10) and of the *Elections Code* (Sections 3501-3 and 3530-31) provides information on the complex rules governing subjects such as the circulation and titling of initiative petitions, their qualification, and their amendment or repeal. There is, however, no source to which one can turn for the recent history of initiatives in California and the factors that affect their defeat or passage.

It was to remedy this lack that the Rose Institute first began to collect information on initiatives during the period of 1976 through 1986. With the generous financial support of five organizations -- the California Association of Realtors Issues Mobilization PAC, Chevron U.S.A., the Hewlett-Packard Company, and the Sun Exploration and Production Company -- the Institute then undertook a closer study of the political dynamics of the initiative process. To lead this undertaking, we turned to Michael D. Meyers, a well-known consultant to initiative campaigns and a close student of California's politics over the past decade. We were encouraged in our work by Leo Berman, David Clarke, Gary Fazzino, Dick Kazen, Bob Kirkwood, Bob Kulick, Bill May, and Kerry Morrison.

This study is based on information drawn from the Rose Institute's California Database and from its California Data Network. Among those who contributed to the study one should cite especially Linda Nelson (who coaxed the statistics out of our computers and helped to prepare the final report) and Jerry Simpson (who researched and wrote the historical sections).

The resulting volume, which continues the Rose Institute's tradition of timely studies of practical politics, is presented on an exclusive basis to its contributors -- the California Association of Realtors, Chevron U.S.A., Hewlett-Packard, and Sun Exploration. On behalf of the Rose Institute and its Board of Governors, it is my pleasant duty to express our sincere gratitude to these organizations for their generosity and confidence.

Alan Heslop
Director

Introduction

Our purpose in this study is to examine the relative importance of several factors -- political climate, primary vs. general ballot, regional trends, level of campaign expenditures, and political context as they pertain to voting on initiative measures. In short, this project seeks to identify distinct voting patterns and, if such patterns exist, to determine whether they can be controlled or managed to a campaign's advantage.

In 1986, voters in all but seven states had the opportunity to vote on at least one ballot measure. Yet in few states does the initiative and referendum process play such an important role in the discussion and ultimate determination of public policy as in California. In fact, in the 13 statewide elections since June of 1976, Californians have voted on 38 initiatives and referendums, 38 bond issues, and 76 constitutional amendments.

California Statewide Propositions 1976-1986

| | <u>Adopted</u> | <u>Defeated</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|---------------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Initiatives & Referendums | 19 | 19 | 38 |
| Bond Issues | 31 | 7 | 38 |
| Constitutional Amendments | <u>54</u> | <u>22</u> | <u>76</u> |
| Total | 104 | 48 | 152 |

Despite the millions of dollars spent to influence initiative campaigns every two years, and despite the acknowledged impact of ballot measures on public policy, our understanding of ballot measure voting is surprisingly limited. Granted, we may be familiar with the campaign dynamics of individual initiatives, but our knowledge of voting behavior patterns and the initiative process itself is restricted to a few general observations. We know, for example, that there have been dramatically different success rates for initiatives and referendums appearing on primary election ballots and those placed on general election ballots over the past ten years.

Although 76% of the primary and special election ballot initiatives and referendums have been successful, compared to 22% of those appearing on the November ballot during a presidential campaign, it would be a mistake to ascribe these different success rates to timing alone. The demographic complexion of the primary electorate may be the predominant factor, but other variables may have contributed to this phenomenon, including campaign spending, editorial support, ballot title, and the legislative analyst's statement of fiscal impact. Of course, it may also be attributable to simple coincidence.

Another general observation is that in the past ten years the overwhelming majority of initiatives and referendums have been adopted or defeated by sizeable margins. In fact, only two of the 38 initiatives and referendums have been decided by fewer than 500,000 votes: the Nuclear Freeze initiative in 1982, and Paul Gann's initiative to change the rules of the state legislature in 1984.

'Yes' Vote for Initiatives and Referendums

| <u>'Yes' Vote</u> | <u>Number of Measures</u> | <u>Cumulative</u> |
|-------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| 70.0 - 74.9% | 4 | 4 |
| 65.0 - 69.9% | 0 | 4 |
| 60.0 - 64.9% | 10 | 14 |
| 55.0 - 59.9% | 3 | 17 |
| 50.0 - 54.9% | 2 | 19 |
| 45.0 - 49.9% | 4 | 23 |
| 40.0 - 44.9% | 4 | 27 |
| 35.0 - 39.9% | 7 | 34 |
| 30.0 - 34.9% | 2 | 36 |
| 25.0 - 29.9% | 1 | 37 |
| 20.0 - 24.9% | 1 | 38 |

The finding that 85 percent of initiatives and referendums -- 32 of 38 -- have been decided by margins exceeding 10 percent poses some interesting questions. Most obvious of these is how -- or, perhaps, why -- they went through the initiative process in the first place, given the consensus of public opinion evidenced by the election returns.

If one examines the immensely successful initiatives concerning the death penalty, abolition of the inheritance tax, and income tax indexing -- all of which received little campaign financial support or opposition -- the obvious question is why the state legislature failed to resolve these issues. On the other hand, the resounding defeat of the initiatives concerning gun control, public financing of political campaigns, and AIDS leads one to wonder how the sponsors of these initiatives managed to misread public opinion to such a degree.

Another major observation concerning ballot measure voting since 1976 involves "ideology." By using the descriptive terms of liberal and conservative in a broad sense, 26 of the 38 measures -- about two-thirds -- can be described either as having been perceived by the electorate in liberal/conservative terms or as having been sponsored by groups from either end of the political spectrum.

Liberal vs. Conservative Propositions 1976-1986

| | <u>Adopted</u> | <u>Defeated</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Liberal | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Conservative | <u>11</u> | <u>6</u> | <u>17</u> |
| Total | 13 | 13 | 26 |

The most obvious conclusions to be drawn from these data are that initiatives sponsored by liberal groups fare very poorly, and that conservative groups are much more likely to resort to the initiative process to achieve their political goals. The fact that only slightly more than half of these conservative- and liberal-sponsored initiatives have been adopted supports the contention that most voters do not think of issues in any type of ideological framework and, perhaps even more significant, the notion that voters' opinions on issues do not remain constant over time.

Over the past decade there has been a dramatic increase in the number of initiatives and referendums to qualify for the ballot. The total of 38 measures for the decade under study compares to 20 for the previous six election cycles -- an increase of 90 percent. We intend in this study to identify the common denominators that will explain, and perhaps predict, the success or failure of initiatives. In the next section we present our key findings.

Summary of Key Findings

Initiative activity may already have peaked. The greatest number of initiatives circulated in a recent election cycle was in 1981-1982, when 65 initiatives were submitted and titled by the Attorney General's office. It is getting late in the 1987-1988 election cycle and, to date, only 43 initiatives have entered the qualification process.

Relatively few initiatives are successful. Less than half of all titled initiatives actually qualify for the ballot, and even fewer are ultimately adopted. For the period under study, 1976-1986, only 5.6% of all titled initiatives ended up becoming law. This finding hardly supports the contention that the initiative process is out of control.

The type of election -- general vs. primary or presidential year vs. midterm year -- greatly affects the likelihood of success. More than twice as many primary ballot initiatives (66.7%) have been successful as general election ballot initiatives (31.8%).

Conservative-sponsored initiatives are more successful than initiatives sponsored by liberal interest groups. Over the past decade, conservative groups have dominated the initiative process, in both relative and absolute terms. This finding is probably explained by the fact that conservative proposals have typically been blocked by the Democrat-controlled state legislature, and that liberal groups have been able to accomplish most of their objectives through legislative action.

Initiatives designed to benefit or harm narrow special interest groups are seldom successful. This finding is explained by the reasoning that an initiative that purportedly benefits a narrow special interest group -- landlords, for example -- is not likely to appeal to the rest of the electorate. Initiatives designed to harm special interest groups, aside from generating significant campaign spending against them, have typically been ambiguous and/or poorly drafted, thus allowing campaign opponents to focus on flaws in the initiative and divert attention from the purpose behind it.

Successful initiatives seldom have serious campaigns waged against them. In 11 of the 15 successful initiative efforts spending by campaign opponents was less than \$1 million -- a small sum by statewide standards.

One-sided campaign spending on behalf of an initiative is no guarantee of success. In only one of the 15 successful initiative campaigns, the nuclear freeze issue of 1982, can the argument be made that one-sided 'Yes' spending 'bought' adoption by the voters. Other examples of large one-sided spending would include the 'Save Prop. 13' campaign, rent control, and Howard Jarvis's proposal to cut state income taxes by 50%. All three of these campaigns outspent their opponents by vast margins but were still unsuccessful.

Most successful initiatives were adopted by large margins. This observation, noted in the preceding Introduction, poses the question, once again, of why these initiatives had to resort to the ballot instead of being adopted by the state legislature.

Campaign spending against an initiative representing public sentiment may have no influence at all. In four campaigns against successful initiatives -- Prop. 13, the state lottery, tort reform, and toxic clean-up -- the margin of victory was so great as to raise the question of whether 'No' side spending of in excess of \$3 million had any effect at all on the outcomes.

The influence of large one-sided campaign spending is greatly overrated. For the 19 unsuccessful initiatives, in only four cases -- two smoking initiatives, oil profits surtax, and bottle deposits -- can the argument be made that one-sided spending by the opponents perhaps influenced the outcome.

There is little or no relationship between the amount of money spent for or against an initiative and the percentage of the vote it receives. The conclusion to be drawn from the last five findings is that, by and large, there is no statistical relationship between campaign spending and support for or against an initiative. This suggests that campaign strategy, themes, timing and other tactical techniques are the variables governing outcome or performance.

Ideology is the principal political influence on initiative voting. Although it is acknowledged that initiatives are seldom presented or perceived in partisan terms, the voters appear to perceive and to react to initiatives in distinctly ideological terms.

Income does not influence initiative voting. This is true even when the issue concerns taxes and/or government spending.

California is becoming more homogeneous on issues concerning taxes and spending, while there remain distinct regional differences on social and environmental issues. Actually, the geo-political split in California is no longer North-South but rather East-West.

Successful initiatives have several features in common.

- * They tend to represent standing public opinion. They start out ahead in the polls and stay ahead through Election Day.
- * They are narrow in focus. They are not complicated, and they don't leave themselves open to criticism by the opposition.
- * In most cases -- tort reform being a notable example -- little or no public education is required.
- * They tend to generate little opposition, organized or otherwise.
- * The difficulty of getting through the qualification process screens out unorganized efforts and, by definition, any group organized enough to qualify a measure for the ballot can wage an effective campaign.
- * Timing is a critical factor. Initiatives do better on primary ballots -- when voters can focus attention on them -- as opposed to November ballots -- when attention is focused on partisan candidates.

Unsuccessful initiatives also have several features in common.

- * They are usually flawed when drafted. They tend to be more complicated, thus allowing the opposition to concentrate their attacks on one or two unpopular features of the measure.
- * Most unsuccessful initiatives are simply too complicated and difficult for the average voter to comprehend.
- * They tend to polarize the electorate. They are either drafted to benefit a very narrow segment of the population, or they are going against a large, built-in 'No' constituency, as was the case with the gun control and anti-smoking initiatives.

The Historical Perspective

Delegates to the California constitutional convention back in 1849 had no intention of authorizing direct legislation, but one of the few surviving provisions of the original state constitution is easily misconstrued:

All political power is inherent in the people. Government is instituted for the protection, security, and benefit of the people; and they have the right to alter or reform the same, whenever the public good may require it.

While this assertion has withstood the test of time, there is no evidence to suggest that the authors envisioned more than a very limited role for the electorate in the formulation of public policy. Before the early 1900s there had been no precedent for direct legislation at the state level, and the paramount example of popular democracy -- the traditional townhall meeting -- was a dying institution. But during the first half of this century, the role of the electorate expanded to encompass such matters as the sale of alcoholic beverages and the selection of county seats. And a few state legislatures ordered "advisory" elections in order to sample public opinion. For the most part, however, the power to enact statutory law lay exclusively with legislative bodies.

Thus "all power" was defined, in 1849, as the power to elect officeholders and, on rare occasions, to amend the constitution. In fact, the convention delegates made the procedure for altering their handiwork so difficult that only three amendments were adopted before a new constitution was framed in 1879.

Railroad Democracy

The Gold Rush lost much of its momentum after 1850. It was then that California began to grow and prosper along more traditional lines. Remote and inaccessible to all but the hardiest immigrants, the new state was largely unaffected by the Civil War or -- at least for a time -- by the political corruption which plagued the nation's urban centers during the post-war years.

After 1869, however, California was linked to the more populous and industrialized East by the Transcontinental Railroad. Most Americans celebrated the railroad as the ultimate instrument of Manifest Destiny, one that would hasten development of the western frontier and bind the nation together. But in California, the benefits of this modern transportation system came at a high cost.

The terms of the Pacific Railroad Act, as amended in 1864, had been exceedingly generous. Two railroad companies -- the Union Pacific in the East, and the Central Pacific in the West -- received federal bond financing and land grants for every mile of track they laid. The California-based Central Pacific would reap nearly \$28 million in federal bonds, plus 10 million acres of public land. In addition to this windfall, the state legislature had agreed to permit county governments to bid for rail service by subscribing to large amounts of company stock and issuing construction bonds.

The main beneficiaries of this largesse were four middle-class merchants from Sacramento. Their combined investment of \$6,000 in Central Pacific stock would eventually bring them control of a transportation empire -- and personal assets estimated at \$200 million. They eventually consolidated their holdings under the banner of the Southern Pacific Railroad, offering the nation's most extensive rail service. As California's wealthiest corporation -- and its largest employer and landowner -- the Southern Pacific dominated California's economic and political life for nearly half a century.

The Southern Pacific used its economic muscle to influence government, and its political power to control commerce. It was careful, for example, to keep a tight reign on the state banking commission. Through the commission, the railroad could "regulate" the flow of private capital, consistent with its own best interests.

In the 1860s the railroad had played cities and towns against one other in order to obtain local subsidies. Once established in a community or region, it manipulated freight rates -- usually to the detriment of farmers and small shippers. It also sought to add acreage to its private land bank, while encouraging speculation and inflation.

In the late 1880s the widow of Southern Pacific's first political manager filed suit in an attempt to annul a financial settlement with the company's principal shareholders. Evidence submitted during the trial exposed the railroad's political and financial activities. And a federal investigation in 1887 uncovered further damning details of the technique of obtaining government funds to form a monopoly, and how one very large corporation had brought an entire state to its knees.

The Southern Pacific Political Bureau exercised almost unlimited power. Its paid operatives were present in every county, in Sacramento, and in Washington, D.C. It possessed the money and organizational skills necessary to infiltrate and subvert political movements, including some that were suspected of working to derail the company's machine. It was usually able to select governors, congressmen, state legislators, judges and commissioners. Republican Party nominating conventions were carefully orchestrated by "railroad men" and, when circumstances favored the Democrats, the omnipresent bureau would often select that party's candidates as well.

When a depression hit the state in the last decade of the century, the railroad received much more than its share of the blame. It was the target of reform movements, outraged newspaper editors, and disgruntled farmers and businessmen who had been victimized by ever-changing freight rates. Just after the turn of the century, Frank Norris wrote *The Octopus*, a novel loosely based on the "massacre of Mussel Slough," where seven men had died in a confrontation between settlers and railroad agents. The book became a national sensation, and political cartoonists never tired of depicting the Southern Pacific as an eight-armed monster from the deep.

The railroad's last hurrah came in 1906, when it conspired with San Francisco political boss Abe Ruef to engineer the nomination and election of gubernatorial candidate James Gillett. It was a bad time for new alliances: the San Francisco graft prosecutions were about to begin, and Ruef was soon to become internationally infamous. But this was really a minor inconvenience. The railroad itself had come to symbolize all that was evil in American politics, and it was about to become an unwilling catalyst for political reform.

Power to the People

The initiative, referendum, and recall had been proposed in the 'nineties by California populists, and political reformers in Los Angeles had been deeply impressed. These direct powers might be what was needed to break the Southern Pacific's stranglehold on state and local government.

An L.A. physician organized the "Direct Legislation League," whose sole purpose was to transfer power from the political bosses to the people. Efforts to implement the initiative, referendum and recall at the city level failed in 1900, but all three reforms were adopted in 1903. The Direct Legislation League was replaced by other reform movements in rapid succession as Los Angeles became the state's nucleus of political dissent. It was here that reformers would coalesce as "progressive Republicans," with the enhancement of popular powers their main goal.

San Francisco, meanwhile, launched its reform movement in the courts. The bizarre and occasionally comical graft prosecutions would grind on for three years, from 1906 to 1909. The trials produced thousands of headlines, but only one conviction stood up under appeal. When the special prosecutor was shot and seriously wounded in the courtroom, he was replaced by Hiram Johnson, a young San Francisco lawyer who would ultimately get the credit for sending the colorful Abe Ruef to San Quentin.

Johnson had received statewide notoriety, and had become a close associate of several members of the Lincoln-Roosevelt League -- otherwise known as the progressive wing of the Republican Party. The League was having some trouble recruiting candidates for the elections of 1910, and Johnson was certainly not their first choice as a gubernatorial candidate. He did, however, possess impressive credentials as a crusader against machine politics, and he was an implacable foe of the Southern Pacific. Indeed, his father's loyal service to the railroad as a member of the state legislature had been the direct cause of his estrangement from his son.

After considerable discussion, the League finally approached Johnson. He refused their offer at first, then accepted with apparent reluctance. He would prove to be a difficult candidate, often refusing to be associated with the rest of the slate; but he was highly effective on the stump, zeroing in on the most important issue of the day. His slogan addressed that issue in no uncertain terms: "Kick the Southern Pacific out of politics!"

Progressives won at both ends of the ticket, and the public was prepared for sweeping reforms. Their confidence might have been shaken had they known that their governor-elect, having little to propose beyond regulation of the railroad, had fled to the East to consult with Theodore Roosevelt, Robert La Follette and Lincoln Steffens. It was left to the Republican Central Committee to draft legislation for the legislative session of 1911, carefully incorporating platform planks that had largely been ignored by Johnson.

Populism Prevails

Governor Johnson had promised to regulate the railroads and other utilities and, sure enough, the Republicans acted quickly to expand the authority of the Railroad Commission. But the hated "Octopus" suffered little adversity at the hands of the progressives, while the political parties it had manipulated for half a century were dealt a series of blows from which they would never completely recover.

A direct primary law had already been passed in 1909, and that law was now extended to include candidates for all federal offices. Local offices were declared "non-partisan" and off-limits to party organizations. But the most devastating innovation of all was reserved for the legislative session of 1913, when crossfiling was instituted.

Johnson had not placed any emphasis on direct legislation during or after his campaign, but when constitutional amendments providing for the initiative, referendum and recall were actually placed before the people, the governor supported them with unexpected energy and enthusiasm.

The task of drafting language for the amendments had fallen to a committee headed by Senator Lee Gates of Los Angeles. Gates was painfully aware that "returning government to the people" was the platform plank least favored by some of his supporters -- not least of whom was the powerful and conservative publisher of the *Los Angeles Times*. Still, it was Gates who warned the committee against making procedures for invoking the initiative or referendum too difficult for small political action organizations. To this end, he proposed that the number of signatures required to qualify a ballot measure should never exceed 50,000.

The formula recommended to the Senate was based on the gubernatorial vote, permitting signature requirements to increase with the number of voters. Sponsors of an initiative -- whether statutory or constitutional -- would need signatures equal to 8 percent of the most recent gubernatorial vote to qualify their measure. Referendums and so-called "indirect initiatives" would only need 5 percent of that vote. In addition, the committee agreed that when 8 percent of the vote reached 50,000, or when 5 percent equalled 35,000, the requirement would be frozen.

The direct legislation amendments were approved in this form by the Senate and sent to the Assembly. When they reached the lower house, however, the ceiling on petition signatures had mysteriously disappeared. *Sacramento Bee* correspondent Franklin Hichborn brought the omission to the attention of the committee, but the freeze was never restored. Hichborn would complain in later years that "most of the evils that have developed in the use of direct legislation in California can be traced to the failure of the progressives to meet the signature issue squarely . . . in 1911." It is certainly true that the requirements increased more rapidly than legislators had anticipated: by 1914 it would take 75,000 signatures to qualify an initiative.

The Revisions of 1966

Progressives also failed to make a distinction between statutory and organic law. While the qualification formula of 1911 remained in effect, there was little incentive for sponsors to favor statutory initiatives over constitutional amendments. The latter, after all, while just as easy to qualify, were far less likely to be overturned in court. Constitutional initiatives outnumbered statutory measures between 1911 and 1966, and some of the laws etched in constitutional stone were fairly trivial.

So, in 1966 the California Constitution Revision Commission recommended that the signature requirement for statutory initiatives be dropped to 5 percent of the gubernatorial vote, and that the extraneous indirect initiative be eliminated. These changes were approved by the voters the same year.

Petition Referendums

The mechanism of the petition referendum was retained by the commissioners in 1966, even though the process had not been invoked since 1954. While the referendum, like the statutory initiative, can be qualified with signatures equal to 5 percent of the gubernatorial vote, these signatures must be obtained within 90 days of the legislature's adjournment. (Sponsors of initiatives have 150 days to circulate petitions.) Qualification of a referendum automatically suspends enactment of a law passed by the legislature until the voters have had an opportunity to endorse or reject it.

A number of petition referendums were qualified in the 1920s and 1930s by economic interests that were prepared to invest in expensive circulation drives. This process was last used by Republicans in 1982 to overturn a Democratic gerrymander. Voters refused to sustain the three reapportionment bills in the June primary, then rejected the "non-partisan" reapportionment commission that the GOP proposed on the November ballot. Since the responsibility for reapportionment remained with the legislature, the success of the June referendum proved to be a Pyrrhic victory -- another reason why groups favor the initiative process, even when their major purpose is to prevent enactment of a new law.

Initiatives and Compulsory Referendums

Only ten states -- all in the West -- offer both the statutory initiative and the constitutional initiative, and California is the only large urban and industrial state to do so. Critics of these processes complain of a constitution that has been debased by detail and trivia, of long and confusing ballots, of diminishing voter participation. In fact, there is little justification for this criticism: the vast majority of propositions and local measures which appear on California ballots -- including constitutional amendments -- are not initiated by the people. In fact, those measures that are proposed by petitioners tend to be the most controversial and are, therefore, the issues most likely to generate voter interest.

The number of subjects submitted to the electorate by legislative action, on the other hand, has increased since 1898, when the state first required voter approval of city charters and their amendments. This requirement evolved from the practice of submitting state constitutions to the people, and it broadened the consensus favoring a direct vote on matters which are deemed fundamental or, for some other reason, exceptional in their impact. Measures submitted by the legislature -- most notably constitutional amendments and bond issues -- are known as compulsory referendums. On the average, there have been three propositions referred by the legislature for every initiative.

The vote on initiatives, which are placed at the bottom of the ballot, has occasionally been larger than that recorded in top-of-the-ticket races. This was the case in the primary elections of 1970, 1972, 1976, and 1978. In general elections, however, more voters are drawn by candidates for governor or president. Still, initiatives have consistently received more votes than bond measures and other compulsory referenda. But, while voters are generally less aware of and interested in the propositions placed on the ballot by the legislature, they are much more likely to adopt them. Between 1912 and 1978, the approval rate for compulsory referendums was more than double that for initiatives.

Conclusion

For better or worse, direct legislation has mushroomed over the last decade: it has become a very popular method of putting some of the state's most pressing and divisive issues directly before the voters. The stakes on many of these issues are very high and, as a result, those with the most to lose or gain are willing -- or obliged -- to invest considerable money and energy into the contest. With stakes as high as these, it's not enough for players simply to know the rules of the game: strategy becomes critical. Having outlined the historical perspective, we can now take a closer look at how the California electorate reacted to the many statutory initiatives between 1976 and 1986. We'll also examine the role of timing and financial backing, and the extent to which voters' income and ideology affect the fate of these measures. It is hoped that our findings will suggest winning strategies.

Influences on Initiative Voting

Although the initiative was originally designed to counter the "negative" influence of affluent, well-organized special interest groups, in practice it has become their tool. Small grassroots movements have also used the process from time to time, but few of their proposals qualify for the ballot. More often, sponsors of initiatives are members of the political establishment. While it is true that no social or economic class has been excluded from the process, it is equally true that the initiative is an expensive and inefficient alternative to lobbying the legislature, and is used only as a last resort.

Most initiatives begin as a response to inaction on the part of the legislature, or concern that too many undesirable amendments will result from the give and take of legislative committee hearings. Another practical motivation is the special status of initiatives: constitutional initiatives become part of the fundamental law of the state, and statutory initiatives, once adopted, can be amended only by a vote of the people, unless the measure itself provides for future revision by the legislature.

A few initiatives have been proposed as part of long-term strategies aimed at educating the public, increasing the membership and financial resources of sponsoring organizations, or generating publicity for political personalities. Sponsors of a 1972 proposition to decriminalize marijuana knew that voters would reject their measure, but hoped that the campaign would build support for future legislative action. And Proposition 9, which created the Political Reform Act of 1974, was closely tied to the gubernatorial ambitions of then-Secretary of State Jerry Brown.

This chapter focuses on two features of the initiative process from 1976 to 1986: how many and what types of initiatives eventually appeared on the ballot, and the principal factors contributing to their ultimate adoption or defeat.

Qualification and Adoption Rates

Those who resort to the initiative process should be mindful of the odds against success. The foremost -- and increasingly difficult -- obstacle is the number of signatures required for qualification to appear on the ballot. Constitutional amendment initiatives must collect the signatures of registered voters that in number must equal 8 percent of the total vote cast for governor in the previous gubernatorial election. The signature formula for statutory initiatives and referendum petitions is 5 percent of the total vote cast in the previous gubernatorial election.

As a practical matter, however, only 60 to 65 percent of the signatures collected "on the street" are usually determined to be valid -- that is, to belong to currently registered voters. This means the aggregate number of signatures required for a constitutional amendment initiative is closer to 950,000 or 1 million, and the total required for a statutory initiative or referendum is 600,000 to 650,000.

The following table recaps the number of valid signatures required to qualify a constitutional amendment and a statutory amendment for election cycles between 1976 and 1988.

Signatures Required to Qualify for Ballot

| Election Cycle | Valid Signatures Required for Constitutional Amendment | Valid Signatures Required for Statutory Amendment or Referendum |
|-------------------|--|--|
| 1975-76 | 499,846 | 312,404 |
| 1977-78 | 499,846 | 312,404 |
| 1979-80 | 553,790 | 346,119 |
| 1981-82 | 553,790 | 346,119 |
| 1983-84 | 630,136 | 393,835 |
| 1985-86 | 630,136 | 393,835 |
| 1987-88 | 595,485 | 372,178 |

Once signatures have been collected, the procedure for verification and certification for the ballot is as follows.

1. Petitions containing signatures are turned into the respective county Registrar of Voters offices for verification.
2. Each county determines the number of valid signatures turned in by randomly checking 5 percent or 5,000 signatures, whichever is greater, against affidavits of registration.
3. The projected number of valid signatures is reported to the office of the Secretary of State.
4. If the projected number of signatures is 110 percent of the total required for qualification, the initiative is automatically certified for the ballot.
5. If the projected number of signatures falls between 90.0 percent and 109.9 percent of the total required, then each county must verify every signature turned in by the initiative's proponents.
6. If the projected number of valid signatures is below 90 percent of the total required, the initiative's sponsors are given a grace period to turn in additional signatures.

During the 1920s, when both statutory and constitutional initiatives required signatures equal to 8 percent of the gubernatorial vote, it was still possible to qualify 69 percent of the initiatives titled by the attorney general. The rate of qualification in the 1950s was 59 percent, but dropped sharply during the next two decades. Between 1970 and 1976, 104 initiatives were titled and only 17 -- 16 percent -- qualified for the ballot.

The table below summarizes the number of initiatives circulated and qualified by election cycle. The qualification rate fluctuated between 1976 and 1986, and the highest rate would have been 20 percent in 1984 if the State Supreme Court had not removed two measures from the ballot.

Number of Initiatives Qualified for Ballot

| Election Cycle | Number Titled | Number Qualified | Percent Qualified % |
|----------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| 1975-76 | 35 | 3 | 8.6 |
| 1977-78 | 26 | 4 | 15.4 |
| 1979-80 | 59 | 5 | 8.5 |
| 1981-82 | 65 | 9 | 13.8 |
| 1983-84 | 45 | 7* | 15.6* |
| 1985-86 | 36 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Total | 266 | 34 | 12.8 |

* Nine initiatives or 20% of those titled actually qualified, but two were removed from the ballot by order of the California State Supreme Court.

The overall rate of adoption for qualified initiatives had hovered near 30 percent between 1912 and 1974, but voters became more receptive between 1976 and 1986, approving 44 percent of the measures placed before them.

Number of Initiatives Adopted by Voters

| Election Cycle | Number Qualified | Number Adopted | Percent Adopted of Qualified % | Percent Adopted of Titled % |
|----------------|------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1975-76 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| 1977-78 | 4 | 2 | 50.0 | 7.7 |
| 1979-80 | 5 | 1 | 20.0 | 1.2 |
| 1981-82 | 9 | 5 | 55.5 | 7.7 |
| 1983-84 | 7 | 3 | 42.9 | 6.7 |
| 1985-86 | 6 | 4 | 66.7 | 11.1 |
| Total | 34 | 15 | 44.1 | 5.6 |

It may be that resistance has been reduced by "initiative fever," but the inability of many sponsors to meet requirements for qualification is possibly a more significant explanation for the higher rate of adoption. Only those sponsors who have the resources to organize successful circulation drives are represented on the ballot, and it can be assumed that these groups are more likely to conduct effective campaigns for adoption.

Summary of Initiatives to Appear on Ballot

True to its reputation, the initiative process in California generated a wide range of ballot measures during the period of study. A review of the following table should dispel any notion that elections in California aren't at least interesting. While at first glance it would appear that the broad number of topics represented by these 34 initiatives defies classification, each initiative can be assigned into one of five general subject categories: tax and spending, social issues, environment, reapportionment, and miscellaneous.

Summary of Initiatives to Appear on the Ballot

| Subject | Election | Ballot | Percent | Percent |
|--------------------------|----------|---------|---------|---------|
| | | | Yes | No |
| Nuclear Power | 1976 | Primary | 32.6 | 67.4 |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976 | General | 24.6 | 75.4 |
| Agricultural Labor | 1976 | General | 37.8 | 62.2 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978 | Primary | 64.8 | 35.2 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978 | General | 45.6 | 54.4 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978 | General | 41.6 | 58.4 |
| Death Penalty | 1978 | General | 71.1 | 28.9 |
| Limit on State Spending | 1979 | Special | 74.3 | 25.7 |
| State Income Tax | 1980 | Primary | 39.2 | 60.8 |
| Rent Control | 1980 | Primary | 35.4 | 64.6 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980 | Primary | 44.3 | 55.7 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980 | General | 46.6 | 53.4 |
| Abolish Inheritance Tax | 1982 | Primary | 61.8 | 38.2 |
| Abolish Inheritance Tax | 1982 | Primary | 64.4 | 35.6 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982 | Primary | 63.5 | 36.5 |
| Victim's Bill of Rights | 1982 | Primary | 56.4 | 43.6 |
| Beverage Deposit | 1982 | General | 44.1 | 55.9 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982 | General | 52.3 | 47.7 |
| Water Resources | 1982 | General | 35.2 | 64.8 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982 | General | 45.5 | 54.5 |
| Gun Control | 1982 | General | 37.2 | 62.8 |
| Legislative Rules | 1984 | Primary | 53.1 | 46.9 |
| "Save Prop. 13" | 1984 | General | 45.2 | 54.8 |
| State Lottery | 1984 | General | 57.9 | 42.1 |
| English Ballots | 1984 | General | 70.5 | 29.5 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984 | General | 44.8 | 55.2 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984 | General | 35.5 | 64.5 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984 | General | 37.0 | 63.0 |
| Tort Reform | 1986 | Primary | 62.1 | 37.8 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986 | General | 34.1 | 65.9 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986 | General | 58.0 | 42.0 |
| English Language | 1986 | General | 73.2 | 26.8 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986 | General | 29.3 | 70.7 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986 | General | 62.6 | 37.4 |

Subject Classification of Initiatives to Appear on the Ballot

| Subject | Initiative | Year | Ballot | Outcome |
|-----------------|-------------------------|------|---------|---------|
| Tax & Spending | Proposition 13 | 1978 | Primary | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | Spending Limits | 1979 | Special | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | State Income Tax | 1980 | Primary | Failed |
| Tax & Spending | Oil Profits Surtax | 1980 | Primary | Failed |
| Tax & Spending | Inheritance Tax | 1982 | Primary | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | Inheritance Tax | 1982 | Primary | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | Income Tax Indexing | 1982 | Primary | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | Legislative Spending | 1984 | Primary | Adopted |
| Tax & Spending | "Save Prop. 13" | 1984 | General | Failed |
| Tax & Spending | Public Employee Pay | 1986 | General | Failed |
| Tax & Spending | Local Vote on Taxes | 1986 | General | Adopted |
| Social Issues | Ag. Labor Relations | 1976 | General | Failed |
| Social Issues | Homosexual Teachers | 1978 | General | Failed |
| Social Issues | Death Penalty | 1978 | General | Adopted |
| Social Issues | Victim's Bill of Rights | 1982 | Primary | Adopted |
| Social Issues | Nuclear Freeze | 1982 | General | Adopted |
| Social Issues | Gun Control | 1982 | General | Failed |
| Social Issues | English Ballots | 1984 | General | Adopted |
| Social Issues | Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984 | General | Failed |
| Social Issues | English Only | 1986 | General | Adopted |
| Social Issues | AIDS Measures | 1986 | General | Failed |
| Environment | Nuclear Power | 1976 | Primary | Failed |
| Environment | Bottle Deposit | 1982 | General | Failed |
| Environment | Water Resources | 1982 | General | Failed |
| Environment | Toxic Clean-Up | 1986 | General | Adopted |
| Reapportionment | Commission | 1982 | General | Failed |
| Reapportionment | Commission | 1984 | General | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | Greyhound Racing | 1976 | General | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | Smoking Regulation | 1978 | General | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | Rent Control | 1980 | Primary | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | Smoking Regulation | 1980 | General | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | State Lottery | 1984 | General | Adopted |
| Miscellaneous | Campaign Finance | 1984 | General | Failed |
| Miscellaneous | Tort Reform | 1986 | Primary | Adopted |

Influence of Timing

Before 1966, policy issues could only be submitted to the voters in even-numbered years, and only in the general election. But the law changed when annual legislative sessions were instituted, and sponsors of initiatives have since been able to time their campaigns to catch the mood of the voters. Sponsors are also able to choose between elections which will attract a maximum number of voters -- presidential year general elections -- and those in which the turnout will be comparatively small.

The following table compares the rates of qualification for presidential and midterm elections.

Number of Initiatives Qualified for Ballot by Type of Election Cycle

| Election Cycle | Number Titled | Number Qualified | Percent Qualified % |
|---------------------|---------------|------------------|---------------------|
| Presidential | | | |
| 1975-76 | 35 | 3 | 8.6 |
| 1979-80 | 59 | 5 | 8.5 |
| 1983-84 | 45 | 7* | 15.6* |
| Subtotal | 139 | 15 | 10.8 |
| Midterm | | | |
| 1977-78 | 26 | 4 | 15.4 |
| 1981-82 | 65 | 9 | 13.8 |
| 1985-86 | 36 | 6 | 16.7 |
| Subtotal | 127 | 19 | 15.0 |
| Total | 266 | 34 | 12.8 |

* Nine initiatives or 20% of those titled actually qualified, but two were removed from the ballot by order of the California State Supreme Court.

Not only have the qualification rates varied from presidential cycle to midterm cycle (nearly 50 percent higher in midterm cycle), the adoption rates for initiatives appearing on the ballot also appear to be greatly influenced by election cycle type. The following table compares adoption rates for primary and general elections in both presidential and midterm cycles.

Number of Initiatives Adopted by Voters By Type of Election

| Election Cycle | Number Qualified | Number Adopted | Percent Adopted of Qualified % | Percent Adopted of Titled % |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| Presidential | | | | |
| General | 9 | 2 | 22.2 | n/a |
| Primary | 5 | 1 | 20.0 | n/a |
| Subtotal | 14 | 3 | 21.4 | 2.0 |
| Midterm | | | | |
| General | 13 | 5 | 38.5 | n/a |
| Primary | 6 | 6 | 100.0 | n/a |
| Subtotal | 19 | 11 | 57.9 | 8.7 |
| Special | 1 | 1 | 100.0 | n/a |
| Total | 34 | 15 | 44.1 | 7.1 |
| | | | | |
| All Generals | 22 | 7 | 31.8 | |
| All Primaries & Specials | 12 | 8 | 66.7 | |
| Total | 34 | 15 | 44.1 | |

The dramatic differences in adoption rates for primary versus general elections, and midterm versus presidential cycles, is one of the most significant findings of this study. Possible explanations for these discrepant qualification and adoption rates are discussed in the summary of findings section at the end of this chapter.

Sponsorship of Initiatives

In the introduction it was noted that many initiatives have been the tool of well-organized special interest groups, frequently in response to inaction on the part of the legislature. The following section, which addresses the influence of campaign spending, provides a clear indication as to which of these groups should be considered affluent and which should be regarded as grassroots movements.

This section organizes the initiatives under study by the ideology of their sponsors or proponents. An astounding 26 of the 34 initiatives -- or 76 percent -- were placed on the ballot by coalitions of loosely defined liberals or conservatives, while the remaining 8 initiatives concerned narrow special interest topics (reapportionment, smoking regulation, rent control, gambling, etc.) that cannot be described accurately as being motivated by ideological forces.

The following tables reveal that conservative initiative sponsors have monopolized primary elections during the past ten years, qualifying seven measures and suffering only one defeat. Only two liberal propositions appeared on primary ballots, and both were defeated. But there is no reason to conclude that the two liberal measures would have fared better in general elections; indeed, general election voters were less receptive to all measures, irrespective of ideology.

Summary of Initiatives by Ideology of Sponsor

| Sponsor | Number Adopted | Number Defeated | Total |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-------|
| Liberals | 2 | 7 | 9 |
| Conservatives | 11 | 6 | 17 |
| Totals | 13 | 13 | 26 |

Liberal-Sponsored Initiatives

| Initiative | Year | Subject | Outcome |
|---------------------|--------|----------------|----------|
| Nuclear Power | 1976 P | Environment | Defeated |
| Ag. Labor Relations | 1976 G | Social | Defeated |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | Defeated |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982 G | Environment | Defeated |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982 G | Social | Adopted |
| Water Resources | 1982 G | Environment | Defeated |
| Gun Control | 1982 G | Social | Defeated |
| Campaign Finance | 1984 G | Miscellaneous | Defeated |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986 G | Environment | Adopted |

Conservative-Sponsored Initiatives

| | | | |
|-------------------------|--------|----------------|----------|
| Proposition 13 | 1978 P | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978 G | Social | Defeated |
| Death Penalty | 1978 G | Social | Adopted |
| Spending Limits | 1979 S | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| State Income Tax | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | Defeated |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| Victim's Bill of Rights | 1982 P | Social | Adopted |
| Legislative Spending | 1984 P | Tax & Spending | Adopted |
| "Save Prop. 13" | 1984 G | Tax & Spending | Defeated |
| English Ballots | 1984 G | Social | Adopted |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984 G | Social | Defeated |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986 G | Tax & Spending | Defeated |
| English Language | 1986 G | Social | Adopted |
| AIDS Measures | 1986 G | Social | Defeated |

The electorate is known to differ from the total adult population in several ways -- it is older, better educated, more affluent, more Republican, and less representative of ethnic minorities. And it is not illogical to assume that some or all of these characteristics become more pronounced and dominant as voter participation declines. While differences between primary and general election voters have not been fully documented, most professional managers are convinced that conservative causes and candidates are the likely beneficiaries of low turnouts. It is possible that professional advice on timing has intervened to make the conservative advantage in primaries a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Of the eleven initiatives which qualified for primary elections, seven dealt with fiscal matters, and all but one proposed changes which would affect the pocketbook. At least eight of these measures were exceptionally complex, requiring campaigns which were educational as well as persuasive. This suggests that sponsors timed their proposals to maximize media coverage, consciously avoiding competition with candidates in the general election. Moreover, the rate of adoption (eight of eleven) demonstrates that it is much easier to focus public attention on measures submitted in primaries.

Initiatives adopted in general elections (only seven out of 22) tended to be less complicated and more obviously in accord with existing public opinion. With one possible exception -- the nuclear freeze of 1982 -- timing was not a critical factor in the campaigns of initiatives approved in general elections.

The Influence of Campaign Spending

No feature of the initiative process in California has received as much attention as the amount of money raised and spent on behalf of campaigns to adopt or to defeat an initiative. Efforts to limit the amount that can be spent on behalf of or in opposition to an initiative have either died in the legislature or been found to be an impermissible infringement of free speech.

While much has been written on the alleged pernicious influence of one-sided campaign spending, such charges do not appear to be supported by analysis of campaign spending on initiatives from 1976 to 1986. To facilitate our analysis, all campaign spending, both pro and con, has been recalculated into 1986 dollars using the GNP deflator. Additional tables with actual dollar spending can be found at the end of this chapter. The first table below recaps the total amount spent by the 'Yes' side and the 'No' side for all initiatives, in 1986 dollars.

Summary of Campaign Expenditures In 1986 Dollars

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | Outcome |
|--------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|----------|
| Public Employee Pay | 1986G | \$1,137,000 | \$6,644,000 | Defeated |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986G | 3,611,000 | 14,000 | Adopted |
| English Language | 1986G | 785,000 | 114,000 | Adopted |
| AIDS Measures | 1986G | 368,000 | 2,772,000 | Defeated |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986G | 2,219,000 | 4,884,000 | Adopted |
| Tort Reform | 1986P | 6,027,000 | 4,930,000 | Adopted |
| "Save Prop 13" | 1984G | 9,297,000 | 1,763,000 | Defeated |
| State Lottery | 1984G | 2,717,000 | 3,618,000 | Adopted |
| English Ballots | 1984G | 128,000 | 0 | Adopted |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 6,357,000 | 4,584,000 | Defeated |
| Campaign Finance | 1984G | 317,000 | 1,222,000 | Defeated |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984G | 1,182,000 | 3,142,000 | Defeated |
| Legislative Spending | 1984P | 928,000 | 350,000 | Adopted |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 1,061,000 | 6,281,000 | Defeated |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982G | 4,006,000 | 7,000 | Adopted |
| Water Resources | 1982G | 1,179,000 | 2,333,000 | Defeated |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 678,000 | 0 | Defeated |
| Gun Control | 1982G | 3,000,000 | 8,381,000 | Defeated |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 1,026,000 | 66,000 | Adopted |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 26,000 | 66,000 | Adopted |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982P | 1,174,000 | 1,000 | Adopted |
| Victims Bill of Rights | 1982P | 1,182,000 | 62,000 | Adopted |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | 1,374,000 | 3,661,000 | Defeated |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980P | 4,870,000 | 2,383,000 | Defeated |
| Rent Control | 1980P | 8,918,000 | 239,000 | Defeated |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 611,000 | 7,519,000 | Defeated |
| Spending Limits | 1979S | 2,518,000 | 0 | Adopted |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | 1,094,000 | 10,001,000 | Defeated |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978G | 1,613,000 | 1,997,000 | Defeated |
| Death Penalty | 1978G | 1,046,000 | 19,000 | Adopted |
| Proposition 13 | 1978P | 3,433,000 | 3,334,000 | Adopted |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976G | 1,182,000 | 2,382,000 | Defeated |
| Ag Labor Relations | 1976G | 2,458,000 | 3,437,000 | Defeated |
| Nuclear Power | 1976P | 2,275,000 | 7,302,000 | Defeated |

The next table summarizes campaign spending both for and against the 15 initiatives that were adopted by the voters between 1976 and 1986. The most interesting observations concerning the influence on campaign spending for successful initiatives are as follows.

1. Spending by opponents of successful initiatives exceeded \$1 million in only four campaigns.
2. Opponents outspent proponents in only two successful campaigns -- toxic clean-up and the state lottery.
3. Nine of 15 successful initiatives generated opposition spending of less than \$100,000 -- a nominal amount by statewide standards.
4. In only one case out of 15 -- the nuclear freeze initiative of 1982 -- can the argument be made that one-sided spending by proponents "bought" adoption by the voters.
5. The margin of victory in the four campaigns where the opponents spent \$3 million or more -- Proposition 13, toxic clean-up, tort reform and the state lottery -- was so substantial that it is questionable whether the opponents' spending had any influence on the outcome at all.

Summary of Campaign Expenditures For Successful Initiatives In 1986 Dollars

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|------------------------|-------|-------------|-----------|------------|
| Spending Limits | 1979S | \$2,518,000 | \$0 | 74.3 |
| English Language | 1986G | 785,000 | 114,000 | 73.2 |
| Death Penalty | 1978G | 1,046,000 | 19,000 | 71.1 |
| English Ballots | 1984G | 128,000 | 0 | 70.5 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978P | 3,433,000 | 3,334,000 | 64.8 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 26,000 | 66,000 | 64.4 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982P | 1,174,000 | 1,000 | 63.5 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986G | 2,219,000 | 4,884,000 | 62.6 |
| Tort Reform | 1986P | 6,027,000 | 4,930,000 | 62.1 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 1,026,000 | 66,000 | 61.8 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986G | 3,611,000 | 14,000 | 58.0 |
| State Lottery | 1984G | 2,717,000 | 3,618,000 | 57.9 |
| Victims Bill of Rights | 1982P | 1,182,000 | 62,000 | 56.4 |
| Legislative Spending | 1984P | 928,000 | 350,000 | 53.1 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982G | 4,006,000 | 7,000 | 52.3 |

The three tables that follow suggest two conclusions: campaign spending has a relatively minor influence on the outcome of successful initiatives; and, indeed, there does not even appear to be a relationship between the amount of money spent either for or against a successful initiative and the percentage of the vote received.

**Rank Order Summary of Campaign Expenditures
For Successful Initiatives
In 1986 Dollars**

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Tort Reform | 1986P | \$6,027,000 | \$4,930,000 | 62.1 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982G | 4,006,000 | 7,000 | 52.3 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986G | 3,611,000 | 14,000 | 58.0 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978P | 3,433,000 | 3,334,000 | 64.8 |
| State Lottery | 1984G | 2,717,000 | 3,618,000 | 57.9 |
| Spending Limits | 1979S | 2,518,000 | 0 | 74.3 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986G | 2,219,000 | 4,884,000 | 62.6 |
| Victims Bill of Rights | 1982P | 1,182,000 | 62,000 | 56.4 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982P | 1,174,000 | 1,000 | 63.5 |
| Death Penalty | 1978G | 1,046,000 | 19,000 | 71.1 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 1,026,000 | 66,000 | 61.8 |
| Legislative Spending | 1984P | 928,000 | 350,000 | 53.1 |
| English Language | 1986G | 785,000 | 114,000 | 73.2 |
| English Ballots | 1984G | 128,000 | 0 | 70.5 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 26,000 | 66,000 | 64.4 |

**Rank Order Summary of Campaign Expenditures
Against Successful Initiatives
In 1986 Dollars**

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Tort Reform | 1986P | \$6,027,000 | \$4,930,000 | 62.1 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986G | 2,219,000 | 4,884,000 | 62.6 |
| State Lottery | 1984G | 2,717,000 | 3,618,000 | 57.9 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978P | 3,433,000 | 3,334,000 | 64.8 |
| Legislative Spending | 1984P | 928,000 | 350,000 | 53.1 |
| English Language | 1986G | 785,000 | 114,000 | 73.2 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 26,000 | 66,000 | 64.4 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 1,026,000 | 66,000 | 61.8 |
| Victims Bill of Rights | 1982P | 1,182,000 | 62,000 | 56.4 |
| Death Penalty | 1978G | 1,046,000 | 19,000 | 71.1 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986G | 3,611,000 | 14,000 | 58.0 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982G | 4,006,000 | 7,000 | 52.3 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982P | 1,174,000 | 1,000 | 63.5 |
| English Ballots | 1984G | 128,000 | 0 | 70.5 |
| Spending Limits | 1979S | 2,518,000 | 0 | 74.3 |

**Rank Order Summary
of Ratio of Campaign Expenditures
For and Against Successful Initiatives**

| Initiative | Year | Ratio of 'Yes' to 'No' Spending |
|------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Spending Limits | 1979S | 100 - 0 |
| English Ballots | 1984G | 100 - 0 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982P | 99 - 1 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982G | 99 - 1 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986G | 99 - 1 |
| Death Penalty | 1978G | 98 - 2 |
| Victims Bill of Rights | 1982P | 95 - 5 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 94 - 6 |
| English Language | 1984G | 87 - 13 |
| Legislative Spending | 1984P | 73 - 27 |
| Tort Reform | 1986P | 55 - 45 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978P | 51 - 49 |
| State Lottery | 1984G | 43 - 57 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986G | 31 - 69 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982P | 28 - 72 |

As expected, the summary of campaign spending for and against unsuccessful initiatives is much more interesting. At first glance, it would appear that there is some support for the adage that big money can defeat an initiative even though it can't enact one. The salient observations on the influence of campaign spending for and against unsuccessful initiatives include the following.

1. Large, one-sided spending (defined as a 2-to-1 ratio or better) on behalf of an initiative is no guarantee of success. Note the large sums expended on behalf of "Save Proposition 13," rent control and Howard Jarvis's proposal to reduce state income taxes by 50 percent.
2. Proponents outspent opponents in only five of the 19 unsuccessful initiative campaigns.
3. A larger proportion of unsuccessful initiatives -- eight of 19, or 42 percent -- were decided by margins of less than 20 percent at the polls, compared to only five of 15 -- or 33 percent -- of successful initiatives.

4. In only four cases out of 19 can the argument be made that large, one-sided spending by opponents possibly influenced the eventual outcome -- the two smoking regulation initiatives, the oil profits surtax and the bottle deposit.

**Summary of Campaign Expenditures
For Unsuccessful Initiatives
In 1986 Dollars**

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|--------------------------|-------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | \$1,374,000 | \$3,661,000 | 46.6 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | 1,094,000 | 10,001,000 | 45.6 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 678,000 | 0 | 45.5 |
| "Save Prop 13" | 1984G | 9,297,000 | 1,763,000 | 45.2 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 6,357,000 | 4,584,000 | 44.8 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 611,000 | 7,519,000 | 44.3 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 1,061,000 | 6,281,000 | 44.1 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978G | 1,613,000 | 1,997,000 | 41.6 |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980P | 4,870,000 | 2,383,000 | 39.2 |
| Ag Labor Relations | 1976G | 2,458,000 | 3,437,000 | 37.8 |
| Gun Control | 1982G | 3,000,000 | 8,381,000 | 37.2 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984G | 1,182,000 | 3,142,000 | 37.0 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984G | 317,000 | 1,222,000 | 35.5 |
| Rent Control | 1980P | 8,918,000 | 239,000 | 35.4 |
| Water Resources | 1982G | 1,179,000 | 2,333,000 | 35.2 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986G | 1,137,000 | 6,644,000 | 34.1 |
| Nuclear Power | 1976P | 2,275,000 | 7,302,000 | 32.6 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986G | 368,000 | 2,772,000 | 29.3 |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976G | 1,182,000 | 2,382,000 | 24.6 |

The table providing a rank order summary of campaign expenditures for and against unsuccessful initiatives, as well as the spending ratios, suggest that whatever influence campaign spending has on the defeat of initiatives, that influence is not as great as portrayed by the media. For example, it is difficult to argue that, although opponents of the gun control measure spent \$8 million to the proponents' \$3 million, the overwhelming defeat of the gun control initiative would have been different had campaign spending been more competitive. Other examples along this line include the nuclear power initiative, public employee pay, and the welfare and medical aid measure of 1984.

Again, it is difficult to discern a distinct pattern or relationship between the amount of money spent either for or against an unsuccessful initiative and the eventual percentage of the vote cast. For the four examples of big spending possibly defeating an initiative -- smoking regulation, oil profits surtax and bottle deposit -- there are three examples of one-sided 'No' spending where the initiative received less than 38 percent of the vote.

**Rank Order Summary of Campaign Expenditures
For Unsuccessful Initiatives
In 1986 Dollars**

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| "Save Prop 13" | 1984G | \$9,297,000 | \$1,763,000 | 45.2 |
| Rent Control | 1980P | 8,918,000 | 239,000 | 35.4 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 6,357,000 | 4,584,000 | 44.8 |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980P | 4,870,000 | 2,383,000 | 39.2 |
| Gun Control | 1982G | 3,000,000 | 8,381,000 | 37.2 |
| Ag Labor Relations | 1976G | 2,458,000 | 3,437,000 | 37.8 |
| Nuclear Power | 1976P | 2,275,000 | 7,302,000 | 32.6 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978G | 1,613,000 | 1,997,000 | 41.6 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | 1,374,000 | 3,661,000 | 46.6 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984G | 1,182,000 | 3,142,000 | 37.0 |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976G | 1,182,000 | 2,382,000 | 24.6 |
| Water Resources | 1982G | 1,179,000 | 2,333,000 | 35.2 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986G | 1,137,000 | 6,644,000 | 34.1 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | 1,094,000 | 10,001,000 | 45.6 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 1,061,000 | 6,281,000 | 44.1 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 678,000 | 0 | 45.5 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 611,000 | 7,519,000 | 44.3 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986G | 368,000 | 2,772,000 | 29.3 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984G | 317,000 | 1,222,000 | 35.5 |

**Rank Order Summary of Campaign Expenditures
Against Unsuccessful Initiatives
In 1986 Dollars**

| Initiative | Year | 'Yes' Side | 'No' Side | % Vote Yes |
|--------------------------|-------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | \$1,094,000 | \$10,001,000 | 45.6 |
| Gun Control | 1982G | 3,000,000 | 8,381,000 | 37.2 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 611,000 | 7,519,000 | 44.3 |
| Nuclear Power | 1976P | 2,275,000 | 7,302,000 | 32.6 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986G | 1,137,000 | 6,644,000 | 34.1 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 1,061,000 | 6,281,000 | 44.1 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 6,357,000 | 4,584,000 | 44.8 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | 1,374,000 | 3,661,000 | 46.6 |
| Ag Labor Relations | 1976G | 2,458,000 | 3,437,000 | 37.8 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984G | 1,182,000 | 3,142,000 | 37.0 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986G | 368,000 | 2,772,000 | 29.3 |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980P | 4,870,000 | 2,383,000 | 39.2 |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976G | 1,182,000 | 2,382,000 | 24.6 |
| Water Resources | 1982G | 1,179,000 | 2,333,000 | 35.2 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978G | 1,613,000 | 1,997,000 | 41.6 |
| "Save Prop 13" | 1984G | 9,297,000 | 1,763,000 | 45.2 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984G | 317,000 | 1,222,000 | 35.5 |
| Rent Control | 1980P | 8,918,000 | 239,000 | 35.4 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 678,000 | 0 | 45.5 |

**Rank Order Summary
Of Ratio of Campaign Expenditures
For and Against Unsuccessful Initiatives**

| Initiative | Year | Ratio of 'Yes' to 'No' Spending |
|--------------------------|-------|---------------------------------------|
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 100 - 0 |
| Rent Control | 1980P | 97 - 3 |
| "Save Prop 13" | 1984G | 88 - 12 |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980P | 67 - 33 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 58 - 42 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978G | 45 - 55 |
| Ag Labor Relations | 1976G | 42 - 58 |
| Water Resources | 1982G | 34 - 66 |
| Greyhound Racing | 1976G | 33 - 67 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | 27 - 73 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984G | 27 - 73 |
| Gun Control | 1982G | 26 - 74 |
| Nuclear Power | 1976P | 24 - 76 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984G | 21 - 79 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986G | 15 - 85 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 15 - 85 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986G | 12 - 88 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | 10 - 90 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 8 - 92 |

In a final attempt to prove or disprove the hypothesis that campaign spending is the most significant factor governing electoral outcome for initiatives, cumulative summaries were prepared. The most startling observation from these two tables is the number of low-budget campaigns that have been conducted for and against the 34 initiatives under study.

As far as the initiatives' sponsors are concerned, 20 of the 34 -- or nearly 60 percent -- conducted campaigns on budgets of less than \$2 million. Of these 20 low-budget efforts, eight were adopted and 12 were defeated -- a success rate very close to the overall average. Of the four big-budget proponent campaigns (\$6 million or more), only one of the four was adopted.

The summary of spending against initiatives is equally enlightening. First, 13 of the 34 'No' sides expended less than \$500,000, and 11 of the 13 initiatives facing this nominal opposition were adopted. Of the six big-budget 'No' campaigns (again, \$6 million or more), all six initiatives were defeated. Although these six campaigns only represent 18 percent of all initiatives to appear on the ballot during this time frame, it is presumed that this is the statistic that fuels charges that negative spending has undue influence on the initiative process.

Cumulative Summary of Campaign Expenditures In 1986 Dollars

| Total 'Yes' Expenditures | Number of Initiatives | Number Adopted | Number Defeated |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| \$9,000,000 or more | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| \$8,000,000 - \$9,000,000 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| \$7,000,000 - \$8,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| \$6,000,000 - \$7,000,000 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| \$5,000,000 - \$6,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| \$4,000,000 - \$5,000,000 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| \$3,000,000 - \$4,000,000 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| \$2,000,000 - \$3,000,000 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000 | 12 | 4 | 8 |
| \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Less than \$500,000 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Totals | 34 | 15 | 19 |

Total 'No' Expenditures

| | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| \$10,000,000 or more | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| \$9,000,000 - \$10,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| \$8,000,000 - \$9,000,000 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| \$7,000,000 - \$8,000,000 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| \$6,000,000 - \$7,000,000 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| \$5,000,000 - \$6,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| \$4,000,000 - \$5,000,000 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| \$3,000,000 - \$4,000,000 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| \$2,000,000 - \$3,000,000 | 4 | 0 | 4 |
| \$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| \$500,000 - \$1,000,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Less than \$500,000 | 13 | 11 | 2 |
| Totals | 34 | 15 | 19 |

To summarize, there does not appear to be a consistent relationship between spending and voter behavior. Most heavily contested measures were voted up or down by large majorities and, while bigger expenditures might have narrowed the margins of victory or defeat in some instances, the end result would almost certainly have been the same.

Only seven of the 19 unsuccessful initiatives received more than 44 percent of the vote, and overwhelming expenditures by opponents may have been the deciding factors in three of these defeats.

| Initiative | Year | \$ on Yes | \$ on No | % Yes |
|--------------------------|-------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Smoking Regulation | 1978G | 1,374,000 | 10,001,000 | 45.6 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980P | 465,000 | 5,611,000 | 44.3 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982G | 923,000 | 5,462,000 | 44.1 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980G | 1,025,000 | 2,732,000 | 46.6 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982G | 678,000 | 0 | 45.5 |
| "Save Prop. 13" | 1984G | 9,297,000 | 1,763,000 | 45.2 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984G | 6,357,000 | 4,584,000 | 44.8 |

At least one of the 15 successful measures could have been defeated: sponsors of the nuclear freeze initiative spent \$3,484,000 to capture 52.3 percent of the vote, while opponents reported a total expenditure of only \$6,000.

Superficial analysis would suggest that big spenders, both pro and con, have a tendency to pour money into campaigns whose outcomes are clear before election day. For example, opponents of the gun control (1982 general election) and public employee pay initiatives (1986 general election), continued their opposition spending, ostensibly oblivious to polls showing that there was little support for either proposal to begin with. Howard Jarvis's \$8.7 million effort to "Save Prop 13" came within percentage points of success, but it proved ultimately that big bucks are not enough to sway public opinion. It's not until after election day, when the 'Undecided' and swing voters have made up their minds, that it becomes clear that perhaps too much was spent -- to little effect -- on one side or another. The press, of course, is only too glad to decry such 'wasteful big spending' after the fact.

It would appear that the influence of money is limited by circumstances beyond the control of contributors. Initiatives which catch the tide of public opinion (tort reform and toxic clean-up in 1986, for example) can seldom be defeated by money alone. Furthermore, when a campaign has communicated with voters and failed to influence them, more money is not the solution.

The Influence of Ideology and Income

Initiatives, unlike candidates for state and federal offices, do not wear labels. Political parties seldom take a stand on ballot issues, and campaign strategists -- always intent on reaching a broad cross-section of the electorate -- often downplay ideological ties.

The following table ranks the 34 initiatives under study by the statistical technique called the Pearson product-moment correlation -- or Pearson's r . This statistic is used to measure the correlation between the values of two variables, in this case, ideology and vote outcome. Ideology is defined by the votes on the death penalty and the nuclear freeze. A positive correlation means there is a strong relationship between conservative ideology and support for the initiative. A negative correlation means there is a strong relationship between liberal ideology and support for the initiative. The higher the correlation factor, whether positive or negative, the greater the influence of ideology on voter behavior. As a rule of thumb, a correlation of positive/negative 0.60 or greater is very significant; a correlation of positive/negative 0.20 or less is of no significance.

Despite the hazard of inferring individual vote behavior from aggregate vote data at the Assembly district level, these data strongly suggest that ideology has a powerful influence on initiative voting. The most salient observations concerning the influence of ideology on initiative voting include the following.

1. Whether intentional or not, initiatives dealing with social issues are viewed by the voters in clear and distinct ideological terms.
2. It is interesting to note that the one social issue initiative to appear on a primary ballot, the Victim's Bill of Rights in June of 1982, had the weakest correlation with other social issue initiatives. Conventional wisdom assumes primary voters are older and more Republican -- hence more conservative. If anything, the expected result would have been a higher correlation between conservative ideology and support for this measure given the premise that the primary electorate is more conservative than the general election electorate.
3. Ideology appears to influence different types of initiatives at different levels. With few exceptions, ideology is an overwhelming influence on social issues. Below social issue initiatives are tax and spending initiatives, where ideology is still a powerful but not overwhelming influence. And then there are a number of topics where ideology is no more than a minor influence.

Correlation Between Conservative Ideology and Support for Initiatives

| Initiative | Year | Category | Pearson's r |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982 G | Social | -0.98 |
| Death Penalty | 1978 G | Social | 0.98 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978 G | Social | 0.91 |
| Water Resources | 1982 G | Environment | -0.90 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986 G | Social | 0.83 |
| English Language | 1986 G | Social | 0.83 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984 G | Social | 0.82 |
| Gun Control | 1982 G | Social | -0.78 |
| Ag. Labor Relations* | 1976 G | Social | -0.78 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986 G | Tax & Spending | 0.78 |
| Nuclear Power* | 1976 P | Environment | -0.77 |
| English Ballots | 1984 G | Social | 0.76 |
| Victim's Bill of Rights | 1982 P | Social | 0.73 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | 0.71 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | 0.71 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986 G | Tax & Spending | 0.69 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | 0.66 |
| "Save Prop. 13" | 1984 G | Tax & Spending | 0.65 |
| Oil Profit Surtax | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | -0.64 |
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | 0.63 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978 P | Tax & Spending | 0.60 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986 G | Environment | -0.57 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984 G | Reapportionment | 0.56 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980 G | Miscellaneous | -0.53 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982 G | Environment | -0.53 |
| Tort Reform | 1986 P | Miscellaneous | 0.53 |
| Greyhound Racing* | 1976 G | Miscellaneous | -0.50 |
| Spending Limits* | 1979 S | Tax & Spending | 0.48 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984 G | Miscellaneous | 0.43 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982 G | Reapportionment | 0.21 |
| Legislative Spending* | 1984 P | Tax & Spending | 0.19 |
| Rent Control | 1980 P | Miscellaneous | 0.18 |
| State Lottery | 1984 G | Miscellaneous | 0.17 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978 G | Miscellaneous | 0.04 |

* Correlation determined at the county level. Correlation for all others determined at the Assembly district level.

Since ideology has been established as a major influence on initiative voting patterns, particularly on social issue initiatives, one would expect income to be an influence on initiatives -- especially when it comes to pocketbook or tax and spending initiatives. The surprising finding is that income is **not** a major determinant on initiative voting. The Pearson correlations between average family income and support for initiatives, shown in the following table, reveal that income is a weak predictor of initiative outcome. Perhaps even more surprising is the fact that income is more predictive for many social and miscellaneous issues than it is for all tax and spending measures.

Correlation Between Income and Support for Initiatives

| Initiative | Year | Category | Pearson's r |
|--------------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|
| Income Tax Reduction | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | 0.55 |
| Rent Control | 1980 P | Miscellaneous | 0.55 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1982 G | Reapportionment | 0.53 |
| Ag. Labor Relations* | 1976 P | Social | 0.52 |
| Proposition 13 | 1978 P | Tax & Spending | 0.50 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1978 G | Miscellaneous | 0.49 |
| Gun Control | 1982 G | Social | 0.46 |
| Redistricting Commission | 1984 G | Reapportionment | 0.39 |
| Income Tax Indexing | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | 0.38 |
| Local Vote on Taxes | 1986 G | Tax & Spending | 0.36 |
| AIDS Measures | 1986 G | Social | -0.36 |
| "Save Prop. 13" | 1984 G | Tax & Spending | 0.35 |
| Welfare & Medical Aid | 1984 G | Social | 0.35 |
| Smoking Regulation | 1980 G | Miscellaneous | 0.35 |
| English Ballots | 1984 G | Social | 0.33 |
| State Lottery | 1984 G | Miscellaneous | 0.32 |
| Bottle Deposit | 1982 G | Environment | 0.32 |
| Campaign Finance | 1984 G | Miscellaneous | 0.32 |
| Water Resources | 1982 G | Environment | 0.31 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | 0.25 |
| Nuclear Power* | 1976 P | Environment | 0.24 |
| Oil Profits Surtax | 1980 P | Tax & Spending | 0.23 |
| Inheritance Tax | 1982 P | Tax & Spending | 0.23 |
| Toxic Clean-Up | 1986 G | Environment | 0.21 |
| Tort Reform | 1986 P | Miscellaneous | 0.20 |
| Homosexual Teachers | 1978 G | Social | -0.20 |
| Legislative Spending* | 1984 P | Tax & Spending | 0.19 |
| English Language | 1986 G | Social | 0.15 |
| Victim's Bill of Rights | 1982 P | Social | 0.14 |
| Greyhound Racing* | 1976 G | Miscellaneous | -0.12 |
| Spending Limits* | 1979 S | Tax & Spending | -0.10 |
| Nuclear Freeze | 1982 G | Social | 0.07 |
| Public Employee Pay | 1986 G | Tax & Spending | 0.05 |
| Death Penalty | 1978 G | Social | 0.00 |

* Correlation determined at the county level. Correlation for all others determined at the Assembly district level.

Regional Variations

Sectionalism is a California tradition that pre-dates the Bear Flag Revolution. North-south rivalries between the self-styled "Dons" of early California were commonplace, and political wars even led to occasional military action. Since 1850 there have been numerous proposals to divide the state, and in recent years most of them have originated in the north. Northern advocates of two Californias have been frustrated by the south's increasing political clout in the wake of a court order to make population the basis of representation in the State Senate.

While the north-south sectionalism is no longer taken too seriously, it was very real in the 1960s, when southern California became much more conservative (and Republican) in its attitudes. In 1964, for example, Lyndon Johnson's lead in northern California was almost double that in the southern counties, even though the north had fewer voters. And, in 1968, the state's 48 northern counties elected Hubert Humphrey, but the ten southern counties turned the tide for Richard Nixon.

Since 1970 the state as a whole has become slightly more homogeneous in its voting on fiscal issues, and individual regions have undergone slight ideological shifts of their own. Los Angeles and San Diego counties, for example, have become more liberal, while Riverside and San Bernardino counties have drifted to the right.

As the following table indicates, the more fiscally conservative areas of the state -- those areas in which voting is most often more conservative than in the state as a whole -- are Orange county, San Diego county, Northern California, and Riverside and San Bernardino counties. The Bay Area, of course, is as comparatively liberal as ever, joined by the Sacramento area and the Central Valley. Notice, too, that the number of deviations is evenly distributed among the three categories we've chosen: one-third in the 'Under 5%' range, one-third in the '5% - 10%' range, and another one-third in the 'Over 10%' range. This would suggest that the voting on fiscal issues is not particularly 'polarized'. The exception is Orange county, where the vote on each of the eleven fiscal issues surveyed exceeded the statewide result by more than 10 percent -- on the conservative side.

**Summary of Regional Variations
for Conservative Position
on Tax and Spending Initiatives**

| Region | Times Above Statewide Average | Times Below Statewide Average | No. of Variations Under 5% | No. of Variations 5%-10% | No. of Variations Over 10% |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Los Angeles | 5 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Orange County | 10 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| San Diego County | 10 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| Riverside/San Bernardino | 8 | 3 | 9 | 2 | 0 |
| South Coast | 7 | 4 | 8 | 2 | 1 |
| Bay Area | 1 | 9 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Central Valley | 3 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 |
| Sacramento | 1 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 3 |
| Northern California | 9 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 2 |
| Totals | | | 33 (33%) | 32 (32%) | 34 (34%) |

The following table shows the rank order placement -- from most conservative to least conservative -- of each region on each of the eleven fiscal issues, with the lower numbers indicating a more conservative outcome than the higher numbers. Again, we can see hints of the gradual ideological shifts within regions. San Diego county, for example, while still one of the more fiscally conservative areas of the state, has shifted slightly to the left between 1976 and 1986, as has Los Angeles county. Over this same period, Riverside and San Bernardino counties have become slightly more conservative on fiscal matters.

Rank Order of Regional Vote for Conservative Position on Tax and Spending Initiatives

| | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K |
|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| Los Angeles | 2nd | 4th | 3rd | 5th | 9th | 9th | 8th | 8th | 2nd | 7th | 5th |
| Orange County | 1st | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| San Diego County | 8th | 2 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Riverside/San Bern. | 5th | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| South Coast | 4th | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 6 |
| Bay Area | 6th | 9 | 7 | 9 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 9 |
| Central Valley | 9th | 7 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Sacramento | 7th | 8 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Northern California | 3rd | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 2 |

Key to Columns

| | | | |
|----------|---------|--------|----------------------|
| A | Prop 13 | 1978 P | Jarvis-Gann |
| B | Prop 4 | 1979 S | Spending Limits |
| C | Prop 9 | 1980 P | Income Tax Reduction |
| D | Prop 11 | 1980 P | Oil Profits Surtax |
| E | Prop 5 | 1982 P | Inheritance Tax |
| F | Prop 6 | 1982 P | Inheritance Tax |
| G | Prop 7 | 1982 P | Income Tax Indexing |
| H | Prop 24 | 1984 P | Legislative Spending |
| I | Prop 36 | 1984 G | "Save Prop. 13" |
| J | Prop 61 | 1986 G | Public Employee Pay |
| K | Prop 62 | 1986 G | Local Vote on Taxes |

The ideological shifts of the state's voters on social issues -- both statewide and within individual regions -- differ slightly from the shifts on fiscal issues. As was the case in our analysis of fiscal issue voting, the state as a whole has become increasingly homogeneous in its social issue voting over the past decade, although it remains more polarized than for fiscal issues. While the state as a whole has been growing increasingly homogeneous, individual regions have also undergone minor ideological shifts. Orange county, for example, has become slightly more conservative on social issues, but still is not nearly as consistently conservative on social issues as on fiscal issues. Riverside and San Bernardino counties, on the other hand, have become slightly less conservative on social issues over the last decade. And yet, on the ten social issue ballot measures used in this analysis, Riverside and San Bernardino counties have the most conservative voting record overall.

The following table shows how often each region's vote result was above or below the statewide result, and whether the difference was less than 5 percent, between 5 and 10 percent, or greater than 10 percent. Again, you can see evidence of the extent to which the regions are polarized on social issues. Three regions -- Orange county, San Diego county, and Riverside and San Bernardino counties -- were above the statewide result on each of the ten social measures. In the case of Orange county and the Riverside/San Bernardino region, the vote exceeded the statewide result by more than 10 percentage points. These three regions are followed closely by the Central Valley, Sacramento, and Northern California, each of which exceeded the statewide result on at least eight of the ten social measures.

On the liberal side are the Bay Area -- which fell below the statewide results on all ten measures -- the South Coast, and Los Angeles county. Again, with the exception of the South Coast, the majority of the variances from the statewide result exceeded 10 percent. The 'Totals' row confirms that a significant majority of the regional vote results vary from the statewide result by more than 10 percent. You will recall a similar table presented earlier showing fiscal measures. In that table, the regional variations from the statewide results were evenly divided among the three columns.

Summary of Regional Variations for Conservative Position on Social Issue Initiatives

| Region | Times Above Statewide Average | Times Below Statewide Average | No. of Variations Under 5% | No. of Variations 5%-10% | No. of Variations Over 10% |
|--------------------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Los Angeles | 2 | 8 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Orange County | 10 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 7 |
| San Diego County | 10 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Riverside/San Bernardino | 10 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 6 |
| South Coast | 2 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 0 |
| Bay Area | 0 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 8 |
| Central Valley | 8 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Sacramento | 8 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| Northern California | 9 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 |
| Totals | | | 25 (28%) | 25 (28%) | 40 (44%) |

Following is a table summarizing the rank order placement of each region on each of the ten social measures. Again, the lower numbers indicate a more conservative outcome than the higher numbers. Here we see further evidence of the slight ideological shifts within individual regions. Orange county and Northern California have drifted a bit to the right, while San Diego county has moved to the left.