



## California Asian Americans support Obama by big margin

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Karthick Ramakrishnan

Asian Americans in California support President Barack Obama over Gov. Mitt Romney by more than a 2-1 margin in the presidential election, [a survey released today finds](#).

The National Asian American Survey, which is directed by [Karthick Ramakrishnan](#), an associate professor of political science at UC Riverside, interviewed more than 1,000 Californian Asian Americans on the 2012 elections.

The survey found that California Asian American likely voters support Prop. 30 – which would temporarily raise taxes – by a 48 to 24 percent margin. But 24 percent of Asian Americans are undecided.

Among all Californians, a recent Public Policy Institute of California poll showed voters supporting the measure 52 to 40 percent, with only 8 percent undecided.

The initiative would temporarily raise the state sales tax and the state income tax for those earning \$250,000 and higher. Gov. Jerry Brown has warned of dire budget cuts if the measure doesn't pass.

The survey found that Asian American voters oppose Prop. 34, which would ban the death penalty in California and replace it with life imprisonment without possibility of parole, by a small margin. The margin is similar to the opposition that polls have found among all voters statewide. But, again, Asian Americans are more likely to be undecided.

A [companion survey](#) on California Asian Americans' attitudes on issues such as affirmative action, healthcare and immigration was also released today.

[Nationwide survey results](#) were released last week.

The election survey found that 43 percent of California Asian Americans support Obama, while 21 percent back Romney. But 33 percent are undecided. That's similar to the national results for Asian Americans.

In solidly Democratic California, where a [recent Field Poll](#) shows Obama with a 24-point lead over Romney, Asian American votes are unlikely to have a big impact on the election. But the national survey concludes that Asian Americans could sway elections in key battleground states such as Virginia, Nevada and North Carolina.

The 2012 report does not explore differences in Asian American political affiliation and attitudes by region of the state.

But the [2008 National Asian American Survey](#) found that Asian Americans who live in Southern California outside Los Angeles – that includes the Inland Empire – were more likely to be Republican than Asian Americans statewide.

The new survey noted the explosive growth in the number of Asian Americans in California and especially the Inland area – and the growing political clout that accompanies the increase in Asian Americans on voter rolls.

Riverside County's Asian American population rose 119 percent between 2000 and 2010 and San Bernardino County's increased 54 percent – giving the two counties the fastest Asian growth rates of the 11 California counties that are home to at least 100,000 Asian Americans, the survey found.

The 2011 census estimates showed continued [Asian growth in the Inland area](#). The region's Asian American population has nearly tripled since 1990. Asian Americans now comprise about 6 percent of the Inland area's population.

As in the rest of California, the Asian American population in the Inland area is growing at a faster rate than the Latino population.

The Asian American community often either gets ignored in political surveys or is treated as a footnote. Polls that do measure Asian American political attitudes and beliefs usually treat the community as one large voting bloc.

The great thing about the National Asian American Survey is that it has a big enough sample size – they interviewed 1,154 Asian American Californians – that researchers can explore differences among Asian ethnic groups.

And those differences are great.

Californians who are of Hmong, Indian and Korean ancestry are most likely to identify as Democrats, the survey found.

That's true nationally as well. But in California, Democrats outnumber Republicans in every Asian ethnic group, the survey found. Nationwide, Filipinos and Vietnamese are more likely to be Republican than Democratic.

Asian Americans are more likely to be nonpartisan than other Americans. In California, 52% are independent or nonpartisan, about the same as nationwide.

Nationwide, 40 percent of all Americans are independent or nonpartisan.

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