

## Chapter 1 : Unsustainable California: The Top 10 Challenges Facing the Golden State

*California Government and Politics Today explains California's ever-changing political situation in the context of social and economic trends. As in previous editions, author Mona Field focuses on the state's ethnic and cultural diversity as well as the global economy's impact on California (and vice versa).*

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*Description. With a focus on ethnic and cultural diversity, the global economy's impact on California (and vice versa), and the emphasis on political involvement as an essential component of achieving the California Dream this new edition continues a tradition of scholarly and practical coverage of California government.*

Congress are the Democratic Party and the Republican Party. There are four other parties that qualify for official ballot status: Additionally, the state constitution establishes mandatory funding levels for some agencies, programs and institutions. Consequently, affected agencies with support from special interest groups, successfully pressed the California Supreme Court to order the restoration of funding to a number of agencies and programs which had been cut. There have been several events, many [4] dubbed "constitutional crises" by their opponents, over the last thirty-two years including: California was a Republican stronghold in presidential elections from until During this period, the Republicans won California in every election except the election of In these years, the GOP regularly nominated Californians as presidential candidates: Richard Nixon in and , and Ronald Reagan in and Since then however, the Democrats have carried the electoral rich state since The immigration of Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans and migration of northern liberals, who tend to vote Democratic, and the flight of white, middle and upper-middle class suburbanites out of the state shifted the balance in favor of the Democratic Party. Lacking reliable dry season rainfall, water is limited and available surface sources are extensively developed through dams, canals, and pipelines. Waste water reclamation in California is already routine for irrigation and industrial use. Most water is in the north of the State, while agriculture, the largest user of stored water in California, is most prevalent in the central and southern areas. Water viewed as excess by the south is viewed by the north as environmentally essential for agriculture, fisheries, and wildlife. While the southern electorate has a greater portion of the population it is not as unified in its viewpoint as is that of the north, so ballot propositions such as those promoting a Peripheral Canal to transport water to the south have failed. Land use is also divisive. High land prices mean that ordinary people keep a large proportion of their net worth in land. This leads them to agitate strongly about issues that can affect the prices of their home or investments. The most vicious local political battles concern local school boards good local schools substantially raise local housing prices and local land-use policies. In built-up areas it is extremely difficult to site new airports, dumps, or jails. Many cities routinely employ eminent domain to make land available for development. A multi-city political battle was fought for several years in Orange County concerning the decommissioning of the huge El Toro Marine airbase. Orange County needs a new airport pilot unions voted the existing airport, John Wayne , the least safe in the U. In the cities, California has one of the U. The state also contains many individuals who desire to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves, their families, and property. The legislature has passed restrictive gun control laws. Private purchase of "assault" weapons generally, semi-automatic rifles that look like military rifles without prior approval from the state Department of Justice which rarely grants such approval is a felony. The law does not, however, prohibit sales of semi-automatic hunting-style civilian weapons, leading many to question the effectiveness of the cosmetic distinction. Open carry of an unloaded firearm in some areas is legal but very uncommon due to the confusing web of state and federal laws, such as the Federal Gun-Free School Zones Act of , which makes it a felony to carry a gun within feet of a school, even without malicious intent. As of , open carry of firearms is for the most part banned, with exceptions made for law enforcement, hunters, and individuals in rural areas of the state. Except in a handful of rural counties, most people find it impossible to get concealed weapons permits since they are issued at the discretion of the local law enforcement officials; California is not a "shall issue" state for concealed weapons permits. For more see gun laws in California. Influence of special-interest groups[ edit ] Because California is the most populous state in the United States, legislation and policies that are enacted by the government of California often have significant implications on major political issues at the national level. Throughout the twentieth century, political decisions in California have wielded substantial influence with Congress while considering legislation at the federal level. Because of the potentially nationwide implications for political decisions made in California, special-interest groups ,

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many of which are based outside of California, play a greater role in California politics than in most other states,[ citation needed ] by contributing large amounts of money into lobbying, litigation, and producing media advertisements to influence voters and elected officials on major political issues. Judicial influence[ edit ] The California Supreme Court has "a reputation as perhaps the most innovative of the state judiciaries, setting precedents in areas of criminal justice, civil liberties, racial integration, and consumer protection that heavily influence other states and the federal bench.

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