



POLLING MEMORANDUM

Fielded September 15–16, 2026

TO
Interested Parties

SUBJECT
California State Controller Election

FROM
David Wolfson, Pollster; Columbia University, Political Analytics Faculty

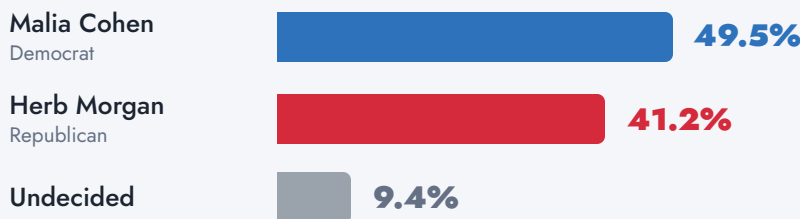
CA CONTROLLER'S RACE

Morgan Inching Up; Gap Is Closing

A new statewide poll of likely November voters finds Republican Herb Morgan inching up on Democrat Malia Cohen in the race for State Controller. Just 8 points separate the two, 49.5% to 41.2% — and the margin narrows to 6.2 once voters hear more about the race.

INITIAL STATE CONTROLLER BALLOT

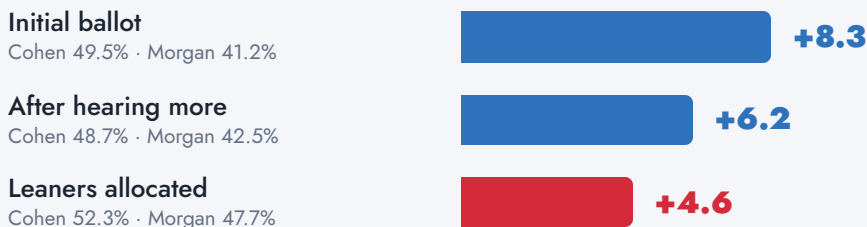
n=828



±4% margin of error

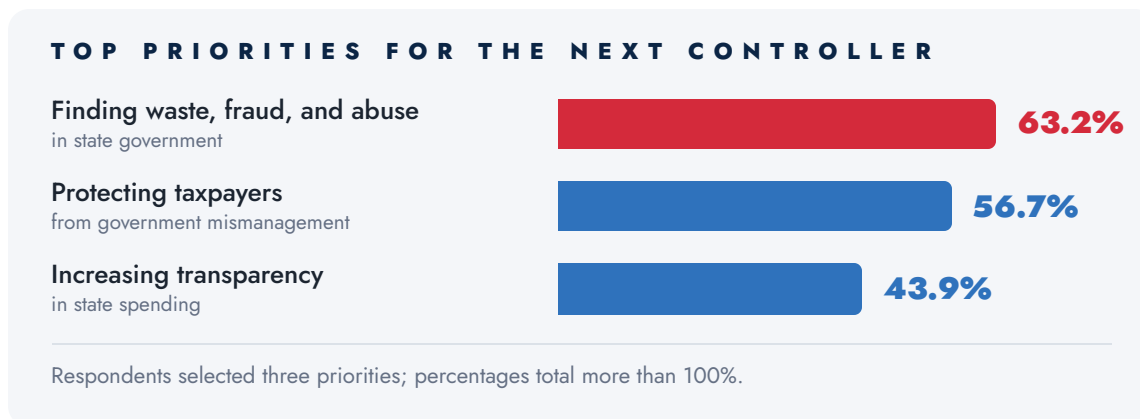
Final-ballot undecideds lean toward Morgan **58.8% to 41.2%**. Allocating them, Cohen leads 52.3% to 47.7% — **a 4.6-point race within the poll's margin of error.**

COHEN'S MARGIN OVER MORGAN

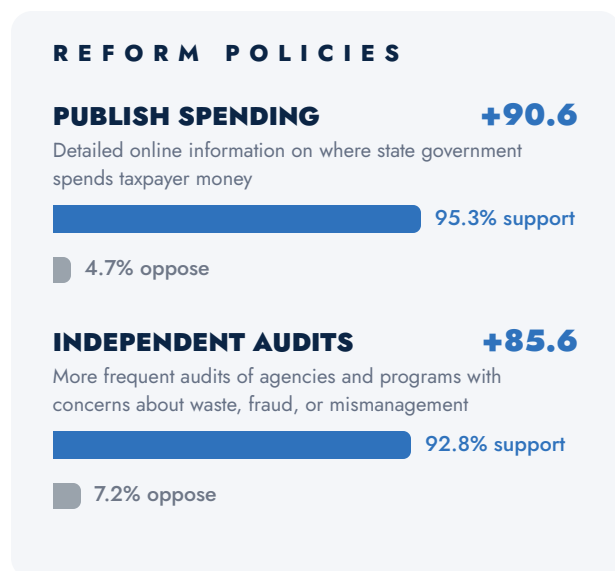


Waste, fraud, and abuse tops voters' priorities

Asked to choose the three highest priorities for California's next State Controller, voters put **finding waste, fraud, and abuse in state government** first. Oversight, accountability, and stewardship of taxpayer money define what voters want from the office.

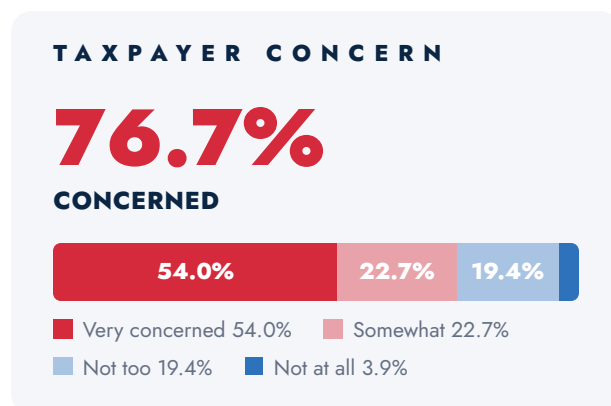


9 in 10 back transparency



More than 9 in 10 voters support both policies, and the intensity is on the side of reform: **73.9% strongly support** publishing spending details and 66.3% strongly support more frequent independent audits.

Taxpayers want to see the books



76.7% are concerned that California taxpayers do not have enough information about how state government spends their money, including **54.0% who are very concerned**.

Voters give California's financial management failing marks

STATE FINANCES ARE BEING MANAGED ...

62.3%

MANAGED POORLY

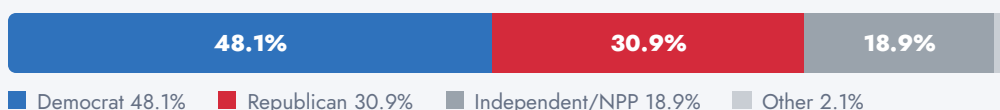
51.7% say very poorly



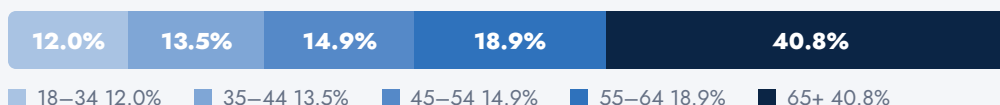
Electorate profile

LIKELY NOVEMBER VOTERS

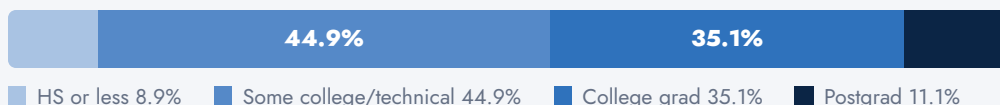
PARTY



AGE



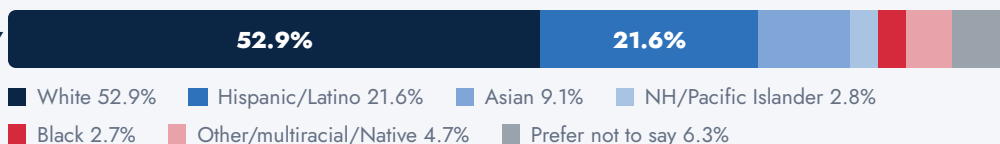
EDUCATION



GENDER



RACE/ETHNICITY



METHODOLOGY

This statewide survey of **828 likely November 2026 California voters** was conducted **September 15–16, 2026** using MMS text-to-web methodology. Respondents were registered voters who said they definitely will vote, drawn using registration-based sampling, vote history, and turnout modeling. The survey carries a 95% confidence level and $\pm 4\%$ margin of error. Percentages may not total 100% because of rounding.

ABOUT THE POLLSTER

David Wolfson is a national pollster specializing in voter behavior and predictive analytics. He teaches at Columbia University's Political Analytics graduate program and previously taught campaign management at the University of Florida for many years. Wolfson is a recipient of an American Association of Political Consultants (AAPC) **Pollie Award** for Best Use of Polling Research, and has conducted hundreds of surveys for candidates, campaigns, and committees across the country.

