



May 30, 2017

To: Interested Parties

From: Ben Tulchin, Corey O'Neil and Kiel Brunner; Tulchin Research

Re: **Statewide Survey Reveals Strong Support for Bail Reform in California**

Tulchin Research recently conducted a California statewide survey to assess voters' attitudes toward the current bail system in California and willingness to make legislative reforms to it. The survey reveals a strong appetite among voters throughout the state for changing California's current bail system. Voters are especially attracted to reforming the current money bail system into one that focuses more on a risk assessment by a judge of each individual case. In addition, voters strongly support a system that more fairly provides opportunity for people, especially low income individuals who can't afford bail, to return to their lives while their case moves forward if they are determined not to be a threat or flight risk instead of being locked away in jail while they await trial.

We provide below a summary of the key findings from the survey.

Key Findings

The survey finds that, nearly three quarters of voters in California strongly favor "*reforming how and why people are held in jail while they await trial, including through money bail, as part of statewide efforts to reform California's criminal justice system*" (72% Yes). That compares to 11 percent of voters who do not think bail reforms are needed and another 17 percent who are undecided.

Bail Reform Preference

<i>Should we consider reforming how and why people are held in jail while they await trial, including through money bail, as part of statewide efforts to reform California's criminal justice system?</i>	
Yes	72%
No	11%
Don't Know	17%
Yes - No	+61

This strong preference for reforming the current bail system is remarkably consistent across key groups of voters in every party, region and ethnic group in the state as the table below illustrates.

**Support for Reforming Bail System
by Key Demographic Group**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Und</u>	<u>Yes-No</u>
<i>Total</i>	72%	11%	17%	+61
<i>Party</i>				
Democrat	77%	8%	16%	+69
Republican	67%	16%	18%	+51
NPP/Other	69%	13%	18%	+56
<i>Region</i>				
LA County	73%	10%	17%	+63
LA Area	72%	12%	17%	+60
Bay Area	73%	10%	18%	+63
San Diego	72%	11%	17%	+61
Sacramento/North	65%	13%	22%	+52
Central Valley	72%	14%	13%	+58
Inland Empire	74%	8%	18%	+66
<i>Race</i>				
White	70%	12%	18%	+58
Latino	77%	11%	12%	+66
Black	81%	9%	10%	+73
Asian	76%	9%	15%	+68

The survey also described separate specific elements of the proposal and asked voters whether or not they support or oppose it. Voters overwhelmingly support a key component of the proposal requiring the court to “*assess each case individually and make release decisions based on the specific circumstances of each case and defendant*” (90% support to 7% oppose, 3% undecided). This support includes a majority of voters (57%) that *strongly* support this element of the proposal. There is also intense support among voters for ensuring that “*bail is not set at a level that keeps low income people detained due to their inability to pay*” (77% support to 16% oppose, 7% undecided).

Bail Reform Proposal Elements

Now, here are some elements that have been suggested for a proposal to change from a bail system based on money to a system based on individual risk assessments. For each element, please indicate whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose or strongly oppose that element as part of the proposal. (DO NOT ROTATE)

	<u>Support</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>	<u>Support–Oppose</u>
<i>Require the court to assess each case individually and make release decisions based on the specific circumstances of each case and defendant.</i>	90% Total (57% Strong)	7% Total (3% Strong)	3%	+83
<i>Ensure that bail is not set at a level that keeps low income people detained due to their inability to pay.</i>	77% Total (46% Strong)	16% Total (5% Strong)	7%	+61

In sum, voters in California strongly support reforming the current money bail system in the state to one that assesses each case individually. Furthermore, voters strongly support reforms to ensure the bail system does not keep low income people in jail simply due to their inability to afford bail even if they are judged to not be a flight risk.

Survey Methodology: *Tulchin Research conducted a statewide survey in California among 1100 likely November 2016 voters, including a statewide base sample of 1000 voters and an oversample of 100 African American voters. The oversample of African American voters provides increased statistical confidence for that specific demographic group. Interviews were conducted online from November 30 – December 6, 2016. The margin of error for the statewide base sample is +/- 3.46 percent and +/- 8.3 among voters in the African American oversample.*