

June 19, 2018

## Is California Failing Seniors? Voters Say Yes.

### **Voters Say Next Governor Needs Master Plan for Aging; More than Half Say They Would Even Pay Higher Taxes if It Meant Better Healthcare and Support Services for Seniors**

**(Sacramento, CA)** – An overwhelming majority (84 percent) of California voters would be more likely to support a candidate for governor who has a vision and long-term master plan to address the state’s increasing need for senior services – and more than half (57 percent) would be willing to support a tax increase to fund it. These are among the key findings of a [statewide voter survey](#) conducted June 8-11 and released today by *We Stand With Seniors...Will You?*

“Voters across all political spectrums and demographics clearly understand the state is not doing enough to ensure we can care for our growing senior population and they want something done now, before it’s too late,” said Shelley Lyford, president and CEO of West Health. “Scaling best practices, expanding senior-specific programs and models of care that are working, and better utilization of existing resources can go a long way to address these critical needs.”

[West Health](#), along with [The SCAN Foundation](#), launched the nonpartisan, nonprofit We Stand With Seniors campaign earlier this year to educate policymakers about the needs of California seniors.

According to the [Public Policy Institute of California](#) (PPIC), the state’s 65-and-older population is projected to grow nearly 90 percent. That is four million people by 2030, totaling 8.6 million seniors.

“Unless we address the growing needs of our seniors now by developing a master plan for aging, the state will be left with the same broken, fragmented system that is expensive and ineffective for families and taxpayers alike. Often, older adults and their caregivers find themselves slowly robbed of their dignity, choice and independence but with leadership here in California, it doesn’t have to be that way,” said Bruce Chernof, MD, president and CEO of The SCAN Foundation.

Two out of three voters think the state is not doing enough for seniors now (64 percent) nor is it prepared to address their future needs (59 percent). The survey results come as voters prepare to select their next governor in November. And in a state where addressing homelessness and public safety are top priorities among voters (72 percent and 79 percent, respectively), a full 68 percent of voters believe that caring for our older adults, including supporting them with the tools to live, in accordance with their needs, values and preferences, is also a top priority.

“The human impacts and financial costs to the state of experimenting with imperfect fixes to address older adults’ broad care needs would be significant. Developing a master plan for aging will help California support older adults, caregivers and families,” Chernof said.

### **Broad Support for Increased Access to Quality, Affordable Senior Services Spans Political Spectrum, Age and Ethnic Lines**

At a time of deep political polarization, California voters from all backgrounds agree the state needs to invest in high-quality senior services and the next governor should have a master plan to address the needs of our growing senior population:

- Supporting a candidate for governor with a vision and plan to address senior needs meets or exceeds 70 percent along the political spectrum, including Republican, Democrat and Decline to State voters.
- All age groups are more likely to support a gubernatorial candidate with a vision and plan for our growing senior population.
- Super majorities of voters across racial and ethnic backgrounds (70 percent and higher) are more likely to support a candidate for governor who has a plan to address aging needs.

### **Super Majorities Support Services to Allow Aging in Place**

[Recent surveys](#) show that 87 percent of individuals wish to stay in their homes as they age. California lags behind other states in addressing its aging population’s needs across many sectors including workforce, social services, affordable housing and caregiver supports; all of which are critical to enable people to successfully age in their homes and communities. Without addressing issues on a system-wide basis, older adults and families will continue to face challenges to find the services they need to avoid institutionalization and remain in their homes and community.

- Nearly nine out of 10 voters (88 percent) feel it is important for California to have a master plan to invest in services that allow seniors to age in place.
- More than three out of four voters (76.4 percent) are more likely to vote for a candidate who understands and plans to address the need to educate and train the future workforce to innovate new products and services to meet the daily living needs of older adults who want to live at home.
- More than three out of four voters (78 percent) would be more likely to vote for a candidate who has a vision and long-term master plan for aging if it included support for senior caregivers, such as a tax break, stipend for support or other type of support for caregivers. And 86.4 percent support California investing more in caregiver programs that assist those who care for aging family members.
- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of California voters are concerned about their ability to pay for long-term care in the future.
- Understanding that the high costs of housing negatively impacts seniors, 78.5 percent of voters are more likely to elect a candidate who has a plan to address senior housing needs.
- Almost two out of three voters (63.4 percent) feel that California’s state government is not doing enough to provide services to help older Californians live independently at home.

In the coming months, *We Stand With Seniors* will continue to educate candidates and policymakers about the need for a master plan for aging in California, and will work with stakeholders to share best practices and develop plans to support the goal of ensuring California seniors can age safely and with dignity.

### ***About We Stand With Seniors***

[West Health](#) and [The SCAN Foundation's We Stand With Seniors ...Will You?](#) nonpartisan, public awareness and education campaign focuses on the specific challenges seniors and their families face in accessing high-quality, affordable healthcare, dental care and supportive services and the cost to the state if these challenges are not addressed. Keep up with #StandWithSeniors on Facebook [@WeStandWithSeniors](#) and Twitter [@WeStandWSeniors](#).

### ***Survey Methodology***

From Friday, June 8 through Monday, June 11, 2018, J. Wallin Opinion Research conducted a telephone survey of voters throughout the State of California, interviewing 1,000 respondents using live, professional interviewers, speaking Spanish and English languages and calling both mobile and landlines (59.9 percent of this survey was completed on mobile phones). A survey of this size yields a margin of error of +/-3.1percent (95 percent confidence interval). The sample is stratified, meaning that the demographic composition of our results matches the demographic composition of the state's voting population.