



From: Justin Mayhew, Public Policy Polling®

To: Interested Parties

Subject: California Voters Adamantly Opposed to Civil Asset Forfeiture Laws

Date: May 16, 2016

Two new Public Policy Polling surveys find overwhelming statewide and local opposition in California to laws allowing law enforcement to seize and keep a person's cash and property if they are merely suspected – not charged or convicted – of being involved in criminal activity. Voters in both the statewide survey and the Southern California regional survey – encompassing Los Angeles, San Bernadino, and Riverside Counties – decisively reject these civil asset forfeiture laws by a margin of at least 5-to-1 upon an initial description of the laws. 82% of statewide voters say police should not be able to take away property from people who haven't been convicted of a crime to just 14% who say they should be able to do that. In Southern California, voters oppose the laws by a similar 80/16 spread.

Key findings from the survey include:

- Democrats, Republicans, and Independents are all equally averse to asset forfeiture laws in California. In the statewide survey, 79% of Democrats, 83% of Republicans, and 88% of independents all say that police should not be able to seize citizens' property without a conviction.
- Opposition to civil asset forfeiture laws strengthens as voters learn more about them. After voters in the statewide survey are read statements detailing how the laws contradict of the constitutional principles of due process and how law enforcement is allowed to keep the seized cash and property to pad their budgets, opposition to the laws jumps three points to 85%. In the regional survey, that number rises to 82%, an increase of two points.
- Even after hearing law enforcement arguments in favor of asset forfeiture, opposition to the practice remained very high, with 78% of California voters and 75% of voters in the Southern California region remaining opposed.
- 7% of California respondents said that they had personally lost property to law enforcement without a conviction, a number that went to 10% in a survey of 3 California counties: Los Angeles, Riverside and San Bernardino. 17% of those surveyed statewide said that they knew someone who lost property to law enforcement without conviction; 19% in the 3 county survey.

PPP surveyed 728 California voters and 618 voters in Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernadino Counties from May 2-4, 2016. The margin of error for the statewide survey is +/-3.6%, while the regional survey has a margin of error of +/-3.9% . These polls were conducted by automated telephone interviews.

