

New Poll Shows California Voters 40 and Older Largely Unprepared for Costs of Long-Term Care Services *Lack of Preparation Spans Income and Political Party Affiliation*

April 21, 2010 – A new survey released today examines the views of California voters 40 and older toward long-term care, and their ability to afford it. On behalf of The SCAN Foundation and UCLA Center for Health Policy Research, Lake Research Partners and American Viewpoint conducted a statewide survey among 1,218 registered voters in California ages 40 and older. The survey was fielded March 5 through 22, 2010. The margin of sampling error is ± 2.8 percentage points. The purpose of the survey was to understand how prepared voters 40 and older are for the costs of long-term care, gauge their concern about the issue, and explore whether voters think the issue should be a priority for candidates and elected officials.

The poll shows most voters 40 and older are largely unprepared for the costs of long-term care should they need it. Most do not have long-term care insurance, nor are they aware that Medicare does not cover extended long-term care services. Additionally, a majority of these voters could not pay for more than three months of nursing home or part-time in-home care if they needed it. Considerable proportions could not afford just one month. This lack of preparedness spans demographic groups, including income and political party affiliation. Voters 40 and older are worried about being able to afford long-term care, concerned about losing their savings to pay for it, and look to elected officials to improve the affordability of services.

Following are key findings:

- § Two-thirds (66 percent) of voters 40 and older worry about being able to pay for long-term care that they or a family member may need in the future. Concern crosses party affiliation, with majorities of Democrats (72 percent), Republicans (59 percent), and independents (63 percent) worried about being able to afford care.
- § Voters' concerns about paying for future long-term care is not surprising given:
 - Only 15 percent of these voters report having long-term care insurance;
 - 68 percent say they could not afford more than three months of nursing home care, and 42 percent could not afford one month of care; and
 - 57 percent could not afford more than three months of in-home care, with one in three (33 percent) currently unable to afford one month of care.

- § A majority of voters 40 and older (69 percent) either inaccurately believes Medicare covers long-term nursing home care, or is unsure. Seventy-eight percent hold the same views about in-home care.
- § Nearly all voters 40 and older (95 percent) say it is important to have affordable long-term care options available so older people can avoid going into nursing homes. Two-thirds (66 percent) say ensuring these options should be a high priority for state elected officials, including half or more of Democrats (76 percent), Republicans (50 percent), and independents (66 percent).
- § The majority of voters 40 and older (85 percent) say they are almost certain to vote in the upcoming elections this November. If an election were held today for governor, 49 percent say they would vote for the Democratic candidate, 38 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate, and 8 percent would vote for a third-party candidate.
- § Regardless of party affiliation or which candidate they are leaning toward electing to the governor's office, majorities say it is important that candidates talk about issues like long-term care. Nearly all Democrats (94 percent) feel this way, as well as 80 percent of Republicans, and 84 percent of independents.
- § Throughout the survey, we find that worry about affording long-term care services, preparedness, and priorities for elected officials span demographic groups including income, party affiliation, age, gender, and ethnicity.

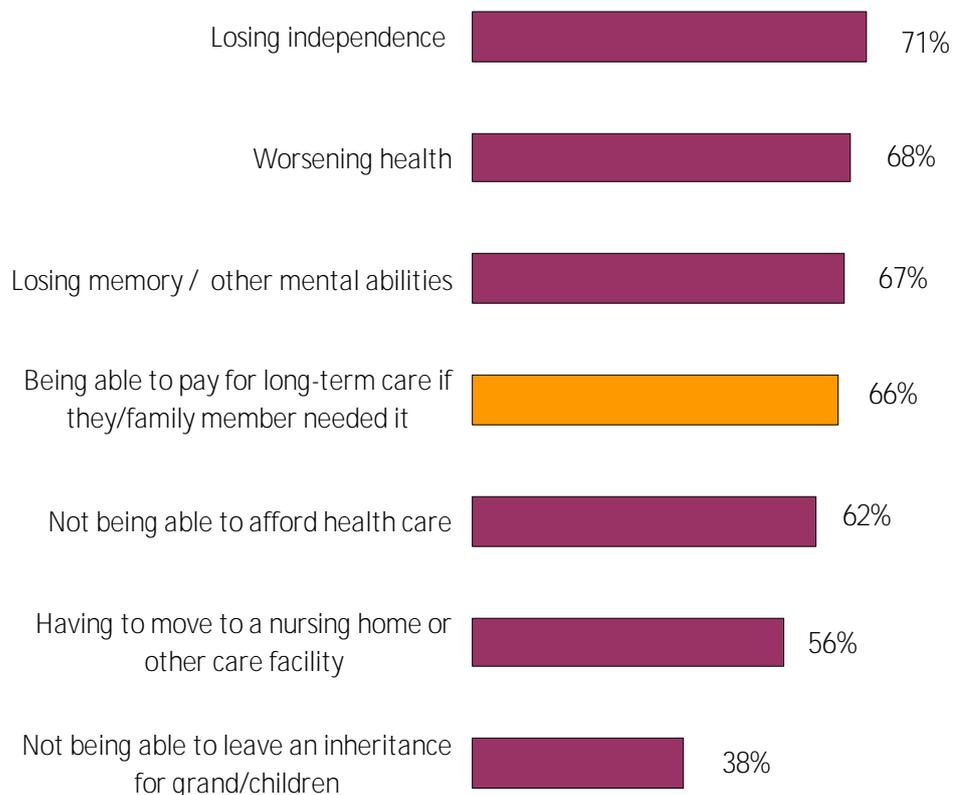
Following are detailed findings.

Detailed Findings

California voters 40 and older worry about being able to pay for long-term care services in the future.

Two-thirds (66 percent) of voters 40 and older say they worry about being able to pay for long-term care that they or a family member may need in the future. In a list of seven worries about growing older, affording long-term care ranks among concerns such as losing one's independence, worsening health, and losing memory or other mental abilities. (See Figure 1.)

Figure 1: Thinking about Growing Older, How Worried Are You about:
Percent saying very/somewhat worried



Q. Thinking about growing older, how worried are you about each of the following issues: Q. The next questions are about long-term care, which includes a range of services people need when they can no longer care for themselves independently. These services include providing help in people's homes or communities with daily activities like bathing and taking medications, as well as care in a nursing home.

There is virtually no difference across income levels when it comes to worrying about affording long-term care. (See Table 1.) Even 63 percent of those in the highest income brackets – household incomes of \$75,000 or more – are worried about being able to afford long-term care services. Concern also crosses the political spectrum.

Voters between ages 40 and 64 are more likely to worry about affording care than those 65 and older, and Latino voters are slightly more likely than white, non-Hispanic voters to be worried.

More than half of voters 40 and older say they are currently providing care for a family member or friend who has a long-term illness or disability, or are likely to provide this care in the next few years (30 percent currently, 25 percent in near future). These current and future caregivers are more likely to express worry about long-term care costs than others.

Table 1: Worry about Long-Term Care Affordability by Demographics

<i>Percent very/somewhat worried</i>	Worried about Being Able to Afford Long-Term Care Services if Needed
All voters 40+	66%
< Age 65	69%
65+	57%
Whites, non-Hispanic	65%
Latinos ¹	73%
<\$30K household income	67%
\$30-\$49K	69%
\$50-\$74K	67%
\$75K+	63%
Democrats	72%
Independents	63%
Republicans	59%
Current/future caregivers	75%
Others	54%

¹ Sample size for Latinos is n=197 with a margin of error of ± 5.9 percentage points. Sample sizes for other races are smaller and therefore not reported here.

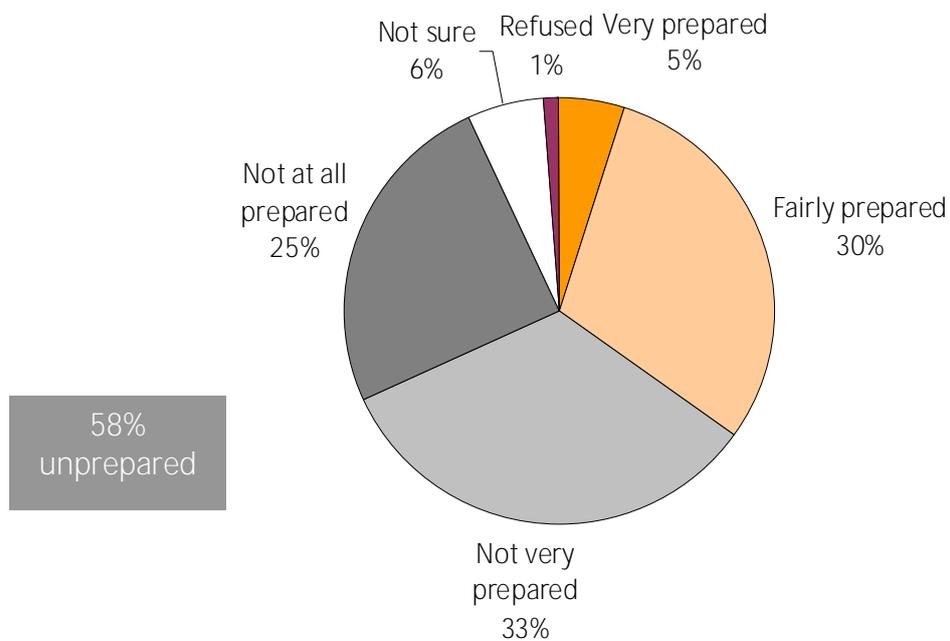
Close to six in ten voters 40 and older say they feel financially unprepared to pay for long-term care, if they needed it.

To gauge respondents' financial preparedness toward long-term care, we asked:

Think for a moment about your current financial situation, any insurance you might have, or any other financial resources at your disposal. Hypothetically speaking, how financially prepared do you feel you are if you needed long-term care, starting right now and for an unknown period of time?

Fifty-eight percent of voters 40 and older say they feel not very (33 percent) or not at all (25 percent) prepared should they need long-term care services. (See Figure 2.) Only five percent say they currently feel very prepared.

Figure 2: How Financially Prepared Do You Feel You Are If You Needed Long-Term Care Services Right Now for Unknown Period of Time?



Q. Think for a moment about your current financial situation, any insurance you might have, or any other financial resources at your disposal. Hypothetically speaking, how financially prepared do you feel you are if you needed long-term care, starting right now and for an unknown period of time?

It is not just lower-income voters who feel financially unprepared. Six in ten (60 percent) of those with incomes between \$50,000 and \$74,999 and nearly half (48 percent) of those earning \$75,000 or more say they feel unprepared currently. (See Table 2.)

Voters ages 40 to 64 feel particularly unprepared to deal with long-term care services should they need them (66 percent vs. 40 percent of those 65 and older). Latino voters are slightly more likely than others to feel unprepared (67 percent vs. 57 percent).

There is very little difference across the political spectrum on feelings toward preparedness.

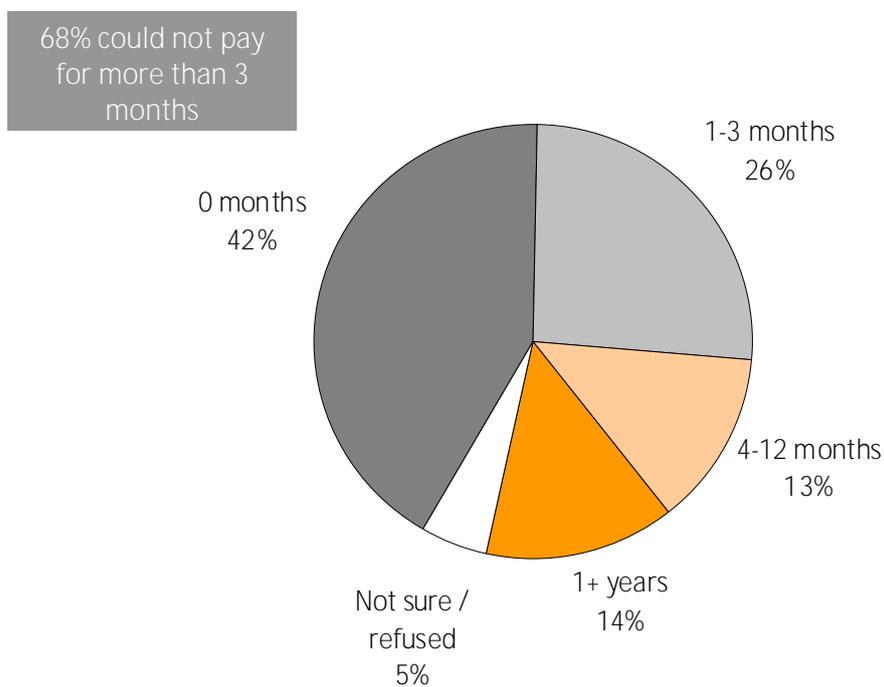
Table 2: Feeling Unprepared for Long-Term Care by Demographics

<i>Percent not too/not at all prepared</i>	Feel Unprepared to Pay for Long-Term Care Services If Needed
All voters 40+	58%
< Age 65	66%
65+	40%
Whites, non-Hispanic	57%
Latinos	67%
<\$30K household income	68%
\$30-\$49K	66%
\$50-\$74K	60%
\$75K+	48%
Democrats	60%
Independents	58%
Republicans	55%

When presented with average costs, a majority of voters 40 and older say they could not afford long-term care for longer than three months if they needed it.

Respondents were given the average long-term nursing home costs (\$6,000 per month) in California and told that Medicare and regular private insurance plans do not pay for these costs. They were then asked how long they could afford care in a nursing home. Four in ten (42 percent) say they could not afford one month of care. Two-thirds (68 percent) say they could not afford care for longer than three months. Fourteen percent say they could afford one year or more of nursing home care. (See Figure 3.)

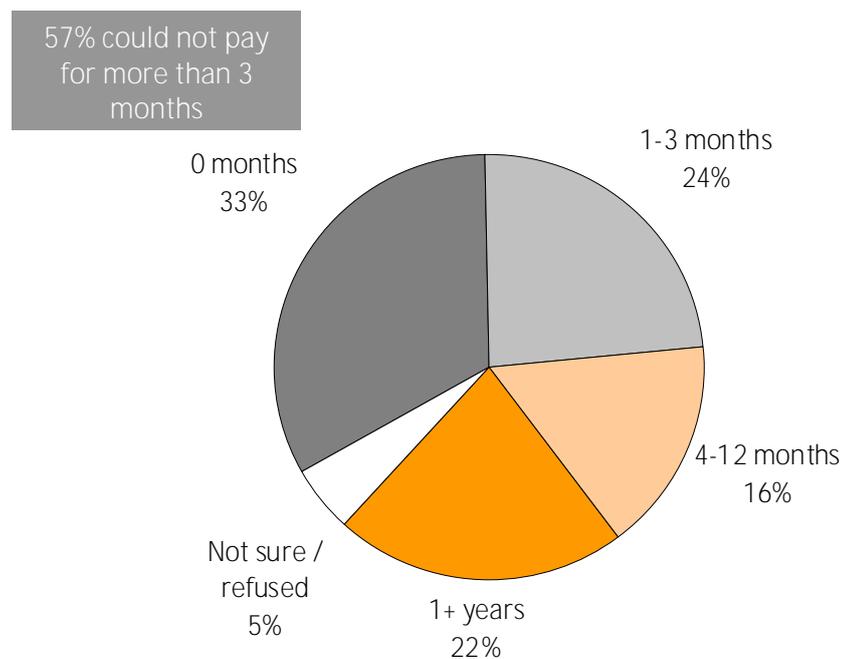
Figure 3: How Long Could You Afford Nursing Home Care If You Had to Pay for It Yourself?



Q. Right now, long-term nursing home care costs about \$6,000 a month in California. Medicare and regular private insurance plans do not pay for any of these costs. How many months could you afford nursing home care, if you had to pay for all of it yourself?

The survey also asked about their ability to afford a part-time, licensed personal care aide to come into their home, which would cost about \$1,700 per month. One in three (33 percent) says they could not afford one month of this type of in-home care. Fifty-seven percent of voters 40 and older say they could not afford more than three months, and 22 percent say they could afford a year or longer of in-home care. (See Figure 4.)

Figure 4: How Long Could You Afford a Part-Time, Licensed Personal Care Aide If You Had to Pay for It Yourself?



- Q. Right now, it costs about \$1,700 a month to have a licensed personal care aide come into the home part-time to help an older person with a chronic illness, such as heart failure, with daily activities. Medicare and regular private insurance plans do not pay for any of these costs. How many months could you afford this care, if you had to pay for all of it yourself?

Again the survey finds a lack of financial preparedness for long-term care spans across income categories. Slightly more than half (54 percent) of those earning household incomes of \$75,000 or more says they could not afford three months of nursing home care. About one in four (27 percent) says they could not afford one month of care. (See Table 3.)

Women are more likely than men to say they could not afford nursing home or in-home care. Latinos and voters ages 40 to 64 are among the most likely to say they could not afford care. Again, there is little difference across party affiliation in ability to pay for long-term care.

Table 3: Inability to Afford Long-Term Care by Demographics

	Nursing Home Care		Part-Time In-Home Personal Care Aide	
	<i>Could Not Afford More than 3 Months</i>	<i>Could Not Afford 1 Month</i>	<i>Could Not Afford More than 3 Months</i>	<i>Could Not Afford 1 Month</i>
All voters 40+	68%	42%	57%	33%
Men	64%	36%	52%	28%
Women	72%	47%	62%	38%
< Age 65	74%	49%	62%	37%
65+	55%	26%	46%	24%
Whites, non-Hispanic	64%	37%	53%	30%
Latinos	82%	63%	75%	49%
<\$30K household income	89%	66%	79%	60%
\$30-\$49K	73%	51%	65%	40%
\$50-\$74K	68%	39%	54%	29%
\$75K+	54%	27%	44%	18%
Democrats	68%	48%	60%	38%
Independents	65%	33%	49%	26%
Republicans	71%	43%	63%	35%

Most voters 40 and older do not know whether Medicare covers long-term care services.

Sixty-nine percent of these voters are either unsure (53 percent) or inaccurately believe (16 percent) that Medicare covers long-term nursing home care. Thirty-percent of voters 40 and older are aware that Medicare does not cover these services.

A larger proportion (78 percent) lacks knowledge about whether Medicare covers in-home long-term care. More than half (56 percent) are unsure, and one in five (22 percent) incorrectly says Medicare covers these services. One in five (20 percent) is aware that Medicare does not cover in-home care.

Voters 65 and older are most likely to be aware that Medicare does not cover nursing home care, although they are equally unaware of whether it covers in-home care. (See Table 4.)

Voters with the lowest incomes (under \$30,000) are among the least likely to know that Medicare covers neither nursing home nor in-home long-term care.

Awareness levels are similar across party affiliation. Additionally, the survey suggests current and future caregivers are essentially no more knowledgeable about nursing home coverage than those who do not provide care to a loved one with a long-term illness or disability.

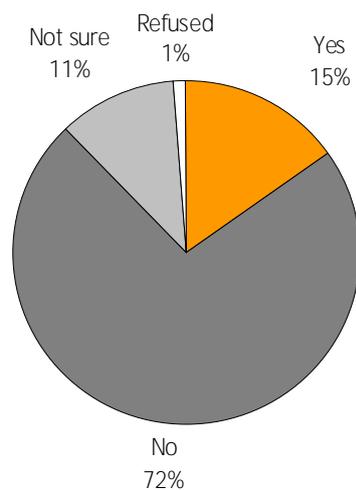
Table 4: Awareness of Whether Medicare Covers Long-Term Care by Demographics

	Nursing Home Care		Part-Time In-Home Personal Care Aide	
	<i>Correct ("no")</i>	<i>Incorrect or unsure</i>	<i>Correct ("no")</i>	<i>Incorrect or unsure</i>
All voters 40+	30%	69%	20%	78%
< Age 65	25%	73%	20%	78%
65+	43%	58%	21%	79%
Whites, non-Hispanic	35%	64%	22%	77%
Latinos	23%	73%	16%	82%
<\$30K household income	22%	74%	15%	82%
\$30-\$49K	32%	68%	19%	80%
\$50-\$74K	33%	65%	20%	78%
\$75K+	33%	66%	24%	76%
Democrats	31%	67%	19%	79%
Independents	29%	70%	21%	78%
Republicans	31%	68%	21%	78%
Current/future caregivers	32%	67%	23%	75%
Others	29%	69%	17%	81%

Most California voters 40 and older do not have long-term care insurance.

Fifteen percent of these voters say they have purchased insurance that covers long-term care expenses. Seventy-two percent have not, and 11 percent say they are not sure. (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5: Have You Purchased Long-Term Care Insurance?



Q. Have you purchased insurance that covers long-term care expenses, through work, through a private policy, or by some other means?

Voters 65 and older are most likely to have long-term care coverage (24 percent). Least likely to have coverage are those with the lowest incomes (5 percent), and individuals who say they are in fair or poor health (8 percent). (See Table 5.)

Table 5: Long-Term Care Insurance Coverage by Demographics

	Has Long-Term Care Insurance	Does not / Not sure
All voters 40+	15%	83%
< Age 65	12%	87%
65+	24%	75%
Whites, non-Hispanic	16%	83%
Latinos	9%	88%
<\$30K household income	5%	94%
\$30-\$49K	17%	82%
\$50-\$74K	17%	81%
\$75K+	19%	81%
Democrats	13%	86%
Independents	16%	84%
Republicans	17%	81%
In excellent/very good/good health	17%	82%
Just fair/poor health	8%	92%

After hearing about Medi-Cal eligibility requirements, two-thirds of voters express worry about having to spend all of their savings to get help paying for long-term care.

Survey respondents were told that in order to get help from Medi-Cal (California's Medicaid program) for long-term care services, individuals would need to spend their savings down to \$2,000 and their monthly income would need to be less than \$845 for an individual or \$1,407 for a couple. After hearing this, 67 percent of voters 40 and older say they are worried that they would have to spend all of their savings to get help paying for care.

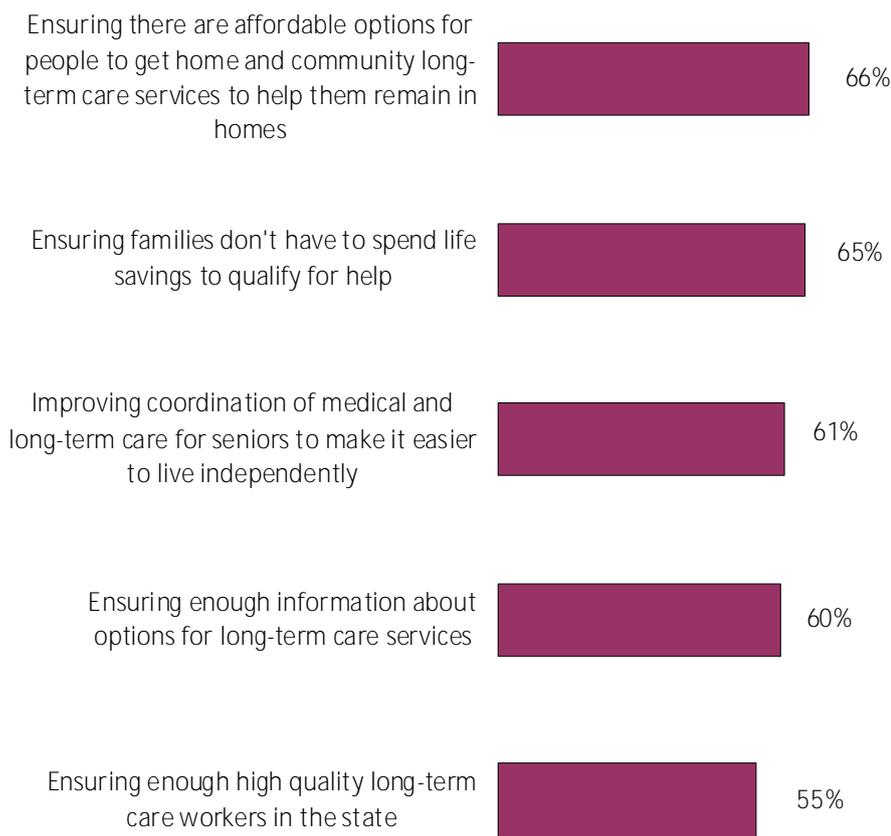
Majorities of Democrats (72 percent), Republicans (61 percent), and independents (66 percent) are worried after hearing about these requirements. Independent women (72%) are among the most likely to express worry.

Voters say affordable home and community-based long-term care options are important, and rate long-term care issues as high priorities for state elected officials.

Nearly all voters (95 percent) say they feel it is important to have affordable options available so that older people can get help in their homes and communities instead of going into nursing homes. More than seven in ten (72 percent) feel this is very important, including majorities of Democrats (82 percent), Republicans (59 percent), and independents (70 percent) saying affordable options are very important.

More than half of voters 40 and older say a number of long-term care issues should be high priorities for elected officials in the state, including ensuring there are affordable home and community-based care options (66 percent), ensuring families do not have to spend their life savings to qualify for help (65 percent), and improving coordination of medical and long-term care (61 percent). (See Figure 6.)

Figure 6: Voters' Priorities for Elected Officials in California:
Percent saying should be high priority



Q. How high of a priority do you think each of the following should be for elected officials in California:

Across demographic groups, women and voters 65 and older tend to be most likely to rate these issues as high priorities for elected officials. For example, 72 percent of women voters 40 and older say ensuring there are affordable home and community-based options is a high priority, compared to 59 percent of men. (See Table 6.)

Half or more voters across the political and income spectrums say ensuring affordable long-term care options should be a top priority for state elected officials.

Table 6: High Priority for Elected Officials: Affordable Options

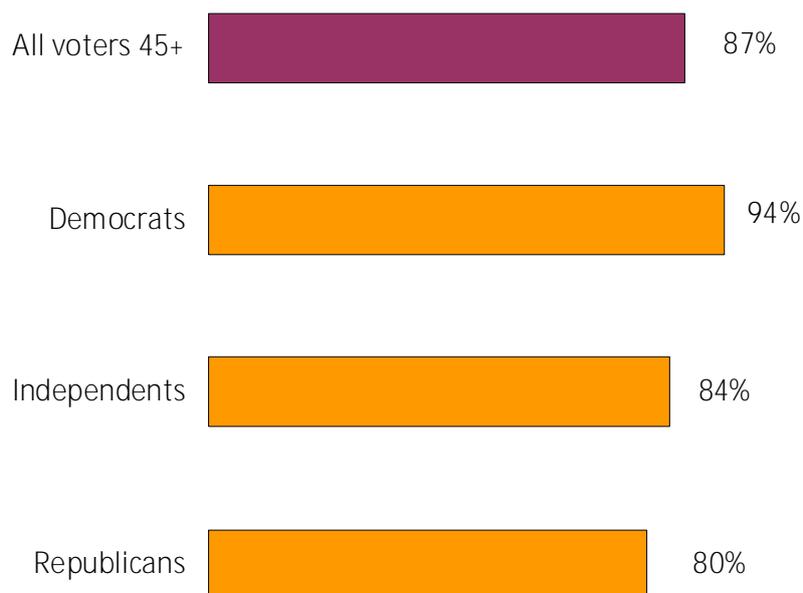
<i>Percent high priority</i>	Making sure there are affordable home and community-based options
All voters 40+	66%
Men	59%
Women	72%
< Age 65	60%
65+	78%
Whites, non-Hispanic	65%
Latinos	75%
<\$30K household income	79%
\$30-\$49K	69%
\$50-\$74K	65%
\$75K+	57%
Democrats	76%
Independents	66%
Republicans	50%

Most registered voters 40 and older say they are almost certain to vote in November, and they want to hear gubernatorial candidates talk about issues like long-term care.

The majority of voters 40 and older (85 percent) say they are almost certain to vote in the upcoming elections this November. If the election for governor were held “today,” 49 percent of these voters say they would vote for the Democratic candidate, 38 percent say they would vote for the Republican candidate, and 8 percent would vote for a third-party candidate.

Regardless of political affiliation or which candidate they are leaning toward electing to the governor’s office, most say it is important that candidates talk about issues like long-term care. (See Figure 7.) Nearly all Democrats (94 percent) feel this way, as well as 80 percent of Republicans, and 84 percent of independents.

Figure 7: Importance of Candidates Talking about Issues Like Long-Term Care
Percent saying very or somewhat important



Q. How important is it that candidates running for governor talk about issues like long-term care?

Methodology

Lake Research Partners and American Viewpoint conducted this survey, administered by [Knowledge Networks](#), among a representative probability sample of N = 1,218 registered voters ages 40 and older in California. The questionnaire was administered in both English and Spanish. The survey was fielded March 5 through 22, 2010. The margin of sampling error for the total survey results is ± 2.8 percentage points. The sampling error is larger for smaller subgroups within the sample.