



California Influencers

California, once a conservative stronghold and the cradle of the Reagan Revolution, has been trending Democratic for years now—and this year it was one of the few states where Democrats held their own against the extremely strong national Republican tide. In the top statewide contests, voters decisively chose veteran liberal Democrats Barbara Boxer for senator and Jerry “Moonbeam” Brown for governor over political newcomers who argued that their corporate experience made them ideally suited to guide the state through dire economic times. Democrats also continue to hold a significant edge in the state’s congressional delegation.

While they may tilt to the left on average, successful California politicians run the gamut from Barbara Lee, the East Bay representative who was the only member of Congress to vote against the 2001 resolution authorizing the use of force in response to the 9/11 attacks, to Devin Nunes, the Central Valley representative who called the Obama administration’s health care reform bill part of a plan to impose a “Socialist utopia” on the American people.

Here is our list of the top 100 players in California politics today.

TOP 50 Democrats

Jerry Brown

The governor-elect is an everlasting political tactician and campaigner. He has held local office, statewide office and ran for national office before starting all over again.

Susan Kennedy

Chief of staff to Governor Schwarzenegger, former executive director of the Democratic Party and staffer to Dianne Feinstein, she handles everything that goes through the governor's office.

Nancy Pelosi

She may have just lost the speakership, but she was the first woman elected to the position and still wields a heavy hand back home.

Dianne Feinstein

California's 800-pound gorilla, she is usually the most popular elected official in the state because of her perfect alignment with the California electorate, just left of center. Her support and endorsement is a gift to any politico.

Barbara Boxer

Considered not as effective as Feinstein and not nearly as popular with the general population, but more popular among Democrats and an icon for liberals across the country. What Jesse Helms was for the right, she is for the left.

John Perez

One of several Latino speakers who have led the Assembly, Perez is the first openly gay person of color to be elected to the body and lead it.

Darrell Steinberg

The leader of the Senate, he is more policy focused than political, but when Steinberg needs to flex his political muscle in Sacramento he does.

Maria Shriver

As California's first lady she wasn't involved much in the first year of her husband's tenure as governor, but after some significant losses at the ballot box, she came in, got involved in hiring

staff, helped position Schwarzenegger for re-election and remains heavily involved.

Eli Broad

A Los Angeles real estate developer and philanthropist, Broad is a major donor to Democrats and their causes.

Haim Saban

The creator of the Power Rangers, Saban is a former member of the UC Board of Regents and a major donor to the Democratic Party.

Richard Blum

Blum is Senator Dianne Feinstein's husband. He is an investment banker and a regent of the University of California, and in the past he has served as chairman of its board.

Gale Kaufman

A fixture in the consulting world of California politics, Kaufman has led Democratic Caucus campaigns, numerous proposition campaigns and Bradley for President in 2000. She is also known for being fiercely tough and for rising to the top in the male-dominated world of political consulting.

Maria Elena Durazo

She is head of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, one of the most powerful interest groups in a Democratic state in the most populous county in the country. Durazo took charge of the organization following the death of her husband, Miguel Contreras, who used to head the organization.

John Burton

A San Francisco liberal, Burton has never changed his stripes. He has served in the California Assembly, Senate and U.S. House. With decades of politics in his blood he couldn't just ride off into the sunset and currently serves as the chair of the state Democratic Party.

Parke Skelton

A successful campaign consultant and progressive Democrat, Skelton has elected numerous politicians across the

state, and his record of victories speaks for itself.

Dave Low

A powerful lobbyist at the California School Employees' Association, he is a resource for those in the labor movement making decisions about where to put money in competitive campaigns.

Art Pulaski

Under his leadership the California Labor Federation has grown and become a more powerful force.

Doug Herman

A principal in the Strategy Group, Herman is based out of Los Angeles. He has worked on the Obama campaign, initiative campaigns and closely with Assembly Speaker John Perez.

Dan Weitzman

He is the head fundraiser for Democratic leaders in the legislature and has held this position through leadership changes.

Alice Huffman

Leader of the California NAACP and a political consultant, Huffman has parlayed both positions to create a powerful career for herself.

Acosta/Salazar

Andrew Acosta and Roger Salazar have headed this Democratic consulting firm for five years now. Before starting the firm, Acosta worked under Gale Kaufman, and Salazar was a spokesperson for President Clinton and Governor Davis.

Dustin Corcoran

Still in his thirties, Corcoran has risen to the head of the California Medical Association, a powerful bipartisan organization. His work for the organization for over a decade prepared him for the lead role and he has hired a strong supporting staff to help guide him.

Antonio Villaraigosa

The former State Assembly speaker and current mayor of Los Angeles has been a national representative for Latinos. He is in his second term as mayor and

decided not to run for governor, but just as Jerry Brown showed, you can always resurrect yourself.

Bill Lockyer

A powerful force in California politics and the Democratic Party, Lockyer hasn't quite made it to the top office—governor—but his name has been mentioned often. He served as leader of the State Senate for over a decade, moved to the attorney general's office and is currently treasurer.

Josh Pulliam

Another young Democratic consultant in his thirties, Pulliam got his training with AKPD Media, founded by David Axelrod. He is rising fast in Sacramento, and is considered a smart, fresh top-tier consultant.

Gavin Newsom

The mayor of San Francisco has had some ups and downs, but his star hasn't faded. Known across the country for performing gay marriages, he aborted a run for governor, but jumped back into the ring and was just elected lieutenant governor.

Gloria Molina

Latinos have seen their political power skyrocket in the last fifteen years. Some have risen and then fallen, but Gloria Molina has remained a steady force. She was the first Latina elected to the California Assembly, to the Los Angeles City Council and to her current position as a Los Angeles County supervisor, overseeing a county that has about the same population as the state of Michigan.

Ace Smith

This Bay Area-based Democratic consultant has worked on numerous campaigns, from Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign to those of California's two Democratic senators and governors Gray Davis and Ann Richards.

Shawnda Westly

As executive director of the California Democratic Party, Westly has risen in a profession dominated by men and

makes day-to-day decisions that keep the party in power running smoothly.

Griffin/Schake

Political consultants and communications experts Chad Griffin and Kristina Schake bring the political, Hollywood and corporate worlds together in their Los Angeles-based firm, creating a powerful mix of influential and wealthy clients.

David Binder

Binder is a top pollster and consultant in California who was able to move to the national stage in 2008 as a member of the Obama campaign.

Angelo Tsakopoulos

A major donor to Democratic causes and candidates, Tsakopoulos spent over \$10 million the year his business partner, Phil Angelides, ran for governor. Along with his daughter, Eleni Tsakopoulos Kounalakis, who is ambassador to Hungary, he is heavily involved in Democratic politics.

Rose Ann DeMaro

As executive director of the California Nurses Association, DeMaro has successfully battled Governor Schwarzenegger and helped position the CNA as one of the state's most powerful interest groups.

Andy Spahn

For years Spahn was the liaison for corporate, political and governmental affairs for Spielberg, Katzenberg and Geffen, which led the way for many donors in Hollywood. Spahn has since gone out on his own, doing the same type of work for his clients.

Karen Skelton/Steve Smith

Two principals at Dewey Square with extensive political and campaign experience. Skelton worked for Vice President Al Gore and currently works closely on projects with First Lady Maria Shriver. Smith brings in close ties with labor.



Reed Hastings

The founder of Netflix, Hastings is a huge donor to education reform issues. His candidate for state superintendent of public instruction lost this year, but his pockets are deep and he is dedicated to education reform.

Anne Gust

Not just a behind-the-scenes wife of governor-elect Jerry Brown, Gust has taken official roles on his staff. She was an unpaid advisor in her husband's attorney general's office and a senior advisor on his gubernatorial campaign.

Daniel Zingale

Former chief of staff to Maria Shriver and senior advisor to Schwarzenegger and currently vice president of the California Endowment, he is still called upon by his former boss and other elected officials for advice.

Lance Olson

Olson has been advising Democrats about political law for nearly three decades. He provides advice on how to circumvent legal hurdles in fundraising.

Bill Lloyd

President of SEIU California, Lloyd heads a labor organization with over 700,000 members that has a major voice in the Democratic Party.

John Chiang

In the past, Asians have not wielded as politically potent a force as Latinos or African Americans, but Chiang is a leader in the community and currently serves as state controller. With California's ever-increasing diversity, it's important to have people from different backgrounds at the table.

Steve Bing

Bing is one of the most publicity-shy political donors in California, but he has contributed tens of millions of dollars to Democratic and liberal causes.

Joe Caves

Along with Leslie Friedman-Johnson, his partner at Conservation Strategy Group, Caves brings the worlds of policy and politics together to help fund environmental causes and get public support for them.

Eliseo Medina

Medina serves as the international secretary-treasurer of SEIU. He has helped make SEIU the fastest growing union on the West Coast and the largest union in California.

Garry South

South is a longtime Democratic consultant in California. He helped elect Gray Davis both lieutenant governor and governor and continues to work on statewide campaigns.

Steve Maviglio

A major Democratic communications guru in the capitol, Maviglio is someone the Sacramento press corps rely on for the latest political news and spin.

Joe Nunez

Nunez helps lead the California Teachers Association, a powerful lobby and force on education, an issue always near and dear to voters' hearts.

Artie Rodriguez

Rodriguez first became involved with the United Farm Workers in the 1960s. He has been at the helm of the UFW since 1993.

John Doerr

Doerr is a venture capitalist in Silicon Valley and a high-profile supporter of Democratic causes. He founded TechNet, a lobbying organization for technology issues.

Tom Adams

Tom Adams is head of the California League of Conservation Voters, an influential leader in environmental policy and an important player in Democratic campaigns.

The leadership, staff and members of the
California School Employees Association

Salute

Dave Low

for being honored as one of the
Top 100 California Influencers

**Your political and legislative work has helped CSEA
build the best union for classified employees nationwide.**



TOP 50 Republicans

Jerry Perenchio

Owner of Univision, the largest Spanish-language media network. Perenchio is a major political donor and makes most of his contributions to Republicans.

Donald Bren

Chairman of the Irvine Company, Bren is a major donor to Republicans with help from a president of his organization, Dan Young. He is also a member of the New Majority, a group of wealthy Orange County Republicans focused on fiscal conservatism.

Pete Wilson

The former governor, senator and San Diego mayor is one of the last Republicans to have held so many offices in California. Many Republican leaders and decision makers come from his inner circle.

Meg Whitman

She was the Republicans' great hope to keep the governor's office in their column, the last vestige of their remaining power. Though she didn't win, her deep pockets could make her a force to be reckoned with in future elections.

Steve Poizner

He lost the Republican primary for governor, but he is one of the few elected officials in the state and has deep pockets, so he may be back.

Arnold Schwarzenegger

He's a lame duck, but still the highest-ranking Republican in the state and his star power will provide him other opportunities in the future.

Steve Schmidt

Schmidt helped elect Schwarzenegger governor and was tapped by John McCain to run his presidential campaign. Following the presidential election, he came out in support of gay marriage.

Abel Maldonado

The current lieutenant governor, appointed to the job earlier this year to



fill a vacancy. He may have just lost his race for a full term, but he remains a leader among Latinos, something needed in the Republican Party.

Renee Croce

A top fundraiser, Croce has a successful track record of raising money for Pete Wilson and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Steve Merksamer

The former chief of staff to Governor Deukmejian, Merksamer leads one of the most power lobbying firms in Sacramento, but he leaves most of the lobbying to his associates. He provides advice to Republicans on political and policy matters.

Jerry Sanders

In a state where Republican leaders are few and far between, Sanders is mayor of San Diego, California's second largest city. San Diego provided a launching pad for former Governor Pete Wilson. If Republicans are looking for a statewide candidate with executive experience, Sanders is their man.

Robert Day

A wealthy businessman and philanthropist who held numerous fundraisers for former President George W. Bush.

Allan Zaremborg

As leader of the Chamber of Commerce, Zaremborg is focused on California's business climate. He wields power not only among Republicans, but also among business-friendly Democrats. He never gets involved in divisive social issues.

Bob White

White was chief of staff to Governor Wilson and helped orchestrate Schwarzenegger's victory and then get his team in place. Today he is at the helm of one of the most powerful lobbying firms in the state, but he heads it up as a consultant, not a lobbyist.

Jim Brulte

The former Republican leader of both the Senate and Assembly, Brulte is still called upon for advice by top Republicans.

George Soares

Most probably don't know this man, but Americans from coast to coast eat the California produce grown across the state by farmers that he represents in Sacramento.

Frank Schubert

In a state known as a liberal haven, Schubert ran a wildly successful come-from-behind campaign to amend the constitution to ban gay marriage.

Gerry Parsky

Parsky has held positions in the past five Republican administrations. He chaired the 2000 and 2004 California Bush-Cheney campaigns.

Rick Claussen

Claussen has taken on Democratic groups with initiative campaigns at the ballot box. He has represented business, tort-reform groups and education reform groups.

John Kobylt & Ken Chiampou

The two southern California radio hosts wield arguably as much power as any Republican official. They have sent many Republicans running for the hills for not toeing the conservative line.

Kevin Sloat

Kevin Sloat founded his lobbying firm over ten years ago and is a major player in Sacramento, representing groups ranging from Indian gaming to business.

Donna Lucas

One of the top public relations professionals in Sacramento, Lucas has worked for governors Deukmejian and Schwarzenegger and has served as chief of staff to First Lady Maria Shriver.

Jon Fleischman

A conservative stalwart in an increasingly Democratic state, Fleischman serves as vice-chair of the California Republican Party and also runs his

own highly successfully political website, The Flash Report, where Republicans blog about the issues of the day and Fleischman frequently breaks news about Republican doings before journalists.

Tony Russo

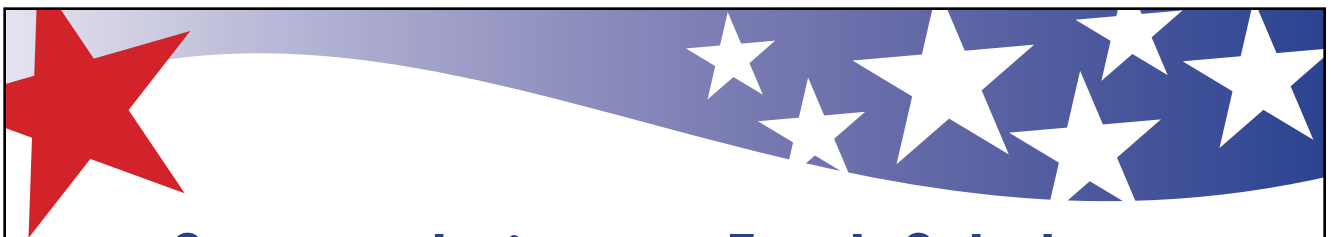
As president of Apex Strategies, Russo is connected to corporations and professional organizations. He got his start in campaigns and worked for the Irvine Company before opening his own shop.

Jeff Randle

Randle has worked his way up the ladder of consulting. He has worked on gubernatorial campaigns for Pete Wilson and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Rick Caruso

Caruso is a Los Angeles developer and donates mostly to Republicans. He is a moderate Republican in the mold of the big city Republican businessman who



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may be interested in running for mayor of Los Angeles some day.

Adam Mendelsohn

The former communications director for Governor Schwarzenegger, Mendelsohn is now a partner at Mercury Public Affairs and represents the governor on all things political.

Bell, McAndrews, Hiltachk

A law firm that helps Republicans comply with political and election laws. Chuck Bell, Colleen McAndrews and Tom Hiltachk represent and provide legal advice to the Republican Party.

Mark Bogetich

He headed up a premier opposition research, policy expertise and analysis firm for over ten years.

Sal Russo

Russo got his start in politics as a volunteer on Ronald Reagan's campaigns for California governor. A conservative stalwart, he has been involved in campaigns across the country and has risen to national prominence this year as a leader of the Tea Party Express.

Mike Murphy

Murphy has advised Republicans from John McCain to Mitt Romney and Arnold Schwarzenegger to Christine Whitman as well as Fortune 500 companies and interest groups. He has also built a career in the entertainment industry as a writer and producer.

Kevin McCarthy

A former Assembly Republican leader and the current congressman from Bakersfield, McCarthy is a political animal. He's the co-author of *Young Guns* along with two fellow young Republicans in Congress and helped recruit candidates across the country in the 2010 election cycle.

Ron Nehring

Nehring has been chair of the state Republican Party since 2007. He is tasked with leading the minority party through fractious debates between conservatives and moderates.

Rob Stutzman

Before Stutzman had his own firm specializing in communications and campaigns, he served as Governor Schwarzenegger's deputy chief of staff for communications and co-communications director for Schwarzenegger during the 2003 recall campaign.

Tom McClintock

A former state senator from southern California and candidate for governor and current congressman from Northern California, McClintock is a go-to politician for conservative Republicans.

Wilson-Miller

Marty Wilson and Beth Miller head up this premier communications firm in Sacramento. Wilson has worked for governors (Pete) Wilson and Schwarzenegger, and Miller has held communications and political positions across the country.

Bill Hauck

Hauck serves as president of the California Business Roundtable, an organization that provides leadership on the state's business climate. He is also a member of the governor's Commission on the 21st Century Economy.

Jon Coupal

Coupal is president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, which was founded by the author of Proposition 13. He is an avid champion of tax cuts.

Joe Rodota

Rodota runs his own political research firm and has worked for President Reagan and governors Wilson and Schwarzenegger. He put together a fast and effective policy and research team that helped elect Schwarzenegger during the gubernatorial recall election of 2003.

Wayne Johnson

With over three decades of political consulting experience, Johnson counts numerous Republicans of the California legislature as clients, along with Schwarzenegger and Congressman McCarthy.

John Chambers

CEO of Cisco Systems and a major donor, primarily to Republicans, Chambers served as co-chair of John McCain's presidential bid.

Alex Spanos

A real estate developer from Stockton, Spanos is a regular contributor to Republican candidates and causes.

Russ Gould

The current chair of the University of California Board of Regents appointed by Schwarzenegger, Gould leads a body that deals with a range of political issues relating to education while overseeing the best public university system in the world.

Fred Davis

A paid media consultant, Davis has made ads for Republicans across the country from his office in the Hollywood Hills. He got his start in Republican politics by helping save the U.S. Senate campaign of his uncle, Jim Inhofe.

Joel Fox

Fox worked for the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association for nearly twenty years, establishing himself as an expert on tax policies and an advocate for business. He is one of the founders of the blog Fox and Hounds Daily.

Deborah Gonzalez

Gonzalez parlayed her experience working for Republican leaders in the legislature into a position with the California Dental Association, making decisions for the organization's powerful PAC.



Liz Snow

The president and CEO of the California Building Industry Association, Snow brings years of experience from her prior position as chief strategy officer for the California Dental Association, where she directed political activities.

Jeff Miller

Miller, a partner at the lobbying firm Capitol Advocacy, is finance chair of the state Republican Party and co-finance chair of the Republican Governors Association.

Rex Frazier

Frazier serves as head of the Personal Insurance Federation of California. He represents insurance companies across the state and is able to direct their money to campaigns.

Jack Flanigan

A member of the influential Flanigan family, Jack is a principal at California Strategies, former VP at the Irvine Company and got his start with Pete Wilson in San Diego.

Miscellaneous

Public Policy Institute of California

A non-partisan think tank headed by Mark Baldassare, who also leads its survey operation.

Field Poll

Established in 1947, it is a well-respected non-partisan poll run by Merv Field and Mark DiCamillo.

California Target Book

A go-to guide for California's congressional and legislative races published by former Republican consultant Allan Hoffenblum.

California Forward

A non-partisan organization working to create a more responsive and effective government for the public.

Center for Governmental Studies

A non-partisan organization fighting for government reform for over 25 years.

Spanish Language Media

In the English media politics doesn't get the attention that it deserves, but Spanish language media give it regular and thorough coverage.