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TO:	Interested Parties
FROM:	EMC Research
RE:	Findings from Recent Research among California Voters
DATE:	June 2, 2024

The following memo outlines key findings from a recent poll conducted by EMC Research among likely voters in California.

Voters are widely supportive of potential legislation to address PAGA reform.

Over seven in ten voters initially support a description of the legislation, including 30% strongly support.

"The California legislature is considering legislation to reform the system for resolving employee labor law claims. The legislation would grant independent state regulators authority to enforce employee labor complaints and provide employees compensation when their rights have been violated. It would give businesses the opportunity to fix errors before lawsuits can be brought. It would increase penalties on businesses that repeatedly violate the law. Lastly, it would allow employees to take their case to court if state regulators cannot resolve their claims."

Support 72%
Somewhat 42%
Strongly 30%

Oppose 28%
Somewhat 14%
Strongly 14%
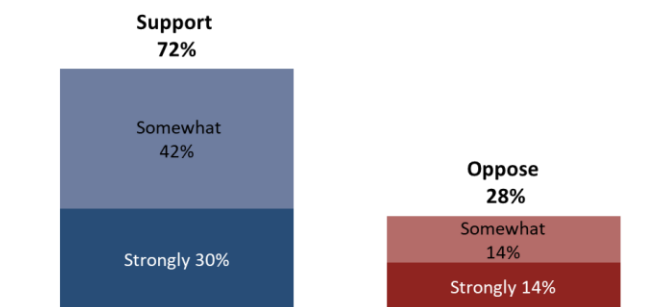
There is support across many demographic groups, including:
- 84% of Democrats
- 64% of No Party Preference/Other
- 56% of Republicans

Voters find arguments in favor of the legislation to be compelling.

Additional information resonates with at least two in three voters.
- "Too often the workers who bring labor claims are left with pennies on the dollar while lawyers walk away with millions. In a recent settlement, attorneys made $9 million while the impacted employees only received $20 each. This proposal will protect workers by ensuring they receive 100% of all penalties." **(76% total convincing, 46% strongly)**

- "State data shows that when independent state regulators handle workers' claims, workers get three times as much money and their claims are resolved almost a full year faster compared to when workers hire an attorney and file a lawsuit. This proposal will ensure workers receive more money, resolve claims faster, and punish businesses who break the law." **(71% total convincing, 35% strongly)**

- "Right now, small businesses, non-profits and other California businesses are under constant threat of shakedown lawsuits by trial lawyers over small labor code technicalities. This proposal will protect small businesses from frivolous lawsuits while also making sure employees continue to have strong labor protections." **(68% total convincing, 31% strongly)**

- "The current system for resolving employee labor claims is failing workers. For the last 20 years, state law has given trial lawyers the primary power to enforce California's employment laws, which has resulted in thousands of frivolous lawsuits against small businesses, and the majority of the $10 billion in settlements has gone to trial lawyers and not the workers. This proposal will restore enforcement authority to independent state regulators, resolve worker claims faster, ensure money for violations goes to workers, and stop abusive lawsuits that hurt small businesses." **(67% total convincing, 27% strongly)**

- "This proposal is a win-win for workers and businesses. Companies wanting to do the right thing will have more resources and the chance to fix mistakes, and employees will get their claims resolved faster and receive more money without needing a high-priced attorney." **(67% total convincing, 33% strongly)**

Voters are less convinced by opposition messages against the legislation.
Hard-hitting opposition resonates less widely than the support messaging.

- "This proposal will force state government bureaucrats to handle thousands of new labor cases every single year – and will cost the state and its taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars annually when the state faces a $40 billion deficit. That is simply too much money, and it depletes funds from other important issues like education, housing, and homelessness." **(62% total convincing, 32% strongly)**

- "Right now, California workers have the power to hold companies accountable when they break the law. Workers have been rewarded billions in stolen wages and other labor law violations because of their ability to fight in court. This proposal would take that power away and allow businesses to take advantage of workers." **(60% total convincing, 27% strongly)**

- "Big corporations have teams of lawyers while many workers don't know their basic rights. This proposal will force employees to be represented by overloaded and unstaffed state bureaucrats. This proposal will tilt the balance even further in favor of large corporations and against workers like you and me." **(60% total convincing, 30% strongly)**

- "This proposal is being pushed by wealthy corporations because they want to take away workers' ability to get justice through the courts. This proposal eliminates workers' rights and lets corporations continue to cheat employees out of billions in what they're owed." **(58% total convincing, 27% strongly)**

- "Wage theft is a huge problem for low-wage workers. In fact, according to a UCLA study, corporations steal more than $2 billion per year in wages from workers, and African American, Latino and immigrant workers are most likely to be victims of wage theft. This proposal would limit the workers' ability to hire attorneys to protect themselves against these dishonest businesses and recover what they're owed." **(57% total convincing, 25% strongly)**

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Support remains above a majority after voters have heard messaging from both sides.

After all of the information, **64%** indicate support for the legislation with only 35% oppose. Strong positive opinions outweigh strong negative opinions with 26% strongly in support with 18% strongly opposed.

After-messaging support continues to be widespread:

- 71% support among Democrats
- 59% with No Party Preference/Other
- 55% with Republicans

Methodology

The findings in this memo come from survey of likely voters in California conducted by EMC Research. Email and text invitations were sent with a link to the web survey. The poll was conducted May 21-30, 2024 with a sample size of 800 interviews for an overall margin of error of ±3.46 percentage points. The survey was available in English and Spanish.