

The Quorum

November 2022: Status Post Midterms

While votes are still being tallied throughout California and the nation, this midterm election has shaped up to be extremely consequential. If ever there was a question about the value of an individual vote, one need look no further than the margins of this most recent election to see how close some of these races and ballot measures have been. Truly, every vote mattered!

Focusing in on California, two very important ballot measures passed that have been supported and advocated for by pediatricians throughout the state, including our very own members of AAP-CA2.

Proposition 1 served to cement reproductive rights into the California constitution, by adding the following statement: "the state shall not deny or interfere with an individual's reproductive freedom in their most intimate decisions, which includes their fundamental right to choose to have an abortion and their fundamental right to choose or refuse contraceptives." The passing of this proposition means that in the future, should California have a legislature and Governor who desire to limit statewide access to contraception and abortion, they will be constitutionally blocked from doing so.

Proposition 31 advances protections for youth against nicotine addiction, by banning the sale of flavored nicotine products throughout the state. This ban was initially signed into law in 2020 but was blocked by the tobacco industry who forced a referendum. With the passing of this proposition, that law has been upheld, and millions of children will be protected as a result.

Regarding policymakers, this election has meant there will be a lot of new faces in Sacramento! While outcomes are still being finalized in some races, at least 25 new members of the California State Legislature were selected, which represents a turnover of more than 20% of the body. This is in large part due to retirements and term limitations of incumbent members, which was the case for Pediatrician Dr. Richard Pan, who has termed out of the legislature after 12 prolific years of service. Additionally, after a long leadership tug-of-war there will be a new Speaker in the California Assembly, Asm. Robert Rivas, who is expected to transition into leadership mid-2023. This member turnover and speakership change means that there will be new partnerships and relationships to build on behalf of children, families, and pediatricians in California. This sometimes can stall previously building policy momentum, and in other cases, can open up new opportunities with policymakers with fresh eyes and energy.

Looking ahead, the first day of the 2023-2024 legislative session actually takes place on December 5th, 2022, as lawmakers return to Sacramento to take official leadership

votes. They will then recess until January 4th, 2023, at which point the legislature will kick into full gear!

References:

1. <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/09/1134833374/california-results-abortion-contraception-amendment-midterms>
2. <https://www.kcra.com/article/prop-31-banning-sale-flavored-tobacco-california-2022-election/41740251>
3. <https://calmatters.org/explainers/california-election-results/>
4. <https://www.kcra.com/article/california-democrats-robert-rivas-assembly-speaker/41929572>
5. https://www.senate.ca.gov/sites/senate.ca.gov/files/2022_senate_legislative_deadlines.pdf
6. https://www.senate.ca.gov/sites/senate.ca.gov/files/final_agreed_2023_legislative_calendar.pdf

The Quorum is a monthly policy spotlight. For any inquiries, please email Chapter 2 legislative and policy analyst, Kamaal Jones, at KamaalJones.AAP@gmail.com

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