

Voters Want California's Next Governor to Institute a Master Plan for Aging

Perspectives on Aging with Dignity • July 2018



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It is no secret that Californians are living longer, but not necessarily better.

By 2030, the state's older adult population will increase by 4 million people, yet the state is woefully unprepared to care for this growing and financially unstable demographic. The lack of any strategy or organized master plan has pushed millions of older Californians into poverty, unable to access high-quality, affordable health care, dental care, housing and supportive services.

Our lawmakers and next governor need to set aside partisan differences and collaborate on the creation of a state master plan for aging that recognizes three important pillars: the ability to age with independence; a health care system that responds to the individual not an institution; and affordable housing.

To urge state lawmakers and our gubernatorial candidates to prioritize senior issues and develop a master plan for aging, [The SCAN Foundation](#) with [West Health](#) launched the nonpartisan, public awareness and education campaign [We Stand With Seniors... Will You?](#)

In June, *We Stand With Seniors* commissioned [a statewide survey](#) to gauge voters' opinions on critical aging issues. Despite little attention in the news cycle, the survey findings underscored overwhelming public concern.

Sixty-four percent of voters expressed their anxiety surrounding the state's lack of action to protect older adults, saying that the state is failing its oldest residents.

Although resources do exist to address some of the needs of California's older adult population, there is no single policy articulating the state's vision. The result is a health and supportive system that is underfunded, yet too expensive and provides too little actual care for those in need.

The survey findings made clear that voters want action and leadership. A compelling 86 percent of voters value programs that promote and provide community-based care to aid older adults and children of aging parents. An even higher 87 percent of voters support a plan that would allow older adults to age in the place of their choice. The fact that more than half of those surveyed said they would support a tax increase to invest in a statewide long-range strategy to support older adults speaks volumes.

Everyone recognizes that the long-term care safety net has gaping holes.

With one in five older Californians living in poverty and the rising tide of public support for a statewide plan, we don't have time for the regular partisanship of politics. The election provides an opportunity for Democrats, Republicans, and Independents to #StandWithSeniors, and develop a long-term solution that addresses the myriad challenges faced by California's older adults, their families, and caregivers.

With nearly three-quarters of Californians concerned with their ability to pay for their own long-term care, the value and importance of a statewide long-term strategy cannot be ignored.

The time for a state master plan is upon us. We need to put aside our political differences and act now to protect the quality of life and dignity of our aging parents and grandparents, and the economic futures of our children and grandchildren. We owe them that much and more.

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