



Written by [Larry Elder](#) on March 18, 2022

California Gov. Newsom's Firewall: Republican-hating Voters

I arrived early for my dinner with a friend at a restaurant on the Westside of Los Angeles. At the table to my right sat two women. We started talking.

They had known each other since second grade, and one was celebrating her 85th birthday. One was a psychotherapist, the other a "human rights activist." Both were Jewish. A few minutes into the conversation, one said: "Wait. I know who you are. You ran for governor." After I confirmed her suspicion, she said, "Guess who I voted for." I smiled. "You didn't vote for me." "How do you know?" she asked.



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I said, "Let's see. We're at a restaurant in West LA. You're Jewish and a psychotherapist. Your friend is a human rights activist. Read the clues. You're both Democrats and no one could pay you to vote for a Republican."

They acknowledged that they voted against the recall of California Gov. Gavin Newsom. I asked, "How do you feel about rising violent crime?" They both called the increase "outrageous," and even criticized the soft-on-crime Los Angeles County District Attorney George Gascon, currently facing his second recall attempt. A vote among his assistant district attorneys found that 98% of them wanted Gascon to resign.

"How do you feel about our homelessness problem?" I asked. The human rights activist responded, "If we provide housing and treatment — and there's plenty of money for both — then I don't understand why people are allowed to remain on the streets." I said, "That was exactly my position during the campaign."

"What about the quality of California's K-12 government schools?" I continued: "Pre-pandemic, nearly 70% of black third graders could not read at state proficiency levels, with math scores not much better. Almost half of *all* third graders cannot read at state proficiency levels, with math scores about the same. Are you OK with that?" They both called it "a travesty."

We turned to the governor's draconian COVID-19 lockdown of business and of in-school education. They said they had been "double-vaxxed with a booster." "So have I," I said. "We're in high-risk categories. But I don't think the state should've been shut down when the risk for young and healthy people is low. Do you?" They agreed with me.

"So," I said. "You agree with me on virtually every issue, yet you voted to retain Newsom."

Before they could answer, I said, "I'll tell you why. You ... just ... could ... not ... bring ... yourself ... to ... pull ... that ... lever ... for ... a ... Republican!"

They laughed and said, "I guess you're right."



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In fact, a recent University of California, Berkeley, poll found that Californians rate Newsom underwater on 9 of 10 issues, including crime, education, jobs, homelessness, state budget, drought, wildfires, the economy and health care. His unfavorable number on homelessness is six times higher than his favorable number. The only positive for Newsom was “climate change,” where he stood one point above disapproval.

Overall, Newsom has a 48% job approval rating. It is tempting to suggest that were a vote held today, Newsom would lose. But during the recall his approval rating was only two points higher, and he survived recall with 62% of the vote.

The overwhelmingly Democratic and Democrat-leaning independent voters in California, like my restaurant companions, just ... could ... not ... bring ... themselves ... to ... vote ... for ... a ... Republican — especially one who voted for former President Donald Trump. At his victory speech the night he survived the recall, Newsom said, “I said this many, many times on the campaign trail: we may have defeated Trump, but Trumpism is not dead in this country.” “Trumpism?”

As for the ladies in the restaurant, we soon started completing each other’s sentences. “What are you drinking?” they asked. They ended up buying me two drinks, and even paid for my lobster dinner. Trumpism rested. For at least one evening.

Larry Elder is a bestselling author and nationally syndicated radio talk show host. His latest book, The New Trump Standard, is available in paperback from Amazon.com and for Nook, Kindle, iBooks and Google Play. To find out more about Larry Elder, or become an “Elderado,” visit www.LarryElder.com. Follow Larry on Twitter @LarryElder. To read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at www.creators.com.

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