



California Gubernatorial Appointments Report

An analysis of the appointments made by the
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Introduction

Since 2021, Hispanas Organized for Political Equality (HOPE) has sponsored legislation in the California State Legislature that would require the office of the Governor to publish the demographic information currently being collected on individuals appointed by the Governor each year. The annual report would serve as a tool to highlight which voices and communities are missing from decision-making tables. Despite receiving bipartisan and unanimous support, Governor Gavin Newsom has vetoed versions of the bill on three different occasions.

In response to the latest veto in October of 2023 of Senate Bill 702 authored by Senator Monique Limón, HOPE embarked on an analysis of the demographic data of gubernatorial appointees made publicly available via press release posted on the Governor's website from January 1 to December 15, 2023. This report presents the findings of our analysis and provides greater transparency on the true state of diversity in California's Gubernatorial appointments.

Our findings are clear; the rich diversity of California's population is not reflected in the demographic makeup of board members and commissioners appointed in 2023. The data analysis, as outlined in the methodology below, was a time-consuming process with potential inaccuracies. While we strive to provide the most accurate data available in this report, we reiterate the need for the Governor to make public the self-reported demographic data his office is currently collecting on appointees. This self-reported data is the most precise way of gathering nuanced demographic information such as race and gender and would require no additional cost as the data is currently being collected by the Governor's office.

There is precedent for this type of report. Currently, the state's Judicial Council collects and releases demographic data relative to gender, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, veteran and disability status for court justices and judges. Illinois enacted a similar measure to SB 702 in 2015 and has seen consistent improvement in diversity since its enactment. Our report is modeled after the October 2023 report published by Governor J.B. Pritzker's office, excluding certain data that are not required by the California Governor's Office.

This approach to creating more transparency in Government is also gaining traction in local governments in California. The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors recently adopted a motion modeled after SB

702 titled “Promoting Diversity in County Commission Appointments,” requiring the Board of Supervisors to publish an annual demographic report of appointments. A similar measure was adopted by the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors in 2021. Their report is titled “A Santa Cruz County Like Me” after HOPE’s campaign to raise awareness on SB 702 titled “A California Like Me.” Mayor Karen Bass has voiced her support and is exploring ways to produce a similar report for the City of Los Angeles.

Governor Newsom cites that his office is currently working with community partners and stakeholders to build a diverse qualified pool of candidates. Our analysis shows that the Governor’s efforts have resulted in near gender parity in the appointments made in 2023 and his office has made strides in appointing more people of color to these important and influential roles. Despite this, Latino, Black, AAPI, and Native American Californians remained vastly underrepresented with White Californians holding the plurality of these positions at 52%.

We also know that Governor Newsom has supported similar legislation to SB 702 during the same legislative cycle requiring venture capital firms to collect demographic information on the companies they invest in. Senate Bill 54 by state Senator Nancy Skinner was signed into law by the Governor in 2023. The law is an effort to increase venture capital investments in businesses founded by women, Latino and Black entrepreneurs by requiring venture capital firms to annually survey the founding teams of the companies they invested in during the year for information such as race, ethnicity, gender identity, disability status, and other demographic information. The aggregated data will be reported to the state starting March 1, 2025. We believe HOPE’s proposal is similar to the goals and data collection methods of the venture capital firm reporting mandate and call on the Governor to apply these standards of equity and transparency to his own office, and to ensure future administrations carry on this work.

The methodology used to determine the demographic composition of Gubernatorial appointees is modeled after a 2022 [UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute report](#) which analyzed the representation of Latinos in appointed positions across California’s executive branch, which includes appointments to the Governor’s cabinet leadership and influential state boards and commissions.

Diverse representation is essential to building a robust multiracial democracy. We hope this report is a starting point to further discussions on increasing transparency in the composition of appointments. Ensuring all communities have a voice in key decision-making tables is part of HOPE’s longstanding mission. We remain motivated and ready to improve equity in the state’s commitment to a California for All.

Existing Government Appointee Demographic Transparency Efforts

🔗 [State of Illinois Board and Commission Act Report](#)

🔗 [Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Motion Promoting Diversity in County Commission Appointments](#)

🔗 [Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors Appointments Report - “A Santa Cruz County Like Me”](#)

Demographic Information of Each Appointment Made in 2023

From January 2023 to December 15, 2023, the Governor's Office made 480 total appointments to Boards, Commissions, Agencies and Task Forces. The demographic breakdown of the appointments is as follows:

Race

Race	Total	Percentage
White*	250	52.08%
Black	54	11.25%
Latino	83	17.29%
AAPI	41	8.54%
Native American	11	2.29%
Unknown	41	8.54%

Gender

Gender	Total	Percentage
Female	226	47%
Male	250	52%
Other/unknown	4	1%

Race and Gender Combined

Race and Gender	Total	Percentage
White Men	142	30%
White Women	107	22%
Black Men	25	5%
Black Women	29	6%
Latino Men	41	8.5%
Latina Women	42	9%
AAPI Men	17	3.5%

** Middle Eastern descent is categorized as white per the Census. While this categorization is challenging, this report follows the Census designation for consistency.*

AAPI Women	24	5%
Native American Men	6	1%
Native American Women	5	1%
Unknown	43	9%

Political Party

Political Party	Total	Percentage
Democrat	340	71%
Republican	43	9%
No Preference	87	18%
Other	10	2%

Geographic Region[†]

California Region	Total	Percentage
Northern California [‡]	198	41%
Bay Area [§]	107	22%
Central Valley	24	5%
Central Coast	16	3%
Los Angeles County	70	15%
Orange County	17	3.5%
Inland Empire	23	5%
Greater San Diego	24	5%
Out of State	1	0.2%

[†] See Appendix I for a full list of the counties included in each region.

[‡] The majority of Northern California Appointees represent Sacramento County at 64% and 40% of appointees hail from the City of Sacramento, primarily because many of these appointed positions are paid positions which require appointees to live and work in Sacramento. All other northern California counties are represented at 6% or less of appointed officials.

[§] In the Bay Area, 23% of appointed officials reside in the City of San Francisco, compared to 11% from the City of Oakland.

Methodology

1. HOPE reviewed the data publicly released by the Governor's office in 2023 via press release announcements with information on appointments to boards, commissions, and agency staff appointments and recorded them in a Microsoft Excel table. HOPE determined the race, gender, California region, and party affiliation of each appointee.
2. The Governor specifically mentions the appointees' city of residence and party affiliation along with biographical information in the press releases. HOPE identified the appointees' region and party affiliation through an analysis of the press releases.
 - a. HOPE identified geographical representation by matching the appointees' city of residence to its corresponding county and then grouping it with one of 8 corresponding regions to represent the entire state of California: Northern California, Bay Area, Central Valley, Central Coast, Greater Los Angeles County, Orange County, Inland Empire, and Greater San Diego. For a full list of the counties included in each region see appendix A.
3. To determine the gender of each appointee made in 2023, HOPE made note of the gendered pronouns used to describe each appointee in the press release (male, female, or other/unknown). While this system may be flawed, we found it to be the most reliable and consistent method to identify gender.
4. Race and ethnicity are not explicitly specified in the press releases. HOPE followed the methodology created by UCLA LPPI's previous appointments report. For this report, all executive appointees were assigned a race and ethnic group defined by U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey. An appointee's race and ethnicity were identified through a multistep process:
 - a. **Self-identification:** If available, we used the appointee's own public self-identification with a racial group to place them into a racial/ethnic group.
 - i. Self-identification sources included biographies and public profile.
 - b. **Third-party identification:** If an individual's biography or profile did not explicitly self-identify race/ethnicity, we sourced public news articles, features, awards, and other public-facing materials that identified an appointee by a specific racial group (e.g., an article featuring them as the first African American to hold their position.)
 - c. **Census surname probability:** For all individuals, we used the U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census Surname to impute the likelihood that an individual belongs to a particular racial and/or ethnic group based on their last name. The U.S. Census Bureau's surname table includes the probability that a surname is of a specified racial/ethnic group. A racial group was assigned to individuals if their surname had a 50% or greater likelihood of being a select racial/ethnic group.
 - d. **CA Voter Files:** Finally, we utilized the CA Voter Files to confirm self-reported data and census identification for individuals for whom there was not clear information.

Self-identification and third-party identification took precedence over the census's racial identification and overrode census racial identification if they did not match. This is a time-intensive and potentially flawed

process underscoring the need for a legislative solution to provide efficient and accurate demographic data.

While our analysis looks at public information on appointees, the Governor currently collects optional self-reported demographic data of applicants to various board and commissions positions. In his veto letter, the Governor cites that because the demographic information specified for reporting in SB 702 is optional and self-reported by candidates, the report would not necessarily accurately reflect the diversity of appointees. However, our state regularly uses self-reported data for many different state agencies for resources like tax credits, disability insurance, and in the appointment of our judicial courts. We believe this report would be more accurately and efficiently produced if it came directly from the data the Governor's office collects.

Next Steps

Since 2021, HOPE has sponsored legislation that would create a formal mechanism to evaluate our progress in ensuring state boards are reflective of the state, and each year, that bill has been met with resistance from the Administration. While Governor Newsom's Administration has made laudable progress in appointing candidates of color, a report like the one required by SB 702 would enshrine an accountability metric for future Administrations, holding our Governors to the same equity values that California has worked so hard to promote. Our analysis of the Governor's 2023 appointees shows that much work remains to achieve transparency and equity on California's gubernatorial appointments and without a public report to evaluate our progress, gaps in representation will continue to exist.

As such, Senator Monique Limón will reintroduce legislation in 2024 to require the Governor's office to annually report the aggregate demographic information of individuals appointed by the Governor. The annual requirements for that Gubernational appointments report match the demographic analysis conducted by HOPE in this report.

HOPE will continue to track appointments made by the Governor's office in 2024 based on publicly available data, but our call to action remains: the work to advance transparency must start in house and would be more accurate if conducted by the Governor's office. Conducting this report would come at nearly no cost to the Administration, given that they already collect this demographic data. This report would also establish a legacy of accountability and transparency for future Administrations and would advance California's goals of having a government that is representative of the people of our state.

About HOPE

Hispanas Organized for Political Equality® (HOPE) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to ensuring political and economic parity for Latinas through leadership, advocacy, and education to benefit all communities and the status of women.

HOPE® prepares and supports Latinas as civic leaders, advocates for policy changes that champion equity for Latinas, and educates the public on the experiences and contributions of Latinas to our economy and society. For over 30 years, HOPE's innovative programming has served over 60,000 Latinas and touched the lives of several thousand more through our advocacy efforts.

Learn more about our work and vision for transforming communities by empowering Latinas at <https://www.latinas.org>.

Appendix I – Regions Definitions

HOPE operates across California in eight regions, as detailed below. As such, the regional demographic findings of this report are presented as reflections of these core areas of the state.

