

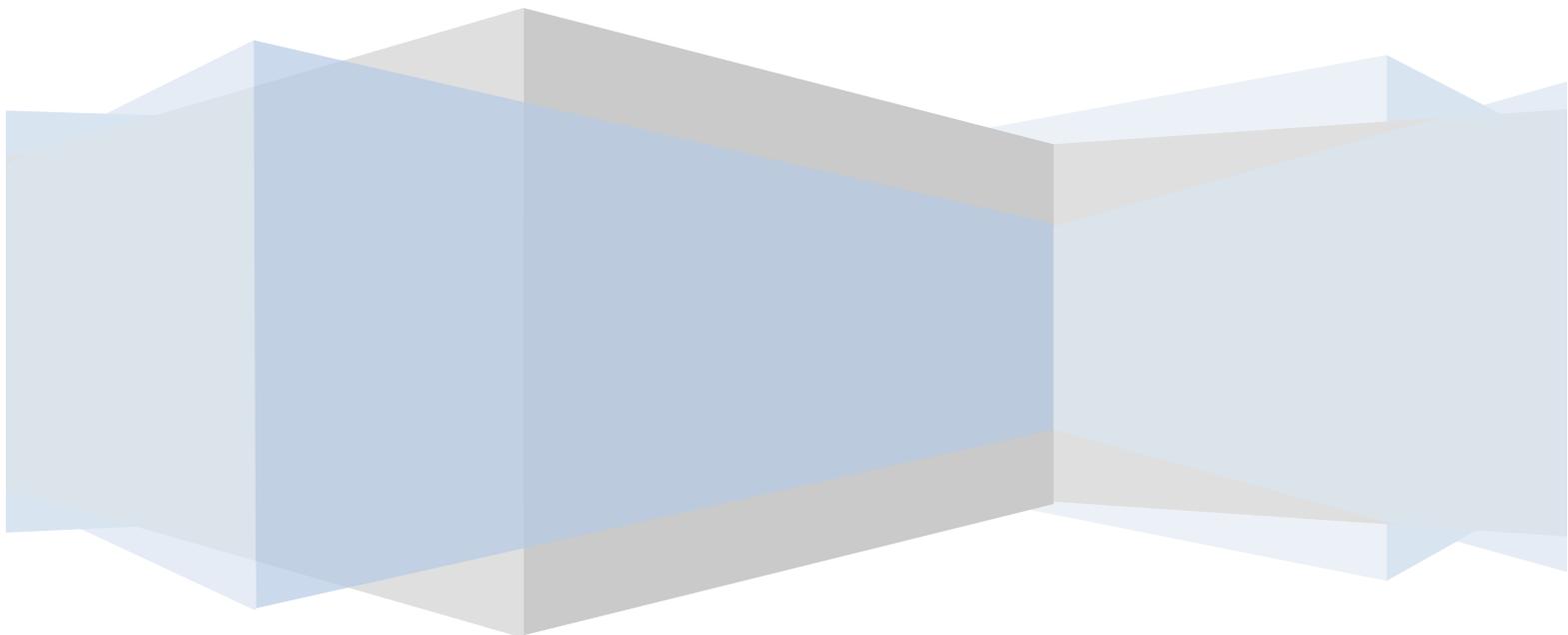
# Survey Research Memo:

**Key Findings of Public Opinion Research Regarding Technological Tools to Make the California State Legislature More Transparent and Accountable**

**From:**

**Tulchin Research | Ben Tulchin and Kiel Brunner**

**Smith Johnson Research | Val Smith, Wayne Johnson, Tim Rosales and Bereket Kelile**



April 14, 2015

**To:** Interested Parties  
**From:** Ben Tulchin and Kiel Brunner; Tulchin Research  
Val Smith, Wayne Johnson, Tim Rosales and Bereket Kelile; Smith Johnson Research  
**Re:** **Key Findings of Public Opinion Research Regarding Technological Tools to Make the California State Legislature More Transparent and Accountable**

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Tulchin Research and Smith Johnson Research recently conducted a statewide survey among 800 likely voters in California and found strong interest in state government being more open, transparent, and accountable. As part of this desire, voters expressed a high degree of interest in technological tools to facilitate this and make government and the legislative process more accessible to the public. Importantly, voters expressed real interest in using these tools to keep track of what is happening in state government. These encouraging findings were even more applicable among California voters who are the most engaged in the democratic process and have a history of taking action in interacting with their government and civic affairs. Favorable opinions of the technological tools tested in the survey were shared by voters of all parties as Democrats, independents and Republicans all held similarly positive views of the tools.

Large majorities of likely voters, and even larger majorities of the most engaged California citizens, indicate they like several specific features of the website or mobile app described in the poll to find out what is going on in the State Legislature. At least seven out of ten voters said they like each of the features tested in the poll. Voters who the poll identified as the most engaged by a series of political and civic participation questions reported even higher positive responses to all of the features.

- The most popular element, allowing the public to “*easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google*”, had more than three quarters of voters liking this feature (76 percent) and nearly half (48 percent) liking it *a lot*. More than eight in ten (84 percent) of the most engaged voters reported liking this feature with 57 percent liking it *a lot*.
- Following closely behind was the element allowing the public to “*comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws*” with nearly three quarters of voters liking this feature (74 percent) and 43 percent liking it *a lot*. Of the most engaged voters polled, nearly eight in ten (78 percent) liked the feature and exactly half (50 percent) liked it *a lot*.
- Also garnering substantial support was the feature allowing the public to “*easily search videos of issues important to you*” with more than seven in ten (71 percent) likely voters liking the feature and nearly half (44 percent) liking it *a lot*. The video search feature was also well liked among engaged voters, as four out of five (80 percent) liked it and more than half (54 percent) liked it *a lot*.
- The element allowing the public to “*get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature*” comparatively had the least support but was still well liked among voters with 70 percent liking the feature and 42 percent liking it *a lot*. Support among engaged voters was slightly higher as it was liked by 75 percent and liked *a lot* by 44 percent.

<b>Website Features Popular Among Likely Voters and Engaged Voters</b>				
<i>When it comes to websites and mobile apps designed to find out what is going on in the State Legislature, how much would you like the Legislature to provide the following capabilities – a lot, some, a little or not at all?</i>				
	<b>Likely Voters</b>		<b>Engaged Voters</b>	
	<b>Total Like</b>	<b>Like a Lot</b>	<b>Total Like</b>	<b>Like a Lot</b>
Allowing you to easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google.	<b>76%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>84%</b>	<b>57%</b>
Allowing you to comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws.	<b>74%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>78%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Allowing you to easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media.	<b>71%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>80%</b>	<b>54%</b>
Allowing you to get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature.	<b>70%</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>44%</b>

Just as the survey found bipartisan support for reforms to make state government more open and transparent, the desire for internet-based tools to aid in government transparency and accountability was also popular across party lines. For example, support for the most popular feature allowing the public to “*easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google*” was equally liked among Democrats and Republicans (75 percent) and liked slightly more among independents (80 percent) as compared to 76 percent among all likely voters statewide. The other features had similar bipartisan support, as evidenced by the table below.

<b>Website Features Strongly Supported Across Party Lines</b>						
<i>When it comes to websites and mobile apps designed to find out what is going on in the State Legislature, how much would you like the Legislature to provide the following capabilities – a lot, some, a little or not at all?</i>						
	<b>Democrats</b>		<b>Republicans</b>		<b>Independents</b>	
	<b>Total Like</b>	<b>Like a Lot</b>	<b>Total Like</b>	<b>Like a Lot</b>	<b>Total Like</b>	<b>Like a Lot</b>
Allowing you to easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google.	<b>75%</b>	46%	<b>75%</b>	49%	<b>80%</b>	50%
Allowing you to comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws.	<b>72%</b>	40%	<b>74%</b>	49%	<b>76%</b>	41%
Allowing you to easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media.	<b>67%</b>	42%	<b>70%</b>	45%	<b>77%</b>	48%
Allowing you to get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature.	<b>70%</b>	41%	<b>70%</b>	42%	<b>69%</b>	43%

Impressively, voters also report a high likelihood of using the website features and mobile app. After asking respondents how much they liked the specific features of the website, they were asked how likely they were to use them. The overall indication of likelihood to use was nearly as high as how much voters liked the features – with at least two-thirds and up to three quarters of voters indicating they were likely to use the website’s features.

- The element most popular and likely to be used, the feature allowing the public to “comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws”, was likely to be used by nearly three quarters (74 percent) of likely voters with 30 percent indicating they were *very likely* to use the feature.
- With nearly as intense likelihood of use, the feature allowing the public to “get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature”, was likely to be used by more than seven in ten voters (72 percent) with 34 percent saying they were very likely to use the feature.
- Also receiving a high indication of likelihood of use was the feature allowing the public to “search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google”, still with more than seven in ten voters (71 percent) likely to use and 25 percent very likely.
- Even the least popular, a feature allowing the public to “search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media”, was likely to be used by more than two-thirds of respondents (67 percent) and 30 percent indicated they would be *very likely* to use it.

<b>Website Features Likely to be Used by Voters and Engaged Voters</b>				
<i>When it comes to websites and mobile apps designed to find out what is going on in the State Legislature, how likely would you be to use the following features – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely?</i>				
	<b>Likely Voters</b>		<b>Engaged Voters</b>	
	<b>Total Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Total Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>
Allowing you to comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws.	<b>74%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>81%</b>	<b>37%</b>
Allowing you to get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature.	<b>72%</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>77%</b>	<b>46%</b>
Allowing you to easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google.	<b>71%</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>30%</b>
Allowing you to easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media.	<b>67%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>76%</b>	<b>38%</b>

Similar to the popularity of the features, likelihood of use is not a partisan issue. Among the most likely feature to be used, allowing the public to “comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws”, 74 percent of all voters were likely to use the feature while, 72 percent of Democrats and 74 percent of Republicans indicated they were likely to use the feature. Independent voters were slightly more interested in the feature, as more than three quarters (77 percent) indicated they were likely to use it.

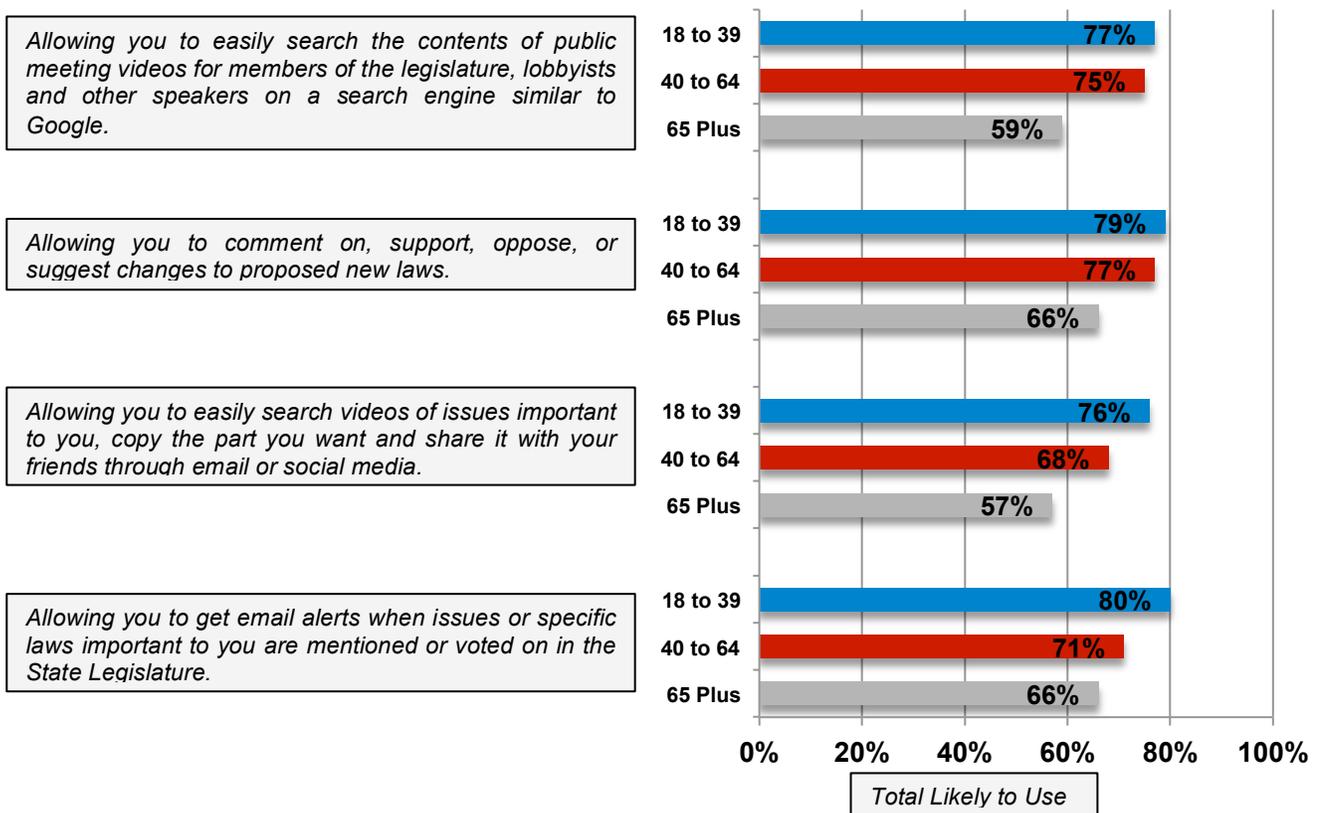
<b>Bipartisan Use – Website Features Likely to be Used by Voters of All Parties</b>						
<i>When it comes to websites and mobile apps designed to find out what is going on in the State Legislature, how likely would you be to use the following features – very likely, somewhat likely, not too likely or not at all likely ?</i>						
	<b>Democrats</b>		<b>Republicans</b>		<b>Independents</b>	
	<b>Total Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Total Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Total Likely</b>	<b>Very Likely</b>
Allowing you to comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws.	<b>72%</b>	28%	<b>74%</b>	32%	<b>77%</b>	30%
Allowing you to get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature.	<b>70%</b>	33%	<b>74%</b>	35%	<b>73%</b>	35%
Allowing you to easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google.	<b>72%</b>	26%	<b>67%</b>	25%	<b>73%</b>	25%
Allowing you to easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media.	<b>63%</b>	28%	<b>69%</b>	32%	<b>71%</b>	32%

Beyond partisanship and civic engagement, we identified several interesting demographic groups with high likelihood of use of the website features designed to encourage transparency and accountability. Among those, we found direct correlations between the groups and the feature they were most likely to use and significant indications of use among different age groups and levels of education.

- The survey asked respondents several civic engagement questions to determine what methods of activism they were involved in over the past few years and those that responded yes to the following question: *“Have you written a letter to the editor, posted, or shared links or articles about political issues for others to read online”*, were the most likely to use several of the features.
  - More than four out of five (82 percent) of those responding yes to the civic engagement question indicated they were *likely* to use the feature allowing the public to *“comment on, support, oppose, or suggest changes to proposed new laws”*.
  - Next in likelihood of use among this civically engaged group was the feature allowing the public to *“get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature”*, with more than four of five (81 percent) likely to use it.
  - Also garnering significant interest in use (79 percent *likely* to use) among civic engaged voters was the feature allowing the public to *“easily search the contents of public meeting videos for members of the legislature, lobbyists and other speakers on a search engine similar to Google”*.
  - Nearly three out of four civically engaged voters (74 percent) report they would likely use the feature allowing the public to *“easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media”*.

- One of the strongest correlations we found was that nearly nine of ten (89 percent) respondents who use YouTube *everyday* were likely to use the feature allowing the public to “*easily search videos of issues important to you, copy the part you want and share it with your friends through email or social media*”, and more than half (54 percent) said they were *very likely* to use the feature.
- Daily users of Facebook, who see a stream of updates and alerts on their front page, were among those with the highest interest (83 percent) in using the feature allowing the public to “*get email alerts when issues or specific laws important to you are mentioned or voted on in the State Legislature*”.
- Interestingly, the survey found that non-college educated voters ages 18 to 49 were among the most likely of any demographic group in the survey to indicate they would use the website features, including 84 percent of this cohort saying they would be likely to use the feature allowing them to comment on new laws.
- The survey found generational differences in terms of likelihood to use the website features. Younger voters (18-39 years old) were the most likely to report a willingness to use the website, with use dropping slightly among voters ages 40 to 64 and even more among seniors.

### Likelihood to Use Website Features by Age



**Survey Methodology:** From March 29 to April 2, 2015, Tulchin Research and Smith Johnson Research conducted a telephone survey among 800 likely November 2016 general election voters statewide in California, using live professional interviewers calling both landlines and cell phones. The margin of error for the survey is +/- 3.46 percentage points.

*Engaged Voters* were defined by respondents' affirmative responses to the following civic engagement questions in the survey:

- Here are some questions about political involvement and your community. We understand that people are busy and often do not have time to get involved in these kinds of activities. For each activity, please let me know if this is something you have done in the past few years...
  - Have you written a letter to the editor, posted, or shared links or articles about political issues for others to read online?
  - Have you communicated your position on an issue to an elected official through phone, email, petition, et cetera?
  - Have you attended a government meeting or political event?
  - Have you made a contribution to a political cause or campaign?
  - Have you supported any organization, such as the NRA or Sierra Club, which promotes political or social change?