

# California primary voters speak on social inequality, war

Our reporters  
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Voters went to polls on Tuesday in the final six primary contests of the 2016 election cycle, with the exception of the District of Columbia, which will vote next week. Hillary Clinton declared victory in the Democratic Party nomination contest Tuesday evening.

WSWS reporters spoke to voters throughout the state of California. California, while traditionally having relatively little influence on the nomination process due to the voting schedule, nonetheless is a significant gauge as it is the largest state in the country.

More than 650,000 Californians registered to vote in the final six weeks of the registration period, pushing the state's total registered voters to 18 million, the most ever heading into a primary election. Many of these newly-registered voters were under the age of 45, a group that has favored Sanders heavily over Clinton.

In Los Angeles, many voters said the growth of social inequality and poverty were motivating factors in their election decisions.

"We have so many problems here," one voter said. "I take the bus down 7th street and there's homeless people everywhere. It's ridiculous for us to continue spending money in places like the Middle East. But at the same time we've caused everything that's going on over there."

Another expressed frustration with the media's declaration of Clinton as the presumptive nominee the day before the California vote. "They shouldn't have done that," he said. "They should have to wait until all the ballots are counted to make sure people feel free to vote for the candidate of their choice."

WSWS reporters also spoke to voters in Berkeley, California, many of who expressed illusions in both the Sanders and Clinton campaigns.

Bob, an engineering student in Berkeley, said that he voted for Sanders. "I believe he has good policies for

social change that will represent the younger generation," he said. "Public education is a big deal for me. I believe it's important to have an educated population."

Asked about Clinton, Bob replied, "I think she's an acceptable candidate. I would have nothing against her as a candidate, but Bernie Sanders seems to have much more audacity."

Helcio, a Brazilian national, expressed a growing and widespread resignation about the US election system. "It's pretty sad," he said. "There is not much hope anymore. All the top 1 percent are in control. It doesn't matter what you do, it will take a long time for people to get power again."

Chris, a database architect, said he voted for Sanders because of concerns over income inequality. "Paraphrasing Robert Reich, I think Hillary Clinton is the best candidate for the system we have, and Bernie is the best for the system we would like to have. I'm voting my conscience in the primary." Asked about the lack of discussion of war in the presidential election, Chris replied, "We're to the state of a forgotten war."

Rishi, an engineer, also voted for Sanders. His primary concerns are "the environment, climate change, and having a good foreign policy that doesn't lead to war," he said. "Trump is out of his mind. Hillary is a little too pro-war, pro-involvement in all the things she voted for. That was probably the biggest reason I voted for Bernie."

When asked what kind of issues were of particular concern to him, Patrick, a voter in the San Francisco area, said, "The big one for me is medical debt. It hits me personally because I have kidney failure. I was diagnosed last November. For just a four-day stay in the hospital, it would have been \$80,000. Luckily, I was able to qualify for Medi-Cal," the state's Medicaid

health care program.

Many voters in San Diego also expressed distrust in the election process and a disbelief that anything would significantly change regardless of which candidate wins in November.

Alex, a student worker, said, “The super delegates can do whatever they want instead of doing what the people want. I read last night that Hillary Clinton is now the nominee. Why should we even bother voting now? The election process is rigged, we don’t have a voice.”

WSWS reporters in San Diego also spoke to voters from City Heights, a mostly Hispanic working class and immigrant community.

Freddie a telecom worker told reporters he was voting because, “I’m tired of blue-collar workers like myself suffering due to the financial institutions, Wall Street banks and corporations.”

When asked if he felt that this framework could adequately address the democratic rights of the population, he responded, “No! It doesn’t feel like it is a democracy when the politicians can be bought and sold. I don’t feel like it’s a democracy if hundreds of police can get away with killing people.”

Freddie was engaged in the strike by 1,700 workers for AT&T, which was contained by the union to San Diego. When our reporters asked why the union, the Communication Workers of America, made strikers return to work without a contract, Freddie responded that he was disappointed in AT&T. When pressed why the union had allowed them to even work without a contract, he agreed that the unions were no longer organizations of the working class.

Speaking on the difficulties of making ends meet, Freddie also said, “It’s not [quite] the [official] poverty line, but it’s paycheck to paycheck and that’s poverty. We work our whole lives and what do we get in the end? To pay off our car, maybe pay off a house that we can pass on to our children. That’s it?! You work so hard and you’ve got nothing to show for it at the end of your lifetime.”

Juan is a 30 year old military veteran who spent time in Afghanistan. He said he was there to vote for Sanders because he agreed with the way Sanders spoke about Wall Street and the difficulties of life for average people. Despite Sanders saying he would support Hillary Clinton if she won the primary, Juan maintained

the impression that Sanders would never support Clinton. He said he would refuse to vote for Clinton, believing the Democratic and Republican parties are thoroughly corrupt and can only be reformed by Sanders.

When asked about Bernie Sanders’ support of the wars in Libya and Syria, as well as his votes to fund the wars in Iraq, Juan said he believed that Sanders did not really support the current wars in the Middle East.

A young mother also spoke to our reporters briefly saying she was going to the polls because it was her obligation. Expressing her disapproval of US military interventions abroad she said, “It’s my taxes that are paying these people to send soldiers to war and kill thousands of people in other countries. We are paying these people and they should answer to us.”

Daniel, a cook and student at a local community college said he was disgusted with growing social inequality, and expressed disbelief that it could be in any way addressed through either of the two big business parties. “The election is controlled by the 1 percent of both parties, the Democrats and Republicans. The race has become a popularity contest, we have no idea what politics is.”

Daniel continued, “We can’t trust anything Hillary says, she is two-faced. There will be no difference if Hillary or Trump wins.”



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