

THE FUTURE OF GOVERNANCE, MEDIA, AND CIVIL SOCIETY

A CALIFORNIA 100 ISSUE ROADMAP FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

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Governance is the way that societies make decisions and solve problems. Good governance is difficult when a society is divided in its values, when trust in governing institutions is low, when political participation is biased along various social lines, and when there is not enough reliable information and structured debate in the media. Complicating matters further, governments may not be able to reach important decisions when there are too many veto points that enable small groups to delay or stop decisions, regardless of their merit or public support. Finally, even after a decision is made, governmental agencies may lack the personnel and capacity to implement and administer policies.

While California's governance system has solved many problems, its governance system suffers from significant challenges in many areas. These include: hard problems (with large-scale challenges associated with climate change, housing, poverty, and more), multiple veto points in public decision making, partisan division and polarization, lack of trust in institutions, biased participation in public decisions, and the need to accelerate the modernization and strengthening of civil service in state and local government.

FROM RESEARCH TO ACTION

What will these challenges mean for current and future generations of Californians, and how can we make sure that California's future in governance, media, and civil society remain innovative, resilient, inclusive, sustainable, and equitable?

In June 2022, the California 100 Initiative released a policy and future scenarios report on governance, media, and civil society, developed by California 100 and the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law. The teams conducted extensive primary and secondary research, and spoke with a wide array of experts in the public and private sectors to examine possible scenarios and policy options for future-focused action.

"California faces big governance challenges in which collective action is too easy to veto, and the state needs to reform its basic institutions if it is going to deal with issues like climate change and housing," said **Francis Fukuyama, co-author of the Future of Governance, Media, and Civil Society report and Olivier Nomellini Senior Fellow at the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law.** "California was at the forefront of the Progressive Era governance reform movement and remains there today. This project is an evaluation of California's current governance and an envisioning of potential reforms."



FUTURE SCENARIOS

Other key takeaways from the California 100 report include a consideration of policy options that improve governance under **four future scenarios** that center around two critical dimensions: whether voters want more direct democracy or more representative democracy, and whether the state's civic capacity—as measured by high-quality news media, public trust, and participation—significantly increase or decrease.

In a context where California's voters prefer more representative forms of government with delegated authority to decision makers, the scenarios range from a stronger and more capable administrative state that compensates for losses in civic capacity to a revitalized public sector where government and society move in the same direction with respect to solving collective problems. In a context where California's voters prefer more direct democracy and control over decision making, the scenarios range from limited provision of public goods given weak public sector capacity to a shift towards local control and anemic public good provision at the statewide level.

Whatever the scenario, the research commissioned by California 100 indicates that doing nothing should not be our default option. In order for California to do better under these various scenarios, the state will need to consider, research, and enact policies and practices that advance **innovation** (such as improved use of technology and data science in government, media and civic participation), **resilience** (such as the ability for public agencies and civil society to respond better to health, environmental, and financial shocks), **inclusion** (more participatory engagement on public projects and programs), **sustainability** (addressing environmental, economic, and human sustainability goals), and **equity** (with well-resourced policies that eliminate disparities by race, income, gender, and other markers of social disadvantage).



Artist rendering of future scenarios in governance, media & civil society
Source: California 100



THE CALIFORNIA 100 ROADMAP

The California 100 report on policies and future scenarios is the first step in a multi-stage process that is designed to inspire and engage Californians—from a variety of sectors and all walks of life—to build a stronger future for current and future generations. In the summer of 2022, our expert and intergenerational Commission will conduct a series of listening sessions throughout the state, to solicit feedback on the ideas generated by our research and to generate additional big and bold ideas for consideration by public and private agencies, as well as by everyday Californians. We will also be generating insights from our policy innovation projects throughout the state that cover a variety of topics, and our deep engagement on questions of science and technology as they relate to a variety of issues, including governance, media, and civil society.

In early 2023, we will take these various policy ideas and scenarios, and engage in a process of deliberative democracy featuring a representative cross-section of California residents. The goal of this deliberative exercise is to understand the conditions under which Californians from various walks of life can come to agreement on the long-term challenges facing the state and, importantly, the kind of bold and visionary solutions we need to put the state on a stronger trajectory for the next century.

California 100 will also be engaging intentionally with young Californians, who have the most to gain or lose in the coming century. Our team members will engage young people throughout the state, including in high school and college settings, and will organize a statewide youth summit that will produce a manifesto for the future of California.

Finally, in Winter and Spring 2023, our intergenerational Commission will draft a vision and strategy document for the future of California, based on briefing materials that build on insights from the various streams of work. California 100 will then launch a culminating event in early summer 2023 that serves as the formal launch of the vision and strategy document and, importantly, also brings together leaders and partners from our various streams of work and prior engagement.

Our culminating event in the summer of 2023 will:

1. Showcase the pressing need for California to prioritize long-term futures,
2. Build an ambitious yet achievable vision and strategy that are grounded in rigorous research and community engagement, and
3. Inspire others to do the same, providing tools that a variety of partners (including policymakers, government agency officials, business leaders, activists, researchers, and next-gen leaders from various sectors) can use to build their own aspirational visions and strategies for California's long-term success.

ABOUT CALIFORNIA 100

The California 100 Initiative envisions a future that is innovative, sustainable, and equitable for all. Our mission is to strengthen California's ability to collectively solve problems and shape our long-term future over the next 100 years. California 100 is organized around 15 policy domains and driven by interrelated stages of work: research, policy innovation and engagement with Californians. California 100's work is guided by an expert and intergenerational Commission. Through various projects and activities, California 100 seeks to move California towards an aspirational vision—changing policies and practices, attitudes and mind-sets, to inspire a more vibrant future.

California 100 staff members compiled this roadmap document, drawing on research in two publications—a Policies and Future Scenarios Report and a Facts-Origins-Trends Report—by authors from the Stanford Center on Democracy, Development and the Rule of Law. The two governance-related publications are part of California 100's larger research stream of work, built in partnership with 20 research institutions across the state.

California 100 sponsored grants for data-driven and future-oriented research focused on understanding today and planning for tomorrow. This research, anchored in California 100's 15 core policy domains, forms the foundation for the initiative's subsequent work by considering how California has gotten to where it is and by exploring scenarios and policy alternatives for what California can become over the next 100 years.

The California 100 Initiative is incubated through the University of California and Stanford.

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READ MORE

To learn more about the future of governance, media, and civil society in California, visit the California 100 website at California100.org, where you will find our detailed reports on the topic, and more information about our research partners.

