

The initial results in California last night make it seem like a sane drop of blue in the country. Jerry Brown won for Governor; Barbara Boxer was re-elected; and Proposition 23, which would have reversed the state's landmark climate change law, was resoundingly defeated. Voters also approved Proposition 25, which allows the state budget to be approved by a simple majority — although retains the 2/3 requirement for tax increases.

But look closer.

Voters rejected Proposition 21, which would have raised the state's vehicle license fee by a mere \$18 to support California's beleaguered state park system (which currently has a maintenance backlog of more than \$1 billion); they approved Proposition 22, which prevents the state taking transportation monies from local governments and whole bunch of other stealth things to tighten the state's budget; and most importantly, they approved Proposition 26, another stealth initiative sponsored by Chevron, Philip Morris, and Anheuser-Busch, which erases the distinction between "fees" and "taxes", might undo this year's budget deal, further restricts the state's ability to raise revenue, and probably emasculates the state's environmental agencies (potentially making the victory in Prop 23 meaningless).

Essentially, then, the voters have given formal political power to the Democrats, and told them to fix the state's problems. They then have tied the Democrats in a series of straitjackets and thrown them into the Pacific Ocean.

Good luck, Jerry; you're going to need it.