

PREFACE

The second edition provides a well-designed, updated, and relatively affordable text that addresses the important processes of California government. The objective remains the same. This book is for Californians. It is about your government—how it works, how it affects you, and what some of its successes and failures are. The fundamental question that I address is this: What do you and I, as ordinary residents, citizens, and taxpayers of California, need to know about our government? That’s not an easy question. In searching for the answer, I solicited the insights of many who observe, deal with, or comment on government every day—nonprofit policy institutes and centers, newspaper reporters and columnists, interest groups, and government agencies themselves—about the essentials of the California government experience: what information they regard as important and how they convey it.

Many politics and government texts describe what government *is*. They tend to be organized around the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. While this structural/functional descriptive approach does convey essential information, I prefer to focus on what government *does*—more of a process and public policy approach centering on how government affects nearly every aspect of our lives—hence the book title *Governing California* rather than *The Government of California*. The result, I think, is a useful *ground-level* guide to how government works and how it affects us all. You be the judge. I invite your reactions: LGiventer@csustan.edu

While the overall chapter outline of *Governing California* remains the same as the first edition, there are important updates throughout the text. Chapter 1, California Contrasts, is more clearly organized in terms of political demography, political parties, political economy, and political geography, with new original figures emphasizing the growth of California’s Latino population and the concentration of Democratic voter registration along the coast and in major urban areas. Chapter 2, The Structure of Government, has been reorganized to acknowledge the executive-legislative-judicial preference for some users rather than the previous national-state-local description. The unique full-color maps of California’s congressional and legislative districts now show the entire state, rather than just the northern and southern urban areas. Chapter 3, Elections, has new details about the role of money in political campaigns. Chapter 4, Lawmaking, is also updated, particularly with respect to lobbyist and interest group activity. Many students, faculty, and reviewers have said that Chapter 5, It’s Your Money, and Chapter 6, Pursuit of Justice, are interesting, informative, yet concise, presentations of complex subjects. So these chapters are improved mostly in terms of data and formatting for the second edition. Chapter 7, Employment, Education, and Social Services, and Chapter 8, Energy and the Environment, have been revised as well with respect to data and policy issues.