

Voters will decide if California should be split into three states

By Joel Shannon,

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Corrections & Clarifications: A previous version of this story misstated the proposed population of Southern California

A proposal that would split the state of California into three separate states has become eligible to appear on the state's ballots in November, California's Secretary of State has confirmed.

The Golden State would become California, Northern California and Southern California, if the proposal were to pass.

Cal3 provides this information for how the state would be split up:

-California would have approximately 12.3 million residents and would be centered around Los Angeles County. Five other counties to the north and along the coast would be included.

-Northern California would have 40 counties with approximately 13.3 million people.

-Southern California would have 13.9 million people in 12 counties

Venture Capitalist Tim Draper is behind the initiative. He says splitting the state would lead to improvements in infrastructure and education while lowering taxes: "States will be more accountable to us and can cooperate and compete for citizens," he told the *Los Angeles Times* in an email last summer.

If the proposed measure was to be passed, the division of California would be subject to approval by Congress, according to Cal3.

But there's many reasons to be skeptical that voters will choose to split the state.

An April poll from Survey USA found that voters were not in favor of splitting the state by a margin of 4 to 1.

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And many similar efforts have failed in the past.

In 2014, Draper failed with a similar proposal: To split the Golden State into six smaller governments.

Getting an initiative on a November 2016 ballot required about 808,000 signatures. The group behind the effort, largely funded by Draper, claimed to have 1.3 million signatures. But the secretary of state deemed about 40% of them to be illegitimate, and the campaign faltered.

In 1992, Stan Statham, an assemblyman from Northern California, embarked on "a quixotic campaign to split California in three," as Sacramento's *News & Review* recalled.

Amid worries of a recession, Statham gained the support of then-Speaker Willie Brown to put a non-binding question on ballots across the state: Should California divide into three states? A bill made it through the Senate before dying in the rules committee.



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