

THE FIELD POLL

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THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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PLURALITY STILL FAVORS PROP. 54, BUT MARGIN OF SUPPORT NARROWS.

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

A narrowing plurality of voters continues to favor passage of Proposition 54, the initiative that would prevent state and local governments from collecting racial and ethnic data about residents of the state.

The measure, officially titled "Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color or National Origin" (also referred to as the "Racial Privacy Initiative") is backed by Ward Connerly, a University of California Regent. Connerly was the leader in the 1996 passage of Prop. 209, which effectively ended public-sector affirmative action programs in California.

Currently, 46% of likely voters say they would vote yes on Prop. 54 if the election were being held now and 35% would vote no. Another 19% are undecided. This 11-point plurality in favor is down from a 21-point advantage found last month. In addition, awareness of the initiative, which qualified for the ballot some time ago, has grown over the past month to 41%, up from 25% in July.

The initiative will be voted on in the next statewide election, which coincides with the gubernatorial recall election to be held on October 7. The poll finds that about one in four voters (23%) say the presence of Prop. 54 makes them more inclined to vote in the special election and 17% report that a candidate's stand on Prop. 54 will be very important to them in determining how they will vote in the gubernatorial recall. Latinos and ethnic minority voters appear to be more influenced by Prop. 54's presence on the ballot than are white non-Hispanic voters.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll*, conducted August 10-13 by Field Research Corporation among a statewide sample of voters likely to participate in the October recall election.

Trend of voter awareness and preferences

Awareness of Prop. 54 increased in August to 41%, up from the 25% and 26% levels found in a July and April *Field Poll*.

Table 1
Trend of voter awareness of Proposition 54
(among likely voters)

	<u>Have heard</u>	<u>Have not heard</u>
August	41%	59
July	25%	75
April	26%	74

Supporters of Prop. 54 have outnumbered opponents by significant margins in each of four *Field Poll* preference measures. Its current lead – 11 points – however, is down from earlier somewhat larger preference margins.

Table 2
Trend of voter preferences on Proposition 54, the “Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color or National Origin” initiative
(among likely voters)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
August 2003	46%	35	19
July 2003	50%	29	21
April 2003	48%	33	19
April 2002*	48%	34	18

* Asked of all registered voters

Preferences by subgroup

Some clear differences in preferences about Prop. 54 are beginning to emerge across different subgroups of the voting population. For example...

- While Republicans and non-partisans support the initiative by greater than two to one margins, Democrats oppose it 47% to 36%.
- Majorities of conservative and middle-of-the-road voters are lining up in favor, but liberals are opposed two to one.
- While white non-Hispanic voters favor Prop. 54 by a 47% to 33% margin, pluralities of Latinos and voters of other racial and ethnic groups are opposing it.

- Opinions about Prop. 54 are related to voter preferences in the upcoming gubernatorial recall election. For example, those intending to vote yes to remove Governor Gray Davis from office are nearly two to one in support of the initiative. Among voters intending to support Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger in the replacement election, it is favored three to one. On the other hand, those intending to vote no on the Davis recall oppose Prop. 54 46% to 41, and those supporting Lt. Governor Democrat Cruz Bustamante's candidacy in the replacement election oppose the initiative 54% to 32%.
- Preferences on Prop. 54 also are related to a voter's views on affirmative action programs. Among voters who oppose affirmative action programs as a way to remedy past discrimination, Prop. 54 is supported by a greater than two to one margin (54% to 25%). By contrast, among supporters of affirmative action programs, it is opposed 49% to 34%.

Table 3
Voter preferences on Proposition 54 – by subgroup
(among likely voters)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	56%	35	19
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	36%	47	17
(.40) Republicans	55%	25	20
(.15) Non-partisan/others*	52%	24	24
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.32) Conservative	51%	30	19
(.44) Middle-of-the-road	53%	28	19
(.24) Liberal	27%	55	18
<u>Region</u>			
(.25) Los Angeles County	45%	37	18
(.35) Other Southern California	43%	36	21
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	48%	37	15
(.18) Other Northern California*	51%	30	19
<u>Gender</u>			
(.50) Men	47%	37	16
(.50) Women	45%	33	22
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.76) White non-Hispanic	47%	33	20
(.12) Latino*	38%	50	12
(.12) All others*	35%	41	24
<u>Age</u>			
(.27) 18-39	49%	29	22
(.19) 40-49	47%	27	26
(.32) 50-64	39%	44	17
(.22) 65 and older	51%	36	13
<u>Familiarity with the initiative</u>			
(.41) Yes, have heard	48%	38	14
(.59) No, have not heard	45%	33	22
<u>Vote on Davis recall</u>			
(.58) Yes voters	53%	28	19
(.37) No voters	41%	46	13
<u>Vote in replacement election</u>			
(.25) Bustamante	32%	54	14
(.22) Schwarzenegger	61%	20	19
(.39) Others	48%	33	19
(.14) Undecided*	44%	32	24
<u>Views on affirmative action programs</u>			
(.36) Favor affirmative action	34%	49	17
(.55) Oppose affirmative action	54%	25	21

* Relatively small sample size.

Impact of Prop. 54's presence on the gubernatorial recall election

Because voters will be voting on Prop. 54 in the same election as the gubernatorial recall, many observers have speculated about the impact that Prop. 54 will have on that historic vote. In its current survey *The Field Poll* asked two questions aimed at gauging some of its potential impact.

The first asked voters whether or not they would be more inclined to participate in the recall election because of the presence of Prop. 54. The results indicate that about one in four voters (23%) do attest to being more likely to vote in the recall election because Prop. 54 is also on the ballot. This compares to 77% who say they would not be more inclined.

The survey finds that Latinos and other racial/ethnic minority voters are more likely to report this than white non-Hispanics. In addition, voters under age 50 are more motivated to vote in the recall because of Prop. 54's presence than are older voters. It also appears that women are more influenced by the presence of the initiative than men, and that Southern Californians are more affected than Northern Californians.

Table 4
With Proposition 54 on the ballot, does this make
you more inclined or less inclined to vote in the
October 7 special election?
(among likely voters)

	<u>More</u> <u>inclined</u>	<u>Not more</u> <u>inclined</u>
Statewide	23%	77
<u>Party registration</u>		
(.45) Democrats	26%	74
(.40) Republicans	21%	79
(.15) Non-partisan/others*	23%	77
<u>Political ideology</u>		
(.32) Conservative	19%	81
(.44) Middle-of-the-road	24%	76
(.24) Liberal	28%	72
<u>Region</u>		
(.25) Los Angeles County	28%	72
(.35) Other Southern California	26%	74
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	18%	82
(.18) Other Northern California*	20%	80
<u>Gender</u>		
(.50) Men	19%	81
(.50) Women	28%	72
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>		
(.76) White non-Hispanic	17%	83
(.12) Latino*	39%	61
(.12) All others*	44%	56
<u>Age</u>		
(.27) 18-39	30%	70
(.19) 40-49	30%	70
(.32) 50-64	21%	79
(.22) 65 and older	12%	88
<u>Vote on Davis recall</u>		
(.58) Yes voters	24%	76
(.37) No voters	22%	78
<u>Vote in replacement election</u>		
(.25) Bustamante	29%	71
(.22) Schwarzenegger	24%	76
(.39) Others	19%	81
(.14) Undecided*	23%	77
<u>Views on affirmative action programs</u>		
(.36) Favor affirmative action	26%	74
(.55) Oppose affirmative action	22%	78
<u>Vote on Proposition 54</u>		
(.46) Yes	23%	77
(.35) No	29%	71
(.19) Undecided*	15%	85

* Relatively small sample size.

A second question asked voters how important a gubernatorial candidate's stand on Prop. 54 was to them in deciding how they would vote in the recall election. Statewide, 17% of likely voters say a candidate's position on Prop. 54 would be very important to them in deciding whom to support in the gubernatorial recall. This is especially true among Latinos, other racial/ethnic minority voters, Democrats, those living in Los Angeles County and voters who favor affirmative action programs as a way to remedy past discrimination. In addition, voters intending to support Bustamante in the replacement election are about twice as likely as others to say a candidate's stand on Prop. 54 will be very important to them.

Table 5
Importance of a candidate's stand on Proposition 54 on
how you will vote in the recall election
(among likely voters)

	<u>Very important</u>	<u>Somewhat important</u>	<u>Not important</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	17%	34	45	4
<u>Party registration</u>				
(.45) Democrats	22%	36	35	7
(.40) Republicans	13%	35	50	2
(.15) Non-partisan/others*	12%	26	58	4
<u>Political ideology</u>				
(.32) Conservative	12%	37	49	2
(.44) Middle-of-the-road	21%	32	43	4
(.24) Liberal	16%	34	42	8
<u>Region</u>				
(.25) Los Angeles County	25%	30	38	7
(.35) Other Southern California	16%	36	46	2
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	13%	34	48	5
(.18) Other Northern California*	13%	39	45	3
<u>Gender</u>				
(.50) Men	14%	29	54	3
(.50) Women	20%	40	35	5
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
(.76) White non-Hispanic	11%	34	52	3
(.12) Latino*	32%	39	24	5
(.12) All others*	37%	33	22	8
<u>Age</u>				
(.27) 18-39	12%	38	44	6
(.19) 40-49	18%	29	51	2
(.32) 50-64	18%	33	46	3
(.22) 65 and older	22%	36	37	5
<u>Vote on Davis recall</u>				
(.58) Yes voters	15%	35	47	3
(.37) No voters	19%	36	41	4
<u>Vote in replacement election</u>				
(.25) Bustamante	29%	32	35	4
(.22) Schwarzenegger	13%	36	49	2
(.39) Others	11%	33	51	5
(.14) Undecided*	19%	38	38	5
<u>Views on affirmative action programs</u>				
(.36) Favor affirmative action	22%	37	36	5
(.55) Oppose affirmative action	14%	34	50	2
<u>Vote on Proposition 54</u>				
(.46) Yes	16%	37	46	1
(.35) No	21%	34	43	2
(.19) Undecided*	12%	27	45	6

* Relatively small sample size.

Pro and con arguments

In advocating for the initiative, Connerly says it will bring the state closer to a race-blind society. He maintains that the government should not be categorizing people by race or ethnicity in much the same way it attempts to be blind to a person's religion or sexual orientation, and that this initiative was carefully crafted and allows for exemptions and amendments should they be warranted. In addition to Connerly, supporters of the initiative include San Diego talk show host Roger Hedgecock, State Senator Sam Aanestad, Human Relations Consultant Joe Hicks, columnist Martha Montelongo Myers and statewide Prop. 54 Vice Chair Dr. Mary Rose Consiglio.

Critics say that passage of the initiative will harm health care programs, reduce school accountability, and hurt law enforcement. In addition, health advocates say that gathering racial and ethnic data can help the state spot racial disparities among whites, blacks, Latinos and Asians in regard to diseases such as breast cancer, diabetes, and asthma, which can afflict each race differently. Opponents include League of Women Voters President Jacqueline Jacobberger, California Medical Association chief Dr. John C. Lewin, former Wilson administration Health Director Dr. Molly Coye, the American Public Health Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics and the California Association of Public Hospitals and Health Systems.

Information About the Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey conducted August 10-13, 2003 in English and Spanish among a random sample of Californians likely to vote in the October 7 recall election. A representative sample of 1,036 California adults were initially screened, yielding interviews with 629 registered voters, 448 of whom were deemed to be likely voters.

Sampling was conducted by means of random digit dialing, which selects telephone exchanges within all area codes serving California in proportion to the population. From each exchange a random sample of telephone numbers was created by adding random digits to the telephone exchange selected, permitting access to both listed and unlisted telephones. After the completion of interviewing, the survey results were weighted slightly to *Field Poll* estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, results from the likely voter sample have sampling error of +/- 5.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. Results from subgroups have somewhat larger sampling error ranges.

There are other possible sources of error in any survey in addition to sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sampling, sequencing or through omissions or errors in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about an initiative, Proposition 54, that will appear on the October 7 recall election ballot having to do with the classification of people by race or ethnicity?

(As you know) Prop. 54 is the "Classification by Race, Ethnicity, Color or National Origin" initiative. It prohibits state and local governments from classifying any person by race, ethnicity, color or national origin. Various exemptions apply. If the election were being held today, and you were voting on Proposition 54, would you vote YES or NO?

With Proposition 54 on the ballot, does this make you more inclined or less inclined to vote in the October 7 election or does it make no difference?

In deciding how you vote in the recall election, how important is a candidate's stand on Proposition 54 to you – very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important?

Which of the following two statements comes closest to your own view: (1) Affirmative action programs are justified because they attempt to make up for past discrimination against certain types of people; or, (2) Affirmative action programs are not justified because they negatively affect people who had nothing to do with the discrimination of the past.