

# THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY  
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS  
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**U.S. Senate Campaign:**

**BOXER MAINTAINING A LARGE  
DOUBLE DIGIT LEAD OVER JONES  
IN AN UNUSUALLY LOW-INTEREST  
CONTEST.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In a contest which is drawing an unusually low degree of voter interest and attention, incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer is maintaining a large double-digit lead (48% to 32%) over her Republican challenger Bill Jones for U.S. Senate.

With just a month to go before the election, two-thirds (65%) of the state's likely voters say they are not following the race closely, similar to what was observed in August.

Even before it became known last year which Republican would be facing Boxer in her bid for a third term, voter inclination to re-elect her was not high. In July 2003, 48% said they were inclined to re-elect her and those not inclined amounted to 41%.

This fairly closely divided inclined-to-not inclined to re-elect ratio has not changed significantly in four subsequent surveys, with 46% now saying they are inclined to re-elect Boxer, while 40% are disinclined. Boxer's strong showing is attributable to her capturing the lion's share (81%) of the Democratic voter preference and outpolling Jones by a large margin among non-partisans/others.

Two of the state's largest stronghold of Democratic votes – Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area – are backing Boxer by wide margins. In areas where GOP candidates usually run strong – Southern California areas outside of Los Angeles, the Central Valley, and areas of Northern California outside of the Bay Area – she is running about even with Jones in voter support.

**Table 1**  
**Voter preferences for U.S. Senate**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Boxer</u></b>	<b><u>Jones</u></b>	<b><u>Other</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided</u></b>
Late Sept./Early Oct.	48%	32	6	14
August	50%	33	8	9
May	55%	32	1	12
<b><u>Party</u></b>				
Democrats	81%	5	5	9
Republicans	9%	73	7	11
Non-partisan/other	45%	18	9	28
<b><u>Region</u></b>				
Los Angeles County	54%	23	7	16
Other Southern California	38%	39	7	16
Central Valley	44%	37	7	12
San Francisco Bay Area	61%	24	5	10
Other Northern California	42%	42	4	12
<b><u>Gender</u></b>				
Male	42%	38	7	13
Female	54%	26	6	14
<b><u>Race/Ethnicity</u></b>				
White non-Hispanic	44%	39	6	12
Latino	55%	19	6	20
African American	76%	4	10	10
Asian/other	51%	24	8	17
<b><u>Political Ideology</u></b>				
Strongly conservative	10%	79	3	8
Moderately conservative	28%	46	8	18
Middle-of-the-road	53%	20	8	19
Moderately liberal	76%	1	8	15
Strongly liberal	93%	2	2	3

*Note: Subgroup findings are from the late September/early October survey.*

### **Image ratings**

One of the reasons why Jones has not been more competitive with Boxer in this year's U.S. Senate race relates to the fact that only about half (52%) of likely voters has an opinion of the former Secretary of State, while 48% do not. Among those voters able to rate him, 29% of voters currently hold a favorable view of Jones, while 23% have an unfavorable opinion.

By contrast, nearly nine in ten voters has an impression of Boxer, and her image profile is 51% favorable and 38% unfavorable.

**Table 2**  
**Image ratings of Boxer/Jones**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Late September/Early October</b>		
	<b>Favorable</b>	<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>Boxer – Total</b>	<u>51%</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>11</u>
Democrats	79%	12	9
Republicans	16%	74	10
Non-partisans/others	52%	30	18
<b>Jones – Total</b>	<u>29%</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>48</u>
Democrats	10%	39	51
Republicans	57%	5	38
Non-partisans/others	19%	18	63

**Inclination to re-elect Boxer**

Over the course of five *Field Poll* surveys conducted over the past fifteen months, there has been virtually no change in the voters' expressed disposition to re-elect Boxer. In July 2003, 48% of voters said they were inclined and 41% were not inclined to support her. In four subsequent surveys that ratio has remained at similar levels. In each case those who are inclined to re-elect Boxer has ranged from five to eight points more than those who are disinclined. The current poll shows that 46% of likely voters are inclined to support Boxer's re-election, while 40% are disinclined.

**Table 3**  
**Inclination to re-elect Boxer**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Inclined to re-elect</b>	<b>Not inclined</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
Late Sept./Early Oct. 2004	46%	40	14
August 2004	48%	40	12
January 2004	46%	40	14
September 2003	45%	40	15
July 2003	48%	41	11

*(Note: Measures prior to August 2004 conducted among all registered voters.)*

**Not closely following the election**

Last August just 9% of likely voters said they were closely following the U.S. Senate campaign here in California and 24% were following it somewhat closely. This compared to two in three likely voters (67%) who report not closely paying attention to the race. Since then, there has been virtually no change in the degree to which voters are following the Senatorial candidates, with 8% saying they are following it closely, 27% somewhat closely, and 65% not closely.

**Table 4**  
**How closely have you been following this year's**  
**U.S. Senate race in California?**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Very</u></b> <b><u>closely</u></b>	<b><u>Somewhat</u></b> <b><u>closely</u></b>	<b><u>Not</u></b> <b><u>closely</u></b>
Late Sept./Early Oct.	8%	27	65
August	9%	24	67
<b><u>Party</u></b> (Late Sept./Early Oct.)			
Democrats	9%	32	59
Republicans	7%	25	67
Non-partisans/others	5%	21	74

\* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

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### **Information About The Survey**

#### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on interviews conducted among a random sample of 1,135 likely voters in California's November general election. Interviews were conducted by telephone in English and Spanish September 24-October 3, 2004. Sampling was carried out using random digit dial methodology which gives all voters, including those whose phone number is listed and unlisted, an equal chance of being contacted. Up to four attempts were made to reach a randomly selected voter at each number dialed. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, some questions were asked of a random subsample of 549 or 586 likely voters each. After the completion of interviewing the larger registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, the overall results in this report have a sampling error of +/- 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from each random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.2 percentage points. These are other possible sources of error in any survey in addition to sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sequencing or through omissions or errors in sampling, interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

#### **Questions Asked**

There will be an election for U.S. Senate in California in the November election.

How closely have you been following this year's U.S. Senate race in California – very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all closely? (split sample)

If the November election for U.S. Senate were being held today, would you be inclined or not inclined to re-elect Barbara Boxer as U.S. Senator? (split sample)

The candidates running for U.S. Senate include Barbara Boxer, Democrat, and Bill Jones, Republican. If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote – Boxer, Jones or someone else?

Is your opinion of (Barbara Boxer) (Bill Jones) favorable or unfavorable? (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)