

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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Release #2171

Release Date: **Thursday, September 8, 2005**

VOTERS CONCERNED ABOUT ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, BUT OPPOSE PRIVATE CITIZEN PATROLS ON THE BORDER. PUBLIC DIVIDED ON WHETHER GOVERNOR SHOULD CALL A “BORDER EMERGENCY.”

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(ISSN 0195-4520)

by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Most voters in this state believe that the number of illegal immigrants crossing the Mexican border into California has been increasing in recent years and express a great deal of concern about the issue of illegal immigration.

However, Californians oppose by a 56% to 41% margin the idea of private citizens forming patrols along the California-Mexico border.

When asked whether California should declare a “border emergency” as the Governors of Arizona and New Mexico have already done, voters are about evenly split – 44% in favor and 40% opposed.

High levels of concern about illegal immigration

For the past several years Californians have consistently registered a high level of concern about illegal immigration. Currently, eight in ten voters (81%) express some concern about the issue, with 49% extremely concerned and 32% somewhat concerned. Only 18% say they are not concerned.

A larger proportion of Republicans is concerned about the issue of illegal immigration than either Democrats or non-partisans.

Voters who live in the eight counties of Southern California outside of Los Angeles County express proportionately greater concern about the issue than those living in other parts of the state.

Latino voters are somewhat less concerned about illegal immigration than other racial and ethnic groups.

Table 1
Concern about the issue of illegal immigration
(among California registered voters)

	Extremely concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not concerned	No opinion
Total – Late August 2005	49%	32	18	1
January 2005	48%	37	15	**
January 2002	49%	29	21	1
Party				
Democrat	42%	34	22	2
Republican	65%	28	7	**
Non-partisans/others	39%	33	27	1
Region				
Los Angeles County	48%	34	18	**
Other Southern California	62%	24	13	1
Central Valley*	48%	33	17	2
San Francisco Bay Area	33%	40	26	1
Other*	48%	30	17	5
Race/ethnicity				
White (non-Hispanic)	53%	33	14	**
Latino*	36%	33	29	2
Black/Asian/Other*	45%	26	26	3
Age				
18 – 39	39%	34	26	1
40 – 49*	43%	38	19	**
50 – 64	56%	29	14	1
65 or older	66%	26	6	2

* Small sample base.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Illegal immigration into California seen as increasing

Almost two out of three voters (63%) think the number of illegal immigrants crossing the Mexican border into California has been increasing over the past several years. This compares to 24% who think the number of border crossings has stayed about the same and just 3% who believe it has been declining.

Table 2
Perceived changes in the number of illegal immigrants crossing
the Mexican border into California in the past several years
(among California registered voters)

Increasing	63%
About the same	24
Decreasing	3
No opinion	10

Voters reject private citizen patrols

By a 56% to 41% margin, Californians reject the idea of private citizens forming patrols along the border with Mexico to reduce the number of people entering the country. The only voter sub-groups favoring private citizen patrols are Republicans and voters age 65 or older. Central Valley voters and those living in the eight-county Southern California region outside of Los Angeles are about evenly divided on the idea.

Table 3
Californians opinion of the idea of private citizens forming patrols along the California-Mexico border (among California registered voters)

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Total statewide	41%	56	3
<u>Party</u>			
Democrat	31%	65	4
Republican	58%	39	3
Non-partisans/others	32%	65	3
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	37%	61	2
Other Southern California	47%	50	3
Central Valley*	46%	46	8
San Francisco Bay Area	34%	64	2
Other*	31%	64	5
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	46%	51	3
Latino*	11%	84	5
Black/Asian/Other*	43%	49	8
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 39	34%	64	2
40 – 49*	38%	60	2
50 – 64	43%	55	2
65 or older	51%	41	8

* Small sample base.

Voters divided on whether Schwarzenegger should declare a “border emergency”

Recently the Governors of Arizona and New Mexico declared “border emergencies” in their states after a series of violent incidents involving illegal immigrants along their borders with Mexico.

Some officials have urged Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to do the same thing in this state. The poll finds voters here about evenly split – 44% favoring such a move and 40% opposed – with 16% undecided.

Democrats and non-partisans are opposed, but Republicans are very much in favor of such a move. Los Angeles County residents are opposed, but voters living in other parts of Southern California are in favor. In other areas of the state opinions are divided.

Latino voters are very much opposed, while white non-Hispanics favor a “border emergency” being declared. Blacks, Asians and other racial/ethnic groups are evenly divided.

Table 4
Should Governor Schwarzenegger declare a “border emergency”
along the California-Mexico border
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Total statewide	44%	40	16
<u>Party</u>			
Democrat	35%	48	17
Republican	62%	23	15
Non-partisans/others	32%	51	17
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	38%	48	14
Other Southern California	51%	37	12
Central Valley*	43%	41	16
San Francisco Bay Area	40%	37	23
Other*	37%	32	31
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	49%	35	16
Latino*	20%	65	15
Black/Asian/Other*	41%	40	19
<u>Age</u>			
18–39	29%	57	14
40–49*	45%	38	17
50–64	52%	34	14
65 or older	58%	23	19

* Small sample base.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a survey of a random sample of 615 California adults contacted by telephone August 19-29, 2005 in English and Spanish, including 426 registered voters.

Households were sampled using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating telephone exchanges within all areas codes serving California households in proportion to population. Within each exchange, telephone numbers are created by adding random digits to the selected telephone exchange. This method permits access to all landline telephone numbers statewide, both listed and unlisted, and gives each residential phone listing an equal chance of being selected.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the registered voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.9 percentage points.

Questions Asked

How concerned are you about the issue of illegal immigration – extremely concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned or not at all concerned?

Do you think the number of illegal immigrants crossing the border from Mexico into California over the past several years has been increasing, decreasing or remaining about the same?

In July a group of private citizens staged a three-week patrol along the California-Mexico border to bring greater attention to illegal border crossings and try to reduce the number of people entering the country illegally. Generally speaking, do you favor or oppose private citizens forming patrols like these along the California-Mexico border?

The Governors of Arizona and New Mexico recently declared “border emergencies” in their states after a series of violent incidents involving illegal immigrants occurred along the U.S. – Mexican border. Some officials in California are urging Governor Schwarzenegger to do the same thing here in California. Do you think conditions along the California – Mexico border are such that Governor Schwarzenegger should declare a border emergency or not?