

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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DISAPPROVAL OF BUSH AND HIS HANDLING OF THE WAR IN IRAQ AT VERY HIGH LEVELS IN CALIFORNIA. MAJORITY WANTS TOTAL OR PARTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS FROM IRAQ. DIVIDED VIEWS ABOUT SETTING A SPECIFIC TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL.

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

There has been no let-up in the unhappiness that Californians have with George W. Bush's overall job performance as President, with 61% now disapproving and 32% approving. A main contributor to this very negative assessment is the President's handling of the war in Iraq. Approval of Bush's performance in handling of the Iraqi war has hit a new low in the current survey, with 67% disapproving and just 28% approving.

A majority of Californians (58%) want the U.S. to withdraw either all (29%) or some (29%) of its troops from Iraq. However, the public is evenly divided on whether a specific troop withdrawal timetable should be set.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* survey conducted among a statewide sample of 992 California voters.

Bush's overall approval rating remains low

Californians continue to be very negative in their appraisal of the job that Bush is doing as President. After steadily losing favor over the past two years, Bush saw his approval rating reach a new low of 28% in late May, down from 32% in April. The current survey shows that Bush's standing with voters has rebounded slightly since May and is similar to what was seen in April.

While a majority of Republicans (65%) approves of the President's performance, this contrasts markedly with the views of Democrats and non-partisans. Statewide, 84% of Democrats and 68% of non-partisans disapprove of the job Bush is doing overall, while just 10% of Democrats and 22% of non-partisans approve.

Table 1
Trend of overall job appraisals of George W. Bush as President
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
July 2006	61%	32	7
Late May 2006	65%	28	7
April 2006	62%	32	6
February 2006	56%	38	6
Late October 2005	60%	34	6
August 2005	55%	38	7
June 2005	56%	36	8
February 2005	56%	41	3
October 2004	54%	43	3
August 2004	55%	41	4
May 2004	52%	43	5
February 2004	51%	43	6
January 2004	42%	52	6
September 2003	48%	46	6
August 2003	45%	50	5
July 2003	43%	51	6
July 2002	28%	63	9
January 2002	21%	72	7
September 2001 (post-9/11 attack)	16%	74	10
September 2001 (pre-9/11 attack)	48%	41	11
May 2001	44%	42	14
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	84%	10	6
Republicans	27%	65	8
Non-partisans/others	68%	22	10

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Bush's rating are lower in California than they are nationally

The findings of recent print and TV media-sponsored national polls reveal that the overall American public also registers strong disapproval of the President's job performance – averaging 38% approval and 58% disapproval. Compared to these national findings, Californians remain somewhat more critical of the President.

Record low approval for Bush's handling of the war in Iraq

Approval of Bush's handling of the war in Iraq has hit a new low, with just 28% approving and 67% disapproving.

Immediately after the U.S. and its allies invaded Iraq in the spring of 2003, a large majority (60%) of California voters approved of Bush's handling of the war. However, one year later in the spring of 2004, those disapproving of Bush's performance became a majority. Over time this majority has increased to the 67% mark found in the current survey.

Nine out of ten Democrats (91%) and seven out of ten (70%) non-partisans disapprove of the President's handling of the Iraqi war. Six in ten Republicans (60%), by contrast, continue to back the President's performance in this area, although 34% disapprove.

Table 2
Trend of voter appraisals of the job President Bush is doing
in handling the war in Iraq
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
July 2006	67%	28	5
April 2006	65%	31	4
February 2006	61%	35	4
Late October 2005	64%	33	3
August 2005	60%	34	6
June 2005	60%	36	5
February 2005	58%	39	3
October 2004	60%	37	3
August 2004	61%	36	3
May 2004	60%	37	3
February 2004	52%	43	5
January 2004	45%	51	4
September 2003	52%	40	8
August 2003	44%	52	4
April 2003	37%	60	3
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	91%	6	3
Republicans	34%	60	6
Non-partisans/others	70%	19	11

Majority supports either a full or partial troop withdrawal

A 58% majority of Californians want either the U.S. to withdraw all of its troops (29%) or some of its troops (29%) from Iraq. About one in four (23%) support keeping the number of troops at current levels, while 10% favor sending in more troops.

These findings represent a slight increase in the majority favoring withdrawing some or all troops from Iraq, when compared to an August 2005 *Field Poll* survey.

More than three in four Democrats (77%) and 63% of non-partisans went either a total or partial withdrawal of troops from Iraq. Just one in three (31%) Republicans take this position.

A larger proportion of women than men advocate U.S. troop withdrawals (64% vs. 51%). A somewhat stronger desire for a troop withdrawal (68%) also exists among the voters in the 18 to 44 age group, while older voters are more divided.

Ethnic voters, which include Latinos, blacks and Asians, are much more supportive of a full or partial troop withdrawal (70%) than are white non-Hispanics (51%)

Table 3
What should the U.S. now do about the number of its troops in Iraq
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Withdraw all troops</u>	<u>Withdraw some troops</u>	<u>Keep at about current levels</u>	<u>Send more troops</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
July 2006	29%	29	23	10	9
August 2005	30%	22	25	11	12
<u>Party</u>					
Democrats	39%	38	12	3	8
Republicans	13%	18	41	19	9
Non-partisans/others*	34%	29	18	9	10
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	27%	24	27	13	9
Female	30%	34	19	7	10
<u>Age</u>					
18 – 44	30%	38	18	8	6
45 – 64	27%	22	31	10	10
65 or older	29%	23	21	14	13
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>					
White non-Hispanic	24%	27	27	11	11
Other	36%	34	16	8	6
<u>Region</u>					
Los Angeles County	30%	33	22	9	6
Other Southern California	26%	28	27	12	7
Central Valley*	25%	36	26	9	4
San Francisco Bay Area	35%	34	18	6	7

* Small sample size.

Californians sharply divided over whether to set a timetable for troop withdrawal

Californians are sharply divided on the question of whether the U.S. should set a specific timetable for withdrawing troops from Iraq. About one half (48%) favor a timetable and about the same proportion (47%) are opposed.

By an almost two to one ratio (62% to 32%) Democrats favor a specific timetable for withdrawal. A smaller majority of non-partisans (55% to 38%) also support a timetable, but GOPers are opposed (73% to 26%).

By a 57% to 40% margin, men think a timetable should not be set, while women take the opposite view (55% to 37%) supporting a troop withdrawal timetable.

Those in the 18 to 44 age group strongly favor a specific timetable 58% to 39%. There is a slight preference (50% to 43%) for not setting a timetable among those 45 to 64 years old. The strongest opposition to a timetable (61% to 33%) is found among those 65 and older.

A majority of ethnic voters (58%) support setting a timetable for troop withdrawal, compared to about four in ten white non-Hispanics (43%) favoring this idea.

Table 4
Should the U.S. set a specific timetable for when U.S.
troops should be withdrawn from Iraq?
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Should</u>	<u>Should not</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Total statewide	48%	47	5
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	62%	32	6
Republicans	26%	73	1
Non-partisans/others*	55%	37	8
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	40%	57	3
Female	55%	38	7
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 44	58%	39	3
45 – 64	43%	50	7
65 or older	33%	61	6
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	43%	52	5
Other	58%	40	2
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	52%	47	1
Other Southern California	43%	51	6
Central Valley	45%	49	6
San Francisco Bay Area	59%	37	4

* Small sample size.

Bush and the economy

More California voters disapprove (52%) than approve (38%) of the President’s handling of the economy. This division of sentiment represents a slight decline in the proportion of Californians disapproving of the President’s performance in this area from April.

There are almost mirror image contrasting views between how Democrats and Republicans view Bush’s handling of the economy. Democrats disapprove 75% to 14% while Republicans approve 73% to 21%. By a nearly two-to-one margin (57% to 30%) non partisans disapprove of the President’s performance in this area.

Table 5
Trend of voter appraisals of the job President Bush is doing
in handling the economy
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Approve</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
July 2006	52%	38	10
April 2006	57%	36	7
February 2006	53%	41	6
Late October 2005	60%	35	5
August 2005	54%	38	8
June 2005	57%	37	6
February 2005	56%	38	6
October 2004	55%	40	5
August 2004	54%	41	5
May 2004	53%	42	5
February 2004	53%	42	5
January 2004	46%	49	5
September 2003	55%	39	6
August 2003	50%	43	7
July 2003	53%	43	4
September 2002	44%	48	8
July 2002	41%	49	10
April 2002	38%	55	7
December 2001	35%	57	8
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	75%	14	11
Republicans	21%	73	6
Non-partisans/others	57%	30	13

Most still see U.S. heading in wrong direction

There has been a small improvement in the way California voters feel on the questions of whether the country is generally going in the right direction or is seriously off on the wrong track.

Last May 64% believed that the U.S. was on the wrong track and 28% thought it was going in the right direction. Now, the ratio of wrong track to right direction is 60% to 30%.

Large majorities of Democrats (75%) and non-partisans (67%) have a pessimistic view of where the country is headed. Republicans lean more to the optimistic side, with 53% believing the U.S. is on the right course, and just 38% thinking it is on the wrong track.

Table 6
Are things in the U.S. generally going in the right direction, or
do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Wrong track</u>	<u>Right direction</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
July 2006	60%	30	10
Late May 2006	64%	28	8
April 2006	64%	26	10
February 2006	55%	36	9
Late October 2005	60%	30	10
August 2005	60%	33	7
June 2005	58%	34	8
February 2005	57%	36	7
October 2004	58%	38	4
August 2004	56%	38	6
May 2004	54%	37	9
February 2004	52%	35	13
January 2004	44%	47	9
September 2003	49%	44	7
August 2003	50%	44	6
July 2003	50%	43	7
September 2002	41%	47	12
July 2002	44%	47	9
January 2002	26%	60	14
December 2001	27%	68	5
September 2001 (pre-9/11 attack)	49%	43	8
January 2001	34%	55	11
2000 (average)	25%	67	8
1999 (average)	37%	54	9
1998 (average)	32%	57	11
1997 (average)	45%	44	11
1996 (average)	49%	34	17
1995 (average)	54%	33	13
1994 (average)	50%	41	9
1993 (average)	50%	42	8
1992 (average)	82%	16	2
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	75%	15	10
Republicans	38%	53	9
Non-partisans/others	67%	21	12

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 992 Californians registered to vote. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period July 10-23, 2006. Sampling for this survey was divided into two approximately equal sized matching subsamples. About half of the interviews were conducted using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating landline telephone exchanges within all area codes serving California households in proportion to population. Within each exchange, random samples of telephone numbers were created by adding random digits to each selected telephone exchange, giving each phone listing an equal chance of being selected and permitting access to all landline telephone numbers both listed and unlisted.

The other half of the sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected randomly from a statewide list of all registered voters in California. In this sample every *n*th voter was selected from the list at random for inclusion into the sample and interviews were attempted only with the specific voter selected.

In an effort to include “hard to reach” voters into each sample, up to 8 attempts were made to reach a voter at each telephone number dialed in each sample. Results from both samples were combined and weighted to conform to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state’s registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the registered sample about the President’s overall job performance have a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points. Questions about Iraq, the economy and the overall direction of the U.S. were asked of random subsamples of either 494 or 498 registered voters each, and have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points. There are other possible sources of error in any survey other than sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sampling, the sequencing of questions or through undetected omissions or errors in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

Thinking about the country overall, do you think things in the U.S. are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as President?

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Bush is doing in handling the nation’s economy?

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Bush is doing in handling the war in Iraq?

Which of the following statements comes closest to your view of what the U.S. should now do about the number of troops in Iraq: “The U.S. should send more troops to Iraq,” “The U.S. should keep the number of its troops at about current levels,” “The U.S. should withdraw *some* of its troops in Iraq,” or “The U.S. should withdraw all of its troops from Iraq?”

Do you think the U.S. should or should not set a specific timetable for when the U.S. troops will be withdrawn from Iraq?