

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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**DROP IN SUPPORT FOR PROPOSITIONS
86 (TAX ON CIGARETTES) AND 87
(ALTERNATIVE ENERGY/OIL TAX).**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Over the past six weeks California voters have been on the receiving end of considerable pro and con TV advertising with regard to two very controversial November ballot propositions – Prop. 86, the cigarette tax initiative, and Prop. 87, the alternative energy, oil tax initiative.

The effects of the campaigning during the past two months appear to have weakened the strong initial desire of voters to approve each initiative.

In the case of Prop. 86, a previous two to one level of support found in July (63% to 32%) has narrowed to a five to four Yes side advantage (53% to 40%). Regarding Prop. 87, a former 52% to 31% lead has diminished to a very narrow 44% Yes and 41% No split.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted September 14-24.

Proposition 86 (Tax on Cigarettes)

In this survey voters were first asked whether they had seen or heard anything about Proposition 86, and 60% said they had, more than twice the proportion (26%) who reported this in July.

When all voters, regardless of any prior awareness, are read the initiative's official ballot title and summary that voters will see when they vote on Election Day, 53% say they are inclined to vote Yes, while 40% say they would vote No. This is down from a nearly two to one level of support (63% to 32%) found in July.

Prop. 86's decline in support has occurred across most of the state's major voting subgroups. The largest drops in preferences have occurred among women (20 points), voters in Northern California outside the Bay Area (20 points), conservatives (18 points), voters 65 and over (18 points) and non-smokers (15 points).

Similar to the July survey, most likely to be opposed to the initiative are current smokers, who remain nearly four to one opposed (21% Yes vs. 77% No). They are now joined in their opposition by pluralities of Republicans, conservatives, voters living in Northern California outside the Bay Area, and voters age 65 or older.

Prop. 86 continues to receive its strongest support from Democrats and non-partisans, voters living in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area, liberals, voters under age 40, Latinos and those who have never smoked, although in most cases their support has diminished some from July levels.

Voters in the current survey who had some prior awareness of the initiative are less supportive (49% to 43%) than those who have not heard of the initiative prior to being surveyed, who support it 59% to 37%.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences regarding Prop. 86,
the cigarette tax initiative
(among likely voters)

	<u>Late September 2006</u>			<u>July 2006</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total voters	53%	40	7	63%	32	5
<u>Region</u>						
Los Angeles County	61%	31	8	71%	23	6
Other Southern California	48%	45	7	56%	39	5
Central Valley	52%	44	4	61%	34	5
San Francisco Bay Area	56%	37	7	68%	28	4
Other Northern California*	39%	54	7	59%	30	11
<u>Party</u>						
Democrats	59%	33	8	73%	19	8
Republicans	42%	53	5	54%	42	4
Non-partisan/other*	60%	34	6	56%	40	4
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Conservative	38%	55	7	56%	40	4
Middle-of-the-road	56%	39	5	64%	29	7
Liberal	64%	28	8	70%	24	6
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	55%	42	3	54%	42	4
Female	51%	39	10	71%	22	7
<u>Age</u>						
18 – 39	66%	34	**	67%	30	3
40 – 64	53%	41	6	61%	32	7
65 or older	42%	45	13	60%	33	7
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White non-Hispanic	49%	44	7	58%	36	6
Latino*	70%	25	5	83%	14	3
Black/Asian/other*	57%	42	1	65%	31	4
<u>Smoking status</u>						
Current smoker*	21%	77	2	23%	72	5
Former smoker	50%	39	11	53%	39	8
Never smoked	61%	34	5	76%	19	5
<u>Prior awareness</u>						
Have heard	49%	43	8	56%	41	3
No prior awareness	59%	37	4	65%	28	7

* Small sample size.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Proposition 87 (Alternative Energy, Tax on Oil Producers)

In the current survey 72% of likely voters said they had seen or heard of Proposition 87, almost four times the proportion (19%) who reported some familiarity with the initiative in July.

After all voters were read Prop. 87's official ballot label, 44% said they were inclined to vote Yes and 41% were inclined to vote No. This is down from a 52% to 31% advantage in July.

Majorities of Democrats, non-partisans and liberals continue to support Prop. 87. However, Republicans and conservatives are now overwhelmingly opposed to the initiative.

More voters with some prior awareness of Prop. 87 are lining up on the No side (47%) than are currently supporting the initiative (41%).

Table 2
Trend of voter preferences regarding Prop. 87, the
alternative energy, tax on oil producers initiative
(among likely voters)

	<u>Late September 2006</u>			<u>July 2006</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total voters	44%	41	15	52%	31	17
<u>Party</u>						
Democrats	55%	25	20	66%	18	16
Republicans*	18%	73	9	34%	51	15
Non-partisan/other*	58%	28	14	58%	26	16
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Conservative*	19%	69	12	40%	47	13
Middle-of-the-road	46%	38	16	49%	33	18
Liberal*	67%	20	13	74%	9	17
<u>Household income</u>						
Less than \$80,000	42%	44	14	53%	32	15
\$80,000 or more*	49%	34	17	53%	35	12
<u>Prior awareness</u>						
Have heard	41%	47	12	53%	41	6
No prior awareness*	49%	28	23	52%	29	9

* Small sample size.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 739 California registered voters, of whom 557 can be considered likely voters in the November general election. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period September 14 – 24, 2006. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue, questions relating to Prop. 87 were administered to random subsample of 277 likely voters, while questions about Prop. 86 were administered to the overall sample of 557 likely voters.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected randomly from a statewide list of all registered voters in California. When drawing samples from registration-based lists, *The Field Poll* employs a systematic random selection procedure, giving all voters with phone numbers within each of seven regions of the state an equal chance of being selected. Once a voter's name and telephone number are selected, interviews are attempted only with the specific voter selected.

In an effort to include "hard to reach" voters" into the sample, up to 8 attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day. Results from the overall registered voter sample were weighted following the completion of interviewing 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 overall likely voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.3 percentage points, while results from the random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 6 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, the rigor with which sampling procedures were implemented, as well as through undetected errors or omissions in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 86, having to do with taxes on cigarettes, on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 86 is the "Tax on Cigarettes" initiative. It imposes an additional 2 dollars and 60 cents per pack excise tax on cigarettes and indirectly increases taxes on other tobacco products. It provides funding for various health programs, children's health coverage and tobacco-related programs. Fiscal impact: Increase in excise tax revenues of about 2.1 billion dollars annually. Other potentially significant costs and savings for state and local governments due to program changes. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 86?

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 87, having to do with alternative energy and a tax on California oil, on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 87 is the "Alternative Energy, Research, Production and Incentives; Tax on California Oil Producers" initiative. It establishes a 4 billion dollar program to reduce petroleum consumption through incentives for alternative energy, education and training that would be funded by tax on California oil producers. Fiscal Impact: State oil tax revenues of 225 million to 485 million dollars annually for alternative energy programs totaling 4 billion dollars. State and local revenue reductions up to the low tens of millions of dollars annually. If the election were being held today, would you vote Yes or No on Proposition 87?