

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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VIEWS OF CONGRESS BECOMING MORE POSITIVE. INCREASE IN ALREADY FAVORABLE IMPRESSIONS OF PELOSI, FEINSTEIN AND BOXER.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

By a 47% to 40% margin, California voters approve of the job that the Democrats are doing in Congress. However, by the very large margin, 70% to 19%, voters here disapprove of the performance of GOP lawmakers.

These mixed and conflicting partisan perceptions of Congress result in an overall unfavorable appraisal of the job Congress is doing overall, with 50% disapproving and 35% approving, although this is much less negative than what was found last May when 64% disapproved and just 23% approved.

Democrat Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, who became Speaker of the House in January, is viewed favorably by California voters. Currently, 48% approve of her performance, while 27% disapprove.

California's two Democratic Senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, continue to receive positive ratings by this state's voters. Feinstein's ratings of 61% favorable vs. 27% unfavorable are comparable to the highest ratings of her tenure. Boxer's approval rating (54%) is also the best she has obtained as U.S. Senator.

Views of Democrats in Congress

California voters hold a more positive (47%) than negative (40%) view of the performance of Democratic members of the Congress. This view represents a reversal of a highly negative appraisal given them in August 2004, the last time *The Field Poll* measured this.

Democratic voters are most approving (68%) of their Democratic Congressional representatives. However, Republican voters take an entirely different view, with 65% disapproving of the Democratic officeholders.

Table 1
Job performance of the Democrats in Congress
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	47%	40	13
August 2004	32%	50	18
April 2003	40%	46	14
April 2002	46%	39	15
May 2001	51%	37	12
January 2001	57%	31	12
June 2000	46%	39	15
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	68%	22	10
Republicans	23%	65	12
Others/non-partisans	43%	38	19

Views of Republicans in Congress

Republican members of Congress get a very poor rating from this state's voters, with 70% disapproving and just 19% approving. Not only do Democrats downrate the job the Congressional Republicans are doing, but a majority of rank-and-file GOP voters (56%) also disapprove.

Table 2
Job performance of the Republicans in Congress
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	19%	70	11
August 2004	32%	52	16
April 2003	46%	42	12
April 2002	42%	45	13
May 2001	42%	47	11
January 2001	49%	39	12
June 2000	32%	55	13
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	11%	78	11
Republicans	33%	56	11
Others/non-partisans	14%	75	11

Views of the Congress overall

In multiple measures over the past year, large majorities of California voters have held very negative views of the performance of Congress overall. Last May, for example, two in three (64%) disapproved of the job that Congress is doing and just 23% approved.

Now, that negative outlook has subsided somewhat, with disapproval declining to 50% and approval rising to 35%. Democrats are about evenly divided when viewing Congress as a whole (41% approving and 40% disapproving). On the other hand, Republicans continue to take a very harsh view – 62% disapproving and 26% approving.

Table 3
Overall job performance of the U.S. Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	35%	50	15
May 2006	23%	64	13
April 2006	24%	66	10
August 2004	33%	52	15
April 2003	50%	39	11
April 2002	48%	39	13
January 2002	54%	33	13
December 2001	57%	32	11
May 2001	51%	38	11
January 2001	53%	35	12
2000 (Average)	45%	41	14
1999 (Average)	34%	57	9
1998 (Average)	44%	40	16
1997 (Average)	34%	54	12
1996 (Average)	25%	68	7
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	41%	40	19
Republicans	26%	62	12
Non-partisans/others	34%	50	16

Ratings of House Speaker Pelosi

San Francisco Democrat Nancy Pelosi was first elected to Congress in 1987 and has won successive terms since then. In 2003 she became the House Minority Leader. At that time *The Field Poll* found that pluralities of this state’s voters approved of the job that she was doing. Now, since her elevation to Speaker of the House last January, her job ratings have improved. Currently, about half (48%) of voters have a positive view of her performance, while 27% rate her negatively.

Views of Pelosi are highly partisan, with 64% of Democrats holding a favorable view, while Republicans view her negatively by greater than two to one (53% to 24%) margin. Voters in the San Francisco Bay region are particularly impressed with Pelosi’s performance as House Speaker and rate her favorably, 61% to 18%.

Table 4
Job performance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	48%	27	25
August 2004*	37%	29	34
April 2003*	34%	25	41
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	64%	12	14
Republicans	24%	53	23
Non-partisans/others	55%	17	29
<u>Region (March 2007)</u>			
Los Angeles County	50%	21	28
Other Southern California	38%	33	29
San Francisco Bay Area	61%	18	21
Other Northern California	47%	30	23

* Previous measures were asked with regard to Pelosi's role as House Minority Leader.

Views of Feinstein and Boxer

Since they were both elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992, both Feinstein and Boxer have consistently received positive job marks from California voters. Now, the ratings each is getting are at record highs, with 61% approving of Feinstein and 54% rating Boxer positively. Democrats are particularly positive in their ratings of each Senator.

Table 5
Trend of Dianne Feinstein's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	61%	27	12
July 2006	51%	32	17
February 2005	51%	29	20
June 2005	54%	26	20
February 2005	50%	29	21
August 2004	55%	29	16
May 2004	53%	23	24
July 2003	55%	31	14
April 2003	49%	34	17
2002 (Average)	49%	26	25
2001 (Average)	57%	27	16
2000 (Average)	57%	27	16
1999 (Average)	51%	28	21
1998 (Average)	56%	27	17
1997 (Average)	47%	35	18
1996 (Average)	46%	36	18
1995 (Average)	50%	40	10
1994 (Average)	47%	39	14
1993 (Average)	47%	32	21
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	78%	14	8
Republicans	40%	46	14
Non-partisans/others	62%	22	16

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. Surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Table 6
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	54%	31	15
July 2006	45%	34	21
February 2005	41%	34	25
June 2005	47%	30	23
February 2005	49%	36	15
August 2004	49%	36	15
May 2004	44%	33	23
July 2003	49%	35	16
April 2003	43%	35	22
2002 (Average)	45%	29	26
2001 (Average)	49%	31	20
2000 (Average)	50%	30	20
1999 (Average)	45%	35	20
1998 (Average)	45%	29	26
1997 (Average)	41%	35	24
1996 (Average)	42%	36	22
1995 (Average)	45%	39	16
1994 (Average)	43%	37	20
1993 (Average)	41%	35	24
<u>Party (March 2007)</u>			
Democrats	74%	16	10
Republicans	28%	57	15
Non-partisans/others	57%	21	22

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. Surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,093 registered voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish March 20-31, 2007. Up to eight attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, The overall sample was divided into two random subsamples of 523 and 570 registered voters each for many of the questions posed in this report.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. When drawing samples from registration-based lists, *The Field Poll* stratifies the sample by region and age to insure that the poll includes adequate representations of voters across each major region of the state and across different age categories. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the results are weighted slightly to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on sample size. According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 3.1 percentage points, while findings from each of the random subsamples 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, the sequencing of questions, the rigor with which sampling procedures are implemented, as well as other factors.

Questions Asked

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is doing its job?

(ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLES)

What about the Democrats in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Democrats are doing their job?

What about the Republicans in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Republicans are doing their job?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?