

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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BUSH'S JOB APPROVAL RATING IN CALIFORNIA AT 27%. MAJORITIES GIVE HIM POOR MARKS ON IRAQ AND THE ECONOMY. NEARLY TWO IN THREE THINK THE COUNTRY IS HEADED IN THE WRONG DIRECTION.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

President George W. Bush's job approval rating continues to stay at a very low level in California. Just 27% approve and 63% disapprove of his performance in office. With only small variations, this dismal appraisal of Bush exists across all regions and most of the state's major demographic subgroups.

On both the President's handling of the war in Iraq and the national economy, large majorities – 69% on the former and 58% on the latter – disapprove of the job that Bush is doing.

The mood of voters in respect to whether the country is on the wrong track parallels their appraisal of Bush – just 24% think the country is going in the right direction, while 63% say the country is seriously off on the wrong track.

Bush's approval trend

Bush's job approval rating soared from 42%, just prior to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001 to 74% immediately following. However, the favorable view that voters had of Bush began a steady decline beginning in 2003. His approval now stands at 27%, very similar to where it has been for the last six months.

Table 1
Trend of overall approval of the job Bush is doing as President
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	27%	64	9
August 2007	26%	65	9
March 2007	26%	67	7
2006 (average)	32%	61	7
2005 (average)	37%	57	6
2004 (average)	44%	51	5
2003 (average)	49%	45	6
2002 (average)	68%	25	7
September 2001 (post-9/11 attack)	74%	16	10
2001 (pre-9/11 attack average)	42%	46	12

Sub-group differences

Disapproval of Bush's job performance runs high in all regions of California. The best approval marks given to the President is 33% in San Diego and Orange Counties, and 34% in the Central Valley.

Large majorities of both male and female voters and voters within each of the state's major racial/ethnic and education subgroups disapproves of the job the President is doing.

There are some pronounced differences in Bush's approval ratings by party and political ideologies. More than four out of five Democrats (85%) and three out of four non-partisans (72%) disapprove of Bush. A small majority (53%) of Republicans have a positive view of the President.

Almost six in ten (57%) of strong conservatives, who represent 19% of the voters in this state, approve of him. Among moderately conservative voters (comprising 11%), approval drops to 40%. Among middle-of-the-road voters, who represent almost one-half of the electorate, just 21% think Bush is doing a good job. Among moderate and strong liberals, who account for 25% of all voters, approval of Bush stands at just 6%.

Table 2
Current approval ratings of President Bush – by subgroup
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	27%	64	9
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.42) Democrats	9%	85	6
(.34) Republicans	53%	33	14
(.24) Non-partisans/others	19%	72	9
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.19) Strongly conservative	57%	31	12
(.11) Moderately conservative	40%	48	12
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	21%	68	11
(.11) Moderately liberal	6%	87	7
(.14) Strongly liberal	6%	93	1
<u>Region</u>			
(.25) Los Angeles County	20%	72	8
(.18) San Diego/Orange	33%	58	9
(.15) Other Southern California	29%	59	12
(.17) Central Valley	34%	55	11
(.20) San Francisco Bay Area	21%	70	9
(.05) Other Northern California*	27%	63	10
<u>Gender</u>			
(.47) Male	28%	62	10
(.53) Female	25%	66	9
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.63) White non-Hispanic	30%	61	9
(.25) Latino	21%	70	9
(.05) Black*	13%	84	3
(.07) Asian*	34%	56	10
<u>Education</u>			
(.26) High school graduate or less	30%	59	11
(.32) Some college/trade school	26%	64	10
(.25) College graduate	27%	66	7
(.17) Post graduate work	22%	71	7

* Small sample base.

Iraq war handling

The issue that continues to be dragging down the President's overall job performance rating the most is his handling of the situation in Iraq. Statewide, just 24% approve, while 70% disapprove of Bush in this area. There has been a steady decline in Bush's rating of the Iraq situation since the beginning of the war in April 2003, when 60% approved of his actions.

Nine out of ten Democrats (90%) and 74% of non-partisans disapprove of Bush's handling of the Iraq war. Only a small margin of Republicans (51% to 44%) divide in favor of the President in this regard.

Table 3
Voter appraisal of the job Bush is doing
in handling the situation in Iraq
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	24%	70	6
August 2007	24%	72	4
March 2007	24%	72	4
2006 (average)	30%	66	4
2005 (average)	36%	61	3
2004 (average)	41%	56	3
September 2003	40%	52	8
August 2003	52%	44	4
April 2003	60%	37	3
<u>Party registration (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	8%	90	3
Republicans	51%	44	5
Non-partisans/others	16%	74	10

Handling the economy

Just one in three (34%) approve of the job that Bush is doing in handling the economy. The President's approval ratings on the economy have not changed much during the past two years.

Among partisan groups there are wide differences in appraisal of Bush's handling of the economy. Eight in ten (80%) of Democrats and six in ten non-partisans (61%) give Bush a poor rating on the economy. However, by a two to one majority (62% to 30%), Republicans approve of Bush's handling of the nation's economy.

Table 4
Voter appraisal of the job Bush is doing
in handling the nation's economy
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	34%	58	8
August 2007	34%	58	8
March 2007	33%	61	6
2006 (average)	38%	55	7
2005 (average)	37%	57	6
2004 (average)	43%	52	5
2003 (average)	42%	53	5
2002 (average)	51%	41	8
2001 (average)	57%	35	8
<u>Party registration</u> (October 2007)			
Democrats	13%	80	7
Republicans	62%	30	8
Non-partisans/others	29%	61	10

U.S. direction

Six years ago in December 2001, two-thirds (68%) of California's voters believed that things in the U.S. were generally going in the right direction. Since then voter sentiment on this question has become progressively more pessimistic. As of today, just 24% believe the country is going in the right direction and 63% are fearful that it is on the wrong track.

Democrats and non-partisans overwhelmingly subscribe to the view that the country is on the wrong track – 80% and 63% respectively. Republicans are evenly divided on the issue – 42% right direction and 42% wrong track.

Table 5
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>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	24%	63	13
August 2007	26%	64	10
March 2007	26%	64	10
September 2006	30%	57	13
July 2006	30%	60	10
Late May 2006	28%	64	8
April 2006	26%	64	10
February 2006	36%	55	9
Late October 2005	30%	60	10
August 2005	33%	60	7
June 2005	34%	58	8
February 2005	36%	57	7
October 2004	38%	58	4
August 2004	38%	56	6
May 2004	37%	54	9
February 2004	35%	52	13
January 2004	47%	44	9
September 2003	44%	49	7
August 2003	44%	50	6
July 2003	43%	50	7
September 2002	47%	41	12
July 2002	47%	44	9
January 2002	60%	26	14
December 2001	68%	27	5
September 2001 (pre-9/11 attack)	43%	49	8
January 2001	55%	34	11
August 2000	67%	25	8
February 2000	58%	30	12
August 1999	54%	37	9
April 1998	57%	32	11
February 1997	44%	45	11
February 1996	34%	49	17
March 1995*	33%	54	13
January 1994*	41%	50	9
May 1993*	27%	64	9
July 1992*	14%	81	5
November 1991*	14%	78	7
August 1990*	30%	63	7
January 1989*	49%	43	8
July 1988*	42%	53	5
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	13%	80	7
Republicans	42%	42	16
Non-partisans/others	20%	63	17

* Surveys conducted among all California adults

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,201 registered voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish October 11-21, 2007. Up to six 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 voters sample was divided into two random subsamples on some of the questions. Because of this, some of the questions in this report are based on a random subsample of 622 voters statewide.

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 1,201 registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 2.9 percentage points, while findings from the random subsample 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

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

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

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF VOTERS)

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 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 situation in Iraq?