

# 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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**SCHWARZENEGGER JOB APPROVAL  
AND IMAGE RATINGS REMAIN HIGH.  
VIEWS OF THE LEGISLATURE ARE  
DIVIDED. GOVERNOR A FORMIDABLE  
U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE IN 2010 IF HE  
WERE TO OPPOSE BOXER.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

As he approaches his fourth anniversary in office, Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger continues to receive high job approval and image ratings, not only from rank-and-file members of his own party, but from majorities of Democrats and non-partisans as well. By contrast, voters divide along party lines in their appraisal of the job the state legislature is doing.

In addition, voters give the Governor the edge over legislative leaders when asked who'd they be more inclined to support if the two sides disagreed on an important policy issue. Voters also give Schwarzenegger credit in his negotiating posture with the state legislature, with most saying he neither compromises too much nor too little when dealing with that body.

When the Governor is paired against incumbent U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer in a hypothetical match-up for the 2010 U.S. Senate race, Schwarzenegger holds a narrow one-percentage point advantage. However, relatively few voters say they'd be inclined to support Schwarzenegger as a presidential candidate if he were allowed to run for that office.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* survey completed earlier this month, updating voter opinions of the Governor.

### **Governor's job performance ratings – up, down, and up again**

Schwarzenegger was first elected Governor in October 2003 when Democrat Gray Davis was removed from office in an historic recall election. During his first year in office, Schwarzenegger's job approval ratings soared to very high levels, reaching 65% approval in three consecutive *Field Poll* surveys in 2004.

However, during 2005 Schwarzenegger's ratings plummeted due in large part to the Governor's decision to call a special election, in which voters ultimately rejected the initiatives he was advocating. Yet, during his 2006 re-election year, Schwarzenegger regained much of his original popularity, and was re-elected by a comfortable 17-point margin.

Voters' positive assessment of the Governor have continued throughout 2007. At present, 56% of voters approve of Schwarzenegger's job performance, while just one in three (32% disapprove), similar to the ratings he has received earlier this year.

The Governor's high approval ratings cut across party lines. Not only do majorities of Republicans approve of Schwarzenegger's performance, but they are joined by majorities of Democrats and non-partisans as well.

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**Table 1**  
**Trend of Arnold Schwarzenegger's job performance as Governor overall**  
**(among registered voters)**

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	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>12</b>
August 2007	57%	31	12
March 2007	60%	29	11
September 2006	48%	37	15
July 2006	49%	40	11
May 2006	41%	46	13
April 2006	39%	47	14
February 2006	40%	49	11
October 2005	37%	56	7
August 2005	36%	52	12
June 2005	37%	53	10
February 2005	55%	35	10
September 2004	65%	22	13
August 2004	65%	22	13
May 2004	65%	23	12
February 2004	56%	26	18
January 2004	52%	27	21
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	51%	37	12
Republicans	63%	27	10
Non-partisans/others	56%	30	14

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**Schwarzenegger's image ratings similar to his job ratings**

The Governor's own personal image ratings have largely followed the trajectory of his job approval ratings, reaching a high of 64% favorable in 2004 during his first year in office, falling to 38% favorable shortly before the ill-fated 2005 special election, but rebounding this year, with 59% holding a favorable opinion of him in the current survey.

And, like voter appraisals of the Governor's job performance, his favorable image ratings cut across party lines.

**Table 2**  
**Trend of voter image ratings of Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>9</b>
September 2006*	49%	41	10
July 2006	51%	44	5
May 2006	46%	46	8
February 2006	44%	49	7
October 2005	38%	54	8
February 2005	62%	33	5
May 2004	64%	25	11
October 2003	48%	41	11
Late September 2003	46%	48	6
Early September 2003	42%	41	17
August 2003	44%	37	19
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	51%	39	10
Republicans	70%	24	6
Non-partisans/others	59%	30	11

\* Among likely voters in the November general election.

**Schwarzenegger more a moderate than a conservative**

Immediately prior to Schwarzenegger's election as governor in October 2003, more voters in this state described him as a conservative in politics (42%) than as a moderate (29%) or liberal (13%). However, now voters hold a somewhat different view, with more seeing him as a political moderate (41%) than either a conservative (34%) or liberal (15%).

**Table 3**  
**In politics, do you think of Governor Schwarzenegger as conservative, moderate or liberal?**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Moderate</u>	<u>Liberal</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>
September 2003	42%	29	13	16
<u>Democrats</u>				
October 2007	38%	40	10	12
September 2003	31%	22	14	17
<u>Republicans</u>				
October 2007	28%	42	21	9
September 2003	32%	37	13	17
<u>Non-partisans/others</u>				
October 2007	38%	40	14	8
September 2003	51%	27	7	13

**Voters divided in their views of the state legislature**

In recent years voters have held a largely negative view of the job performance of the state legislature. In every *Field Poll* taken between 2003 and 2006, more voters disapproved than approved of its performance, and in some cases by a considerable margin.

Voter assessments of the legislature rebounded somewhat at the beginning of this year, becoming slightly more positive than negative in March. However, in August, in the midst of an extended budget deadlock, voters again down-rated the legislature's performance, with 51% disapproving and just 33% approving.

The current survey finds that voters are about evenly split in their assessment of the legislature, with slightly more disapproving (40%) than approving (38%).

Republicans are the most critical, disapproving by a 50% to 33% margin. Democrats and non-partisans hold a more positive than negative assessment, but by somewhat narrow margins.

**Table 4**  
**Trend of voter appraisals of the job the state legislature is doing overall**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>22</b>
August 2007	33%	51	16
March 2007	42%	40	18
September 2006	34%	46	20
May 2006	26%	51	23
April 2006	28%	56	16
February 2006	31%	48	21
October 2005	26%	58	16
August 2005	27%	54	19
June 2005	24%	57	19
February 2005	34%	52	14
September 2004	33%	46	21
August 2004	33%	49	18
May 2004	27%	52	21
February 2004	26%	58	16
January 2004	23%	62	15
July 2003	19%	67	14
April 2003	31%	51	18
2002 (average)	40%	40	20
2001 (average)	43%	37	20
2000 (average)	48%	25	27
1999 (average)	45%	28	27
1998 (average)	45%	33	22
1997 (average)	38%	40	22
1996 (average)	41%	49	10
1995 (average)	34%	59	7
1993 (average)	28%	64	8
1992 (average)	32%	64	4
1990 (average)	45%	48	7
1988 (average)	57%	36	7
1983 (average)	43%	49	8
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	39%	35	26
Republicans	33%	50	17
Non-partisan/other	43%	34	23

*Note: Measures prior to 1996 conducted among all adults using a three- or five-point response scale, which was converted to the current two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes.*

### **Inclination to support the Governor over legislative leaders in policy disputes**

The Governor currently holds an edge over leaders in the state legislature when voters are asked who they'd be more inclined to support if the two sides disagreed on an important policy issue. At present, 38% of voters say they would side with the Governor, while 32% would align themselves with legislative leaders. The remaining 30% say neither or have no opinion.

This represents a reversal in voter opinions from June 2005, when more voters said they'd be more inclined to side with legislative leaders over the Governor by a 44% to 33% margin.

Opinions are highly partisan on this issue, with Republicans more inclined to side with the governor by a three to one margin (57% to 16%), while Democrats and non-partisans are more inclined to favor legislative leaders.

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**Table 5**  
**If the Governor and leaders in the state legislature disagreed on an important policy issue, whose position would you be more inclined to support?**  
**(among registered voters)**

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	<b><u>The Governor</u></b>	<b><u>Leaders in the state legislature</u></b>	<b><u>Neither/ No opinion</u></b>
<b>October 2007</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>30</b>
September 2006	39%	40	21
June 2005	33%	44	23
February 2005	37%	40	23
May 2004	47%	29	24
February 2004	43%	32	25
January 2004	48%	30	22
<b><u>Party (October 2007)</u></b>			
Democrats	27%	41	32
Republicans	57%	16	27
Non-partisans/others*	29%	39	32

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\* Small sample size.

### **Voters credit Schwarzenegger in his negotiations with the legislature**

Voters generally give Schwarzenegger credit for his negotiating posture when dealing with the legislature. Most (44%) think he compromises about the right amount with the Democratic-controlled legislature. About one in five (22%) think the Governor does not compromise enough, and 19% think he compromises too much.

This view extends across party lines, with pluralities of Democrats, Republicans and non-partisans all saying that Schwarzenegger compromises about the right amount.

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**Table 6**  
**In his dealings with the legislature, does Governor Schwarzenegger  
compromise too much, not enough or about the right amount?**  
**(among registered voters)**

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	<b><u>Not enough</u></b>	<b><u>About right</u></b>	<b><u>Too much</u></b>	<b><u>No opinion</u></b>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>Party</u></b>				
Democrats	33%	42	12	13
Republicans	5%	50	29	16
Non-partisans/others	27%	39	16	18

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### **Schwarzenegger a formidable challenger to Boxer in 2010**

In the current survey, registered voters were asked who they'd be more inclined to support in a 2010 U.S. Senate contest if their choices were incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer and Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The results show voters almost evenly divided, with Schwarzenegger favored by 44% and Boxer preferred by 43%.

A contest like this would divide voters along many regional, partisan and demographic lines. For example, Boxer would hold an edge over Schwarzenegger in Los Angeles County and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, among Democrats, non-partisans, liberals, women, younger voters, Latinos and blacks. On the other hand, the Governor is preferred over Boxer by more voters in San Diego, Orange, and other Southern California counties outside of Los Angeles, the Central Valley and areas of other Northern California other than the Bay Area. In addition, he would lead among Republicans, conservatives, middle age and older voters, white non-Hispanics and men.

**Table 7**  
**Voter preferences if Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger were to oppose**  
**Democrat Barbara Boxer in the 2010 U.S. Senate race**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Schwarzenegger</u>	<u>Boxer</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<b>Statewide</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	28%	58	14
San Diego/Orange	54%	37	9
Other Southern California*	45%	40	15
Central Valley	59%	26	15
San Francisco Bay Area	41%	50	9
Other Northern California*	60%	30	10
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	22%	62	16
Republicans	75%	14	11
Non-partisans/others	39%	52	9
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	49%	38	13
Female	40%	48	12
<u>Age</u>			
18-39	37%	52	11
40-64	47%	40	13
65 or older	50%	35	15
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	55%	34	11
Latino	20%	64	16
Black*	31%	60	9
Asian*	35%	40	25
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	73%	18	9
Middle-of-the-road	42%	42	16
Liberal	17%	72	11

\* Small sample base.

**Few would back Schwarzenegger for president if he were able to run**

The U.S. Constitution does not permit a foreign-born person (Schwarzenegger is Austrian-born) to serve as president. However, even if Schwarzenegger were allowed to run for president, voters in this state are not inclined to support him.

Statewide, 63% say they would not be inclined to vote for Schwarzenegger if he were able to run for president, while just 18% say they would be supportive.

When this question was last posed in October 2004, 50% of Californians said they would not be inclined to vote for Schwarzenegger for president, while 26% said they would be.

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**Table 8**  
**Voter inclination to vote for Arnold Schwarzenegger  
for President if he were allowed to run  
(among registered voters)**

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	<u>October 2007</u>	<u>October 2004</u>
Not inclined	63%	50%
Inclined	18	26
Depends/no opinion	19	24

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## **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 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 respondent fatigue, the overall sample was divided into two random subsamples of 622 and 579 voters each on some questions.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. 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 subsamples have a sampling error of +/- 4.1 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 Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as Governor of California?

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way the California state legislature is doing its job?

(ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLES OF ALL VOTERS)

There will be an election for U.S. Senate in California in 2010, and incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer has already announced her intention to seek re-election. Because of term limits, Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger can not seek re-election for Governor. Suppose, when his term expires in 2010, Schwarzenegger decided to run for the U.S. Senate against Boxer. If the 2010 election for U.S. Senate were being held today and the candidates were Barbara Boxer, Democrat and Arnold Schwarzenegger, Republican, for whom would you vote – Boxer or Schwarzenegger?

As you know, because Governor Schwarzenegger was not born in the U.S., he is prevented by law from running for President. If Schwarzenegger were able to run for President, would you be inclined to vote for him or not?

Is your overall opinion of Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger favorable or unfavorable?

Generally speaking in politics, do you think Arnold Schwarzenegger is strongly conservative, somewhat conservative, moderate, somewhat liberal or strongly liberal?

If Governor Schwarzenegger's position on an important state issue differed from that of leaders in the state legislature, whose position would you more inclined to support – Governor Schwarzenegger's or the leaders in the state legislature?

In his dealings with Democratic leaders in the state legislature, do you think Governor Schwarzenegger does not compromise enough, compromises too much, or compromises about the right amount?