

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 AND THE STATE
LEGISLATURE BOTH GET VERY POOR JOB
RATINGS. FOUR OUT OF FIVE VOTERS SAY
STATE IS ON THE WRONG TRACK.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

California voters continue to give very poor marks to the job that both Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and the state legislature are doing. Just 22% of voters now approve of the Governor's performance and 16% approve of the way the legislature is doing its job. Schwarzenegger's current approval ratings equal the lowest ever given a sitting California governor in the more than fifty years the *Field Poll* has been conducting these job assessments.

The poll also finds that an overwhelming majority of voters (79%) believe that the state is seriously off on the wrong track. Just 13% think the state is moving in the right direction.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* of California registered voters completed earlier this month among 1,390 registered voters statewide.

Schwarzenegger's job rating

Just about one in five voters (22%) currently approves of Schwarzenegger's performance as Governor, while 70% disapprove. These negative numbers are similar to those found by *The Field Poll* in a survey taken in March of this year and represent the lowest appraisal of the Governor since he was first elected in a 2003 special election.

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

| | Approve | Disapprove | No opinion |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| July 2010 | 22% | 70 | 8 |
| March 2010 | 23% | 71 | 6 |
| January 2010 | 27% | 64 | 9 |
| October 2009 | 27% | 65 | 8 |
| Late-April 2009 | 33% | 55 | 12 |
| March 2009 | 38% | 54 | 8 |
| September 2008 | 38% | 52 | 10 |
| July 2008 | 40% | 46 | 14 |
| May 2008 | 41% | 48 | 11 |
| December 2007 | 60% | 31 | 9 |
| October 2007 | 56% | 32 | 12 |
| 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 |

Schwarzenegger’s job ratings now equal the lowest ever given a sitting Governor

Schwarzenegger’s current 22% approve and 70% disapprove job performance ratings are equivalent to those given former Governor Gray Davis shortly before he was recalled from office in 2003 and are the lowest job ratings ever given a sitting California Governor in the more than fifty years that *The Field Poll* has been conducting its job assessment measures.

| Table 2 | | | |
|--|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Comparing Governor Schwarzenegger’s lowest and highest approval ratings with his six immediate predecessors | | | |
| | Approve | Disapprove | No opinion |
| <u>Schwarzenegger (R)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – July 2010 | 22% | 70 | 8 |
| Highest – September and August 2004 | 65% | 22 | 13 |
| <u>Davis (D)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – August 2003 | 22% | 70 | 8 |
| Highest – February 2000 | 62% | 20 | 18 |
| <u>Wilson (R)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – September 1992 | 33% | 63 | 4 |
| Highest – February 1991 | 52% | 27 | 21 |
| <u>Deukmejian (R)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – August 1990 | 53% | 45 | 2 |
| Highest – August 1985 | 73% | 24 | 3 |
| <u>J. Brown (D)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – April 1980 | 38% | 61 | 1 |
| Highest – March 1976 | 69% | 25 | 6 |
| <u>Reagan (R)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – August 1971 | 46% | 52 | 2 |
| Highest – February 1969 | 60% | 33 | 7 |
| <u>P. Brown (D)</u> | | | |
| Lowest – October 1961 | 35% | 50 | 15 |
| Highest – June 1959 | 51% | 22 | 27 |

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1994, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which was converted to the current two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes.

(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican

Sub-group appraisals

No matter how you divide California voters, whether by party, ideology, region, gender, age or race/ ethnicity, very large majorities of each group disapprove of Schwarzenegger’s job performance.

Table 3
Voter appraisal of the job performance of Arnold Schwarzenegger as governor across subgroups of the registered voter population

| | Approve | Disapprove | No opinion |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Total | 22% | 70 | 8 |
| <u>Party registration</u> | | | |
| Democrats | 22% | 72 | 6 |
| Republicans | 21% | 69 | 10 |
| Non-partisans/others | 24% | 68 | 8 |
| <u>Political ideology</u> | | | |
| Strongly conservative | 21% | 70 | 9 |
| Moderately conservative | 19% | 68 | 13 |
| Middle-of-the-road | 26% | 66 | 8 |
| Moderately liberal | 17% | 77 | 6 |
| Strongly liberal | 19% | 78 | 3 |
| <u>Region</u> | | | |
| Los Angeles County | 19% | 75 | 6 |
| San Diego/Orange | 21% | 69 | 10 |
| Other Southern California | 20% | 74 | 6 |
| Central Valley | 22% | 65 | 13 |
| San Francisco Bay Area | 27% | 67 | 6 |
| Other Northern California* | 25% | 65 | 10 |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | |
| Male | 23% | 69 | 8 |
| Female | 21% | 71 | 8 |
| <u>Age</u> | | | |
| 18 – 39 | 24% | 69 | 7 |
| 40 – 49 | 23% | 73 | 4 |
| 50 – 64 | 19% | 73 | 8 |
| 65 or older | 23% | 65 | 12 |
| <u>Race/ethnicity</u> | | | |
| White non-Hispanic | 24% | 67 | 9 |
| Latino | 19% | 77 | 4 |
| African-American | 14% | 80 | 6 |
| Asian/other | 24% | 67 | 9 |
| Chinese-American | 30% | 57 | 13 |
| Korean-American | 21% | 68 | 11 |
| Vietnamese-American | 28% | 64 | 8 |

* Small sample base.

** Less than ½ of 1%.

View of the state legislature

The very negative marks that voters give the Governor are matched by voters' appraisal of the job that the state legislature is doing. Seventy-four percent currently disapprove of the state legislature's performance, while just 16% approve. Greater than seven in ten voters have given the legislature negative ratings in each of the six previous *Field Poll* surveys dating back to September 2008.

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

| | Approve | Disapprove | No opinion |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| July 2010 | 16% | 74 | 10 |
| March 2010 | 13% | 78 | 9 |
| January 2010 | 16% | 72 | 12 |
| October 2009 | 13% | 78 | 9 |
| April 2009 | 14% | 74 | 12 |
| March 2009 | 18% | 72 | 10 |
| September 2008 | 15% | 73 | 12 |
| July 2008 | 27% | 57 | 16 |
| May 2008 | 30% | 57 | 13 |
| December 2007 | 39% | 42 | 19 |
| October 2007 | 38% | 40 | 22 |
| August 2007 | 33% | 51 | 16 |
| March 2007 | 42% | 40 | 18 |
| 2006 (average) | 30% | 50 | 20 |
| 2005 (average) | 28% | 55 | 17 |
| 2004 (average) | 28% | 53 | 19 |
| 2003 (average) | 25% | 59 | 16 |
| 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 registration</u> | | | |
| Democrats | 20% | 68 | 12 |
| Republicans | 9% | 85 | 6 |
| Non-partisans/others | 15% | 72 | 13 |

Note: Surveys prior to 1996 were conducted among all adults. In addition, response scales from these surveys were converted from their original five-point scale to the current two-point approve/disapprove scales for comparative purposes.

Nearly eight in ten believe California is seriously off on the wrong track

Nearly eight in ten voters (79%) also maintain that the state is seriously off on the wrong track, while just 13% see California moving in the right direction. This is the gloomiest assessment given by voters in this state since the early 1990's.

Table 5
Are things in California generally going in the right direction or
do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?
(among registered voters)

| | Right direction | Wrong track | No opinion |
|------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| July 2010 | 13% | 79 | 8 |
| January 2010 | 14% | 79 | 7 |
| October 2009 | 15% | 78 | 7 |
| March 2009 | 18% | 73 | 9 |
| September 2008 | 22% | 70 | 8 |
| July 2008 | 21% | 68 | 11 |
| May 2008 | 23% | 68 | 9 |
| December 2007 | 43% | 47 | 10 |
| October 2007 | 42% | 42 | 16 |
| August 2007 | 42% | 45 | 13 |
| March 2007 | 52% | 38 | 10 |
| September 2006 | 49% | 36 | 15 |
| July 2006 | 47% | 41 | 12 |
| May 2006 | 32% | 57 | 11 |
| April 2006 | 28% | 56 | 16 |
| February 2006 | 31% | 55 | 14 |
| October 2005 | 30% | 63 | 7 |
| August 2005 | 30% | 57 | 13 |
| June 2005 | 28% | 60 | 12 |
| February 2005 | 35% | 53 | 12 |
| September 2004 | 46% | 38 | 16 |
| May 2004 | 37% | 51 | 12 |
| February 2004 | 35% | 54 | 11 |
| August 2003 | 16% | 76 | 8 |
| July 2003 | 18% | 75 | 7 |
| April 2003 | 26% | 65 | 9 |
| 2002 (average) | 37% | 52 | 11 |
| 2001 (average) | 43% | 50 | 7 |
| 2000 (average) | 58% | 35 | 7 |
| 1999 (average) | 52% | 34 | 14 |
| 1998 (average) | 48% | 42 | 10 |
| 1997 (average) | 36% | 54 | 10 |
| 1996 (average) | 39% | 49 | 12 |
| 1995 (average) | 32% | 57 | 11 |
| 1994 (average) | 21% | 70 | 9 |
| 1993 (average) | 11% | 83 | 6 |
| 1992 (average) | 7% | 90 | 3 |
| 1989 (average) | 50% | 42 | 8 |
| 1988 (average) | 52% | 43 | 5 |

Note: Surveys prior to 1996 conducted among all California adults, not just registered adults.

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Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed June 22 – July 5, 2010 among a representative sample of 1,390 registered voters in California. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue, some of the questions were asked of random subsamples of either 485 or 477 registered voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. To enable the survey to more closely examine the preferences of California's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese. In addition, for questions asked of the total sample, the main statewide was supplemented with additional interviews among Chinese Americans, Korean-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans.

Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. The overall registered voter sample was drawn from a listing of all registered voters, while the ethnic sample augments were drawn from listings of ethnic surnames of voters targeting Chinese-American, Korean-American and Vietnamese-American voters. All samples were provided by Voter Contact Services, a leading provider of registered voter samples to the survey research industry.

Interviewing was completed on either a voter's landline phone or a cell phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, results from the ethnic sample augments were weighted down to bring them into alignment with their proper shares of the state's registered voter population. In addition, the overall registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the characteristics of the registered voter population in California by region, age, gender and party registration.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size as well as the percentage distribution being examined. The maximum sampling error estimates for results based on the overall registered voter sample is +/- 2.8 percentage points, while findings from each random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The maximum sampling error is based on results in the middle of the sampling distribution (i.e., percentages at or near 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (those closer to 10% or 90%) have a smaller margin of error. Findings from subgroups of the overall sample have somewhat larger sampling error levels. There are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error. However, the overall design and execution of the survey sought to minimize these other sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field and has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. The poll receives annual funding from media subscribers of *The Field Poll*, from California foundations, and from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the raw data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes.

Questions Asked

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

Thinking about this state, do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as Governor of California?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

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