

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
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THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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**INCREASED MAJORITY OF VOTERS (58%)
READY TO RECALL DAVIS.
GOVERNOR'S JOB RATINGS DECLINE TO
LOWEST LEVEL YET. VOTERS DIVIDED
OVER WHETHER DAVIS SHOULD RESIGN
OR FIGHT THE RECALL.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

There has been a steady increase in sentiment to recall Gray Davis as Governor of California among likely California voters.

Just last month a bare majority of likely voters (51%) said they were ready to recall Davis, while 43% said they would vote No on removing him from office. In a statewide survey completed August 10-13 by *The Field Poll*, the proportion favoring the recall has now increased to 58% and those opposed has dropped to 37%.

A similar trend is evident when the dispositions of all registered voters are examined. In April there was just a slim three percentage point plurality of voters that favored a Davis recall. That plurality increased to fifteen points in July and today it stands at twenty-three points.

Table 1
**Trend of California voter intentions regarding a possible recall
of Governor Gray Davis**

	<u>Yes, recall Davis</u>	<u>No, retain Davis</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<u>Likely voters</u>			
August	58%	37	5
July	51%	43	6
<u>Total registered voters</u>			
August	57%	34	9
July	54%	39	7
April	46%	43	11

Vote intentions by subgroup

Support for recalling the Governor extends to most major subgroups of the likely voter population. Currently, the only voter segments where a majority oppose the recall include Democrats and self-described liberals, voters in the San Francisco Bay Area and ethnic voters other than Latinos.

Table 2
Voter intentions to recall Governor Gray Davis – by subgroup
(among likely voters)

	<u>Yes, recall</u> <u>Davis</u>	<u>No, retain</u> <u>Davis</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Likely voters – statewide	58%	37	5
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	27%	67	6
(.40) Republicans	92%	5	3
(.15) Non-partisans/others*	59%	32	9
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.32) Conservative	87%	7	6
(.44) Middle-of-the-road	58%	36	8
(.24) Liberal	18%	78	4
<u>Region</u>			
(.25) Los Angeles County	55%	36	9
(.35) Other Southern California	66%	30	4
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	43%	54	3
(.18) Other Northern California*	64%	30	6
<u>Gender</u>			
(.50) Male	61%	35	4
(.50) Female	55%	38	7
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.76) White non-Hispanic	60%	36	4
(.12) Latino*	55%	35	10
(.12) All others*	41%	51	8
<u>Age</u>			
(.27) 18-39	62%	33	5
(.19) 40-49	57%	38	5
(.32) 50-64	53%	41	6
(.22) 65 or older	59%	36	5
<u>Education</u>			
(.16) High school or less*	70%	21	9
(.34) Some college/trade school	58%	36	6
(.24) College graduate	59%	39	2
(.26) Post graduate work	49%	46	5
<u>Vote in 2002 election</u>			
(.41) Davis voter	22%	71	7
(.35) Simon voter	97%	2	1
(.24) Other/didn't vote	61%	30	9

* Small sample base.

Davis' job performance rating

The way registered voters view Davis's performance as Governor has been in a steady decline for the past several years. The current survey indicates that a new low has been reached in the way voters perceive Davis. Now, seven in ten registered voters (70%) disapprove of his performance – equaling the largest proportion of Californians disapproving any state or national office holder as measured by *The Field Poll* in its fifty-six year history. Just 22% now approve of the job Davis is doing.

Davis's job ratings now are on par with those which Californians gave to Richard Nixon in early August 1974, just prior to his resignation as President. At that time, just 24% of Californians approved of Nixon's performance in office, while 70% disapproved.

Greater than nine in ten Republicans (94%) and greater than three in four non-partisans (76%) disapprove of Davis' performance. Even among Democrats 49% disapprove, while just 41% approve.

Table 3
Trend of job appraisals of Davis as Governor
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
August 2003	22%	70	8
July 2003	23%	66	11
April 2003	24%	65	11
September 2002	39%	49	12
July 2002	41%	49	10
April 2002	39%	54	7
January 2002	39%	53	8
December 2001	38%	51	11
September 2001	38%	52	10
May 2001	36%	55	9
January 2001	57%	34	9
August 2000	56%	28	16
June 2000	61%	24	15
February 2000	62%	20	18
October 1999	54%	27	19
August 1999	59%	26	15
March 1999	54%	15	31
<u>Party registration (August 2003)</u>			
(.44) Democrats	41%	49	10
(.36) Republicans	3%	94	3
(.20) Non-partisans/others*	14%	76	10

* Small sample base.

Voters expect Davis to be recalled

Apart from how they themselves expect to vote on the recall, a large majority (68%) of likely voters think Davis will be removed from office. Greater than nine out of ten (94%) of those intending to vote Yes on the recall think Davis will be voted out. Even among those intending to vote No on the recall, a sizeable segment (33%) expects Davis to be removed. Only about half (49%) of those planning to vote No expect Davis to retain his position.

Very large majorities of Republicans (88%) and non-partisans (74%) think Davis will be recalled. About half (49%) of Democrats feel this way.

Table 4			
Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you think voters will remove Davis from office or will Davis defeat the recall and remain in office? (among likely voters)			
	<u>Davis will be removed</u>	<u>Davis will remain in office</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Likely voters – statewide	68%	22	10
<u>Current vote on recall</u>			
(.58) Yes voters	94%	3	3
(.37) No voters	33%	49	18
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	49%	38	13
(.40) Republicans	88%	6	6
(.15) Non-partisans/others*	74%	13	13

* Small sample base.

Voters dislike Davis personally and disapprove of his policies

About four in ten (42%) of the state’s voters say they both dislike Davis and disapprove of his policies. Another 16% dislike him personally but approve of his policies. About one in five (22%) like him but disapprove of his policies, while 13% like him and think well of his policies. Thus, the total proportion of voters who disapprove of Davis’s policies stands at 64%, while 29% approve. In addition, a total of 58% of voters dislike Davis, while 35% say they like him.

Dislike of Davis and his policies predominates among Yes voters on the recall, Republicans and non-partisans. Even among Democrats and those voting No on the recall, there are sizeable portions who dislike Davis.

Table 5
Voter impressions of Gray Davis and his policies
(among likely voters)

	<u>Dislike him/ disapprove of his policies</u>	<u>Dislike him/ approve of his policies</u>	<u>Like him/ disapprove of his policies</u>	<u>Like him/ approve of his policies</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Likely voters – statewide	42%	16	22	13	7
<u>Current vote on recall</u>					
(.58) Yes voter	64%	4	25	**	7
(.37) No voter	11%	37	14	31	7
<u>Party registration</u>					
(.45) Democrats	21%	28	20	25	6
(.40) Republicans	67%	3	22	1	7
(.15) Non-partisans/others*	41%	14	29	7	9

* Small sample base.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Voters divided on whether Davis should resign

Likely voters are about evenly divided as to whether Davis should resign from office or do all he can to defeat the recall and complete his term as Governor. Statewide, 49% feel he should fight the recall, while 42% favor his resignation. Another 9% have no opinion.

Nearly nine in ten (87%) of those intending to vote No on the recall think Davis should stay in office and resist the attempts to remove him, while 9% of No voters want him to resign. One in four (25%) of those intending to vote Yes thinks Davis should fight the recall, while 64% would rather he resign.

A large majority (71%) of Democrats want Davis to fight the recall and not resign, but 23% of voters within his own party support his resignation. A 65% majority of Republicans favor Davis resigning, while 26% would rather he fight the recall.

Table 6
Should Governor Davis resign or fight the recall?
(among likely voters)

	<u>Fight the recall</u>	<u>Resign</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Likely voters – statewide	49%	42	9
<u>Current vote on recall</u>			
(.58) Yes voters	25%	64	11
(.37) No voters	87%	9	4
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	71%	23	6
(.40) Republicans	26%	65	9
(.15) Non-partisans/others*	46%	38	16

* Small sample base.

Voters split on whether the recall election is good or bad for California

While support for recalling Davis has been increasing steadily in recent months, voters are not of a whole mind as to whether the recall election itself is a good or bad thing for California.

In the current survey, a slight plurality of likely voters (47%) believe the recall election is a bad thing for California, while 44% say it is a good thing. This is similar to the results observed in July on the same question.

About seven out of ten Yes voters (72%) and Republicans (70%) now think the recall is a good thing for California. Among No voters, 93% view the recall election negatively and just 5% think it is a good thing. About seven in ten Democrats (71%) feel the recall election is bad for California, but 20% now think it is a good thing.

Table 7
Is holding a recall election of Governor Davis a good thing or a bad thing for California? (among likely voters)

	<u>Bad thing</u>	<u>Good thing</u>	<u>Depends/ No opinion</u>
Likely voters – August	47%	44	9
July	50%	44	6
<u>Current vote on recall</u>			
(.58) Yes voters	18%	72	10
(.37) No voters	93%	5	2
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.45) Democrats	71%	20	6
(.40) Republicans	22%	70	8
(.15) Non-partisans/others*	45%	44	11

* Small sample base.

Voter reaction to pro and con arguments about the recall

Throughout the recall campaign – first during the signature gathering phase and now during the formal run up to the election – advocates and opponents of the recall have raised a number of arguments in support of the stands they were taking. In this survey, *The Field Poll* tested voter reaction to eleven pro and con arguments that have been widely reported about the election.

Pro-recall arguments

There is one pro-recall argument about which two in three likely voters agree. This is the idea that electing a new governor will move California in a new direction (65%).

Three other pro-recall arguments garner smaller but majority support. One is that Gray Davis has failed as governor and the state needs new leadership (57%). The other two include the view that the recall election will foster more discussion about the failure of California and its political leadership (55%) and that the recall election is a good thing because it is getting more Californians involved in the state’s political process (53%).

However, only four in ten (40%) agree that recalling Governor Davis will make it easier to solve the state's budget problems.

Table 8
Voter opinions of arguments IN FAVOR of the Davis recall
(among likely voters)

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Electing a new Governor will move California in a new direction.			
<u>Total</u>	<u>65%</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>8</u>
Yes voters	86%	6	8
No voters	36%	58	6
The recall election is a good thing because Gray Davis has failed as Governor and the state needs new leadership.			
<u>Total</u>	<u>57%</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>3</u>
Yes voters	91%	6	3
No voters	3%	96	1
The recall election is a good thing because it is fostering more discussions about the future of California and its political leadership.			
<u>Total</u>	<u>55%</u>	<u>42</u>	<u>3</u>
Yes voters	82%	16	2
No voters	15%	84	1
The recall election is a good thing because it is getting more Californians involved in the state's political process.			
<u>Total</u>	<u>53%</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>4</u>
Yes voters	78%	19	3
No voters	19%	78	3
Recalling Governor Davis will make it easier to solve the state's budget problems			
<u>Total</u>	<u>40%</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>6</u>
Yes voters	67%	25	8
No voters	5%	90	5

Anti-recall arguments

Majorities of voters also agree with three anti-recall arguments. The first, about which 60% agree, is that the recall is a bad thing because with so many candidates running to replace Davis, the eventual winner will likely get on a small share of the total vote and this is no way to elect a Governor. Another anti-recall argument, to which 56% concur, is that the cost of holding the recall election is a waste of taxpayer money. In addition, 54% agree that the recall election has become a joke, making California the laughing stock of the nation.

On the other hand, majorities of voters differ with three other arguments against the recall. Nearly six out of ten (58%) disagree with the premise that recalling the Governor will bring greater instability and only make matters worse.

In addition, similar 55% majorities disagree that holding the recall so soon after Davis's re-election is just an attempt by Republicans to undo last year's election, and that the recall will set the stage for more no confidence votes of our elected officials.

Table 9
Voter opinions of arguments AGAINST of the Davis recall
(among likely voters)

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
The recall election is a bad thing because there are so many candidates running to replace Davis, the eventual winner will likely get only a small share of the total vote, and this is no way to elect a Governor.			
<u>Total</u>	60%	36	4
Yes voters	40%	54	6
No voters	91%	9	*
The cost of holding the recall election is a waste of taxpayer money.			
<u>Total</u>	56%	43	1
Yes voters	31%	67	2
No voters	96%	4	*
The recall election has become a joke, making California the laughing stock of the nation.			
<u>Total</u>	54%	42	4
Yes voters	28%	67	5
No voters	92%	8	*
Holding a recall so soon after Davis won re-election is just an attempt by the Republicans to undo last year's election results.			
<u>Total</u>	44%	55	1
Yes voters	17%	82	1
No voters	85%	14	1
The recall election is a bad thing because it will set the stage for more no confidence votes of our elected officials.			
<u>Total</u>	41%	55	4
Yes voters	14%	81	5
No voters	79%	16	5
Recalling the Governor will bring greater instability and only make matters worse.			
<u>Total</u>	35%	58	7
Yes voters	3%	91	6
No voters	81%	15	4

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Information About the Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey conducted August 10-13, 2003 in English and Spanish among a random sample of California registered and likely voters. A representative sample of 1,036 California adults were initially screened yielding interviews with 629 registered voters, 448 of whom were deemed to be likely voters in the October 7 recall election.

Sampling was conducted by means of random digit dialing, which selects telephone exchanges within all area codes serving California in proportion to the population. From each exchange a random sample of telephone numbers was created by adding random digits to the telephone exchange selected, permitting access to both listed and unlisted telephones. After the completion of interviewing, the survey results were weighted slightly to Field Poll estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, results from the overall registered voter sample have sampling error of +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level, while findings from the likely voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 5.0 percentage points. Results from subgroups of the overall sample have somewhat larger sampling error ranges.

There are other possible sources of error in any survey in addition to sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sampling, sequencing or through omissions or errors in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

If you were voting today in the recall election, would you vote YES to remove Gray Davis from office or NO to keep Davis as Governor?

Regardless of how you intend to vote, do you think voters will remove Governor Davis from office or do you expect Davis to defeat the recall and remain in office?

Generally speaking, do you think holding a recall election of Governor Davis is a good thing or bad thing for California?

I am going to read some statements people have made about the recall election. For each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree. (ITEMS READ ONE AT A TIME IN RANDOM ORDER) Do you agree or disagree? (SEE RELEASE FOR WORDING OF ITEMS) (NOTE: IN ORDER TO COVER A BROAD RANGE OF ARGUMENTS, THE OVERALL LIKELY SAMPLE WAS DIVIDED INTO TWO APPROXIMATELY EQUAL-SIZED RANDOM SUBSAMPLES FOR THESE QUESTIONS)

Some people think Governor Davis should resign from office rather than fight the recall election. What do you think? Would you rather see Davis do all he can to defeat the recall and complete his term as Governor or would you rather he resign?