

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 AFTER 100 DAYS:
HIGH APPROVAL RATINGS. VOTERS SEE
HIM AS DOING WHAT IS RIGHT OVER
WHAT IS POLITICALLY POPULAR. VIEWS
CONTRAST SHARPLY WITH THOSE HELD
ABOUT HIS PREDECESSOR.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

California voters have a very favorable impression of the job that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has been doing during his first one hundred days in office.

Schwarzenegger obtains a 56% to 26% approval ratings among this state's registered voters. In addition, they tend to give the new governor more positive than negative assessments when asked to evaluate his performance in specific policy areas. And unlike their perceptions of his predecessor Gray Davis, voters, by a greater than two to one margin, think that when making decisions on important policy matters Schwarzenegger does what he believes is right rather than what is politically popular.

Voters continue to take a highly negative view of the job the state legislature is doing, with 58% disapproving of its performance overall and just 26% approving. Although voter assessments are highly partisan, if there were a disagreement on matters relating to the state budget, more would side with the Governor over the legislature.

These are the findings of the latest *Field Poll* conducted February 18-22 among a random cross-section of 958 registered voters.

Overall job ratings of Schwarzenegger

About twice as many voters in this state approve than disapprove of Schwarzenegger's overall performance as governor (56% to 26%).

Republicans are overwhelmingly positive (83%) in their appraisal of the governor. Non-partisans also tend to view his performance in a positive light. By contrast, Democrats have a more mixed view, with 42% disapproving and 37% approving of the governor's performance to date.

Voters living in the San Francisco Bay Area rate Schwarzenegger favorably by a four to three margin, while those living in Los Angeles County give him a five to three positive rating. Voters living in all other parts of the state are even more positive in their evaluations of the new governor, approving of his performance by margins of two and three to one.

Both men and women view Schwarzenegger in a favorable light. White non-Hispanics approve of the job Schwarzenegger is doing three to one. Latinos rate him positively by a narrower five to four margin. Asians view Schwarzenegger in a favorable light five to three, while blacks are about evenly divided in their assessments.

Table 1
Voter appraisals of the job Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as Governor
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
February 2004	56%	26	18
January 2004	52%	27	21
<u>Party</u>			
(.43) Democrats	37%	42	21
(.36) Republicans	83%	7	10
(.21) Non-partisans/others	51%	24	25
<u>Region</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	53%	33	14
(.18) Orange/San Diego counties	68%	18	14
(.14) Other Southern California	63%	17	20
(.22) San Francisco Bay Area	43%	32	25
(.16) Central Valley	61%	24	15
(.06) Other Northern California*	58%	19	23
<u>Gender</u>			
(.49) Male	58%	24	18
(.51) Female	54%	27	19
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.70) White non-Hispanic	60%	21	19
(.16) Latino	49%	40	11
(.05) Black/African-American*	37%	35	28
(.09) Asian/other	51%	33	15

* Small sample base

Assessing Schwarzenegger in specific policy areas

Voters also rate the Governor more positively than negatively in a number of specific policy areas. For example, in dealing with the state's economy and the state budget deficit, 54% approve, while about three in ten disapprove. By roughly five to three margins, voters also rate the new governor more positively than negatively in the areas of taxes, providing adequate government services, and the public schools. By a four to three margin, voters also give Schwarzenegger positive marks on higher education. Voters are more divided in their assessments of Schwarzenegger with regard to looking out for the interests of the poor, health care, and on matters relating to same-sex marriages.

Table 2
Voter appraisals of Governor Schwarzenegger's performance in specific policy areas
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
The state's economy	54%	30	16
The state's budget deficit	54%	33	13
Taxes	50%	31	19
Providing adequate government services	50%	27	23
The public schools	46%	30	24
Higher education	42%	31	27
Looking out for the interests of the poor	38%	35	27
Health care	31%	31	38
Matters relating to same-sex marriages	39%	42	19

Doing what is right for the state

More than twice as many voters (61% vs. 28%) credit Schwarzenegger with doing what he believes is right when making important policy decisions, rather than simply doing what is politically popular. Republicans overwhelmingly believe that Schwarzenegger is guided by the principle of doing what is right (82% to 10%). Democrats are less convinced, with 44% thinking he does what he believes is right and 42% saying he does what is politically popular.

Two years ago the state's voters felt entirely differently on this question with regard to then Governor Gray Davis. At that time voters, by a margin of 57% to 33%, believed that Davis was motivated more by doing what was politically popular than by what he believed was the right course for the state.

Table 3
When making decisions on important policy matters, is Governor Schwarzenegger more likely to do what he really believes is right or what is politically popular? (among registered voters)

	<u>What he believes is right</u>	<u>What is popular</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	61%	28	11
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	44%	42	14
Republicans	82%	10	8
Non-partisans/others	58%	29	13
Governor Gray Davis – January 2002	33%	57	10

Disapproval of the state legislature

Voters continue to express displeasure with the state legislature, although their current assessments are up slightly from their record low assessments of one year ago. Now, 58% disapprove and 26% approve of the legislature. Last summer, this ratio was 67% to 19%.

Currently, all partisan groups hold significantly more negative than positive assessments of the state legislature’s performance.

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

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
February 2004	26%	58	16
January 2004	23%	62	15
July 2003	19%	67	14
April 2003	31%	51	18
September 2002	35%	46	19
July 2002	45%	36	9
April 2002	39%	41	24
January 2002	40%	36	24
<u>Party (February 2004)</u>			
Democrats	29%	51	20
Republicans	22%	67	11
Non-partisans/others	26%	57	17

Who to trust in disagreements over the state budget

If there were major disagreements between the Governor and the state legislature on matters relating to the state budget, more voters are inclined to support the Governor (43%) than the legislature (32%). However, views about this are highly partisan and voters’ backing of

Schwarzenegger over the legislature is less pronounced than it was one month ago when 48% said they would back the Governor and 30% the legislature.

Republicans would side with Schwarzenegger by a huge 67% to 8% margin. Democrats, by contrast would side with the legislature nearly three to one (52% to 22%). Non-partisans would side with the Governor by a four to three margin (42% to 31%).

Table 5
If the Governor and leaders in the state legislature disagreed on how to handle the state budget, whose position would you be more inclined to support?
(among registered voters)

	<u>The Governor</u>	<u>Leaders in the state legislature</u>	<u>Neither/ No opinion</u>
February 2004	43%	32	25
January 2004	48%	30	22
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	22%	52	26
Republicans	67%	8	25
Non-partisans/others	42%	31	27

Schwarzenegger’s past behavior with women

When Schwarzenegger was running for Governor last year, he admitted that in his career as body builder and movie actor, he sometimes inappropriately touched some women. These revelations came to light late in the campaign and dominated press coverage of him in its closing days.

When asked about this, however, eight in ten (81%) voters, including 81% of men and 79% of women, say these actions do not concern them in his ability to perform his duties as Governor.

Table 6
Does Schwarzenegger’s past behavior with women make you more concerned about his ability to perform as Governor, less concerned or have no effect on you?
(among registered voters)

	<u>No effect</u>	<u>More concerned</u>	<u>Less concerned</u>
Statewide	81%	15	4
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	74%	22	4
Republicans	92%	4	4
Non-partisans/others	75%	21	4
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	81%	14	5
Female	79%	17	4

Information About the Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a telephone survey of 958 registered voters in California conducted in English and Spanish between the period of February 18–22, 2004. Up to five attempts was made to reach a randomly selected voter at each number dialed. After the completion of interviewing, the sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, results from the overall sample of 958 registered voters have a sampling error of +/-3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Note: Evaluations of the job Governor Schwarzenegger is doing on “matters relating to same-sex marriages” was added to the survey after interviewing had started. Results to this question are based on the answers of 306 registered voters interviewed between February 21-22, 2004 and have a sampling error of +/-5.8 percentage points.

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, sequencing or through omissions or errors in sampling, interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

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?

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

When making decisions on important policy matters facing the state, do you think Governor Schwarzenegger is more likely to do what he really believes is right or do what is politically popular?

I am going to read some issues facing California today and for each, please tell me if you approve or disapprove of the job Governor Schwarzenegger is doing in this area. (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Do you approve or disapprove of the job Governor Schwarzenegger is doing in this area? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS READ)

When Schwarzenegger was running for Governor last year, he admitted that in his career as a body builder and movie actor he may have sometimes inappropriately touched some women. Does Schwarzenegger's past behavior with women make you more concerned or less concerned about his ability to perform as Governor, or does it have no effect on you?