

# THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY  
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS  
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

Field Research Corporation  
222 Sutter Street, Suite 700  
San Francisco, CA 94108-4411  
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541  
EMAIL: [fieldpoll@field.com](mailto:fieldpoll@field.com)  
[www.field.com/fieldpollonline](http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline)

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**PROPOSITION 72:**  
**VOTERS CURRENTLY DISPOSED TO**  
**VOTE YES ON REFERENDUM REQUIRING**  
**HEALTH CARE COVERAGE FOR**  
**EMPLOYEES WORKING FOR LARGE AND**  
**MEDIUM-SIZED EMPLOYERS.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Proposition 72 on the November ballot is a referendum that seeks to repeal the state's Health Insurance Act (SB2) signed into law last year. If approved, the provisions in the law would stand, which calls for requiring large and medium-sized employers to provide health care coverage for employees.

In its most recent statewide survey completed between July 31 and August 8, *The Field Poll* finds that if the election were today 48% of likely voters would vote Yes to reaffirm SB2, 31% would vote No to repeal it, while 21% are undecided.

When measuring ballot propositions, the poll employs a two-question series.

The first question probed voter awareness of the referendum by asking: "*Have you seen, read, or heard anything about Proposition 72, a referendum requiring health care coverage for employees working for large and medium sized employers?*"

The replies indicate that just 30% of the likely voters report having heard of the measure prior to being read its main provisions. This is up slightly from a 23% awareness level report in a May *Field Poll* on the referendum.

The second question included a summary of the official ballot description that voters will see when they go to the polls to vote. It read as follows:

*“Proposition 72 is the Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum. A “Yes” vote approves and a “No” vote rejects legislation requiring health care coverage for employees working for large and medium sized employers. Fiscal impact: Significant expenditures fully offset, mainly by employer fees, for a state program to purchase private health insurance coverage. Significant county health program savings. Significant public employer health coverage costs and significant net state revenue losses. If the vote were being held today, would you vote YES to approve or NO to reject Proposition 72?”*

In response to this question, about half of all voters (48%) say they would vote Yes and 31% would vote No. In May the division was 50% Yes and 28% No.

### **Subgroup Differences**

In the current survey Democrats support the referendum 60% to 21%, while a plurality of Republicans intends to vote No by a 45% to 34% margin. Non-partisans and others line up 47% Yes and 28% No.

There is a strong correlation between preferences on Prop. 72 and whom voters prefer in the Presidential election. Those planning to vote for John Kerry overwhelmingly support Prop. 72 (62% Yes and 18% No). Voters supporting George W. Bush for President are opposed to the referendum 48% to 30%.

Women favor the referendum more than two to one (51% Yes and 24% No). A plurality of men support it, but by a narrower 45% to 38% margin.

While a plurality of white non-Hispanics favors Prop. 72 (42% to 33%), Latinos and other racial and ethnic voter groups favor it by greater than two to one margins.

Voter concerns about the possibility of being without health insurance coverage either now or in the future also appear to be tied to support or opposition to the referendum. Those voters currently without health insurance favor Prop. 72 two to one. In addition, insured voters who report being very concerned about the possibility of going without insurance in the future are nearly three to one in favor.

The following table shows the preferences overall and across a number of key subgroups of the likely voter population.

**Table 1**  
**Voter preferences regarding Proposition 72, the Health Care Coverage Requirements referendum**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<u>Would vote YES</u>	<u>Would vote NO</u>	<u>Don't know</u>
Statewide - August	48%	31	21
- May	50%	28	22
<u>Party (August)</u>			
(.44) Democrats	60%	21	19
(.36) Republicans	34%	45	21
(.20) Non-partisans/others	47%	28	25
<u>Political ideology (August)</u>			
(.35) Conservative	31%	50	19
(.40) Middle-of-the-road	53%	26	21
(.25) Liberal	64%	12	24
<u>Gender (August)</u>			
(.49) Men	45%	38	17
(.51) Women	51%	24	25
<u>Race/ethnicity (August)</u>			
(.69) White non-Hispanic	42%	33	25
(.15) Latino	57%	27	16
(.16) Others	63%	25	12
<u>Union affiliation (August)</u>			
(.22) Yes, anyone in household	56%	23	21
(.78) No	46%	33	21
<u>Household income (August)</u>			
(.12) Less than \$20,000*	61%	20	19
(.18) \$20,000 - \$39,999	52%	28	20
(.31) \$40,000 - \$79,999	53%	26	21
(.31) \$80,000 or more	39%	41	20
<u>Health insurance status (August)</u>			
(.11) Not insured*	53%	27	20
(.88) Insured	47%	31	22
<u>Concern about not having health insurance in future (among those insured)</u>			
(.36) Very concerned	60%	22	18
(.19) Somewhat concerned	51%	29	20
(.33) Not too/not at all concerned	32%	42	26
<u>Presidential preference (August)</u>			
(.51) Kerry voter	62%	18	20
(.40) Bush voter	30%	48	22
(.09) Other/undecided*	41%	30	29

\* Small sample size.

**Impact of groups supporting/opposing Prop. 72**

The poll also asked voters about the potential impact on their vote of knowing the referendum’s major proponents and opponents.

When told of Prop. 72’s support by the California Medical Association and the state’s largest labor unions, 21% of likely voters say this would make them more inclined to back the referendum, 17% say this makes them more inclined to vote No, 58% say it has no impact and 4% have no opinion. Among undecided voters the division is 16% more inclined to vote Yes, 11% more inclined to vote No, 59% no impact and 14% no opinion.

When told of Prop. 72’s opposition by business groups including the state Chamber of Commerce, 9% of voters say this makes them more inclined to vote Yes, 9% more inclined to vote No, while greater than three in four (78%) say it has no impact on how they will vote. Among undecided voters, this information leads 5% to be more inclined to vote Yes, 7% more inclined to vote No, while 82% say it has no effect.

**Table 2**  
**How does Prop. 72’s support by the California Medical Association and the state’s largest labor union affect your vote? (among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Total voters</u></b>	<b><u>Yes voters</u></b>	<b><u>No voters</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided voters</u></b>
<u>Their support makes me more inclined to vote...</u>				
Yes	21%	33%	4%	16%
No	17	3	42	11
Has no effect	58	62	53	59
No opinion	4	2	1	14

**Table 3**  
**How does Prop. 72’s opposition by business groups, including the state Chamber of Commerce, affect your vote? (among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Total voters</u></b>	<b><u>Yes voters</u></b>	<b><u>No voters</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided voters</u></b>
<u>Their opposition makes me more inclined to vote</u>				
Yes	9%	17%	1%	5%
No	9	4	18	7
Has no effect	78	78	77	82
No opinion	4	1	4	6

## **Information About the Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on interviews conducted among a random sample of 534 Californians likely to vote in the November general election. Interviews were conducted by telephone in English and Spanish July 30 – August 8, 2004. Sampling was carried out using random digit dial methodology which gives all voters, including those whose phone number is listed and unlisted, an equal chance of being contacted. Up to five attempts were made to reach a randomly selected voter at each number dialed. After the completion of interviewing the larger registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, the overall results in this report have a sampling error of +/- 4.4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. These 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**

Have you seen, read or heard anything Proposition 72, a referendum requiring health care coverage for employees working for large and medium sized employers?

Proposition 72 is the Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum. A “Yes” vote approves and a “No” vote rejects legislation requiring health care coverage for employees working for large and medium sized employers. Fiscal impact: Significant expenditures fully offset, mainly by employer fees, for a state program to purchase private health insurance coverage. Significant county health program savings. Significant public employer health coverage costs and significant net state revenue losses. If the vote were being held today, would you vote YES to approve or NO to reject Proposition 72?

A number of business groups including the state Chamber of Commerce oppose Prop. 72. Does their opposition make you more inclined to vote YES, more inclined to vote NO, or does it have no effect on how you will vote on Prop. 72?

Supporters of Prop. 72 include the California Medical Association and the state's largest labor unions. Does their support make you more inclined to vote YES, more inclined to vote NO, or does it have no effect on how you will vote on Prop. 72?