

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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Health-Related Propositions:

**PROP. 72 (HEALTH COVERAGE)
AHEAD BY 16 POINTS. PROP. 61 AND
63 ALSO LEAD, BUT PROP. 67 TRAILS.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In its latest survey, *The Field Poll* obtained preference measures regarding four health-related ballot measures – Propositions 61, 63, 67, and 72 – that California voters will be asked to decide on in the November 2 election.

Proposition 72 is a referendum that seeks to repeal the state’s Health Insurance Act (SB2) signed into law last year. Passage of Prop. 72 would affirm SB2, requiring that all employers with 50 or more employees provide health care coverage to employees or pay into a special state fund. Currently voters favor its passage by a 45% to 29% margin, with 26% undecided.

Proposition 67 is an initiative which would provide additional funding for emergency room physicians, hospital emergency rooms, community clinics, emergency personnel, and the 911 telephone system through a surcharge on telephone users. Currently voters are opposed to this proposition 46% to 37%, with 17% undecided.

Proposition 61 authorizes \$750 million in general obligation bonds to expand funding for construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping children’s hospitals. Although the “Yes” side is prevailing at this time 46% to 35%, this is down from a larger 47% to 31% lead in August.

The health measure receiving the highest level of support at this time is Proposition 63. This initiative would establish a 1% tax on personal income above \$1 million to expand funding for mentally ill children, adults and seniors. Voters currently are dividing 57% Yes and 31% No on this initiative.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* measuring voter preferences toward four health-related propositions on the November 2 statewide election ballot.

Proposition 72 (Health Care Coverage Requirements)

The current 45% to 29% margin in favor of Prop. 72 is similar to a seventeen-point lead found in an early August *Field Poll*.

Democrats and non-partisans are strongly supporting the continuation of SB2 and voting “yes,” while Republicans are strongly opposed and voting “no.” Men favor it by a narrow nine-point margin, while women are supporting it by a wider 18-point margin.

Those supporting John Kerry for President are backing Prop. 72 five to one (60% to 12%), while voters favoring George W. Bush are opposed 49% to 30%. Union households are backing the referendum 53% to 21%, while non-union households favor it by a narrower 43% to 31% margin.

Support levels are also related to a voter’s perceived vulnerability to being without health insurance now or in the future. Voters who are currently without health insurance or are very concerned about being without insurance in the future are more likely to be on the “yes” side than those who are not as concerned.

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>
Total – Late September	45%	29	26
– August	48%	31	21
– May	50%	28	22
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	58%	16	26
Republicans	28%	50	22
Non-partisans/others	47%	23	30
<u>Gender</u>			
Men	43%	34	23
Women	47%	25	28
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	43%	32	25
Latino	49%	31	20
Others	52%	15	33
<u>Union affiliation</u>			
Yes, anyone in household	53%	21	26
No	43%	31	26
<u>Household income</u>			
Less than \$40,000	56%	18	28
\$40,000 - \$79,999	45%	29	26
\$80,000 or more	40%	41	19
<u>Concern about not having health insurance in future</u>			
Currently without insurance*	42%	28	30
Insured/very concerned about future	57%	17	26
Insured/somewhat concerned about future	41%	34	25
Insured/not concerned about future	30%	46	24
<u>Presidential preference</u>			
Kerry voter	60%	12	28
Bush voter	30%	49	21

Note: Subgroup results are from the Late September survey.

* Small sample

Reasons for voting Yes on Prop. 72

When asked to state in their own words why they favor Prop. 72, “yes” voters tend to cite two main reasons for their support. They are of the view that “it is a step in the right direction/will expand insurance coverage” (48%) and that “employers should share in the costs of health care for their workers” (39%). These two reasons were cited most frequently when this question was asked in August.

Table 2
What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote Yes to approve Prop. 72?
(among likely voters intending to vote Yes)

	<u>Late Sept.</u>	<u>August</u>
It’s a step in the right direction, will expand insurance coverage	48%	47%
Employers should share in the costs, do their part, contribute to the health care of their workers	39	40
Would make health care insurance more affordable to workers / it’s too expensive to pay for yourself	9	15
It affects me directly, would guarantee coverage for me	6	8
It’s better than having government pay for health care / would save the state money	4	4
It would put all businesses on an equal footing	1	1
Other mentions (less than 1% each)	4	3
Don’t know / no answer	5	6

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions

Reasons for voting No on Prop. 72

Those opposed to the measure volunteer two primary reasons for their stand: “it would increase the cost of doing business in the state and make business less competitive” (33%) and “providing workers health insurance should remain voluntary, a benefit” (31%).

Table 3
What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote No to oppose Prop. 72?
(among likely voters intending to vote No)

	<u>Late Sept.</u>	<u>August</u>
It would increase the cost of doing business in CA, makes business less competitive, bad for business	33%	26%
Providing workers health insurance should remain voluntary, a benefit / should not be mandated by government	31	20
It’s not business’ responsibility / people or government (not businesses) should pay for health care	7	20
Businesses would pass the costs on to consumers and drive up prices	4	6
It doesn’t go far enough/won’t fix the health care mess	2	*
It will drive up the costs of health care further	1	2
Other mentions (less than 2% each)	19	20
Don’t know / no answer	12	17

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.*

Proposition 67 (Emergency Medical Services)

The current survey shows that more voters are taking the “no” side position on Prop. 67, 46% to 37%. This is virtually identical to what was observed in August. While Democrats narrowly approve 47% to 38%, Republicans are overwhelmingly opposed – 60% to 23%.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total Statewide – Late September	37%	46	17
– August	37%	47	16
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	47%	38	15
Republicans	23%	60	17
Non-partisans/others	41%	38	21

Note: Subgroup findings are from the Late September survey.

Reasons for voting No on Prop. 67

The most frequently mentioned reasons for opposing Prop. 67 are financially-related. For example, 28% say they “oppose adding a surcharge to phone bills/phone bills are already too high.” Another 20% mention that “it is another tax increase, already paying too much in taxes.” Close behind is “phone users shouldn’t have to shoulder the costs for health care, other ways to fund emergency services can be found,” cited by 19%.

	<u>Late Sept.</u>	<u>August</u>
Oppose adding a surcharge to phone bills, phone bills are already too high	28%	25%
It’s another tax increase, oppose tax increases, already paying too much in taxes	20	32
Phone users shouldn’t have to shoulder the costs for health care, find other ways to fund emergency services	19	18
Oppose paying for the health care costs of people who don’t have insurance, illegal immigrants	14	10
Hospitals/doctors already have enough money, they are mismanaged, should spend the money they have more wisely	11	14
Very little would go to fund emergency services, the money wouldn’t go where it’s supposed to	4	4
Other reasons (less than 2% each)	15	10
Don’t know/no answer	8	5

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

Reasons for voting Yes on Prop. 67

A range of reasons is offered by supporters of Prop. 67 for voting “yes.” Chief among them is the comment that “emergency services are underfunded” (28%). Another related comment that “emergency services are important” is cited by 22%. The third ranking reason is that “it would help the people who are unable to pay for care/the uninsured” (18%).

Table 6
Reason why Yes voters intend to vote Yes on Prop. 67
(among likely voters intending to vote Yes)

	<u>Late Sept.</u>	<u>August</u>
Emergency services are underfunded, they need more money	28%	21%
Emergency services are important, will provide better emergency room services	22	24
It would help the people who are unable to pay for care, the uninsured, poor people	18	15
Doctors, emergency room personnel should be fairly reimbursed, compensated	13	16
The additional telephone fee is modest/would not cost much	13	7
Will improve the quality of the health care system	8	9
It’s needed, worth it	7	6
To improve the 911 system	6	4
Other reasons (less than 1% each)	7	5
Don’t know/no answer	12	10

Note: Percentages add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

Proposition 63 (Mental Health Services Expansion)

Voter reaction to Prop. 63 remains very favorable. In this survey 57% say they are on the “yes” side and 31% are against. This 26-point lead is similar to a 30-point lead found in August.

The Democrats are overwhelmingly in favor of Prop. 63, 74% to 16%, while Republicans are opposed, 54% to 34%. Non-partisans are supportive 58% to 24%.

Table 7
Voter preferences regarding Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Expansion, Tax on Personal Income Above \$1 Million initiative
(among likely voters)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total Statewide – Late September	57%	31	12
– August	59%	29	12
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	74%	16	10
Republicans	34%	54	12
Non-partisans/others	58%	24	18

Note: Subgroup findings are from the Late September survey.

Proposition 61 (Children’s Hospital Projects Bond)

Support for Prop. 61 is now at eleven points (46% to 35%), down from a sixteen-point advantage in August. Democrats and non-partisans are lining up on the “yes” side by a two to one margin, while Republicans are opposed five to three.

Table 8
Voter preferences regarding Proposition 61,
the Children’s Hospital Projects, Grant Program Bond Act
(among likely voters)

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total Statewide – Late September	46%	35	19
– August	47%	31	22
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	54%	27	19
Republicans	31%	50	19
Non-partisans/others	54%	28	18

Note: Subgroup findings are from the Late September survey.

Throughout the 2004 election cycle The Field Poll is expanding its coverage of health-related statewide ballot propositions as part of the California HealthCare Foundation’s HealthVote2004 project. HealthVote2004 is aimed at providing voters with facts and non-partisan analysis about each health-related ballot measure facing California voters in this election. More information can be found at www.healthvote2004.org.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on interviews conducted among a random sample of 549 Californians likely to vote in the November general election. Interviews were conducted by telephone in English and Spanish September 24-29, 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 four 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 for each proposition have a sampling error of +/- 4.3 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

Proposition 61 is the "Children's Hospital Projects, Grant Program Bond Act." It authorizes 750 million dollars in general obligation bonds for grants to eligible children's hospitals for construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping children's hospitals. Fiscal impact: State costs of about 1.5 billion dollars over 30 years to pay off both the principal and interest costs of the bonds. Payments of about 50 million dollars per year. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 61?

Proposition 63 is the "Mental Health Services Expansion, Funding; Tax on Personal Incomes Above 1 Million Dollars" initiative. It establishes a 1 percent tax on taxable personal income above 1 million dollars to fund expanded health services for mentally ill children, adults and seniors. Fiscal impact: Additional state revenues of about 800 million dollars annually by 2006-2007, with comparable annual increases in total state and county expenditures for the expansion of mental health programs. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 63?

Proposition 67 is the "Emergency Medical Services, Funding, Telephone Surcharge" initiative. It increases the telephone surcharge and allocates other funds for emergency room physicians, hospital emergency rooms, community clinics, emergency personnel training and equipment, and the 9-1-1 telephone system. Fiscal impact: Increased state revenues of about 500 million dollars annually to reimburse physicians and hospitals for uncompensated emergency medical services and other specified purposes. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 67?

IF YES: What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote YES to approve Prop. 67? Any other reasons?

IF NO: What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote NO to reject Prop. 67? Any other reasons?

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?

IF YES: What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote yes to approve Prop. 72? Any other reasons?

IF NO: What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote no to reject Prop. 72? Any other reasons?