

# 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'S JOB RATINGS HIT A NEW LOW. VOTERS OPPOSE THE GOVERNOR'S CALL FOR A SPECIAL ELECTION. STATE LEGISLATURE NOT HIGHLY REGARDED, BUT VOTERS MORE LIKELY TO SIDE WITH IT AGAINST THE GOVERNOR.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

There has been a steep drop in the regard that Californians have of the job that Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as Governor.

In a statewide survey completed last week following Schwarzenegger's call for a special election this November, *The Field Poll* finds the Governor's approval rating sliding to 37% among registered voters statewide, while 53% disapprove of how Schwarzenegger is handling his job.

As recently as last September 65% of voters approved and 22% disapproved of Schwarzenegger, while in February 55% approved and 35% disapproved.

Among all California adults, regardless of whether they are registered to vote or not, the Governor's decline in approval is even more pronounced, with just 31% approving and 58% disapproving of his performance in office. This is a reversal from four months ago when 54% of the adult public approved and 35% disapproved of Schwarzenegger.

**Table 1**  
**Trend of Arnold Schwarzenegger's job performance as Governor**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Registered voters</u>			
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
<u>All Adults</u>			
June 2005	31%	58	11
February 2005	54%	35	11

**Partisan differences**

The drop in Schwarzenegger's job rating is most pronounced among registered Democrats and non-partisans. Throughout all of 2004, a plurality of Democrats, as well as a majority of non-partisans, approved of the job the Governor was doing. Now, just 16% of Democrats approve, while 76% disapprove. Among non-partisans 35% approve and 54% disapprove, a reversal from a 48% approve and 38% disapprove rating in February.

In addition, there has been some erosion in the sky-high ratings the Governor had been receiving from Republicans. While still highly favorable (66%), GOP voter appraisal is down from the approximately 90% approval ratings he was receiving from Republicans throughout all of last year.

**Table 2**  
**Trend of Schwarzenegger's job performance among the state's partisans**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Democrats</u>			
June 2005	16%	76	8
February 2005	34%	54	12
September 2004	46%	34	20
August 2004	45%	36	19
May 2004	48%	38	14
<u>Republicans</u>			
June 2005	66%	23	11
February 2005	84%	11	5
September 2004	88%	6	6
August 2004	90%	5	5
May 2004	89%	5	6
<u>Non-partisans/others</u>			
June 2005	35%	54	11
February 2005	48%	38	14
September 2004	64%	25	11
August 2004	61%	23	16
May 2004	58%	23	19

### **Comparison to Davis's job ratings**

Governor Schwarzenegger's predecessor, Democrat Gray Davis, was elected in 1998 and re-elected in 2002, but was removed from office in the historic 2003 recall election. Davis, like Schwarzenegger, enjoyed very favorable ratings during the early part of his tenure. For example, in early 2000 62% approved of Davis' job performance and 20% disapproved.

However, in subsequent years voters began to lose support for Davis and his ratings declined precipitously. In September 2002, about one year before he was voted out of office, just 39% approved of the job that Davis was doing and 49% disapproved – an appraisal similar to one Schwarzenegger now receives.

Davis's ratings continued to drop throughout 2003 and reached a record low of 22% approval and 70% disapproval in August 2003.

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**Table 3**  
**Trend of Gray Davis's job performance as Governor**  
**(among registered voters)**

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	<b><u>Approve</u></b>	<b><u>Disapprove</u></b>	<b><u>No opinion</u></b>
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

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### **Opposition to Governor's call for a special election**

More voters oppose (52%) than favor (37%) the Governor's call for a November special election, even when the additional costs of holding the election are not listed in the question. This represents a big decline in overall voter support for holding a special election compared to a February *Field Poll*. At that time, a narrow majority (51%) supported the idea of holding a special election when its costs were not cited.

However, in both the current poll and the previous February survey, when voters are informed of the special election's estimated costs, voters reject the idea overwhelmingly. In the current survey more than twice as many voters disapprove (61%) as approve (28%) of the special election when told of its estimated \$45 to \$80 million cost.

**Table 4**  
**Reaction to the Governor's call for a special election this year**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Without mention of its cost</u>			
June 2005	37%	52	11
February 2005	51%	45	4
<u>When its potential cost of \$45 to \$80 million is cited</u>			
June 2005	28%	61	11
February 2005*	30%	67	3

\* In the February survey the estimated cost of holding the special election was \$50 to \$70 million.

**State legislature job ratings decline**

There has also been a big decline in the public's appraisal of the job that the state legislature is doing over the past four months. Last February 36% of adults and 34% of registered voters approved of the state legislature. Now, the approval figure among adults is 26% and just 24% among registered voters.

**Table 5**  
**Trend of the state legislature's job performance**

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
June 2005 (registered voters)*	24%	57	19
June 2005 (adults)	26%	54	20
February 2005 (registered voters)*	34%	52	14
February 2005 (adults)	36%	49	15
2004 (average)	30%	47	23
2002-2003 (average)*	35%	45	20
2000-2001 (average)	46%	28	26
1995-1999 (average)	43%	40	17
1992-1994 (average)	30%	64	6
1988-1991 (average)	51%	42	7
<u>Highest rating</u>			
February 1988	57%	36	7
<u>Lowest rating</u>			
July 2003*	19%	67	14

Note: Ratings conducted among all California adults unless indicated with an asterisk, which were conducted among registered voters

### **Good-faith negotiations?**

Voters believe that neither Schwarzenegger nor the legislature is negotiating with the other in good faith. Rather, pluralities see their actions as being characterized more by confrontation and posturing, with little room for compromise.

Currently, 52% see Schwarzenegger's actions as being mainly confrontational, compared to 32% who believe he is negotiating with the legislature in good faith. This represents a reversal in voter opinions of the Governor's dealing with the legislature from February, when more voters felt Schwarzenegger was negotiating with that body in good faith (47%) than felt his actions were mainly confrontational (39%).

Attitudes regarding the state legislature's dealings with the Governor, are also highly negative. Similar to what was found in February, 52% believe the lawmaking body has not been negotiating with the Governor in good faith, while just 25% think it is.

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**Table 6**  
**Is the Governor/State Legislature negotiating with the other in good faith or are their actions characterized more by confrontation with little room for compromise?**  
**(among registered voters)**

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	<b><u>Negotiating in good faith</u></b>	<b><u>Confrontation/ little room for compromise</u></b>	<b><u>No opinion</u></b>
<b><u>Governor Schwarzenegger</u></b>			
June 2005	32%	52	16
February 2005	47%	39	14
<b><u>State Legislature</u></b>			
June 2005	25%	52	23
February 2005	27%	54	19

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### **Whose side would voters support?**

In three separate Field Poll surveys conducted last year, a sizeable plurality of voters said they would be more inclined to support the Governor over leaders in the legislature if the two sides disagreed on an important policy matter. However, in two surveys completed this year, voters have been turning away from their earlier support of the Governor. Currently, 44% say they are now more inclined to support the positions of legislative leaders, compared to 33% who would tend to side with the Governor.

**Table 7**  
**If the Governor and leaders in the state legislature disagreed on an important state issue, 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>
June 2005	33%	44	23
February 2005	37%	40	23
May 2004	47%	29	24
February 2004	43%	32	25
January 2004	48%	30	22
<u>Party (June 2005)</u>			
Democrats	18%	64	18
Republicans	58%	15	27
Non-partisans/others	24%	49	27

**Little confidence in Governor or legislature to resolve the state's budget deficit**

Voters express little confidence in either the Governor or state legislature to do what's right in resolving the state's budget deficit. Just one in six voters (17%) say they hold a great deal of confidence in Schwarzenegger to do what is right in dealing with budget deficit, while 49% have not much confidence. Another 32% report having some confidence in him.

Opinions of the legislature are even more critical. Only 5% report a great deal of confidence in state lawmakers to do what's right to resolve the budget situation, with 54% expressing little confidence in that body. Another 40% have some confidence in the legislature to do what is right.

**Table 8**  
**Confidence in the Governor/State Legislature to do what is right to resolve the state's budget deficit**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>Not much</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Governor Schwarzenegger (Total)</u>	<u>17%</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>2</u>
Democrats	10%	22	67	1
Republicans	27%	50	21	2
Non-partisans/others	17%	24	58	1
<u>State legislature (Total)</u>	<u>5%</u>	<u>40</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>1</u>
Democrats	5%	46	48	1
Republicans	5%	31	63	1
Non-partisans/others	4%	42	53	1

\* Less than 0.5%

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 954 California adults, conducted by telephone June 13-19, 2005 in English and Spanish. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue the overall sample was divided into two random subsamples of 491 and 463 adults respectively on some of the survey questions. The overall sample included 711 registered voters, while the two random subsamples had 371 and 340 voters respectively.

Households were sampled using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating landline telephone exchanges within all areas codes serving California households in proportion to population. Within each exchange, telephone numbers are created by adding random digits to the selected telephone exchange. This method gives each phone listing an equal chance of being selected and permits access to all landline telephone numbers statewide, both listed and unlisted.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall adult sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points, while findings from each random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 points. Findings from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points, while the findings from each random subsample of voters have a sampling error of +/- 5/5 points.

### **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?

(THE ORDERING OF THE FOLLOWING TWO ITEMS WAS RANDOMIZED TO AVOID POSSIBLE SEQUENCE BIAS)

Do you think Governor Schwarzenegger is negotiating with the state legislature in good faith to reach compromises, or are his dealings with the legislature characterized more by confrontation and posturing with little room for compromise?

Do you think the state legislature is negotiating with the governor in good faith, or are their dealings with him characterized more by confrontation and posturing with little room for compromise?

Overall, how much confidence do you have in the state legislature to do what is right to resolve the state's budget deficit – a great deal of confidence, some confidence, or not much confidence?

Overall, how much confidence do you have in Governor Schwarzenegger to do what is right to resolve the state's budget deficit – a great deal of confidence, some confidence or not much confidence?

If Governor Schwarzenegger's position on an important state 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's?

(FORM A) Governor Schwarzenegger has called a special statewide election for November 8 of this year, in which voters will be asked to decide on a number of statewide ballot propositions. Do you favor or oppose the Governor's call for a special election on November 8?

(FORM B) Governor Schwarzenegger has called a special statewide election for November 8 of this year, in which voters will be asked to decide on a number of statewide ballot propositions. Holding the special election is expected to cost the state between 45 and 80 million dollars. Do you favor or oppose the Governor's call for a special election on November 8?