

# 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 Special Election Initiatives**

**MORE VOTERS INCLINED TO VOTE NO  
ON GOVERNOR'S STATE SPENDING/  
SCHOOL FUNDING AND REDISTRICTING  
INITIATIVES. MAJORITY FAVORS  
SCHOOL TEACHERS TENURE CHANGES.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In calling for a special election next November, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger wants voters to approve three initiatives that he is strongly backing. In its most recent statewide survey completed last week, *The Field Poll* measured initial voter awareness and preferences for each of these initiatives. The results show that voters currently oppose the "School Funding/State Spending" initiative as well as the "Reapportionment" initiative, but favor the "Public School Teachers Tenure" initiative.

### **School Funding and State Spending**

The measure receiving considerable attention from Schwarzenegger and his opponents is titled the "School Funding/State Spending" initiative. Large proportions of both registered voters (66%) and likely voters (70%) report that they have seen or heard something about this initiative.

According to the official summary of the initiative released by the California Secretary of State, it would change the minimum school funding requirements under Proposition 98, limit state spending to prior year totals, make other changes in budgeting and require the Governor to reduce state budgets under certain circumstances.

After being read this summary the registered voters interviewed in this survey were asked how they would vote if the election were being held today. Statewide, 47% say they would vote No, 31% would vote Yes, and 22% are undecided.

The division of sentiment is closer among those who are deemed most likely to vote in the November special election. Among this group, 42% are now inclined to vote No, 35% are on the Yes side, while 23% are undecided.

**Public School Teachers Tenure**

Another controversial initiative backed by the Governor is called the "Public School Teachers; Waiting Period for Permanent Status" initiative. This measure would increase the time required before a teacher can become a permanent employee and authorizes school boards to dismiss teaching employees who have received two consecutive unsatisfactory performance evaluations.

Fifty-nine percent of registered voters and 64% of likely voters report having seen or heard something about this initiative. When all voters regardless of any prior awareness are read a summary of the measure, supporters outnumber opponents by a 59% to 35% margin among all registered voters and by a 61% to 32% margin among likely voters.

**Redrawing election district boundaries**

The third initiative that the Governor wants voters to approve in the special election calls for amending the state constitution regarding the way California's Assembly, Senate, Congressional and Board of Equalization districts are drawn following each census of the state's population.

Currently 50% of registered voters and 60% of likely voters have seen or heard something about this proposition. When asked how they would vote if the election were being held today, those opposing the initiative outnumber those who favor it both among all registered voters (44% No, 33% Yes, 23% Undecided), as well as likely voters (46% No, 35% Yes, 19% undecided).

The following table summarizes the current voter preferences on each of these three initiatives.

<b><u>Table 1</u></b>		
<b>Voter support/opposition to the three special election initiatives supported by Governor Schwarzenegger (after being read a summary of its official ballot title and description)</b>		
	<b><u>Total registered voters</u></b>	<b><u>Likely voters</u></b>
<b><u>State Spending, School Funding Initiative</u></b>		
Would vote yes	31%	35%
Would vote no	47	42
Undecided	22	23
<b><u>Public School Teachers Tenure Initiative</u></b>		
Would vote yes	59%	61%
Would vote no	35	32
Undecided	6	7
<b><u>Reapportionment/Redistricting of Legislative Boundaries Initiative</u></b>		
Would vote yes	33%	35%
Would vote no	44	46
Undecided	23	19

**State Spending/School Funding – subgroup breakdowns**

The voter subgroups most likely to be opposed to the State Spending/School Funding initiative are Democrats, non-partisans, liberals, union members, those who have some prior awareness of the initiative, voters living in Northern California, and college graduates.

Support for this proposition is strongest among Republicans and conservatives. Preferences are about evenly divided among those who had not heard of the measure prior to the survey, Southern California voters, non-union members and those who did not graduate from college.

<b>Table 2</b>			
<b><u>Initiative to impose limits on state spending and</u></b>			
<b><u>change Prop. 98 formula for school funding</u></b>			
<b><u>(among likely voters)</u></b>			
	<b><u>Would</u></b>	<b><u>Would</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided</u></b>
	<b><u>vote YES</u></b>	<b><u>vote NO</u></b>	
Total likely voters	35%	42	23
<b><u>Prior awareness of initiative</u></b>			
Yes, have heard	36%	49	15
No, have not heard	31%	27	42
<b><u>Party</u></b>			
Democrats	24%	57	19
Republicans	53%	27	20
Non-partisans/others*	20%	42	38
<b><u>Gender</u></b>			
Male	36%	42	22
Female	33%	42	25
<b><u>Union affiliation</u></b>			
Union member in household*	28%	47	25
Non-union household	37%	41	22
<b><u>Region</u></b>			
Southern California	42%	39	19
Northern California	25%	47	28
<b><u>Age</u></b>			
18-49	32%	40	28
50 or older	38%	44	18
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Not a college grad	36%	37	27
College graduate	31%	48	21
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>			
Conservative	51%	27	22
Moderate	34%	43	23
Liberal*	14%	62	24

\* Small sample base

**Public School Teachers Tenure – subgroup breakdowns**

Most of the voter subgroups analyzed in this survey indicate that they are inclined to vote Yes on the Public School Teachers Tenure initiative. Major subgroups where a plurality favors a No vote are Democrats and liberals. College graduates and union members are about evenly divided.

**Table 3**  
**Initiative to increase the number of years required**  
**for public school teachers to obtain tenure**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Would</u></b> <b><u>vote YES</u></b>	<b><u>Would</u></b> <b><u>vote NO</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided</u></b>
Total likely voters	61%	32	7
<b><u>Prior awareness of initiative</u></b>			
Yes, have heard	60%	37	3
No, have not heard	64%	25	11
<b><u>Party</u></b>			
Democrats	43%	51	6
Republicans	83%	12	5
Non-partisans/others*	55%	34	11
<b><u>Gender</u></b>			
Male	58%	37	5
Female	65%	27	8
<b><u>Union affiliation</u></b>			
Union member in household*	49%	50	1
Non-union household	66%	26	8
<b><u>Region</u></b>			
Southern California	63%	33	4
Northern California	59%	31	10
<b><u>Age</u></b>			
18-49	61%	33	6
50 or older	62%	32	6
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Not a college grad	72%	23	5
College graduate	48%	44	8
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>			
Conservative	80%	17	3
Moderate	61%	33	6
Liberal*	36%	51	13

\* Small sample base

**Redrawing election district boundaries – subgroup breakdowns**

Support and opposition to the redistricting initiative divides sharply along partisan and ideological lines. Democrats and liberals are opposed by wide margins, while pluralities of Republicans and conservatives are in favor. Non-partisans are closely divided.

Other voter subgroups against the initiative include union members, women, college graduates and voters living in Northern California.

There are big differences between the preferences of voters who had some awareness of the initiative prior to being surveyed than those who did not. Likely voters who had some familiarity with the initiative prior to being interviewed narrowly favor the redistricting proposal 47% to 43%, with 10% undecided. On the other hand, those with no prior awareness oppose it nearly three to one (50% to 17%), although a large proportion (33%) are undecided.

**Table 4**  
**Redistricting of legislative boundaries**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Would vote YES</u></b>	<b><u>Would vote NO</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided</u></b>
Total likely voters	35%	46	19
<b><u>Prior awareness of initiative</u></b>			
Yes, have heard	47%	43	10
No, have not heard	17%	50	33
<b><u>Party</u></b>			
Democrats	22%	57	21
Republicans	45%	38	17
Non-partisans/others*	42%	41	17
<b><u>Gender</u></b>			
Male	41%	44	15
Female	29%	48	23
<b><u>Union affiliation</u></b>			
Union member in household*	33%	56	11
Non-union household	36%	43	21
<b><u>Region</u></b>			
Southern California	39%	42	19
Northern California	30%	51	19
<b><u>Age</u></b>			
18-49	32%	45	23
50 or older	37%	46	17
<b><u>Education</u></b>			
Not a college grad	35%	38	27
College graduate	35%	53	12
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>			
Conservative	47%	37	16
Moderate	36%	42	22
Liberal*	15%	69	16

\* Small sample base

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 955 California adults, which included interviews with 711 registered voters and 501 voters considered most likely to vote in the November 8 special election. The survey was 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 voter sample was divided into two random subsamples of 371 and 340 voters respectively on the survey questions.

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 registered voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points, while findings from each random voter subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 points. Findings from the likely voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points, while the findings from each random subsample of voters have a sampling error of +/- 6.3 points.

### **Questions Asked**

Have you seen, read or heard anything about an initiative on the upcoming November statewide special election having to do with state spending and school funding?

(As you know) This is the "School Funding and State Spending" initiative. It would change the minimum state school funding requirements under Proposition 98, permit suspension of minimum funding, end repayment requirements and eliminate authority to reduce funding when state revenues decline. It also limits state spending to prior year totals plus revenue growth, shifts excess revenues from schools and tax relief to the budget reserve or debt repayment, and requires the Governor to reduce state budgets under certain circumstances. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on this initiative?

Have you seen, read or heard anything about an initiative on the upcoming November statewide special election having to do with tenure for public school teachers?

(As you know) This is the "Public School Teachers; Waiting Period for Permanent Status" initiative. It would increase the length of time required before a teacher becomes a permanent employee from two years to five years and authorizes school boards to dismiss permanent teaching employees who have received two consecutive unsatisfactory performance evaluations. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on this initiative?

Have you seen, read or heard anything about an initiative on the upcoming November statewide special election having to do with how election district boundary lines are drawn?

(As you know) This is the Reapportionment initiative. It would amend the state constitution's process for redistricting California's Assembly, Senate, Congressional and Board of Equalization districts. It requires a three-member panel of retired judges, selected by legislative leaders, to adopt a new redistricting plan. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on this initiative?