

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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BOTH PRESCRIPTION DRUG INITIATIVES, PROPS. 78 AND 79, ARE LEADING, BUT FEW VOTERS CAN IDENTIFY THE PROPONENTS OF EACH INITIATIVE. VOTERS DIVIDED ON PROP. 73, THE PARENTAL NOTIFICATION OF TEEN ABORTION INITIATIVE.

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Two of the more contentious ballot propositions that voters will be asked to act upon in the November statewide special election are Propositions 78 and 79, competing initiatives having to do with prescription drug discounts.

A *Field Poll* completed last week finds both initiatives leading, albeit by different margins. Proposition 78, the pharmaceutical industry-sponsored initiative, is favored by a 49% to 31% margin among voters most likely to vote in the special election. Prop. 79, the initiative backed by consumer advocacy and labor groups, is also leading but by a somewhat narrower 42% to 34% margin. However, only small proportions of voters can correctly identify either Prop. 78's or Prop. 79's main proponents and that once provided this information, results indicate that this could have a significant impact on voter preferences.

The survey also measured voter preferences regarding Proposition 73, relating to parental notification of a teen abortion. Currently voters are evenly divided on this measure, with 45% intending to vote Yes and 45 % intending to vote No.

These are the results from the latest *Field Poll* completed August 19-29 about the three health-related propositions that voters will be confronting in the upcoming November special election. Throughout the 2005 statewide special election campaign, *The Field Poll* will be expanding its coverage of these health-related propositions as it partners with the California HealthCare Foundation and its HealthVote initiative. HealthVote is aimed at providing voters with non-partisan information and analysis of the various health-related ballot measures facing California voters in this election. More information about HealthVote can be found at www.healthvote.org.

Proposition 78

Prop. 78 is titled the “Prescription Drugs; Discounts” initiative and is sponsored by the pharmaceutical industry. It would establish a discount drug program that would enable certain low and moderate income residents to purchase prescription drugs at reduced prices. The program would be overseen by the state Department of Health Services, authorizing it to contract with pharmacies to sell prescription drugs at agreed-upon discounts and negotiate rebates with drug manufacturers.

When likely voters are read Prop. 78’s official title and ballot summary and asked how they would vote if the election were being held today, 49% say they would be inclined to vote Yes, 31% are inclined to vote No and 20% are undecided. Last June voter sentiment was even more supportive – 57% Yes to 26% No.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences on Prop. 78, the “Discount Prescription Drugs” initiative, after being read its official title and summary (among likely voters)

	<u>Late August</u>	<u>Mid June</u>
Yes	49%	57%
No	31	26
Undecided	20	17

Proposition 79

Prop. 79 is officially called the “Prescription Drug Discounts: State Negotiated Rebates” initiative and is sponsored by the consumer advocacy and labor groups. It calls for providing prescription drug discounts to Californians with qualifying incomes to be funded through rebates from participating drug manufacturers negotiated by the California Department of Health Services. It also prohibits Medi-Cal contracts with manufacturers who do not provide Medicaid best prices.

When likely voters are read its official title and ballot summary and asked how they would vote, 42% say they would vote Yes, 34% would vote No and 24% are undecided. This is down slightly from a 48% to 33% preference lead in mid-June.

Table 2
Trend of voter preferences on Prop. 79, the “Prescription Drug Discounts, State-Negotiated Rebates” initiative, after being read its official title and summary (among likely voters)

	<u>Late August</u>	<u>Mid June</u>
Yes	42%	48%
No	34	33
Undecided	24	19

Low awareness of each initiative’s major sponsors

After obtaining voter preferences on Props. 78 and 79, voters were asked about their knowledge of who was backing each initiative. The results show that voters at this stage have a very low recognition of each initiative’s main proponents.

Asked whether they believed the pharmaceutical companies were supporting or opposing Prop. 78, just 13% answered correctly that the major drug companies were backing that initiative. A much larger group (33%) had the incorrect impression that the pharmaceutical companies were opposing the initiative, while 54% said they didn’t know.

Asked whether they believed consumer advocacy and labor groups were supporting or opposing Prop. 79, just 21% accurately report that they are backing this initiative. Another 13% incorrectly believe these groups were opposing Prop. 79, while 66% said they didn’t know.

Table 3
Voter awareness of the major sponsors of Props. 78 and 79 (among likely voters)

	<u>Total likely voters</u>	<u>Yes voter</u>	<u>No voter</u>	<u>Undecided*</u>
<u>Are major pharmaceutical companies supporting or opposing Prop. 78?</u>				
Supporting	13%	13%	20%	2%
Opposing	33	40	35	11
Don’t know	54	47	45	87
<u>Are consumer advocacy and labor groups supporting or opposing Prop. 79?</u>				
Supporting	21%	26%	23%	11%
Opposing	13	12	21	4
No opinion	66	62	56	85

* Small sample size

Knowledge of sponsorship has big potential impact on voting intentions

The *Poll* also attempted to measure how knowledge of Prop. 78's and Prop. 79's major backers could potentially influence voter preferences toward each initiative. Voters were told that the major pharmaceutical companies were supporting Prop. 78 and asked what effect, if any, this would potentially have on their vote. Overall, 19% say this would make them more likely to vote Yes, but more than twice as many (44%) said this would make them more likely to vote No. Another one in four (23%) report that drug companies' support for Prop. 78 would have no effect on how they would vote and 14% had no opinion.

The potentially negative impact that drug companies' support of Prop. 78 has on voters can also be seen when examining how this affects the preferences of the subgroups of voters initially inclined to vote Yes, No or who are undecided. Greater than one in three Yes voters (36%) and 39% of undecided voters report being more inclined to vote No after they being told of the drug companies' support of Prop. 78. These proportions are about three times as great as the proportions of No voters (12%) or undecided voters (11%) who say they would be more inclined to vote Yes after being told of the pharmaceutical companies' support of Prop. 78.

Voters were also told that consumer advocacy and labor groups were supporting Prop. 79 and asked what effect, if any, this would have on their vote. This information tends to have a more positive than negative effect on voter intentions on Prop. 79. Overall, 40% say that knowledge of who's backing Prop. 79 makes them more likely to vote Yes, while 24% say it makes them more likely to vote No. Another quarter (24%) say that the support of these groups has no effect on their vote on Prop. 79, and 12% have no opinion.

In addition, only 11% of those initially inclined to vote Yes on Prop. 79 and just 10% of undecided voters say the support of consumer advocacy and labor groups makes them more inclined to vote No. This compares to 19% of No voters and 38% of undecided voters who say these groups' support for Prop. 79 would make them more inclined to vote Yes.

Table 4
The potential impact that knowledge of Props 78 and 79’s
sponsors has on voter intentions
(among likely voters)

	Total likely voters	Yes voter	No voter	Unde- cided*
<u>After being told that major pharmaceutical companies are supporting Prop. 78 how would this affect your vote?</u>				
More likely to vote Yes	19%	26%	12%	11%
More likely to vote No	44	36	60	39
No effect	23	26	21	19
No opinion	14	12	7	31
<u>After being told that consumer advocacy and labor groups are supporting Prop. 79 how would this affect your vote?</u>				
More likely to vote Yes	40%	58%	19%	38%
More likely to vote No	24	11	51	10
No effect	24	22	24	29
No opinion	12	9	6	23

* Small sample size

The survey also asked voters whether they or members of their family would personally benefit from either of the prescription drug discount programs. Statewide, one in three likely voters (33%) believe they would benefit. These voters as a group are much more inclined to support both Props. 78 and 79, with 71% currently backing Prop. 78 and 60% supporting Prop. 79.

In another question dealing with prescription drug discount programs, voters were asked who they thought should have responsibility for administering drug discount programs – state government, federal government, or the pharmaceutical companies. Among likely voters 43% preferred state government administering the program, 23% support federal government jurisdiction, while 19% favor having the pharmaceutical companies themselves administer the program.

Proposition 73 (Parental Notification of Teen Abortion)

Another initiative to be voted on in the November special election is Prop. 73, the “Termination of Minor’s Pregnancy, Waiting Period and Parental Notification” initiative. It would require parental notification before abortion for a minor under age 18, except in cases of medical emergency or with a parental or judicial waiver.

Currently, voter opinions on Prop. 73 are evenly divided, with 45% intending to vote Yes and 45% saying they would vote No. This is not much different than voter preferences observed last June, when 48% were in favor and 43% opposed.

Republicans, conservatives, Protestants, and born-again Christians are the voter subgroups most in favor of the parental notification initiative. Those most opposed include Democrats, liberals, non-Christians and those with no religious preference.

Table 5
Voter preferences regarding Prop. 73 (Parental Notification of Teen Pregnancy)
(among likely voters)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Late August – total	45%	45	10
Mid June - total	48%	43	9
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	29%	62	9
Republicans	61%	28	11
Non-partisans/others*	44%	46	10
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	47%	43	10
Female	42%	48	10
<u>Age</u>			
18-39	41%	51	8
40-49	51%	42	7
50 or older	44%	44	12
<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	46%	43	11
Latino/Black/Asian*	42%	49	9
<u>Marital status</u>			
Married/living together	49%	40	11
Never married/separated/divorced/widowed	41%	49	10
<u>Education</u>			
Not a college grad	49%	40	11
College graduate	41%	49	10
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	61%	28	11
Moderate	44%	45	11
Liberal*	19%	76	5
<u>Religion</u>			
Protestant	55%	34	11
Catholic*	46%	43	11
Other/no preference*	31%	59	10
<u>Born-again Christian</u>			
Yes*	64%	29	7
No	38%	51	11

* Small sample size.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a survey of a random sample of 686 California adults contacted by telephone August 19-29, 2005 in English and Spanish. The survey included 465 registered voters, of whom 325 were considered likely voters in the November 2005 special election.

Samples of households were selected using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating 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 permits access to all landline telephone numbers statewide, both listed and unlisted, and gives each residential phone listing an equal chance of being selected.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time preferences regarding each ballot initiative have a sampling error of +/- 5.8 percentage points.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 73, an initiative on the November statewide special election having to do with abortion and parental notification?

(As you know) Prop. 73 is the "Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before Termination of Minor's Pregnancy" initiative. It amends the state constitution defining and prohibiting abortion by minors under the age of 18 until 48 hours after a physician notifies the minor's parent or legal guardian, except in cases of a medical emergency or with a parental or judicial waiver. It also mandates reporting requirements and authorizes monetary damages against physicians for violation. If the election were being held today, would you vote yes or no on Prop. 73?

Have you seen, read or heard anything about either of two initiatives, Propositions 78 and 79, on the November statewide special election having to do with prescription drug discounts?

Prop. 78 is called the "Discount on Prescription Drugs" initiative. It establishes a discount prescription drug program for certain low and moderate income Californians. It authorizes the Department of Health Services to contract for discounts with participating pharmacies and for rebates with participating drug manufacturers. Fiscal impact: State costs in the millions to the low tens of millions of dollars annually. Unknown but potentially significant savings for state and county health programs. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 78?

Prop. 79 is called the "Prescription Drugs Discounts, State-Negotiated Rebates" initiative. It provides drug discounts to Californians with qualifying incomes funded by state-negotiated drug manufacturer rebates. It prohibits Medi-Cal contracts with manufacturers who do not provide Medicaid best prices. Fiscal impact: State costs in the low tens of millions of dollars annually. Unknown but potentially significant net costs or savings for Medi-Cal, as well as savings for state and county health programs. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 79?

As far as you know, are the major pharmaceutical companies generally supporting or opposing Proposition 78?

It happens that many of the major pharmaceutical companies are supporting Proposition 78. Does their support make you more likely to vote Yes or more likely to vote No on Proposition 78?

As far as you know, are consumer advocacy and labor groups generally supporting or opposing Proposition 79?

It happens that consumer advocacy and labor groups are supporting Proposition 79. Does their support make you more likely to vote Yes or more likely to vote No on Proposition 79?

Do you think that you or others in your family would personally benefit from either of the drug discount programs?

Ideally, who do you think should have the responsibility for administering prescription drug discount programs – the federal government, the state government or the pharmaceutical companies themselves?