

# 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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### **BROAD SUPPORT FOR BASEBALL'S STEROIDS PROBE. MOST CALIFORNIANS BELIEVE BARRY BONDS USED STEROIDS AND SHOULD BE PENALIZED.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In recent months there have been increasing media reports and much publicity alleging that San Francisco Giants star Barry Bonds and other well-known major league players used steroids to enhance their performance on the field. In reaction, Major League Baseball announced the launching of a formal investigation into these allegations, headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell.

The latest *Field Poll* asked a cross-section of 917 California voters, including 383 self-identified baseball fans, about their opinions about these issues. Following are the survey's main findings:

- More than three-fourths (77%) of voters in this state believe that baseball's probe into steroid use is a good thing, while just 13% feel it is a bad thing.
- A majority of Californians (58%) think Bonds used steroids to enhance his performance on the field. Just 10% think he didn't, and 32% offer no opinion. The proportion believing Bonds used steroids increases to 68% among baseball fans.
- By a greater than two to one margin (64% to 26%) Californians support penalizing Bonds in some way if the current baseball probe concludes that he knowingly used steroids. San Francisco Giants fans hold a contrary view, with 52% opposed to imposing any sanctions against Bonds and just 37% supportive of penalizing him.
- There is no clear consensus among Californians as to how baseball should penalize Bonds if he is found to have knowingly used steroids. About four in ten support his paying a large fine (43%), another 40% favor putting an asterisk next to his baseball records, and 38% think he should be prohibited from entering baseball's Hall of Fame. Giants fans are much less likely than others to support imposing any of these sanctions against Bonds.
- Many Californians believe steroid use was fairly widespread among professional baseball players five years ago. Greater than one in five voters (21%) believe that more than 30% of all ballplayers were using performance-enhancing substances at that time. Voters average (median) estimate of the percentage of ball players using steroids five years ago is 16%.

**Strong support for baseball’s probe into steroid use by players**

Three-fourths (77%) of California voters think it is a good thing that Major League Baseball is conducting a formal investigation into allegations of steroid use by players, while just 13% feel it is a bad thing.

Support for baseball’s probe into steroid use by players receives the overwhelming support of baseball fans statewide, as well as the fans of different teams, including those of the San Francisco Giants.

**Table 1**  
**Opinion of major league baseball’s formal investigation**  
**into allegations of steroid use by players**  
**(among California voters)**

	<b>Total voters statewide</b>	<b>Baseball fans*</b>	<b>Team followed most</b>		
			<b>San Francisco Giants</b>	<b>Other National league</b>	<b>Other American league</b>
Good thing	77%	79%	68%	87%	79%
Bad thing	13	15	28	11	11
Mixed	4	4	3	1	10
No opinion	6	2	1	1	**

\* *Baseball fans defined as those following baseball a lot or some.*

\*\* *Less than ½ of 1%*

**Majority believes Barry Bonds used steroids**

When Californians are asked if they believe Bonds used steroids to enhance his performance on the field, 58% believe he did, while just 10% do not. Another 32% do not offer an opinion.

The proportion believing Bonds used steroids increases to 68% among baseball fans. Even a greater than two-to-one majority of San Francisco Giants fans thinks Bonds used these substances.

**Table 2**  
**Do you think San Francisco Giants star Barry Bonds**  
**used steroids to enhance his performance**  
**(among California voters)**

	<b>Total voters statewide</b>	<b>Baseball fans*</b>	<b>Team followed most</b>		
			<b>San Francisco Giants</b>	<b>Other National league</b>	<b>Other American league</b>
Yes	58%	68%	55%	72%	76%
No	10	12	25	9	5
Don’t know	32	20	20	19	19

\* *Baseball fans defined as those following baseball a lot or some.*

**Most Californians (except Giants fans) think Bonds should be penalized**

Nearly two in three of this state’s voters (64%) think that Bonds should be penalized in some way if the baseball probe concludes that he knowingly used steroids.

However, there is no clear consensus among Californians as to how Bonds should be penalized. The penalties receiving the most support include having Bonds pay a large fine (43%), placing an asterisk next to his baseball records (40%), and prohibiting him from entering baseball’s Hall of Fame (38%). Californians are less supportive of the idea of prohibiting Bonds from playing in any future major league games or voiding all of his baseball records.

Fans of the San Francisco Giants hold a decidedly contrary view when it comes to penalizing Bonds. Among Giants fans only 37% favor sanctioning their star in any way, and fewer than 30% support any of the possible penalties posed in the survey.

**Table 3**  
**If the baseball probe concludes that Bonds knowingly used steroids,**  
**should baseball formally penalize him; if so, how?**  
**(among California voters)**

	<b>Total voters statewide</b>	<b>Baseball fans*</b>	<b>Team followed most</b>		
			<b>San Francisco Giants</b>	<b>Other National league</b>	<b>Other American league</b>
Should <u>not</u> penalize Bonds	26%	32%	52%	24%	24%
<u>Should penalize Bonds</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>37</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>67</u>
Pay a large fine	43%	38%	20%	45%	44%
Put asterisk next to his baseball records	40	42	29	46	52
Prohibit him from entering the Hall of Fame	38	33	21	37	41
Prohibit him from playing any future major league games	29	23	15	22	31
Void all of his baseball records	25	21	10	26	24
No opinion	10	8	11	6	9

\* Baseball fans defined as those following baseball a lot or some.

\*\* Less than ½ of 1%

**Steroid use seen as being widespread among ballplayers five years ago**

Californians think that steroid use was fairly widespread among major league players five years ago, although the public's estimates are wide-ranging. At the low end, just 4% believe that fewer than 1% of all players used these substances five years ago, while at the high end greater than one in five (21%) believe more than 30% of players were using them. Voters average (median) estimate as to the percentage of ballplayers using steroids five years ago is 16%.

**Table 4**  
**What proportion of all major league baseball players**  
**do you think used steroids 5 years ago**  
**(among California voters)**

	<b>Total voters statewide</b>	<b>Team followed most</b>			
		<b>Baseball fans*</b>	<b>San Francisco Giants</b>	<b>Other National league</b>	<b>Other American league</b>
Less than 1%	4%	5%	5%	6%	2%
1% – 10%	26	32	32	32	32
11% – 20%	17	20	21	19	21
21% – 30%	14	16	17	14	16
More than 30%	21	18	19	19	20
No opinion	18	9	6	10	9
Average (median) estimate	16%	14%	15%	14%	15%

\* Baseball fans defined as those following baseball a lot or some.

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of Californians registered to vote. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period April 3–10, 2006. A total of 1,431 California adults were reached and screened by telephone, of whom 917 reported being registered to vote.

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

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.3 percentage points. There are other possible sources of error in any survey other than sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sampling, or sequencing or through undetected omissions or errors in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

### **Questions Asked**

Would you say you have a lot of interest, some interest, or little or no interest in professional baseball? (IF A LOT OR SOME) Which California baseball team do you root for or follow the most?

Major League Baseball recently announced that it would launch a formal investigation into allegations of steroid use by players. Generally speaking, do you think this investigation is a good thing or a bad thing?

One of the players reportedly under investigation for steroid use is San Francisco Giants star Barry Bonds. Based on what you may have seen or heard, do you think Bonds used steroids as a way to enhance his performance?

If you had to guess, about what proportion of all major league baseball players do you think were using steroids five years ago – less than 1 percent, 1 to 10 percent, 11 to 20 percent, 21 to 30 percent, or more than 30 percent?

If the baseball probe concludes that Bonds knowingly used steroids, do you think baseball should or should not formally penalize him for his actions?

I am going to read some penalties that major league baseball could impose upon Bonds if it concludes he knowingly used steroids, and for each please tell me whether you favor or oppose it. (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER) Do you favor or oppose this? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS)