

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

Field Research Corporation

222 Sutter Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94108-4411
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541
EMAIL: fieldpoll@field.com
www.field.com/fieldpollonline

FOR ADVANCE PUBLICATION BY SUBSCRIBERS ONLY.

COPYRIGHT 2007 BY FIELD RESEARCH CORPORATION.

Release #2229

Release Date: **Tuesday, April 10, 2007**

VOTERS FAVOR CREATING OPPORTUNITIES TO LEGALIZE THE STATUS OF ILLEGAL RESIDENTS AND BACK POLICIES AIMED AT REDUCING THE FLOW OF IMMIGRANTS INTO THE COUNTRY. NARROW MAJORITY SUPPORTS RECENT FEDERAL ROUND-UPS OF ILLEGAL RESIDENTS. GROWING OPPOSITION TO A BORDER FENCE.

IMPORTANT: Contract for this service is subject to revocation if publication or broadcast takes place before release date or if contents are divulged to persons outside of subscriber staff prior to release time. (ISSN 0195-4520)

By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

California voters continue to view illegal immigration as a serious problem, hold some rather clear views about what should be done in many areas.

When asked their views on a number of proposals being debated among Congressional leaders and the White House, large majorities support creating programs to legalize the status of illegal immigrants who have resided here for a number of years (83%), and establishing temporary worker programs to allow immigrants to work here in the future (67%).

Large majorities also back policies aimed at reducing the flow of immigrants into the country, such as increasing the number of federal agents patrolling the border (71%) and stiffening penalties on those who hire illegal immigrants (63%).

However, there is greater contentiousness about the new policy of having federal agents round up and deport illegal immigrants, with 53% in favor and 40% opposed. In addition, opposition is growing toward the idea of building a wall along major sections of the U.S.-Mexico border, with 59% now opposed, up from 48% last year.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* measuring California voter opinions about the issue of illegal immigration.

Illegal immigration – how serious a problem?

Most Californians continue to consider illegal immigration a serious problem, with 49% rating it very serious and 28% somewhat serious.

Almost seven in ten (68%) Republicans describe illegal immigration as very serious, significantly greater than the 40% Democrats and 35% of non-partisans who feel this way.

Voters living in Southern California outside of Los Angeles County are more likely than residents in other parts of the state to consider illegal immigration to be a very serious problem.

Table 1
Seriousness of the illegal immigration problem in California
(among registered voters)

	<u>Very serious</u>	<u>Somewhat serious</u>	<u>Not serious</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
March 2007	49%	28	22	1
July 2006	53%	30	16	1
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	47%	22	28	3
Other Southern California	58%	27	14	1
San Francisco Bay Area	34%	37	28	1
Other Northern California	50%	27	19	4
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	40%	31	18	1
Republicans	68%	20	12	*
Non-partisans/others	35%	33	28	4
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Conservative	70%	18	9	3
Middle-of-the-road	46%	32	21	1
Liberal	27%	33	38	2

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Reactions to specific proposals

Six proposals dealing with illegal immigration which have been discussed and argued by state and national leaders, as well as advocates on all sides of the issue, were posed to voters in the current survey. Most can be compared to previous *Field Poll* surveys conducted over the past year.

There has been a consistency of opinion on four of the six proposals. For example:

- Four in five voters (83%) continue to favor creating a program allowing illegal immigrants who have been living in the U.S. for a number of years an opportunity to stay in this country and apply for citizenship if they have a job, learn English and pay back taxes. This is similar to 80% support for this approach found last July, and up slightly from 75% who felt this way last April.
- Two-thirds of voters (67%) support creating temporary worker programs for illegal immigrants that would legalize their status and allow future immigrants to work in this country, up slightly from 60% support last April.
- Seven in ten (71%) favor increasing the number of federal agents patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border, identical to what was found last year.
- About two in three Californians (63%) advocate imposing stiff penalties on employers and individuals who hire illegal immigrants, similar to 60% support found in two previous 2006 surveys.

On the other hand, there is growing opposition (59%) to the idea of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border. This is a significant increase from last year, when 48% were opposed and 47% were in favor.

In addition, one of the more contentious issues measured in the current survey is the new policy of federal immigration agents rounding up, detaining and deporting immigrants found to have entered the country illegally. When asked about this, a narrow majority of voters (53%) is supportive, while four in ten are opposed (40%).

Table 2
Opinions of California voters about specific proposals aimed
at dealing with the problem of illegal immigration
(among registered voters)

	<u>Favor</u>	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<hr/>			
Create a program that would allow illegal immigrants who have been living in the U.S. for a number of years an opportunity to stay in this country and apply for citizenship if they have a job, learned English and paid back taxes			
March 2007	83%	14	3
July 2006	80%	16	4
April 2006	75%	21	4
<hr/>			
Increase the number of federal border agents patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border			
March 2007	71%	25	4
July 2006	71%	26	3
<hr/>			
Create temporary worker programs for illegal immigrants that would legalize their status and allow future immigrants to work in this country			
March 2007	67%	28	5
April 2006	60%	34	6
<hr/>			
Impose stiff penalties on employers and individuals who hire illegal immigrants			
March 2007	63%	31	6
July 2006	60%	35	5
April 2006	60%	34	6
<hr/>			
Continue the new policy of having federal immigration agents round up, detain and deport immigrants found to be living here illegally			
March 2007	53%	40	7
<hr/>			
Build a wall along major sections of the U.S.-Mexico border			
March 2007	37%	59	4
April 2006	47%	48	5

Differences between the views of white non-Hispanics and Latinos

Latinos and white non-Hispanics hold similar views on a number of the policy proposals. For example, large majorities of both groups favor creating a path to citizenship for long-time illegal residents and creating a temporary worker program that would legalize their status and allow future immigrants to work here.

In addition, fewer than four in ten white non-Hispanics (39%) and Latinos (30%) back the idea of building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Latinos (54%) are somewhat less supportive than white non-Hispanics (75%) about increasing the number of federal agents patrolling the border, although majorities of both groups are in favor.

However, Latino and white non-Hispanic voters hold opposite positions on two other policies – stiffening penalties on those who hire illegal immigrants and rounding up, detaining and deporting illegal immigrants. While majorities of white non-Hispanics (68% and 58%, respectively) favor each of these policies, among Latinos just 43% and 35% are supportive.

Table 3
Proportions of California voters who favor specific proposals aimed at dealing with the problem of illegal immigration – by racial/ethnic subgroup (among registered voters)

	% favor		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>White non-Hispanics</u>	<u>Latinos</u>
Create a program that would allow illegal immigrants who have been living in the U.S. for a number of years an opportunity to stay in this country and apply for citizenship if they have a job, learned English and paid back taxes	83%	82%	89%
Increase the number of federal border agents patrolling the U.S.-Mexico border	71	75	54
Create temporary worker programs for illegal immigrants that would legalize their status and allow future immigrants to work in this country	67	65	75
Impose stiff penalties on employers and individuals who hire illegal immigrants	63	68	43
Continue the new policy of having federal immigration agents round up, detain and deport immigrants found to be living here illegally	53	58	35
Build a wall along major sections of the U.S.-Mexico border	37	39	30

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 570 registered voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish March 20-31, 2007. Up to eight attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. When drawing samples from registration-based lists, *The Field Poll* stratifies the sample by region and age to insure that the poll includes adequate representations of voters across each major region of the state and across different age categories. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the results are weighted slightly to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on sample size. According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 4.5 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, the sequencing of questions, the rigor with which sampling procedures are implemented, as well as other factors.

Questions Asked

How serious a problem do you think illegal immigration is in California today – very serious, somewhat serious, not too serious or not at all serious?

I am going to read some proposals that have been made relating to the illegal immigration situation, and for each please tell me whether you favor or oppose this policy. (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Do you favor or oppose this policy? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS READ)