

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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**LARGE MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIANS
DISAPPROVE OF CONGRESS' JOB
PERFORMANCE. VIEWS OF SPEAKER
PELOSI BECOMING MORE NEGATIVE.
FAVORABLE APPRAISALS OF FEINSTEIN
AND BOXER DIP SOMEWHAT.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

A large majority of California voters disapprove of the overall job being done by U.S. Congress.

While the voting public is very critical of the job performance of both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, Republican representatives are viewed somewhat more unfavorably than their Democratic counterparts.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's ratings have declined over the past seven months and, for the first time, are more negative than positive.

The favorable views that voters have of U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer continue, although they too have declined somewhat.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted October 11-21 among a random sample of 1,201 registered voters in California.

View of Congress remains very negative

Congress' overall job performance continues to be seen in a largely negative light by this state's voters. Currently, just 22% of California voters approve and 64% disapprove of what our national legislators are doing.

During the past fifteen years there have been six previous times when fewer than 30% of Californians have approved of the job Congress has been doing. These have included August (20%), April 2006 (24%), May 2006 (23%), October 1999 (30%), February 1996 (25%) and July 1992 (24%).

There was an extended period between August 2000 and April 2003 when more California voters approved than disapproved of the job the Congress was doing. However, views of Congress turned negative in 2004 and have remained that way over the past three years

In today's survey, large majorities in all partisan groups disapprove of how Congress is performing – Democrats 58%, Republicans 70% and non-partisans 63%.

Table 1
Overall job performance of the U.S. Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	22%	64	14
August 2007	20%	66	14
March 2007	35%	50	15
May 2006	23%	64	13
April 2006	24%	66	10
August 2004	33%	52	15
April 2003	50%	39	11
April 2002	48%	39	13
January 2002	54%	33	13
December 2001	57%	32	11
May 2001	51%	38	11
January 2001	53%	35	12
August 2000	54%	34	12
June 2000	40%	48	12
February 2000	42%	42	16
October 1999	30%	60	10
March 1999	37%	54	9
August 1998	57%	33	10
August 1997	38%	51	11
February 1997	36%	46	18
June 1996	38%	59	3
February 1996	25%	68	7
September 1995	36%	58	6
May 1995	44%	51	5
September 1994	33%	62	5
July 1992	24%	71	5
January 1992	32%	67	1
Party (October 2007)			
Democrats	24%	58	18
Republicans	20%	70	10
Non-partisans/others	22%	63	15

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys conducted prior to 1997 were completed among a cross-section of all California adults, not just registered voters.

Job appraisals of Congressional Democrats and Congressional Republicans

When voters are asked to rate the jobs that congressional Democrats and Republicans are doing, the latter group is rated more unfavorably than Democrats.

About one-third (34%) of all voters approve of the job that House Democrats are doing, but just 20% apply this rating to the Republicans.

Almost one-half (48%) of Democratic voters approve of the job that their party members are doing in Washington, while 37% disapprove. Republican voters are more critical of their own party members – 19% approve and 66% disapprove.

Table 2
Job performance of the Democrats in Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	34%	51	15
August 2007	33%	54	13
March 2007	47%	40	13
August 2004	32%	50	18
April 2003	40%	46	14
April 2002	46%	39	15
May 2001	51%	37	12
January 2001	57%	31	12
June 2000	46%	39	15
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	48%	37	15
Republicans	19%	66	15
Others/non-partisans	30%	52	18

Table 3
Job performance of the Republicans in Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	20%	64	16
August 2007	19%	69	12
March 2007	19%	70	11
August 2004	32%	52	16
April 2003	46%	42	12
April 2002	42%	45	13
May 2001	42%	47	11
January 2001	49%	39	12
June 2000	32%	55	13
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	16%	70	14
Republicans	29%	53	18
Others/non-partisans	14%	68	18

Pelosi's rating becoming more negative

California voters are now more negative than positive in their assessment of the job that Democratic Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi is doing, with 35% approving of her performance and 40% disapproving. Last march 48% approved and 27% disapproved of Pelosi.

Democratic voters, by a 48% to 26% margin, continue to approve of Pelosi's performance. Non-partisans are evenly divided, 34% approving and 35% disapproving. However, a huge 61% to 19% majority of Republicans rate her unfavorably.

Table 4
Job performance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	35%	40	25
August 2007	39%	37	24
March 2007	48%	27	25
August 2004*	37%	29	34
April 2003*	34%	25	41
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	48%	26	26
Republicans	19%	61	20
Non-partisans/others	34%	35	31
<u>Region (October 2007)</u>			
Los Angeles County	40%	28	32
Other Southern California	27%	45	26
San Francisco Bay Area	43%	40	17
Other Northern California	31%	46	23

* Previous measures were asked with regard to Pelosi's role as House Minority Leader.

Feinstein's and Boxer's ratings decline some but remain more positive than negative

Senator Dianne Feinstein's current job marks are 51% approve and 31% disapprove. While positive, this rating is down somewhat from higher appraisals found in earlier surveys this year, but are close to her 25-year average

Table 5
Trend of Dianne Feinstein's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	51%	31	18
August 2007	56%	28	16
March 2007	61%	27	12
July 2006	51%	32	17
February 2005	51%	29	20
June 2005	54%	26	20
February 2005	50%	29	21
August 2004	55%	29	16
May 2004	53%	23	24
July 2003	55%	31	14
April 2003	49%	34	17
2002 (Average)	49%	26	25
2001 (Average)	57%	27	16
2000 (Average)	57%	27	16
1999 (Average)	51%	28	21
1998 (Average)	56%	27	17
1997 (Average)	47%	35	18
1996 (Average)	46%	36	18
1995 (Average)	50%	40	10
1994 (Average)	47%	39	14
1993 (Average)	47%	32	21
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	66%	16	18
Republicans	34%	52	14
Non-partisans/others	50%	30	20

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Senator Barbara Boxer's job performance appraisal is also somewhat less favorable now than it was earlier this year. Currently, 44% approve of the job that Boxer is doing and 35% disapprove.

Table 6
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
October 2007	44%	35	21
August 2007	48%	33	19
March 2007	54%	31	15
July 2006	45%	34	21
February 2005	41%	34	25
June 2005	47%	30	23
February 2005	49%	36	15
August 2004	49%	36	15
May 2004	44%	33	23
July 2003	49%	35	16
April 2003	43%	35	22
2002 (Average)	45%	29	26
2001 (Average)	49%	31	20
2000 (Average)	50%	30	20
1999 (Average)	45%	35	20
1998 (Average)	45%	29	26
1997 (Average)	41%	35	24
1996 (Average)	42%	36	22
1995 (Average)	45%	39	16
1994 (Average)	43%	37	20
1993 (Average)	41%	35	24
<u>Party (October 2007)</u>			
Democrats	63%	17	20
Republicans	22%	59	19
Non-partisans/others	40%	31	29

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,201 registered voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish October 11-21, 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. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue, the overall sample was divided into two random subsamples of 622 and 579 voters each on some questions.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. 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 1,201 registered voters are subject to a sampling error of +/- 2.9 percentage points, while findings from the random subsamples have a sampling error of +/- 4.1 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

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is doing its job?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

What about the Democrats in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Democrats are doing their job?

What about the Republicans in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Republicans are doing their job?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?