

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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**BY A 51% TO 42% MARGIN VOTERS
APPEAR READY TO VOTE NO ON
PROPOSITION 8, THE "LIMIT ON
MARRIAGE" CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The issue of same-sex marriage, which has long been in the forefront of social and political discussions in California, has become very salient this year.

In May the California Supreme Court struck down an existing state law enacted by voters in 2000 that limited marriage to unions only between a man and a woman. Since the High Court's ruling, many gay and lesbian couples both within the state and around the country have taken their vows and become officially married in California.

In June groups opposed to the legal recognition of same-sex marriage qualified a constitutional amendment, Proposition 8, for the November ballot, which if approved would again provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California.

In a statewide survey completed this week among 672 likely voters, *The Field Poll* finds that if the election were being held now, more voters say they would vote No (51%) on Prop. 8 than would vote Yes (42%).

Initial awareness and vote predispositions

There is relatively high voter awareness of Proposition 8 among the state's voting electorate. Statewide 62% of likely voters report having seen or heard something about the proposed constitutional amendment.

When all voters regardless of any prior awareness are read Prop. 8's official ballot description, 51% say they would vote No, while 42% would vote Yes.

Democratic and Republican voter sentiments are poles apart on this issue. Sixty-three percent of Democrats intend to vote No, while 68% of Republicans are ready to vote Yes. Non-partisans are overwhelmingly on the No side – 66% to 27%.

There are also big differences in voting preferences by region. Voters living in California's coastal counties, which represents 69% of all likely voters, oppose Prop. 8 56% to 37%. Opinions are almost reversed among Californians living in inland counties, where supporters outnumber opponents 54% to 40%.

The strongest opposition to Prop. 8 is found in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, where voters oppose Prop. 8 by a two and one-half to one margin (67% to 26%). They are joined by voters in Los Angeles County who are also on the No side, 51% to 41%.

By contrast, voters in the Central Valley and in other parts of Northern California outside of the Bay Area are opposed on the order of five to four. In Southern California areas outside Los Angeles County, preferences are more evenly split (50% No and 45% Yes).

Women voters are lining up on the No side of Prop. 8 to a greater extent than men – 54% No and 40% Yes among women vs. 49% No and 45% Yes among men.

By age, opposition to Prop. 8 is greatest among younger voters under age 30, as well as among "baby boomers" in the 50 – 64 age bracket. Voters in other age groups are more evenly divided.

White non-Hispanics, African-Americans and Asians are lining up on the No side by five to four margins. This contrasts with the voting preferences of Latinos, who are supporting Prop. 8 five to four.

There are also big differences by religion. Protestants favor Prop. 8 56% to 40%, while Catholics are evenly divided. By contrast, voters affiliated with other religions or who have no religious preference are opposing Prop. 8 by wide margins.

Evangelical Christians favor the amendment better than two to one, 66% to 31%. However, non-evangelicals are on the No side 59% to 34%.

There is greater opposition to Prop. 8 among voters who personally know or work with gays or lesbians. This group, which includes nearly three in four voters statewide, opposes Prop. 8 54% to 40%. On the other hand, those who have no personal familiarity with gays or lesbians favor the amendment by a narrow margin.

Table 1
Initial voter preferences regarding Proposition 8, the
"Limit on Marriage" constitutional amendment
(among Californians likely to vote in the November general election)

	<u>Intending to vote...</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Statewide	42%	51	7
<u>Party</u>			
(.43) Democrats	30%	63	7
(.34) Republicans	68%	27	5
(.23) Non-partisans/others	27%	66	7
<u>Region</u>			
(.69) Coastal counties	37%	56	7
(.31) Inland counties	54%	40	6
<u>Area</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	41%	51	8
(.33) Other Southern California	45%	50	5
(.18) Central Valley	54%	39	7
(.20) San Francisco Bay Area	26%	67	7
(.05) Other Northern California*	57%	43	**
<u>Gender</u>			
(.47) Male	45%	49	6
(.53) Female	40%	54	6
<u>Age</u>			
(.13) 18 – 29*	41%	55	4
(.18) 30 – 39	43%	46	11
(.21) 40 – 49	46%	49	5
(.29) 50 – 64	38%	57	5
(.19) 65 or older	46%	47	7
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.63) White non-Hispanic	41%	54	5
(.17) Latino	49%	38	13
(.20) African-American/Asian	41%	54	5
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.19) Strongly conservative	87%	9	4
(.10) Moderately conservative	69%	16	15
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	34%	59	7
(.12) Moderately liberal	14%	79	7
(.14) Strongly liberal	13%	86	1
<u>Religion</u>			
(.39) Protestant	56%	40	4
(.21) Catholic	44%	45	11
(.21) Other	33%	60	7
(.19) No preference	21%	76	3
<u>Evangelical Christian</u>			
(.24) Yes	66%	31	3
(.76) No	34%	59	7
<u>Personally know or work with gays/lesbians</u>			
(.74) Yes	40%	54	6
(.26) No	48%	45	7

* Small sample base.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 672 Californians likely to vote in the November general election. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish July 8-14, 2008. Up to six 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. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews were 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 were weighted slightly to re-align the overall sample to characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 672 likely voters is +/- 3.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

The maximum sampling error is based on percentages in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 8, the state constitutional amendment that would place limits on marriages in California to appear on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 8 is the "Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment." It amends the California constitution to provide that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Proposition 8, the Limit on Marriage Constitutional Amendment?