

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

601 California Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94108-2814
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541
EMAIL: fieldpoll@field.com
www.field.com/fieldpollonline

FOR ADVANCE PUBLICATION BY SUBSCRIBERS ONLY.

COPYRIGHT 2008 BY FIELD RESEARCH CORPORATION.

Release #2290

Release Date and Time: **6:00 a.m., Tuesday, September 30, 2008**

VOTERS INITIALLY SUPPORT PROP. 3, CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL BOND INITIATIVE, BUT MANY ARE UNDECIDED.

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 are initially lining up in favor of Proposition 3, the Children's Hospital Bond initiative. At present 47% of likely voters say they intend to vote Yes, while 35% are on the No side. However, a relatively large proportion of voters (18%) are undecided.

Awareness of the initiative among likely voters is low. Just 18% report having seen or heard anything about the initiative prior to participating in the survey. Voters familiar with the initiative tend to be more supportive of Prop. 3 (58% to 34%), than those unfamiliar with it, (45% to 35%).

The subgroups of the voting population currently most likely to be backing Prop. 3 are Democrats, liberals, younger voters, Latinos, blacks, Los Angeles County residents, and voters living in households making less \$40,000 per year.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted among 830 likely voters statewide in mid-September.

Table 1

**Voter preferences regarding Proposition 3, the Children's Hospital
Bond initiative – overall and by voter awareness of Prop. 3
(among likely voters)**

| | Total | Prior awareness of Prop. 3 | |
|-----------|-------|----------------------------|------------------|
| | | Yes, familiar | No, not aware |
| Yes | 47% | 58% | 45% |
| No | 35 | 34 | 35 |
| Undecided | 18 | 8 | 20 |

The California HealthCare Foundation provided additional grant funding to the poll to permit a more detailed examination of voter opinions about the initiative. Findings from these additional questions follow.

Reasons given for supporting Prop. 3

Voters who voiced support or opposition to Prop. 3 were asked to state in their own words their reasons for their preferences. Answers were recorded verbatim during the survey and later coded into general categories of response.

By far the most common answer given by Yes voters for backing Prop. 3 (56%) is that they want “to help or take care of the kids.” Other frequently cited reasons include the view that “more money should be spent building or rebuilding hospitals” (23%) and “children’s hospitals provide services that other hospitals don’t” (16%).

Table 2a
Volunteered reasons given by Yes voters for intending to vote Yes on Prop. 3
(among likely voters intending to vote Yes)

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| To help, take care of the kids | 56% |
| More money should be spent building, rebuilding hospitals | 23 |
| Children's hospitals provide services other hospitals don't | 16 |
| Have a child, relations with special needs | 9 |
| Work in health care, know the situation | 2 |
| Will create more jobs in the state | 1 |
| Other mentions (less than 1% each) | 2 |
| No answer | 5 |

Note: Adds to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

Reasons given for opposing Prop. 3

No voters cited three answers more than any others as reasons for opposing Prop. 3. They include: “the state doesn’t have the money, not the right time”, mentioned by 32%, “am voting against most bonds, there’s too much debt already” (23%), and “it’s another tax increase, the state government is trying to do too much, leave to the private sector” (22%).

Table 2b
Volunteered reasons given by No voters for intending to vote No on Prop. 3
(among likely voters intending to vote No)

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| State doesn't have the money / not the right time | 32% |
| Voting against most bonds / too much debt already | 23 |
| It's another tax increase / state government is trying to do too much / leave to private sector | 22 |
| Not enough accountability / Not sure how money will be spent | 8 |
| Other issues are more important, have higher priority | 5 |
| Oppose spending that benefits children of illegal immigrants | 3 |
| Current hospitals are adequate | 1 |
| Other mentions (less than 1% each) | 6 |
| No answer | 9 |

Note: Adds to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.

Differences in preferences across voter subgroups

There are significant differences in voter preferences regarding Prop. 3 across subgroups of the statewide voting population.

For example, while Democrats are backing the hospital bond initiative by a greater than two-to-one margin (59% to 25%), Republicans are opposed 48% to 32%. Similar differences are seen between liberals and conservatives. Political liberals currently back Prop. 3 more than three to one (62% to 20%). By contrast, conservatives are opposed 48% to 36%.

Voters in Los Angeles County, who represent nearly one-quarter of all likely voters statewide, are much more supportive of Prop. 3 than are voters in other parts of the states. Greater than six in ten LA County voters (62%) are currently backing Prop.3, while just 25% are on the No side. In no other region of the state does support for the initiative exceed 44%.

There are also big differences in preferences along racial and ethnic lines. While white non-Hispanics and Asian voters are about evenly divided, large majorities of Latinos (67%) and blacks/African-Americans (70%) are intending to vote Yes on Prop. 3.

Lower-income voters are also supporting the initiative to a much greater extent than middle and upper-income voters. For example, Prop. 3 is supported by a greater than two-to-one margin among voters with household incomes of less than \$40,000. By contrast, voters with incomes of \$80,000 or more are about evenly divided.

Age differences are also prominent. Younger voters under age 30 are backing Prop. 3 by a three-to-one margin (63% to 21%), while voters age 65 or older are more divided in their preferences.

Table 3
Preferences toward Prop. 3 across voter subgroups
(among likely voters)

| | Yes | No | Undecided |
|---------------------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Total | 47% | 35 | 18 |
| <u>Party</u> | | | |
| (.44) Democrats | 59% | 25 | 16 |
| (.36) Republicans | 32% | 48 | 20 |
| (.20) Non-partisans/others | 47% | 34 | 19 |
| <u>Political ideology</u> | | | |
| (.31) Conservative | 36% | 48 | 16 |
| (.40) Middle-of-the-road | 44% | 35 | 21 |
| (.29) Liberal | 62% | 20 | 18 |
| <u>Region</u> | | | |
| (.24) Los Angeles County | 62% | 25 | 13 |
| (.33) Other Southern California | 44% | 38 | 18 |
| (.17) Central Valley | 43% | 40 | 17 |
| (.21) San Francisco Bay Area | 41% | 33 | 26 |
| (.05) Other Northern California | 35% | 46 | 19 |
| <u>Race/ethnicity</u> | | | |
| (.71) White non-Hispanic | 41% | 41 | 18 |
| (.17) Latino | 67% | 16 | 17 |
| (.06) Black/African-American* | 70% | 16 | 14 |
| (.06) Asian/other* | 41% | 37 | 22 |
| <u>Gender</u> | | | |
| (.47) Men | 50% | 35 | 15 |
| (.53) Women | 44% | 34 | 22 |
| <u>Age</u> | | | |
| (.15) 18 – 29 | 63% | 21 | 16 |
| (.15) 30 – 39 | 46% | 28 | 26 |
| (.20) 40 – 49 | 45% | 41 | 14 |
| (.31) 50 – 64 | 43% | 37 | 20 |
| (.19) 65 or older | 43% | 41 | 16 |
| <u>Household income</u> | | | |
| (.08) Less than \$20,000* | 64% | 31 | 5 |
| (.15) \$20,000 - \$39,999 | 54% | 25 | 21 |
| (.31) \$40,000 - \$79,999 | 47% | 33 | 20 |
| (.13) \$80,000 - \$99,999* | 41% | 39 | 20 |
| (.33) \$100,000 or more | 42% | 41 | 17 |

* Small sample base.

Importance attached to pro and con statements about Prop. 3

Four statements about Prop. 3 were posed to respondents in the survey – two pro and two con – and voters were asked to state how important they felt each was to them. The results indicate that at least three in four voters believe each statement is important, with between 47% and 56% rating each as very important.

However, there are big differences between how Yes and No voters rate the relative importance of these statements. For example, each of the two supportive statements is considered very important by about eight in ten Yes voters. One statement maintains that the bonds are needed so that children with life-threatening diseases can continue to receive specialized care, while the second describes the need to purchase the latest technologies and specialized equipment to continue research into childhood diseases. However, among No voters only about one in four consider these statements very important to them.

This same divergent pattern characterizes Yes and No voter reactions to one of the opposing arguments. That statement relates to California already being deeply in debt and not being able to afford to issue more bonds for anything except essential needs. While nearly eight in ten No voters (78%) consider this statement very important, just 34% of Yes voters hold this view.

The second opposing statement concerned the argument that money from the bonds will benefit medical supply hours, pharmaceutical companies, administrators and other special interest groups more than the children. Voter reaction to this statement does not create the same level of differentiation between Yes and No voters, with about half (51%) of No voters considering this very important vs. 43% among Yes voters.

Table 4
Importance of pro and con statements made about Prop. 3 to voters
(among likely voters)

| | <u>Very important</u> | <u>Somewhat important</u> | <u>Not important</u> | <u>No opinion</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| <u>Statements in support of Prop. 3</u> | | | | |
| The bonds are needed so that children with cancer, leukemia, cystic fibrosis or other life-threatening diseases can continue to receive the specialized care they need and can't get anywhere else. | | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>56% %</u> | <u>29</u> | <u>12</u> | <u>3</u> |
| Yes voters | 81% % | 17 | 1 | 1 |
| No voters | 26% % | 39 | 32 | 3 |
| Undecided | 47% % | 42 | 5 | 6 |
| The bonds are needed for children's hospitals to purchase the latest technologies and specialized equipment to continue medical research into childhood diseases. | | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>52% %</u> | <u>33</u> | <u>13</u> | <u>2</u> |
| Yes voters | 76% % | 22 | 2 | * |
| No voters | 24% % | 42 | 32 | 2 |
| Undecided | 42% % | 45 | 7 | 6 |
| <u>Statements opposing Prop. 3</u> | | | | |
| California is already deeply in debt and can not afford to issue more bonds for anything but its most essential needs. | | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>52% %</u> | <u>31</u> | <u>15</u> | <u>2</u> |
| Yes voters | 34% % | 39 | 25 | 2 |
| No voters | 78% % | 15 | 7 | * |
| Undecided | 50% % | 40 | 5 | 5 |
| The money from the bonds will benefit medical supply houses, pharmaceutical companies, hospital administrators and other special interest groups more than the children. | | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>47% %</u> | <u>28</u> | <u>21</u> | <u>4</u> |
| Yes voters | 43% % | 29 | 24 | 4 |
| No voters | 51% % | 25 | 22 | 2 |
| Undecided | 52% % | 30 | 8 | 10 |

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Other elements affecting voting decisions

There are varying differences in voter reaction to several other aspects of Prop. 3. For example, when told that California’s university, non-profit and charitable hospitals and parents of seriously ill children are backing the initiative, 37% of voters say this makes them more likely to support Prop. 3, while just 5% are less likely. By comparison, proportionately fewer voters report being influenced when they are told that some of Prop. 3's major opponents are the National Tax Limitation Committee and the American Conservative Union.

Another aspect of Prop. 3 relates to the fact that California voters approved another similar children’s hospital bond in the November 2004 election. When voters are reminded of this, about twice as many voters say this makes them less likely (22%) than more likely (11%) to support Prop. 3.

Table 5
Impact that other elements have on Prop. 3 on voter preferences
(among likely voters)

| <u>When voters are told that...</u> | More likely to support | No effect | Less likely to support |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Supporters of Prop. 3 include California's university, non-profit and charitable hospitals, as well as parents of seriously ill children. | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>37%</u> | <u>58</u> | <u>5</u> |
| Yes voters | 56% | 42 | 2 |
| No voters | 12% | 78 | 10 |
| Undecided | 36% | 62 | 2 |
| Opponents of Prop. 3 include the National Tax Limitation Committee and the American Conservative Union. | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>18%</u> | <u>71</u> | <u>11</u> |
| Yes voters | 25% | 67 | 8 |
| No voters | 8% | 76 | 16 |
| Undecided | 18% | 70 | 12 |
| California voters approved another children's hospital bond initiative in November 2004... | | | |
| <u>Total</u> | <u>11%</u> | <u>67</u> | <u>22</u> |
| Yes voters | 20% | 70 | 10 |
| No voters | 1% | 61 | 38 |
| Undecided | 6% | 68 | 26 |

Note: "No effect" percentages also include those with no opinion.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 830 likely voters in California. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period of September 5-14, 2008 by *The Field Poll*. The California HealthCare Foundation provided grant funding to the poll to enable a more detailed examination of voter opinions of the initiative. 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 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 depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 830 likely voters is +/- 3.5 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. 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. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 3 that calls for issuing state bonds for children's hospitals that will appear on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 3 is the "Children's Hospital Bond Act Grant Program" initiative. It authorizes 980 million dollars in general obligation bonds for construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping eligible children's hospitals. Fiscal impact: State costs of about 2 billion dollars over 30 years to pay off both the principal and interest costs of the bonds. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Proposition 3, the Children's Hospital Bond Act, Grant Program initiative?

(IF YES) What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote YES on Proposition 3? (PROBE) Any other reasons?

(IF NO) What are some of the reasons why you intend to vote NO on Proposition 3? (PROBE) Any other reasons?

I am going to read some statements that have been made by supporters and opponents of Proposition 3, the Children's Hospital Bond initiative. For each statement, please tell me how important the statement is to you.

(ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Is this statement very important, somewhat important, not too important or not at all important to you? (SEE RELEASE FOR STATEMENTS READ)

Supporters of Proposition 3 include California's university, non-profit and charitable hospitals, as well as parents of seriously ill children. Does knowing this make you more likely or less likely to vote for Proposition 3 or does it have no effect on how you will vote?

Opponents of Proposition 3 include the National Tax Limitation Committee and the American Conservative Union. Does knowing this make you more likely or less likely to vote for Proposition 3 or does it have no effect on how you will vote?

Thinking aback to the November 2004 election, do you recall having voted YES or NO on Proposition 61?

California voters approved Proposition 61 in the November 2004 election. Does the fact that California voters approved a children's hospital bond initiative in 2004 make you more likely or less likely to vote for Prop. 3, or does it have no effect on how you will vote?

About the California HealthCare Foundation

The California HealthCare Foundation is an independent philanthropy committed to improving the way health care is delivered and financed in California. During each statewide election cycle, the Foundation's *HealthVote.org* web site, in partnership with the Center for Governmental Studies, serves as a resource and clearinghouse of information for voters to learn more about the health-related initiatives that appear on the statewide election ballot. During the current election cycle, more information about both Prop. 3 and Prop. 4, the parental notification of abortion by minors initiative, can be found at *HealthVote.org*.