

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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MOST CALIFORNIANS CONTINUE TO APPROVE OF JOB OBAMA IS DOING. BUT, A 53% TO 33% MAJORITY BELIEVES THE COUNTRY IS ON WRONG TRACK, THEIR GLOOMIEST ASSESSMENT IN TWO YEARS.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

A majority of California voters continues to approve of the job that Barack Obama is doing as President. Currently 54% approve while 39% disapprove. This is a more favorable assessment than Obama is getting in recent national surveys that show as many Americans approving as disapproving of the President's performance.

However, California voters have become more pessimistic when it comes to the direction that the country is heading. In the current survey just 33% of California voters think the country is headed in the right direction, while 53% believe it is seriously off on the wrong track. This division of sentiment is the gloomiest found by *The Field Poll* over the past two years.

In other questions the President receives mixed job marks for his handling of the nation's economy and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* survey of California registered voters conducted June 22-July 5 among 1,390 registered voters statewide. To enable the survey to more closely examine the preferences of California's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

Trend in Obama's overall job performance

A majority of California voters (54%) continues to approve the job President Obama is doing in office, while 39% disapprove. These results are similar to those found last March, when 52% approved and 37% disapproved.

However, they represent a decline in the President's job performance compared to last year when six in ten or more approved.

Table 1
Trend of Californians' views about the job Barack Obama
is doing as President
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
July 2010	54%	39	7
March 2010	52%	37	11
January 2010	56%	34	10
October 2009	60%	31	9
March 2009	65%	21	14

Big differences in job ratings across demographic subgroups

Obama's approval rating is highest among Democrats (79%), ethnic voters including African-Americans (91%), Asian-Americans (62%) and Latinos (61%), those living in the San Francisco Bay Area (67%), 18-29 year olds (63%), those who have done post-graduate work (63%) and Los Angeles County voters (62%).

Disapproval of the President is strongest among Republicans (76%). Smaller pluralities of voters in San Diego/Orange Counties, Central Valley and other regions of Southern California outside of Los Angeles also disapprove.

Table 2
Californians' views of the job Barack Obama
is doing as President overall – by subgroup
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Total registered voters	54%	39	7
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	79%	14	7
Republicans	18%	76	6
Non-partisans/others	53%	37	10
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	62%	30	8
San Diego/Orange	43%	50	7
Other Southern California	48%	49	3
Central Valley	42%	48	10
San Francisco Bay Area	67%	25	8
Other Northern California*	49%	38	13
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 29	63%	31	6
30 – 39	57%	36	7
40 – 49	51%	43	6
50 – 64	50%	40	10
65 or older	49%	43	8
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	50%	42	8
Female	57%	35	8
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	47%	47	6
Latino	61%	29	10
African-American	91%	3	6
Asian-American/other	62%	23	15
Chinese-American	64%	22	14
Korean-American	80%	13	7
Vietnamese-American	57%	33	20
<u>Education</u>			
High school or less	48%	42	10
Some college / trade school	51%	41	8
College graduate	55%	37	8
Post graduate work	63%	33	4

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

California vs. national ratings

Californians' current assessment of the job being done by the President overall is more favorable than that of voters in the country as a whole. Most national polls have been reporting about as many Americans disapproving as approving of the job Obama is doing.

Job ratings of the President's handling of the economy and the Gulf oil spill

When it comes to two major national issues, voters in this state are divided in their appraisal of Obama's job performance. In respect to the President's handling of the economy, California voters split 47% approving and 44% disapproving. This assessment is slightly better than a January 2010 *Field Poll* measure, when more voters were disapproving of the President's handling of the economy. In respect to the President's handling of oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico, voters divide about evenly, with 44% giving Obama a favorable rating and 43% unfavorable.

Table 3			
How Californians rate the job President Obama is doing in handling the economy and the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico (among registered voters)			
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>The economy</u>			
July 2010	47%	44	9
January 2010	44%	50	6
October 2009	60%	35	5
March 2009	61%	31	8
<u>Party registration (July 2010)</u>			
Democrats	72%	19	9
Republicans	13%	82	5
Non-partisans/others	46%	40	14
<u>The oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico</u>			
July 2010	44%	43	13
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	66%	23	11
Republicans	15%	72	13
Non-partisans/others	39%	42	19

Direction of the country

The view that this state's voters have of the overall direction of the country has become more pessimistic. In the current survey, 33% of California voters think the country is headed in the right direction, with 53% believe it is seriously off on the wrong track. This is the gloomiest view found by *The Field Poll* over the past two years.

Table 4
Are things in the U.S. generally going in the right direction or
do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?
(among California registered voters)

	Right direction	Wrong track	No opinion
July 2010	33%	53	14
January 2010	41%	49	10
October 2009	48%	41	11
March 2009	42%	47	11
2008 (average)	16%	75	9
2007 (average)	25%	65	10
2006 (average)	30%	60	10
2005 (average)	33%	59	8
2004 (average)	38%	53	9
2003 (average)	44%	50	6
2002 (average)	51%	37	12
December 2001	68%	27	5
September 2001 (pre-9/11 attack)	43%	49	8
January 2001	55%	34	11
2000 (average)	63%	28	9
1999 (average)	54%	37	9
1998 (average)	57%	32	11
1997 (average)	44%	45	11
1996 (average)	34%	49	17
1995 (average)	33%	54	13
1994 (average)	41%	50	9
1993 (average)	27%	64	9
1992 (average)	14%	81	5
1991 (average)	14%	78	7
1990 (average)	30%	63	7
1989 (average)	49%	43	8
1988 (average)	42%	53	5
Party registration (July 2010)			
Democrats	51%	38	11
Republicans	12%	76	12
Non-partisans/others	29%	51	20

Note: Surveys prior to 1996 conducted among all California adults.

Views of Californians vs. those of the national public

Comparing the sentiment of California voters with those of the national public on the right direction/wrong track question reveals only a small difference. The average of four recent national media polls shows 33% of Americans saying the country is moving in the right direction, similar to those found here in California. However, a slightly larger proportion of Americans (61%) than Californians believe the country is off on the wrong track.

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Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed June 22 – July 5, 2010 among a random sample of 1,390 registered voters in California. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue, some of the questions were asked of random subsamples of either 485 or 477 registered voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. To enable the survey to more closely examine the preferences of California's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese. In addition, for questions asked of the total sample, the main statewide was supplemented with additional interviews among Chinese Americans, Korean-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans.

Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. The overall registered voter sample was drawn from a listing of all registered voters, while the ethnic sample augments were drawn from listings of ethnic surnames of voters targeting Chinese-American, Korean-American and Vietnamese-American voters. All samples were provided by Voter Contact Services, a leading provider of registered voter samples to the survey research industry.

Interviewing was completed on either a voter's landline phone or a cell phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, results from the ethnic sample augments were weighted down to bring them into alignment with their proper shares of the state's registered voter population. In addition, the overall registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the characteristics of the registered voter population in California by region, age, gender and party registration.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size as well as the percentage distribution being examined. The maximum sampling error estimates for results based on the overall registered voter sample is +/- 2.8 percentage points, while findings from each random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. The maximum sampling error is based on results in the middle of the sampling distribution (i.e., percentages at or near 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (those closer to 10% or 90%) have a smaller margin of error. Findings from subgroups of the overall sample have somewhat larger sampling error levels. There are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error. However, the overall design and execution of the survey sought to minimize these other sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field and has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. The poll receives annual funding from media subscribers of *The Field Poll*, from California foundations, and from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the raw data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes.

Questions Asked

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

Thinking about the country overall, do you think things in the U.S. are generally going in the right direction, or do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Barack Obama is handling his job as President?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Obama is doing in handling the nation's economy?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way President Obama is handling the oil spill situation in the Gulf of Mexico?