

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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**NEARLY THREE IN TEN CALIFORNIA
VOTERS IDENTIFY STRONGLY OR SOME-
WHAT WITH THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT.
ONE IN THREE VOTERS ALSO NOT
CONVINCED THAT OBAMA WAS BORN IN U.S.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

During the past year in different parts of the country there have been large-scale organized local protests against what is believed to be wasteful government spending and unnecessary government growth and regulation. These protests have taken on the name “tea parties” invoking the pre-revolutionary war protests symbolized by the Boston Tea Party.

In its most recent statewide survey, *The Field Poll* asked a representative cross-section of California voters whether they had heard of the tea party movement and to what extent they personally identified with it. The results show that about 61% of this state’s voters say they are aware of the movement, and 28% say they identify with it either a lot (12%) or some (16%).

The latest poll also included a question probing whether Californians believed President Barack Obama was born in the U.S. Statewide while two in three (67%) think that he was, 33% are not convinced, with 11% maintaining that he was not and 22% not sure.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted among a statewide sample of 1,232 registered voters in six languages – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

The tea party movement

Greater than six in ten California voters (61%) report having heard of the tea party protest movement. This includes 12% who say they identify with it a lot and 16% who have some identification with it.

Registered Republicans and strong conservatives report greater awareness of the movement and are significantly more likely to say they identify with it a lot. While majorities of Democrats, non-partisans, liberals and political moderates are aware of the movement, very few of these voters identify with it a lot or somewhat.

Table 1
Voter awareness and identification with the Tea Party Protest
Movement – by party registration and political ideology
(among California registered voters)

		Identify with it...			
	Have heard	A lot	Some	Not at all/don't know	Not aware
Total statewide	61%	12%	16	33	39
<u>Party registration</u>					
Democrats	55%	4%	10	41	45
Republicans	70%	28%	24	18	30
Non-partisans/others	59%	6%	17	36	41
<u>Political ideology</u>					
Strongly conservative	74%	46%	18	10	26
Moderately conservative	55%	13%	24	18	45
Middle-of-the-road	56%	5%	17	34	44
Moderately liberal	50%	*	11	39	50
Strongly liberal	77%	1%	9	67	23

* Less than ½ of 1%.

Was Obama born in the U.S.?

Throughout the 2008 Presidential campaign, and lingering for some time afterward, there has been conjecture in the media that Barack Obama was not actually born in the United States, and thus constitutionally is not eligible to be president.

Those advancing the claim are referred to in the press as “birthers.” One theory is that Obama was born in Hawaii before it became a U.S. state in 1959. Others claim he was born in Kenya where his father was born and resided for most of his life. This runs contrary to published records, vouched for by various Hawaiian state officials, showing that Obama was born on August 4, 1961 in Hawaii.

In this survey *The Field Poll* asked California voters their opinions on this matter. The results show that two-thirds of voters here (67%) say they believe that Obama was born in the U.S. However, 11% think that he was not and another 22% say they aren't sure.

There is a wide variance in voter beliefs about Obama's birthplace by party and political ideology. In addition, voter opinions are also correlated with whether or not a voter identifies with the tea party movement.

Eighty-five percent of Democrats, but just 42% of Republicans, maintain that Obama was born in the U.S. There is also a wide divergence of opinion between liberals, 96% of whom believe Obama was born in America, and conservatives, of whom fewer than half feel this way (45%).

Just 29% of the voters who say they identify a lot with the tea party movement believe that Obama is a U.S.-born citizen.

Table 2 Voter opinions about whether Barack Obama was born in the United States (among California registered voters)			
	Yes, was born in U.S.	No, was not	Don't know/ not sure
Total statewide	67%	11	22
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	85%	6	9
Republicans	42%	20	38
Non-partisans/others	71%	5	24
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	45%	18	37
Middle-of-the-road	69%	10	21
Liberal	96%	1	3
<u>Tea party movement identification</u>			
Identify a lot with Tea Party movement	29%	22	49
All others	73%	9	18

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The latest *Field Poll* survey was completed by telephone January 5-17, 2010 among a total of 1,232 registered voters in California. The survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese – based on the preference of the voter. The survey polled a random cross section of voters statewide and was supplemented with additional interviews conducted among random samples of Chinese-American, Korean-American, Vietnamese-American and African-American voters to permit the poll to examine these voter subgroups. This produced samples of between 100 and 175 voters for each of the poll's ethnic voter subgroups. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue one of the questions in this report was asked of a random subsample of the overall sample.

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. Interviews were conducted on either a voter's landline phone or a cell phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file and the preference of the voter.

The main statewide sample was developed by selecting voters randomly from a list of registered voters throughout California. Supplemental samples of Asian-American voters were developed by selecting voters with surnames most associated with these populations and then screening them to determine their ethnic heritage. After the completion of interviewing, the overall sample was weighted to align it to its proper statewide proportions by race/ethnicity and other demographic characteristics of the registered voter population.

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 sample is +/- 2.9 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the random subsample have a maximum sampling error of +/- 4.9 percentage points. 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 the random subsample or 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.

Questions Asked

Have you seen or heard anything about the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year?

How much do you personally identify with the Tea Party protest movement – a lot, some or not at all?

(ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLE)

Some groups claim that President Barack Obama was not born in the United States. What is your opinion?

Do you think Barack Obama was born in the United States or not?