

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

222 Sutter Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94108-4411
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541
EMAIL: fieldpoll@field.com
www.field.com/fieldpollonline

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**CALIFORNIA VOTERS STILL PREFER
KERRY. BOXER MAINTAINING BIG,
DOUBLE-DIGIT LEAD OVER JONES
FOR SENATE.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In the final week of the 2004 Presidential election campaign, Massachusetts Senator John Kerry is holding a seven-point lead (49% to 42%) over President George W. Bush in the contest for California's 55 electoral votes.

In the U.S. Senate race, there has been no diminishment in the large double digit lead that incumbent Democrat Barbara Boxer has maintained over Republican Bill Jones throughout the year. Boxer currently leads Jones by nineteen points, 53% to 34%.

These are the findings from *The Field Poll's* final pre-election survey of California voters, which included interviews with 1,086 likely voters in next Tuesday's election.

Presidential preference

Kerry commands huge leads over Bush in the state's two largest population centers, Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area. However, in the Central Valley and in areas of Southern California outside of Los Angeles, majorities support Bush.

While men are evenly divided in their presidential preferences, women provide Kerry with a big fourteen-point margin of support. There are also large differences between the preferences of married voters and single voters. Bush holds a narrow three-point edge among those who are married or living together, while Kerry holds a greater than two to one lead among single voters.

White non-Hispanics favor Bush narrowly 48% to 44%, while Latinos prefer Kerry two to one and blacks side with Kerry six to one. Asian/other ethnics also support the Massachusetts Senator by a five to four margin.

Kerry's lead is twenty-four points among younger voters age 18-29, while among voters age 50 or older he and Bush are running about even.

Table 1
California voter preferences for President
(among likely voters)

	<u>Kerry- Edwards</u>	<u>Bush- Cheney</u>	<u>Others/ undecided</u>
Late October	49%	42	9
Early October	49%	40	11
Late September	49%	41	10
August	53%	41	6
May	55%	40	5
February	53%	41	6
January	39%	48	13
<u>Region</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	58%	34	8
(.18) San Diego/Orange	40%	53	7
(.09) Inland Empire	36%	56	8
(.16) Central Valley	34%	55	11
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	63%	28	9
(.10) Other	52%	43	5
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.44) Democrats	83%	12	5
(.36) Republicans	8%	86	6
(.20) Non-partisan/other	49%	32	19
<u>Gender</u>			
(.48) Male	46%	46	8
(.52) Female	53%	39	8
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.68) White non-Hispanic	44%	48	8
(.17) Latino	60%	30	10
(.06) Black*	73%	12	15
(.09) Asian/other	52%	42	6
<u>Religion</u>			
(.44) Protestant	34%	57	9
(.27) Born-again Christian	27%	64	9
(.26) Catholic	55%	38	7
(.18) Other	62%	26	12
(.12) No preference	71%	22	7
<u>Age</u>			
(.16) 18-29	58%	34	8
(.19) 30-39	48%	42	10
(.21) 40-49	51%	41	8
(.25) 50-64	45%	47	8
(.19) 65 or older	48%	45	7
<u>Marital status</u>			
(.63) Married/living together	44%	47	9
(.19) Separated/widowed/divorced	53%	38	9
(.18) Single/never married	65%	30	5

Note: Subgroup findings are from the late October survey.

** Small sample size.*

Vote preferences center around Bush

Most of Kerry's support is driven by the negative feelings that voters have about Bush. More than one-half (52%) of Kerry's supporters say that their preference represents more a vote against Bush than a vote for Kerry. By contrast, 78% of those who favor Bush say their vote is based on support for him rather than a vote against Kerry.

	<u>Kerry voters</u>		<u>Bush voters</u>	
	<u>For Kerry</u>	<u>Against Bush</u>	<u>For Bush</u>	<u>Against Kerry</u>
Late October	43%	52	78%	17
Early October	40%	55	71%	26
August	38%	58	79%	17
May	33%	65	71%	25

(Differences between 100% and the sum of each candidate's percentages in each poll equals the proportion with no opinion.)

Candidate images

By an eleven-point margin (52% to 41%), voters have a more favorable than unfavorable view of Kerry. Last August Kerry's image in this state was viewed more favorably (58% positive and 35% negative).

On the other hand, the negative impression that California voters have of Bush has persisted throughout the general election campaign. Last May 53% had an unfavorable view of him and 44% had a favorable impression. Now, the proportion of voters holding an unfavorable opinion of the President (49%) exceeds those having a favorable view (46%) by just three points.

When voters are asked to evaluate the two vice-presidential candidates, North Carolina Senator John Edwards' image rating is much better than that of incumbent Vice President Dick Cheney.

Table 3
Images of the Presidential and Vice Presidential candidates
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>John Kerry</u>			
Late October	52%	41	7
Early October	51%	39	10
Late September	51%	42	7
August	58%	35	7
May	48%	40	12
<u>George Bush</u>			
Late October	46%	49	5
Early October	45%	52	3
Late September	44%	52	4
August	42%	53	5
May	44%	53	3
<u>John Edwards</u>			
Late October	51%	34	15
Late September	54%	28	18
August	57%	27	16
<u>Dick Cheney</u>			
Late October	43%	47	10
Late September	39%	51	10
August	40%	52	8

Note: Edwards and Cheney were not measured in early October or May.

U.S. Senate race

This year's campaign for U.S. Senate has drawn relatively little interest among voters, and preferences have not changed much over the course of the campaign. Boxer's current nineteen-point lead over Jones is similar to the leads she has held in three previous *Field Polls* conducted since the beginning of the general election campaign.

Boxer is overwhelmingly preferred by Democrats and has a big lead among non-partisans. Republicans favor Jones greater than five to one.

Boxer is leading by greater than two to one margins in Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area. Jones' support is roughly equivalent to Boxer's in the Inland Empire and Central Valley regions of the state.

Women support Boxer greater than two to one, while among men the Senator leads by five points.

Table 4
Voter preferences for U.S. Senate
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Boxer</u>	<u>Jones</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Late October	53%	34	4	9
Early October	48%	32	6	14
August	50%	33	8	9
May	55%	32	1	12
<u>Party</u>				
(.44) Democrats	87%	6	2	5
(.36) Republicans	14%	74	3	9
(.20) Non-partisan/other	49%	23	12	16
<u>Region</u>				
(.24) Los Angeles County	61%	26	5	8
(.18) San Diego/Orange	48%	42	2	8
(.09) Inland Empire	42%	43	5	10
(.16) Central Valley	44%	41	5	10
(.23) San Francisco Bay Area	61%	25	4	10
(.10) Other	51%	37	4	8
Gender				
(.48) Male	45%	40	5	10
(.52) Female	60%	28	4	8

Note: Subgroup findings are from the late October survey.

Images of the Senate candidates

Boxer continues to be viewed more positively than negatively by the voting electorate. Statewide, 53% of likely voters report having a favorable impression of the Senator, while 35% hold an unfavorable view. Just 12% have no opinion.

By contrast, more than four in ten likely voters (41%) still had no opinion of Jones in the final week of the election, although this is down from 48% in early October. Among those who can rate Jones, voters have a more favorable than unfavorable view of him by a three to two margin.

Table 5
Image ratings of Boxer/Jones
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Boxer</u>			
Late October	53%	35	12
Early October	51%	38	11
August	47%	40	13
May	50%	36	14
<u>Jones</u>			
Late October	36%	23	41
Early October	29%	23	48
August	33%	17	50
May	21%	12	67

Little voter interest

While there has been some increase in attention to the Senate race over the past month, voters' overall interest has remained unusually low throughout the campaign. Just one in eight voters (13%) now say they have been following the contest closely, and 37% somewhat closely. Half (50%) indicate that they have not paid much attention to the race.

There is relatively little difference in the reported interest in the Senate race among Democrats, Republicans and non-partisans.

Table 6
How closely have you been following this year's
U.S. Senate race in California?
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Very closely</u>	<u>Somewhat closely</u>	<u>Not closely</u>
Late October	13%	37	50
Early October	8%	27	65
August	9%	24	67
<u>Party (Late October)</u>			
Democrats	12%	39	49
Republicans	17%	33	50
Non-partisans/others	8%	38	54

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on interviews conducted among a random sample of 1,086 Californians likely to vote in the November general election. Interviews were conducted by telephone in English and Spanish October 21-27, 2004. Sampling was carried out using random digit dial methodology which gives all voters, including those whose phone number is listed and unlisted, an equal chance of being contacted. Up to six attempts were made to reach a randomly selected voter at each number dialed. After the completion of interviewing, the overall registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, the overall results for each proposition have a sampling error of +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. These are other possible sources of error in any survey in addition to sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sequencing or through omissions or errors in sampling, interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

Questions Asked

If the election for President were being held today, for whom would you vote – the Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards, or the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, or someone else? (PAIRINGS ROTATED TO AVOID POSSIBLE SEQUENCE BIAS)

Is your preference more a vote for (George W. Bush) (John Kerry) or more a vote against (John Kerry) (George W. Bush)?

Is your opinion of (George W. Bush) (John Kerry) favorable or unfavorable?

Is your opinion of (John Edwards) (Dick Cheney) favorable or unfavorable?

There will also be an election for U.S. Senate in California in the November election. How closely have you been following this year's U.S. Senate race in California – very closely, somewhat closely, not too closely or not at all closely?

The candidates running for U.S. Senate include Barbara Boxer, Democrat, and Bill Jones, Republican. If the election for U.S. Senate were being held today, for whom would you vote – Boxer, Jones or someone else?

Is your opinion of (Barbara Boxer) (Bill Jones) favorable or unfavorable?