

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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Release #2122

Release Date: **Friday, August 6, 2004**

**KERRY MAINTAINING DOUBLE-DIGIT
LEAD IN CALIFORNIA. OPPOSITION TO
BUSH STILL A STRONG FACTOR IN
KERRY'S SUPPORT. EDWARDS LIKED
MORE THAN CHENEY.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The double-digit lead that the Democratic presidential nominee Senator John Kerry first established last February against President George W. Bush among likely voters in California is holding steady.

In a statewide survey taken after the conclusion of last week's Democratic convention, *The Field Poll* finds the Democratic ticket of Kerry and North Carolina Senator John Edwards is preferred 51% to 40% over the Republican ticket of Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney.

Independent Ralph Nader and his vice presidential running mate Peter Camejo receive just 2% and 7% are undecided. However, it's problematical whether Nader will gain the necessary number of voter signatures to be listed on the California ballot. If Nader were not on the ballot in this state, the Kerry-Edwards ticket is preferred over Bush-Cheney by twelve points – 53% to 41%, with 6% undecided.

Earlier this year prior to the start of the Democratic primary election season, Kerry trailed Bush 48% to 39% among California voters. However, after Kerry's victories in Iowa, New Hampshire and other Democratic primary and caucus states, he opened up a big 53% to 41% preference lead over Bush in California.

The trend of California voter preferences since the beginning of the year is shown in the following table:

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

	<u>Kerry- Edwards</u>	<u>Bush- Cheney</u>	<u>Nader- Camejo</u>	<u>Other/ Undecided</u>
<u>With Nader</u>				
August 2004 (with Nader)	51%	40	2	7
May 2004 (with Nader)	51%	39	4	6
<u>Without Nader</u>				
August 2004	53%	41	--	6
May 2004	55%	40	--	5
February 2004*	53%	41	--	6
January 2004*	39%	48	--	13

* January and February measures asked of all registered voters.
Note: prior measures did not include names of the Vice Presidential candidates.

Regional and partisan differences

There are significant differences in voter preferences by region of the state and by party. Kerry leads Bush by a two and one-half to one margin in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, and also is preferred over the President by majorities of voters living in Los Angeles County and the Northern California counties outside the Bay Area. On the other hand, Bush is preferred by 8 points among voters in the Central Valley and by 3 points among voters in Southern California outside of Los Angeles County.

Democrats and Republicans hold diametrically opposite preferences in the presidential contest, with greater than eight in ten supporting their own party's nominee. Non-partisan voters or those affiliated with another party currently favor Kerry by a 48% to 29% margin.

Table 2
Voter preferences by region and party
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Kerry- Edwards</u>	<u>Bush- Cheney</u>	<u>Other/ undecided</u>
Total Statewide	51%	40	9
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	55%	39	6
Other Southern California	44%	47	9
Central Valley	40%	48	12
San Francisco Bay Area	63%	27	10
Other Northern California*	55%	41	4
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	83%	11	6
Republicans	15%	81	4
Non-partisan/other	48%	29	23

* Relatively small sample.

Vote commitment

Kerry and Bush currently have about equal proportions of voters who say they strongly support their candidacies in California – 34% of voters are strongly supportive of Kerry and 33% are strongly supportive of Bush. However, those not as strongly committed to either of the two candidates divide more than two to one for Kerry (17% to 7%).

Six in ten Democrats and seven in ten Republicans strongly support their party's nominee.

About one in four non-partisan voters (24%) are strongly for Kerry, compared to 19% who feel this way about Bush. However, among non-partisans who are not strongly committed, Kerry is preferred by a larger margin over Bush 24% to 10%.

Table 3
Strength of support for each candidate
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
Support Kerry strongly	34%	60%	8%	24%
Support Kerry somewhat	17	22	7	24
Support Bush somewhat	7	3	11	10
Support Bush strongly	33	7	70	19
Undecided/other	9	8	4	23

For or against a candidate

Last May twice as many Kerry supporters said their vote for the Massachusetts Democrat was more a vote against Bush than a vote for Kerry's candidacy – 65% against Bush and 33% for Kerry. Now, following the Democratic convention, a larger proportion of Kerry voters – but still a minority – say their support is more a vote for the Senator than a vote against Bush – 38% for Kerry and 58% against Bush.

Nearly four-fifths (79%) of Bush's support comes from voters who are for him, while just 17% say they are mainly voting against Kerry. This represents an increase in pro-Bush vote support among backers of the President since May.

Table 4
Is your preference more a vote for your candidate
or a vote against the other candidate?
(among California likely voters)

	<u>August</u>	<u>May</u>
<u>Kerry voters</u>		
For Kerry	38%	33%
Against Bush	58	65
No opinion	4	12
<u>Bush voters</u>		
For Bush	79%	71%
Against Kerry	17	25
No opinion	4	4

Candidate images

Kerry and Edwards have much more positive image profiles in California than do Bush and Cheney.

Following the Democratic convention, the proportion of likely voters holding a positive view of Kerry has increased, with 58% viewing him favorably and 35% unfavorably. This is up from a 48% favorable and 40% unfavorable split found last May.

Edwards is also viewed very favorably, with 57% of voters now having a positive view of him and just 27% regarding him negatively.

On the other hand, a 53% majority of likely voters in this state hold an unfavorable opinion of Bush, compared to 42% who view him positively. Cheney's image is similarly negative – 52% unfavorable and 40% favorable.

Currently, three in ten voters (30%) has a favorable opinion of Nader, while 44% see him in a negative light.

Table 5
**Trend of voter image ratings of the Presidential
and Vice Presidential candidates**
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
John Kerry - August	58%	35	7
- May	48%	40	12
George Bush - August	42%	53	5
- May	44%	53	3
Ralph Nader - August	30%	44	26
- May	21%	51	28
John Edwards - August	57%	27	16
Dick Cheney - August	40%	52	8

Note: Edwards and Cheney were not measured in May.

Cheney vs. Edwards

When voters were asked which Vice Presidential candidate they think would make a better President, Edwards is preferred over Cheney by a wide 53% to 38% margin. Democrats and non-partisan voters overwhelmingly prefer Edwards. Two-thirds (68%) of Republicans favor Cheney, but 22% think Edwards would make a better President.

Table 6				
Which Vice Presidential candidates do you think would make a better President? (among California likely voters)				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
Edwards	53%	77%	22%	57%
Cheney	38	17	68	28
No opinion	9	6	10	15

Who is going to win?

While a substantial plurality of this state's voters favor Kerry, when these same voters are asked who they think will win the November election, slightly more think Bush will win (40%) than believe Kerry will emerge as the next President (38%). About one in five (22%) do not offer an opinion. Democrats and Republicans hold diametrically opposite views of who is likely to win, with six in ten or more believing their party's nominee will prevail. However, Republicans are slightly more confident that their man will win than Democrats are about Kerry.

Table 7				
Who do you think is likely to win the Presidential election in November? (among California likely voters)				
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
Bush	40%	21%	66%	32%
Kerry	38	60	15	34
No opinion	22	19	19	34

Importance of the election

Seven in ten (69%) California voters think this year's presidential election is more important than previous elections, while 30% see no difference in its importance.

Democrats are more likely than Republicans and non-partisans to view the 2004 election as more important this year.

Table 8
Importance of this year's Presidential election
compared to past elections
(among California likely voters)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
More important	69%	79%	63%	58%
Same/no difference	30	21	35	42
No opinion	1	1	2	*

* Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Information About the Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on interviews conducted among a random sample of 633 Californians likely to vote in the November election. Interviews were conducted by telephone in English and Spanish July 30- August 4, 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 five attempts were made to reach a randomly selected voter at each number dialed. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, each candidate's image rating was asked of a split sample of 311 voters. After the completion of interviewing the larger registered voter sample was weighted to Field Poll estimates of the state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, the overall results in this report have a sampling error of +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the split sample have a sampling error of +/- 5.8 percentage points. 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, the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, or the independent ticket of Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo? (TICKETS ROTATED TO AVOID POSSIBLE SEQUENCE BIAS)

(IF NADER OR UNDECIDED) Suppose independent Presidential candidate Ralph Nader does not qualify for the California ballot. If the election 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?

(IF BUSH OR KERRY) Do you support (Bush) (Kerry) strongly or somewhat? Is your preference more a vote for (George W. Bush) (John Kerry) or more a vote against (John Kerry) (George W. Bush)?

Apart from how you intend to vote, who do you think is likely to win the Presidential election in November – Bush or Kerry?

How important do you think the upcoming Presidential election is compared to past elections for President – more important than past elections, less important or about the same importance?

Is your opinion of _____ favorable or unfavorable? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)
(NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

Which Vice Presidential candidate – John Edwards or Dick Cheney – do you think would make a better President?