

# 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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**SCHWARZENEGGER CONTINUES TO GET HIGH MARKS. BUT, CALIFORNIANS WOULD NOT SUPPORT HIM IF HE WERE ABLE TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Voters continue to give Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger very high job approval marks, with 65% saying they endorse his performance, unchanged since last May.

The positive appraisal of Schwarzenegger appears to be carrying over to the way voters view the direction of the state, as more voters now see the state heading in the right direction than the wrong direction for the first time since 2001.

Despite their very supportive view of the governor, by two to one margins California voters do not favor the idea of Schwarzenegger running for President if the U.S. Constitution were changed to allow foreign-born citizens to become President, and would not be inclined to vote for him if he did.

These are some of the findings from the latest *Field Poll* survey of California voters about their opinions of the governor.

### **Job performance rating**

Schwarzenegger was elected governor last November after Governor Gray Davis was removed from office in an historic recall election. *The Field Poll's* first two measurements of public opinion following the election revealed that twice as many voters initially approved as disapproved of the new governor. In May, approval of Schwarzenegger soared to a near record three-to-one ratio, where it has remained ever since.

A very large majority of Republicans and non-partisans view him favorably. Democrats are somewhat less enthusiastic, although a plurality are still positive. All voter segments – across different age, race/ethnicity and gender categories – view Schwarzenegger very favorably.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Voter appraisals of the job Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as Governor                      (among registered voters)</b>			
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Late September	65%	22	13
August	65%	22	13
May	65%	23	12
February	56%	26	18
January	52%	27	21
<u>Party</u>			
Democrats	46%	34	20
Republicans	88%	6	6
Non-partisans/others	64%	25	11
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	68%	20	12
Female	61%	24	15
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	69%	18	13
Latino	55%	33	12
Black/Asian/other	61%	30	9
<u>Age</u>			
18-39	66%	21	13
40-64	64%	27	9
65 or older	63%	13	24

*Note: Subgroup results are from the Late September survey.*

### **Direction of the state**

California voters have generally held a dismal view of the direction the state has been heading over the past three years. This view reached its nadir in August 2003 during the campaign to recall Governor Davis, when 76% described the state as seriously off on the wrong track. Since Schwarzenegger took office, that very critical perception has eased. Now, for the first time since 2000, more voters think the state is headed in the right direction as feel it is on the wrong track (46% vs. 38%).

**Table 2**  
**Overall direction that California is heading**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Right direction</u>	<u>Wrong track</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Late September 2004	46%	38	18
May 2004	37%	51	12
February 2004	35%	54	11
August 2003	16%	76	8
July 2003	18%	75	7
April 2003	26%	65	9
September 2002	33%	54	13
January 2002	41%	50	9
2001	43%	50	7
2000	58%	35	7
1999	52%	34	14
1998	48%	42	10
1997	36%	54	10
1996	39%	49	12
1995*	32%	57	11
1994*	21%	70	9
1993	11%	83	6
1992	7%	90	3
1989*	50%	42	8
1988*	52%	43	5

\* Surveys conducted among all California adults, not just registered adults.

### **Schwarzenegger's promises**

During the recall election campaign last year, Schwarzenegger promised that if elected he would change the way state government is run and reduce the power of special interests.

On the first promise, while 54% of voters feel he has followed through on it either a great deal (11%) or some (43%), 38% think he has done little (25%) or nothing (13%) to change the way state government is run.

On whether he has followed through on his promise to reduce the power of special interests, voters are more critical. Four in ten (41%) think the Governor has done little or nothing on this score, while 37% think he has done either a great deal (5%) or some (32%) on this score.

**Table 4**  
**To what extent has Governor Schwarzenegger followed through on his promises in two areas (among registered voters)**

	<u>A great deal</u>	<u>Some</u>	<u>A little</u>	<u>Not at all</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>To change the way state government is run</u>					
All voters	<u>11%</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>8</u>
Democrats	6%	35	33	22	4
Republicans	19%	53	15	2	11
Non-partisans/others	7%	43	25	14	11
<u>To reduce the power of special interests</u>					
All voters	<u>5%</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
Democrats	2%	21	25	32	20
Republicans	11%	41	17	4	27
Non-partisans/others	4%	38	16	26	17

**Arnold for President?**

Schwarzenegger’s successful run for the governorship and the huge publicity it has created, together with his well-received, nationally televised speech at this year’s Republican National Convention, has prompted some in Congress to propose changing the U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born Americans who have been citizens for at least twenty years to run for President.

In this survey *The Field Poll* posed this issue to voters, and also asked whether they supported the idea of the Austrian-born Schwarzenegger, a U.S. citizen since 1984, running for President if the Constitution were changed, and should he run, whether California voters would be inclined to support his presidential bid.

The results show that by large margins Californians are opposed to each possibility. By a 58% to 36% margin, they oppose changing the U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born Americans who have been citizens for at least twenty years to run for President. And, by two to one margins, voters oppose the idea of Schwarzenegger running for President if the Constitution were changed, and would be disinclined to support him if he were to make a presidential election bid.

**Table 5**

**Reactions to the possibility of changing the U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born citizens to run for President, the idea of Schwarzenegger running for President if the Constitution were changed, and their inclination to vote for Schwarzenegger if he were to make a presidential election bid (among registered voters)**

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
<hr/>				
Amend U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born Americans who have been citizens for 20+ years to run for President?				
Approve	36%	36%	31%	42%
Disapprove	58	60	60	51
No opinion	6	4	9	7
<hr/>				
Support/oppose idea of Schwarzenegger running for President if U.S. Constitution were changed?				
Support	32%	22%	43%	35%
Oppose	56	72	40	52
No opinion	12	6	17	13
<hr/>				
If Schwarzenegger ran for President would you be inclined or not inclined to vote for him?				
Inclined	26%	11%	45%	24%
Not inclined	50	73	25	46
No opinion	24	16	30	30

**Favorable comments about the Governor**

Voters were also asked to describe in their own words in what ways they thought Schwarzenegger had done a good job as governor. In response, four out of five (79%) offer one or more positive comments, while 21% could not.

The most frequently volunteered positive response was that “he’s decisive, a strong leader, a man of action,” cited by 24%. One in six (17%) also credit him for being “fiscally responsible, trying to control state spending and reduce the deficit.”

Another one in ten voters (10%) say that “he’s for the people and not tied to special interests,” while a similar proportion “support his veto of the law that would have granted drivers’ licenses to illegal immigrants” (10%).

Other positive expressions ranging from general descriptions of the governor’s style to specific issues were mentioned by between 2% and 9% of voters each. Larger proportions of Republicans than Democrats and non-partisans volunteer positive comments about the governor.

**Table 6**  
**In what ways has Schwarzenegger done a good job as Governor?**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
He’s decisive, a strong leader, good politician, man of action	24%	20%	33%	17%
He’s trying to control state spending, reduce the deficit, be fiscally responsible	17	11	25	17
He’s for the people, not tied to special interests	10	7	13	12
Support his veto of the law that would have granted drivers’ licenses to illegal immigrants	10	8	13	7
He’s independent, bi-partisan, can appeal to both sides	9	8	11	8
He’s trying to help California businesses	5	3	9	4
Support his lowering of the car tax	5	4	4	10
He supports environmental protection	4	6	2	4
He supports the schools, is on the side of kids	3	4	2	5
He’s honest, sensible, a good man	3	2	3	3
He’s upbeat, optimistic, has lots of energy and enthusiasm	2	*	6	*
Support his trying to renegotiate Indian gambling pacts	2	2	3	1
Other mentions (less than 2% each)	10	12	6	11
None/no answer	21	31	10	19

\* Less than ½ of 1%.  
 (Columns add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.)

**Unfavorable comments about the Governor**

In addition, voters were asked to volunteer in what ways they felt Schwarzenegger had not done a good job as governor. In this case, 59% could offer at least one negative comment, while 41% could not.

No one critical comment is cited by more than 9% of voters statewide. Most frequently mentioned are the following: “hasn’t cut spending enough, supports too much debt (9%),” “he’s gone back on his promises, has not changed things too much” (6%), “oppose his position on driver’s licenses for illegal immigrants” (5%).

**Table 7**  
**In what ways has Schwarzenegger not done a good job as Governor?**  
**(among registered voters)**

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Non-partisans/ others</u>
He hasn't cut spending enough, supports too much debt	9%	9%	7%	11%
He's gone back on his promises, has not changed things much	6	7	3	6
Oppose his position on driver's licenses for illegal immigrants	5	7	5	2
Oppose his increases to tuition, budget cuts at UC, CSU	4	6	1	6
He compromises too much, bends to the wishes of the legislature, Democrats	4	3	5	4
He hasn't stood up to the special interests	4	6	1	3
He's cut state spending too much in areas that help the poor, people in need	4	5	1	4
He hasn't been tough enough on illegal immigrants	3	3	4	2
He hasn't done enough for the K-12 schools	3	4	1	3
He's too liberal on social issues, supports gay marriage, abortion	2	*	5	3
He's too supportive of gambling, too many casino deals	1	2	2	*
He's too pro-business	1	1	2	2
He supports George Bush, the Republicans	1	2	*	1
Makes improper comments, dislike his "girlie men" remarks	1	1	1	*
Other mentions (less than 1% each)	11	14	8	8
None/no answer	41	30	64	45

\* Less than 1/2 of 1%.  
 (Columns add to more than 100% due to multiple mentions.)

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The results in this report are based on telephone interviews conducted in English and Spanish among a random sample of 600 Californians registered to vote. Interviewing on these questions was conducted September 24-29, 2004.

Sampling was carried out using a random digit dial methodology, which gives all voters including those whose phone number is listed or unlisted, an equal chance of being contacted. Up to four 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 characteristics of state's total registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, the overall results have a sampling error of +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. There 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 omission or errors in sampling, interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

### **Questions Asked**

As you know, only those citizens who are native born Americans can run for President. Would you approve or disapprove of amending the U.S. Constitution to allow foreign-born Americans who have been citizens for at least 20 years to run for President?

Now, thinking about the state overall, do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things are seriously off on the wrong track?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as Governor of California?

In what ways do you think Schwarzenegger has done a good job as governor? (PROBE) Anything else?

In what ways do you think Schwarzenegger has not done a good job as governor? (PROBE) Anything else?

When Schwarzenegger was running for Governor last year he proposed to change the way state government is run. To what extent do you think Schwarzenegger has followed through on his promise – a great deal, some, a little or not at all?

When Schwarzenegger was running for Governor last year he promised to reduce the power of special interests in Sacramento. To what extent do you think Schwarzenegger has followed through on his promise – a great deal, some, a little or not at all?

As you know Governor Schwarzenegger is an immigrant from Austria, and although he has been a U.S. citizen for more than 20 years, he cannot run for President. If the U.S. Constitution were changed to allow immigrants who have been citizens for at least 20 years to run for President, would you support or oppose the idea of Schwarzenegger running for President?

If Schwarzenegger was able to run for President sometime in the future, would you be inclined to vote for him or not?