

# 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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**CALIFORNIA VOTERS SPLIT ALMOST EVENLY ABOUT ARIZONA'S NEW ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION LAW. OPINIONS DIVIDE SHARPLY ALONG PARTISAN AND RACIAL/ETHNIC LINES. ISSUE HAS BIG EFFECT ON SUPPORTERS OF CANDIDATES IN GOVERNOR AND SENATE RACES.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

California voters are sharply divided and hold very strong opinions about Arizona's new anti-illegal immigration law. According to the latest *Field Poll* 49% of this state's registered voters approve of the Arizona law while 45% disapprove. Most of the voters who approve or disapprove do so strongly.

Voters' close division of opinion toward the new law masks large differences in opinions by statewide party registration, race and ethnicity and country of birth. For example . . .

- While 62% of Democrats disapprove of the law, 77% of Republicans approve. Non-partisans are about evenly divided (46% in favor and 49% opposed).
- White non-Hispanic voters here are supporting the Arizona law 58% to 37%, as do African-Americans (53% to 39%). This contrasts sharply with the views of Latino voters who oppose the new law 71% to 24%. Asian-American voters are more divided – 50% in favor and 43% opposed.
- Voters who were born in the U.S. favor the law 54% to 41%, while voters born outside the U.S. oppose it by a greater than two to one margin (67% to 28%).

In addition, the issue is having a big effect on supporters and opponents of the candidates for governor and U.S. Senate in this year's election.

These are the results of the latest *Field Poll* conducted June 22-July 4 among a representative sample of 1,390 registered voters statewide. To enable the poll to more closely examine the preferences of the state's ethnic voting populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

## **Background**

Illegal immigration has been a long-running, unsettled and highly controversial social and political issue in California for many years.

The action taken by the state of Arizona last April when it enacted the nation's toughest law on illegal immigration has incited pro and con passions across the country. In so doing it has sharply divided people along partisan, ideological and ethnic lines and has made it an explosive issue in this year's political campaigns.

The Arizona law requires immigrants to carry their alien registration documents at all times and gives police the right to question anyone they think may be in the country illegally and ask them to produce these documents.

Lawmakers in other states are considering adopting similar measures. Last week the Justice Department filed a lawsuit to grant an injunction to stop enforcement of the Arizona measure before it takes effect later this month.

In the course of updating several trend measures about voter attitudes about illegal immigrants, in its current survey *The Field Poll* also included a question asking voters here their opinion of the Arizona law.

## **Sharp divisions in California voter sentiment about the Arizona law**

The results of the poll show that California voters hold strong opinions about the Arizona law and are about evenly divided on the issue. At present 49% of voters here approve of the Arizona law, with 37% approving strongly and 12% approving somewhat. A nearly equivalent proportion (45%) disapprove – 34% strongly and 11% somewhat.

There are large differences of opinion toward the law by a voter's party registration, race/ethnicity and where they were born. For example, about six in ten (62%) Democrats disapprove of the law, while 77% of Republicans approve. Non-partisans are about evenly divided in their view – 46% favoring it and 49% in opposition.

Among white non-Hispanics 58% support the law while 37% do not. The opinions of African-American voters are similar (53% approve and 39% disapprove). This contrasts sharply with the views of Latino voters, who oppose the law by a 71% to 24% margin. Asian-American voters divide 50% in favor and 43% opposed. Vietnamese-American voters appear more likely to support the law, while Korean-Americans are more opposed. On the other hand, Chinese-American voters are closely divided.

A majority (54%) of voters born in the U. S. support the Arizona law, while 41% disapprove. However, among those born outside the U. S., less than three in ten (28%) endorse the law and 67% are opposed.

Voters who are likely to cast a ballot in the November general election support the law by a roughly five to four margin (54% approving and 41% disapproving).

Only about one in four voters who prefer Democrats Jerry Brown for Governor or Barbara Boxer in the U.S. Senate race register approval of the law. By contrast, about four out of five of the supporters of Meg Whitman for Governor or Carly Fiorina for U.S. Senate are lining up in favor of the legislation.

Voters who are currently undecided in the governor's race support the new law 63% to 35%, while undecided voters for U.S. Senate are divided (49% approve vs. 47% disapprove).

	<b>Approve strongly</b>	<b>Approve somewhat</b>	<b>Disapprove somewhat</b>	<b>Disapprove strongly</b>
<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>34</b>
<u>Party registration</u>				
(.44) Democrats	22%	11	13	49
(.31) Republicans	64%	13	8	9
(.25) Non-partisans/others	32%	14	12	37
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
(.64) White non-Hispanic	45%	13	12	25
(.22) Latino	16%	8	9	62
(.06) African-American	37%	16	10	29
(.08) Asian-American/other (total)	<u>34%</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>30</u>
(.02) Chinese-American	29%	19	19	22
(.01) Korean-American	12%	21	20	43
(.02) Vietnamese-American	43%	18	11	23
<u>Nativity</u>				
(.84) Born in U.S.	41%	13	11	30
(.16) Born outside U.S.	17%	11	13	54
<u>Likely voters in November (total)</u>				
(.33) Brown supporters for Governor	17%	9	12	57
(.32) Whitman supporters for Governor	64%	14	7	9
(.10) Undecided for Governor	49%	14	8	27
(.35) Boxer supporters for U.S. Senate	16%	10	13	57
(.33) Fiorina supporters for U.S. Senate	70%	14	5	7
(.07) Undecided for U.S. Senate	36%	13	15	32

*(Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each row equal proportion with no opinion.)*

**Overall effect of illegal immigrants on the state**

For a number of years the *Field Poll* has measured the opinions of California voters toward illegal or undocumented immigrants and the effect they are having on the state overall. In a 1982 survey three out of four Californians (75%) believed that illegal immigrants were generally having a more unfavorable than favorable effect. While opinions have moderated somewhat over the years, a majority of voters (56% to 34%) still believe their effect on the state is more negative than positive.

**Table 2**  
**Overall effect of illegal immigrants on the state**  
**(among registered voters)**

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No effect/ no opinion
<b>July 2010</b>	<b>34%</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>10</b>
2006	36%	57	7
1994	26%	67	7
1987	23%	69	8
1982	19%	75	6
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	48%	40	12
Republicans	15%	79	6
Non-partisans/others	32%	56	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	28%	62	10
Latino	54%	36	10
African-American	26%	59	15
Asian-American/other (total)	<u>31%</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>12</u>
Chinese-American	29%	54	17
Korean-American	46%	41	13
Vietnamese-American	18%	74	8
<u>Nativity</u>			
Born in U.S.	32%	59	9
Born outside U.S.	46%	40	14
<u>Likely voters in November (total)</u>			
Brown supporters for Governor	48%	38	14
Whitman supporters for Governor	20%	77	3
Boxer supporters for U.S. Senate	49%	39	12
Fiorina supporters for U.S. Senate	17%	80	3

Note: Surveys conducted prior to 2006 asked of all adults statewide and not just registered voters.

**Are illegal immigrants taking jobs away from other Californians?**

In 1982 a 52% majority of voters held the opinion that illegal immigrants were taking jobs away from Californians, while 38% believed that they were generally doing jobs that others didn't want.

However, in four statewide *Field Poll* surveys conducted since then majorities maintain that illegal immigrants are doing jobs that other Californians mostly do not want. In the current survey 58% say this, while 34% think they are taking jobs away from other Californians.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Are illegal immigrants taking jobs away from Californians or mostly doing jobs that other Californians don't want? (among registered voters)</b>			
	<b>Doing jobs others don't want</b>	<b>Taking jobs away from Californians</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>July 2010</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>8</b>
2006	65%	25	10
1994	58%	34	8
1987	65%	30	5
1982	38%	52	10
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	67%	24	9
Republicans	43%	51	6
Non-partisans/others	60%	32	8
<u>Likely voters in November (total)</u>			
Brown supporters for Governor	56%	35	9
Whitman supporters for Governor	66%	24	10
Boxer supporters for U.S. Senate	46%	47	7
Fiorina supporters for U.S. Senate	69%	23	8
Fiorina supporters for U.S. Senate	43%	47	10

*Note: Surveys conducted prior to 2006 asked of all adults statewide and not just registered voters.*

## **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 representative sample of 1,390 registered voters in California. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize respondent fatigue, one of the questions were asked of a random subsample of 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 the 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 ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Generally speaking, do you feel that illegal or undocumented immigrants who come to California have a generally favorable or unfavorable effect on the state as a whole?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

Do you think that illegal or undocumented immigrants are taking jobs away from other Californians and contributing to the state's unemployment problem, or do you think they are taking jobs that other Californians mostly do not want?

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

The state of Arizona recently passed a new law that gives police the right to question anyone who they think may be in the country illegally and ask them to produce documents to verify their legal status. Do you approve or disapprove of Arizona's new illegal immigration law? Do you feel this way strongly or somewhat?