

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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**CALIFORNIANS HAVE VERY LOW
REGARD FOR THE U.S. CONGRESS.
APPRAISAL OF PELOSI DIVIDED.
FEINSTEIN AND BOXER VIEWED
FAVORABLY.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Throughout 2006, when Republicans had control of both houses of the U.S. Congress, California voters had a poor overall appraisal of that legislative body, with nearly three times as many viewing it negatively as positively. Now, twelve months after the Democrats gained control in January, voter appraisals of its overall performance is no better.

At present, 66% of this state's voters disapprove of the job the U.S. Congress is doing, while just 20% approve. This appraisal is about the same as those given by voters last year.

Californians' views of Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi are divided, with 35% viewing her performance favorably and 38% unfavorably.

Voter appraisals of California's two U.S. Senators are more positive. Half of the voting public (50%) approves of the job performance of Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein, while 38% disapprove. Views of Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer are slightly less favorable, with 45% rating her positively and 35% negatively.

These are the findings of the latest *Field Poll* measuring voter opinion of the U.S. Congress and the state's legislative leaders in Washington.

Congress' overall job rating

In a survey completed in mid-December, just 20% of this state's voters say they approve of the job that Congress is doing, while 66% disapprove. This is very similar to the results found in August and October of this year, and are similar to measures taken in 2006 when Republicans had control of the Congress.

All partisan groups – Democrats, Republicans and non-partisans – share a dismal appraisal of Congress' current performance.

Table 1
Overall job performance of the U.S. Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	20%	66	14
October 2007	22%	64	14
August 2007	20%	66	14
March 2007	35%	50	15
May 2006	23%	64	13
April 2006	24%	66	10
August 2004	33%	52	15
April 2003	50%	39	11
April 2002	48%	39	13
January 2002	54%	33	13
December 2001	57%	32	11
May 2001	51%	38	11
January 2001	53%	35	12
August 2000	54%	34	12
June 2000	40%	48	12
February 2000	42%	42	16
October 1999	30%	60	10
March 1999	37%	54	9
August 1998	57%	33	10
August 1997	38%	51	11
February 1997	36%	46	18
June 1996	38%	59	3
February 1996	25%	68	7
September 1995	36%	58	6
May 1995	44%	51	5
September 1994	33%	62	5
July 1992	24%	71	5
January 1992	32%	67	1
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	20%	65	15
Republicans	18%	72	10
Non-partisans/others	24%	61	15

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys conducted prior to 1997 were completed among a cross-section of all California adults, not just registered voters.

Appraisals of the Democrats and Republicans in Congress

The ratings that California voters give to the Democrats in Congress is marginally higher than those it gives to Republicans in Congress, although both are viewed negatively. At present, 56% disapprove of the job that congressional Democrats are doing, while 30% approve. This compares to a 63% to 23% negative to positive rating given to the Republicans in Congress.

California Democrats are about evenly divided in the appraisal of their party's congressional members (44% approve and 42% disapprove). GOP voter opinions of the job the Democrats in Congress are doing is more than four to one negative, while non-partisans view congressional Democrats unfavorably by a greater than two to one margin.

California Republicans have a more negative than positive opinion of the job that congressional Republicans are doing (48% disapprove vs 38% approve). Democrats view the Republicans in Congress negatively by a six to one margin, while a nearly three to one ratio of non-partisans are critical of the Republicans in Congress.

Table 2
Job performance of the Democrats in Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	30%	56	14
October 2007	34%	51	15
August 2007	33%	54	13
March 2007	47%	40	13
August 2004	32%	50	18
April 2003	40%	46	14
April 2002	46%	39	15
May 2001	51%	37	12
January 2001	57%	31	12
June 2000	46%	39	15
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	44%	42	14
Republicans	17%	74	9
Others/non-partisans	24%	54	22

Table 3
Job performance of the Republicans in Congress
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	23%	63	14
October 2007	20%	64	16
August 2007	19%	69	12
March 2007	19%	70	11
August 2004	32%	52	16
April 2003	46%	42	12
April 2002	42%	45	13
May 2001	42%	47	11
January 2001	49%	39	12
June 2000	32%	55	13
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	13%	78	9
Republicans	38%	48	14
Others/non-partisans	22%	57	21

Pelosi ratings

When Nancy Pelosi initially took over the House Speakership earlier this year, her performance was initially viewed favorably by voters in this state, with 48% approving and 27% disapproving. However, that positive appraisal declined in subsequent months and voter opinions are now about evenly divided, with 35% approving and 38% disapproving.

Democrats, and to a lesser extent non-partisans, still rate Pelosi more positively than negatively. However, Republicans are highly critical of the Speaker.

Voters living in the San Francisco Bay Area, Pelosi's home region, view her in a more favorable light than other Californians. In the Bay Area, 51% approve of Pelosi's performance in office, while 31% disapprove. Los Angeles County voters are evenly divided in their appraisals of Pelosi, while voters living in other parts of the state have a more negative than positive view of her.

Table 4
Job performance of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	35%	38	27
October 2007	35%	40	25
August 2007	39%	37	24
March 2007	48%	27	25
August 2004*	37%	29	34
April 2003*	34%	25	41
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	49%	27	24
Republicans	16%	61	23
Non-partisans/others	39%	24	37
<u>Region (December 2007)</u>			
Los Angeles County	33%	33	34
Other Southern California	31%	45	24
San Francisco Bay Area	51%	31	18
Other Northern California	30%	40	24

* Previous measures were asked with regard to Pelosi's role as House Minority Leader.

Feinstein and Boxer appraisals

Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein continues to receive generally positive job ratings from California voters. In the current survey, 50% approve and 32% disapprove.

Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer's ratings, while positive, are not as good as Feinstein's, with 45% approving and 35% disapproving of her performance.

Table 5
Trend of Dianne Feinstein's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	50%	32	18
October 2007	51%	31	18
August 2007	56%	28	16
March 2007	61%	27	12
July 2006	51%	32	17
February 2005	51%	29	20
June 2005	54%	26	20
February 2005	50%	29	21
August 2004	55%	29	16
May 2004	53%	23	24
July 2003	55%	31	14
April 2003	49%	34	17
2002 (Average)	49%	26	25
2001 (Average)	57%	27	16
2000 (Average)	57%	27	16
1999 (Average)	51%	28	21
1998 (Average)	56%	27	17
1997 (Average)	47%	35	18
1996 (Average)	46%	36	18
1995 (Average)	50%	40	10
1994 (Average)	47%	39	14
1993 (Average)	47%	32	21
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	67%	20	13
Republicans	28%	54	18
Non-partisans/others	50%	23	27

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Table 6
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among California registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
December 2007	45%	35	19
October 2007	44%	35	21
August 2007	48%	33	19
March 2007	54%	31	15
July 2006	45%	34	21
February 2005	41%	34	25
June 2005	47%	30	23
February 2005	49%	36	15
August 2004	49%	36	15
May 2004	44%	33	23
July 2003	49%	35	16
April 2003	43%	35	22
2002 (Average)	45%	29	26
2001 (Average)	49%	31	20
2000 (Average)	50%	30	20
1999 (Average)	45%	35	20
1998 (Average)	45%	29	26
1997 (Average)	41%	35	24
1996 (Average)	42%	36	22
1995 (Average)	45%	39	16
1994 (Average)	43%	37	20
1993 (Average)	41%	35	24
<u>Party (December 2007)</u>			
Democrats	63%	22	15
Republicans	21%	63	16
Non-partisans/others	50%	20	30

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,283 registered voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish December 10-17, 2007. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall voter sample was divided into two random subsamples on some of the questions. Because of this, some of the questions in this report are based on a random subsample of 649 registered voters statewide.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the results are weighted slightly to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 1,283 registered voters is +/- 2.9 percentage points, while findings from the random subsample of 649 voters has a maximum sampling error of +/- 4.0 percentage points.. The maximum sampling error is based on percentages +/- in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is doing its job?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF REGISTERED VOTERS)

What about the Democrats in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Democrats are doing their job?

What about the Republicans in Congress? Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congressional Republicans are doing their job?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Nancy Pelosi is handling her job as Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?