

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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JUST ONE IN THREE VOTERS AWARE OF STATE COMMISSION'S REDRAWING OF DISTRICT LINES. THOSE FAMILIAR GIVE IT HIGH MARKS. RELATIVELY FEW ENDORSE OVERTURNING NEW DISTRICT LINES VIA REFERENDUM.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Voters familiar with the work of the California Citizens Redistricting Commission generally give it positive marks. One in three California voters (34%) reports being familiar with its work in redrawing legislative district lines this year, and these voters are more likely to say the commission did a good job than bad job in performing its duties.

For example, by a 45% to 24% margin voters aware of the commission say it did a good job in drawing district lines that "keep voters from the same city, town or local community together within the same district." By similar margins they also feel the commission did a good job in drawing district lines that are "fair to each of the major political parties" (45% to 24%) and are "fair to each of the state's major racial and ethnic voting groups" (41% to 24%).

When all voters are asked how they would vote if either of two referenda seeking to overturn the commission's newly drawn district lines for the U.S. Congress and State Senate qualify for the ballot, more voters are inclined to uphold the lines than change them.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted September 1–12 in English and Spanish among 1,001 registered voters statewide.

One in three voters reports being familiar with the commission's work

When voters in this survey were asked whether they had seen, read or heard anything about the new legislative district lines drawn this year by the California Citizens Redistricting Commission, only one in three (34%) said they had.

Awareness of the commission's work is somewhat greater among Republicans (42%) than Democrats (33%) or non-partisans (28%). In addition, voters over age 50 and those who have completed post-graduate work are more likely than other voters to say they are familiar with the commission's work.

Table 1
Voter awareness of the redrawing of legislative district lines
by the California Citizens Redistricting Commission
(among registered voters)

	Yes, have heard	No, have not heard/ not sure
Total statewide	34%	66
<u>Party registration</u>		
Democrats	33%	67
Republicans	42%	58
Non-partisans/others	28%	72
<u>Age</u>		
18 – 29	18%	82
30 – 39	20%	80
40 – 49	33%	67
50 – 64	48%	52
65 or older	43%	57
<u>Education</u>		
High school graduate or less	20%	80
Some college/trade school	32%	68
College graduate	35%	65
Post-graduate work	48%	52

Commission gets good marks from those familiar with it

Voters who reported being aware of the commission's work were asked to assess the performance of the commission on three dimensions. The survey finds that in all three areas more voters rate the commission positively than negatively.

By a 45% to 24% margin voters believe the commission did a good job drawing district lines that "keep voters from the same city, town or local community together within the same district." Also, by an identical 45% to 24% ratio, these voters think the commission did a good job in drawing district lines that are "fair to each of the major political parties." In addition, more voters think the commission did a good job (41%) than a bad job (24%) in drawing district lines that are "fair to each of the state's major racial and ethnic voting groups."

In each case, Democrats familiar with the commission's work rate its performance positively by greater than two to one margins, while Republicans who are aware of the commission's work are more divided in their assessments.

Table 2			
Views about the job the California Citizens Redistricting Commission did in redrawing district lines to achieve various objectives (among voters aware of the commission's work)			
	Good job	Bad job	No opinion
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District lines drawn keep voters from the same city, town or local community together within the same district			
Total	<u>45%</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>31</u>
Democrats	50%	22	28
Republicans	39%	33	28
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District lines drawn are fair to each of the major political parties			
Total	<u>45%</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>31</u>
Democrats	55%	14	31
Republicans	35%	37	28
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District lines drawn are fair to each of the state's major racial and ethnic voting groups			
Total	<u>41%</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>35</u>
Democrats	50%	21	29
Republicans	36%	30	34

Little support for two referenda to overturn newly drawn districts

Two ballot propositions are currently in circulation that seek to overturn the district lines drawn by the commission. The first seeks to overturn the new lines that it drew for the state's forty State Senate district lines. The second seeks to overturn the way the commission drew the new boundary lines drawn for the state's fifty-three Congressional districts.

When all voters, regardless of any prior awareness of the commission's work, are asked how they would vote if either of these two referenda qualifies for the ballot, fewer than three in ten voters currently say they would vote to overturn the newly drawn lines, although relatively large proportions are undecided.

In the case of a possible referendum to overturn the new State Senate district lines, the *Poll* finds 42% of voters are inclined to vote Yes to keep the commission's new district lines, 29% would vote No to overturn them and another 29% are undecided.

Similar results are seen when voters are asked to react to a possible referendum to overturn the newly drawn lines applicable to California's congressional districts. If such a referendum were to qualify, 44% of voters say they'd be inclined to vote Yes to keep the new district lines, 28% would vote No to overturn them and another 28% are undecided.

Table 3			
Voter preferences regarding a possible referendum to overturn the commission's newly drawn <u>State Senate</u> district lines (among all registered voters)			
	Would vote...		
	Yes, to keep new district lines	No, to change them	Undecided
Total registered voters	42%	29	29
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	46%	29	25
Republicans	40%	32	28
Non-partisans/others	39%	24	37
<u>Awareness of Commission's work</u>			
Yes, aware	52%	30	18
No, not aware	37%	28	35

Table 4			
Voter preferences regarding a possible referendum to overturn the commission's newly drawn <u>Congressional</u> district lines (among all registered voters)			
	Would vote...		
	Yes, to keep new district lines	No, to change them	Undecided
Total registered voters	44%	28	28
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	49%	25	26
Republicans	40%	31	29
Non-partisans/others	39%	30	31
<u>Awareness of Commission's work</u>			
Yes, aware	62%	22	16
No, not aware	35%	31	34

Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed September 1-12, 2011 among a random sample of 1,001 registered voters in California. In order to cover a broad range of issues and minimize respondent fatigue, some of the questions in this report were asked of a random subsample of either 481 or 520 voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. 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.

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, 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 voters sample is +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings based on voters included in the random subsample have a maximum sampling error of +/- 4.6 percentage points. 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.

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 possible sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field, who is still an active advisor. The *Poll* 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 several California foundations, and the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes.

Questions Asked

As you may know, after each census of the population, new legislative district boundary lines must be drawn to account for any changes in population that occurred over the past decade. This year, as a result of recently passed voter initiatives, California's new district lines were drawn by an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission. Have you seen, read or heard anything about the new legislative district lines drawn by this new commission?

Do you feel the commission generally did a good job or a bad job in drawing new district lines that...
(keep voters from the same city, town or local community together within the same district) (are fair to each of the major political parties) (are fair to each of the state's major racial and ethnic voting groups)?

Some groups want to put the congressional districts drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission to a public vote in the next statewide election. Suppose a referendum like this qualified for the ballot and voting YES was a vote to keep the commission's newly drawn district lines in place, while voting NO was a vote to change them and have the state Supreme Court redraw them. If you were voting today, would you vote YES to keep the commission's district lines or NO to change them?*

Some groups want to put the state Senate districts drawn by the Citizens Redistricting Commission to a public vote in the next statewide election. Suppose a referendum like this qualified for the ballot and voting YES was a vote to keep the commission's newly drawn district lines in place, while voting NO was a vote to change them and have court-appointed officials redraw them. If you were voting today, would you vote YES to keep the commission's district lines or NO to change them?*

* Asked of a random subsample of voters.