

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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**PROP. 8 (SAME-SEX MARRIAGE BAN) DIVIDING
49% NO – 44% YES, WITH MANY VOTERS IN
CONFLICT; VOTERS MOVING TO THE NO SIDE
ON PROP. 7 (RENEWABLE ENERGY
GENERATION); YES SIDE STILL LEADS ON
PROP. 2 (FARM ANIMAL CONFINEMENT).
PLURALITY FAVORS PROP. 11
(REDISTRICTING), BUT MANY UNDECIDED.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

One of the most closely watched statewide election contests in years concerns Proposition 8, the proposed state constitutional amendment to ban same-sex couples from marrying in California. The controversial initiative has produced an outpouring of a reported \$60 million in campaign contributions from over 64,000 people in all fifty states and more than twenty foreign countries.

In its final pre-election survey, *The Field Poll* shows the No-side continuing to prevail over the Yes-side but by a narrower margin than previously. The poll, completed one week before the election, shows 49% of likely voters voting No, 44% on the Yes side and 7% undecided.

The poll finds significant proportions of both Yes and No voters in conflict about the issues involved in the same-sex marriage debate, with many Yes voters concurring with some anti-Prop. 8 arguments and sizeable proportions of No voters recognizing the merits of some pro-Prop. 8 claims.

The same survey finds a shift in voter preferences on Prop. 7, the renewable energy generation initiative, with support declining twenty-four points in recent months, from 63% in July to 39% at present. On the other hand, a majority of voters (60%) continues to support Prop. 2, the farm animal confinement initiative. In addition, a 45% to 30% plurality of voters favors Prop. 11, the redistricting initiative, although a large 25% of likely voters are undecided.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted October 18-28 among a random sample of 966 likely voters statewide.

Trend of voter preferences on Proposition 8 (Same-Sex Marriage Ban)

Prop. 8 trailed in *The Field Poll's* initial measurement in July by nine points (51% No to 42% Yes) taken shortly after it qualified for the ballot.

The No-side advantage increased to fourteen points (52% to 38%) in September, when voters were asked to react to its original ballot description, which referred to the measure as the "Limit on Marriage" initiative. However, following the state Supreme Court's ruling that the state's existing same-sex marriage ban was unconstitutional, thereby making it legal for same-sex couples to marry in California, state Attorney General Jerry Brown changed Prop. 8's official ballot title to the "Eliminates Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry" initiative. When voters were read this amended description in September, the No-side lead grew to seventeen points (55% No vs. 38% Yes).

Now, after more than a month of intensive campaigning on both sides, the initiative trails by just five points, 49% No vs. 44% Yes, with 7% undecided. Yes-side support has increased six points, and those opposed declining six points over the past month.

Table 1
Trend of likely voter preferences regarding Prop. 8, the constitutional amendment to ban same-sex marriages

	Yes	No	Undecided
Late October	44%	49	7
September (using amended ballot description)	38%	55	7
September (using original ballot description)	38%	52	10
July	42%	51	7

Trend of voter preferences on Prop. 2 (Farm Animal Confinement), Prop. 7 (Renewable Energy Generation) and Prop. 11 (Redistricting)

There has been a major shift in voter dispositions with regard to Proposition 7, the renewable energy generation initiative, over this same period.

A July *Field Poll*, taken prior to any active campaigning on the initiative, showed likely voters initially supporting the measure by a wide margin, 63% to 27%. Now, after months of vigorous campaigning on both sides, the proportion of voters supporting the measure has declined twenty-four points to 39%. This compares to 43% of voters who are now opposing the initiative, while a growing 18% are undecided.

By contrast, there has been very little change in voters' initial support for Prop. 2, the farm animal confinement initiative. Last July voters favored the initiative 63% to 24%. In the current poll 60% are intending to vote Yes and 27% are voting No.

In addition, a plurality of voters continue to support Prop. 11, the initiative to change the way state legislative districts are drawn. In the current survey, 45% are in favor, while 30% are opposed – not much different than the poll’s July survey, when it was supported 42% to 30%. However, a relatively large proportion of voters (25%) remain undecided.

Table 2
**Trend of likely voter preferences regarding Prop. 7 (Renewable Energy Generation),
 Prop. 2 (Farm Animal Confinement) and Prop. 11 (Redistricting)**

	Yes	No	Undecided
<u>Prop. 7 (Renewable Energy Generation)</u>			
Late October	39%	43	18
July	63%	27	13
<u>Prop. 2 (Farm Animal Confinement)</u>			
Late October	60%	27	13
July	63%	24	13
<u>Prop. 11 (Redistricting)</u>			
Late October	45%	30	25
July	42%	30	28

Note: Props 2, 7 and 11 were not measured in September.

Prop. 8 demographic differences

The relatively close 49% No vs. 44% Yes division of preferences on Prop. 8 masks many sharp splits across various demographic subgroups of the state’s likely voter population.

Democrats are strongly opposing the initiative by a margin of 65% to 28%. Voters supporting Barack Obama for President are even more likely to be opposing Prop. 8 (73% No vs. 21% Yes). By contrast, Republicans are extremely supportive of the initiative, with 75% now on the Yes side and 20% voting No. Supporters of John McCain for President are even more heavily on the Yes side – 84% Yes and 13% No. Voters registered as non-partisans or who are affiliated with other parties are opposing Prop. 8 by a roughly two to one ratio – 60% No and 31% Yes.

There is a huge ideological divide on this issue. Strong conservatives are nearly eight to one in favor of the initiative (87% to 10%), while voters who are strongly liberal in politics take a completely opposite view, with 86% opposing Prop. 8 and just 10% in favor. Voters who say they take a middle-of-the-road position in politics are voting No by eleven points (51% to 40%).

Californians intending to vote early or by mail will likely comprise almost half (47%) of all voters in next week’s election. These voters are narrowly favoring the initiative 48% to 45%. In addition, among the 22% of voters who had already voted at the time the survey was completed, the Yes side was leading by six points (50% to 44%). This differs from the voting preferences of those intending to vote at their local precincts next Tuesday. These voters oppose Prop. 8 by a 52% to 41% margin.

There is a clear geographic divide in voting preferences on Prop. 8. Voters living in the state's coastal counties, which constitutes 71% of all likely voters, are heavily on the No side, with 54% opposed and 39% in favor. This contrasts with voters living in the state's inland counties who are backing the initiative, 57% to 37%.

The poll finds women opposing the same sex marriage ban by nine points (51% to 42%), while men are about evenly divided – 47% No and 46% Yes.

All age subgroups under age 65 are opposing Prop. 8 by doubled-digit margins. However, voters 65 and over are strongly in favor of the initiative, backing Prop. 8 by a nearly two to one margin (62% Yes vs. 32% No).

White non-Hispanic voters, who comprise about two-thirds of all likely voters, are currently opposing Prop. 8 by six points – 50% to 44%. Latinos, who comprise about 19% of likely voters, are about evenly divided (48% No vs. 46% Yes). African-Americans and Asians/others hold mixed views about the initiative, with the former narrowly backing Prop. 8 and the latter narrowly opposed.

There are big differences in preferences according to a voter's education level. Voters with no more than a high school education are favoring Prop. 8 by two and one-half to one (62% to 27%). By contrast, voters who have a post-graduate education are taking an opposite view and are voting No nearly two to one (61% to 33%).

A voter's religious affiliation also relates to preferences on Prop. 8. Protestants are very much in favor of Prop. 8, with 60% on the Yes side and 33% voting No. Catholics are about evenly divided (48% No vs. 44% Yes). By contrast, voters affiliated with other non-Christian religions or who have no religious preference are heavily opposed to the proposed ban on same-sex marriages.

A very large majority of this state's voters (78%) say they personally know or work with people who are gay or lesbian. These voters are inclined to be voting No on Prop. 8 (51% No vs. 43% Yes). The much smaller proportion of voters who are not personally familiar with gays or lesbians, on the other hand, are lining up on the Yes side 50% to 42%.

Table 3
Preferences toward Prop. 8 (Same Sex Marriage Ban) across subgroups
of the likely voter population

	Yes	No	Undecided
Total statewide	44%	49	7
<u>Voting method</u>			
(.53) Precinct voter	41%	52	7
(.47) Mail/early voter	48%	45	7
(.22) Already voted	50%	44	6
<u>Party</u>			
(.43) Democrats	28%	65	7
(.34) Republicans	75%	20	5
(.23) Non-partisans/others	31%	60	9
<u>Presidential preference</u>			
(.55) Obama	21%	73	6
(.33) McCain	84%	13	3
(.12) Other/undecided	44%	38	18
<u>Area</u>			
(.71) Coastal counties	39%	54	7
(.29) Inland counties	57%	37	6
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.20) Strongly conservative	87%	10	3
(.11) Moderately conservative	66%	29	5
(.40) Middle-of-the-road	40%	51	9
(.11) Moderately liberal	19%	73	8
(.18) Strongly liberal	10%	86	4
<u>Gender</u>			
(.47) Men	46%	47	7
(.53) Women	42%	51	7
<u>Age</u>			
(.25) 18 – 34	39%	52	9
(.27) 35 – 49	43%	53	4
(.29) 50 – 64	38%	53	9
(.19) 65 or older	62%	32	6
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.67) White non-Hispanic	44%	50	6
(.19) Latino	46%	48	6
(.06) African-American*	49%	43	8
(.08) Asian/other*	41%	51	8
<u>Education</u>			
(.18) High school graduate or less	62%	27	11
(.37) Some college/trade school	45%	49	6
(.24) College degree	41%	54	5
(.21) Post-graduate work	33%	61	6
<u>Religion</u>			
(.43) Protestant	60%	33	7
(.24) Catholic	44%	48	8
(.18) Other religions	30%	64	6
(.15) No preference	17%	77	6
<u>Personally familiar with gays/lesbians</u>			
(.78) Yes	43%	51	6
(.22) No/not sure	50%	42	8

* Small sample base.

Pro and con arguments about Prop. 8

In this survey voters were read ten arguments about Prop. 8 – five in favor and five against – that have been featured by supporters and opponents, as well as in news commentaries about the initiative, and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with each statement.

The results reveal the very complex nature of the issues at stake, with many Yes voters allowing that they agree with some anti-Prop. 8 statements and many No voters recognizing the merits of some of the pro-Prop. 8 arguments.

Reactions to arguments in favor

One argument in favor of Prop. 8 draws the broadest level of agreement. This relates to the view that “the institution of traditional marriage between a man and a woman is one of the cornerstones of our country’s Judeo-Christian heritage.” Statewide, 65% of voters agree with this statement, including 39% of those intending to vote No.

A 50% to 36% plurality of voters concurs with another Yes side argument that “Prop. 8 restores the institution of traditional marriage between a man and a woman, while not removing any domestic partnership rights that had previously been granted to gay and lesbian couples.”

A narrower plurality of likely voters (47% to 41%) also agrees with the view that “Prop. 8 reverses the flawed legal reasoning of activist judges who overturned the state’s previous voter-approved law defining marriage as between a man and a woman.” However, attitudes about this are closely tied to vote choices, with large majorities of Yes voters in agreement and most No voters disagreeing.

On the other hand, majorities of voters disagree with two other pro-Prop. 8 arguments. By a nearly two to one margin (60% to 32%), voters disagree with the statement “if Prop. 8 is not approved, the public schools could be required to teach kids that same sex marriage is as acceptable as traditional marriage in California.” Nearly as many (59%) disagree with the view that “gay rights leaders in California are moving too fast in their efforts to win new rights and legal protections for gays and lesbians.”

Table 4
Likely voter reaction to five pro-Prop. 8 statements

	Total voters	Yes voters	No voters	Undecided*
The institution of traditional marriage between a man and a woman is one of the cornerstones of our country's Judeo – Christian heritage				
Agree	65%	90%	39%	68%
Disagree	30	7	54	20
No opinion	5	3	7	12
Prop. 8 restores the institution of traditional marriage between a man and a woman, while not removing any domestic partnership rights that had previously been granted to gay or lesbian couples				
Agree	50%	82%	23%	59%
Disagree	36	9	61	10
No opinion	14	9	16	31
Prop. 8 reverses the flawed legal reasoning of activist judges who overturned the state's previous voter-approved law defining marriage as between a man and a woman				
Agree	47%	73%	26%	18%
Disagree	41	20	62	41
No opinion	12	7	12	41
Gay rights leaders in California are moving too fast in their efforts to win new rights and legal protections for gays and lesbians				
Agree	33%	64%	10%	22%
Disagree	59	24	87	66
No opinion	8	12	3	12
If Prop. 8 is not approved, the public schools could be required to teach kids that same sex marriage is as acceptable as traditional marriage in California				
Agree	32%	45%	24%	16%
Disagree	60	48	68	68
No opinion	8	7	8	16

* Small sample base.

Opposing arguments

When presented with five arguments opposing the initiative, a majority of likely voters concurs with four of them.

Sixty-one percent are in accord with the statement that “by eliminating the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry, Prop. 8 denies one class of citizens the right to enjoy the dignity and responsibility of marriage.”

Nearly as large majorities also say they agree with each of these three anti-Prop. 8 arguments: “matters relating to the definition of marriage should not be written into the constitution” (58%); “domestic partnership laws by themselves do not give gay and lesbian couples the same certainty and security that marriage laws provide” (58%); and, “extending new rights and legal protections to different peoples and lifestyles, such as gays and lesbians, benefits California and the nation in the long run” (57%). Significant proportions of Yes voters concur with the first two of these statements.

A smaller plurality of voters also concur with the view that “followers of the Mormon Church are exerting too much influence on the state’s political process by underwriting an estimated 40 percent of the Yes on Proposition 8’s campaign contributions.” Statewide 40% of voters agrees with this view, 33% disagree and 27% have no opinion.

Table 5
Likely voter reaction to five anti-Prop. 8 statements

	Total voters	Yes voters	No voters	Undecided*
By eliminating the right of gay and lesbian couples to marry, Prop. 8 denies one class of citizens the right to enjoy the dignity and responsibility of marriage				
Agree	61%	33%	86%	42%
Disagree	33	60	10	46
No opinion	6	7	4	12
Matters relating to the definition of marriage should not be written into the constitution				
Agree	58%	41%	74%	71%
Disagree	34	48	21	19
No opinion	8	11	5	10
Domestic partnership laws by themselves do not give gay and lesbian couples the same certainty and security that marriage laws provide				
Agree	58%	45%	72%	50%
Disagree	30	42	19	25
No opinion	12	13	9	25
Extending new rights and legal protections to different peoples and lifestyles, such as gays and lesbians, benefits California and the nation in the long run				
Agree	57%	19%	89%	40%
Disagree	36	71	9	27
No opinion	7	10	2	33
Followers of the Mormon Church are exerting too much influence on the state's political process by underwriting an estimated 40 percent of the Yes on Proposition 8's campaign contributions				
Agree	40%	22%	55%	34%
Disagree	33	49	22	15
No opinion	27	29	23	51

* Small sample base.

Voter subgroup differences regarding Prop. 7 (Renewable Energy Generation), Prop. 11 (Redistricting) and Prop. 2 (Farm Animal Confinement)

The following three tables highlight differences in voter preferences on Prop. 7 about renewable energy generation, Prop. 2 about farm animal confinement, and Prop. 11 having to do with redistricting.

Table 6			
Preferences toward Prop. 7 (Renewable Energy Generation)			
– across subgroups of the likely voter population			
	Yes	No	Undecided
Total	39%	43	18
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	42%	35	23
Republicans	29%	60	11
Non-partisans/others*	47%	37	16
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	28%	54	18
Middle-of-the-road	48%	37	15
Liberal	39%	39	22
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 34	46%	35	19
35 – 49	42%	42	16
50 – 64	34%	45	21
65 or older	33%	54	13
<u>Familiarity with Prop. 7</u>			
Yes, have heard	41%	46	13
No, not aware	35%	37	28
<u>Voting method</u>			
Precinct voter	42%	40	18
Mail/early voter	38%	47	15
Already voted	43%	49	8

* Small sample base.

Table 7
Preferences toward Prop. 2 (Farm Animal Confinement)
– across subgroups of the likely voter population

	Yes	No	Undecided
Total	60%	27	13
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	68%	19	13
Republicans	40%	47	13
Non-partisans/others*	75%	15	16
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	40%	46	14
Middle-of-the-road	62%	23	15
Liberal	76%	14	10
<u>Familiarity with Prop. 2</u>			
Yes, have heard	63%	27	10
No, not aware	48%	31	21
<u>Voting method</u>			
Precinct voter	61%	25	14
Mail/early voter	57%	32	11
Already voted	55%	35	10

* Small sample base.

Table 8
Preferences toward Prop. 11 (Redistricting)
– across subgroups of the likely voter population

	Yes	No	Undecided
Total	45%	30	25
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	41%	34	25
Republicans	53%	27	20
Non-partisans/others*	41%	27	32
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	52%	25	23
Middle-of-the-road	41%	33	26
Liberal	41%	32	27
<u>Familiarity with Prop. 11</u>			
Yes, have heard	62%	30	8
No, not aware	29%	30	41
<u>Voting method</u>			
Precinct voter	42%	28	30
Mail/early voter	48%	32	20
Already voted	48%	36	16

* Small sample base.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 966 likely voters in California. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period October 18-28, 2008. 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 of 481 and 485 likely voters each on the proposition races other than Prop. 8.

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 were conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing or the voter's preference. After the completion of interviewing, the results were 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 likely voters is +/- 3.3 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the random subsamples have a maximum sampling error of +/- 4.6 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 VOTERS

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 8, the state constitutional amendment having to do with same sex marriages on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 8 is the initiative to "Eliminate the Right of Same-Sex Couples to Marry" constitutional amendment. It changes the California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry and provides that only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California. Fiscal impact: Potential revenue loss over the next few years, mainly to sales taxes, totaling several tens of millions of dollars to state and local government. (IF NOT ALREADY VOTED: If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 8?) (IF ALREADY VOTED: Did you vote YES or NO on Prop. 8?)

ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF VOTERS

I am going to read some statements that have been made about Proposition 8 and for each, please tell me whether you agree or disagree. (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Do you agree or disagree? (SEE RELEASE FOR ITEMS READ)

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 2, about standards for confining farm animals on the November statewide election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 2 is the "Standards for Confining Farm Animals" initiative. It requires that certain farm animals be allowed for the majority of every day to fully extend their limbs or wings, lie down, stand up and turn around. Limited exceptions apply. Fiscal impact: Potential unknown decreases in tax revenues from farm businesses in the range of several million dollars annually. (IF NOT ALREADY VOTED: If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 2?) (IF ALREADY VOTED: Did you vote YES or NO on Prop. 2?)

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 7, an initiative to establish standards for renewable energy on the November election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 7 is the “Renewable Energy Generation” initiative. It requires all utilities to generate 20% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2010, increasing to 40% by 2020 and 50% by 2025. Fiscal impact: Increased state administrative costs of up to \$3.4 million annually paid by fees. (IF NOT ALREADY VOTED: If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 7?) (IF ALREADY VOTED: Did you vote YES or NO on Prop. 7?)

Have you seen, read or heard anything about Proposition 11, a state constitutional amendment having to do with how election district boundary lines are drawn on the November election ballot?

(As you know) Proposition 11 is the “Redistricting Initiative Constitutional Amendment.” It changes authority for establishing office boundaries from elected representatives to a commission and establishes a multi-level process to select commissioners from the registered voter pool. The commission would be comprised of Democrats, Republicans and representatives of neither party. (IF NOT ALREADY VOTED: If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on Prop. 11?) (IF ALREADY VOTED: Did you vote YES or NO on Prop. 11?)