

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

Field Research Corporation

601 California Street, Suite 900
San Francisco, CA 94108-2814
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541
EMAIL: fieldpoll@field.com
www.field.com/fieldpollonline

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BY LARGE MARGINS CALIFORNIA VOTERS FAVOR ANOTHER TERM FOR OBAMA/BIDEN AND FEINSTEIN. MOST REMAIN PESSIMISTIC OF A CHANGE IN POLITICAL CLIMATE IN WASHINGTON AFTER THE ELECTION.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The opinions of California voters have not changed much regarding their presidential voting preferences between Barack Obama and Mitt Romney over the past thirteen months.

The results of the final pre-election *Field Poll* completed this week among 1,566 likely voters statewide finds the Democratic ticket of Obama and Joe Biden leading Republicans Romney and Paul Ryan 54% to 39%, roughly equivalent to the average lead Obama has held over Romney since 2011.

Similarly, by a wide margin (54% to 33%) California voters are supporting the re-election of Dianne Feinstein as U. S. Senator.

Table 1

**Trend of voter preferences for President
(among likely voters in California)**

	Obama/ Biden	Romney/ Ryan	Other	Undecided
October 25 – 30, 2012	54%	39	2	5
October 17 – 24, 2012	53%	38	2	7
Mid September 2012	58%	34	2	6
Early July 2012	55%	37	3	5
February 2012	55%	35	N/A	10
November 2011	50%	40	N/A	10
September 2011	51%	38	N/A	11

N/A: Other candidates not measured.

	Feinstein	Emken	Undecided
October 25 – 30	54%	33	13
October 17 – 24	56%	32	12
Mid September	57%	31	12
Early July	51%	32	17
<u>Party registration (Late Oct. 2012)</u>			
Democrats	85%	6	9
Republicans	19%	70	11
No party preference/other	51%	25	24

Are voters casting positive or negative vote for President?

Four out of five Obama voters say their preference is more a vote of support for the President (79%) than a vote against Romney (14%).

By contrast, nearly four in ten Romney supporters (39%) say their vote is more a vote against the President than a vote for the former Massachusetts Governor.

	Obama voters	Romney voters
For my candidate	79%	54%
Against his opponent	14	39
No opinion	7	7

How presidential preferences divide by sub-group

The Obama/Biden ticket is getting almost universal support from this state's Democrats (87% to 7%) and is also getting a substantial share of the vote of political independents (51% to 34%). Republicans, by contrast, are overwhelmingly supporting the GOP ticket 82% to 12%.

The *Poll* finds the state's white-non Hispanic voters are evenly dividing their preferences. This means the President's entire fifteen-point advantage in California is derived from the voting preferences of this state's large and growing ethnic population. This includes a three-to-one lead among Latinos (66% to 22%) and a two and one-half to one advantage among Asian-American

voters (58% to 25%). In addition, African-Americans are overwhelmingly supporting Obama (89% to 5%).

A large majority of voters in Los Angeles County prefer Obama/Biden (61% to 34%), as do those living in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area (65% to 23%). By contrast, voters living in the state's inland counties prefer the Romney/Ryan ticket by a narrow margin (48% to 46%).

While men are supporting Obama/Biden by six points (48% to 42%), women are backing the Democratic ticket by a wider twenty-three point margin (58% to 35%). In addition, both men and women who are single are particularly more supportive of Obama/Biden than those who are married.

Except for voters age 65 or older who are about evenly split, Californians in all other age categories are supporting the Democratic ticket by double-digit margins.

Table 4
California voter preferences for President in Late October – by subgroup
(among likely voters)

	Obama/ Biden	Romney/ Ryan	Other/ Undecided/ Refused
Total likely voters	54%	39	7
<u>Frequency of voting</u>			
Regular voter	53%	39	8
New/occasional voter	64%	23	13
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	87%	7	6
Republicans	12%	82	6
No party preference/others	51%	34	15
<u>Voting method</u>			
Precinct voter	54%	37	9
Mail ballot voter	53%	40	7
Already voted	53%	42	5
<u>Area</u>			
Coastal counties	57%	34	9
Inland counties	46%	48	6
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	63%	31	6
South Coast	43%	47	10
Other Southern California	38%	53	9
Central Valley	50%	44	6
San Francisco Bay Area	64%	26	10
Other Northern California*	57%	40	3
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	48%	42	10
Married man	43%	48	9
Single/never married man	58%	31	11
Female	58%	35	7
Married woman	53%	41	6
Single/never married woman	73%	17	10
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 29	60%	28	12
30 – 39	61%	30	9
40 – 49	52%	39	9
50 – 64	56%	39	5
65 or older	46%	48	6
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	47%	47	6
Latino	66%	22	12
African-American*	89%	5	6
Asian-American (total)	58%	25	17
Chinese-American*	63%	21	16
Korean-American*	41%	20	39
Vietnamese-American*	47%	27	26
Other Asian-American*	62%	28	10

* Small sample base.

Note: In Tables 3 and 4, subgroup findings are based on interviews conducted during both interviewing waves.

Image rates of the Presidential candidates

The impression that California voters have of President Obama remain quite positive, with 57% holding a favorable view and 35% unfavorable. This is similar to *Field Poll* measures observed throughout the summer and fall of this year, and is somewhat more positive than their assessments last fall and in the early spring. However, the President's current ratings are not as favorable as those he received in California throughout his 2008 presidential election campaign.

Romney is currently viewed more negatively than positively by California, with 49% viewing him unfavorably and 41% favorably. However, this assessment is somewhat better than the more negative than what he was getting earlier in the summer.

Table 5
Trend of voter impressions of the presidential candidates
(among likely voters in California)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Barack Obama, President</u>			
October 25 – 30, 2012	57%	35	8
October 17 – 24, 2012	57%	37	6
Mid September 2012	61%	36	3
Early July 2012	58%	39	3
May 2012	53%	38	9
September 2011	55%	41	4
October 2008	61%	30	9
September 2008	62%	32	6
July 2008	63%	26	11
May 2008	62%	29	9
January 2008	59%	23	15
<u>Party registration (Late Oct. 2012)</u>			
Democrats	89%	7	4
Republicans	17%	77	6
No party preference/others	56%	32	12
<u>Mitt Romney, former Massachusetts Governor</u>			
October 25 – 30, 2012	41%	49	10
October 17 – 24, 2012	38%	50	12
Mid September 2012	39%	53	8
Early July 2012	36%	55	9
May 2012	40%	44	16
November 2011	38%	39	23
September 2011	34%	40	26
June 2011	38%	34	28
<u>Party registration (Late Oct. 2012)</u>			
Democrats	10%	77	13
Republicans	81%	12	7
No party preference/others	33%	53	14

Note: 2012 and 2011 measures prior to early July 2012 and 2008 measures prior to September 2008 were based on registered voters.

Image ratings of the Vice Presidential candidates

California voters have a generally positive impression of Vice President Biden. Biden currently is viewed favorably by 52% of this state's voters, where 38% view him negatively. By contrast, Ryan is viewed more unfavorably than favorably – 44% to 37%,

Table 6			
Image ratings of each party's vice presidential candidates (among likely voters)			
	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Joe Biden, Vice President</u>			
Late October	52%	38	10
Mid September	57%	34	9
<u>Paul Ryan, Wisconsin Congressman</u>			
Late October	37%	44	19
Mid September	35%	42	23

Image ratings of the candidates for U.S. Senate

Incumbent U.S. Senator Feinstein is almost universally known to voters of this state and is viewed more positively than negatively by a 55% to 30% margin. This contrasts dramatically with voter assessments of her challenger, Republican Elizabeth Emken. Statewide fewer than one in three likely voters (32%) is able to offer an opinion of Emken, although her image is more favorable (21%) than unfavorable (11%) among those able to offer an opinion.

Table 7			
Image ratings of the candidates for U.S. Senate (among likely voters)			
	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator</u>			
Late October	55%	30	15
Mid September	59%	33	8
Early July	52%	26	12
<u>Elizabeth Emken, businesswoman</u>			
Late October	21%	11	68
Mid September	22%	9	69
Early July 2012	22%	13	65

Will there be a change in political climate after the election?

The survey also asked voters whether they felt that the political climate in Washington would improve after the election.

The results show that California voters remain fairly pessimistic that it will. Just 28% say they think the nation's political climate will change for the better following the election, while a 54% majority foresees no change or that there would be even less cooperation between the two political parties in the coming years.

Romney supporters and registered Republican voters are a little less pessimistic than are Obama voters and Democrats about this.

Table 8			
Will the political climate in Washington change after the election (among likely voters)			
	Yes, more likely to work together	No change/ less likely to work together	Depends/ no opinion
Late October – Total	28%	53	19
<u>Presidential preference</u>			
Obama voters	27%	57	16
Romney voters	32%	43	25
Undecided	22%	68	10
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	28%	57	15
Republicans	32%	44	24
No party preference/other	22%	58	20

Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The results in this release come from a survey completed by *The Field Poll* among a total of 1,912 California registered voters, 1,566 of whom were considered likely to vote in the November general election. The survey was conducted by telephone using live interviewers in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, and Vietnamese from Field Research Corporation’s central location call center in San Diego. Data collection was conducted over two consecutive interviewing periods. The first spanned the period October 17-24 and included 815 likely voters, while the second was completed October 25-30 and included 751 likely voters. Some of the questions were asked of voters only during the survey's first interviewing wave, while others were asked only during the survey's second wave.

The voter samples from each interviewing wave were supplemented with additional interviews conducted among Asian-American voters to permit comparisons with the state’s other major racial/ethnic voting populations. Funding for the multi-ethnic samples was provided by the New America Media, through a grant from the San Francisco Foundation.

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. Interviews were completed on either a voter’s landline phone or a cell phone. In this survey 1,479 interviews were conducted on a landline phone and 433 were completed through a cell phone contact. After completion of interviewing, the overall sample was weighted to align it to the proper statewide distribution of voters by race/ethnicity and other demographic characteristics of the California registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend upon its sample size. According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall likely voter sample are subject to a maximum sampling error of +/- 2.6 percentage points, while findings based on voters interviewed in either the first or second waves have a maximum sampling error of +/- 3.6 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 have a smaller margin of error. Sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

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

(IF ALREADY VOTED:)

In the election for president, did you vote for the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden or the Republican ticket of Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan? (IF OBAMA/BIDEN:) Was your preference more a vote for Obama or more a vote against Romney? (IF ROMNEY/RYAN:) Was your preference more a vote for Romney or more a vote against Obama?

In the election for U.S. Senate, did you vote for the Democrat Dianne Feinstein or the Republican Elizabeth Emken?

(IF HAVEN'T VOTED YET:)

If the presidential election were being held today would you vote for the Democratic ticket of Barack Obama and Joe Biden or the Republican ticket of Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan? (IF OBAMA/BIDEN:) Is your preference more a vote for Obama or more a vote against Romney? (IF ROMNEY/RYAN:) Is your preference more a vote for Romney or more a vote against Obama?

There is also an election for U.S. Senate. Democrat Dianne Feinstein is running against Republican Elizabeth Emken. If the election for U.S. Senate were being held today, for whom would you vote – Feinstein or Emken?

Generally speaking, do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of... (NAMES AND TITLES OF CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)

(Note: Feinstein and Emken were measured only in the survey's first interviewing wave, while Biden and Ryan were included only in the survey's second wave, as was the following question:)

After the elections, do you think the two political parties in Washington will be more likely or less likely to work together on legislation, or will there be no change?