



PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY
SEPTEMBER 2004

**Californians and
Their Government**

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**Public
Policy
Institute of
California**

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) is a private operating foundation established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. The Institute is dedicated to improving public policy in California through independent, objective, nonpartisan research.

PPIC's research agenda focuses on three program areas: population, economy, and governance and public finance. Studies within these programs are examining the underlying forces shaping California's future, cutting across a wide range of public policy concerns, including education, health care, immigration, income distribution, welfare, urban growth, and state and local finance.

PPIC was created because three concerned citizens – William R. Hewlett, Roger W. Heyns, and Arjay Miller – recognized the need for linking objective research to the realities of California public policy. Their goal was to help the state's leaders better understand the intricacies and implications of contemporary issues and make informed public policy decisions when confronted with challenges in the future. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office.

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Preface

The PPIC Statewide Survey series provides policymakers, the media, and the general public with objective, advocacy-free information on the perceptions, opinions, and public policy preferences of California residents. Inaugurated in April 1998, the survey series has generated a database that includes the responses of more than 102,000 Californians.

The current survey is the eighteenth in our *Californians and Their Government* series, which is conducted on a periodic basis throughout the state's election cycles. The series is examining the social, economic, and political trends that underlie public policy preferences and ballot choices. The current survey focuses on the November 2nd statewide election, including the presidential election. It examines voters' preferences in the presidential election, the U.S. Senate race, and on three state propositions that will also be on the ballot, as well as Californians' attitudes and perceptions toward state policies and national issues. This report presents the responses of 2,003 adult residents throughout the state on a wide range of issues:

- The November 2nd statewide election, including preferences in the presidential election, most important issues for the candidates to address in the presidential debates, perceptions of which of the major party candidates will do a better job in handling issues such as the economy, the situation in Iraq, health care, and terrorism and homeland security; the U.S. Senate election, perceptions of the political profile of U.S. Senate candidates, and public support for, and attitudes related to, Proposition 60 (election rights of political parties), Proposition 62 (primaries initiative), and Proposition 72 (health care coverage requirements referendum).
- State policies, including overall approval ratings of Governor Schwarzenegger and the state legislature, ratings of the governor and legislature in representing the best interests of the people, and satisfaction with legislative term limits; support for legislative reforms such as convening a part-time legislature, election reforms such as campaign finance, and citizens' initiative reforms.
- National policies, including overall approval ratings of President Bush and his handling of jobs and the economy; the public's evaluations of the overall direction of the country and the conditions of the U.S. economy; policy preferences with regard to government regulations and health care as they relate to national attitudes and California trends over time; and attitudes toward the workings of the two-party system and the strengths of the major political parties.
- The extent to which Californians may differ in their ballot choices for the November election; political and economic attitudes toward the state; and attitudes toward national political issues by party affiliation, demographics, race/ethnicity, and region of residence.

This is the 50th PPIC Statewide Survey, which has included a number of special editions:

- The Central Valley (11/99, 3/01, 4/02, 4/03, 4/04)
- San Diego County (7/02)
- Orange County (9/01, 12/02, 12/03)
- Los Angeles County (3/03, 3/04)
- Population Growth (5/01)
- Land Use (11/01, 11/02)
- Environment (6/00, 6/02, 7/03, 7/04)
- State Budget (6/03, 1/04, 5/04)

Copies of this report may be ordered by e-mail (order@ppic.org) or phone (415-291-4400). Copies of this and earlier reports are posted on the publications page of the PPIC web site (www.ppic.org). For questions about the survey, please contact survey@ppic.org.

Contents

Preface	i
Press Release	v
California 2004 Election	1
State Policies	7
National Policies	13
Survey Methodology	19
Survey Questions and Results	21
Survey Advisory Committee	27

Press Release

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<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

THEY COULD CARE LESS: CALIFORNIANS MORE CONCERNED THAN AMERICANS GENERALLY ABOUT PRESIDENTIAL VOTE

Voters See Stark Differences Between Parties, Candidates; Term Limits Still Hot, Proposal for Part-Time Legislature Not

SAN FRANCISCO, California, September 23, 2004 — California's highly partisan voters can agree on one thing: It really matters who wins the presidential election. Despite finding themselves in the minority in recent national polls, state voters see more at stake in the outcome of the election than do voters nationally, according to a new survey released by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

Seven in 10 Californians (71%) – and 80 percent of likely state voters – say it really does matter who wins the presidential race when it comes to making progress on the important issues facing the country, compared to 63 percent of Americans who hold this view. Democrats (78%) and Republicans (77%) are equally likely to say the outcome of the election is important, while independents (31%) are slightly more inclined to believe that things will be the same regardless of who is elected. Whites (78%) are far more likely than Latinos (61%) to say it matters who wins on November 2nd. Widespread concern about the outcome of the election is driving high levels of interest in the campaign: Most voters (89%) say they are following presidential election news closely.

Why the strong feelings? California voters see big differences in the platforms of the nation's major political parties: 83 percent believe there are important differences between Democrats and Republicans, including majorities of Democratic (86%), Republican (84%), and independent (77%) likely voters. Overall, voters view Democrats rather than Republicans as more likely to represent the concerns of people like them (58% to 32%) and to bring about the kind of changes the country needs (52% to 37%), while they are divided about which party will do a good job managing the federal government (44% to 43%).

Despite the belief that the major parties offer starkly different choices, a significant number of state voters would still like to see the two-party system get an overhaul. While 48 percent of likely voters say the Democratic and Republican parties do an adequate job of representing the American people, an equal number (46%) think they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed. A majority of all independents (62%) believe a third party is required. "California's independent voters are clearly looking for a more permanent home, and this should create some trepidation among the Democrats and Republicans who currently bank on their votes," says PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. "But what's most surprising is the substantial numbers of Democrats (43%) and Republicans (37%) who believe a third party is needed. Is it the major parties or just the current crop of candidates that these voters find so lacking?"

Voters Prefer Kerry on Economy, Bush on Homeland Security

Currently, the Democratic ticket of Senators John Kerry and John Edwards holds a 12-point lead over the ticket of Republican President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney (51% to 39%), down from a 16-point spread in August (54% to 38%). Kerry leads Bush among independent voters (54% to 29%) and Latinos (63% to 30%), while the two are locked in a statistical dead heat among white likely voters (47% to 44%). Evangelical Christians favor Bush over Kerry (60% to 30%), while Kerry leads among likely voters with other religious preferences (59% to 32%).

Asked which issue they would most like to hear the candidates address during their debates this fall, likely voters name the economy, jobs, and unemployment (30%), followed by the war in Iraq (19%),

health care (12%), and terrorism and national security (8%). California voters currently prefer Kerry to Bush on jobs and the economy (54% to 37%) and health care (57% to 32%). Voters narrowly support Kerry over Bush on Iraq (48% to 44%) and choose Bush over Kerry on homeland security (48% to 43%).

Support for Open Primary; Health Insurance Referendum Lags Despite Health Care Worries

Proposition 62 – the ballot measure designed to change the state’s partisan primary system to an open primary format – receives support from 49 percent of likely voters, while 33 percent oppose the initiative. Forty-six percent of voters believe Prop. 62 will result in candidates who more effectively represent their districts than do candidates today, while 31 percent disagree. Also up for a vote in November is Proposition 60, placed on the ballot by the legislature as a counter to the open primary initiative and intended to maintain the current partisan primary system. At present, more voters are undecided about this proposition than support or oppose it (42% undecided, 34% support, 24% oppose). Interestingly, a majority of voters (54%) say that the current system of partisan primaries generally produces candidates who effectively represent their districts.

Proposition 72 – a referendum on legislation passed last year requiring all large and medium employers in the state to provide health insurance for their employees – remains short of the majority needed to approve the law (45% to 34%) and virtually unchanged since August. Most voters (65%) say Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger’s opposition to the referendum will not sway their vote either way.

Despite the lack of support for Proposition 72, health care remains a very real concern for most Californians. Three in four state residents (77%) – and 71 percent of likely voters – say they are at least somewhat concerned about being able to afford necessary health care. A slim majority of Californians (53%) say they would be willing to pay more – either through higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes – to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance. There is also a strong preference for a system of universal, government-administered health care (60%) as opposed to the current system in which most people get their health insurance from private employers (35%).

Reform-Minded? Californians Like Some Legislative, Election Reforms but Reject Others

Support for Governor Schwarzenegger remains strong, with 61 percent of Californians approving of the way he has handled his job. Ratings for the state legislature are far lower (40% approve, 46% disapprove). One reason for the difference? Nearly half of state residents (46%) say the governor does an excellent or good job working for their best interests, while only 22 percent say the same about the legislature. But despite their hard feelings towards many in government, residents and voters remain choosy – and full of surprises – when it comes to the types of legislative and election reforms they support:

- **Term Limits:** Legislative term limits remain popular, with 61 percent of Californians and 65 percent of likely voters calling them a good thing. However, Californians may be open to some changes: Nearly four in 10 voters (36%) think that expanding the time legislators could serve in office would make them more effective representatives. Twenty-eight percent of voters say such an extension would make legislators less effective and 31 percent see no difference.
- **Part-Time Legislature:** A majority of Californians (53%) and likely voters (54%) say it would be a bad idea to change the status of the California Legislature from full-time to part-time.
- **Smaller Legislative Districts:** State residents are slightly more likely to believe that having a greater number of state legislators serving smaller districts would not result in better representation for their part of the state (49% to 43%). Likely voters also share this view (52% to 40%).
- **Redistricting:** Californians are divided about shifting the power to redraw legislative and congressional district lines from the state legislature to a new independent state commission (39% favor, 40% oppose). Voters are more inclined to support such a proposal (44% favor, 38% oppose).
- **Publicly Financed Campaigns:** Majorities of state residents (57%) and likely voters (54%) are unwilling to spend even a few dollars a year to support public funding for state and legislative campaigns.

- **Initiative Process:** Californians prefer that initiatives on the state ballot (37%) – rather than the legislature (31%) or governor (23%) – have the greatest influence over public policy in the state. However, strong majorities of state residents (68%) and likely voters (67%) also believe that the process is in need of at least minor changes.

More Key Findings

- **Boxer maintains lead in Senate race** (page 3)

Among likely voters, incumbent Senator Barbara Boxer has an 18-point lead over Republican challenger Bill Jones (54% to 36%). Fifty-nine percent of voters consider Boxer very liberal (30%) or somewhat liberal (29%), while 36 percent call Jones very conservative (11%) or somewhat conservative (25%) and 48 percent say they don't know enough about him to say.

- **Approval ratings for President Bush remain low** (page 13)

Fifty-four percent of Californians disapprove and 43 percent approve of how President Bush is handling his job overall, similar to his August ratings (56% disapprove, 40% approve). Approval ratings for the president on the issue of jobs and the economy are also low – with 56 percent saying they disapprove – and are relatively unchanged since one year ago (52% disapprove, 42% approve).

- **Residents don't like nation's direction, but see better economic times ahead** (page 14)

A majority of Californians (54%) believe the nation is headed in the wrong direction, while 42 percent think it is going in the right direction. However, they are somewhat more optimistic about the nation's economic future: 47 percent of state residents expect good times during the next year and 41 percent anticipate bad times ahead. These general trends have changed little from one year ago.

- **More Californians today say regulation of business is necessary** (page 15)

More Californians today (54%) than four years ago (46%) say that government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest. Forty-two percent think government regulation of business does more harm than good, compared to 49 percent in 2000.

- **Slight increase in support for new gun laws** (page 15)

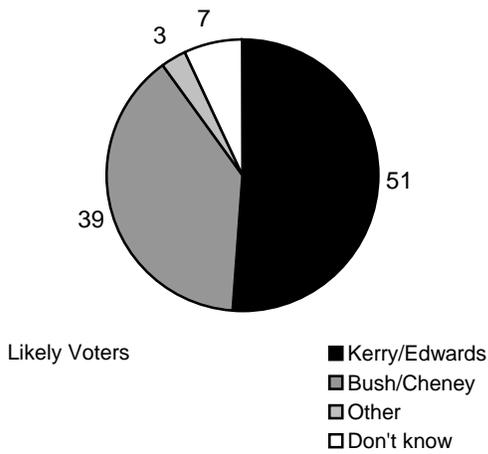
A majority of residents (52%) believe that better enforcement of existing guns laws – rather than new laws or restrictions (39%) – is more likely to decrease gun violence. Support for new gun laws is higher among Latinos than whites (53% to 34%). Overall attitudes have changed slightly since 2000, when 56 percent of state residents advocated better enforcement and 34 percent supported new laws.

About the Survey

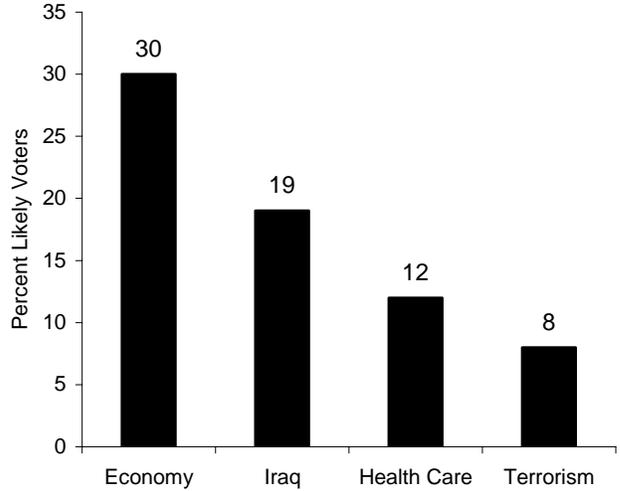
The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and public policy preferences. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,003 California adult residents interviewed between September 12 and September 19, 2004. Interviews were conducted in English or Spanish. The sampling error for the total sample is +/- 2%. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. For more information, see page 19. Mark Baldassare is research director at PPIC, where he holds the Arjay and Frances Fearing Miller Chair in Public Policy. He is founder of the PPIC Statewide Survey, which he has directed since 1998. His recent book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

PPIC is a private, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving public policy through objective, nonpartisan research on the economic, social, and political issues that affect Californians. The institute was established in 1994 with an endowment from William R. Hewlett. PPIC does not take or support positions on any ballot measure or on any local, state, or federal legislation, nor does it endorse, support, or oppose any political parties or candidates for public office. This report will appear on PPIC's website (www.ppic.org) on September 23. ###

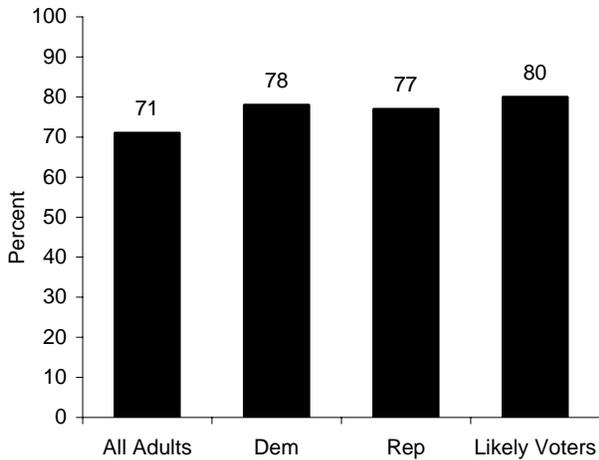
2004 Presidential Race



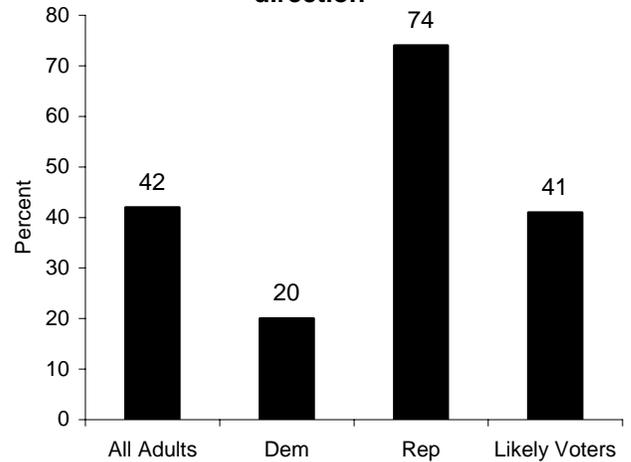
Top Four Issues for Presidential Debates



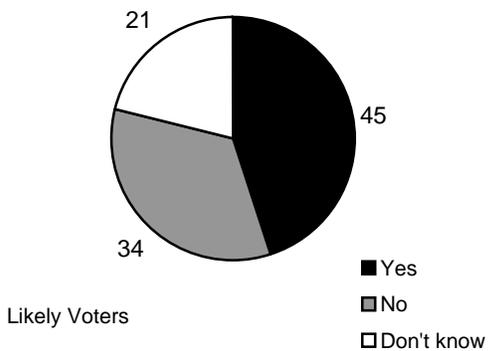
Percent who believe that it really matters who wins the 2004 presidential election



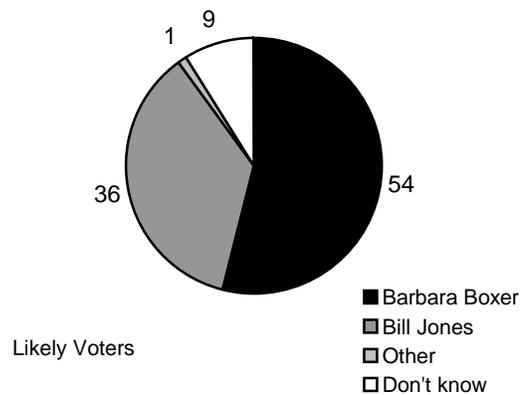
Percent who think that things in the U.S. are generally going in the right direction



Proposition 72: "Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum"



2004 U.S. Senate Race



California 2004 Election

Presidential Election

While many national polls reported a significant “Bush bounce” following the Republican National Convention in early September, the Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards continues to hold a double-digit lead over the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney in California. Kerry led Bush by an 11-point margin in July (49% to 38%), a 16-point margin in August (54% to 38%), and Kerry now leads by a 12-point margin in September (51% to 39%). Only 7 percent of likely voters are undecided about their choice on November 2nd (the percentage of undecided voters has remained virtually unchanged over the past three months).

Kerry draws support from eight in 10 Democrats, and Bush has the support of eight in 10 Republicans; however, Kerry leads Bush by a large margin among independent voters (54% to 29%). Kerry has strong support in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, while Bush leads in the Central Valley and Other Southern California by somewhat narrower margins. Kerry’s lead over Bush is large among Latino likely voters (63% to 30%), while the two tickets are in a statistical dead heat among white likely voters (47% Kerry, 44% Bush). Kerry has a larger lead among women (55% to 36%) than among men (48% to 42%). Evangelical Christians favor Bush over Kerry (60% to 30%), while Kerry leads among likely voters with other religious preferences (59% to 32%).

“If the November 2nd presidential election were being held today, would you vote for ...”

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004
John Kerry and John Edwards	49%	54%	51%
George W. Bush and Dick Cheney	38	38	39
Other answer (specify)	7	2	3
Don't know	6	6	7

<i>Results among likely voters</i>		Kerry / Edwards	Bush / Cheney	Other answer	Don't know
All Likely Voters		51%	39%	3%	7%
Party registration	Democrat	81	11	1	7
	Republican	14	80	2	4
	Independent	54	29	5	12
Region	Central Valley	42	48	1	9
	SF Bay Area	70	19	4	7
	Los Angeles	58	32	2	8
	Other Southern California	37	55	3	5
Race/Ethnicity	Whites	47	44	3	6
	Latinos	63	30	1	6
Gender	Male	48	42	5	5
	Female	55	36	1	8
Religion	Evangelical Christian	30	60	3	7
	Other	59	32	3	6

Ranking of Candidates on Issues

Bush and Kerry plan to face off in a series of presidential debates in September and October. What would California’s likely voters like to hear the candidates talk about during these televised encounters? The top four issues are the economy and jobs (30%), the war in Iraq (19%), health care (12%), and terrorism and security issues (8%). Across the political spectrum, the number one issue is the economy and jobs (36% Democrats; 25% Republicans; 31% independents). The issues of Iraq, health care, and terrorism and security are found in the top tier of issues in all voter groups.

Which of the candidates would do a better job on each of these four issues? California voters favor Kerry over Bush on jobs and the economy (54% to 37%) and health care (57% to 32%). More than eight in 10 Democrats support their party’s candidate on these domestic issues, and independent voters also pick Kerry over Bush on jobs and the economy (55% to 34%) and health care (60% to 28%). Republican likely voters lend higher levels of support to their party’s candidate on jobs and the economy (74%) than on health care (64%).

Likely voters are more divided when asked who would do a better job on the situation in Iraq and on terrorism and security. Voters narrowly support Kerry over Bush on Iraq (48% to 44%) and favor Bush over Kerry on terrorism and security issues (48% to 43%). Republicans show overwhelming support for the president on the situation in Iraq (81%) and terrorism and security (84%). Independents lean toward Kerry over Bush on the handling of Iraq (49% to 38%) and are evenly split between Bush and Kerry when it comes to terrorism and security issues (44% Bush, 43% Kerry). Large majorities of Democrats favor Kerry when it comes to handling the situation in Iraq (75%) and terrorism and homeland security (69%).

“Regardless of your choice for president, which of these candidates would do the better job on each of these issues—George W. Bush or John Kerry?”

<i>Results among likely voters</i>		Likely Voters	<u>Party Registration</u>		
			Democrat	Republican	Independent
The situation in Iraq	Bush	44%	17%	81%	38%
	Kerry	48	75	11	49
	Other answer	2	1	2	5
	Don't know	6	7	6	8
Health care	Bush	32	9	64	28
	Kerry	57	85	23	60
	Other answer	2	1	2	2
	Don't know	9	5	11	10
Jobs and the economy	Bush	37	11	74	34
	Kerry	54	83	16	55
	Other answer	2	1	2	4
	Don't know	7	5	8	7
Terrorism and homeland security	Bush	48	22	84	44
	Kerry	43	69	10	43
	Other answer	2	1	1	4
	Don't know	7	8	5	9

U.S. Senate Election

In November's U.S. Senate election, Democratic incumbent Barbara Boxer has an 18-point lead over Republican challenger Bill Jones among likely voters (54% to 36%), while 9 percent of likely voters remain undecided. There has been little change in the level of support for each of the candidates or the percentage of undecided voters. Boxer and Jones enjoy solid support within their political parties, while independents lean toward Boxer (54% to 29%). Boxer is strongly favored in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, while Jones registers his highest levels of support in the Central Valley and Other Southern California. Boxer has a wider advantage over Jones among women (58% to 30%) than men (49% to 42%) and among Latinos (68% to 24%) than whites (49% to 40%). Evangelical Christians prefer Jones to Boxer by a wide margin (52% to 33%), while voters of other religious orientations strongly prefer Boxer (61% to 30%).

Asked to define the candidates' politics, 59 percent of California likely voters perceived Boxer as liberal, 19 percent as middle-of-the-road, and 5 percent as conservative (17 percent indicated that they did not know enough to say). In comparison, 36 percent of likely voters viewed Jones as conservative, 13 percent as middle-of-the-road, and 3 percent as liberal; a plurality (48%) said they did not know enough about Jones to identify his political bent. Thirty-five percent of likely voters define their own politics as liberal, 29 percent as middle-of-the-road, and 36 percent as conservative.

"If the 2004 U.S. Senate election were being held today, would you vote for ..."

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	July 2004	August 2004	September 2004
Barbara Boxer, the Democrat	52%	53%	54%
Bill Jones, the Republican	37	36	36
Other answer	1	1	1
Don't know	10	10	9

<i>Results among likely voters</i>		Barbara Boxer, the Democrat	Bill Jones, the Republican	Other answer	Don't know
All Likely Voters		54%	36%	1%	9%
Party registration	Democrat	84	8	1	7
	Republican	18	73	0	9
	Independent	54	29	0	17
Region	Central Valley	42	49	1	8
	SF Bay Area	69	24	1	6
	Los Angeles	61	25	1	13
	Other Southern California	44	45	0	11
Race/Ethnicity	Whites	49	40	1	10
	Latinos	68	24	0	8
Gender	Male	49	42	1	8
	Female	58	30	0	12
Religion	Evangelical Christian	33	52	1	14
	Other	61	30	0	9

State Proposition 60

Proposition 60 is the “Election Rights of Political Parties Legislative Constitutional Amendment.” It was placed on the November ballot by the state legislature as a competing measure to Proposition 62, a citizens’ initiative that would change the state’s primary election process from a closed, partisan system to an open, nonpartisan system. Proposition 60 would mirror the current system, in which the top primary vote-getter from each party is ensured a place on the general election ballot. If voters approve both Propositions 60 and 62, the one that receives the most votes will become law.

When read the official ballot title and summary for Proposition 60, a large proportion of likely voters (42%) say they do not know how they would vote if the election were held today. At this stage in the campaign, 34 percent say they would vote yes and 24 percent say they would vote no. Support for Proposition 60 is well below 50 percent among Democrat, Republican, and independent likely voters, and it likewise falls far short of majority support in all regions of the state. Although support for Proposition 60 is higher among Latino likely voters than among whites (46% to 31%), support for the proposition comes in well below 50 percent among both men and women and across age, education, and income groups.

“Proposition 60 on the November ballot is the “Election Rights of Political Parties Legislative Constitutional Amendment.” ... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 60?” *

Results among likely voters	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Latinos
Yes	34%	35%	29%	41%	27%	31%	39%	35%	46%
No	24	23	27	20	33	21	24	23	25
Don't know	42	42	44	39	40	48	37	42	29

One of the factors that may help voters make up their minds on Propositions 60 and 62 is their perception of the current primary system. A majority of voters (54%) say that the state’s partisan primaries generally produce candidates who effectively represent their districts, while 34 percent say that they are not effectively represented under the current system and 12 percent are undecided. Majorities of Democrats (57%), Republicans (55%), and whites (53%) and Latinos (61%) say that the current partisan system produces effective representatives for their districts. While independent voters are more evenly divided in their perceptions of the partisan primaries, a bare majority of them say that the current system produces effective representatives (50% to 39%). There are no significant differences across age and income groups. Overall, there does not seem to be widespread dissatisfaction with the partisan primary system at this stage of the election cycle.

“Do you think California's current system of partisan primaries generally produces candidates who effectively represent their districts?”

	Likely Voters
Yes, produces effective representatives	54%
No, does not produce effective representatives	34
Don't know	12

* For complete question wording, see Question 13 in the Survey Questionnaire, page 22.

State Proposition 62

Proposition 62 on the November ballot is the “Elections, Primaries Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute.” This “open primary” reform, which qualified as a citizens’ initiative, would change the current closed, partisan primary system—it would require primary elections in which voters may vote for any state or federal candidate regardless of the voter’s or candidate’s party registration. The two primary election candidates receiving the most votes for an office—whether they are candidates with no party affiliation or members of the same or of different parties—would be listed on the general election ballot. As previously noted, the legislature placed Proposition 60 on the ballot to counter this effort. Should both Proposition 60 and 62 pass by majority vote, the ballot measure that receives more votes would become state law.

When voters are read the official ballot label and summary of this initiative, 49 percent of likely voters say they would vote yes and 33 percent say they would vote no; only 18 percent are undecided. Thus, compared to the response to Proposition 60, Proposition 62 has more supporters, more opponents, and fewer undecided voters. Currently, there are higher levels of support for Proposition 62 among Democrats (49% to 32%) and independents (58% to 29%) than among Republicans (46% to 36%). Support for Proposition 62 declines with age; however, support is similar across income groups.

**“Proposition 62 on the November ballot is the “Elections, Primaries Initiative Constitutional Amendment.”
 ... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 62?” ***

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	49%	49%	46%	58%	50%	50%	46%	53%	53%
No	33	32	36	29	36	32	34	31	33
Don't know	18	19	18	13	14	18	20	16	14

Do voters think that Proposition 62 would make a positive difference in the primary election process? Residents throughout the state were asked if the passage of Proposition 62 would result in candidates who would more effectively represent their districts than candidates do today. While 46 percent of likely voters said that the proposition would offer them candidates more effective in their representation, 31 percent believed that the measure would not lead to better representation, and 23 percent were unsure. The belief that Proposition 62 would improve representation declines somewhat with age and household income. Latino likely voters (58%) are more likely than white likely voters (43%) to believe that Proposition 62 would lead to more effective representation.

“If Proposition 62 passes, do you think California would generally have candidates who more effectively represent their districts than candidates today?”

	Likely Voters
Yes	46%
No	31
Don't know	23

* For complete question wording, see Question 15 in the Survey Questionnaire, page 22.

State Proposition 72

The percentage of Californians who support Proposition 72—a referendum on legislation passed last year requiring all large and medium employers in the state to provide health insurance for their employees—remains below the 50 percent majority needed to approve the measure. We have seen no change in support or opposition to Proposition 72 among likely voters since the August Statewide Survey. Forty-five percent of likely voters plan to vote yes on the measure, while 34 percent are opposed and 21 percent remain undecided.

Among likely voters, a majority of Democrats (55%) and about half of independents (49%) favor the proposition, while a plurality of Republicans oppose it (48%). A majority in the San Francisco Bay Area (51%) support the measure, but support falls below 50 percent in the rest of the state. Support is higher among Latino likely voters than among white likely voters (53% to 42%). Support declines with age and household income but is not strongly related to either gender or education at this stage of the campaign.

Immediately before this survey began, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger announced that he planned to oppose Proposition 72 and endorse a “no” vote on the measure. Does the governor’s stand on this referendum affect voter choices?

Sixty-five percent of likely voters say that the governor’s opposition to Proposition 72 will not affect their vote, while 14 percent say that it will make them more likely to oppose the measure and 16 percent say that it will make them more likely to support it. One in four Republicans say that the governor’s stand on the issue makes them more likely to oppose it, while one in five Democrats say that if the governor is endorsing a “no” vote, they are more likely to favor the measure. Seventy-three percent of independent likely voters say that the governor’s opposition to this referendum makes no difference to them, while 10 percent say that it will make them more likely to oppose the measure and 13 percent say that it will incline them to support it.

**“Proposition 72 on the November ballot is the “Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum.”
... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 72?” ***

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	August 2004	September 2004
Yes	45%	45%
No	34	34
Don't know	21	21

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	45%	55%	29%	49%	43%	51%	48%	39%	53%
No	34	23	48	34	37	26	30	41	29
Don't know	21	22	23	17	20	23	22	20	18

* For complete question wording, see Question 17 in the Survey Questionnaire, page 23.

State Policies

Governor's Approval Ratings

Roughly six in 10 California adults (61%) and likely voters (64%) approve of the job Arnold Schwarzenegger is doing as governor of California. Schwarzenegger's approval ratings have been in this range throughout his first year in office—and both before and after his appearance at the Republican National Convention in early September. The governor continues to have the overwhelming support of Republicans (88%) and a majority of independents (63%). Democrats are more evenly divided (47% approve; 44% disapprove). Nearly seven in 10 residents in the Central Valley (66%) and Other Southern California (69%) regions approve of the governor, as do more narrow majorities of residents in Los Angeles (54%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (52%). Although 71 percent of whites approve of Schwarzenegger's job performance, 51 percent of Latinos disapprove (42% approve).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Approve	61%	47%	88%	63%	66%	52%	54%	69%	64%
Disapprove	31	44	8	27	26	38	37	24	28
Don't know	8	9	4	10	8	10	9	7	8

Beyond overall job performance, how does the public rate Governor Schwarzenegger when it comes to working for their best interests? About half of all California adults (46%) and likely voters (48%) rate the governor as excellent or good on this dimension. Three in 10 residents think the governor is doing a fair job in this regard, and two in 10 think he is doing a poor job. Again, there is a large partisan divide: Seventy-three percent of Republicans think Schwarzenegger is doing an excellent or good job working for their interests, compared to only 45 percent of independents and 29 percent of Democrats. While 56 percent of whites give the governor excellent or good ratings, only 27 percent of Latinos rate Schwarzenegger that highly when it comes to working for their best interests.

“How would you rate Governor Schwarzenegger when it comes to working for the best interests of people like you?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Excellent	13%	4%	27%	9%	14%	8%	9%	18%	15%
Good	33	25	46	36	35	28	29	36	33
Fair	31	38	20	32	27	36	34	29	31
Poor	21	31	5	19	22	25	26	14	19
Don't know	2	2	2	4	2	3	2	3	2

Approval Ratings for State Legislators

The legislature gets much lower ratings than the governor: Forty percent of Californians approve and 46 percent disapprove of the way the state legislature is handling its job. Among the state’s likely voters, 37 percent approve and 51 percent disapprove. Although Democrats control the legislature, there is virtually no partisan difference in ratings: Similar percentages of Democrats (41%), Republicans (38%), and independents (39%) approve of the job the legislature is doing. Approval also differs very little among liberals (43%), moderates (42%), and conservatives (37%). Forty-five percent of Latinos and 38 percent of whites give the legislature high marks. Nearly half of California adults ages 18 to 34 (47%) approve of the legislature, compared to only 32 percent of those age 55 and older.

Californians’ overall approval of the state legislature has remained largely unchanged during 2004, but it is significantly higher today than it was leading up to last year’s recall election (28% in August 2003).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California legislature is handling its job?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	40%	41%	38%	39%	37%
Disapprove	46	46	52	46	51
Don't know	14	13	10	15	12

How does the public rate the state legislature when it comes to working for their best interests? Californians give the legislature considerably lower marks than they give the governor. Twenty-two percent of Californians think that the legislature as a whole is doing an excellent (3%) or good (19%) job working for the best interests of people like themselves. Democrats (24%), Republicans (20%), and independents (20%) all give the legislature lower ratings than they give the governor for doing an excellent or good job on this dimension.

Californians who describe themselves as liberal (23%), moderate (23%), and conservative (22%) are all about as likely to rate the state legislature as excellent or good in terms of working for the best interests of people like themselves. Latinos are somewhat more likely than whites to say that the legislature deserves excellent or good ratings in this domain (27% to 21%).

“How would you rate the California legislature when it comes to working for the best interests of people like you?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Excellent	3%	3%	2%	2%	1%
Good	19	21	18	18	19
Fair	43	45	38	41	41
Poor	31	28	38	34	36
Don't know	4	3	4	5	3

Legislative Term Limits

Legislative term limits, enacted by a citizens' initiative in 1990, remain popular. Sixty-one percent of Californians think that legislative term limits are a good thing; only 17 percent think they are bad, and 18 percent think they don't make a difference. Republicans (75%) are more likely than Democrats (57%) and independents (59%) to say that legislative term limits are a good thing, but majorities of Californians of all political affiliations are positive about these limits.

In October 1998, two years after the first state legislators were termed out of office, 68 percent of likely voters thought that term limits were a good thing for the state. In December 2001, reflecting general pro-government attitudes following the September 11th terrorist attacks, support for term limits dropped to 49 percent. Today, as 26 state legislators conclude their terms at the end of the year, approval of term limits among likely voters has risen to 65 percent.

“The California legislature has operated under term limits since 1990, meaning that members of the state senate and state assembly are limited in the number of terms they can hold their elected office. Do you think that term limits are a good thing or a bad thing for California, or do they make no difference?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good thing	61%	57%	75%	59%	65%
Bad thing	17	23	11	19	20
No difference	18	16	12	19	12
Don't know	4	4	2	3	3

Given the popularity of term limits, do Californians think there would be any virtue in allowing legislators to serve up to four years beyond the current term limits (three two-year terms for the state assembly and two four-year terms for the state senate). Nearly four in 10 adult residents (35%) and likely voters (36%) think more time would make legislators *more* effective representatives. However, 25 percent of Californians think it would make legislators *less* effective, and one-third say it would make *no* difference in how well their areas are represented in the legislature.

Democrats (41%) are somewhat more likely than independents (34%) and Republicans (29%) to think that extended terms would make legislators more effective representatives. Across the ideological spectrum, 44 percent of liberals, 33 percent of moderates, and 29 percent of conservatives say their areas would be more effectively represented if their state legislators could serve up to four additional years beyond the current limits.

“What if your state legislators were allowed to serve up to four years beyond the current term limits of three two-year terms in the state assembly and two four-year terms in the state senate? Do you think they would be more effective or less effective in representing your area, or would there be no difference?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More effective	35%	41%	29%	34%	36%
Less effective	25	21	34	25	28
No difference	34	33	31	35	31
Don't know	6	5	6	6	5

Legislative Reforms

One of the initiatives in preparation for statewide circulation is a measure to shift the California legislature from full-time to part-time status. A majority of Californians (53%) say this would be a bad thing, about one in four (22%) say it would be a good thing, and about one in six (17%) say it would make no difference. Democrats (63%) are more likely than Republicans (47%) and independents (47%) to say this change would be bad.

Solid majorities in the San Francisco Bay Area (57%) and Other Southern California (54%) regions, and about half of the residents in Los Angeles (51%) and the Central Valley (49%), believe that changing the legislature to part-time status would be a bad thing. Across the state’s demographic and racial/ethnic groups, majorities share a negative opinion about this legislative reform proposal. The belief that having the legislature work part-time is a bad thing increases with education and income. Fifty-nine percent of those who approve of the way the legislature is handling its job say that changing the legislature’s status to part-time would be a bad thing, as do 47 percent of those who disapprove of the legislature’s job performance.

“There is a proposal to change the California legislature from full-time to part-time status. Do you think that having a part-time legislature would be a good thing or a bad thing for California, or would it make no difference?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good thing	22%	14%	30%	27%	24%
Bad thing	53	63	47	47	54
No difference	17	16	15	18	14
Don't know	8	7	8	8	8

Does a state of nearly 36 million people, with 40 state senators and 80 members of the state assembly, need more districts? Californians are divided when asked if having more representatives serving smaller districts would result in better representation for their areas. Forty-three percent of Californians think a larger legislature would better represent their areas, while 49 percent say that it would not make a difference. Democrats (45%) are more likely than Republicans (37%) and independents (39%) to say this change would make their areas better represented in Sacramento. Whites are more likely than Latinos to say more representatives would be inconsequential (53% to 38%), and the belief that it would not matter increases with age, education, and income. Those who approve and those who disapprove of the way the legislature is handling its job today are nearly equally likely to say that more representatives serving smaller districts would make no difference.

“Currently, 40 state senators and 80 assembly members represent the people of California in the state legislature. Overall, do you think people in your area would be better represented in the state legislature if there were more representatives serving smaller districts, or would it not make a difference?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Area would be better represented	43%	45%	37%	39%	40%
Would not make a difference	49	48	55	53	52
Other (specify)	2	2	2	3	2
Don't know	6	5	6	5	6

Electoral Reforms

There have been proposals to change the way that legislative districts are drawn, largely in response to concerns that the involvement of the state's elected officials makes the redistricting process too political. Californians are closely divided on the issue of taking the power to redraw districts away from the state legislature and transferring it to a new, independent state commission. Thirty-nine percent of California residents favor the proposal, 40 percent oppose it, and one in five residents are undecided. Likely voters support the idea of creating an independent commission to redraw district lines by a slight margin (44% favor, 38% oppose). Whites are more likely than Latinos to support the change (41% to 36%). Across demographic groups, support increases with education and household income; there are no significant differences by age.

Voters' evaluations of the legislature play a role in support for this election reform. Among those who disapprove of the legislature's overall performance at this time, 44 percent favor the idea of shifting the responsibility of drawing district lines to an independent commission; among those who approve of the legislature's performance, support drops to 37 percent.

“Would you favor or oppose taking the power to redraw legislative and congressional district lines from the state legislature and shifting this responsibility to a new, independent state commission?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	39%	41%	38%	48%	44%
Oppose	40	41	41	34	38
Don't know	21	18	21	18	18

Californians often complain about the effects of political fundraising on candidates and elected officeholders, but are they willing to pay for publicly financed campaigns? Many state residents are not willing to spend even a few dollars a year for publicly funded state and legislative campaigns (57% opposed, 35% in favor). The response was similarly negative when we first asked this question in August 2000 (57% opposed, 38% in favor). In the wake of the November 2002 gubernatorial election, the response to public financing was more positive (50% in favor, 46% opposed). However, a year ago, prior to the recall election, a majority of Californians once again opposed this idea (53% opposed, 41% in favor).

Today, Democrats (45%) are much more supportive than Republicans (24%) of public financing for political campaigns. Overall, majorities across racial/ethnic groups and demographic groups oppose having this type of system. Across regions, opposition is stronger in Other Southern California (64%) than in the Central Valley (56%), Los Angeles (55%), and the San Francisco Bay Area (47%).

“Generally speaking, would you favor or oppose having a system of public funding for state and legislative campaigns in California if it cost taxpayers a few dollars a year to run?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	35%	45%	24%	38%	39%
Oppose	57	48	68	55	54
Don't know	8	7	8	7	7

Initiative Reforms

Who or what would Californians *prefer* to have the most influence over state public policy? Their first preference is initiatives on the state ballot (37%). Then, despite the governor’s much higher approval ratings, three in 10 (31%) name the legislature, and one in four (23%) name the governor. Preferences are similar among likely voters (38% for initiatives; 35% for the legislature; 20% for the governor). The responses were similar among all adults in a December 1999 survey (42% initiatives; 30% legislature; 21% governor).

Today, Democratic and independent voters are about equally likely to prefer that the legislature and initiatives on the state ballot have the most influence over public policy, while Republicans much prefer initiatives (38%) over the legislature (22%). In the San Francisco Bay Area, a plurality of residents (41%) would prefer the legislature to have the most influence over public policy, compared to pluralities of residents elsewhere in the state who would prefer initiatives on the ballot to have the most influence over public policy. Latinos and whites are equally likely to say they prefer initiatives (both 37%).

“In California state government today, which of the following would you prefer to have the most influence over public policy?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Initiatives on the state ballot	37%	36%	38%	36%	38%
The legislature	31	38	22	34	35
The governor	23	18	31	21	20
Other answer	1	0	2	0	1
Don't know	8	8	7	9	6

Although Californians express a preference for ballot box policymaking, nearly seven in 10 residents say that changes are needed in the California initiative process, and only one in five considers the current system just fine the way it is. Thirty-five percent would like to see major changes, and 33 percent believe only minor changes are needed. Democrats (75%) and independents (68%) are more likely than Republicans (62%), and Latinos (76%) are more likely than whites (64%), to say the initiative process is in need of change. Even among those who believe initiatives should have the most influence on public policy, two-thirds think the process needs major or minor changes. In October 2000, a similar 32 percent of Californians said that major changes were needed, while 43 percent called for minor changes in the initiative process.

“Do you think the citizens' initiative process in California is in need of major changes or minor changes or that it is basically fine the way it is at this time?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Major changes	35%	38%	28%	36%	33%
Minor changes	33	37	34	32	34
Fine the way it is	21	16	28	22	23
Don't know	11	9	10	10	10

National Policies

President's Ratings

In California, President Bush's overall job approval ratings have changed very little since the GOP convention. Today, 43 percent of all California adults approve of the way Bush is handling his job as president, while 54 percent disapprove. In the August Statewide Survey, 40 percent approved and 56 percent disapproved. Today's ratings represent a considerable drop from the September 2003 survey, in which 51 percent approved of Bush's performance, and an even greater decline since the September 2002 survey, when 64 percent approved of the way he was handling his job. In a recent CBS News/*New York Times* poll, 50 percent of all Americans approved of the president's job performance and 42 percent disapproved.

The partisan divide is dramatic: Eighty percent of Republicans approve and 80 percent of Democrats disapprove of Bush's performance. However, he has gained some ground among independent voters. In the August survey, only 30 percent of independents approved of his performance. Today, 40 percent approve, but 58 percent disapprove. Likely voters' views are similar to those of all adults (43% approve; 55% disapprove). Regionally, the president draws much higher approval ratings in the Central Valley (54%) and Other Southern California (57%) than in the San Francisco Bay Area (27%) or Los Angeles (34%). Whites (48%) are more likely than Latinos (40%) to approve of Bush's job performance.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Approve	43%	18%	80%	40%	54%	27%	34%	57%	43%
Disapprove	54	80	18	58	42	70	63	40	55
Don't know	3	2	2	2	4	3	3	3	2

How do Californians rate the president on the number-one campaign issue—jobs and the economy? About the same as his overall job performance—56 percent of all adults and 58 percent of likely voters disapprove of his record on the economy. Regionally, disapproval is highest in the San Francisco Bay Area (73%) and Los Angeles (64%), but significant percentages in the Central Valley (47%) and Other Southern California (44%) also disapprove. About half of Latinos (56%) and whites (53%) disapprove of the president's performance on economic issues. Economic performance ratings were similar in the September 2003 survey, when 52 percent disapproved and 42 percent approved of Bush's handling of the economy.

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling the issue of jobs and the economy?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Approve	39%	16%	71%	37%	47%	23%	31%	53%	39%
Disapprove	56	81	24	60	47	73	64	44	58
Don't know	5	3	5	3	6	4	5	3	3

Overall Direction

As the November presidential election draws near, more Californians (54%) believe that, in general, the nation is headed in the wrong direction than in the right direction (42%). Likely voters have similar views (56% wrong direction, 41% right direction). For all Californians, the outlook is about the same as in September 2003 (42% right direction, 51% wrong direction).

Again, there is a sharp partisan divide: Seventy-four percent of Republicans say the country is headed in the right direction, and 77 percent of Democrats say it is headed in the wrong direction. Independents lean toward a negative assessment (57% wrong direction, 39% right direction). There is also a regional divide: A majority of residents in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles think things are going in the wrong direction; a majority in the Central Valley and Other Southern California think they are going in the right direction.

Californians are more positive about the state of the state (47% right direction, 40% wrong direction) than about the state of the nation (54% wrong direction, 42% right direction).

“Do you think that things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Right direction	42%	20%	74%	39%	52%	28%	33%	53%	41%
Wrong direction	54	77	22	57	44	69	62	42	56
Don't know	4	3	4	4	4	3	5	5	3

When asked about the nation’s *economic* future, Californians are somewhat more optimistic: Forty-seven percent expect good fiscal times in the next year; 41 percent see bad times ahead. Expectations are almost unchanged from the September 2003 survey, when 47 percent anticipated good economic times and 42 percent thought that the economy would not do well. Along partisan lines, a majority of Republicans (73%) and a near majority of independents (47%) think that good times lie ahead. In contrast, a majority of Democrats (55%) see bad economic times coming in the next year. San Francisco Bay Area residents have the most negative economic outlook across the state’s regions. Californians have similar expectations for the national (47% good times, 41% bad times) and the state economies (46% good times, 40% bad times).

“Turning to economic conditions, do you think that during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Region				Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Good times	47%	31%	73%	47%	51%	35%	41%	59%	47%
Bad times	41	55	19	41	38	51	46	31	41
Don't know	12	14	8	12	11	14	13	10	12

Government Regulations

Over the last four years, Californians have become more convinced of the need for government regulation of business. Today, they are more likely to say that government is necessary to protect the public interest (54%) than that government regulation of business does more harm than good (42%). In the February 2000 survey, during the 2000 presidential campaign, state residents were somewhat more likely to think that regulations do more harm than good (49%) and less likely to say government regulation is necessary (46%).

Although still large, the partisan gap in attitudes toward regulating business is actually slightly smaller now than in 2000. Today, there is a 19-point gap: Sixty-one percent of Democrats believe government regulation is necessary to protect the public interest, compared to 42 percent of Republicans. In 2000, there was a 25-point gap between Democrats and Republicans on the necessity of government regulations (56% to 31%). In 2000, 47 percent of independents thought government regulation of business was necessary to protect the public interest; today, six in 10 independents feel this way.

“Which statement comes closest to your views:”

	February 2000	September 2004
Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest	46%	54%
Government regulation of business does more harm than good	49	42
Don't know	5	4

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest	54%	61%	42%	59%	54%
Government regulation of business does more harm than good	42	35	53	37	42
Don't know	4	4	5	4	4

In the matter of government regulations on guns, there has been a slight change in attitudes over the last four years in the direction of support for passing more laws. When it comes to decreasing gun violence, 52 percent of residents now say that better enforcement of existing gun laws is the answer; 39 percent opt for passing more laws and restrictions on obtaining new guns. In the September 2000 survey, just before the presidential election, 56 percent were for better enforcement, 34 percent for more laws.

Democrats are more supportive of new gun laws than Republicans. On this issue, the partisan divide has narrowed somewhat—15 points today (44% Democrats, 29% Republicans) compared to 20 points in 2000 (41% Democrats, 21% Republicans). There has been no change in opinion across other voter groups. Support for new gun laws is higher among Latinos than whites (53% to 34%).

Health Care

Health care was identified in the August Statewide Survey as one of the top issues of the 2004 presidential campaign, and the current survey indicates that health care is one of the top four issues voters want to hear the candidates talk about during the presidential debates. National polls have also placed health care on the list of top concerns. Why is health care such a major issue this year? Half of California adults (57%) and likely voters (49%) say that they are very concerned about affording necessary health care when a family member gets sick. However, there are partisan and racial/ethnic differences: Democrats are more likely than Republicans (65% to 39%) and Latinos are more likely than whites (73% to 46%) to say they are very concerned about health care affordability. Concern is also high among lower income, less educated, and foreign-born residents.

What type of health insurance system is preferred? Six in 10 Californians say they favor a universal health insurance program—in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that’s run by the government and financed by taxpayers—rather than the current health insurance system in the United States. Republicans prefer the current health insurance system, while Democrats and independents would rather have a universal health insurance program. A national survey by ABC News/*Washington Post* in 2003 found similar results (62% universal health insurance, 32% current health insurance system).

“Which would you prefer: the current health insurance system in the United States, in which most people get their health insurance from private employers but some people have no insurance, or a universal health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that’s run by the government and financed by taxpayers?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Universal health insurance system	60%	72%	37%	59%	54%
Current system	35	24	58	35	40
Don't know	5	4	5	6	6

Would Californians be willing to pay more—either in higher taxes or health insurance premiums—to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance? Fifty-three percent say yes; 42 percent say no. On this question, the California results are similar to the results of a national survey by the Kaiser Family Foundation in February 2003 (52% willing to pay, 42% not willing to pay). Willingness to pay more varies by partisanship (65% Democrats, 60% independents, 39% Republicans) and race/ethnicity (56% white, 47% Latino). It declines with age and citizenship status and increases with higher education and higher income levels.

“Would you be willing to pay more—either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes—in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, willing to pay more	53%	65%	39%	60%	55%
No, not willing to pay more	42	31	55	37	40
Don't know	5	4	6	3	5

Measures of Political Intensity

Californians continue to be highly engaged in the 2004 presidential election: Seventy-six percent of all adults and 89 percent of likely voters are either very closely or fairly closely following the news about the candidates. Democrats (45%) and Republicans (44%) are equally likely to say they are following the *very* news closely. About half of college graduates, residents with incomes of \$80,000 or more, residents age 55 and older, and whites are very closely following news about candidates.

Californians are more likely than Americans generally to believe it really matters who wins the 2004 presidential election. In this survey, 71 percent of Californians express that belief, while 26 percent believe that things will be pretty much the same no matter who wins. In a Pew Research Center survey in July 2004, 63 percent of Americans said it really matters who wins, while 32 percent said that things will pretty much be the same whatever the outcome. Eight in 10 likely voters stress the importance of who wins for making progress on important issues, and Democrats and Republicans are about equally likely to hold this view. Although independents are more likely to say that things will be the same despite the outcome, a large majority (65%) believe that it matters who wins. Whites (78%) are more likely than Latinos (61%) to say the outcome matters.

“As far as making progress on the important issues facing the country is concerned, does it really matter who wins the 2004 presidential election, or will things pretty much be the same regardless of who is elected president?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Really matters who win	71%	78%	77%	65%	80%
Things will be the same regardless	26	19	21	31	17
Other answer	1	1	0	1	1
Don't know	2	2	2	3	2

A similar 75 percent of Californians believe there are important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for, while only 21 percent believe there are no important differences. Even independent voters are much more likely than not to believe there are important differences between the major parties (66% to 29%). More than eight in 10 likely voters, Democrats, and Republicans believe there are big distinctions between the major political parties. The perception of major differences between the parties is nearly identical among evangelical Christians and others (76% to 75%).

“Do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, important differences	75%	82%	80%	66%	83%
No, no important differences	21	16	17	29	16
Don't know	4	2	3	5	1

Perceptions of Major Political Parties

Given that Californians think there are important differences between the Democrats and Republicans, which party do they think is more effective? Californians choose Democrats over Republicans when it comes to bringing about changes the country needs (51% to 36%) and being concerned with the needs of people like themselves (57% to 30%). In these areas, independents give Democrats higher points. When asked who can best manage the federal government, Californians are divided (42% Republicans, 42% Democrats). In this case, independents give Republicans the nod (44% to 36%).

“Which party do you think is better described by the phrase ...”

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>“Can bring about the kind of changes the country needs”</i>	Republican Party	36%	11%	74%	32%	37%
	Democratic Party	51	82	16	48	52
	Both equally	3	1	3	3	2
	Neither	6	3	5	10	6
	Don't know	4	3	2	7	3
<i>“Is concerned with the needs of people like me”</i>	Republican Party	30	7	65	28	32
	Democratic Party	57	87	24	56	58
	Both equally	3	2	3	2	2
	Neither	5	2	6	8	6
	Don't know	5	2	2	6	2
<i>“Able to manage the federal government well”</i>	Republican Party	42	19	77	44	43
	Democratic Party	42	72	11	36	44
	Both equally	2	2	2	4	2
	Neither	8	5	8	11	8
	Don't know	6	2	2	5	3

Do the two major political parties do an adequate job of representing the American people or is a third party needed? Californians are evenly divided (48% adequate job, 46% third party needed). Republicans are the most likely to say that the major parties are doing an adequate job, Democrats give a mixed assessment, and most independents think that a third party is needed. A national Gallup Poll in 2003 found a much more positive view of the major parties among all Americans (56% adequate job, 40% third party needed).

“In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Adequate job	48%	51%	58%	34%	48%
Third party is needed	46	43	37	62	46
Don't know	6	6	5	4	6

Survey Methodology

The PPIC Statewide Survey is directed by Mark Baldassare, research director at the Public Policy Institute of California, with assistance in research and writing from Jon Cohen, associate survey director; Renatta DeFever and Kristy Michaud, survey research associates; and Kimberly Curry, survey intern.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,003 California adult residents interviewed between September 12 and September 19, 2004. Interviewing took place on weekday nights and weekend days, using a computer-generated random sample of telephone numbers that ensured that both listed and unlisted telephone numbers were called. All telephone exchanges in California were eligible for calling. Telephone numbers in the survey sample were called up to ten times to increase the likelihood of reaching eligible households. Once a household was reached, an adult respondent (age 18 or older) was randomly chosen for interviewing by using the “last birthday method” to avoid biases in age and gender. Each interview took an average of 20 minutes to complete. Interviewing was conducted in English or Spanish. Casa Hispana translated the survey into Spanish, and Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, Inc. conducted the telephone interviewing.

We used recent U.S. Census and state figures to compare the demographic characteristics of the survey sample with characteristics of California’s adult population. The survey sample was closely comparable to the census and state figures. The survey data in this report were statistically weighted to account for any demographic differences.

The sampling error for the total sample of 2,003 adults is +/- 2 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. This means that 95 times out of 100, the results will be within 2 percentage points of what they would be if all adults in California were interviewed. The sampling error for subgroups is larger. The sampling error for the 1,636 registered voters is +/- 2.5 percent, and the sampling error for the 1,151 likely voters is +/- 3 percent. Sampling error is only one type of error to which surveys are subject. Results may also be affected by factors such as question wording, question order, and survey timing.

Throughout the report, we refer to four geographic regions. “Central Valley” includes Butte, Colusa, El Dorado, Fresno, Glenn, Kern, Kings, Madera, Merced, Placer, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Shasta, Stanislaus, Sutter, Tehama, Tulare, Yolo, and Yuba Counties. “SF Bay Area” includes Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano, and Sonoma Counties. “Los Angeles” refers to Los Angeles County, and “Other Southern California” includes the mostly suburban regions of Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties. These four regions are the major population centers of the state, accounting for approximately 90 percent of the state population.

We present specific results for Latinos because they account for about 28 percent of the state’s adult population and constitute one of the fastest growing voter groups. The sample sizes for the African American and Asian subgroups are not large enough for separate statistical analysis. We do contrast the opinions of registered Democrats, Republicans, and independents. The “independents” category includes only those who are registered to vote as “decline to state.”

In some cases, we compare PPIC Statewide Survey responses to responses recorded in national surveys conducted by ABC News/*Washington Post*, CBS News/*New York Times*, the Pew Research Center, Fox News/*Opinion Dynamics*, the Gallup Organization, the National Election Studies (NES), and the Kaiser Family Foundation. We use earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in California.

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT
SEPTEMBER 12—SEPTEMBER 19, 2004
2,003 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS; ENGLISH AND SPANISH
MARGIN OF ERROR +/-2% AT 95% CONFIDENCE LEVEL FOR TOTAL SAMPLE

1. Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

47% right direction
 40 wrong direction
 13 don't know

2. Turning to economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?

46% good times
 40 bad times
 14 don't know

[Responses recorded for questions 3 through 19 are from likely voters only. All other responses are from all adults, except where noted.]

3. If the November 2nd presidential election were being held today, would you vote for: *[rotate]* the Republican ticket of George W. Bush and Dick Cheney *[or]* the Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards?

51% John Kerry and John Edwards
 39 George W. Bush and Dick Cheney
 3 other answer *[specify]*
 7 don't know

4. How closely are you following news about candidates for the upcoming presidential election—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

50% very closely
 39 fairly closely
 8 not too closely
 3 not at all closely

5. There will be a series of presidential debates leading up to the November 2nd election. Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about during the presidential debates? *[code, don't read]*

30% economy, jobs, unemployment
 19 Iraq situation, war in Iraq
 12 health care, health costs
 8 terrorism, security issues
 5 education, schools
 4 immigration, illegal immigration
 4 federal budget, deficit, taxes
 2 foreign policy in general
 2 crime, gangs
 1 energy, oil/gasoline prices
 1 environment, pollution
 8 other *(specify)*
 4 don't know

5a. Is there another issue that you want to hear about almost as much? *[code, don't read]*

22% economy, jobs, unemployment
 20 Iraq situation, war in Iraq
 16 health care, health costs
 8 education, schools
 7 terrorism, security issues
 5 federal budget, deficit, taxes
 3 foreign policy in general
 3 immigration, illegal immigration
 3 social security
 2 environment, pollution
 2 gay rights, gay marriages
 1 abortion
 1 guns, gun control
 1 energy, oil/gasoline prices
 1 government regulations
 1 housing costs/availability
 1 moral and family values
 1 women's rights
 2 other *(specify)*

Regardless of your choice for president, which of these candidates would do the better job on each of these issues—George W. Bush or John Kerry?

[rotate questions 6 to 9]

6. Which candidate would do a better job on the situation in Iraq?

- 44% George W. Bush
- 48 John Kerry
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

7. Which candidate would do a better job on health care?

- 32% George W. Bush
- 57 John Kerry
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 9 don't know

8. Which candidate would do a better job on jobs and the economy?

- 37% George W. Bush
- 54 John Kerry
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 7 don't know

9. Which candidate would do a better job on terrorism and homeland security?

- 48% George W. Bush
- 43 John Kerry
- 2 other answer (*specify*)
- 7 don't know

10. If the November election for the U.S. Senate were being held today, would you vote for: **[rotate]** Barbara Boxer, the Democrat, **[or]** Bill Jones, the Republican?

- 54% Barbara Boxer
- 36 Bill Jones
- 1 other answer (*specify*)
- 9 don't know

[rotate questions 11 and 12]

11. Do you consider Barbara Boxer to be **[rotate order]** or don't you know enough to say?

- 30% very liberal
- 29 somewhat liberal
- 19 middle-of-the-road
- 4 somewhat conservative
- 1 very conservative
- 17 don't know enough to say

12. Do you consider Bill Jones to be **[rotate order]** or don't you know enough to say?

- 1% very liberal
- 2 somewhat liberal
- 13 middle-of-the-road
- 25 somewhat conservative
- 11 very conservative
- 48 don't know enough to say

13. Proposition 60 on the November ballot—the “Election Rights of Political Parties Legislative Constitutional Amendment”—requires that general election ballots include the candidate receiving the most votes among candidates of the same party for partisan office in the primary election. No significant fiscal impact is expected. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 60?

- 34% yes
- 24 no
- 42 don't know

14. Do you think California's current system of partisan primaries generally produces candidates who effectively represent their districts?

- 54% yes, produces effective representatives
- 34 no, does not produce effective representatives
- 12 don't know

15. Proposition 62 on the November ballot—the “Elections, Primaries Initiative Constitutional Amendment,”—requires primary elections where voters may vote for any state or federal candidate regardless of the voter's or candidate's party registration. The two primary election candidates receiving the most votes for an office—whether they are candidates with “no party” or members of the same or different party—would be listed on the general election ballot. No significant fiscal impact is expected. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 62?

- 49% yes
- 33 no
- 18 don't know

16. If Proposition 62 passes, do you think California would generally have candidates who more effectively represent their districts than candidates today?

46% yes
31 no
23 don't know

17. Proposition 72 on the November ballot is the "Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum." A *yes* vote approves and a *no* vote rejects state legislation requiring health care coverage for employees working for large and medium employers. The fiscal impacts include significant state expenditures on private health insurance offset fully by significant employer health coverage costs, significant county health program savings, and significant net state revenue losses. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 72?

45% yes
34 no
21 don't know

18. How closely are you following news about Proposition 72, "The Health Care Coverage Requirements Referendum"—very closely, fairly closely, not too closely, or not at all closely?

6% very closely
23 fairly closely
34 not too closely
34 not at all closely
3 don't know

19. Does knowing that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger opposes this state proposition make you more likely to oppose it, more likely to support it, or does it make no difference to you?

14% more likely to oppose
16 more likely to support
65 no difference
5 don't know

[rotate questions 20/21 and 22/23 as blocks]

20. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

61% approve
31 disapprove
8 don't know

21. How would you rate Governor Schwarzenegger when it comes to working for the best interests of people like you—excellent, good, fair, or poor?

13% excellent
33 good
31 fair
21 poor
2 don't know

22. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California legislature is handling its job?

40% approve
46 disapprove
14 don't know

23. How would you rate the California legislature when it comes to working for the best interests of people like you—excellent, good, fair, or poor?

3% excellent
19 good
43 fair
31 poor
4 don't know

24. In California state government today, which of the following would you prefer to have the most influence over public policy: *[rotate list]*

37% initiatives on the state ballot
31 the legislature
23 the governor
1 other answer (*specify*)
8 don't know

25. Do you think the citizens' initiative process in California is in need of major changes or minor changes or that it is basically fine the way it is at this time?

35% major changes
33 minor changes
21 fine the way it is
11 don't know

26. The California legislature has operated under term limits since 1990, meaning that members of the state senate and state assembly are limited in the number of terms they can hold their elected office. Do you think that term limits are a good thing or a bad thing for California, or do they make no difference?

61% good thing
17 bad thing
18 no difference
4 don't know

27. What if your state legislators were allowed to serve up to four years beyond the current term limits of three two-year terms in the state assembly and two four-year terms in the state senate? Do you think they would be more effective or less effective in representing your area, or would there be no difference?

- 35% more effective
- 25 less effective
- 34 no difference
- 6 don't know

28. There is a proposal to change the California legislature from full-time to part-time status. Do you think that having a part-time legislature would be a good thing or a bad thing for California, or would it make no difference?

- 22% good thing
- 53 bad thing
- 17 no difference
- 8 don't know

29. Currently, 40 state senators and 80 assembly members represent the people of California in the state legislature. Overall, do you think people in your area would be better represented in the state legislature if there were more representatives serving smaller districts, or would it not make a difference?

- 43% area would be better represented
- 49 would not make a difference
- 2 other (*specify*)
- 6 don't know

30. Would you favor or oppose taking the power to redraw legislative and congressional district lines from the state legislature and shifting this responsibility to a new, independent state commission?

- 39% favor
- 40 oppose
- 21 don't know

31. Generally speaking, would you favor or oppose having a system of public funding for state and legislative campaigns in California if it cost taxpayers a few dollars a year to run?

- 35% favor
- 57 oppose
- 8 don't know

32. Changing topics, overall do you approve or disapprove of the way that George W. Bush is handling his job as president of the United States?

- 43% approve
- 54 disapprove
- 3 don't know

33. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling the issue of jobs and the economy?

- 39% approve
- 56 disapprove
- 5 don't know

34. Do you think that things in the United States are generally going in the right direction or the wrong direction?

- 42% right direction
- 54 wrong direction
- 4 don't know

35. Turning to economic conditions, do you think during the next 12 months the United States will have good times financially or bad times?

- 47% good times
- 41 bad times
- 12 don't know

I'm going to read some pairs of statements. As I read each pair, tell me if the first statement or the second statement comes closest to your views—even if neither is exactly right.

[rotate questions 36 and 37]

36. *[rotate]* Government regulation of business is necessary to protect the public interest *[or]* Government regulation of business does more harm than good.

- 54% government regulation is necessary
- 42 government regulation does more harm than good
- 4 don't know

37. What do you think is more likely to decrease gun violence: *[rotate]* better enforcement of gun laws *[or]* more laws and restrictions on obtaining guns?

- 52% better enforcement
- 39 more laws
- 5 both
- 4 don't know

[rotate questions 38 and 39]

38. Which would you prefer: *[rotate]* the current health insurance system in the United States, in which most people get their health insurance from private employers but some people have no insurance *[or]* a universal health insurance program, in which everyone is covered under a program like Medicare that's run by the government and financed by taxpayers?

- 35% current system
- 60 universal health insurance system
- 5 don't know

39. Would you be willing to pay more—either in higher health insurance premiums or higher taxes—in order to increase the number of Americans who have health insurance, or not?

- 53% yes, willing to pay more
- 42 no, not willing to pay more
- 5 don't know

40. How concerned are you about being able to afford necessary health care when a family member gets sick—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 57% very concerned
- 20 somewhat concerned
- 10 not very concerned
- 13 not at all concerned

41. On another topic, some people are registered to vote and others are not. Are you absolutely certain that you are registered to vote?

- 82% yes
- 18 no

41a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

- 42% Democrat
- 35 Republican
- 5 another party (*specify*)
- 18 independent

42. Regardless of your current voter registration status, generally speaking, do you usually think of yourself as a Democrat, a Republican, an independent, or what?

- 34% Democrat [*ask q43b*]
- 25 Republican [*ask q43c*]
- 31 Independent [*ask q43a*]
- 6 other (*specify*)[*ask q43a*]
- 4 don't know [*ask q43a*]

43a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

- 31% Republican Party
- 43 Democratic Party
- 20 neither
- 6 don't know

[skip to Q44]

43b. Do you think of yourself as a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

- 58% strong
- 40 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[skip to Q44]

43c. Do you think of yourself as a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

- 62% strong
- 36 not very strong
- 2 don't know

[rotate questions 44/45 and 46/47/48 as blocks]

44. Overall, do you think there are any important differences in what the Republicans and Democrats stand for?

- 75% yes, important differences
- 21 no, no important differences
- 4 don't know

45. In your view, do the Republican and Democratic parties do an adequate job representing the American people, or do they do such a poor job that a third major party is needed?

- 48% adequate job
- 46 third party is needed
- 6 don't know

I'm going to read you some phrases. Please tell me if you think each one better describes the Republican Party and its leaders or the Democratic Party and its leaders. First, which party do you think is better described by the phrase ...

[rotate questions 46 to 48]

46. "Can bring about the kind of changes the country needs"

- 36% Republican Party
- 51 Democratic Party
- 3 both equally [*volunteered*]
- 6 neither [*volunteered*]
- 4 don't know

47. "Is concerned with the needs of people like me"

- 30% Republican Party
- 57 Democratic Party
- 3 both equally *[volunteered]*
- 5 neither *[volunteered]*
- 5 don't know

48. "Able to manage the federal government well"

- 42% Republican Party
- 42 Democratic Party
- 2 both equally *[volunteered]*
- 8 neither *[volunteered]*
- 6 don't know

49. On another topic, would you consider yourself to be politically ... *[rotate order]*

- 11% very liberal
- 21 somewhat liberal
- 32 middle-of-the-road
- 24 somewhat conservative
- 10 very conservative
- 2 don't know

50. Generally speaking, how much interest would you say you have in politics—a great deal, a fair amount, only a little, or none?

- 26% great deal
- 43 fair amount
- 25 only a little
- 6 none

51. As far as making progress on the important issues facing the country is concerned, does it really matter who wins the 2004 presidential election, or will things pretty much be the same regardless of who is elected president?

- 71% really matters who wins
- 26 things will pretty much be the same regardless
- 1 other *(specify)*
- 2 don't know

[Responses recorded for questions 52 and 53 are from registered voters only]

52. How often would you say you vote—always, nearly always, part of the time, seldom, or never?

- 70% always
- 19 nearly always
- 7 part of the time
- 2 seldom
- 2 never

53. Do you plan to vote in the general election on November 2nd? *If yes:* Will you vote at your local polling place or by absentee ballot?

- 73% yes, local polling place
- 23 yes, absentee ballot
- 2 no, not planning to vote
- 2 don't know

54. On another topic, are you yourself now covered by any form of health insurance or health plan?

- 83% yes
- 17 no

55. Are you or is anyone in your immediate family a member of a labor union? *If yes:* Is that person you or another person in your family?

- 10% yes, respondent
- 10 yes, another person in family
- 2 yes, both
- 78 no

[56-69: demographic questions]

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