



PPIC
STATEWIDE
SURVEY
AUGUST 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.

David W. Lyon is founding President and Chief Executive Officer of PPIC. Raymond L. Watson is Chairman of the Board of Directors.



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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 100,000 Californians.

The current survey is the seventeenth 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 and national issues. This report presents the responses of 2,002 adult residents throughout the state on a wide range of issues:

- The November 2nd statewide election, including preferences in the presidential election, level of attention to news about the presidential election, voters' views about President Bush, most important issues in the presidential campaign, the U.S. Senate election, and public support for Proposition 1A (local government revenues), Proposition 63 (mental health services expansion), and Proposition 72 (health care coverage requirements referendum).
- National policies, including overall approval ratings of President Bush and of his handling of the situation in Iraq and of terrorism and security issues, public perceptions of how the situation in Iraq is going for the United States today, and perceptions of homeland security issues—such as concerns about the personal threat of terrorism, perceptions of the problem of terrorism in California today, attitudes toward the federal government's response to the threat of terrorism, including support for the recent recommendation to create a new director of intelligence—as the third anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks approaches.
- State policies, including overall approval ratings of Governor Schwarzenegger and the state legislature, approval ratings on their handling of the state budget and taxes, satisfaction with the state budget plan and support for the California Performance Review that was ordered by Governor Schwarzenegger, public concerns about the effects of spending cuts on local government, support for local tax increases for local government services, the role of citizen's initiatives in making public policy, and overall perceptions of the citizens' initiative process.
- 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 49th 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.

Regional Groupings Used in This Report



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Press Release

Para ver este comunicado de prensa en español, por favor visite nuestra página de internet:
<http://www.ppic.org/main/pressreleaseindex.asp>

VOTERS ENGAGED IN TOP RACES AND ENTRENCHED IN THEIR VIEWS **Much Interest, Few Undecideds in Presidential, Senate Races;** **Concern Grows Over War in Iraq**

SAN FRANCISCO, California, August 17, 2004 — Campaign season has come early to California. The state's increasingly partisan voters are surprisingly engaged – and dug in – at this stage in the general election process, according to a new survey released by the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC).

How important is the upcoming election to likely voters in California? Sixty-four percent say they are more interested in politics now than they were during the 2000 presidential election, with liberals (69%) more likely than conservatives (61%) to hold this view. Californians are presently more engaged in the political process than are Americans generally: Fewer voters nationwide (47%) say they have greater interest in politics today than they did four years ago. And most Californians today (89%) say they are following presidential election news very (48%) or fairly (41%) closely. In August 2000, only 41 percent of likely voters in the state were very closely following coverage of the presidential candidates.

Currently, the Democratic ticket of Senators John Kerry and John Edwards holds a 16-point lead over the ticket of Republican President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney (54% to 38%), up from an 11-point spread in July (49% to 38%). Kerry is ahead among independent voters (64% to 25%) and among all demographic groups, including Latinos (68% to 26%) and women (58% to 34%). Bush leads in the Central Valley (53% to 41%) and in Southern California counties excluding Los Angeles (48% to 42%), while Kerry draws his strongest support in the Bay Area (66% to 26%) and in Los Angeles (63% to 29%).

Although it is early in the campaign, very few voters today are undecided about their presidential pick: Only 6 percent of likely voters say they have not yet chosen a candidate. In August 2000, the percentage of undecided voters in the presidential contest (14%) was more than double what it is today. “The growing polarization of the electorate in California explains some of this decisiveness, but that’s not the whole story,” says PPIC Statewide Survey Director Mark Baldassare. “It is obvious that both sides see a great deal at stake in this election.”

Economy, War Top Issues in Presidential Race

Asked which issue they would most like to hear the candidates address during the presidential campaign, likely voters most often name the economy, jobs, and unemployment (26%), followed by the war in Iraq (21%), and terrorism or national security (9%). Across the state, with the exception of the Central Valley, the economy is the number one issue on voters' list of campaign topics. Kerry is favored over Bush by a wide margin among those who cite the economy, jobs, and unemployment (60% to 33%) and Iraq (62% to 31%), while Bush is chosen over Kerry among those who name terrorism (66% to 30%).

President Bush and his policies are disliked by nearly half of likely voters today (45%), while just 33 percent say they like Bush and like his policies. Interestingly, more voters like Bush (50%) than said they liked President Clinton (45%) four years ago. However, President Clinton's *policies* (62%) were liked more than President Bush's *policies* (35%) are today. President Bush's overall approval rating has fallen to a record low (40%) and is lower than the national rating for his presidency (46%).

Views on Iraq Situation Darken, But Homeland Security Concerns Remain Stable

One of the major policies of President Bush – the effort in Iraq – is receiving increasingly negative reviews from Californians. Sixty-three percent disapprove of his handling of the Iraq situation, up 18 points from one year ago. Today, only 34 percent of state residents – and 37 percent of likely voters – approve of the president’s handling of Iraq, compared to 45 percent nationally.

These numbers reflect Californians’ increasing concern about U.S. efforts to establish security in and rebuild Iraq, as well as about the Bush administration’s efforts to “sell” the action. One year ago, half of state residents (51%) said that U.S. activities in Iraq were going at least somewhat well. Today, only 33 percent share this view. And 61 percent now say it was not worth going to war in Iraq. One year ago, residents were split over whether or not the effort was worth the costs (47% yes, 46% no). Californians are also increasingly inclined to believe that the Bush administration intentionally exaggerated evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction. Today, 57 percent hold that view, up from 53 percent in August 2003. Despite these concerns, nearly half of Californians still believe that the U.S. is more secure as a result of our efforts in Iraq (51%) – a decline from 59 percent one year ago – while 44 percent disagree.

Bush gets higher ratings for his handling of terrorism and homeland security, with half of Californians approving and half disapproving (47% to 49%). Nonetheless, approval of the president’s performance in this area is considerably lower than it was in August 2003 (62%). As the nation approaches the third anniversary of September 11th, 55 percent of state residents say they are at least somewhat confident that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies will be able to prevent future terrorist attacks. This confidence level has changed very little since a year ago (58%). Sixty-six percent of Californians view terrorism and security as a problem in the state today – compared to 61 percent in August 2003 – but only 15 percent are very worried that they or someone in their family will be the victim of a terrorist attack. Latinos (38%) remain far more concerned than other groups about becoming the victim of such an attack.

Where do Californians stand on one of the main recommendations of the 9/11 Commission? An overwhelming majority (71%) support the idea of creating a national director of intelligence.

Governor Remains Popular; Budget and CPR Get Positive Reviews

Approval ratings for Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger are back to where they were before the recent budget standoff with the state legislature. Two in three Californians (65%) – including majorities of Democrats, Republicans, and independents – approve of the way he is handling his job generally, and 58 percent like his handling of the state budget and taxes. Why the improvement? Many Californians (52%) say they are satisfied with the recent budget agreement and most (65%) favor Schwarzenegger’s plans for changing state government through the California Performance Review process. The legislature does not fare as well: 45 percent express overall disapproval, and 53 percent disapprove of the way it is handling the budget and taxes. “Schwarzenegger is a unique phenomenon in a state where both Republican and Democratic officials are viewed in a negative light,” says Baldassare.

Support for Local Government, Mental Health Props but Not for Health Insurance Referendum

Proposition 1A – the ballot measure designed to keep state government from dipping into local sales and property tax revenues when funds get tight – enjoys a sizeable lead (60% to 25%). A strong majority of likely voters (63%) think it is a good idea to protect local government revenues, even if this means less funding for state programs. Interestingly, Schwarzenegger’s backing of Proposition 1A does not appear to carry much weight at this time – nearly two in three likely voters (64%) say it makes no difference to them. More important is concern about the effects of current budget cuts on local government: 76 percent of likely voters are worried about what these cuts will mean for their local services, and 63 percent say they would be willing to increase their local sales tax by one-half cent to pay for these services.

Also on the November ballot is Proposition 63, which would raise the personal income tax on those making over \$1 million annually by 1 percent to fund expansion of mental health services. Sixty-six

percent say they support this measure, with a similar number (63%) believing that the current level of state funding for mental health services is inadequate. In general, voters support the idea of tying a specific tax to a specific service, with 55 percent calling this method of budgeting a good idea.

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 – is currently short of the majority needed to approve the law (45% to 34%). Most likely voters (67%) think requiring companies to provide health insurance would pose a problem for employers. Nonetheless, two in three (66%) say it is very important that large and medium employers offer health insurance to their employees.

Initiative Process Still Seen as Important but Flawed

Californians' love-hate relationship with the state's initiative process continues: While they believe in the policymaking value of the process, they also readily admit to its shortcomings. Large majorities of state residents say initiatives bring up important public policy issues that have not been adequately addressed by the governor and state legislature (75%) and believe it is a good thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies through direct democracy (74%). Moreover, a majority (59%) say that the public policy decisions made by voters through the initiative process are *probably better* than decisions by the governor and legislature. However, majorities of Californians also agree that the ballot wording for initiatives is often confusing (75%) and that there are too many propositions on the state ballot (60%).

More Key Findings

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

Among likely voters, incumbent Senator Barbara Boxer has a 17-point lead over Republican challenger Bill Jones (53% to 36%) with 10 percent undecided. Most voters (57%) say they are satisfied with their choices in the Senate race. However, three in four Democrats (72%) are satisfied compared to fewer than half of Republicans (48%) and independents (44%).

- **Californians are divided about direction of state, economy** (page 21)

Forty-four percent of Californians say the state is headed in the right direction, while 42 percent disagree. Forty-five percent expect good times financially in the next year, while 40 percent do not.

- **Many Californians lack health insurance** (page 25)

Nearly one in five Californians (19%) say they are not covered by any form of health insurance.

About the Survey

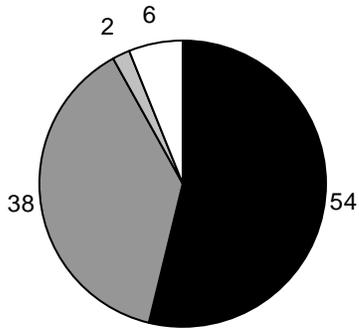
The purpose of the PPIC Statewide Survey is to develop an in-depth profile of the social, economic, and political forces affecting California elections and public policy preferences. Findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,002 California adult residents interviewed between August 4 and August 11, 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 on methodology, 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 book, *A California State of Mind: The Conflicted Voter in a Changing World*, is available at www.ppic.org.

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This report will appear on PPIC's website (www.ppic.org) on August 17. ###

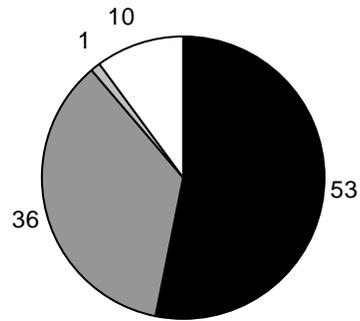
2004 Presidential Race



Likely Voters

- Kerry/Edwards
- Bush/Cheney
- Other
- Don't know

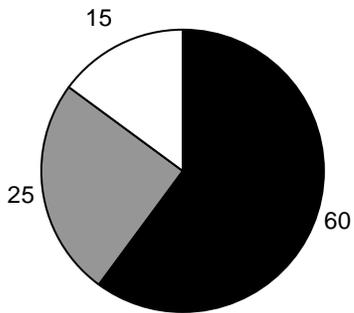
2004 U.S. Senate Race



Likely Voters

- Barbara Boxer
- Bill Jones
- Other
- Don't know

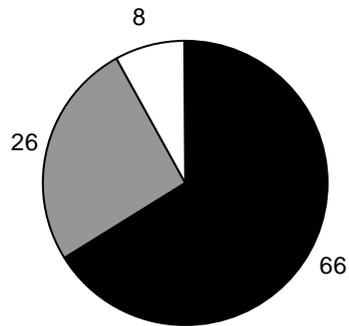
Proposition 1A



Likely Voters

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

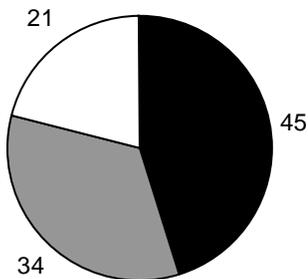
Proposition 63



Likely Voters

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

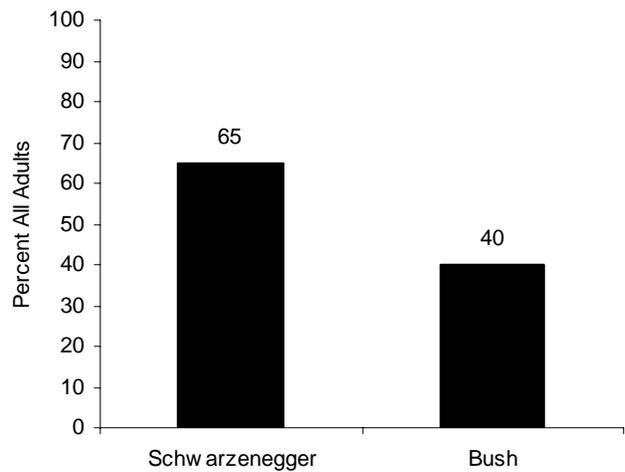
Proposition 72



Likely Voters

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

Approval Ratings



California 2004 Election

Presidential Election

In the November 2004 presidential election, the Democratic ticket of John Kerry and John Edwards now holds a 16-point lead over Republicans George W. Bush and Dick Cheney (54% to 38%) among California's likely voters, while 2 percent support other candidates and 6 percent are undecided. In our July survey, Kerry led Bush by an 11-point margin (49% to 38%), while 5 percent supported the independent ticket of Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo, which has since failed to qualify for the state ballot.

Was there a "bounce" in the polls after the Democratic convention? Kerry has gained support among independent voters (50% to 64%) and Democratic voters (82% to 87%) since our July survey, while Bush has picked up support among Republicans (77% to 82%). Kerry continues to draw his strongest support in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, where he leads Bush in both cases by more than a 2-to-1 margin; Bush leads in the Central Valley and by a narrower margin in Other Southern California. Kerry is ahead of Bush in all demographic groups; however, the gender gap in California is noteworthy: Kerry's lead over Bush is much larger among women (58% to 34%) than among men (49% to 42%).

"If the 2004 presidential election were being held today, would you vote for..."

<i>Results among likely voters</i>		Kerry / Edwards	Bush / Cheney	Other answer	Don't know
All Likely Voters		54%	38%	2%	6%
Party Registration	Democrat	87	7	1	5
	Republican	11	82	1	6
	Independent	64	25	4	7
Region	Central Valley	41	53	3	3
	SF Bay Area	66	26	3	5
	Los Angeles	63	29	2	6
	Other Southern California	42	48	2	8
Race/Ethnicity	Whites	50	42	2	6
	Latinos	68	26	1	5
Gender	Male	49	42	2	7
	Female	58	34	2	6

How important is the upcoming election to voters? One indication is the level of interest in election news. Nearly nine in 10 likely voters say they are following election news either *very* (48%) or *fairly* (41%) closely. In August 2000, only 41 percent said they were following the election news very closely.

"How closely are you following news about candidates for the upcoming presidential election?"

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very closely	48%	46%	49%	51%	36%
Fairly closely	41	43	40	41	45
Not too closely	9	9	8	8	17
Not at all closely	2	2	3	0	2

Campaign Issues

President Bush and his policies are disliked by 45 percent of California likely voters, while just one in three likely voters say they like Bush and like his policies. Republicans show strong support for the president, with seven in 10 liking both the man and his policies. By comparison, seven in 10 Democrats and a majority of the state’s independents (56%) have negative views of Bush and his policies. Across the state’s regions, likely voters in the San Francisco Bay Area and in Los Angeles most often say they dislike the president and his policies, while favor for Bush and his policies is highest in the Central Valley and Other Southern California. Among likely voters, current attitudes toward Bush and his policies are more negative among Latinos than whites, women than men, and younger than older voters.

“Which of these statements is closest to your views about President George W. Bush...”

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
I like George Bush and I like his policies	33%	6%	72%	17%	44%	23%	24%	43%	22%
I like George Bush but I dislike his policies	17	17	16	20	17	15	20	18	20
I dislike George Bush but I like his policies	2	2	1	2	1	2	3	2	4
I dislike George Bush and I dislike his policies	45	72	8	56	34	59	50	34	53
Don't know	3	3	3	5	4	1	3	3	1

Asked to name which issue they would most like to hear the candidates address during the presidential campaign, likely voters most often name the economy, jobs, and unemployment (26%), followed by the war in Iraq (21%), and terrorism or security issues (9%). Across the state, with the exception of the Central Valley, the economy is the number one issue on voters’ list of campaign topics. Kerry is favored over Bush by a wide margin among those who cite the economy, jobs, and unemployment (60% to 33%) and Iraq (62% to 31%), while Bush is favored over Kerry among those who name terrorism (66% to 30%). The economy and Iraq are the top mentions in all demographic groups.

“Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 2nd election?” (top six issues)

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	All Likely Voters	Region				Latinos
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Economy; jobs; unemployment	26%	21%	28%	29%	24%	25%
Iraq situation; war in Iraq	21	23	21	20	22	23
Terrorism; security issues	9	12	8	10	9	5
Education; schools	5	7	2	8	5	10
Health care; health costs; HMO reform	5	4	6	6	6	8
Immigration; illegal immigration	5	3	2	6	9	5

U.S. Senate Election

With respect to the U.S. Senate seat from California up for reelection in November, incumbent Barbara Boxer has a 17-point lead over Republican challenger Bill Jones among likely voters (53% to 36%). These results are similar to those in our July Statewide Survey, when Boxer had a 15-point lead. Both candidates have solid support within their political parties, while independents lean toward Boxer (57% to 25%). Across the state's regions, Boxer holds wide leads in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles, and Jones has narrower leads in the Central Valley and Other Southern California. The incumbent leads in all demographic groups, and she has a much wider advantage over Jones among women, where she holds a 26-point lead (57% to 31%), than she does among men (49% to 41%). Boxer also holds a large 44-point lead among Latino likely voters and a slimmer 5-point lead among white voters.

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

<i>Results among likely voters</i>		Barbara Boxer, the Democrat	Bill Jones, the Republican	Other answer	Don't know
All Likely Voters		53%	36%	1%	10%
Party Registration	Democrat	87	6	0	7
	Republican	10	77	0	13
	Independent	57	25	2	16
Region	Central Valley	40	50	1	9
	SF Bay Area	67	26	1	6
	Los Angeles	62	27	1	10
	Other Southern California	38	46	0	16
Race/Ethnicity	Whites	47	42	1	10
	Latinos	67	23	1	9
Gender	Male	49	41	1	9
	Female	57	31	1	11

Most voters say they are satisfied with the candidate choices available in the election for U.S. senator from California. However, seven in 10 Democrats are satisfied compared to fewer than half of Republicans and independents. Of those who support Boxer, seven in 10 (71%) are satisfied with the choices, while among those backing Jones, fewer than half (48%) say they are satisfied.

“Would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with the choices of candidates in the election for U.S. Senator on November 2nd?”

<i>Results among likely voters</i>	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Satisfied	57%	72%	48%	44%	63%
Not satisfied	28	18	31	38	25
Don't know	15	10	21	18	12

State Proposition 1A

Proposition 1A, the ballot measure designed to keep the state government from dipping into local sales and property tax revenues when funds get tight, enjoys a sizeable lead, with 60 percent of likely voters planning to vote yes in November. Placed on the ballot by the legislature and supported by the governor, this measure (which was one of the sticking points holding up approval of this year’s state budget) is opposed by only 25 percent of likely voters. Support for Proposition 1A is about equally high among Democrats and Republicans and in all regions of the state, and majorities in all demographic groups support the measure.

“Proposition 1A on the November ballot is the Protection of Local Government Revenues Legislative Constitutional Amendment. ... If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 1A?”*

Results among likely voters	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	60%	57%	61%	66%	64%	60%	58%	60%	59%
No	25	27	24	22	22	25	27	25	32
Don't know	15	16	15	12	14	15	15	15	9

Sixty-three percent of likely voters believe that it is a good idea to protect local government revenues, even if it means less money is available to the state. Solid majorities across the state’s political groups, major regions, and demographic groups say it is a good idea to protect local government funding, even if less money is available for state programs. And 74 percent of those voters who think protecting local government revenues is a good idea support Proposition 1A.

Schwarzenegger’s support for Proposition 1A, on the other hand, does not seem to carry much weight at this time—nearly two in three likely voters say it makes no difference to them. Proposition 1A is favored by a wide margin by those who say that the governor’s support is irrelevant (61% to 26%).

“Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to protect local government revenues, even if it means less funding for state programs?”

	Likely Voters
Good idea	63%
Bad idea	23
Don't know	14

“Does knowing that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger supports this state proposition make you more likely or less likely to support it or does it make no difference to you?”

	Likely Voters
More likely	21%
Less likely	13
No difference	64
Don't know	2

* For complete question wording, see Question 12 in the Survey Questionnaire, page 22.

State Proposition 63

Also on the November ballot is Proposition 63, which would raise the personal income tax on incomes over \$1 million by 1 percent to fund expansion of mental health services. Current support for this measure among likely voters (66%) is well over the simple majority needed for passage. In May 2004, 67 percent of likely voters said that they supported an unspecified tax increase on income over \$1 million to be used for mental health services. While the measure has solid support among Democrats and independents, it is favored by a slim majority of Republicans. Support is lower in the Central Valley than elsewhere, lower among men than women (60% to 72%), and lower among whites than Latinos (64% to 79%).

“Proposition 63 on the November ballot, the Mental Health Services Expansion and Funding Initiative, establishes a 1 percent tax on taxable personal income above one million dollars to expand health services for mentally ill children, adults, and seniors. ...

If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 63?*

Results among likely voters	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	66%	78%	51%	72%	57%	73%	69%	63%	79%
No	26	14	42	23	35	21	22	30	17
Don't know	8	8	7	5	8	6	9	7	4

More than six in 10 likely voters believe that the current level of funding for mental health programs in California is insufficient. Two in 10 say there is just enough or more than enough funding for mental health needs, while 18 percent are uncertain about the level of state funding available today. A majority in all regions and demographic groups say that these programs don't have enough funding. However, while the perception of inadequate funding for mental health is held by 76 percent of Democrats and 70 percent of independents, fewer than half of Republicans (43%) agree. Of the likely voters who think there is not enough funding for mental health programs, 83 percent support Proposition 63.

In general, California's likely voters approve of tying a specific tax to a specific service, with 55 percent calling this a *good idea* and 34 percent saying it is a bad one. Support for this idea is higher among independents (63%) than Democrats (56%) or Republicans (51%) and is favored by higher percentages of women than men (59% to 51%). Of those who approve of tying a specific tax to a specific service, 79 percent say they will vote yes on Proposition 63 to raise taxes that would go specifically to pay for mental health services. Of those who oppose tying taxes to specific services, only 47 percent are in favor of Proposition 63.

“Do you think that the current level of state funding for mental health programs is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?”

	Likely Voters
More than enough	6%
Just enough	13
Not enough	63
Don't know	18

* For complete question wording, see Question 9 in the Survey Questionnaire, page 22.

State Proposition 72

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, is currently short of the majority needed to approve the law. Forty-five percent of likely voters plan to vote yes on the measure, while one in three are opposed; a sizeable 21 percent are still undecided. Although a majority of Democrats (55%) favor the proposition, only three in 10 Republicans would like to see it enacted. Support does not reach a majority in any region of the state. Support is higher among Latino than white voters (59% to 42%) and among women than men (48% to 40%). A majority (51%) of those making under \$40,000 like the measure, but only 40 percent of those making \$80,000 and higher would vote for it.

“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^{*}
If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 72?^{*}

Results among likely voters	All Likely Voters	Party Registration			Region				Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	
Yes	45%	55%	30%	45%	43%	46%	48%	43%	59%
No	34	24	48	29	37	30	32	36	31
Don't know	21	21	22	26	20	24	20	21	10

Sixty-seven percent of likely voters think requiring companies to provide health insurance would pose a financial problem for employers, with 24 percent saying it would be a *big problem*. Among Republicans, 76 percent think it would pose at least somewhat of a problem, with 33 percent saying it would pose a big problem. Of those who say requiring health benefits would be a big problem for large and medium employers, 25 percent would vote yes and 58 percent would vote no on Proposition 72.

“Do you think that the financial cost of requiring large and medium employers to provide health care benefits for their employees would be a big problem for those employers, somewhat of a problem, not too much of a problem, or not a problem at all?”

	Likely Voters
Big problem	24%
Somewhat of a problem	43
Not too much of a problem	16
Not a problem at all	13
Don't know	4

At the same time, two in three likely voters say it is *very important* to them that medium and large employers offer health insurance to their employees, and another 21 percent say it is *somewhat important*. Only 10 percent say this is *not too* or *not at all* important. Democrats (78%) and independents (71%) are more likely than Republicans (49%) to say this is very important to them, and Latinos consider this more important than do whites (80% to 62%). Of those who consider it very important to have medium and large employers provide health benefits, 57 percent would vote yes and 21 percent would vote no.

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

National Policies

President's Ratings

President Bush's overall approval rating in California has dropped to a record low and is much lower than the national rating for his presidency. Overall, 40 percent of Californians approve of the way he is handling his job, while 56 percent disapprove. Nationally, Bush's job performance rating stands at 46 percent approval and 45 percent disapproval, according to an August 2004 Pew Research Center survey.

The president's California ratings have come down in the last year from 53 percent approval and 42 percent disapproval in the August 2003 survey, and even further down from August 2002, when 64 percent approved and 32 percent disapproved of his job performance. The president's performance is approved by 81 percent of Republicans but disapproved by 84 percent of Democrats and 67 percent of independents. The president's approval ratings are much lower in the San Francisco Bay Area (29%) and Los Angeles (34%) than in the Central Valley (52%) and Other Southern California (50%). Forty-five percent of whites and 36 percent of Latinos approve of the president's job performance.

On Iraq, the president's approval ratings have also declined and are lower than the national ratings. Today, only 34 percent of Californians approve of his handling of the situation, compared to 45 percent nationally, according to a recent ABC News/*Washington Post* poll. Since August 2003, Californians' disapproval of the president's handling of Iraq has increased by 18 points to 63 percent today. While most Republicans in California still approve of the president's Iraq performance, and most Democrats and independents disapprove, the percent with negative opinions has climbed 24 points among Democrats, 30 points among independents, and 6 points even among Republicans since last year. More than half of Californians in all regions disapprove of Bush's policies on Iraq, with disapproval especially high in the San Francisco Bay Area (72%) and Los Angeles (70%). Younger people are also more negative, with seven in 10 18-34 year olds disapproving, compared to almost six in 10 residents age 55 and older.

Bush gets higher ratings for his handling of terrorism and homeland security, with nearly half of Californians approving and half disapproving. Nonetheless, approval of the president's performance in this area is considerably lower than it was in August 2003 (62%) and August 2002 (70%). Eight in 10 Republicans approve, while two in three Democrats and nearly six in 10 independents disapprove. A majority of Central Valley (58%) and Other Southern California (58%) residents approve of the president's handling of homeland security, while most residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (61%) and Los Angeles (55%) disapprove.

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling..."

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>his job as president of the United States?</i>	Approve	40%	14%	81%	30%	42%
	Disapprove	56	84	16	67	56
	Don't know	4	2	3	3	2
<i>the situation in Iraq?</i>	Approve	34	12	73	25	37
	Disapprove	63	87	24	74	61
	Don't know	3	1	3	1	2
<i>terrorism and homeland security issues?</i>	Approve	47	27	80	39	47
	Disapprove	49	68	18	59	50
	Don't know	4	5	2	2	3

U.S. Efforts in Iraq

Californians' views of the situation in Iraq are consistent with their opinions about the president's performance on this dimension. In August 2003, 51 percent thought the U.S. efforts in Iraq were going very or somewhat well. Today, 33 percent think the U.S. military action there is going *very* (7%) or *somewhat well* (26%), while 65 percent say it is going *not too well* (29%) or *not at all well* (36%).

Once again, there are strong partisan and regional differences: Sixty-six percent of Republicans say things are going well, compared to 13 percent of Democrats and 25 percent of independents. Across regions, Central Valley (38%) and Other Southern California (44%) residents are more likely than residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (25%) or Los Angeles (25%) to say things are going well. Men are somewhat more positive than women about the success of the effort (36% to 30%).

Most Californians no longer believe it was worth going to war in Iraq. When asked, "all in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not," 61 percent of Californians say no; only 36 percent say the war effort has been worthwhile. In August 2003, when residents were asked a similar question—"In your view, is the war in Iraq worth the toll it has taken in American lives and other kinds of costs, or isn't the war worth these costs"—47 percent said the effort was worth the costs and 46 percent said it wasn't.

Again, the responses are highly partisan, with 74 percent of Republicans saying the effort was justified—a view shared by only one in six Democrats and one in four independents. Six in 10 self-defined conservatives feel the war has been worth the cost, while seven in 10 moderates and eight in 10 liberals disagree with this view. A majority of Californians in all regions and demographic groups believe it wasn't worth going to war in Iraq. Opinions on the war with Iraq are more negative in the San Francisco (72%) and Los Angeles (67%) regions than in the Central Valley (50%) and Other Southern California (51%), and among Latinos (69%) than whites (54%), younger than older residents, and lower-income than upper-income residents.

"In general, how would you say things are going for the U.S. in Iraq—very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very well	7%	2%	15%	5%	8%
Somewhat well	26	11	51	20	27
Not too well	29	34	20	33	28
Not at all well	36	51	13	40	36
Don't know	2	2	1	2	1

"All in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes, worth it	36%	16%	74%	26%	38%
No, not worth it	61	81	22	71	58
Don't know	3	3	4	3	4

The Bush Administration and Iraq

Californians are increasingly inclined to believe that the Bush administration intentionally exaggerated evidence about Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Today, 57 percent hold this view, up from 53 percent in August 2003. Nationwide, on a similar question that asked, "In making its case for war with Iraq, do you think the Bush administration told the American public what it believed to be true, or did it intentionally mislead the public," 55 percent said the government told what it believed was the truth, and 42 percent felt they had been intentionally misled (ABC News/*Washington Post*, July 2004).

Opinions on this issue in California break down sharply along partisan lines, with most Republicans thinking the administration did not intentionally exaggerate evidence (74%) and most Democrats (77%) and independents (67%) thinking there was a deliberate effort to mislead. Residents in the San Francisco Bay Area (68%) and Los Angeles (64%) are most likely to think the evidence was intentionally exaggerated. Latinos are more likely than whites to think there was a deliberate effort to mislead the public (68% to 49%). This view is also more prevalent among younger and lower-income residents.

Half of Californians believe that the U.S. is more secure as a result of the war with Iraq (51%)—a decline from 59 percent in August 2003—while three in 10 say it contributed a great deal to U.S. security. California's opinions on this are similar to the nation's, with 51 percent in the ABC News/*Washington Post* poll saying the war contributed to long-term security.

A strong majority of Republicans say the war has helped U.S. security at least some, while an equally high number of Democrats disagree, and independents are evenly divided. In the San Francisco Bay Area, most residents think the war has not aided long-term security, while most residents in the Central Valley and Other Southern California think it has helped at least some, and those in Los Angeles are divided. Residents with lower education are also more likely to think the Iraq war has made the U.S. at least somewhat more secure, and Latinos are more likely than whites to hold this view (58% to 50%). Of those who say the effort contributed at least some to U.S. security, 52 percent say the war in Iraq was worth it. But of those who disagree, 80 percent say the effort was not worth the cost.

"Before the war began, do you think that the Bush administration did or did not intentionally exaggerate its evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction such as biological or chemical weapons?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Did intentionally exaggerate	57%	77%	21%	67%	55%
Did <u>not</u> intentionally exaggerate	38	19	74	27	41
Don't know	5	4	5	6	4

"Do you think the war with Iraq has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States? If response is "it did": Is that a great deal or some?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Contributed a great deal	30%	23%	42%	29%	29%
Contributed some	21	15	27	21	19
Did not contribute	44	59	28	47	47
Don't know	5	3	3	3	5

U.S. Homeland Security

As the third anniversary of the September 11th terrorist attacks approaches, and in light of recent investigations of the intelligence efforts leading up to that event, a majority of Californians are at least somewhat confident that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies will be able to prevent future terrorist attacks. Fifty-five percent of state residents say they are very (12%) or somewhat (43%) confident, while 44 percent say they are not too confident (28%) or not at all confident (16%). The confidence level has changed very little since a year ago when 58 percent said they were *very* (14%) or *somewhat* confident (44%) that future terrorist attacks could be prevented.

There are strong partisan differences on this issue: Republicans (70%) are much more likely than Democrats (47%) or independents (47%), to say they are very or somewhat confident that U.S. agencies will prevent future attacks. Independent voters have had the biggest decline in confidence in the last year (60% to 47%). There are virtually no differences between likely voters and all adults on this issue. Across the state’s regions, San Francisco Bay Area (50%) and Los Angeles (52%) residents are less confident than Central Valley (61%) and Other Southern California (59%) residents. There are no significant differences across age, income, or racial/ethnic groups on this issue.

The recommendation to create a national director of intelligence to draw on intelligence from all agencies has strong support in California today: Seventy-one percent of all adults, and of likely voters, say they would support this proposed reform in intelligence gathering. Moreover, this recommendation gets strong support across party lines: Sixty-nine percent of Democrats, 70 percent of independents, and 77 percent of Republicans. The proposal is strongly supported by Latinos (70%) and whites (74%), U.S. born (71%) and foreign-born citizens (70%) and non-citizens (67%), and across the state’s regions and age, education, and income groups.

“How confident are you that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies will be able to prevent future terrorist attacks in the United States in which large numbers of Americans are killed?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very confident	12%	8%	16%	7%	11%
Somewhat confident	43	39	54	40	43
Not too confident	28	32	22	31	30
Not at all confident	16	19	7	22	16
Don't know	1	2	1	0	0

“Do you approve or disapprove of the recommendation to create a national director of intelligence who would draw on intelligence from all agencies?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	71%	69%	77%	70%	71%
Disapprove	20	21	16	24	21
Don't know	9	10	7	6	8

Local Homeland Security

Many Californians continue to rate terrorism and security as a problem in California and worry that they or a family member might be victims of a future terrorist attack.

Sixty-six percent of Californians think that terrorism is a big problem (24%) or somewhat of a problem (42%) in the state, while 31 percent believe that it is not much of a problem today. The proportion who rank terrorism as a problem today is higher than in August 2003 (61%) and August 2002 (64%), but lower than in December 2003 (73%).

There are no significant partisan differences in the perception of a terrorism and security problem in California. Across all political groups, about two in three voters believe this is at least somewhat of a problem in California. Regionally, residents of Los Angeles (29%) and Other Southern California (26%) are more likely than residents of the Central Valley (18%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (21%) to rate terrorism as a big problem.

Latinos are more likely than whites to see this issue as a big problem in California today (34% to 20%). This perception tends to increase with age and decline with income, education, and citizenship.

Four in 10 Californians (40%) say they are very (15%) or somewhat (25%) worried that they or someone in their family will be a victim of a terrorist attack, while 60 percent say they are not too worried (34%) or not at all worried (26%). State residents gave similar responses in the August 2002 survey and in the December 2001 survey. Latinos are much more concerned about becoming a victim of a terrorist attack than whites (65% to 29%). Men are more likely than women to say they are not at all concerned (30% to 22%). Younger, less educated, and lower-income residents are more worried than older, more educated, and more affluent residents that they or someone in their family will become a victim of terrorism.

“How much of a problem is terrorism and security in California today?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Big problem	24%	22%	22%	23%	23%
Somewhat of a problem	42	42	43	43	43
Not much of a problem	31	33	31	33	30
Don't know	3	3	4	1	4

“How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be the victim of a terrorist attack?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very worried	15%	12%	6%	11%	7%
Somewhat worried	25	27	24	22	24
Not too worried	34	34	42	38	42
Not at all worried	26	27	28	29	27

Interest in Politics

The current state of national and international affairs—including the war in Iraq, terrorism, and security issues—may have sparked some Californians’ interest in politics this year. Seven in 10 residents say that they have a great deal (28%) or a fair amount (42%) of interest in politics. In contrast, only 19 percent reported having a great deal of interest, and 44 percent a fair amount of interest, at a similar juncture in the presidential election in our August 2000 survey.

Among likely voters, 40 percent express a great deal of interest in politics today. Interest in politics rises with age, education, income, homeownership, years at current residence, and citizenship. Whites are much more likely than Latinos to say they have a great deal or fair amount of interest in politics (78% to 54%). There are no significant differences in political interest across the state’s regions.

More than six in 10 residents say they are more interested in politics now than they were during the 2000 presidential election. Only 12 percent say they are less interested this year, while 23 percent say their level of interest is about the same. In comparison, a Pew Research Center survey in July 2004 found that 47 percent of Americans had more interest, 28 percent had less interest, 23 percent volunteered that they had the same level of interest, and 2 percent were undecided. In California today, two-thirds of Democrats and independents (both 67%) say they are more interested in politics this year than they were during the 2000 presidential election, as do 59 percent of Republicans.

Among likely voters, 64 percent are more interested in politics this year, and only 7 percent are less interested, while 28 percent report that their interest level is unchanged. The proportion of residents who say they are more interested in politics this year than in 2000 is fairly similar across age, education, income, homeownership, and length of residence categories. Liberals are more likely than conservatives to say they are more interested this year (69% to 61%), and those who disapprove of Bush are more likely than those who approve of him to say they are more interested in politics this year (68% to 59%). Across the state’s regions, residents of the San Francisco Bay Area (70%) are more likely than others to say that they are more interested in politics this year than during the last presidential election in 2000.

“How much interest would you say that you have in politics?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Great deal	28%	32%	33%	27%	21%
Fair amount	42	44	50	44	33
Only a little	24	21	15	24	35
None	6	3	2	5	11

“Are you more interested or less interested in politics this year than you were in 2000—the last presidential election year?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Latinos
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
More interested	64%	67%	59%	67%	65%
Less interested	12	11	10	12	16
Same (<i>volunteered</i>)	23	21	30	21	17
Don't know	1	1	1	0	2

State Policies

Governor's Ratings

Arnold Schwarzenegger's approval rating is back where it was before the state budget standoff with the legislature. In the current survey, conducted following the governor's July 31st signing of the \$105 billion state budget, nearly two in three California adults (65%) and seven in 10 likely voters (69%) approve of his job performance as governor. Among all adults, his ratings are up from 57 percent in July, 64 percent in May, and 59 percent in January. Among likely voters, Schwarzenegger's current job approval rating is higher than in July (64%), similar to May (69%), and higher than in January (64%).

Compared to last month, higher percentages of independents (56% to 66%), Democrats (49% to 57%), and Republicans (84% to 89%) approve of Schwarzenegger's overall job performance. Schwarzenegger's support is also up from July across the state's major geographic regions. Today nearly eight in 10 Other Southern California residents (77%), seven in 10 Central Valley residents, six in 10 San Francisco Bay Area residents, and 57 percent of Los Angeles County residents approve of his performance in office. Whites are much more likely than Latinos to approve of the governor's job performance (76% to 48%), as are homeowners relative to renters (73% to 55%) and those with incomes of \$80,000 and higher relative to those with income under \$40,000 (75% to 54%).

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

	All Adults	Region				Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	65%	70%	60%	57%	77%	57%	89%	66%	69%
Disapprove	28	25	30	36	17	33	8	26	24
Don't know	7	5	10	7	6	10	3	8	7

The governor receives lower marks for his handling of the state budget and taxes; however, these approval ratings are also relatively high. Fifty-eight percent of all adults and 63 percent of likely voters approve of the way Schwarzenegger is handling this set of issues. These numbers are virtually unchanged from May 2004 when 55 percent of Californians and 61 percent of likely voters approved of his handling of the budget and taxes. As with his overall job approval rating, Schwarzenegger gets overwhelming support from Republicans (84%) and majority support from independents (57%). While a majority of Democrats support the governor overall, they are more evenly split on his handling of fiscal issues (49% approve; 42% disapprove). Higher percentages of whites than Latinos approve of his handling of these issues (68% to 41%), as do homeowners compared to renters (65% to 48%) and higher income (\$80,000 and more) compared to lower income (under \$40,000) residents (69% to 48%).

“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes?”

	All Adults	Region				Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	58%	58%	54%	49%	71%	49%	84%	57%	63%
Disapprove	34	33	38	41	22	42	12	34	31
Don't know	8	9	8	10	7	9	4	9	6

Legislature's Ratings

Governor Schwarzenegger's approval ratings are considerably higher than those achieved by the state legislature. Today, 42 percent of adults give the legislators positive ratings for their overall performance in office, compared to 40 percent in May and 36 percent in January. As in previous surveys, likely voters give the legislature even lower ratings: Today, 52 percent of likely voters *disapprove* of the way the legislature is handling its job, similar to May (52%) and January (50%).

Nearly half of registered Democrats (48%) approve of the job performance of the Democratic-led legislature, while significantly lower percentages of independents (36%) and Republicans (32%) approve. There is no significant variation in legislative approval ratings across the state's major regions.

Half of Latinos (52%) compared to 38 percent of whites approve of the legislature's job performance. Support for the lawmakers is also higher among younger Californians (ages 18 to 34) than among older residents, age 55 or older (53% versus 32%). A higher percentage of residents with children in the household than those without children at home approve of the legislature (49% to 37%).

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

	All Adults	Region				Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	42%	45%	40%	41%	43%	48%	32%	36%	37%
Disapprove	45	45	45	45	44	39	58	53	52
Don't know	13	10	15	14	13	13	10	11	11

About one in three Californians (35%) and likely voters (32%) approve of the way the California legislature is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes. This is similar to the approval ratings in our May survey (all adults 32%; likely voters 30%) and higher than in our January survey (all adults 28%; likely voters 26%). Across partisan affiliations, fewer than four in 10 voters approve of the legislature's performance in this area (Democrats 38%; Republicans 29%; independents 29%). While approval ratings on fiscal issues are unchanged from May 2004 among all adults and likely voters, approval ratings have increased slightly among Democrats (32% to 38%) and decreased somewhat among Republicans (34% to 29%). As in the overall performance rating of the legislature, younger Californians (ages 18 to 34) are more likely to approve of the legislature's handling of fiscal issues than are older adults, age 55 or older (40% to 26%).

"Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California legislature is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes?"

	All Adults	Region				Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California	Dem	Rep	Ind	
Approve	35%	37%	33%	33%	37%	38%	29%	29%	32%
Disapprove	53	54	54	54	52	50	62	58	58
Don't know	12	9	13	13	11	12	9	13	10

State Budget and California Performance Review

On July 31st, the governor signed the state's 2004-2005 fiscal year budget, which totaled about \$105 billion in spending and included no new taxes. Overall, 52 percent of Californians are satisfied with this budget plan, and 40 percent are dissatisfied with it. While the budget signed into law is not identical to Governor Schwarzenegger's May Revision, overall satisfaction among adults with the enacted budget is nearly identical to satisfaction with his revised budget plan in May (50% satisfied; 41% dissatisfied) and somewhat lower than with his original budget plan in January (57% satisfied; 30% dissatisfied).

Opinion among the state's likely voters is more closely divided (49% satisfied; 44% dissatisfied). Today, nearly seven in 10 Republicans (69%) and a narrow majority of independents (53%) are satisfied with the approved budget. By contrast, 51 percent of Democrats are *dissatisfied* with the budget. Satisfaction with the budget plan decreases with age and education and is unrelated to household income.

"The state legislature and governor have approved a new state budget of around \$105 billion that closes the budget gap with spending cuts in transportation and general government, defers spending increases in K-12 public education, and uses money from local government property taxes and state bonds. The plan includes no new taxes. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with this budget?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Satisfied	52%	41%	69%	53%	49%
Dissatisfied	40	51	25	39	44
Don't know	8	8	6	8	7

The governor's much anticipated California Performance Review (CPR), which was ordered in January, was released to the public on August 3rd. Overall, two-thirds of Californians and 71 percent of likely voters favor the CPR's overall plans to combine state agencies, eliminate boards and commissions, and slow the growth in the number of state employees. More than eight in 10 Republicans (84%) favor these plans for changing the way state government operates, as do large majorities of independents (69%) and Democrats (59%). Support for these changes increases with age, education, and household income, and it is significantly higher among whites than Latinos (75% to 48%). Support for the CPR is much higher among those who approve of Schwarzenegger's job performance than among those who disapprove (81% to 32%). Seventy-one percent of those who disapprove of the way the California legislature is handling its job support the CPR, as do 63 percent of those who approve of the legislature's overall job performance.

"Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered a California Performance Review with the goal of making state government more effective and efficient. The plans include combining state agencies with similar functions, eliminating boards and commissions, and slowing the growth in the number of state employees. In general, would you say that you favor or oppose the governor's plans for changing state government?"

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Favor	65%	59%	84%	69%	71%
Oppose	27	32	10	26	22
Don't know	8	9	6	5	7

Local Budgets

The recently passed California state budget calls for a reduced level of state funding for local governments. Three in four adults (74%) and likely voters (76%) are at least somewhat concerned about the effects of spending cuts on their local governments. Among all Californians, 35 percent are *very concerned* about the effects of spending cuts on local government, and another 39 percent are *somewhat concerned*; only 9 percent are *not at all concerned*. Forty-four percent of Democrats are very concerned about the effects of spending cuts on their local government services, compared to lower percentages of independents (32%) and Republicans (22%) who share this level of concern.

In May 2004, after the release of the governor’s revised budget plans, about equal percentages of all adults, likely voters, and voters in partisan groups were very concerned about the effects of spending cuts on local government services. Likewise, “yes” and “no” voters on Proposition 1A—the Protection of Local Government Revenues Act—are about equally likely to be very concerned about cuts affecting local services.

“How concerned are you about the effects of spending cuts on your local government services?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Very concerned	35%	44%	22%	32%	38%
Somewhat concerned	39	38	40	39	38
Not too concerned	16	10	22	18	14
Not at all concerned	9	7	13	9	8
Don’t know	1	1	3	2	2

Given their concern about state spending cuts, are Californians willing to raise their local taxes? Sixty-one percent of all adult residents, and 63 percent of likely voters, would support a measure on their local ballot to increase their local sales tax by one-half cent to pay for police and other local government services. A sizeable majority of Democrats (70%) would support such a measure (which requires a two-thirds majority vote), as would smaller majorities of independents (59%) and Republicans (55%).

Support for a local sales tax increase is directly related to concern about the effects of spending cuts on local government services. Sixty-seven percent of those who are very or somewhat concerned about spending cuts would vote yes on this local tax measure, compared to only 46 percent of those who have not too much or no concern about these cuts. Support for this measure does not vary across state regions (Central Valley 61%; San Francisco Bay Area 62%; Los Angeles 61%; Other Southern California 60%).

“What if there were a measure on your local ballot to increase the local sales tax by one-half cent to pay for police and other local government services? Would you vote yes or no?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Yes	61%	70%	55%	59%	63%
No	35	28	42	37	34
Don’t know	4	2	3	4	3

Role of Citizens' Initiatives

When asked to identify who or what has the most influence over California public policy, a plurality of Californians (39%) say the governor, about three in 10 say the legislature (31%), and about one in five (18%) say initiatives on the state ballot. In December 1999, 33 percent of Californians thought the governor had the most influence over state policy, 37 percent the legislature, and 20 percent state ballot initiatives. Today, the state's likely voters are about evenly likely to highlight the role of the governor (38%) and the legislature (36%) and are equally likely as all adults to say that state initiatives have the most influence (18%).

Even though most residents believe the governor and the legislature have the most influence over public policy, they are highly supportive of the initiative process and believe that it yields relatively good public policy. Large majorities of all California residents (74%) and likely voters (72%) say it is a good thing that voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives, and only one in five considers it a bad thing. Republicans are somewhat more likely (79%) than independents (74%) and Democrats (70%) to believe it a fortunate thing that voters can make laws and change public policy directly at the ballot box.

“In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Good thing	74%	70%	79%	74%	72%
Bad thing	20	24	16	20	22
Other	2	2	1	1	2
Don't know	4	4	4	5	4

Moreover, a majority of residents (59%) and likely voters (57%) believe that the public policy decisions made by voters through the initiative process are *probably better* than the policy decisions made by the governor and state legislature. Only one in four thinks that voter decisions are *probably worse* (23%). Majorities across party and racial/ethnic lines trust decisions made by the public more than those made by elected officials. However, Republicans are somewhat more likely than Democrats (61% to 54%) to think the decisions made directly by voters are probably better than those made by the state government in Sacramento, as are Latinos relative to whites (63% to 57%).

“Overall, do you think public policy decisions made through the initiative process by California voters are probably better or probably worse than public policy decisions made by the governor and state legislature?”

	All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Probably better	59%	54%	61%	64%	57%
Probably worse	23	27	20	21	25
Same (<i>volunteered</i>)	6	7	8	6	7
Don't know	12	12	11	9	11

Citizens' Initiative Process

While a majority of Californians recognize and value the initiative process, many also believe the process could be improved. A large majority of residents (75%) agree that citizens' initiatives bring up important public policy issues that the governor and state legislature have not adequately addressed, with three in 10 saying they *strongly agree*. Democrats (78%), Republicans (77%), and independents (81%) alike agree with this view of initiatives. However, while most residents believe that citizens' initiatives bring up important public policy issues that otherwise would not have been addressed, many (57%) say they are only *somewhat satisfied* with how the initiative process is working in California today; only one in 10 (11%) are *very satisfied*. What kinds of complaints do Californians raise about state ballot initiatives?

Three in four residents agree that the ballot wording for initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to clearly understand what happens if the measure passes. Forty-three percent of all adults and 48 percent of likely voters *strongly agree* with this criticism. However, there are significant differences across party and racial/ethnic lines. Democrats (81%) and independents (84%) are more likely than Republicans (74%), and whites (79%) more likely than Latinos (68%), to see ballot wording as a problem. Across demographic groups, residents over 35 years old (78%), college graduates (78%), and residents with incomes over \$40,000 (81%) are more likely than residents under age 35 (71%), those with only a high school education (70%), and those with incomes under \$40,000 (70%) to agree that ballot wording is often too complicated and confusing.

Solid majorities of California adults and likely voters (both 60%) agree that there are too many propositions on the state ballot, while fewer than four in 10 say they disagree. There are no significant differences in this perception across the state's regions or partisan, racial/ethnic, and demographic groups.

		All Adults	Party Registration			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?	Very satisfied	11%	10%	17%	9%	12%
	Somewhat satisfied	57	56	59	55	58
	Not satisfied	26	29	19	29	26
	Don't know	6	5	5	7	4
The ballot wording for citizens' initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes	Strongly agree	43	49	41	51	48
	Somewhat agree	32	32	33	33	32
	Somewhat disagree	13	11	13	9	10
	Strongly disagree	8	7	11	5	8
	Don't know	4	1	2	2	2
There are too many propositions on the state ballot	Strongly agree	28	31	26	28	30
	Somewhat agree	32	31	32	34	30
	Somewhat disagree	23	23	26	20	25
	Strongly disagree	11	11	11	12	11
	Don't know	6	4	5	6	4

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 Eliana Kaimowitz, survey research associates; and Kimberly Curry, survey intern.

The findings of this survey are based on a telephone survey of 2,002 California adult residents interviewed between August 4 and August 11, 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 19 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 2,002 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 1,595 registered voters is +/- 2.5 percent, and the sampling error for the 1,117 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 the ABC News/*Washington Post* Polling Unit, the Pew Research Center, and the Gallup Organization. We use earlier PPIC Statewide Surveys to analyze trends over time in California.

**PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: CALIFORNIANS AND THEIR GOVERNMENT
AUGUST 4—AUGUST 11, 2004
2,002 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?

- 44% right direction
- 42 wrong direction
- 12 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?

- 45% good times
- 40 bad times
- 15 don't know

[Responses recorded for questions 3 through 17 are from likely voters only. All other responses are from all adults]

3. If the 2004 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?

[Interviews conducted on August 4, 5, 6 also included "or an independent ticket of Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo." On August 6, Nader and Camejo did not submit enough signatures to qualify for the November ballot.]

- 54% John Kerry and John Edwards, the Democrats
- 38 George W. Bush and Dick Cheney, the Republicans
- 2 other answer *(specify)*
- 6 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?

- 48% very closely
- 41 fairly closely
- 9 not too closely
- 2 not at all closely

5. Which of these statements is closest to your views about President George W. Bush?

- 33% I like George Bush and I like his policies
- 17 I like George Bush but I dislike his policies
- 2 I dislike George Bush but I like his policies
- 45 I dislike George Bush and I dislike his policies
- 3 don't know

6. Which one issue would you most like to hear the presidential candidates talk about between now and the November 2nd election?

- 26% economy, jobs, unemployment
- 21 Iraq situation, war in Iraq
- 9 terrorism, security issues
- 5 education, schools
- 5 health care, health costs
- 5 immigration, illegal immigration
- 4 foreign policy in general
- 3 federal budget, deficit, taxes
- 2 environment, pollution
- 2 abortion
- 13 other *(specify)*
- 5 don't know

6a. Is there another issue that you want to hear about almost as much?

- 24% economy, jobs, unemployment
- 17 Iraq situation, war in Iraq
- 10 terrorism, security issues
- 8 education, schools
- 7 health care, health costs
- 6 federal budget, deficit, taxes
- 6 foreign policy in general
- 3 social security
- 3 environment, pollution
- 3 immigration, illegal immigration
- 2 energy, oil prices, gasoline prices
- 11 other *(specify)*

7. If the 2004 U.S. Senate election were being held today, would you vote for: *[rotate]* Barbara Boxer, the Democrat *[or]* Bill Jones, the Republican?

- 53% Barbara Boxer, the Democrat
- 36 Bill Jones, the Republican
- 1 other answer *(specify)*
- 10 don't know

8. Would you say you are satisfied or not satisfied with the choices of candidates in the election for U.S. Senator on November 2nd?

- 57% satisfied
- 28 not satisfied
- 15 don't know

[ROTATE QUESTIONS 9-17 AND 18-25 AS BLOCKS]

[ROTATE QUESTIONS 9-11, 12-14, AND 15-17 AS BLOCKS]

9. On another topic, Proposition 63 on the November ballot, the “Mental Health Services Expansion and Funding Initiative” establishes a 1 percent tax on taxable personal income above one million dollars to expand health services for mentally ill children, adults, and seniors. The fiscal impact includes additional state revenues of about 800 million dollars annually by 2006-2007, with comparable increases in state and county spending to expand mental health programs. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 63?

66% yes
26 no
8 don't know

[rotate questions 10 and 11]

10. Generally speaking, do you think it's a good idea or a bad idea to have a specific tax tied directly to a specific service?

55% good idea
34 bad idea
11 don't know

11. Do you think that the current level of state funding for mental health programs is more than enough, just enough, or not enough?

6% more than enough
13 just enough
63 not enough
18 don't know

12. Proposition 1A on the November ballot is the “Protection of Local Government Revenues Legislative Constitutional Amendment.” This measure ensures local property tax and sales tax revenues remain with local government, which safeguards funding for public safety, health, libraries, parks, and other local services. These provisions can only be suspended if the governor declares a fiscal necessity and two-thirds of the legislature agrees. The fiscal impact would be higher local government revenues, possibly in the billions of dollars annually, and similar decreases in state resources. If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no on Proposition 1A?

60% yes
25 no
15 don't know

[rotate questions 13 and 14]

13. Generally speaking, do you think it is a good idea or a bad idea to protect local government revenues, even if it means less funding for state programs?

63% good idea
23 bad idea
14 don't know

14. Does knowing that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger supports this state proposition make you more likely or less likely to support it or does it make no difference to you?

21% more likely
13 less likely
64 no difference
2 don't know

15. 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

[rotate questions 16 and 17]

16. Do you think that the financial cost of requiring large and medium employers to provide health care benefits for their employees would be a big problem for those employers, somewhat of a problem, not too much of a problem, or not a problem at all?

24% big problem
43 somewhat of a problem
16 not too much of a problem
13 not a problem at all
4 don't know

17. How important is it to you that large and medium employers provide health care benefits for their employees—very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not at all important?

66% very important
21 somewhat important
5 not too important
5 not at all important
3 don't know

18. On another topic, in California state government today, which of the following do you think has the most influence over public policy: *[rotate list]*-

- 39% the governor
- 31 the legislature
- 18 initiatives on the state ballot
- 1 other answer (*specify*)
- 11 don't know

California uses the direct initiative process, which enables voters to bypass the legislature and have issues put on the ballot—as state propositions—for voter approval or rejection.

19. In general, do you think it is a good thing or a bad thing that a majority of voters can make laws and change public policies by passing initiatives?

- 74% good thing
- 20 bad thing
- 2 other (*volunteered*)
- 4 don't know

20. Overall, do you think public policy decisions made through the initiative process by California voters are probably better or probably worse than public policy decisions made by the governor and state legislature?

- 59% probably better
- 23 probably worse
- 6 same (*volunteered*)
- 12 don't know

21. Generally speaking, would you say you are very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, or not satisfied with the way the initiative process is working in California today?

- 11% very satisfied
- 57 somewhat satisfied
- 26 not satisfied
- 6 don't know

For the following items, please say if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree.

[rotate questions 22 to 24]

22. The ballot wording for citizens' initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes—Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

- 43% strongly agree
- 32 somewhat agree
- 13 somewhat disagree
- 8 strongly disagree
- 4 don't know

23. Citizens' initiatives bring up important public policy issues that the governor and state legislature have not adequately addressed—Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

- 30% strongly agree
- 45 somewhat agree
- 14 somewhat disagree
- 6 strongly disagree
- 5 don't know

24. There are too many propositions on the state ballot—Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree?

- 28% strongly agree
- 32 somewhat agree
- 23 somewhat disagree
- 11 strongly disagree
- 6 don't know

25. On another topic, the state legislature and governor have approved a new state budget of around 105 billion dollars that closes the budget gap with spending cuts in transportation and general government, defers spending increases in K to 12 public education, and uses money from local government property taxes and state bonds. The plan includes no new taxes. In general, are you satisfied or dissatisfied with this budget?

- 52% satisfied
- 40 dissatisfied
- 8 don't know

26. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger ordered a California Performance Review with the goal of making state government more effective and efficient. The plans include combining state agencies with similar functions, eliminating boards and commissions, and slowing the growth in the number of state employees. In general, would you say that you favor or oppose the governor's plans for changing state government?

- 65% favor
- 27 oppose
- 8 don't know

[rotate questions 27 and 28]

27. How concerned are you about the effects of spending cuts on your local government services—very concerned, somewhat concerned, not too concerned, or not at all concerned?

- 35% very concerned
- 39 somewhat concerned
- 16 not too concerned
- 9 not at all concerned
- 1 don't know

28. What if there were a measure on your local ballot to increase the local sales tax by one-half cent to pay for police and other local government services? Would you vote yes or no?

61% yes
35 no
4 don't know

29. 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?

40% approve
56 disapprove
4 don't know

[rotate questions 30 and 31]

30. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling the situation in Iraq?

34% approve
63 disapprove
3 don't know

31. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that President Bush is handling terrorism and homeland security issues?

47% approve
49 disapprove
4 don't know

32. In general, how would you say things are going for the U.S. in Iraq—very well, somewhat well, not too well, or not at all well?

7% very well
26 somewhat well
29 not too well
36 not at all well
2 don't know

33. All in all, do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not?

36% yes, worth it
61 no, not worth it
3 don't know

34. Before the war began, do you think that the Bush Administration did or did not intentionally exaggerate its evidence that Iraq had weapons of mass destruction such as biological or chemical weapons?

57% did intentionally exaggerate
38 did not intentionally exaggerate
5 don't know

35. Do you think the war with Iraq has or has not contributed to the long-term security of the United States? (*if it did: Is that a great deal or some?*)

30% contributed a great deal
21 contributed some
44 did not contribute
5 don't know

36. On another topic, how confident are you that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement agencies will be able to prevent future terrorist attacks in the United States in which large numbers of Americans are killed—very confident, somewhat confident, not too confident, or not at all confident?

12% very confident
43 somewhat confident
28 not too confident
16 not at all confident
1 don't know

37. Do you approve or disapprove of the recommendation to create a national director of intelligence who would draw on intelligence from all agencies?

71% approve
20 disapprove
9 don't know

[rotate questions 38 and 39]

38. How much of a problem is terrorism and security in California today? Is it a big problem, somewhat of a problem, or not much of a problem?

24% big problem
42 somewhat of a problem
31 not much of a problem
3 don't know

39. How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be the victim of a terrorist attack—very worried, somewhat worried, not too worried, or not at all worried?

15% very worried
25 somewhat worried
34 not too worried
26 not at all worried

40. Changing topics back to the state, overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California?

65% approve
28 disapprove
7 don't know

41. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Governor Schwarzenegger is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes?

58% approve
34 disapprove
8 don't know

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

42% approve
45 disapprove
13 don't know

43. Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the California legislature is handling the issue of the state budget and taxes?

35% approve
53 disapprove
12 don't know

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

80% yes
20 no [skip to 46]

44a. Are you registered as a Democrat, a Republican, another party, or as an independent?

43% Democrat [ask q45b]
34 Republican [ask q45c]
18 independent [ask q45a]
5 other [skip to q46]

45a. Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or Democratic Party?

48% Democratic party
24 Republican party
20 neither (volunteered)
8 don't know

[skip to q46]

45b. Would you call yourself a strong Democrat or not a very strong Democrat?

56% strong
41 not very strong
3 don't know

[skip to q46]

45c. Would you call yourself a strong Republican or not a very strong Republican?

62% strong
35 not very strong
3 don't know

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

10% very liberal
21 somewhat liberal
31 middle-of-the-road
23 somewhat conservative
12 very conservative
3 don't know

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

28% great deal
42 fair amount
24 only a little
6 none

48. Are you more interested or less interested in politics this year than you were in 2000—the last presidential election year?

64% more interested
12 less interested
23 same (volunteered)
1 don't know

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

55% always [skip to q50]
18 nearly always [ask q49a]
9 part of the time [ask q49a]
4 seldom [ask q49a]
14 never [ask q49a]

49a. Here are some reasons people give for not always voting. Which of these is the main reason you do not always vote? [rotate]

27% I don't know enough about the choices
18 I'm too busy to vote
10 Voting doesn't change things
6 I'm not interested in politics
3 move / travel (volunteered)
12 something else (specify)
22 not registered / not eligible to vote (volunteered)
2 don't know

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

81% yes
19 no

[51-65: demographic questions]

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