

Voter Opinion about the Special Election

**Critical findings from recent surveys by the Public Policy
Institute of California and the Field Institute.**

October, 2005

How Californians View the Special Election

➤ Voter Interest

According to the PPIC Statewide Survey (September, 2005), 53 percent of likely California voters are not in favor of Governor Schwarzenegger's special election, while 40 percent of likely voters support it.

<i>Likely Voters Only</i>	Likely Voters	Party			Region			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California
Good idea	40%	23%	63%	36%	42%	28%	40%	52%
Bad idea	53	73	29	56	46	66	55	44
Neither (<i>volunteered</i>)	1	0	1	2	2	1	1	0
Don't know	6	4	7	6	10	5	4	4

Of likely California voters, 19 percent are following news about the special election "very closely", 50 percent are following it "fairly closely", and 23 percent are following it "not too closely".

<i>Likely Voters Only</i>	Likely Voters	Party			Region			
		Dem	Rep	Ind	Central Valley	SF Bay Area	Los Angeles	Other Southern California
Very closely	19%	21%	16%	21%	20%	16%	17%	22%
Fairly closely	50	48	54	46	48	57	48	47
Not too closely	23	25	24	25	23	22	27	22
Not at all closely	7	6	5	8	7	5	8	9
Don't know	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	0

SOURCE: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey (September, 2005)

➤ Role of Initiatives

Californians are more likely to say that the November 8th special election is more of a bad idea than a good idea. However, they still believe that initiatives (39%) should have more influence than the legislature (32%) or governor (18%) over state policy.

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
The governor	18%	13%	21%	20%	16%
The legislature	32	43	24	38	35
Initiatives on the state ballot	39	36	46	32	42
Other answer	1	1	1	1	2
Don't know	10	7	8	9	5

Of California likely voters, 63 percent of residents believe the initiative process needs either major (29%) or minor changes (34%).

	All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
		Dem	Rep	Ind	
Major changes	29%	36%	23%	30%	28%
Minor changes	34	33	35	34	36
Fine the way it is	29	25	34	31	29
Don't know	8	6	8	5	7

SOURCE: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey (September, 2005)

➤ Initiative Process

California voters identify both strengths and weaknesses within the initiative process. 74 percent of adults and 79 percent of likely voters believe that initiatives are important because they address significant public policy issues that the governor and state legislatures have failed to adequately address. Conversely, 62 percent of all adults think that there are too many propositions on the ballot and according to nearly eight in ten adults, the wording of the initiatives is too complicated to understand. Approximately 47% of likely voters agree. Many voters believe that special interests have a lot (56%) or some (36%) control over the initiative process.

		All Adults	Party			Likely Voters
			Dem	Rep	Ind	
<i>Citizens' initiatives bring up important public policy issues that the governor and state legislature have not adequately addressed</i>	Strongly agree	32%	34%	35%	35%	36%
	Somewhat agree	42	41	43	45	43
	Somewhat disagree	14	14	11	14	13
	Strongly disagree	5	6	4	3	5
	Don't know	7	5	7	3	3
<i>There are too many propositions on the state ballot</i>	Strongly agree	32	37	29	31	33
	Somewhat agree	30	30	28	36	28
	Somewhat disagree	22	21	26	20	24
	Strongly disagree	11	8	13	12	13
	Don't know	5	4	4	1	2
<i>The ballot wording for citizens' initiatives is often too complicated and confusing for voters to understand what happens if the initiative passes</i>	Strongly agree	47	56	45	49	53
	Somewhat agree	30	27	32	31	29
	Somewhat disagree	12	11	12	13	11
	Strongly disagree	6	3	8	6	5
	Don't know	5	3	3	1	2

SOURCE: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey (September, 2005)

PPIC STATEWIDE SURVEY: SPECIAL SURVEY ON CALIFORNIANS AND THE INITIATIVE PROCESS (SEPTEMBER 12-19, 2005)
 2,004 CALIFORNIA ADULT RESIDENTS: ENGLISH AND SPANISH (Margin of Error +/-2% at 95% confidence level for total sample)

➤ Negative Reaction to Special Election

Currently, 57% of California voters oppose the idea of conducting a special election in November and opposition continues to grow.

Table 4
Voter reaction to the Governor's call for a special election this year
(among registered voters)

	<u>Oppose</u>	<u>Favor</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Without mention of its cost</u>			
Late August 2005	57%	30	13
June 2005	52%	37	11
February 2005	45%	51	4
<u>When its potential cost is cited</u>			
Late August 2005	63%	30	7
June 2005	61%	28	11
February 2005	67%	30	3

SOURCE: The Field Poll (Friday, September 2, 2005)

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall registered voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.4 percentage points, while findings from each of the random subsamples have a sampling error of +/- 4.7 percentage points.