

# THE FIELD POLL

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

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## **DESPITE HIS LOW POPULARITY, SCHWARZENEGGER REMAINS VERY COMPETITIVE IN GENERAL ELECTION TRIAL HEATS.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Despite a low job approval rating, and with a plurality of likely voters disinclined to re-elect him, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger remains very competitive when paired against each of his two possible Democratic rivals in simulated November general election match-ups.

State Treasurer Phil Angelides and State Controller Steve Westly are running in the June Democratic primary election that will determine who will face Schwarzenegger in the November general election. Even though both Democrats hold prominent statewide offices and have won prior statewide elections, large majorities of voters do not have an opinion of either man.

A statewide *Field Poll* survey completed February 12-26 among 507 likely voters reveals these highlights in this year's election for Governor:

- Angelides leads Westly 26% to 18% among likely voters in the June Democratic primary election, although a large and growing proportion of Democratic primary voters (54%) undecided.
- By a 47% to 37% margin, voters are predisposed at this point not to re-elect Schwarzenegger, although compared to October this represents an 8-point decline in the percentage of voters disinclined to re-elect the Governor and a 7-point increase in the proportion who are undecided.
- Voter preferences are closely divided between Schwarzenegger and the two leading Democrats in simulated November general election pairings. When pitted against Angelides, Schwarzenegger currently runs even, with 39% of likely voters favoring each candidate. Against Westly, the Governor trails by four points (41% to 37%). However, many voters in each case – one in five – are currently unsure about whom they will support for Governor in November.

- Schwarzenegger's overall image among likely voters is 49% unfavorable and 44% favorable, with 7% having no opinion. By contrast, relatively small proportions of voters have an opinion of the Governor's two Democratic opponents. Voter impressions of Angelides is 24% favorable, 13% unfavorable, with 63% having no opinion. For Westly it is 19% favorable, 9% unfavorable, and 72% unable to rate him.

### **Disinclination to re-elect Schwarzenegger**

Last year at about this time, a 56% majority of voters said they were inclined to re-elect Schwarzenegger as this state's Governor. However, since then voter opinions of the Governor have soured considerably. In four subsequent *Field Poll* surveys conducted since then, the proportions of voters inclined to re-elect the Governor have dropped to the 34% to 39% range. The current survey finds just 37% favoring his re-election at this time, 47% not inclined to support him and 16% undecided. This represents a decline in the percentage of voters disinclined to re-elect the Governor compared to October and an increase in the proportion undecided.

One factor working against the Governor is that only 65% of Republicans are inclined to back him for re-election, 14% are disinclined and an unusually large 21% are undecided.

Inclinations to re-elect the Governor are very low among liberals (12%) and Democrats (16%), as well as Latinos (29%) and other ethnic voters (21%).

Schwarzenegger's re-election support is strongest among conservatives (54%) and residents of Inland counties (44%), although the proportions are lower than the levels usually obtained by successful Republican candidates in recent elections.

**Table 1**  
**Voter inclination to re-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger as Governor in 2006**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<u>Inclined</u>	<u>Not inclined</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<b>February 2006</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16</b>
October 2005	36%	55	9
August 2005	36%	56	8
June 2005	39%	57	4
February 2005	56%	42	2
<u>Party</u>			
Democrat	16%	72	12
Republican	65%	14	21
Non-partisans/others	28%	52	20
<u>Area</u>			
Coastal counties	33%	50	17
Inland counties	44%	39	17
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	41%	44	15
Female	33%	49	18
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	41%	42	17
Latino*	29%	58	13
Other*	21%	58	21
<u>Age</u>			
18–39	31%	56	13
40–49	38%	48	14
50–64	32%	46	22
65 or older	47%	36	17
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	54%	25	21
Moderate	37%	43	20
Liberal	12%	81	7

\* Small sample size.

Note: Previous surveys conducted among all registered voters.

**Angelides continues to lead Westly, but a majority are undecided**

In each of four *Field Poll* surveys dating back to June of last year, Angelides has held narrow leads over his rival Westly in the Democratic gubernatorial primary. In the current survey, Angelides' lead is 8 points (26% to 18%), although a large and growing percentage of Democratic primary voters (54%) are undecided.

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**Table 2**  
**Voter preferences in the 2006 Democratic primary election for Governor**  
**(among likely Democratic primary voters)**

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	<u>Angelides</u>	<u>Westly</u>	<u>Someone else</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
February 2006	26%	18	2	54
October 2005	37%	26	**	37
August 2005	32%	22	**	46
June 2005	37%	28	**	35

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\*\* Not asked.

Note: Previous surveys conducted among registered voters eligible to vote in the Democratic primary.

### **General election match-ups are close**

*The Field Poll* has paired Angelides and Westly against Schwarzenegger in four previous general election match-ups since February 2005. In the first measurement last year, Schwarzenegger had a big lead over each Democrat. However, starting in June and continuing throughout the remainder of 2005, voter preferences turned against the Governor, giving each Democrat a small lead.

The current poll finds Schwarzenegger running even when paired against Angelides, and trailing Westly narrowly (41% to 37%). However, one in five voters (20%) are undecided in each case, a somewhat larger proportion than found in past polls.

Preferences between Angelides and Schwarzenegger, and Westly and the Governor, divide along party, regional, ideological and gender lines, with both Democrats leading the Governor among fellow Democrats and non-partisans, liberals, women and among those living in the state's Coastal counties. On the other hand, Schwarzenegger holds narrow leads over his two opponents among Republicans, conservatives, men and voters in the Inland counties. In addition, the incumbent holds a small advantage over each Democrat among white non-Hispanic voters, but this is offset by large leads each Democrat possesses among Latino and other ethnic voters.

**Table 3**  
**November general election pairings between**  
**Schwarzenegger (R) and Angelides (D) for Governor**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<u>Angelides</u>	<u>Schwarzenegger</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<b>February 2006</b>	<b>39%</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>20</b>
October 2005	47%	41	**	12
August 2005	43%	40	**	17
June 2005	46%	42	**	12
February 2005	35%	52	**	13
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	64%	14	2	20
Republicans	8%	72	2	18
Non-partisans/others	42%	34	1	24
<u>Area</u>				
Coastal counties	42%	37	1	20
Inland counties	32%	44	3	21
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	39%	43	2	16
Female	39%	35	1	25
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White non-Hispanic	36%	43	2	19
Latino*	46%	34	1	19
Other*	47%	23	2	29
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Conservative	19%	62	3	16
Moderate	35%	39	1	25
Liberal	75%	7	1	17

\* Small sample base.

\*\* Not asked

Note: Previous surveys conducted among all registered voters.

**Table 4**  
**November general election pairings between**  
**Schwarzenegger (R) and Westly (D) for Governor**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<u>Westly</u>	<u>Schwarzenegger</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<b>February 2006</b>	<b>41%</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>
October 2005	46%	40	**	14
August 2005	42%	39	**	19
June 2005	44%	40	**	16
February 2005	33%	52	**	15
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	69%	14	1	16
Republicans	9%	70	2	19
Non-partisans/others	38%	30	2	30
<u>Area</u>				
Coastal counties	43%	35	1	21
Inland counties	37%	43	1	19
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	39%	42	2	17
Female	42%	34	1	23
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White non-Hispanic	37%	42	1	20
Latino*	51%	32	3	14
Other*	47%	21	2	30
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Conservative	20%	62	1	17
Moderate	37%	35	2	26
Liberal	76%	8	1	15

\* Small sample base.

\*\* Not asked.

Note: Previous surveys conducted among all registered voters.

### **Big differences in candidate image ratings**

Ninety-three percent of likely voters statewide have an opinion of Schwarzenegger, and impressions are divided, with 44% holding a favorable impression and 49% an unfavorable impression. Views of the Governor are highly partisan, with 73% of Republicans having a favorable view, while 72% of Democrats and 56% of non-partisans have a negative impression.

By contrast, nearly two-thirds (63%) of likely voters have no opinion of Angelides and nearly three in four (72%) have no opinion of Westly.

Among voters able to rate each Democrat, opinions are generally positive. In Angelides' case 24% have a favorable opinion and 13% unfavorable, while 19% hold a favorable impression of Westly and 9% view him unfavorably. Angelides is also viewed a little more favorable among his fellow Democrats than Westly, but Westly has a more positive image rating than Angelides among non-partisan voters.

**Table 5**  
**Image ratings of the gubernatorial candidates**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor</u>			
Total voters	<u>44%</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>7</u>
Democrats	23%	72	5
Republicans	73%	18	9
Non-partisans/others	34%	56	10
<u>Phil Angelides, State Treasurer</u>			
Total voters	<u>24%</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>63</u>
Democrats	33%	10	57
Republicans	17%	15	68
Non-partisans/others	19%	17	64
<u>Steve Westly, State Controller</u>			
Total voters	<u>19%</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>72</u>
Democrats	24%	10	66
Republicans	16%	10	74
Non-partisans/others	17%	4	79

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 507 California registered voters considered likely to vote in the 2006 gubernatorial elections. The survey was conducted by telephone February 12-26, 2006 in English and Spanish. Democratic primary election preferences are based on 266 likely voters who are eligible to participate in the June Democratic primary.

Households were sampled using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating landline telephone exchanges within all areas codes serving California households in proportion to population. Within each exchange, telephone numbers are created by adding random digits to the selected telephone exchange. This method gives each phone listing an equal chance of being selected and permits access to all landline telephone numbers statewide, both listed and unlisted.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points, while Democratic primary preferences have a sampling error of +/- 6.0 percentage points.

### **Questions Asked**

Next, I am going to read some names of people who are in politics and public affairs. For each, please tell me whether your opinion of that person is favorable, unfavorable or whether you don't yet know enough about that person. (ITEMS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Is your opinion of NAME AND TITLE favorable or unfavorable? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is running for re-election this year. Are you inclined or not inclined to vote for Schwarzenegger in the November general election for Governor?

(ASKED OF DEMOCRATS AND NON-PARTISANS INTENDING TO VOTE IN THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY:) In the June Democratic Primary election for Governor, state Treasurer Phil Angelides is running against State Controller Steve Westly. If the Democratic Primary election for Governor were being held today, for whom would you vote – Angelides or Westly?

(THE NEXT TWO QUESTIONS WERE READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

(If the election for Governor were being held today and) (What if) the candidates were Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democrat Phil Angelides, for whom would you vote for Governor – Schwarzenegger or Angelides?

(If the election for Governor were being held today and) (What if) the candidates were Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democrat Steve Westly, for whom would you vote for Governor – Schwarzenegger or Westly?