

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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**FEINSTEIN WELL AHEAD OF MOUNTJOY
IN U.S. SENATE RACE. INITIAL SUPPORT
FOR PROP. 82, THE PRE-SCHOOL
INITIATIVE.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

This year's contest for the U.S. Senate, in which Democrat Dianne Feinstein is running for a third complete term, has not yet generated much voter or press attention. In addition to not having to face any significant primary election opposition, Feinstein will likely be facing former State Senator Richard Mountjoy, who himself is not expected to face any significant challenge for the Republican nomination.

When a cross-section of likely voters statewide are asked who they would prefer in a possible November election pairing between the two, Feinstein leads Mountjoy two to one (56% to 28%). Mountjoy entered the contest only recently and is not well-known either among his own party members or the overall electorate. While 85% of likely voters have an opinion of Feinstein, just 12% know anything about Mountjoy.

This survey also measured voter support for Proposition 82, the Pre-school Education initiative, to be voted on in the June primary. While awareness of the initiative is relatively low (35%), when voters are read a summary of its major provisions supporters outnumber opponents 55% to 34%.

These are the findings for the latest *Field Poll* conducted among 507 likely voters late last month.

Big contrast in candidate image ratings

Feinstein served as the highly publicized Mayor of San Francisco, assuming office following the assassination of Mayor George Moscone in 1978. She subsequently ran for Governor in 1990, losing to Republican Pete Wilson, and then was elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 to complete the remaining years of Wilson's unexpired term, and subsequently was re-elected to two full terms in 1994 and 2000. Mountjoy was first elected to the State Assembly in 1978, won a State Senate seat in the 29th District in 1994, but was termed out in 2004.

Eighty-five percent of all voters have an opinion of Feinstein, with sentiments dividing 51% favorable and 34% unfavorable. By contrast, just 12% of the state's voters have an opinion of Mountjoy, and it divides 5% favorable and 7% unfavorable. Even among rank-and-file Republicans, just 10% currently have an opinion of the former State Senator.

Table 1
Image ratings of the major party candidates for
U.S. Senate in the 2006 election
(among likely voters)

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
<u>Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator</u>			
Total voters	<u>51%</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>15</u>
Democrats	71%	16	13
Republicans	31%	55	14
Non-partisans/others	44%	36	20
<u>Richard Mountjoy, former State Senator</u>			
Total voters	<u>5%</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>88</u>
Democrats	4%	8	88
Republicans	6%	4	90
Non-partisans/others	4%	9	87

Feinstein preferred two to one

When the two candidates are matched against each other in a possible November general election pairing, Feinstein is preferred over Mountjoy two to one (56% to 28%).

Feinstein leads across all major subgroups of the likely voter population, except for Republicans and conservatives.

Table 2
November general election preferences between Feinstein and Mountjoy
(among likely voters)

	<u>Feinstein (D)</u>	<u>Mountjoy (R)</u>	<u>Other</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total statewide	56%	28	1	15
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	85%	6	1	8
Republicans	24%	57	1	18
Non-partisans/others	49%	25	2	24
<u>Area</u>				
Coastal counties	59%	27	1	13
Inland counties	49%	31	2	18
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	65%	24	**	11
Other Southern California	45%	40	1	14
Central Valley	51%	30	3	16
San Francisco Bay Area	68%	14	1	17
Other Northern California*	47%	22	**	31
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Conservative	25%	58	**	17
Moderate	60%	21	1	18
Liberal	88%	1	1	10
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	53%	30	1	16
Female	57%	27	1	15
<u>Age</u>				
18 – 39	53%	22	2	23
40 – 64	59%	29	**	12
65 or older	49%	34	1	16

* Small sample base.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

Feinstein job approval ratings

A five to three majority of voters (51% to 29%) approves of the job Feinstein is doing as U.S. Senator. Voter assessments of Feinstein's job performance have remained more positive than negative throughout her tenure.

Table 3
Trend of Dianne Feinstein's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
February 2006	51%	29	20
June 2005	54%	26	20
February 2005	50%	29	21
August 2004	55%	29	16
May 2004	53%	23	24
July 2003	55%	31	14
April 2003	49%	34	17
2002 (Average)	49%	26	25
2001 (Average)	57%	27	16
2000 (Average)	57%	27	16
1999 (Average)	51%	28	21
1998 (Average)	56%	27	17
1997 (Average)	47%	35	18
1996 (Average)	46%	36	18
1995 (Average)	50%	40	10
1994 (Average)	47%	39	14
1993 (Average)	47%	32	21
<u>Party (February 2006)</u>			
Democrats	70%	13	17
Republicans	31%	50	19
Non-partisans/others	46%	29	25

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. Surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Boxer job ratings

The current survey also updated the voter appraisals of the performance of California's other U.S. Senator, Democrat Barbara Boxer. The results show that 41% currently approve of Boxer's performance in office, while 34% disapprove.

This represents a slight decline from the job approval ratings she has received in the recent past, when the proportion approving of her performance was typically in the mid to high 40% range.

Table 4
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among registered voters)

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
February 2006	41%	34	25
June 2005	47%	30	23
February 2005	49%	36	15
August 2004	49%	36	15
May 2004	44%	33	23
July 2003	49%	35	16
April 2003	43%	35	22
2002 (Average)	45%	29	26
2001 (Average)	49%	31	20
2000 (Average)	50%	30	20
1999 (Average)	45%	35	20
1998 (Average)	45%	29	26
1997 (Average)	41%	35	24
1996 (Average)	42%	36	22
1995 (Average)	45%	39	16
1994 (Average)	43%	37	20
1993 (Average)	41%	35	24
<u>Party (February 2006)</u>			
Democrats	63%	13	25
Republicans	15%	60	25
Non-partisans/others	41%	33	26

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. Surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

Early support for Proposition 82

California's June 2006 ballot will be unusual for the fact that it now appears that there will be only two statewide propositions to be decided by the voters. One initiative will be Proposition 82, the Pre-school Education initiative. This measure is backed by movie director/actor Rob Reiner, who also sponsored the successful cigarette tax hike, child development initiative, Proposition 10, on the November 1998 election ballot.

His current initiative would establish the right to public pre-school for all four-year-old children in California. It would be funded by a tax increase of individuals with incomes over \$400,000 per year and couples with incomes over \$800,000 per year and would be administered by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and county school superintendents.

In this survey 35% of likely voters indicated that they had seen or heard something about Prop. 82. Whether or not they had any prior awareness of the measure, all likely voters surveyed were asked if they were currently disposed to vote Yes or No after being read a summary of its major provisions. At this point, a majority (55%) reported being in favor of Prop. 82, 34% were opposed and 11% were undecided.

Table 5
Voter preferences about Proposition 82, the
Pre-School Education Initiative
(among likely voters)

	<u>Would vote...</u>		
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Total statewide	55%	34	11
<u>Party</u>			
Democrat	73%	16	11
Republican	36%	50	14
Non-partisans/others	53%	43	4
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Conservative	38%	50	12
Moderate	56%	32	12
Liberal	74%	15	11
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	52%	38	10
Female	58%	30	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White (non-Hispanic)	53%	35	12
Latino*	62%	30	8
Other*	64%	27	9
<u>Prior awareness of Prop. 82</u>			
Yes, had heard of it	53%	40	7
No, not aware	57%	30	13

* Small sample size.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 680 California registered voters, of whom 507 were considered likely to vote in the 2006 general election. The survey was conducted by telephone February 12-26, 2006 in English and Spanish.

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 registered sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.6 percentage points, while those from the likely voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points.

Questions Asked

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein is running for re-election this year. Are you inclined or not inclined to vote for Feinstein in the November general election for U.S. Senate?

If the election for U.S. Senate were being held today and the candidates were Republican Richard Mountjoy and Democrat Dianne Feinstein for whom would you vote for U.S. Senate – Mountjoy or Feinstein?

Have you seen, read or heard anything about a proposition that will appear on the June statewide primary election ballot having to do with pre-school programs for children?

(As you know) The Public Pre-school Education initiative establishes the right to public pre-school for all four-year old children in California. It would be funded by a tax increase on individuals with incomes over 400 thousand dollars per year and couples with incomes over 800 thousand dollars per year and would be administered by the state Superintendent of Public Instruction and county school superintendents. If the election were being held today, would you vote YES or NO on this initiative?