

# 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 COMFORTABLY AHEAD  
OF MOUNTJOY IN SENATE RACE.  
DEMOCRATS AHEAD IN GENERIC  
VOTE PREFERENCES FOR CONGRESS.  
MAJORITY WANTS DEMOCRATS TO  
CONTROL CONGRESS.**

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by Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

The most recent *Field Poll* completed in late July finds incumbent Democratic U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein maintaining a comfortable lead, 56% to 34%, over Republican Richard Mountjoy in this year's U.S. Senate race.

Voter impressions of the job performances of Feinstein and her colleague in the Senate, Barbara Boxer, continue to be viewed favorably.

When voters statewide are asked which party's candidate they would likely support in this year's congressional races, 44% favor the Democrat, while 36% support the Republican. In addition, when asked which party they would like to see control Congress following this year's election, apart from their own Congressional preferences, a majority (52%) prefer Democratic control, while just 34% favor the Republicans.

### **Preferences for U.S. Senate**

Earlier this year it became clear that neither Democratic incumbent Senator Dianne Feinstein nor her opponent Republican Richard Mountjoy, formerly a State Senator and now an Immigration Control consultant, would be facing any serious opposition in their respective parties' primaries and would likely be opponents in the November general election.

Over the course of the last six months, *The Field Poll* has obtained four separate Feinstein vs. Mountjoy general election preference measures, and in each Feinstein has enjoyed a significant advantage.

Today's findings show Feinstein leading Mountjoy by twenty-two points, 56% to 34%, among likely voters.

Feinstein's lead is derived from her getting overwhelming support (85%) from Democrats and being the choice of non-partisan voters by a better than two to one margin (55% to 25%). Feinstein also captures a small but significant slice (22%) of the GOP vote.

The incumbent holds sizeable leads in all regions of the state except in Southern California outside of Los Angeles County. Feinstein is getting strong support from men (53% to 37%), and even stronger support from women (60% to 30%). Majorities of voters across all racial and ethnic subgroups also favor the Senator.

**Table 1**  
**November general election preferences for U.S. Senate**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b><u>Feinstein (D)</u></b>	<b><u>Mountjoy (R)</u></b>	<b><u>Other</u></b>	<b><u>Undecided</u></b>
Total statewide – <b>July</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>
– Late May	54%	28	3	15
– April	59%	31	2	8
– February	56%	28	1	15
<b><u>Party</u></b>				
Democrats	85%	7	1	7
Republicans	22%	69	**	9
Non-partisans/others	55%	25	5	15
<b><u>Area</u></b>				
Coastal counties	59%	30	2	9
Inland counties	49%	41	**	10
<b><u>Region</u></b>				
Los Angeles County	63%	27	3	7
Other Southern California	42%	46	1	11
Central Valley	56%	38	**	6
San Francisco Bay Area	73%	19	1	7
Other Northern California*	50%	38	**	12
<b><u>Political ideology</u></b>				
Conservative	21%	73	**	6
Moderate	63%	22	1	14
Liberal	91%	3	4	2
<b><u>Gender</u></b>				
Male	53%	37	2	8
Female	60%	30	1	9
<b><u>Race/ethnicity</u></b>				
White non-Hispanic	52%	37	1	10
Latino	74%	21	2	3
Black/Asian/other	59%	28	1	12

\* Small sample base. (D) denotes Democrat (R) denotes Republican  
 \*\* Less than 1/2 of 1%. Note: All subgroups are from July 2006 survey.

### Candidate images of the U.S. Senate candidates

Feinstein is very well known and holds a very positive image with voters. Six in ten (60%) have a favorable view of her and 35% an unfavorable view.

Mountjoy suffers by comparison because fewer voters know much about him. Six in ten likely voters (62%) have no opinion of the former State Senator, and among those with an opinion, impressions divide 23% favorable and 15% unfavorable.

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**Table 2**  
**Trend of image ratings of the major party candidates for U.S. Senate**  
**(among likely voters)**

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	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
<u>Dianne Feinstein</u>			
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>
April 2006	54%	37	9
February 2006	51%	34	15
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrat	88%	9	3
Republican	28%	66	6
Non-partisan/other	58%	35	7
<u>Richard Mountjoy</u>			
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>23%</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>62</b>
April 2006	8%	10	82
February 2006	5%	7	88
<u>Party (July 2006)</u>			
Democrat	15%	17	68
Republican	34%	6	60
Non-partisan/other	21%	28	51

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### Feinstein job ratings

Ever since she took office as U.S. Senator in 1993, Feinstein has consistently received favorable job performance ratings from this state's registered voters. In today's survey 51% approve of the job she is doing, while 32% disapprove, close to the average ratings she has received during her thirteen-year 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>
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>17</b>
February 2005	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 (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	71%	15	14
Republicans	38%	53	9
Non-partisans/others*	35%	33	32

*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.*

*\* Small sample size.*

### **Boxer job ratings**

Boxer's job performance as a U.S. Senator is also viewed more positively than negatively by this state's voters, but to a smaller degree than Feinstein's.

Currently, 45% of registered voters approve of the job that Boxer is doing, while 34% disapprove. During the past three years, the plurality of voters holding a more positive than negative appraisal of her has ranged from eight to seventeen points.

**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>
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>21</b>
February 2005	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 (July 2006)</u>			
Democrats	69%	13	18
Republicans	19%	67	14
Non-partisans/others*	38%	25	37

*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.*

*\* Small sample size.*

### **Generic congressional vote preferences**

In this survey the statewide cross section of likely voters was asked to respond to the standard pre-election generic vote preference question for Congress. It asks, "If the election for the U.S. House of Representatives were held today in your district, which party's candidate would you prefer?"

Statewide, 44% of voters choose the Democratic candidate in this setting, while 36% support the Republican candidate. Another 20% have no opinion or mention another party.

Generic vote preferences cannot determine with any precision how the elections in each of California's fifty-three Congressional districts will turn out. However, the generic vote result is frequently seen as an indicator as to which party will gain or lose Congressional seats.

By way of comparison, the average Democratic lead in the ten most recent national polls reporting on the generic congressional vote preference question was eleven points.

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**Table 5**  
**If the election for U.S. House of Representatives were held today**  
**in your district, which party's candidate would you prefer?**  
**(among likely voters)**

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	<b><u>Democratic</u></b> <b><u>candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Republican</u></b> <b><u>candidate</u></b>	<b><u>Other/</u></b> <b><u>no opinion</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic</u></b> <b><u>candidate vote</u></b> <b><u>plurality statewide</u></b>
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>20</b>	
<i>November 2004 vote*</i>				+16
September 2004	46%	35	19	+11
August 2004	42%	35	23	+7
<i>November 2002 vote*</i>				+7
September 2002	43%	39	18	+4
January 2002	43%	40	17	+3

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\* Aggregate vote across all of California's 52 congressional districts by party.

### **Majority wants Democratic control of Congress**

Apart from how California voters plan to vote in their own individual districts this November, a sizeable majority of voters – 52% to 34% – say they would like to see the Democrats control the next Congress. Of the non-partisan polls that posed this question to cross-sections of all U.S. voters, Democratic control of Congress is favored nationwide by margins ranging from ten to twenty points, and the views of Californians, as evidenced by this poll, are toward the high end of that range.

Eighty-five percent of California Democrats say they would like to see their party in control next year, while just 6% prefer the Republicans.

Almost one-half (48%) of non-partisans prefer Democratic control of Congress to Republican control (16%). One in four (25%) would like neither in control. Three fourths (76%) of Republicans want their party to remain in control, while 13% opt for Democratic control.

**Table 6**  
**Apart from how you will vote, which party do you want**  
**to control Congress after the November election?**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Democratic party</b>	<b>Republican party</b>	<b>Neither</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<b>Total – July 2006</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>
<u>Party</u>				
Democrats	85%	6	4	5
Republicans	13%	76	7	4
Non-partisans/others	48%	16	25	11
<u>Age</u>				
18 – 44	61%	28	6	5
45 – 54	50%	35	11	4
55 – 64	45%	38	12	5
65 or older	46%	40	9	5
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Conservative	16%	76	4	4
Moderate	57%	21	14	8
Liberal	87%	4	7	2

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 992 California registered voters, of whom 762 can be considered likely voters in the November general election. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period July 10-23, 2006. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall registered voter sample was divided into two approximately equal sized subsamples of 498 and 494 likely voters each for the job performance ratings reported in this release.

Sampling was also divided into two parts. About half of the interviews were conducted using a random digit dial methodology, which randomly selects operating landline telephone exchanges within all area codes serving California households in proportion to population. Within each exchange, random samples of telephone numbers were created by adding random digits to each selected telephone exchange, giving each phone listing an equal chance of being selected and permitting access to all landline telephone numbers both listed and unlisted. The other half of the sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected randomly from a statewide list of all registered voters in California. In this sample every *n*th voter was selected from the list at random for inclusion into the sample and interviews were attempted only with the specific voter selected.

In an effort to include "hard to reach" voters into each sample, up to 8 attempts were made to reach a voter at each telephone number dialed in each sample. Results from both samples were combined and weighted to conform to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

According to statistical theory, 95% of the time results from the overall likely voter sample have a sampling error of +/- 3.8 percentage points, while the job performance ratings questions have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 percentage points. There are other possible sources of error in any survey other than sampling variability. Different results could occur because of differences in question wording, sampling, the sequencing of questions or through undetected omissions or errors in interviewing or data processing. Extensive efforts were made to minimize such potential errors.

### **Questions Asked**

In the election this year for U.S. Senate, Republican Richard Mountjoy, Immigration Control consultant, is running against Democrat Dianne Feinstein, incumbent U.S. Senator. If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote for U.S. Senate – Richard Mountjoy, the Republican, or Dianne Feinstein, the Democrat?

In the November general election for House of Representatives in your district, do you plan to vote for the Republican candidate or the Democratic candidate? (IF UNCERTAIN, PROBE:) Well, which party's candidate do you lean towards at this time?

Apart from how you will vote in your own district's Congressional election, which party do you want to control Congress after the upcoming elections – the Democratic Party or the Republican Party?

Next, I am going to read some names of people who are running for statewide office this year. As I read each name, please tell me if your opinion of that person is favorable, unfavorable or whether you don't know enough about that person to have an opinion. (NAMES AND TITLES READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Is your opinion of \_\_\_\_\_ favorable or unfavorable?

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?