

California Statewide Survey on Redistricting – April 2005
Details of Results

Approval Ratings

The Governor's approval rating slipped below 50 percent. Republicans remain strongly supportive, with 76 percent approving of the Governor, but approval is down to 21 percent among Democrats and 43 percent among third-party and decline to state voters ("Others).

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the job Governor Schwarzenegger is doing today? Is that strongly?

Response	All responses		Dem	Rep	Other
Strongly approve	23%		8 %	40%	17%
Approve	24%		13%	36%	26%
<i>Total approve</i>	<i>47 %</i>		<i>21%</i>	<i>76%</i>	<i>43%</i>
<i>Total Disapprove</i>	<i>42 %</i>		<i>64%</i>	<i>17%</i>	<i>41%</i>
Disapprove	19%		28%	10%	16%
Strongly disapprove	23%		36%	7%	25%
Don't know	12%		15%	8%	17%

Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the job the state legislature is doing today? Is that strongly?

Response	All responses		Dem	Rep	Other
Strongly approve	5%		4%	6%	4%
Approve	25%		27%	21%	31%
<i>Total approve</i>	<i>30%</i>		<i>31%</i>	<i>27%</i>	<i>35%</i>
<i>Total Disapprove</i>	<i>47%</i>		<i>45%</i>	<i>51%</i>	<i>40%</i>
Disapprove	26%		28%	26%	19%
Strongly disapprove	21%		17%	25%	21%
Don't know	23%		24%	22%	26%

From a list of often-mentioned criticisms of the legislature, voters were most concerned about "Legislators never pass a budget on time" (45% Very Concerned) and "Legislators listen more to special interests than to the wishes of their constituents" (44%). Trailing slightly were "Legislators draw their election district lines so that they are safe from any challenges in elections" (36%) and " Legislators spend too much time fundraising" (30%).

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Question: Many criticisms are made of the State Legislature today. On a 1-5 scale, where 5 means it concerns you A LOT and 1 means it concerns you NOT AT ALL, please rate the following criticism of Legislators:

Question: Legislators listen more to special interests than to the wishes of their constituents

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
5 Concerned a lot	44 %	43 %	45 %	42 %
4	23 %	25 %	21 %	24 %
<i>Total concerned</i>	<i>67 %</i>	<i>68 %</i>	<i>66 %</i>	<i>66 %</i>
<i>Total not concerned</i>	<i>10 %</i>	<i>10 %</i>	<i>11 %</i>	<i>24 %</i>
2	5 %	5 %	5 %	9 %
1 Not at all concerned	5 %	5 %	6 %	5 %
"3" or Don't know	23 %	22 %	23 %	21 %

Question: Legislators draw their election district lines so that they are safe from any challenges in elections

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
5 Concerned a lot	36 %	31 %	43 %	32 %
4	18 %	20 %	15 %	16 %
<i>Total concerned</i>	<i>44 %</i>	<i>51 %</i>	<i>58 %</i>	<i>48 %</i>
<i>Total not concerned</i>	<i>17 %</i>	<i>17 %</i>	<i>16 %</i>	<i>22 %</i>
2	8 %	7 %	9 %	11 %
1 Not at all concerned	9 %	10 %	7 %	11 %
"3" or Don't know	30 %	31 %	27 %	31 %

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Question: Legislators spend too much time fundraising

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
5 Concerned a lot	30 %	31 %	29 %	30 %
4	20 %	21 %	20 %	14 %
<i>Total concerned</i>	<i>50 %</i>	<i>52 %</i>	<i>49 %</i>	<i>44 %</i>
<i>Total not concerned</i>	<i>19 %</i>	<i>18 %</i>	<i>18 %</i>	<i>18 %</i>
2	10 %	10 %	9 %	8 %
1 Not at all concerned	9 %	8 %	9 %	10 %
"3" or Don't know	32 %	29 %	33 %	39 %

Question: Legislators never pass budgets on time

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
5 Concerned a lot	45 %	45 %	47 %	35 %
4	18 %	19 %	17 %	17 %
<i>Total concerned</i>	<i>63 %</i>	<i>64 %</i>	<i>64 %</i>	<i>52 %</i>
<i>Total not concerned</i>	<i>16 %</i>	<i>17 %</i>	<i>14 %</i>	<i>16 %</i>
2	10 %	10 %	8 %	15 %
1 Not at all concerned	6 %	7 %	6 %	1 %
"3" or Don't know	23 %	19 %	22 %	33 %

Redistricting - General

An overwhelming majority of likely voters (73 %), and overwhelming majorities within each party (71, 76, and 70 percent), agree that redistricting is a conflict of interest for the legislature, and voters of all parties support giving the power to an independent redistricting commission.

But this is not a primary issue for all voters: only two-thirds of likely California voters claim awareness of the term gerrymandering and its definition. Among those aware voters, however, support for redistricting reform is even higher than among all likely voters.

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Question: Some people say it is a conflict of interest for legislators to draw their own election districts. Do you agree or disagree with that idea? Is that strongly?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Strongly agree	48 %	46 %	53 %	41 %
Agree	25 %	25 %	23 %	29 %
<i>Total agree</i>	<i>73 %</i>	<i>71 %</i>	<i>76 %</i>	<i>70 %</i>
<i>Total disagree</i>	<i>21 %</i>	<i>23 %</i>	<i>18 %</i>	<i>24 %</i>
Disagree	13 %	14 %	12 %	16 %
Strongly disagree	8 %	9 %	6 %	8 %
Don't know	6 %	6 %	6 %	7 %

Question: After each census, the state legislature redraws the boundary lines for California's districts, which are then used to elect our representatives to Congress, the State Senate, and the State Assembly. This process is called redistricting. Have you heard or read the term gerrymandering, which is when redistricting is abused either to benefit one political party over the other or to benefit incumbents by making their districts safe from challengers?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Yes	68 %	65 %	73 %	59 %
No	31 %	32 %	26 %	41 %
Don't Know	2 %	2 %	1 %	0 %

Likely voters in all parties also overwhelmingly agree that redistricting by an independent commission is preferable to redistricting by the state legislature.

Question: In general, do you think it is better for California's election districts to be drawn by state legislators or by an independent commission?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Independent Commission	69 %	70 %	70 %	61 %
Legislature	16 %	19 %	13 %	17 %
Don't Know or "Depends on who is on the Commission"	15 %	11 %	17 %	22 %

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Redistricting – Specific Reform Options

Redistricting by a "bipartisan panel of retired judges" is preferred by voters of all parties by more than two-to-one over redistricting by the state legislature.

Question: In the 1990s and 1970s, California's state government deadlocked and the courts had retired judges to draw our election districts. The districts we have today were drawn by state legislators in 2001. When it is time to draw election districts again, which would you prefer draw the lines: state legislators, or a bipartisan panel of retired judges?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Judges	64 %	65 %	64 %	59 %
Legislature	23 %	25 %	20 %	24 %
Don't Know	13 %	10 %	16 %	17 %

Many incumbents say that safe districts are important if California is to build influence in Washington and bring home more federal dollars. But likely voters think it is more important to have districts that do not divide cities and communities:

Question: Which of the following do you think is more important: Election districts be compact and keep cities and communities from being divided; or California's Members of Congress have safe seats so they can build seniority and influence in Washington, which could result in more federal funds for California?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Unified communities	50 %	45 %	54 %	50 %
Build influence	36 %	40 %	33 %	35 %
Don't Know	14 %	14 %	13 %	16 %

Another issue of contention is the date of implementation: would new districts be drawn mid-decade, or would California wait until 2011 to implement reforms? Likely voters of all parties appear to be more concerned with fixing a system that maintained party control in all 153 districts up for election in 2004 than concerned about comparisons to the Republican power grab in Texas last year.

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Question: Some reform proposals would redraw election districts before the 2006 elections. Others would wait to take effect until the next scheduled redistricting in 2011. Would you prefer that redistricting reform take effect in 2006 or 2011?

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
2006 (or 2008 if offered)	59 %	54 %	65 %	58 %
2011	31 %	37 %	24 %	27 %
Don't Know	10 %	8 %	11 %	15 %

In fact, when asked directly, likely voters overall reject the "power grab" assertion, though Democratic voters agree with it. This is the only redistricting question where a split between the voters appears.

Question: Governor Schwarzenegger is currently promoting a redistricting reform proposal that would take effect in 2006 and create a panel of retired judges to draw election districts. Which of the following statements is closer to your view: The Governor's proposal is an honest effort to reform and improve California government; or The Governor's proposal is a Republican power grab.

Response	All responses	Dem	Rep	Other
Honest reform	56 %	34 %	80 %	55 %
Power grab	34 %	56 %	10 %	32 %
Don't Know	11 %	10 %	10 %	13 %