

## **One Year Later: Sacramento Residents More Optimistic about the Governor and the Economy Than Other Californians**

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A sizeable majority of residents in the Sacramento region approve of the way Governor Schwarzenegger is handling his job (65%) and feel optimistic about the future economic conditions in the region (60%). This is a complete reversal from public opinion a year ago when only 24% of region residents viewed then-Governor Davis's performance positively and 61% were pessimistic about the region's economic future (Liu 2003). People in the Sacramento region today (60%) are also much more optimistic about their economic future than are today's Californian residents as a whole (43%). Moreover, the Governor is much more popular in the Sacramento region (65%) than California as a whole (55%), even though people are less positive concerning the Governor's handling of public transportation (32%) and public education (45%). The performance of the State Legislature remains unpopular with Sacramento area residents (only 28% approval from Democrats and 33% from Republicans), slightly more so than with the rest of California (36% approval).

These are some of the findings of *The 2004 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*, conducted from February 7 to March 2, 2004, by the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento (CSUS).

### **Strong Support for Governor Schwarzenegger's Overall Job Performance**

A majority of Sacramento region residents approve of the way Governor Schwarzenegger is handling his job. He is much more popular in the Sacramento region than he is in California as a whole. A recent statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California indicated that, in February 2004, 55% of the residents in California approved of the Governor's performance, compared to 65% in the Sacramento region.

Although the governor enjoys widespread support in the Sacramento region, his approval rating varies a great deal along racial, political party, and county lines. White residents (70%) and Republican voters (88%) are much more likely to regard his job performance positively than residents from other racial groups (54%) and Democrats (48%). A majority of residents in El Dorado (78%), Placer (72%), and Sacramento (64%) counties approve of the governor, whereas less than half of the residents in Yolo County (49%) find the governor's leadership exemplary.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling his job as governor of California”**

*Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	Sacramento Region	California
Approve	65%	55%
Disapprove	24	26
Don't know	11	19

*Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups*

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Approve	70%	54%
Disapprove	20	32
Don't know	10	14

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Approve	88%	48%	59%
Disapprove	6	38	29
Don't know	6	14	12

*Comparison between Sacramento Region Counties*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Approve	78%	72%	64%	49%
Disapprove	16	17	25	38
Don't know	6	11	11	13

### **Less Positive Concerning Governor's Handling of Public Transportation and Education**

Although 65% approve of Governor's overall job performance, their evaluation of how the Governor deals with many specific issues surveyed in this study is less positive. Governor Schwarzenegger is rated high for his response to the economy (56%), but not for his handling of public transportation (32%). Over half approve of his handling of taxes (51%) and the budget (51%), while only 45% support his leadership of public education.

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that Arnold Schwarzenegger is handling each of the following issues?”**

Issues	Approve	Disapprove	Don't Know
Economy	56%	26%	18%
Budget	51	33	16
Taxes	51	29	20
Public education	45	30	25
Public transportation	32	20	48

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## Few Sacramento Residents Approve of the State Legislature's Job Performance

Compared to the popular Governor, both Democrats and Republicans in the State Legislature enjoy much less support. Less than a third of area residents think that the Democrats (28%) and the Republicans (33%) in the State Legislature are handling their jobs well.

Contrary to Governor Schwarzenegger, the State Legislature is less popular in the Sacramento region than in California as a whole. A recent statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California indicated that in January 2004, 36% of the residents in California approved of how the State Legislature handles its job, compared to 28% (for Democrats) and 33% (for Republicans) in the Sacramento region.

Residents and voters in the Sacramento region are sharply divided on their opinion of the State Legislature. White residents (60%) and Republican voters (78%) are more likely to disapprove of how Democrats in the State Legislatures are handling their jobs, whereas other racial minorities (54%) and Democrats (70%) are more likely to disapprove of the job performance of Republicans in the State Legislature.

### Overall Job Approval Ratings for the Governor, the Democrats in the State Legislature, and the Republicans in the State Legislature

	Governor (Sacramento)	Democratic Legislature (Sacramento)	Republican Legislature (Sacramento)	State <sup>1</sup> Legislature (California)
Approve	65%	28%	33%	36%
Disapprove	24	57	50	45%
Don't know	11	15	17	19

<sup>1</sup> Source: Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey, January 2004. *Special Surveys on California's Fiscal System*. Question 52. Our question is a little bit different from the PPIC survey question, which asked: "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the job California legislature is doing at this time?"

### "Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the Democrats in the State Legislature are handling their jobs"

#### Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Approve	25%	36%
Disapprove	60	49
Don't know	15	15

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Approve	11%	46%	27%
Disapprove	78	41	55
Don't know	11	13	18

**“Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way that the Republicans  
in the State Legislature are handling their jobs”**

*Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups*

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Approve	34%	30%
Disapprove	49	54
Don't know	17	16

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Approve	55%	17%	21%
Disapprove	33	70%	55
Don't know	12	13	24

## Optimistic about the Future Economic Conditions in the Sacramento Region

The majority of the residents (60%) in the Sacramento region think that we will have good times in the next 12 months, and only 31% believe that we will have bad times. This represents a reversal of opinion from 2003 when only 32% of residents thought that we would have good times in the next 12 months (Liu 2003). Compared to residents in California on the whole (43%, PPIC, February 2004), people in the Sacramento region (60%) are much more optimistic about their economic future.

Whites (62%) and residents in Placer (71%) and El Dorado (64%) counties are more optimistic than other racial groups (52%) or residents of Sacramento (58%) and Yolo (46%) counties. Among registered voters, Republicans (75%) are the most optimistic, compared to Democrats (52%) or other voters (53%).

**“Thinking about economic conditions in the Sacramento region, do you think that, financially, during the next 12 months we will have good times or bad times?”**

### *Comparison between California and the Sacramento Region*

	California <sup>1</sup> (2004)	Sacramento (2004)	Sacramento <sup>2</sup> (2003 )	Sacramento <sup>3</sup> (2002)
Good times	43%	60%	32%	72%
Bad times	44	31	61	18
Don't know	13	9	7	10

<sup>1</sup> Source: Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government, February 2004, Question 3. Our question is a little bit different from the PPIC survey question, which asked: “Turning to the economic conditions in California, do you think that during the next 12 months we will have good times financially or bad times?”

<sup>2</sup> Source: The 2003 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region. July 2003. [www.csus.edu/ssis/](http://www.csus.edu/ssis/).

<sup>3</sup> Source: The 2002 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region. June 2002. [www.csus.edu/ssis/](http://www.csus.edu/ssis/).

### *Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups*

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Good times	62%	52%
Bad times	31	36
Don't know	7	12

### *Comparison between Sacramento Region Counties*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
Good times	64%	71%	58%	46%
Bad times	29	22	34	38
Don't know	7	7	8	16

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Good times	75%	52%	53%
Bad times	18	39	36
Don't know	7	9	11

## **Survey Methods**

The above results are based on our third annual survey, *The 2004 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. This survey is a computer-assisted telephone survey of 1003 randomly selected adult residents age 18 or over in the Sacramento region. For the purpose of this study, the Sacramento region includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this 2004 survey is to assess the opinions of people in the Sacramento region regarding a wide range of local and national issues.

Over 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish, from February 7 to March 2, 2004, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). The sample is representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region and comparable to the 2000 U.S. Census (68% residents in the Census vs. 67% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 16% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 8% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 8% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately  $\pm 3\%$  at the 95% confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento region findings with those from other California regions, the state, and the nation. Data cited regarding the state and other California regions often comes from the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Surveys. Nationwide data often comes from Gallup polls.

The College of Social Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies (SSIS) and the Office of Community Collaboration (OCC) at CSUS sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley, Dean of SSIS is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

This research is directed by Amy Qiaoming Liu, Ph.D., Department of Sociology and Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. Dr. Liu is an expert in public opinion polls, and has conducted over 20 surveys in the past nine years, including:

- 2003 Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- 2002 Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment
- Marshalltown United Way Survey

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## **References**

Liu, Amy Qiaoming. 2003. *The Full Report for the 2002 Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region*. California State University, Sacramento (CSUS). [www.csus.edu/ssis/](http://www.csus.edu/ssis/).

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