

Poll: Sacramento Residents Like Governor Schwarzenegger More than the Rest of the State and the Issues He Handles, Despite Deep Regional and Political Divide

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Residents in the Sacramento region still like the way that Governor Schwarzenegger does his job more than specific issues he has to handle. Nearly half of the public in the Sacramento region (49%) approve of the way that the Governor is handling his job, but they are much less positive about some of the specific issues he has to deal with, particularly public education (59% disapprove), affordable housing (52% disapprove), and the state budget (50% disapprove). This is almost the same as two years ago when approximately two-thirds of Sacramento residents (65%) approved of his job performance as a Governor, but a lower percentage of residents favored how he handled the state budget (51% approve), taxes (51% approve), public education (45% approve), public transportation (32% approve), and affordable housing (22% approve, Liu and Meyer 2004).

Area residents also support Governor Schwarzenegger more than the state as a whole. Compared to other Californians (35%, Baldassare February 2006), a larger percentage of people in the Sacramento region (49%) approve of the way that the Governor is handling his job even though they are pessimistic of how he has addressed affordable housing (22% approve), public education (31% approve), the state budget (37% approve), public transportation (39% approve), and taxes (44% approve). This is consistent with the pattern we observed in 2004 when 65 percent of the public in the Sacramento region were optimistic about his overall job performance whereas only 55 percent of Californians shared this positive view (Baldassare February 2004; Liu and Meyer 2004).

The region's perceptions of the Governor and support for him vary by county of residence, race, income, gender, and age though those differences are less pronounced when we examine only the registered voters. Compared to Democrats (28%) and other voters (41%), Republicans (79%) are more likely to approve of the overall job performance of Arnold Schwarzenegger. Contrary to Democrats, a majority of Republicans like how the Governor deals with taxes (68% Republicans vs. 28% Democrats), the state budget (63% Republicans vs. 21% Democrats), public education (53% Republicans vs. 14% Democrats), public transportation (53% Republicans vs. 30% Democrats), and flood protection (53% Republicans vs. 33% Democrats). Moreover, Republicans are much more likely to vote for Arnold Schwarzenegger in the election this year than Democrats (10%) and other voters (26%).

These are some of the results from *The 2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 4<sup>th</sup> to March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

**Governor Schwarzenegger enjoys more support in Sacramento than in California**

Arnold Schwarzenegger is more popular in the Sacramento region than he is in California as a whole. A statewide survey by the Public Policy Institute of California indicated that in February 2006, 35 percent of the residents in California approved of the way that the Governor was handling his job (Baldassare February 2006), compared to nearly half of Sacramento region residents (49%) who shared similar positive views of his job performance.

Although the Governor enjoys moderate support in the Sacramento region, his approval rating varies a great deal along racial, political party, and county lines. White residents (56%) and Republican voters (79%) are much more likely to regard his job performance positively than residents from other racial groups (30%) and Democrats (28%). A majority of residents in El Dorado (62%) and Placer (59%) counties approve of the way that the Governor handles his job, whereas less than half of the residents in Sacramento (45%) and Yolo (42%) counties find the governor’s leadership exemplary. However, his approval in the region has taken a sharp decline compared to two years ago (49% in 2006 vs. 65% in 2004) just like his approval rating among California residents during the same time (35% in 2006 vs. 55% in 2004, Baldassare 2004 and 2006).

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

*Comparison between 2006 and 2004 in Sacramento and California*

	Sacramento (2006)	California (2006)	Sacramento (2004)	California (2004)
Approve	49%	35%	65%	55%
Disapprove	45	53	24	26
Don’t Know	6	12	11	19

*Comparison among Registered Voters*

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
2006			
Approve	79%	28%	41%
Disapprove	18	66	51
Don’t know	3	6	8
2004			
Approve	88%	48%	59%
Disapprove	6	38	29
Don’t know	6	14	12

*Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region*

	El Dorado	Placer	Sacramento	Yolo
2006				
Approve	62%	59%	45%	42%
Disapprove	34	35	48	54
Don't know	4	6	7	4
2004				
Approve	78%	72%	64%	49%
Disapprove	16	17	25	38
Don't know	6	11	11	13

*Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes*

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less than \$75,000	\$75,000 or more
2006			
Approve	35%	45%	58%
Disapprove	55	50	37
Don't know	10	5	5
2004			
Approve	53%	65%	74%
Disapprove	34	25	16
Don't know	13	10	10

*Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups*

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
2006		
Approve	56%	30%
Disapprove	39	61
Don't know	5	9
2004		
Approve	70%	54%
Disapprove	20	32
Don't know	10	14

*Comparison between Males and Females*

	Males	Females
2006		
Approve	54%	45%
Disapprove	40	48
Don't know	6	7
2004		
Approve	71%	62%
Disapprove	21	25
Don't know	8	13

*Comparison among People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
2006			
Approve	40%	52%	54%
Disapprove	53	42	41
Don't know	7	6	5
2004			
Approve	63%	66%	67%
Disapprove	29	22	22
Don't know	8	12	11

**Governor Schwarzenegger is more popular than the specific issues he addresses**

Although nearly half of the area residents (49 percent) approve of the Governor's overall job performance, their evaluation of how he deals with specific issues surveyed in this study is less positive. Fifty-nine percent disapprove of how he handles public education (59%), and over half dislike how he deals with affordable housing (52%) and the state budget (50%).

When compared to 2004, the disapproval rate of how the Governor deals with specific issues has increased. For example, in 2004, 51 percent of people in the Sacramento region approved of the governor's handling of the state budget. The reversal occurs in 2006 when 50 percent disapprove of how the Governor deals with this issue. This trend holds true for public education (30% disapproved in 2004 vs. 59% disapprove in 2006), state budget (33% disapproved in 2004 vs. 50% disapprove in 2006), taxes (29% disapproved in 2004 vs. 41% disapprove in 2006), and public transportation (20% disapproved in 2004 vs. 35% disapprove in 2006). The one exception to this increasing disapproval trend is affordable housing: as in 2004, the majority of the residents in the region dislike how he deals with affordable housing (53% disapproved in 2004 vs. 52% disapprove in 2006).

The Governor declared a state of emergency for the levees in the Central Valley on Feb. 24, 2006. Since then, the approval rating for how he is dealing with flood control has increased. Before Feb. 24, 37 percent approved the way he was handling flood control, 36 percent held the opposite view, and 27 percent stated they didn't know. Since Feb. 24, a majority of the residents (53%) approve of what he is doing to protect California from floods, and only 15 percent have no idea about his performance in this area.

**“Now I am going to read you a list of issues  
Governor Schwarzenegger has to deal with.”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
Affordable housing	2006	22%	52%	26%
	2004	22	53	25
Public education	2006	31	59	10
	2004	45	30	35
The state budget	2006	37	50	13
	2004	51	33	16
Public transportation	2006	39	35	26
	2004	32	20	48
Taxes	2006	44	41	15
	2004	51	29	20
Flood protection	2006	39	36	25
	2004	n/a	n/a	n/a
Overall job performance	2006	49	45	6
	2004	65	24	11

**“Now I am going to read you a list of issues Governor Schwarzenegger has to deal with. Please tell me whether you approve or disapprove of the way he is handling each one. Flood control?”**

*Comparison before and after the Governor's Declaration of the State Emergency*

	Before Declaration (Before Feb. 24)	After Declaration (After Feb. 24)
Approve	37%	53%
Disapprove	36	32
Don't know	27	15

## Deep political divide over Governor's job performances

Registered voters in the Sacramento region view Arnold Schwarzenegger's job performances quite differently. An overwhelming majority of Republicans (79%) approve of the Governor's overall job performance, whereas two-thirds (66%) of Democrats hold the opposite view. Moreover, a majority of Republicans think the Governor handles taxes (68% approve), the state budget (63% approve), and public education (53% approve) very well. In sharp contrast, a majority of Democrats are pessimistic of how he has addressed these important state issues (59% disapprove of taxes, 68% disapprove of state budget, and 77% disapprove of public education).

### **“Now I am going to read you a list of issues Governor Schwarzenegger has to deal with.”**

		Approve	Disapprove	Don't know
Overall job performance	Republicans	79%	18%	3%
	Democrats	28	66	6
	Other voters	41	51	8
Taxes	Republicans	68	20	12
	Democrats	28	59	13
	Other voters	43	41	16
The state budget	Republicans	63	28	35
	Democrats	21	68	11
	Other voters	35	54	11
Public education	Republicans	53	37	10
	Democrats	14	77	9
	Other voters	26	69	5
Public transportation	Republicans	53	22	25
	Democrats	30	47	23
	Other voters	34	36	30
Flood protection	Republicans	53	22	25
	Democrats	33	45	21
	Other voters	34	40	26
Affordable housing	Republicans	35	34	31
	Democrats	14	66	20
	Other voters	20	54	26

## Split over the reelection of Governor Schwarzenegger

There is a huge disparity among registered voters regarding the reelection of Governor Schwarzenegger. A majority of Republicans (67%) would vote to reelect Governor Schwarzenegger, but he does not fair so well when it comes to Democrats (10%) or other registered voters (26%). Over half of the registered Democratic voters (54%) would vote for the democratic nominee and nearly half of the other voters (45%) would choose to vote for any other nominee.

His chance of being reelected also differs a great deal along race, gender, age, income, and county lines. Residents from El Dorado (45%) and Placer counties (46%), residents whose family is making \$75,000 or more a year (42%), those residents who are 65 or older, white residents (39%), and males (38%) are much more likely to reelect the Governor than vote for a Democratic or other nominee. On the other hand, a higher percentage of people from Sacramento County (31%), residents whose family is making less than \$30,000 a year (35%), other racial groups (36%), or those residents age 40 or younger (37%) would vote for any other nominee rather than either the Democratic nominee or Governor Schwarzenegger.

### If an election for Governor of California were held today, would you vote for Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Democratic nominee?"

#### Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Arnold	67%	10%	26%
Democratic nominee	4	54	14
Any other nominee	18	23	45
Don't know	11	13	15

#### Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	Sacramento Region	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Arnold	33%	45%	46%	28%	30%
Democratic nominee	26	17	19	27	35
Any other nominee	28	26	23	31	20
Don't know	13	12	12	14	15

#### Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$30,000	\$30,000 to Less than \$75,000	\$75,000 or more
Arnold	21%	30%	42%
Democratic nominee	29	27	25
Any other nominee	35	29	23
Don't know	15	14	10

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*Comparison among People of Different Ages*

	40 or Younger	41 to 64	65 and Older
Arnold	25%	35%	41%
Democratic nominee	25	25	29
Any other nominee	37	26	16
Don't know	13	14	14

*Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups*

	Whites	Other Racial Groups
Arnold	39%	17%
Democratic nominee	23	33
Any other nominee	25	36
Don't know	13	14

*Comparison between Males and Females*

	Males	Females
Arnold	38%	30%
Democratic nominee	21	29
Any other nominee	28	27
Don't know	13	14

## Survey methods

The above results are based on our fifth annual survey, *The 2006 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*<sup>1</sup>. This study is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1122 adult residents age 18 and older from randomly selected households in the Sacramento region, which includes Sacramento, Yolo, Placer, and El Dorado counties. The objective of this project is to assess quality of life and public opinion regarding a wide range of important local and national issues in the Sacramento region.

More than 30 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 4 to March 5, 2006, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. 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. 65.4% in the sample in Sacramento County, 14% in the Census vs. 16.3% in the sample in Placer County, 9% in the Census vs. 8.2% in the sample in Yolo County; and 9% in the Census vs. 10.1% in the sample in El Dorado County). The margin of error for the survey is approximately  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for group comparisons in the Sacramento region would be higher than  $\pm 3$  percentage points at the 95 percent 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), Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, the Office of Community Collaboration at California State University (CSU), Sacramento, and CSU, Office of Community Service Learning sponsored this project. Dr. Joseph Sheley is actively involved in this project and has made great contributions.

This research is directed by Amy Q. 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:

- 2005, 2004, 2003, and 2002 Annual Surveys 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

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<sup>1</sup> This study was called Annual Survey of Public Opinion and Life Quality in the Sacramento Region.

## Reference

Baldassare, Mark. February 2006. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and the Environment*. San Francisco, CA.

Baldassare, Mark. February 2004. *Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) Statewide Survey: Californians and Their Government*. San Francisco, CA.

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## **Appendix I: The 2006 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors**

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