

Poll: Majority of Sacramento Residents Oppose Military Action against Iran and Long-term Military Presence in Iraq and Afghanistan

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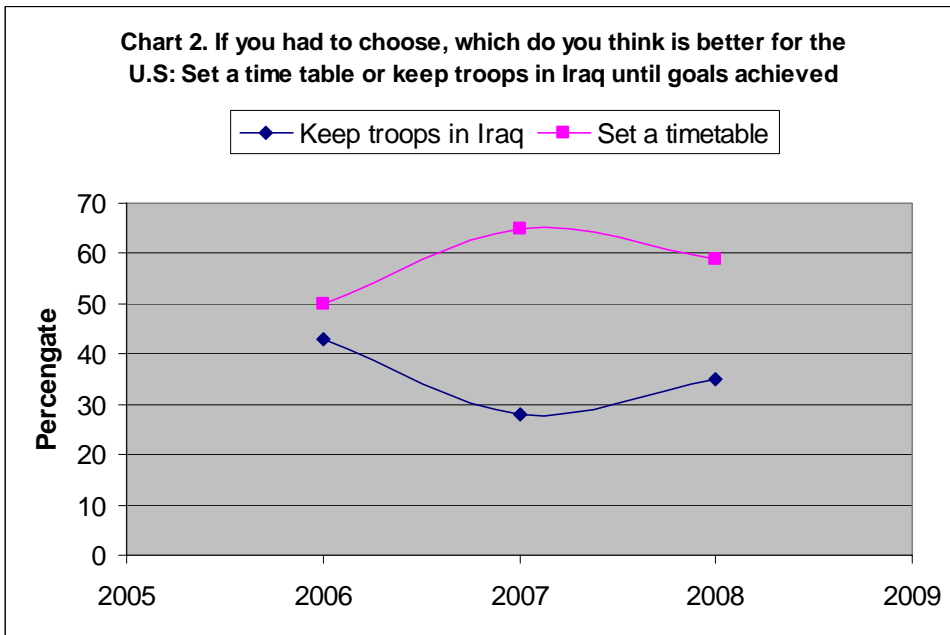
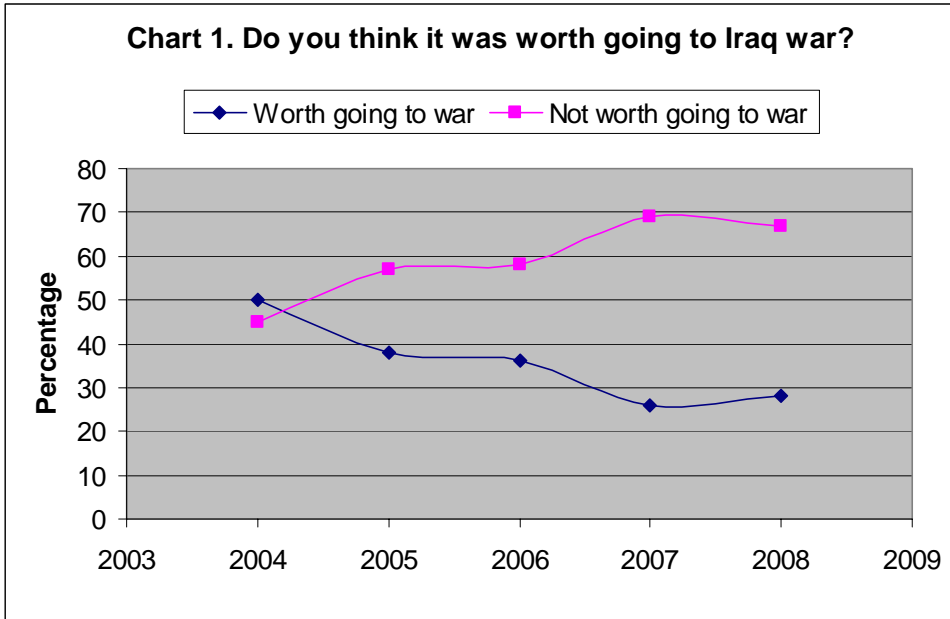
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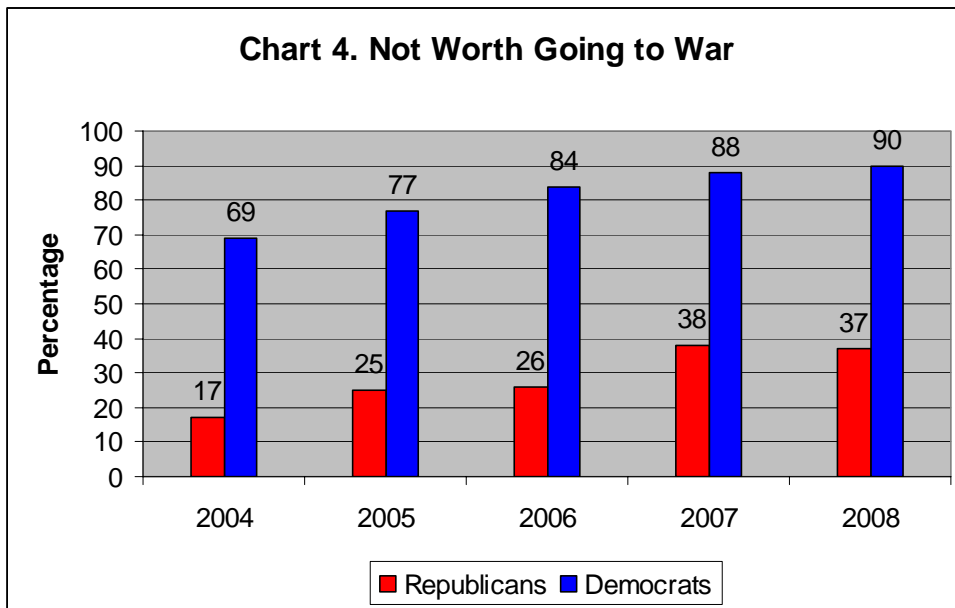
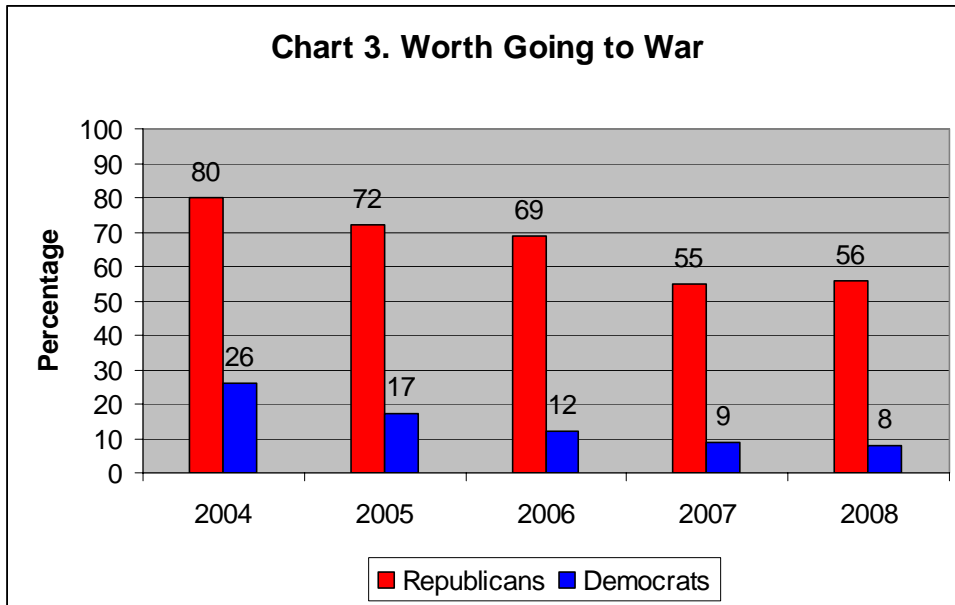
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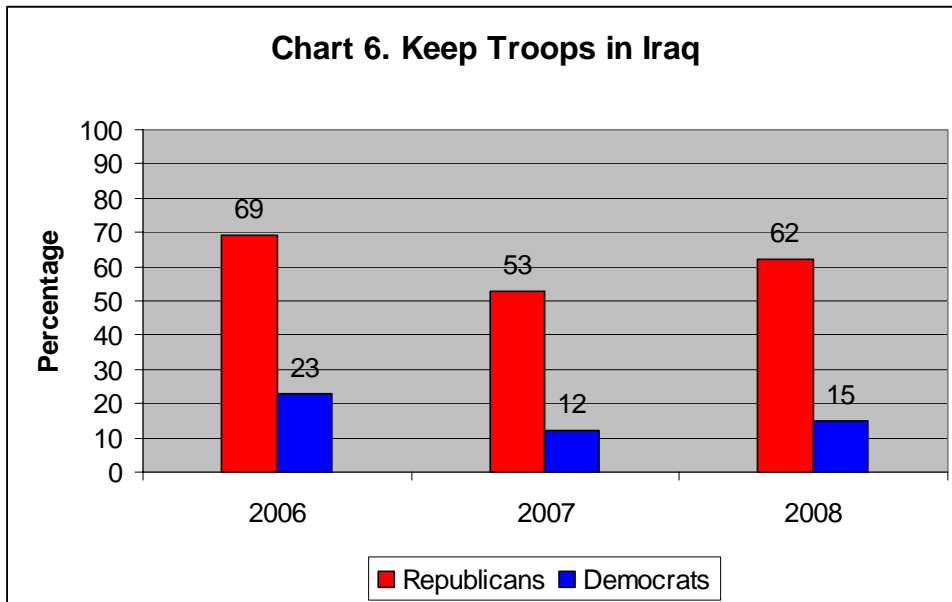
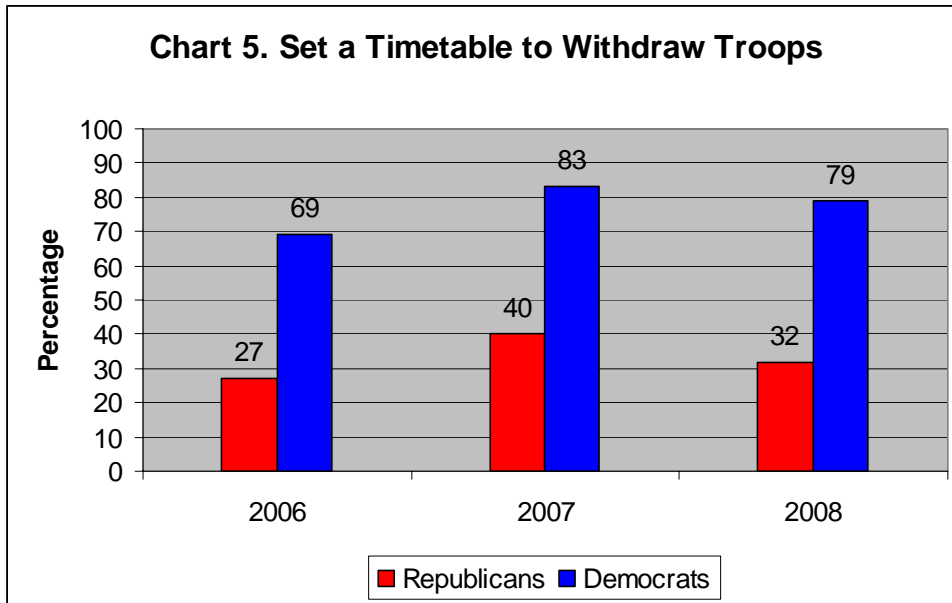
In response to the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, the United States entered into war with Afghanistan on October 7, 2001. By the end of December, U.S. troops had removed the Taliban from power and limited al-Qaeda's ability to operate inside Afghanistan's borders. However, the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces have persisted and regained strength over the past few years. More than six years have passed, Afghanistan people, along with the U.S. military and its allies, are plagued by increasing violence from the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Even though Americans have strongly supported the Afghanistan War (Gallup Poll 2008), would residents in Sacramento favor a long-term military presence in Afghanistan? Based on *the 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, 38 percent of people in the Sacramento region think we should maintain a long-term military presence in Afghanistan, and 51 percent are opposed to it.

On March 19, 2003, the United States also initiated military action against Iraq. In the ensuing years, an overwhelming majority of residents in the greater Sacramento region have come to oppose the war in Iraq as well. In 2004, 45 percent of area residents indicated that it was not worth going to war. By 2007, this negative sentiment increased to 69 percent, and the majority (65%) also wanted to set a timetable to remove American troops from Iraq—regardless of whether or not U. S. goals were achieved by that time (Liu and Faulkner 2007). With security improvement in Iraq in the past year, 67 percent still believe it wasn't worth going to war in Iraq, and 59 percent hope to set a timetable for troop withdrawal (See Charts 1 and 2 on Page 2).

Republicans and Democrats, however, have expressed divergent views on the war. Fifty-six percent of Republicans believe it was worth going to war, whereas only eight percent of Democrats hold this view (48% difference). Moreover, sixty-two percent of Republicans want to keep the troops in Iraq for as long as it takes for the U.S. to achieve its goals, while only 15 percent of Democrats share this opinion (47% difference). In fact, seventy-nine percent of Democrats want to set a timetable to withdraw American troops regardless of whether U.S. goals are achieved by that time. The Iraq War has become one of the most divisive issues among registered voters in the Sacramento region since the annual survey began in 2002 (See Charts 3 and 4 on Page 3 and Charts 5 and 6 on Page 4).







The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq have lasted longer and cost more money and human lives than originally anticipated. Seemingly tired of war, regional residents (66%) broadly oppose sending troops to Iran to eliminate its ability to produce nuclear weapons. Even the majority of Republicans (56%) oppose such a military action.

What follows are more detailed results for *The 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*, conducted from February 16 to March 2, 2008, by the Institute for Social Research (ISR), California State University, Sacramento.

Little support for long-term military presence in Afghanistan

Only 38 percent of the residents in the Sacramento region think we should maintain a long-term military presence in Afghanistan. Fifty-one percent oppose it, and 11 percent have not yet made up their mind.

Whites (42%), men (44%), and those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more (49%) think we should stay in Afghanistan for an extended length of time compared to people from other racial groups (28%), women (34%), and those with household incomes of less than \$50,000 (31%). In fact, people from other racial groups (62%) are the most likely to oppose a long-term military presence.

Again, the largest division is found among registered voters. Fifty-eight percent of Republicans believe we should remain in Afghanistan while only 30 percent of Democrats and 29 percent of other voters share a similar view. The majority of Democrats (59%) and other voters (59%), however, do not believe we should keep troops there for the long term. On this issue, Republicans and Democrats differ by almost 30 percentage points (58% of Republicans favor staying vs. 30% of Democrats).

“Do you think the U.S. should maintain long-term military presence in Afghanistan?”

Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups

	Sacramento Region	Whites	Other Racial groups
Yes	38%	42%	28%
No	51	46	62
Don't know	11	12	10

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Yes	44%	34%
No	50	51
Don't know	6	15

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or More
Yes	31%	41%	49%
No	55	50	43
Don't know	14	9	8

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Yes	58%	30%	29%
No	33	59	59
Don't know	9	11	12

Overwhelming majority of residents still say it was not worth going to war

Today less than one-third (28%) of the area residents think it was worth engaging in the war with Iraq. Compared to a year ago, support for the war (28% in 2008 vs. 26% in 2007) is holding steady at under 30 percent (Liu and Faulkner 2007). Based on a Washington Post-ABC News poll conducted from February 28 to March 2, 2008, Americans as a whole (34%) are more likely than people from this region (28%) to support the war. Security improvement in Iraq in the past year does not seem to have changed many area residents' opinions about the war.

Opinions on the war in this region vary somewhat by county of residence, race, household income, and gender. Yolo county residents are least supportive of the war in Iraq, with 80 percent stating they believe it was not worth going to war. Most supportive are Placer county citizens, though 59 percent do not favor the war. El Dorado (62%) and Sacramento counties (67%) fall in between. Whites (31%), men (32%), and those with household incomes of \$100,000 or more (34%) show more support for the war than people from other racial groups (21%), women (26%), and those with household incomes of less than \$50,000 (22%).

The largest division, however, is found among registered voters. Fifty-six percent of Republicans still believe it was worth going to war in Iraq, a decline of 24 percentage points since 2004, when 80 percent of Republicans surveyed favored the war. The majority of Democrats (90%), however, believe it was not worth it. This is an increase of 31 points since 2004. Most of the independents and those belonging to other political parties (65%) also stated that it was not worth going to war.

“All in all do you think it was worth going to war in Iraq, or not?”

Comparison among the Sacramento Region in 2008, 2007, 2006, 2005, and 2004

	2008	2007 ¹	2006 ²	2005 ³	2004 ⁴
Worth going to war	28%	26%	36%	38%	50%
Not worth going to war	67	69	58	57	45
Don't know	5	5	6	5	5

¹Source: Liu and Faulkner 2007.

²Source: Liu and Pyara 2006.

³Source: Liu and Hofer 2005.

⁴Source: Liu and Hofer 2004.

Comparison among the Sacramento Region and the United States

	Sacramento Region	United States ¹
Worth going to war	28%	34%
Not worth going to war	67	63
Don't know	5	3

¹Source: The Washington Post-ABC News poll was conducted by telephone from February 28 to March 2, 2008. “The Washington Post – ABC News Poll” http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/politics/polls/postpoll_030308.html. Retrieved on March 05, 2008. The poll wording is slightly different from ours: “All in all, considering the costs to the United States versus the benefits to the United States, do you think the war with Iraq was worth fighting, or not? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?”

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Worth going to war	34%	37%	27%	18%
Not worth going to war	62	59	67	80
Don't know	4	4	6	2

Comparison between White and Other Racial Groups

	Non-Hispanic White	All Other Races
Worth going to war	31%	21%
Not worth going to war	64	74
Don't know	5	5

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Worth going to war	32%	26%
Not worth going to war	64	68
Don't know	4	6

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or More
Worth going to war	22%	29%	34%
Not worth going to war	73	67	61
Don't know	5	4	5

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
2008			
Worth going to war	56%	8%	25%
Not worth going to war	37	90	65
Don't know	7	2	10
2007 ¹			
Worth going to war	55%	9%	17%
Not worth going to war	38	88	76
Don't know	7	3	7
2006 ²			
Worth going to war	69%	12%	35%
Not worth going to war	26	84	59
Don't know	5	4	6
2005 ³			
Worth going to war	72%	17%	21%
Not worth going to war	25	77	74
Don't know	3	6	5
2004 ⁴			
Worth going to war	80%	26%	43%
Not worth going to war	17	69	52
Don't know	3	5	5

¹ Source: Liu and Faulkner 2007.

² Source: Liu and Pyara 2006.

³ Source: Liu and Hofer 2005.

⁴ Source: Liu and Hofer 2004.

Majority still wants to set up a timetable to withdraw troops from Iraq

Fifty-nine percent of area residents want to set a timetable for removing the troops from Iraq whether or not American goals there are met, 35 percent want to keep the troops there, and six percent don't know or haven't formed an opinion yet. Although this (59%) represents a six-percent drop (65%) over 2007 (Liu and Faulkner 2007), it is a nine percent increase (50%) over 2006. This is quite different from two years ago when the region was divided on the best course of action with respect to the American troops in Iraq: half of residents in the region (50%) favored the establishment of a timetable, 43 percent wanted to keep the troops there, and seven percent didn't know.

Endorsement for setting a timetable varies across the four counties in the Sacramento region. Residents from Sacramento (62%), El Dorado (58%), and Yolo (57%) counties are more likely than people from Placer County (51%) to believe that we should set a timetable. Opinions about getting the troops out in a timely fashion also differ across racial, gender, and income categories. Non-white residents (70%), lower income households (65%), and women (64%) favor this more than white residents (55%), higher income households (54%), and men (52%).

However, regardless of county (38% for El Dorado, 41% for Placer, and 33% for Sacramento and Yolo), race (39% for whites and 23% for people from other racial groups), household income (28% for those households making less than \$30,000 a year, 36% for those making \$50,000 to \$99,999, and 41% for those making \$100,000 or more), and gender (43% for men and 29% for women), no more than 43 percent want to keep the troops in Iraq for as long as it takes to achieve U.S. goals. Only the majority of registered Republicans (62%) believe we should keep the troops there. Democrats (79%) and other voters (56%) favor setting a timetable.

Compared to a year ago, Democrats maintain almost the same position (12% in 2007 vs. 15% in 2008 wanting to keep troops there), while about 10 percent of Republicans (53% in 2007 vs. 62% in 2008) and other voters (25% in 2007 vs. 35% in 2008) have changed their minds; now they want to keep the troops there for as long as it takes instead of setting a timetable.

“If you had to choose, which do you think is better for the U.S.: to set a timetable for removing troops from Iraq and remove them regardless of whether the U.S. goals are achieved by that time, (or) to keep a significant number of troops in Iraq until the U.S. achieves its goals there, regardless of how long that takes?”

Comparison among 2008, 2007 and 2006

	2008	2007 ¹	2006 ²
Set a timetable	59%	65%	50%
Keep troops in Iraq	35	28	43
Don't know	6	7	7

¹ Source: Liu and Faulkner 2007.

² Source: Liu and Pyara 2006.

Comparison among the Four Counties in the Sacramento Region

	El Dorado County	Placer County	Sacramento County	Yolo County
Set a timetable	58%	51%	62%	57%
Keep troops in Iraq	38	41	33	33
Don't know	4	8	5	10

Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups

	Whites	Other Racial groups
Set a timetable	55%	70%
Keep troops in Iraq	39	23
Don't know	6	7

Comparison among People with Different Household Incomes

	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 or More
Set a timetable	65%	59%	54%
Keep troops in Iraq	28	36	41
Don't know	7	5	5

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Set a timetable	52%	64%
Keep troops in Iraq	43	29
Don't know	5	7

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
2008			
Set a timetable	32%	79%	56%
Keep troops in Iraq	62	15	35
Don't know	6	6	9
2007 ¹			
Set a timetable	40%	83%	67%
Keep troops in Iraq	53	12	25
Don't know	7	5	8
2006 ²			
Set a timetable	27%	69%	49%
Keep troops in Iraq	69	23	44
Don't know	4	8	7

¹ Source: Liu and Faulkner 2007.

² Source: Liu and Pyara 2006.

Two-thirds oppose sending troops to Iran

Sixty-six percent of residents in the Sacramento region believe U.S. troops should not be sent to Iran to eliminate its ability to produce nuclear weapons, 24 percent support sending troops, and 11 percent don't know. Resistance to an Iran War is broad - more than 60 percent of whites (67%), 61 percent of people from other racial groups, 65 percent of men, 66 percent of women, 62 percent of those with some college, and 77 percent of residents with college degrees are against combat in Iran. Even the majority of Republicans (56%) oppose military action in Iran.

“Do you think the U.S. should send troops to Iran to eliminate its ability to produce unclear weapons?”

Comparison between Whites and Other Racial Groups

	Sacramento Region	Whites	Other Racial groups
Yes	24%	23%	31%
No	66	67	61
Don't know	10	10	8

Comparison between Men and Women

	Male	Female
Yes	27%	23%
No	65	66
Don't know	8	11

Comparison among People with Different Education

	High School or Less	Some College	College Degree
Yes	39%	27%	15%
No	50	62	77
Don't know	11	11	8

Comparison among Registered Voters

	Republicans	Democrats	Other Voters
Yes	32%	15%	27%
No	56	77	63
Don't know	12	8	10

Survey methods

The above results are based on part of our seventh annual survey, *The 2008 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region*. This project is a computer-assisted telephone interview of 1,200 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 the perception of the quality of life and public opinion in the Sacramento region on a wide range of important local and national issues.

More than 40 students conducted phone interviews in English and Spanish from February 16 to March 2, 2008, at the Institute for Social Research, California State University, Sacramento. The sample is quite representative of the four counties in the Sacramento region when compared with the 2000 U.S. Census (9% in the Census vs. 10% in the sample in Yolo County; 9% in the Census vs. 9% in the sample in El Dorado County, 14% in the Census vs. 16% in the sample in Placer County, and 68% residents in the Census vs. 65% in the sample in Sacramento County). The small differences may reflect the changes in the population of the region. The margin of error for the survey in the region is approximately ± 3 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level. The error for the survey of the City of Sacramento is ± 5 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence level.

This survey has compared the Sacramento regional findings with those from other California regions, as well as those from 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), the Department of Sociology, the Office of Public Affairs, and the Community Engagement Center at California State University, Sacramento, sponsored this project.

This research is directed by Amy 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 ten years, including:

- 2002, 2003, 2004, 2006, and 2007 Sacramento State Annual Survey of the Region
- Survey of Iowa Business about Eldercare and Eldercare Needs
- Story County Conservation Board Survey
- Grundy County Youth Needs Assessment

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Appendix I: The 2008 Annual Survey Research Team Members and Sponsors

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