

# THE CALIFORNIA POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL STATEWIDE SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION  
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PAY-TV AMENDMENT NOW TRAILS BY  
SLIGHT MARGIN BUT "UNDECIDEDS"  
COULD SWING BALANCE EITHER WAY

by Mervin D. Field

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Proposition 15, the constitutional amendment to ban pay-TV, continues to divide the voting public of the state, and, although the "No" voters now muster a slight plurality, enough people are still undecided to swing the balance either way.

A measurement of public opinion on this issue was made by the California Poll earlier this month. The title of the amendment as it will appear on the November ballot was shown to a representative sampling of eligible voters throughout the state. Each person was asked to say whether he, or she, would vote "Yes" or "No" on the measure if the election were being held today.

The replies in this most recent survey are shown alongside those from a similar survey conducted last May:

On Proposition 15 would vote:	<u>September</u>	<u>May</u>
Yes	37%	41%
No	45	42
Undecided	18	17

Since the first survey taken in May, a pay-TV system operated by Subscription TV has begun operations and is now serving 6,000 homes in Los Angeles and San Francisco. The announced intentions of this company are to expand the system beyond present service areas if and when the problems posed by the proposed amendment can be overcome.

(MORE)

The California Poll was founded in 1946 as a medium for promoting public opinion research. The California Poll is completely independent of all political parties and candidates. Its sole purpose is to report public opinion accurately and objectively. Most of the financial support for the Poll comes from newspapers and television stations that have exclusive rights within the city of publication. The Poll utilizes accepted scientific sampling and questioning procedures in obtaining the data reported in its releases. Representative samples of adults are interviewed at periodic intervals on election issues and other socially important questions of the day. Proportionate numbers of people of both sexes, from all parts of the state, from different sized communities, and of all age, economic, political, and occupation groups are included in the samples. Major surveys are made with samples of 1,200 or more respondents. Interim surveys sometimes are made with smaller samples but not less than 600 interviews.

Arguments have boiled down on the one hand, to the question of whether the present system of "free" television with advertiser-sponsored programs is in jeopardy, and on the other hand to the question of whether it is proper to restrict the freedom of choice of viewers to purchase pay-TV programs if they wish to.

The campaign in favor of the amendment is supported largely by theater owners and television networks who believe they stand to lose if pay-TV becomes successful. Attempting to defeat the measure are the people who have invested millions of dollars in developing the pay-TV system to the state where it can now be presented to the public.

The California public, in the meantime, will be listening and weighing the arguments. Since the coming days will undoubtedly see important developments in both the pro and con campaigns, the California Poll will continue to make soundings of public opinion on this question right up to the last week before the election. Watch for the reports exclusively in the \_\_\_\_\_.