

# THE CALIFORNIA POLL

Library  
Survey Research Center  
University of California  
Berkeley, California

THE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL STATEWIDE SURVEY  
ESTABLISHED AND OPERATED BY FIELD RESEARCH CORPORATION SINCE 1946

**San Francisco** Headquarters  
145 Montgomery Street  
San Francisco 94104  
392-5766

Mervin D. Field, Director  
Robert Heyer, Editor

**Los Angeles** Office  
3142 Wilshire Boulevard  
Los Angeles 90005  
385-5259

**COPYRIGHT 1966 BY FIELD RESEARCH CORPORATION. FOR PUBLICATION BY SUBSCRIBERS ONLY**

Release #540

**PUBLIC OPPOSED TO RUMFORD ACT.  
WANT REPEAL OR MODIFICATION.**

by Mervin D. Field

For release THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1966

**IMPORTANT:** Contract for this service is subject to revocation if publication or broadcast takes place before release time or if contents of report are divulged to persons outside of subscriber staff prior to release time.

Although the so-called "white backlash" was not as prominent a factor in the 1964 presidential campaign as it was expected to be, it seems likely to play an important role in the coming California gubernatorial campaign, according to findings of the latest California Poll.

"White backlash" is a coined term to describe white resistance to the drive of Negroes to obtain more equality in housing, jobs, and other opportunities in society. The effects of the backlash may mean fewer votes for candidates who are active in supporting the Negro civil rights movement.

The greatest area of sensitivity on this issue today in California seems to be the question of open housing opportunities for Negroes. Over the years California Poll surveys have demonstrated that most whites are willing to support, albeit grudgingly in some cases, efforts to equalize opportunities for Negroes in education, jobs, public transportation, and public accommodations. However, they seem to draw the line when it comes to passing laws to make it easier for Negroes to move into the block in which they live, and this is where the battle lines may be drawn in the coming gubernatorial campaign.

## Rumford Act

The California Legislature passed the "Rumford Fair Housing Act" in 1963 without much fanfare. The Rumford bill was designed to open up housing opportunities for Negroes and other minority groups by making it illegal for apartment house owners or real estate brokers to refuse to rent or sell to anyone because of race, color, or religion.

In 1964, this law, and previous legislation of the same type, was all repealed by a statewide referendum (Proposition 14), but the issue has been reactivated this year as a result of the California Supreme Court's ruling that Proposition 14 is unconstitutional. Thus, the Rumford Act is again law until it is repealed or modified by future legislative or voter action.

Ronald Reagan, the Republican gubernatorial candidate, has been reported as strongly opposed to the Rumford Act, while Governor Brown, who was originally in favor of it, has come around to the position of advocating modifications.

(MORE)

At the present time, the California Poll's soundings of public opinion on the Rumford Act show that a majority of the potential voting public is opposed to keeping the law in its present form: 42 percent want it repealed outright, and 26 percent feel it should be modified. Only 29 percent want it kept as is.

Sharp Division

The Rumford Act issue has divided the California public sharply, as can be seen in the differences between Democrats and Republicans, Brown voters vs. Reagan voters, and Negroes vs. whites. For example, while a majority of Republicans advocate repeal of the Rumford Act, two-thirds of the Democrats want it kept at least in modified form. Reagan voters overwhelmingly oppose it, while a large majority of Brown voters favor it. Negroes favor it by a large margin.

"Would you be in favor of keeping the Rumford Act just as it is, repealing it outright, or modifying it somewhat? "

	<u>Keep as is</u>	<u>Modify somewhat</u>	<u>Repeal outright</u>	<u>No answer</u>
Statewide	29%	26	42	3
Southern California	28%	24	45	3
Northern California	31%	29	37	3
Democrats	37%	26	34	3
Republicans	17%	26	54	3
Brown voters	44%	25	27	4
Reagan voters	16%	26	57	1
Undecided voters	28%	32	33	7
Home owners	28%	27	42	3
Renters	31%	24	42	3
White	26%	26	45	3
Negro	78%	15	6	1
Other	26%	36	32	6

People with college educations and those who are under 50 years of age are slightly more in favor of keeping the Rumford Act.