

THE CALIFORNIA POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND IMPARTIAL STATEWIDE SURVEY OF PUBLIC OPINION
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

Library
Survey Research Center
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

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Release #767

For release WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 25, 1972

PUBLIC'S DISPOSITION IS TO VOTE NO
ON PROPOSITION 19, MARIJUANA ISSUE

by Mervin D. Field

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vocation if publication or broadcast takes place before
release date or if contents of report are divulged to
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In a statewide survey completed during the first week in October, the California Poll finds that just one-fourth (26%) of the public had made up its mind on the marijuana issue which will come up for a vote on the November ballot as Proposition 19.

Among this small group of people who had a position on Proposition 19, a majority is opposed to the measure: 60% say they intend to vote "No."

The majority of the public (74%) said that they were unaware of Proposition 19 or that they wanted to wait until they heard more about it before making up their minds.

The California Poll has measured voter opinion on numerous ballot propositions over the years, and there is a general rule it is that public opinion is very unstable, especially during the pre-election period before an issue becomes widely publicized. Most often the public comes to grips with a ballot proposition issue only in the closing days of the campaign, when pro and con publicity about a measure typically reaches its peak. The Poll has found many instances of major attitude shifts, including complete reversals of preference, occurring in the final days before an election.

Shifts most readily occur when the issue being posed by a ballot proposition is not widely known, or when the measure has an ambiguous wording. On the question of liberalizing marijuana laws, however, the issue is widely recognized, and in previous surveys The California Poll has found that the public has definite feelings about this step. For example, surveys in 1969 and again in 1971 indicated that while there was a gradual easing of anxiety about its effects, a majority still were not tolerant of the use of marijuana, and were against liberalizing legalization of it.

(OVER)

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. 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 1,000 or more respondents. Interim surveys sometimes are made with smaller samples of not less than 600 interviews.

Following are the replies to questions that were asked in 1969 and 1971.

	STATEWIDE PUBLIC	
	May 1969	February 1971
Use of marijuana is no more dangerous than use of alcohol --		
AGREE	16%	27%
DISAGREE	75	64
DON'T KNOW	9	9
Marijuana should not be considered in the same class as other so-called dangerous drugs like LSD, amphetamines, "Speed", and heroin --		
AGREE	29%	42%
DISAGREE	63	53
DON'T KNOW	8	5
While marijuana may not be more dangerous than alcohol, its use leads a person to take other more harmful drugs --		
AGREE	83%	71%
DISAGREE	12	23
DON'T KNOW	5	6
Which of these statements best fits what you personally feel should be done about marijuana?		
Legalize marijuana so it could be purchased and used like tobacco	3%	5%
Legalize marijuana with age and other controls, like those of alcohol	10	18
Keep present ban, but make penalties less severe than now	9	18
Strictly enforce present laws and penalties	26	24
Pass new laws with even tougher penalties than now	49	30
Other, don't know	3	5

In its October 1972 survey, The California Poll asked those who had made up their minds on Proposition 19 as well as those who had not, to express a stand on the issue, assuming that they were voting at the time of the survey. Respondents were shown a summary of the ballot proposition provisions.

The table below shows the current opinion toward Proposition 19.

Disposition to vote --	PROPOSITION 19	
	Those aware of the proposition	Those not yet aware
YES	37%	27%
NO	60	62
UNDECIDED	3	11

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767A INFORMATION ABOUT THIS SURVEY

DATES AND TIME OF INTERVIEWING

September 29 - October 7, 1972, late afternoon and evenings, all day Saturday

POPULATION COVERED

California adult public who said they were registered and intended to vote in November election.

SIZE OF SAMPLE

Total interviews:	1275
Democrats	685
Republicans	502
Others	88
Southern California	761
Northern California	514
Men	565
Women	710
18 - 24	207
25 - 34	281
35 - 49	316
50 - 69	352
70 and older	112

THE QUESTIONS ASKED:

"Have you seen or heard anything about any issues which will appear as statewide propositions on the November ballot?"

(IF "YES"): "Which statewide ballot propositions have you seen or heard anything about? Any others?"

(IF PROPOSITION 19 OR MARIJUANA MENTIONED):

"Have you made up your mind as to how you are going to vote on Proposition 19, the marijuana proposition, or do you think you will wait until you hear more about it before making up your mind?"

ASKED OF EVERYONE:

"On this card is a summarization of the 'Marijuana' proposition which will appear on the November ballot. This will give you a general idea of how the proposition will be presented. If you were voting now, would you be inclined to favor or oppose this proposition?"

PROPOSITION 19 - (Marijuana) A proposal to remove criminal penalties for the possession of marijuana by adults. It allows the licensed cultivation of marijuana for personal consumption. Transportation and possession of marijuana for sale would remain criminal offenses.

SURVEY METHOD

Interviews are made face-to-face with respondents in their homes. Sampled homes are drawn in accordance with a probability sample design that gives all areas of the state and all neighborhoods properly proportionate chance to be included. More than 200 sampling points are used. A randomly selected address designates the starting point of a cluster of six to ten interviews. Up to three calls are made on each sampled address. One adult per household is interviewed, selected by a systematic procedure to provide a proper balance by age and sex.

SAMPLING RELIABILITY

The sample is designed to be self-weighted with respect to population factors, i.e., sampling points are selected with probability in proportion to population. Socio-economic and demographic characteristics and political and social opinions are also therefore assumed to be represented proportionately. Standard weighting procedures are used to adjust the final sample to population parameters whenever key variables deviate because of sampling variability or other factors.

The sampling reliability of data from this sample is shown below. These figures represent an estimate of average sampling tolerances at the 95% confidence level; that is, the chances are about 19 out of 20 that if the whole population of the state had been surveyed with the same questionnaire, the results of the complete census would not be found to deviate from the obtained survey findings by more than plus or minus the amount shown below.

<u>Sample size</u>	<u>Plus/minus sampling tolerance (in percentage points)</u>
1300	3.0
1000	3.5
800	3.9
600	4.5
400	5.5
200	7.7
100	11.0
50	16.0

POLL OPERATION AND SPONSORSHIP

The California Poll is owned and operated by Field Research Corporation, an independent national public opinion and marketing research agency with headquarters in San Francisco. The Poll was founded in 1946 and has been published continuously since that time. The Poll is non-partisan.

The cost of operating The California Poll is underwritten by a syndicate of 10 newspapers and three television stations in California. Each one pays an annual fee for exclusive publication or broadcast rights in its area. The Poll does not accept fees from any candidates, political parties, or individuals who have any interest in the data being published.