

USC Annenberg's Institute for Justice and Journalism
Pew Hispanic Center
New California Media
The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute

***The 2003 Multilingual Survey
of California Voters***

September 25, 2003

Summary of Findings

- The California electorate is sharply split along racial and ethnic lines over both the gubernatorial recall and Proposition 54. Latino, African American, Asian American and white voters express distinctly different views of the recall, of Gov. Gray Davis' performance in office, of the candidates seeking to replace him and of the racial classification initiative.
- Hispanics and Asian Americans are closely split on whether Davis should be removed from office, while blacks oppose the recall by a wide margin and a majority of whites favor removing the governor from office. In the contest to replace Davis, should the recall succeed, nearly 60% of Latino voters favor Lt. Gov. Cruz Bustamante, while less than a fifth of black voters support him. Support for Arnold Schwarzenegger varies widely. Asian Americans and whites say Schwarzenegger will get their votes in about equal measures – at about the same level as Bustamante – while support among Latinos and blacks is significantly lower.
- Although substantial numbers of voters are either still undecided or say they are not aware of Proposition 54, Latinos, African Americans and Asian Americans are expressing more support than whites for the initiative, which would amend the California Constitution to prohibit the collection and use of various kinds of information about racial or ethnic identity by the state, local governments and schools.
- Views of race relations also reveal substantial divisions, with Latinos and Asian Americans seeing improvement, but whites and blacks expressing more pessimism. A majority of Latinos and Asian Americans also see prospects for economic improvement, while African Americans are notably less optimistic. Asked whether they need government protection against discrimination, substantial majorities of blacks, Latinos and Asian Americans say they do, though a smaller share of Asian Americans holds this view than Latinos and blacks.
- Significant percentages of Latino (30%) and Asian American voters (39%) say they prefer receiving their news in a language other than English. At least two-thirds of all respondents say they depend on some form of television for news that shapes their voting decisions, with about 15% of Latinos, African Americans and whites and only 8% of Asian Americans saying they rely on newspapers. More than half rate media coverage of the recall and issues important to them good or excellent.

* The terms Hispanic and Latino are used interchangeably in this report and refer to people who have identified themselves as such and who can be of any race. References to whites, blacks (or African Americans) and Asian Americans are to non-Hispanics.

Methodology

This telephone survey of registered voters was conducted Sept. 6 to 16. The great majority of the interviews took place before the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued its initial ruling Sept. 15 on the timing of the election.

The survey was not constructed to illustrate the potential outcome of a statewide vote or to map the preferences of the electorate as a whole. Rather, the sampling design allows for an accurate and in-depth analysis of the views within racial and ethnic groups that typically represent small fractions of the samples in statewide polls of the electorate at large.

The survey is comprised of four separate samples of California's major racial and ethnic groups:

- 600 Hispanics, who were interviewed in Spanish and English (margin of error: +/- 4.1%)
- 504 African Americans, who were interviewed in English (margin of error: +/- 4.5%)
- 254 whites, who were interviewed in English (margin of error: +/- 6.0%)
- 250 Asian Americans, who were interviewed in English, Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese or Korean. (margin of error: +/- 6.3%)

Quotas were established for the Asian sample so that it is representative of the major Asian American ethnic groups in California's electorate. The size of the Asian American sample does not allow for the tabulation of results for individual national or language groups.

Respondents of Japanese, Filipino and Asian Indian heritage were interviewed in English only. All Asian American and Hispanic respondents chose their language of preference for the interview. All survey respondents are registered to vote and have voted in at least one of the last two statewide elections.

The 2003 Multilingual Survey of California Voters was supported by a partnership of four sponsoring organizations:

The *Institute for Justice and Journalism*, created at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication with Ford Foundation funding in 2000. It offers professional fellowships, research and other resources to strengthen news coverage and public understanding of justice and civil rights issues. **Contact: Steve Montiel, director, (213) 743-4997, smontiel@usc.edu.**

The *Pew Hispanic Center*, a nonpartisan research organization based in Washington, D.C. The center is a project of the USC Annenberg School for Communication, with a mission to improve understanding of the diverse Hispanic population in the U.S. and to chronicle Latinos' growing impact on the nation. **Contact: Regina Aragón, (510) 393-9435, on the day of release or Roberto Suro, director, (202) 292-3307, info@pewhispanic.org.**

New California Media, an association of more than 600 ethnic news organizations, launched multilingual polling in 2002 with Bendixen & Associates to give voice to ethnic media audiences. NCM's sponsor for the 2003 Multilingual Survey of California Voters is California Technology Foundation. **Contact: Sandy Close, executive director, (415) 503-4170, sclose@pacificnews.org or Gloria Rubio-Cortes, CTFC, (415) 371-8808.**

The Tomás Rivera Policy Institute, an affiliated research unit of the University of Southern California through the School of Policy, Planning and Development. The Institute, established in 1985, is nationally recognized for its objective policy research on issues affecting the Hispanic community. **Contact: Harry Pachon, president, (213) 821-5615, pachon@usc.edu.**

Field work for the survey and the compilation of results was conducted by Bendixen & Associates, a public opinion research firm based in Miami. **Contact: Sergio Bendixen, president, (305) 529-9916.**

THE RECALL

Majorities of voters in all four samples took a negative view of the recall process, and even among white Republicans a bare majority (52%) took a favorable view. However, among other voters – African Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans – there was a wide range of views on the election, with blacks expressing the most negative views. (Q23) Ratings of Davis’ job performance also revealed a split as blacks gave the sitting governor distinctly more favorable ratings than voters of other groups. (Q22) A similar variety of positions emerged when respondents were asked how they would vote on the recall (Q24).

Whites who intend to vote in favor of the recall hold the strongest views, with only 3% saying they might still change their minds compared with 18% to 20% of other voters in favor of the recall who said they might still change their views. (Q25-A)

Table 1	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q22. How would you rate the job Gray Davis is doing as governor?				
1. Excellent	4%	4%	1%	4%
2. Good	26%	41%	21%	17%
3. Mediocre	40%	36%	27%	44%
4. Poor	27%	16%	48%	33%
5. Don't Know / No Answer	3.0%	2.0%	3.0%	2.0%
Q23. How would you characterize the CA recall election?				
1. It is a good example of the democratic process	28%	12%	39%	33%
2. It is a political circus	64%	83%	51%	53%
3. Don't Know / No Answer	8%	5%	10%	14%
Q24. The question on the ballot in the recall election is: Shall Gray Davis be recalled (removed) from the office of governor? If the election were held today, would you vote yes or no?				
1. Yes	45%	23%	56%	44%
2. No	47%	65%	35%	46%
3. Don't Know / No Answer	8%	11%	9%	10%

THE REPLACEMENT BALLOT

Bustamante’s candidacy to replace Davis, should the recall succeed, produced the sharpest divisions along racial and ethnic lines of any aspect of the recall election. Latinos were more than twice as likely as whites or Asian Americans to say they will vote for Bustamante and more than three times as likely as African Americans. (Q26) Among blacks, who were the most heavily Democratic group in the survey (87%), only 17% said they would vote for Bustamante, the only Democratic officeholder on the replacement ballot. During the survey interviews more than a quarter of black respondents said they would vote for Davis on the replacement ballot, even though his name will not appear on that ballot. Indeed, more blacks volunteered a preference for Davis than said they would vote for Bustamante. A similar split emerged when respondents were asked whether they had a positive or negative attitude toward Bustamante, with 41% of blacks expressing negative views of him while 67% of Latinos expressed positive views. (Q17)

Support for Arnold Schwarzenegger varied widely. Asian Americans and whites said he would get their vote in about equal measures – at about the same level as Bustamante – while support among Latinos and blacks was significantly lower. (Q26)

Table 2	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q26. If the election were held today, for whom would you vote?				
1. Cruz Bustamante	57%	17%	22%	25%
2. Peter Camejo	1%	5%	0.0%	2%
3. Arianna Huffington	1%	4%	1%	4%
4. Tom McClintock	6%	2%	15%	4%
5. Arnold Schwarzenegger	13%	7%	20%	22%
6. Peter Ueberroth	1%	3%	1%	4%
7. Another Candidate	4%	29%	12%	10%
8. Don't Know/No Answer	16%	34%	28%	30%

Table 3	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q17. Rate Cruz Bustamante				
1. Very Positive	37%	10%	15%	8%
2. Somewhat Positive	30%	24%	20%	24%
3. Somewhat Negative	10%	21%	14%	17%
4. Very Negative	11%	20%	35%	6%
5. No Opinion	8%	21%	14%	45%
6. Does Not Recognize	4%	4%	1%	0%
Q20. Rate Arnold Schwarzenegger				
1. Very Positive	10%	6%	15%	16%
2. Somewhat Positive	17%	18%	30%	21%
3. Somewhat Negative	18%	16%	15%	18%
4. Very Negative	40%	39%	21%	22%
5. No Opinion	10%	21%	19%	23%
6. Does Not Recognize	5%	1%	0%	0%

HISPANIC VIEWS

By interviewing a large sample of Hispanics in both English (48% of the sample) and Spanish (52%), the survey was able to explore the range of views within this segment of the electorate. Virtually all (92%) of the respondents who preferred to be interviewed in Spanish are naturalized citizens born abroad, and an identical share of those who preferred English are native-born U.S. citizens. Several additional questions were posed only to Latino respondents to further explore their attitudes.

The survey found that 95% of Latino respondents were aware of the special election, and there was no difference among the English and Spanish speakers. When asked whether they had heard about Proposition 54, however, English speakers were more likely to respond affirmatively (58%) than Spanish speakers (48%).

Substantial differences emerged between English- and Spanish-speaking Latinos on virtually all aspects of the recall and replacement ballots. English speakers were more than twice as likely (40% vs. 16%) as Spanish speakers to say Davis is doing a poor job as governor. On the question of how they would vote on the recall, English speakers were more likely to say they would vote to recall Davis (51% vs. 39%), while 51% of Spanish speakers said they would vote against the recall, compared with 43% of English speakers. Bustamante drew greater support among Spanish speakers (66%) than among English speakers (47%). And more Spanish speakers had negative views of

Schwarzenegger (65%) than did English speakers (52%). In contrast, no substantial differences according to language preferences emerged in Latinos' views of Proposition 54.

Latino voters were asked whether their opinion of Schwarzenegger was influenced by his support of Proposition 187, the 1994 initiative that would have denied social services to undocumented immigrants, and his alliance with former Gov. Pete Wilson, who prominently backed Proposition 187 and who serves as a co-chair of the Schwarzenegger campaign. (Q26-B) Nearly half (49%) said these facts affected their opinion negatively, with Spanish speakers (59%) more likely to state that view than English speakers (37%).

Asked whether they considered it important for California to elect a Latino as governor, 47% of the Latino sample replied that it is very important, 26% that it is somewhat important, and 26% that it is not important at all. (Q26-C) Spanish speakers were almost twice as likely (60% vs. 32%) as English speakers to say it is very important.

Latino ambitions to see one of their own elected governor and their support for Bustamante do not, however, translate directly into a desire to unseat Davis. Among Hispanics who said they would vote for Bustamante, 61% said they would vote against the recall. Indeed, Bustamante supporters were more likely to say they would vote against the recall than the Hispanic voters overall.

Among Spanish speaking respondents, 57% said they preferred Spanish-language media while 31% said they preferred English-language media, indicating substantial bilingualism in this segment of the Latino population. (Q28) Virtually all Latinos interviewed in English said they preferred English-language media.

PROPOSITION 54

Much of the California electorate is still in play on this controversial initiative. A sizeable proportion of respondents in all four samples indicated that they have yet to form firm opinions about Proposition 54, stating either that they were unfamiliar with the initiative or that they were still open to changing their minds even after they had been read the text of the initiative twice and had heard three arguments often cited by supporters of the initiative and three arguments often cited by opponents. (Q15A-B)

White voters expressed the greatest uncertainties. (Q14) Minority group voters voiced more support for the initiative, with Hispanics expressing the widest margin of backing (46% in favor vs. 33% against).

When asked whether arguments pro and con were convincing or not, respondents indicated that the strongest argument in favor of the initiative is that its passage will ensure that race becomes a private matter, such as religion, and that the state will no longer be able to ask about a respondent's race or ethnicity. (Q8) The survey showed that the strongest argument against the initiative is that it would be a meaningless effort to create a colorblind society, because discrimination remains a reality that affects housing, employment and educational opportunities. (Q10) However, the presentation of three arguments on each side of the debate did not produce any significant shifts in the respondents' views on the initiative. (Q14)

Table 4	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q6. Have you heard about Proposition 54?				
1. Yes	53%	65%	65%	48%
2. No	45%	32%	30%	47%
3. DK/NA	2%	3%	5%	5%
Q14. Now that you have more information about Prop. 54. Do you support or oppose Proposition 54?				
1. Support	46%	41%	31%	42%
2. Oppose	33%	33%	25%	40%
3. DK/NA	21%	26%	44%	18%
Q15A. Would you say that you will definitely support Prop. 54, or would you say that you could still change your mind about Prop. 54?				
1. Will definitely support Prop. 54	71%	78%	78%	63%
2. I may still change my mind about Prop. 54	26%	19%	18%	31%
3. DK/NA	3%	3%	4%	6%
Q15B. Would you say that you will definitely oppose Prop. 54, or would you say that you could still change your mind about Prop. 54?				
1. Will definitely oppose Prop. 54	68%	78%	73%	70%
2. I may still change my mind about Prop. 54	30%	19%	25%	24%
3. DK/NA	2%	3%	2%	6%

Black and Latino voters who said that they or someone in their family had experienced discrimination because of their race or ethnicity were somewhat more likely to oppose the initiative. (Q32) And, conversely, those who said they had no experience of discrimination were more likely to support the initiative.

Table 5		
Blacks		
Q32. Experienced discrimination	Support 54	Oppose 54
1. Yes	40	48
2. No	58	48
Hispanics		
Q32. Experienced discrimination	Support 54	Oppose 54
1. Yes	35	46
2. No	64	54

RACE RELATIONS

A series of questions probed respondents' views of race relations and again revealed differences among the sampled groups. Blacks and Latinos were more likely by a significant measure – 86% of blacks and 80% of Latinos – to say they considered racial discrimination to be a very important issue than whites (56%) or Asian Americans (68%). (Q31) Substantial majorities of African Americans, Hispanics and Asian Americans said they believed that members of their groups needed protection against discrimination from the government. (Q33) Much smaller shares of these group samples said they or a family member had ever experienced discrimination (Q32), and, indeed, narrow majorities said they had no personal experience of discrimination.

Table 6	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
31. How important an issue is racial discrimination to you?				
1. Very important	80%	86%	56%	68%
2. Somewhat important	14%	9%	32%	21%
3. Not important at all	4%	4%	8%	7%
4. Don't Know/No Answer	2%	1%	4%	4%
32. During the last few years have you or a family member experienced discrimination because of your racial or ethnic background?				
1. Yes	40%	44%	18%	39%
2. No	59%	52%	78%	57%
3. Don't Know/No Answer	1%	4%	4%	4%
33. Do you think you (Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans—each respondent asked about own group) need government protection against discrimination?				
1. Yes	76%	81%	n/a	69%
2. No	20%	14%	n/a	26%
3. Don't Know /No Answer	4%	5%	n/a	5%

When respondents were asked which group is most discriminated against, responses again broke down along racial and ethnic lines. A third or more of the Latino, white and Asian American samples named blacks as the most discriminated against, and the remaining responses were divided among other groups. Latinos cited their own group by a somewhat higher margin than they cited African Americans (44% vs. 33%). In the black sample, African Americans were the only group identified as a victim of discrimination by a significant number of respondents.

Table 7	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q34 What racial or ethnic group do you think is most discriminated against?				
1. African Americans	33%	77%	39%	38%
2. Latinos	44%	5%	10%	8%
3. Asian Americans	2%	1%	4%	13%
4. Middle Easterners	10%	5%	11%	16%
5. Whites	1%	1%	8%	1%
6. DK/NA	10%	13%	28%	24%

Two questions that probed views of future prospects produced a similar spread of results, with Latinos and Asian Americans generally offering more optimistic views than whites or blacks. (Q35-36)

Table 8	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q35. Do you think that relations among the different ethnic and racial groups in California are improving, worsening or staying about the same?				
1. Improving	44%	24%	34%	44%
2. Worsening	10%	27%	16%	4%
3. Staying the same	42%	44%	41%	42%
4. DK/NA	4%	4%	9%	10%
Q36. Do you think the opportunities for you (Latinos, African Americans, Asian Americans—each respondent asked about own group) to get ahead economically in California are improving, worsening or staying about the same?				
1. Improving	57%	23%	n/a	59%
2. Worsening	9%	29%	n/a	3%
3. Staying the same	32%	45%	n/a	30%
4. DK/NA	3%	4%	n/a	8%

MEDIA

At least two-thirds of all respondents said they depend on some form of television for news that shapes their voting decisions, with about 15% of Latinos, African Americans and whites and only 8% of Asian Americans saying they rely on newspapers. (Q27) More than half rated media coverage of the recall and issues important to them good or excellent. (Q29)

Like Hispanics, a large percentage of Asian Americans said they prefer receiving news in a language other than English. (Q28)

Table 9	Hispanic	Black	White	Asian
Q27. What media do you depend upon the most for news that shapes your voting decisions?				
1. Local television	38%	45%	34%	32%
2. National television	14%	16%	15%	25%
3. Cable television	13%	17%	18%	12%
4. Radio	12%	4%	10%	10%
5. Newspapers	16%	15%	16%	8%
6. Internet	4%	1%	4%	8%
7. DK/NA	4%	3%	3%	5%
Q28. Do you prefer English-language media or (Spanish-language, African American, Asian American) media?				
1. English-language media	61%	83%		59%
2. Spanish-language, African American, Asian American media	30%	11%		39%
3. DK/NA	9%	6%		2%
Q29. Rate the job the media is doing in its coverage of the recall campaign and the issues that are important to you.				
1. Excellent	13%	11%	12%	9%
2. Good	41%	47%	46%	44%
3. Mediocre	36%	27%	30%	30%
4. Poor	8%	12%	11%	9%
5. DK/NA	3%	4%	1%	8%