

A Review of *Field Poll* Trends of California Public Opinion About Same-Sex Marriage Laws and Proposition 8

**Presented at the 2008 PAPOR/Field Workshop Conference
December 12, 2008**

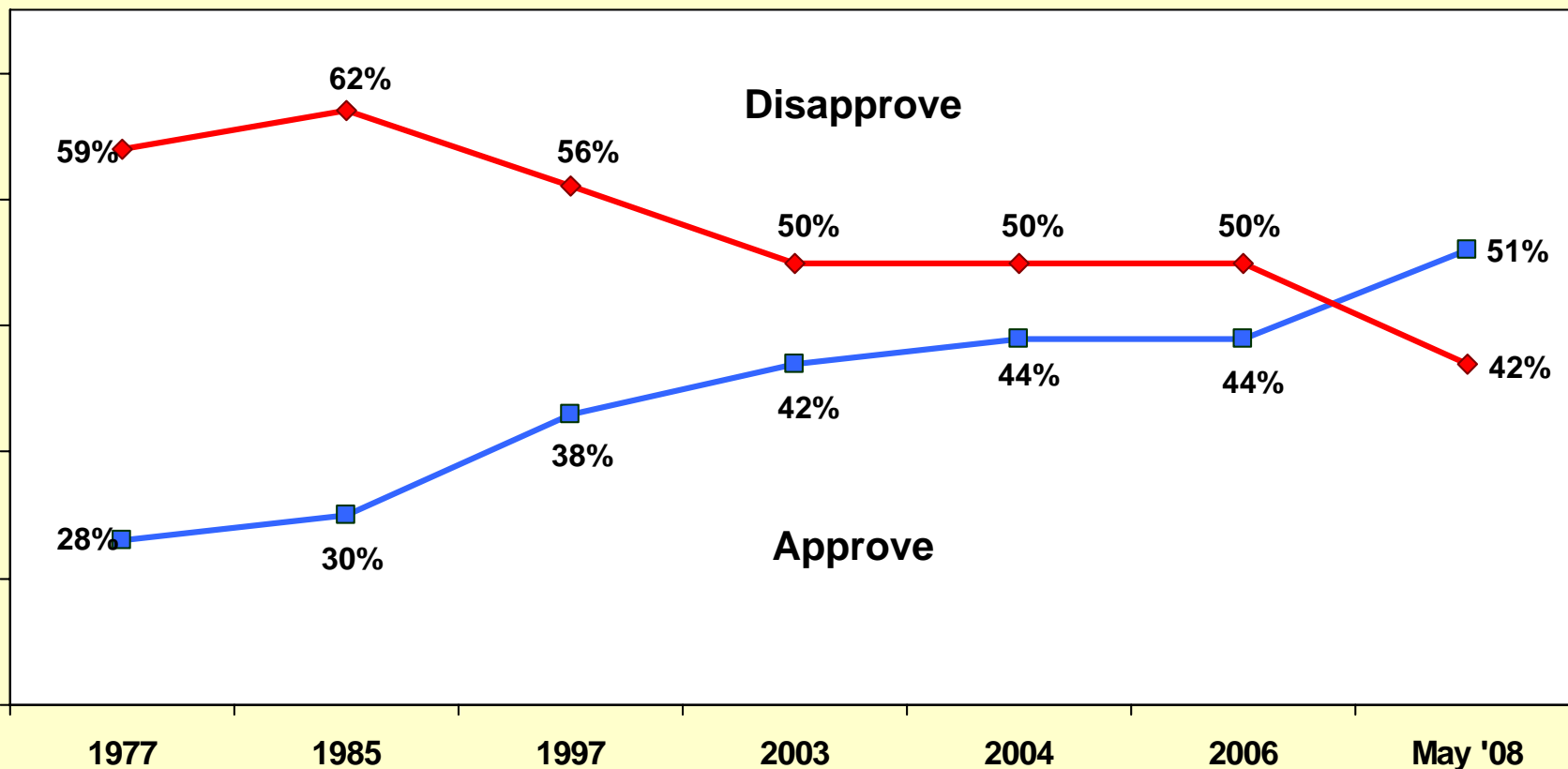
– by –

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Table 1

Trends of California public opinion regarding same-sex marriages

Question: "Do you approve or disapprove of California allowing homosexuals to marry members of their own sex and have regular marriage laws apply to them?"



Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Surveys taken after 1997 conducted among California registered voters.

Table 2a

**Changes in levels of approval for same-sex marriage in California
(1977–2008) – by political party and ideology**

	<u>% approve</u>				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003-06</u>	<u>2008</u>
Statewide	28%	30%	38%	43%	51%
<u>Party</u>					
Democrat	26	34	47	59	65
Republican	28	26	24	23	25
Non-partisan/independent	33	29	41	41	61
<u>Political ideology</u>					
Conservative	23	20	21	15	19
Moderate	24	31	39	44	53
Liberal	38	43	66	76	80

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Surveys taken after 1997 conducted among California registered voters.

Table 2b

**Changes in levels of approval for same-sex marriage in California
(1977–2008) – by age and gender**

	<u>% approve</u>				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003-06</u>	<u>2008</u>
Statewide	28%	30%	38%	43%	51%
<u>Age</u>					
18 - 29	40	36	47	55	68
30 - 39	30	37	39	48	58
40 - 49	16	36	40	44	51
50 - 64	22	27	35	41	47
65 or older	24	20	22	25	36
<u>Gender</u>					
Male	28	27	35	39	48
Female	28	33	40	47	53

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Surveys taken after 1997 conducted among California registered voters.

Table 2c

**Changes in levels of approval for same-sex marriage in California
(1977–2008) – by religion and education**

	<u>% approve</u>				
	<u>1977</u>	<u>1985</u>	<u>1997</u>	<u>2003-06</u>	<u>2008</u>
Statewide	28%	30%	38%	43%	51%
<u>Religion</u>					
Protestant	26	24	29	28	34
Catholic	23	25	29	38	45
Other religions	30	38	50	58	61
No preference	44	46	66	71	81
<u>Education</u>					
High school or less	28	24	28	34	38
Some college	29	33	45	41	50
College graduate	27	43	61	64	57

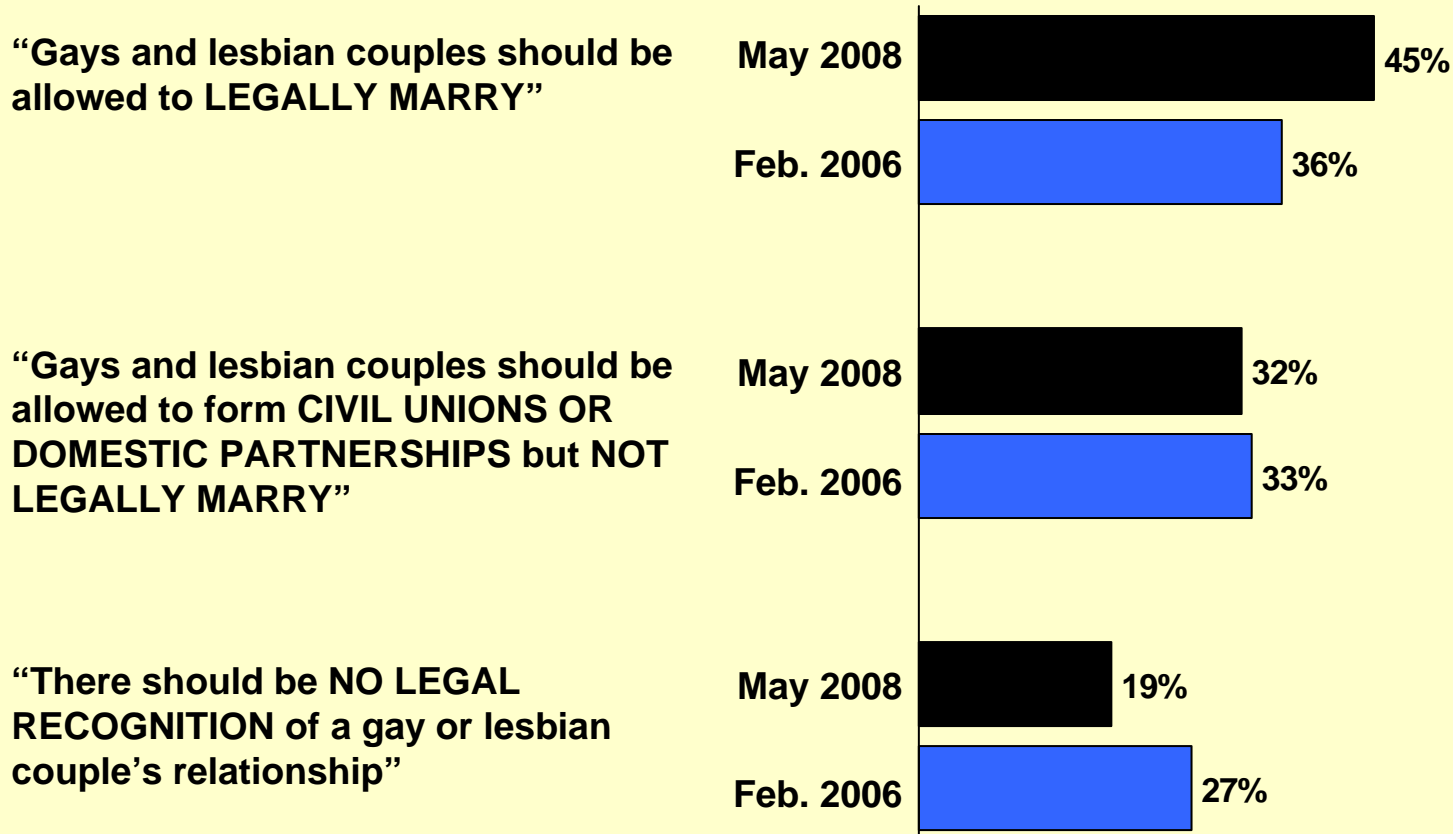
Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Surveys taken after 1997 conducted among California registered voters.

Table 3

Trends of California public opinion regarding same-sex marriages

Question: "Which of the following most closely resembles your own view about state laws regarding the relationships of two people of the same sex?"



Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and sum of each survey's percentages equal proportion with no opinion.

Table 4

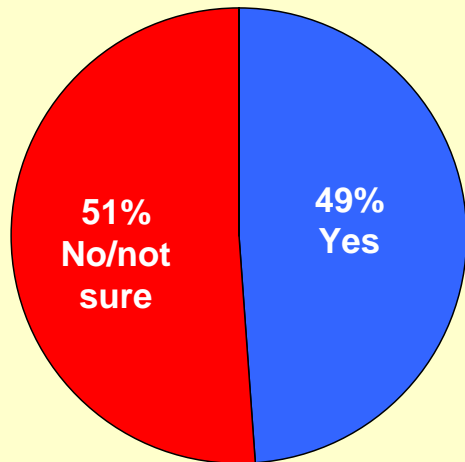
Cross-tabulating voter responses to the two alternative questions asked about same-sex marriage laws in California (May 2008)

<u>Which most closely resembles your opinion about same-sex marriage laws?</u>	<u>Permit homosexuals to marry and have regular marriage laws apply?</u>	
	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>
“Gays and lesbian couples should be allowed to LEGALLY MARRY”	85%	2%
“Gays and lesbian couples should be allowed to form CIVIL UNIONS OR DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIPS but NOT LEGALLY MARRY”	13%	51%
“There should be NO LEGAL RECOGNITION of a gay or lesbian couple’s relationship”	1%	45%

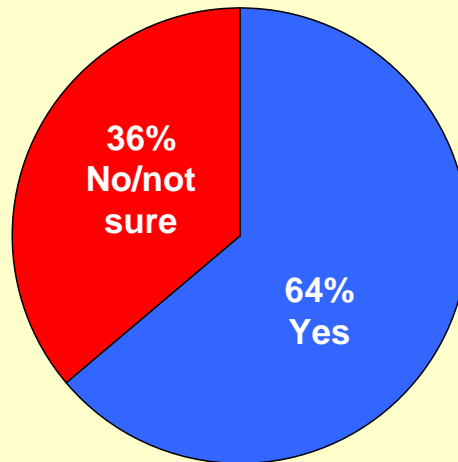
Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and sum of each column’s percentages equal proportion with no opinion.

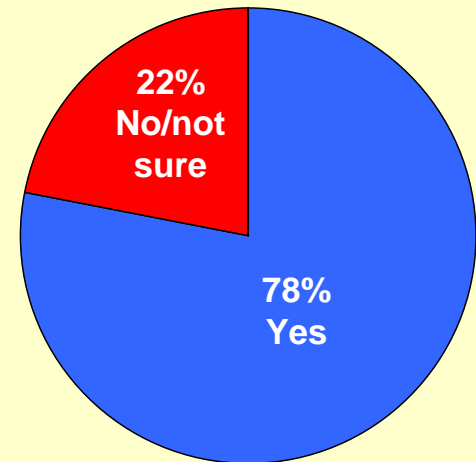
Table 5
Self-reports of Californians saying they personally know someone who is gay or lesbian



1977



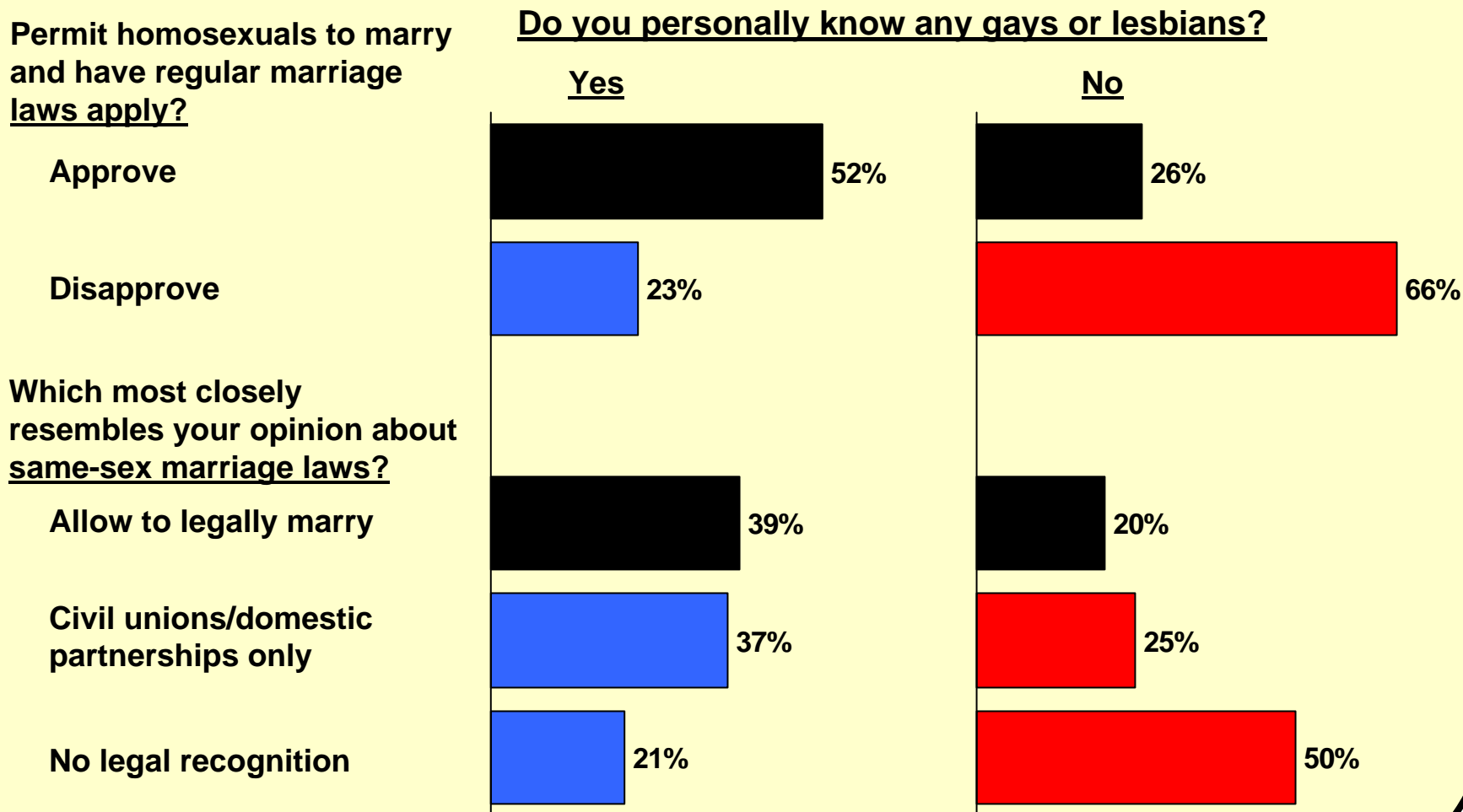
2006



2008

Source: The Field Poll.

Table 6
Differences in views about same-sex marriage laws between Californians who know gays/lesbians and those who don't

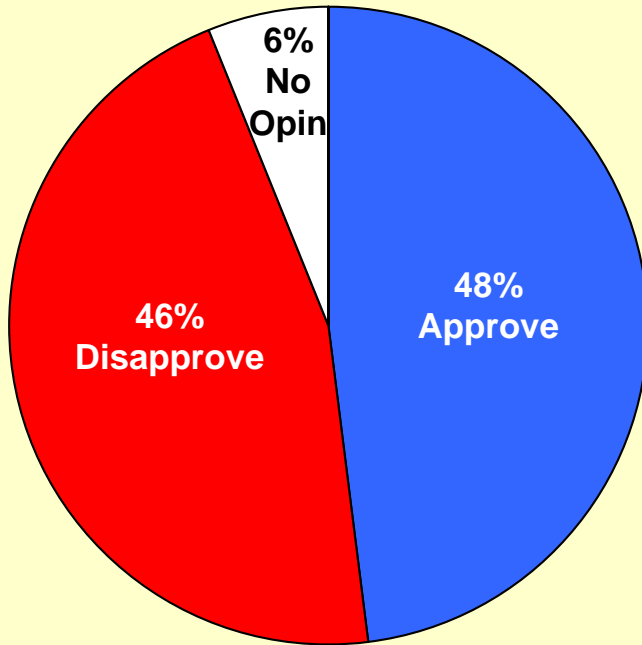


Source: February 2006 Field Poll.

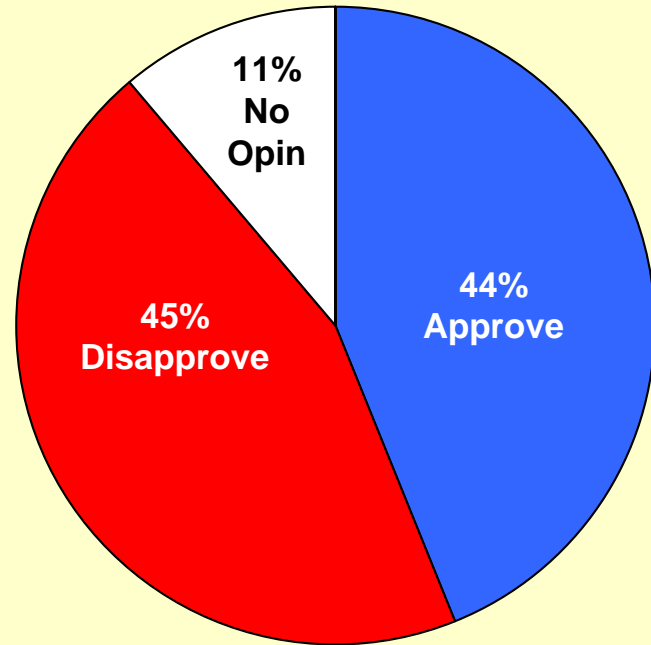
Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of the percentages from each survey question equal the proportion with no opinion.

Table 7

Voter reaction to the May 2008 California Supreme Court ruling which declared the state's same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional



May 2008



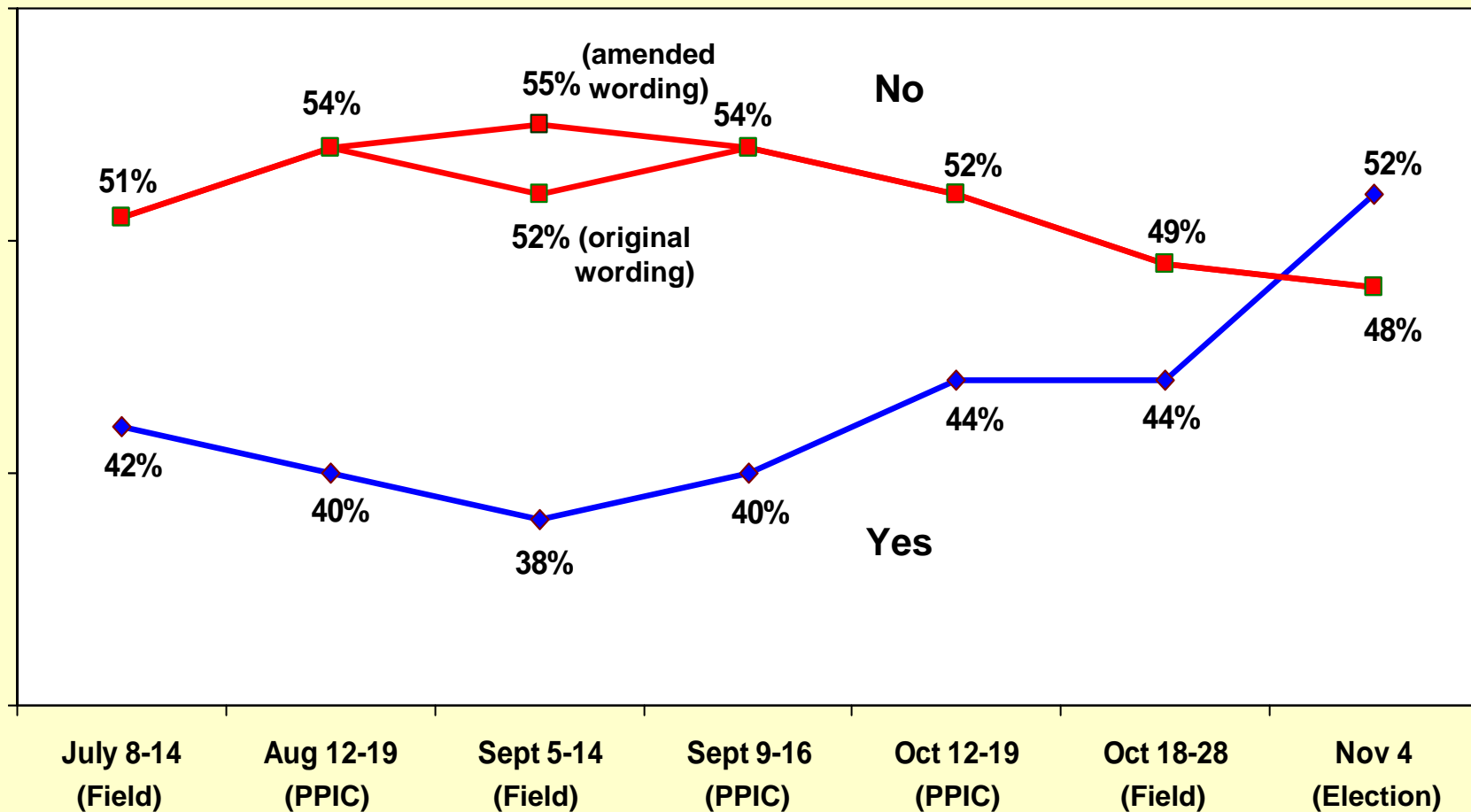
July 2008

Source: The Field Poll.

Table 8

Trend of likely voter preferences regarding Prop. 8 to reinstate a ban on same-sex marriages in California

(Field and PPIC pre-election surveys)



Source: The Field Poll and Public Policy Institute of California.

Table 9a
Comparing July vs. Late October voting preferences toward Prop. 8 across subgroups of the likely voting population

	<u>July</u>		<u>Late October</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Statewide	42%	51	44%	49
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	30%	63	28%	65
Republicans	68%	27	75%	20
Non-partisans/others	27%	66	31%	60
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Strongly conservative	87%	9	87%	10
Moderately conservative	69%	16	66%	29
Middle-of-the-road	34%	59	40%	51
Moderately liberal	14%	79	19%	73
Strongly liberal	13%	86	10%	86

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of the percentages from each survey equal the proportion with no opinion.

Table 9b
Comparing July vs. Late October voting preferences toward Prop. 8 across subgroups of the likely voting population

	<u>July</u>		<u>Late October</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Statewide	42%	51	44%	49
<u>Presidential Preference</u>				
Obama	24%	73	20%	73
McCain	73%	21	84%	13
<u>Education</u>				
High school or less	58%	34	62%	27
Some college	48%	45	45%	49
College graduate	40%	55	41%	54
Post-graduate work	27%	67	32%	61
<u>Personally know gays/lesbians</u>				
Yes	40%	54	43%	51
No	51%	43	50%	42

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of the percentages from each survey equal the proportion with no opinion.

Table 9c
**Comparing July vs. Late October voting preferences toward
 Prop. 8 across subgroups of the likely voting population**

	<u>July</u>		<u>Late October</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Statewide	42%	51	44%	49
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	45%	49	46%	47
Female	40%	54	42%	51
<u>Age</u>				
18 – 34	41%	53	39%	52
35 – 49	44%	48	43%	53
50 – 64	38%	57	38%	53
65 or older	46%	47	62%	32
<u>Marital status</u>				
Married	47%	47	48%	45
Never married	34%	59	26%	69

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of the percentages from each survey equal the proportion with no opinion.

Table 9d
Comparing July vs. Late October voting preferences toward Prop. 8 across subgroups of the likely voting population

	<u>July</u>		<u>Late October</u>	
	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Statewide	42%	51	44%	49
<u>Religious preference</u>				
Protestant	56%	40	60%	33
Catholic	44%	45	44%	48
Other religions	33%	60	30%	64
No preference	21%	76	17%	77
<u>Evangelical Christian</u>				
Yes	66%	31	74%	20
No	35%	59	34%	59
<u>Region</u>				
Coastal counties	37%	56	39%	54
Inland counties	54%	40	57%	37

Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of the percentages from each survey equal the proportion with no opinion.

Table 10
Reactions of California likely voters to five
pro-Prop. 8 statements (Late-October 2008)

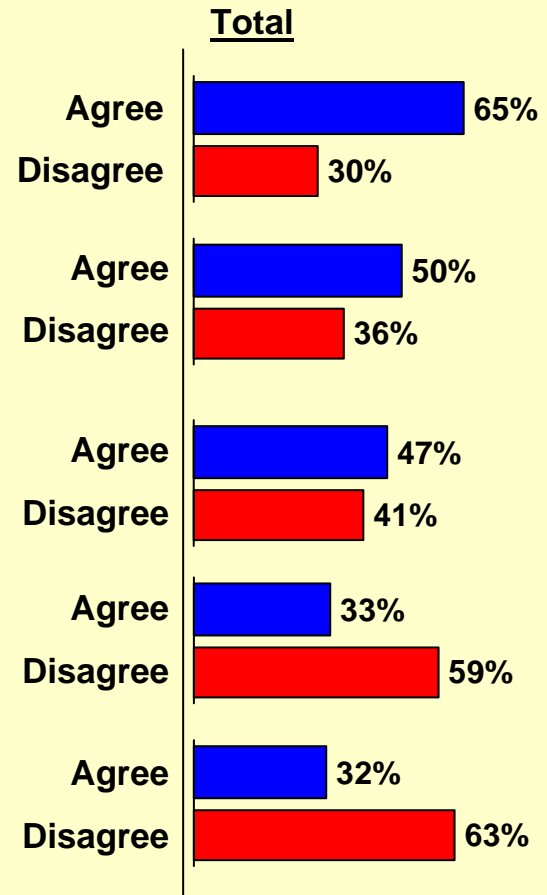
Traditional marriage a cornerstone of our Judeo – Christian heritage

Restores traditional marriage while not removing existing domestic partnership laws

Reverses flawed legal reasoning of activist judges

Gay rights leaders moving too fast in efforts to win new legal protections

If not approved, public schools could be required to teach that same-sex marriage is as acceptable as traditional marriage



Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of each item's percentages equal proportion of voters who have no opinion.

Table 11
Reactions of California likely voters to five
anti-Prop. 8 statements (Late-October 2008)



Source: The Field Poll.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of each item's percentages equal proportion of voters who have no opinion.