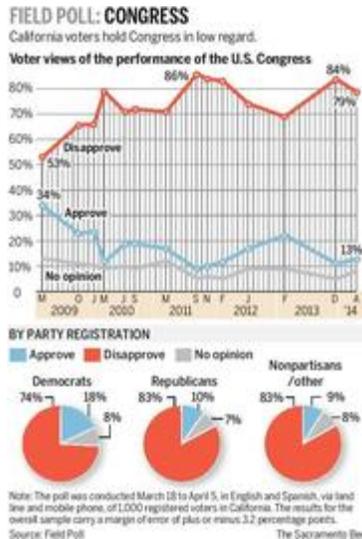


# Field Poll: Calif. voters deeply skeptical of Congress

By Christopher Cadelago  
ccadelago@sacbee.com

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California voters remain intensely disapproving of the work conducted on their behalf on Capitol Hill, but they continue to offer a more upbeat assessment of the efforts of their own representatives, according to the latest Field Poll.

About six weeks ahead of the primary election, nearly 80 percent said they disapproved of the job being done by Congress and only 13 percent approve. Republican voters – especially those who identify with the tea party – are the most critical of the work and the least willing to return their own representative to Washington for another two-year term.

The results are consistent with recent national measures showing federal lawmakers held in low esteem following political setbacks for both parties. Republicans are blamed for the partial government shutdown, and Democrats have taken prolonged fire for the botched rollout of the health care overhaul.

Republicans hold a 233-199 advantage in the House of Representatives, though Democrats control the White House and the U.S. Senate.

In the latest Field Poll, there was no clear agreement about whether voters preferred one party holding both the White House and Congress, or the current arrangement of divided

government. Some 37 percent favor single-party control, 36 percent desire split power and 26 percent say it depends or have no opinion.

“They like having two parties kind of fighting it out, but what they want is compromise and legislation that address the problems facing the country, and they are not seeing that,” said Mark DiCamillo, the poll’s director. “They are just seeing partisan bickering, and that’s pretty much what’s keeping the ratings down.”

Democrats hold a large share of the state’s 53 congressional seats and are likely to have the most to lose come November.

Overall, the poll showed just lukewarm support for incumbents (46 percent). In the 47 districts with incumbent candidates, Democrats are more prone to re-elect their representative (57 percent) than Republicans (33 percent) and voters who identify with the tea party (27 percent).

The results seem to reflect the internal angst playing out in a handful of primaries that pit mainstream Republicans against more conservative candidates. Among the nearly two-thirds of GOP voters who align with the tea party, nearly 9 out of 10 don’t like the job being done by Congress.

The analysis shows tea party Republicans at a rate of 2-to-1 disapprove of the job being done by their representative while non-tea party Republicans approve in about the same proportion as all voters statewide. Tea party voters also are the least likely to support the president’s party having a majority grip on Congress.

“You are seeing these fairly large differences within the Republican Party,” DiCamillo said. “In some cases it’s polar opposites.”

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*Call Christopher Cadelago, Bee Capitol Bureau, [\(916\) 326-5538](tel:9163265538). Follow him on Twitter [@ccadelago](https://twitter.com/ccadelago).*