

Poll: Voters support water bond, against health-related ballot measures

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California voters have turned against two health-related measures on Tuesday's ballot while majorities continue to support a water infrastructure bond and a criminal sentencing initiative, according to a new Field Poll.

Heavy advertising by insurance- and medical-industry interests appears to have taken hold, with sentiment among likely voters swinging dramatically against Proposition 45, which would allow the state insurance commissioner to regulate health insurance rates, and Proposition 46, which would raise the cap on medical malpractice pain and suffering awards and mandate drug testing of doctors. Early summer polling found both measures enjoyed strong support.

But now just 30 percent of likely voters support the insurance measure while 42 percent oppose it. The balance, 28 percent, remain undecided. Opposition to the malpractice/doctor drug-testing measure polled higher, with nearly half of respondents, 49 percent, saying they'll vote against it, compared with 32 percent planning to vote "yes." Nineteen percent are unsure how they'll vote.

Field Poll Director Mark DiCamillo said that support for both measures even declined during the two weeks that researchers conducted the poll, Oct. 15-28.

"The numbers are showing a clear downward trend," he said. "The chances of passage, in our judgment, are not great."

Ramona Dehart, an 84-year-old Folsom retiree, said she's planning to vote "no" on both health-related measures. "I just don't trust the politicians," Dehart said, "especially when it comes to medical matters."

However, she said she supports Proposition 1, which authorizes the state to assume \$7.5 billion in bond debt to build water projects, because California's epic drought "proves we need to save it." The poll found the bond leading among likely voters, 54 percent to 22 percent.

The Field Poll also found that support for Proposition 47, which would reduce sentencing for certain drug and property crimes, fell 6 percentage points since a July survey, although a majority of likely voters still support it.

Meanwhile, the percentage of voters in the undecided category increased from 19 percent four months ago to 26 percent in October. Still, 51 percent of those polled said they'll vote for the measure, while the percentage of anticipated "no" voters fell marginally from 24 percent in July to 23 percent in the latest poll.

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