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**STRONG SUPPORT FOR PROP. 58.
BACKING FADES IF REPEAL OF PROP.
227 PROVISION IS MENTIONED.**

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By Jack Citrin, Director, IGS, and Mark DiCamillo, Director, *The Field Poll*

California voters strongly support Proposition 58, a measure that would allow school districts to broaden the use of bilingual education programs, although that backing turns to opposition when voters are told the measure repeals a key provision of Proposition 227.

The findings, part of the latest *Field/IGS Poll* of likely voters, reveal the public's complicated views regarding bilingual education, and illustrate the critical importance for public opinion of the specific language used to describe measures that go before voters.

Proposition 58, which was placed on the ballot by the Legislature and Gov. Jerry Brown, would represent the most significant change to California's bilingual education policy since voters approved Proposition 227 in 1998 with 60.1% of the vote. Prop. 227 generally requires English learner students to have a maximum of one year of intensive English instruction before transitioning into mainstream English-only classes, a provision known as the "sheltered English immersion requirement."

According to the Legislative Analyst's Office official analysis of Prop. 58, the measure "repeals key provisions of Proposition 227," and adds new provisions to the state's Education Code. In general, the LAO analysis says, "schools would no longer be required to teach English learners in English-only programs," and could instead "teach their English learners using a variety of programs, including bilingual programs."

However, the official ballot label, which was drafted by the Attorney General's office, makes no mention of Prop. 227, and instead labels Prop. 58 as the "English Proficiency, Multilingual Education" initiative. The first sentence of the ballot label says that the measure "preserves requirement that public schools ensure students obtain English language proficiency," although later it also notes that the measure "authorizes school districts to establish dual-language immersion programs."

Strong support for Prop. 58 when official ballot label is presented to voters

When provided with the official ballot label and asked how they would vote if the election were held today, voters strongly support Prop. 58, with 69% of respondents saying they would back the measure. Only 14% were opposed, and 17% were undecided. Support for the measure included majorities of both parties and independent voters, and majorities of both white and Latino voters.

Table 1
Likely voter preferences regarding Prop. 58 (English Proficiency)
after being presented with its official ballot label

PROPOSITION 58: ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION. INITIATIVE STATUTE. Preserves requirement that public schools ensure students obtain English language proficiency. Requires school districts to solicit parent/community input in developing language acquisition programs. Requires instruction to ensure English acquisition as rapidly and effectively as possible. Authorizes school districts to establish dual-language immersion programs for both native and non-native English speakers. Fiscal Impact: No notable fiscal effect on school districts or state government.

September 2016

Vote intentions on Prop. 58

Yes	69%
No	14
Undecided	17

Alternative descriptions produce different results

The results were starkly different when a different sample of voters was provided a summary of Prop. 58 that references the repeal of the sheltered English immersion requirement of Prop. 227 ("alternate description #1"). This shift in opinion was not greatly altered among a third group that was told about the repeal of 227, but also was given both an argument in favor of Prop. 58, that bilingual programs are valuable "because speaking several languages is a valuable skill in a globalized economy," and an argument against the new measure, that English learners should be taught in English because English fluency "is necessary to get good jobs and get ahead" ("alternate description #2"). The order of these arguments was randomized.

Regardless of which alternative version of the question was asked, support for Prop. 58 declined sharply if voters were told that it would repeal part of Prop. 227 and could allow students to take some classes in their native language for years. When informed simply that Prop. 58 repeals a key provision of Prop. 227 ("alternate description #1"), respondents opposed the measure 51% to 30%, with 19% undecided. When the question also included the arguments in favor of and opposed to Prop. 58 ("alternate description #2"), respondents very narrowly opposed the measure 41% to 39%, with 20% undecided.

Table 2
Likely voter preferences regarding Prop. 58 (English Proficiency)
after being presented with two alternate descriptions of the initiative

Alternate description #1

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 227, requiring the state's public schools to move most students who are learning English into classes taught only in English after one year. Proposition 58, the English Proficiency and Multilingual Education measure, on the November ballot would repeal that part of Proposition 227 and could allow students to take some classes in their native language rather than English throughout high school.

Alternate description #2 (with additional arguments added)

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 227, requiring the state's public schools to move most students who are learning English into classes taught only in English after one year. Proposition 58, the English Proficiency and Multilingual Education measure, on the November ballot would repeal that part of Proposition 227 and could allow students to take some classes in their native language rather than English throughout high school.

Opponents of Proposition 58 say that students who are not good English speakers should take classes only in English as soon as possible because being fluent in English is necessary to get good jobs and get ahead. Supporters of Proposition 58 say that schools and parents should be able to implement ongoing bilingual education programs because speaking several languages is a valuable skill in a globalized economy.

<u>Would vote...</u>	<u>Alternate description #1</u>	<u>Alternate description #2</u>
Yes	30%	39%
No	51	41
Undecided	19	20

Republicans, independents, and white non-Hispanic voters especially influenced

When the question references the repeal of part of Prop. 227, opposition to Prop. 58 increases particularly among Republicans, independents, and white non-Hispanic voters. Compared to the results produced by using only the official ballot label, Republican opposition increased from 28% to 82% under "alternate description #1," and 59% under "alternate description #2," which included the pro and con arguments. Among independents, opposition increased from 7% to 53% or 52%, and among white non-Hispanic voters opposition increased from 15% to 55% or 44%.

This result may reflect the greater popularity of Prop. 227 among those groups. In the final pre-election *Field Poll* of 1998, support for Prop. 227 was especially strong among Republicans (78%), independents (65%), and white non-Hispanics (63%). By contrast, Democrats in the final 1998 survey narrowly opposed Prop. 227, 48% to 44%. (Latinos in that poll supported Prop. 227 by a margin of 52% to 38%, although the Latino sample size was small.)

In the current survey, opposition to Prop. 58 also increased among Democratic and Latino voters when the question referenced the repeal of a portion of Prop. 227, though less dramatically than among Republicans, independents, and whites. Among Democrats, opposition increased from 8% using the official ballot label to 29% under "alternate description #1" and 24% under "alternate description #2." Among Latinos, opposition increased from 10% to 37% or 33%.

These findings underscore the significance of the Attorney General's ballot labels for initiatives, and the potential impact of giving voters more detailed information about the measures' content. In this case, an underlying consistency among seemingly opposite findings may be that the official description of Prop. 58 focuses attention on English proficiency. This almost certainly is a unified goal for the electorate, even if there are sharp disagreements about how this is best achieved.

Table 3						
Comparing voter preferences on Prop. 58 using its official ballot label to two alternate descriptions, across major subgroups of the likely voter population						
	Official ballot label		Alternate description #1		Alternate description #2	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Total likely voters	69%	14	30%	51	39%	41
<u>Party registration</u>						
Democrat	73%	8	44%	29	54%	24
Republican	62%	28	12%	82	24%	59
No party preference/other	69%	7	27%	53	30%	52
<u>Gender</u>						
Male	73%	12	30%	52	36%	45
Female	65%	15	30%	50	42%	38
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White non-Hispanic	70%	15	25%	55	34%	44
Latino	68%	10	43%	37	56%	33
All others*	64%	13	33%	51	35%	38
<u>Age</u>						
18-39	70%	9	46%	32	54%	26
40-64	64%	18	26%	57	32%	49
65 or older*	73%	12	22%	59	34%	46
<u>Education</u>						
Not a college graduate	70%	16	27%	56	35%	46
College graduate	72%	12	36%	47	39%	36
Post graduate work	63%	11	29%	45	46%	39

* Small sample base.

Note: Differences between 100% and the sum of each version's total of Yes and No percentages equal proportions who are undecided.

Information About the Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report come from a survey of California voters conducted jointly by *The Field Poll* and the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The survey was completed online by YouGov September 7-13, 2016 in English and Spanish among 1,800 registered voters in California, including 1,426 registered voters considered likely to vote in the November 2016 general election. In order to compare voter preferences using the three different descriptions of Prop. 58, the sample of likely voters was divided into three random subsamples of 484, 459 and 483 likely voters each.

YouGov administered the survey among a sample of the California registered voters who were included as part of its online panel of over 1.5 million U.S. residents. Eligible panel members were asked to participate in the poll through an invitation email containing a link to the survey. YouGov selected voters using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking targets, so that the characteristics of the voters selected approximate the demographic and regional profile of the overall California registered voter population. To help ensure diversity among poll respondents, YouGov recruits its panelists using a variety of methods, including web-based advertising and email campaigns, partner-sponsored solicitations, and telephone-to-web recruitment or mail-to-web recruitment. Difficult-to-reach populations are supplemented through more specialized recruitment efforts, including telephone and mail surveys.

The Field Poll and the Institute of Governmental Studies were jointly responsible for developing all questions included in the survey. After survey administration, YouGov forwarded its data file to *The Field Poll* for processing. *The Field Poll* then took the lead in developing and applying post-stratification weights to more precisely align the sample to *Field Poll* estimates of the demographic characteristics of the California registered voter population both overall and by region. *The Field Poll* was also responsible for determining which voters in the survey were considered most likely to vote in this year's election.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field. The Poll has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. *The Field Poll* receives financial support from leading California newspapers and television stations, which purchase the rights of first release to *Field Poll* reports in their primary viewer or readership markets. The Poll also receives funding from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes, as well as from foundations, non-profit organizations, and others as part of the Poll's policy research sponsor program.

Questions Asked

BALLOT LABEL DESCRIPTION

Proposition 58: ENGLISH PROFICIENCY. MULTILINGUAL EDUCATION. INITIATIVE STATUTE. Preserves requirement that public schools ensure students obtain English language proficiency. Requires school districts to solicit parent/community input in developing language acquisition programs. Requires instruction to ensure English acquisition as rapidly and effectively as possible. Authorizes school districts to establish dual-language immersion programs for both native and non-native English speakers. Fiscal Impact: No notable fiscal effect on school districts or state government. If the election were being held today, how would you vote on Proposition 58? YES; NO; UNDECIDED (ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF 484 LIKELY VOTERS)

ALTERNATE DESCRIPTION #1

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 227, requiring the state's public schools to move most students who are learning English into classes taught only in English after one year. Proposition 58 on the November ballot, the English Proficiency, Multilingual Education measure, would repeal that part of Proposition 227 and could allow students to take some classes in their native language rather than English throughout high school. If the election were being held today, how would you vote on Proposition 58? YES; NO; UNDECIDED (ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF 459 LIKELY VOTERS)

ALTERNATE DESCRIPTION #2

In 1998 California voters passed Proposition 227, requiring the state's public schools to move most students who are learning English into classes taught only in English after one year. Proposition 58 on the November ballot, the English Proficiency, Multilingual Education measure, would repeal that part of Proposition 227 and could allow students to take some classes in their native language rather than English throughout high school. Opponents of Proposition 58 say that students who are not good English speakers should take classes only in English as soon as possible because being fluent in English is necessary to get good jobs and get ahead. Supporters of Proposition 58 say that schools and parents should be able to implement ongoing bilingual education programs because speaking several languages is a valuable skill in a globalized economy. If the election were being held today, how would you vote on Proposition 58? *YES; NO; UNDECIDED* (ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF 483 LIKELY VOTERS)

(THE ORDER IN WHICH THE PRO AND CON ARGUMENTS WERE PRESENTED TO VOTERS WAS RANDOMIZED TO AVOID POSSIBLE SEQUENCE BIAS)

Note about Sampling Error Estimates

Polls conducted online using an opt-in panel do not easily lend themselves to the calculation of sampling error estimates as are traditionally reported for random sample telephone surveys.