

THE FIELD POLL

THE INDEPENDENT AND NON-PARTISAN SURVEY
OF PUBLIC OPINION ESTABLISHED IN 1947 AS
THE CALIFORNIA POLL BY MERVIN FIELD

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FEINSTEIN LEADS DEMOCRATIC FIELD IN 2010 GUBERNATORIAL RACE. BROWN EDGES VILLARAIGOSA IF FEINSTEIN NOT A CANDIDATE. WHITMAN HOLDS NARROW LEAD OVER CAMPBELL IN GOP RACE, WHILE POIZNER TRAILS.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

While the 2010 Democratic and Republican primary elections for governor are more than a year away, a large number of contenders from both parties have already announced their candidacies or disclosed that they are considering a run.

Next year's gubernatorial race will be an open seat election with no incumbent on the ballot. Governor Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger is prevented by law from running again.

A *Field Poll* conducted February 20 - March 1 measured voter preferences and image appraisals for eight Democrats and three Republicans who have been mentioned in press and political circles as possible gubernatorial candidates.

In the Democratic primary U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein is way out in front of her Democratic challengers should she decide to seek her party's nomination. She currently is the choice of 38% of Democratic primary voters. Following her are state Attorney General Jerry Brown and Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, who both have 16% support.

Should Feinstein decide against running, the race becomes a much closer contest. In this setting Brown is preferred by 26% and Villaraigosa is backed by 22%. San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom is running third at 16%, followed by Lt. Governor John Garamendi at 8%.

On the Republican side former eBay CEO Meg Whitman is the early leader with 21% of GOP voter preferences, followed by former Congressman Tom Campbell (18%). State Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner is trailing at 7%. However, a huge 54% of GOP voters are undecided.

Democratic primary preferences

There is considerable speculation within political circles about the intentions of Feinstein in the race. In response to press queries about her gubernatorial intentions she has not ruled out the possibility.

When Feinstein's name is included in a Democratic primary field, she leads with 38% of the preferences of Democratic primary voters. Brown (16%), Villaraigosa (16%) and Newsom (10%) are each well back of the leader.

Feinstein is preferred by large proportions of Democratic primary voters in both Northern California (38%) and Southern California (37%). By contrast, the other candidates have a more regional base of support at this stage. Villaraigosa, who just won re-election as Los Angeles Mayor on Tuesday, has significant support should he decide to run for governor in the ten-county Southern California region (21%). But he obtains only 9% support in Northern California. Conversely, Brown and Newsom receive significantly greater early voter support in Northern California than in the South.

Table 1
Voter preferences in the 2010 Democratic primary for Governor
– including Feinstein as a candidate
(among Democratic primary voters)

| | Total | Southern California | Northern California |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Dianne Feinstein | 38% | 37% | 38% |
| Jerry Brown | 16 | 14 | 19 |
| Antonio Villaraigosa | 16 | 21 | 9 |
| Gavin Newsom | 10 | 6 | 15 |
| John Garamendi | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Steve Westly | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Bill Lockyer | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Jack O'Connell | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Undecided | 12 | 13 | 11 |

Were Feinstein to decide to remain in the Senate and not enter the governor's race, the Democratic primary would become a much more competitive contest. Brown at 26% and Villaraigosa at 22% would be the early front-runners, followed by Newsom (16%), and Garamendi (8%),

Trailing the field are businessman Steve Westly (2%), State Treasurer Bill Lockyer (2%) and State Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell (2%). A relatively large proportion of Democratic primary voters (23%) are undecided in this setting.

Table 2
Voter preferences in the 2010 Democratic primary for Governor
– without Feinstein as a candidate
(among Democratic primary voters)

| | Total | Southern California | Northern California |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Jerry Brown | 26% | 22% | 31% |
| Antonio Villaraigosa | 22 | 29 | 12 |
| Gavin Newsom | 16 | 9 | 25 |
| John Garamendi | 8 | 10 | 5 |
| Steve Westly | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Bill Lockyer | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Jack O’Connell | 2 | 1 | 3 |
| Undecided | 22 | 26 | 18 |

Republican candidate preferences

Voter preferences in the Republican primary are much less defined. The current poll finds Whitman with a small lead receiving 21% of GOP voter preferences, followed by Campbell at 18%. Poizner is currently a distant third at 7%. However, a majority of GOP voters (54%) are undecided at this point.

Table 3
Early voter preferences in the 2010 GOP primary for Governor
(among GOP primary voters)

| | Total | Southern California | Northern California |
|---------------|--------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Meg Whitman | 21% | 17% | 27% |
| Tom Campbell | 18 | 19 | 17 |
| Steve Poizner | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Undecided | 54 | 58 | 47 |

Voter images of the possible Democratic candidates

Feinstein is far better known among both Democrats and the overall electorate than are the other possible gubernatorial candidates. More than nine in ten Democrats (92%) and 91% of all voters statewide have an opinion of Feinstein. Among Democrats her image is more than five to one positive, with 78% holding a favorable impression and 14% unfavorable.

Seventy-nine percent of Democrats hold an opinion of Brown and it is overwhelmingly positive – 68% favorable and 11% unfavorable. Villaraigosa is known to two-thirds (67%) of Democrats statewide, and his image is more than two to one positive, with 47% having a favorable view and 20% unfavorable.

Newsom is also known to about two-thirds of Democrats (66%), and his image is 43% positive and 23% negative.

Large portions of Democratic primary voters do not offer an opinion of the other possible contenders. The percentages with no opinion for example are as follows: Garamendi (43%), Lockyer (46%), O'Connell (56%) and Westly (74%).

Table 4
Voter images of eight prominent Democrats mentioned as possible candidates in the 2010 election for Governor of California (among registered voters)

| | Total voters | Democrats | Republicans | Non-partisans/ others* |
|---|--------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 57% | 78% | 33% | 51% |
| Unfavorable | 34 | 14 | 62 | 34 |
| No opinion | 9 | 8 | 5 | 15 |
| <u>Jerry Brown, State Attorney General</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 50% | 68% | 27% | 48% |
| Unfavorable | 25 | 11 | 48 | 19 |
| No opinion | 25 | 21 | 25 | 33 |
| <u>Antonio Villaraigosa, Los Angeles Mayor</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 35% | 47% | 22% | 32% |
| Unfavorable | 28 | 20 | 46 | 20 |
| No opinion | 37 | 33 | 32 | 48 |
| <u>John Garamendi, Lt. Governor</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 33% | 42% | 28% | 25% |
| Unfavorable | 20 | 15 | 30 | 15 |
| No opinion | 47 | 43 | 42 | 60 |
| <u>Bill Lockyer, State Treasurer</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 30% | 38% | 24% | 22% |
| Unfavorable | 26 | 16 | 33 | 34 |
| No opinion | 44 | 46 | 43 | 44 |
| <u>Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Mayor</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 30% | 43% | 14% | 28% |
| Unfavorable | 35 | 23 | 55 | 30 |
| No opinion | 35 | 34 | 31 | 42 |
| <u>Jack O'Connell, State Superintendent of Public Instruction</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 23% | 27% | 19% | 23% |
| Unfavorable | 21 | 17 | 28 | 19 |
| No opinion | 56 | 56 | 53 | 58 |
| <u>Steve Westly, businessman</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 14% | 16% | 12% | 15% |
| Unfavorable | 10 | 10 | 12 | 8 |
| No opinion | 76 | 74 | 76 | 77 |

* Small sample base.

Image ratings of the Republican candidates

Large majorities of voters do not have an impression of the three potential GOP candidates. Just 28% of Republicans and 29% of all voters statewide offer an opinion of Whitman. Voter impressions of her among Republicans are more positive (17%) than negative (11%).

Four in ten Republicans (40%) and 34% of all voters have an opinion of Campbell. Republicans view him favorably 22% to 18%.

State Insurance Commissioner Poizner is known to 42% of Republicans and 37% of all voters statewide. Among Republican voters more view him favorably (23%) than unfavorably (19%).

Table 5
Voter images of three prominent Republicans mentioned as possible candidates in the 2010 election for Governor of California (among registered voters)

| | Total voters | Democrats | Republicans | Non-partisans/ others* |
|--|--------------|-----------|-------------|---------------------------|
| <u>Meg Whitman, businesswoman</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 17% | 15% | 17% | 22% |
| Unfavorable | 12 | 15 | 11 | 8 |
| No opinion | 71 | 70 | 72 | 70 |
| <u>Tom Campbell, former Congressman</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 21% | 21% | 22% | 19% |
| Unfavorable | 13 | 7 | 18 | 14 |
| No opinion | 66 | 72 | 60 | 67 |
| <u>Steve Poizner, State Insurance Commissioner</u> | | | | |
| Favorable | 21% | 21% | 23% | 17% |
| Unfavorable | 16 | 15 | 19 | 16 |
| No opinion | 63 | 64 | 58 | 67 |

* Small sample base.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 761 registered voters in California. Primary election preferences are based on 342 Democratic primary voters and 298 GOP voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period February 20 and March 1, 2009. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall voter sample was divided into two random subsamples on some of the questions.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. The overall sample was stratified so as to yield interviews with approximately equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted to return this sample allocation of voters to the actual distribution of registered voters by party and by various other demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of registered voters is +/- 3.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Findings from the Democratic voter sample have a maximum sampling error of +/- 5.5 percentage points, while those from the GOP sample have a maximum sampling error of +/- 5.8 percentage points. The maximum sampling error is based on percentages in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

I am going to read the names of some people involved in California politics and public affairs. For each, please tell me whether you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or whether you don't know enough about him or her to have an opinion. (NAME AND TITLE OF EACH PERSON READ IN RANDOM ORDER) Is your opinion of _____ favorable or unfavorable? (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES READ)

(ASKED OF DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY VOTERS)

I am going to read the names of some Democrats who are possible candidates for governor next year. For each, please tell me whether there would be a good chance, some chance or no chance that you would vote for that person in the Democratic primary for Governor next year. You may name as many or as few persons as people you would be inclined to vote for. (NAMES AND TITLES OF CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) Is there a good chance, some chance or no chance that you would vote for (NAME) in the Democratic primary for Governor next year?

Suppose that in next year's Democratic primary election for Governor the candidates were (NAMES AND TITLES OF PEOPLE READ FOR WHOM THEY HAD A GOOD OR SOME CHANCE TO SUPPORT). If the Democratic primary election for Governor were being held today and these were the candidates, who would be your first choice... (LAST NAMES REPEATED)? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)

IF FEINSTEIN CHOSEN: If Feinstein was not a candidate, who would be your second choice? (NAMES OF REMAINING CANDIDATES REPEATED)?

(ASKED OF GOP VOTERS)

There will be an election next year for Governor of California and Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger is prevented by law from seeking a third term. Suppose that in next year's Republican primary election for Governor the candidates were (NAMES AND TITLES READ IN RANDOM ORDER). If the Republican primary election for Governor were being held today and these were the candidates, who would be your first choice? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ)