

# THE FIELD POLL

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

## Field Research Corporation

601 California Street, Suite 900  
San Francisco, CA 94108-2814  
(415) 392-5763 FAX: (415) 434-2541  
EMAIL: [fieldpoll@field.com](mailto:fieldpoll@field.com)  
[www.field.com/fieldpollonline](http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline)

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**BROWN HOLDS LARGE LEAD OVER NEWSOM IN DEMOCRATIC RACE FOR GOVERNOR. NO CLEAR GOP LEADER, WITH HALF OF REPUBLICANS UNDECIDED. IN GENERAL ELECTION MATCH-UPS BROWN LEADS COMFORTABLY, WHILE NEWSOM HOLDS SMALL LEADS.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

State Attorney General Jerry Brown is running comfortably ahead of San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom 47% to 27% in voter preferences for the Democratic nomination in next year's race for governor.

The picture is much more unsettled on the Republican side, where about half of GOP primary voters (49%) are undecided. Among those offering a preference former eBay head Meg Whitman receives 22% of the vote, former Congressman Tom Campbell 20% and State Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner 9%.

Each of the potential Democratic contenders are known to large majorities of this state's voters, whereas only small proportions hold an opinion of the three Republicans. When voters are asked to choose between the Democrats and their lesser known GOP rivals in general election match-ups, both Brown and Newsom best each of the Republicans. Brown's leads, however, are large and range from 21 to 25 points. By contrast, Newsom's leads are in the single digits.

These are the findings from the latest *Field Poll* completed this week.

### **The Democratic field for governor**

Earlier this year there were at least eight Democratic political figures who were considered possible candidates for the 2010 governorship. In the intervening months, however, most of them have either formally dropped out or have not taken any actions to indicate they are seriously considering a gubernatorial run. This has narrowed the field to two, and possibly three, Democratic candidates.

Newsom formally declared his candidacy weeks ago and has been actively campaigning. While Brown has not formally announced his candidacy, last week he filed official paperwork with the Secretary of State to start an exploratory committee. There is also some continuing speculation that U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein will become a candidate, although she has not stated her intentions one way or another.

**Brown holds big lead over Newsom in Democratic primary**

When Democratic primary voters are asked for their voting preference for governor pairing Brown against Newsom, Brown leads by twenty points, 47% to 27%, with 26% undecided.

Brown’s statewide advantage over Newsom stems largely from his thirty-one point lead over Newsom among Democratic primary voters residing in Southern California. This contrasts with voter preferences in Northern California, where Brown’s lead over Newsom is only five points.

There is also a decided gender gap in voter preferences in this contest. Brown maintains a solid lead over Newsom among males – 56% to 22%. However, among women preferences are somewhat closer – 40% Brown and 31% Newsom.

The biggest differences in this contest, however, are by age. Among younger voters in the 18-39 age group, Newsom leads Brown 41% to 32%. However, Brown leads Newsom by thirty points among voters age 40 – 64, and by a huge forty-five points among seniors age 65 or older.

**Table 1**  
**Voter preferences in the 2010 Democratic primary for governor**  
**between Jerry Brown and Gavin Newsom**  
**(among Democratic primary voters)**

	Brown	Newsom	Other/ undecided
<b>October 2009</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>26</b>
March 2009	26%	16	58*
<u>Region (Oct. 2009)</u>			
Northern California	43%	38	19
Southern California	50%	19	31
Coastal counties	47%	28	25
Inland counties	46%	25	29
<u>Gender (Oct. 2009)</u>			
Male	56%	22	22
Female	40%	31	29
<u>Age (Oct. 2009)</u>			
18 – 39	32%	41	27
40 – 64	51%	21	28
65 or older	62%	17	21

\* Preferences for other gubernatorial possibilities in the March survey were: Villaraigosa 22%, Garamendi 8%, Westly 2%, Lockyer 2% and O’Connell 2%, with 22% undecided.

### **Feinstein would be the Democratic leader if she were a candidate**

When Democratic primary voters are asked their preferences should Senator Dianne Feinstein also become a candidate, Feinstein would lead both Brown and Newsom. In this setting the Senator obtains 40% of Democratic primary voter preferences, compared to 27% for Brown and 16% for Newsom. This is a somewhat smaller advantage than Feinstein held earlier in the year when the field was larger.

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**Table 2**

**Voter preferences in the 2010 Democratic primary  
for governor including Dianne Feinstein  
(among Democratic primary voters)**

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	<b>October</b>	<b>March</b>
Feinstein	<b>40%</b>	38%
Brown	<b>27</b>	16
Newsom	<b>16</b>	10
Other/undecided	<b>17</b>	36*

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\* Preferences for other gubernatorial possibilities in the March survey were: Villaraigosa 16%, Garamendi 4%, Westly 2%, Lockyer 1%, O'Connell 1%, with 12% undecided.

### **No clear leader in GOP preferences**

Although three Republicans have been vying for the GOP nomination and have been campaigning for months, about half (49%) of Republican primary voters are withholding judgment and are not taking sides yet. Among those voters who do offer a preference, opinions divide 22% for Whitman, 20% for Campbell and 9% for Poizner. These findings are not much different than those observed in a March 2009 *Field Poll* survey.

Whitman holds a small five-point lead among voters in Southern California, whereas Campbell leads narrowly in the North. There are also significant differences by age. Among younger voters aged 18-49, Campbell is the preferred candidate. On the other hand, Whitman holds a significant lead among voters age 50-64. Republicans age 65 or older are about evenly divided between the two.

**Table 3**  
**Voter preferences in the 2010 Republican primary for governor**  
**(among Republican primary voters)**

	<b>Whitman</b>	<b>Campbell</b>	<b>Poizner</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
<b>October 2009</b>	<b>22%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>49</b>
March 2009	21%	18	7	54
<u>Region (Oct. 2009)</u>				
Southern California	21%	16	8	55
Northern California	24%	26	10	40
Coastal counties	24%	21	7	48
Inland counties	19%	19	13	49
<u>Gender (Oct. 2009)</u>				
Male	23%	21	12	44
Female	22%	19	7	52
<u>Age (Oct. 2009)</u>				
18 – 49	15%	25	10	50
50 – 64	36%	14	9	41
65 or older	19%	18	7	56

**Each of the possible Democratic candidates are well-known to voters**

Large majorities of voters have an opinion of the two Democratic gubernatorial contenders, Brown and Newsom, and an even larger proportion know enough about Feinstein were she to enter the race.

Among all voters 73% have an opinion of Brown, including 75% of Democrats. Statewide 70% offer an impression of Newsom, including 63% of Democrats. Regarding Feinstein, 88% of voters give an opinion, including 90% of Democrats.

All three Democrats are rated more favorably than unfavorably by the Democratic rank-and-file, although both Brown and Feinstein score somewhat higher than Newsom. Among the overall electorate more voters view both Brown and Feinstein positively than negatively, while a plurality of voters statewide view Newsom in a negative light.

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

	Total voters	Democrats	Republicans	Non-partisans/ others
<b>Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator</b>				
Favorable	52%	68%	28%	52%
Unfavorable	36	22	60	33
No opinion	12	10	12	15
<b>Jerry Brown, State Attorney General</b>				
Favorable	44%	57%	26%	44%
Unfavorable	29	18	47	26
No opinion	27	25	27	30
<b>Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Mayor</b>				
Favorable	30%	41%	9%	35%
Unfavorable	40	22	69	35
No opinion	30	37	22	30

**Only small proportions of voters can rate the GOP candidates**

Large majorities of this state’s voters currently have no opinion about each of the three GOP gubernatorial candidates. Just 39% of Republicans and 31% of registered voters offer an opinion of Whitman. Her image rating is currently more positive than negative, especially among Republicans.

About four in ten Republicans (40%) and voters in the overall electorate (41%) have an opinion of Campbell. More Republicans have a favorable than unfavorable impression of him, whereas among the overall electorate his image is mixed.

Four in ten Republicans (40%) and 39% of the overall electorate can rate Poizner. Among those with an opinion more view Poizner positively than negatively.

**Table 5**  
**Voter images of the three GOP 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	18%	15%	29%	12%
Unfavorable	14	18	10	12
No opinion	68	67	61	76
<u>Tom Campbell, former Congressman</u>				
Favorable	20%	17%	25%	19%
Unfavorable	21	20	15	29
No opinion	59	63	60	52
<u>Steve Poizner, State Insurance Commissioner</u>				
Favorable	22%	20%	24%	22%
Unfavorable	17	20	16	15
No opinion	61	60	60	63

**The Democratic candidates lead in general election match-ups**

When the three lesser-known Republican candidates are paired against either Brown or Newsom in simulated general election match-ups, each trails at this stage.

Brown leads Whitman, Campbell and Poizner by wide margins ranging from 21 to 25 points. While Newsom also holds the early advantage over each of the Republicans, his leads are smaller and range from 5 to 9 points.

**Table 6**  
**Voter preferences in possible general election match-ups in**  
**the 2010 general election for Governor**  
**(among all registered voters)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Party registration</b>		
		<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Non-partisans/ others</b>
Brown	<b>50%</b>	74%	18%	49%
Whitman	<b>29</b>	9	63	21
Undecided	<b>21</b>	17	19	30
Brown	<b>48%</b>	76%	13%	43%
Campbell	<b>27</b>	8	63	18
Undecided	<b>25</b>	16	24	39
Brown	<b>50%</b>	76%	16%	49%
Poizner	<b>25</b>	6	60	16
Undecided	<b>25</b>	18	24	35
Newsom	<b>40%</b>	63%	9%	37%
Whitman	<b>31</b>	11	65	25
Undecided	<b>29</b>	26	26	38
Newsom	<b>38%</b>	61%	7%	35%
Campbell	<b>33</b>	14	68	21
Undecided	<b>29</b>	25	25	44
Newsom	<b>39%</b>	62%	7%	37%
Poizner	<b>30</b>	11	67	18
Undecided	<b>31</b>	27	26	45

## About This Report

### Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 1,005 registered voters in California, including 496 Democratic primary election voters and 373 Republican primary election voters. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between September 18 and October 5, 2009. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize potential respondent fatigue, some of the questions were asked of a random subsample of either 509 voters or 496 voters statewide.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected randomly from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Once a voter's name and telephone number had been selected, interviews were attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews were conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file and the preference of the voter. 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. After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted to known distributions of registered voters by party and by other demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of registered voters is +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from each random subsample have a sampling error of +/- 4.5 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 analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

### Questions Asked

(ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF ALL VOTERS)

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. (NAMES AND TITLES OF EACH PERSON READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Is your opinion of \_\_\_\_\_ favorable or unfavorable?

(ASKED OF DEMOCRATIC PRIMARY VOTERS)

There will be an election next year for governor of California. Suppose that in next year's Democratic primary election for governor the candidates were Jerry Brown, state Attorney General, and Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Mayor. If the Democratic primary election for governor were being held today and these were the candidates, for whom would you vote? (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

What if the choices in the Democratic primary election for Governor were Jerry Brown, state Attorney General, Gavin Newsom, San Francisco Mayor, and Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator. If the Democratic primary election for governor were being held today and these were the candidates, for whom would you vote? (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

(ASKED OF REPUBLICAN PRIMARY 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, for whom would you vote? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES LISTED)

(ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF ALL VOTERS)

I am going to read match-ups between some possible Democratic and Republican candidates for governor in next year's November general election. For each pairing, please tell me which candidate you would vote for if the election for governor were being held today? What about... (PAIRS READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) If these were the candidates and the election for governor were being held today, for whom would you vote? (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES AND TITLES READ)