

# 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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### **GOP PRIMARY VOTERS DIVIDED IN THEIR PREFERENCES FOR U.S. SENATE, WITH A HUGE 59% UNDECIDED. BOXER HOLDS DOUBLE- DIGIT LEADS OVER BOTH FIORINA AND DEVORE IN GENERAL ELECTION MATCH-UPS.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Barbara Boxer will be seeking a fourth term to the U.S. Senate in 2010 and she doesn't appear to be facing any serious opposition in the Democratic primary next June.

However, it is widely expected that there will be a contested primary on the Republican side. Assemblyman Chuck DeVore has already announced his intention to run for Boxer's Senate seat and has been actively campaigning. Most expect that he will be challenged by businesswoman Carly Fiorina, who has formed an exploratory committee.

When a cross-section of GOP primary voters are asked their preferences between the two Republicans, voters are now almost evenly divided, with 21% favoring Fiorina, 20% DeVore, and a huge 59% undecided. This differs from an earlier twelve-point Fiorina lead found in a March *Field Poll*.

Neither Fiorina nor DeVore are very well-known to statewide voters, be they Republicans, Democrats or non-partisans. Boxer, on the other hand, is known to nearly nine in ten of this state's voters.

When voters are asked to choose between Boxer and her two lesser known challengers in general election match-ups, the incumbent holds comfortable leads of between fourteen and seventeen points over each Republican.

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

### **GOP primary voters evenly divided in U.S. Senate race**

When prospective voters in next June's Republican primary election are asked whom they would choose if the GOP primary for U.S. Senate were being held today, a majority (59%) are undecided. There is a nearly even division among those who do offer a preference, with Fiorina receiving the support of 21% of GOP voters and DeVore backed by 20%. The current findings are a much a closer preference division than was observed in March, when Fiorina held an early twelve-point lead over DeVore, 31% to 19%.

	<b>Fiorina</b>	<b>DeVore</b>	<b>Undecided</b>
<b>October 2009</b>	<b>21%</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>59</b>
March 2009	31%	19	50
<u>Region</u>			
Southern California	19%	20	61
Northern California	25%	21	54
Coastal counties	22%	20	58
Inland counties	21%	21	58
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	22%	23	55
Female	21%	18	61
<u>Age</u>			
18 – 39	20%	24	56
40 – 64	24%	21	55
65 or older	21%	13	66

### **Huge disparity in voter recognition of the Democratic and GOP Senate candidates**

Fiorina and DeVore are not well-known to either the overall electorate or registered Republicans at this point in the Senate campaign. Among all voters 72% report having no opinion of Fiorina, while an even larger 82% have no opinion of DeVore. Among the small proportions of voters who have an impression of each, voters hold generally mixed views.

This contrasts sharply with incumbent Boxer's nearly universal recognition among voters. Statewide nearly nine in ten voters (87%) have an opinion of Boxer – 48% favorable and 39% unfavorable. Impressions of Boxer, however, are highly partisan, with Democrats viewing her favorably nearly four to one, while Republicans have a nearly four to one negative impression.

**Table 2**  
**Voter recognition and image ratings of possible candidates for U.S. Senate in 2010 (among registered voters)**

	<b>Total voters</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Non-partisans/ others</b>
<b>Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator (D)</b>				
Favorable	48%	69%	19%	47%
Unfavorable	39	18	70	35
No opinion	13	13	11	18
<b>Carly Fiorina, businesswoman (R)</b>				
Favorable	12%	11%	16%	9%
Unfavorable	16	21	10	16
No opinion	72	68	74	75
<b>Chuck DeVore, Assemblyman (R)</b>				
Favorable	9%	10%	7%	9%
Unfavorable	9	10	11	7
No opinion	82	80	82	84

(D) denotes Democrat (R) denotes Republican

**Boxer holds early double-digit leads over both GOP rivals in the general election**

When Boxer is paired against the two GOP U.S. Senate hopefuls, the incumbent holds early double-digit leads over her two lesser-known opponents in general election match-ups. Against Fiorina Boxer's lead is 49% to 35%. When she is paired against DeVore her lead is 50% to 33%.

**Table 3**  
**Voter preferences in California's 2010 general election for U.S. Senate (among registered voters)**

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>Non-partisans/ others</b>
Boxer (D)	49%	74%	14%	49%
Fiorina (R)	35	13	68	33
Undecided	16	13	18	18
Boxer (D)	50%	75%	10%	55%
DeVore (R)	33	10	72	25
Undecided	17	15	18	20

(D) denotes Democrat (R) denotes Republican

## **About This Report**

### **Sample Details**

The findings in this report are based on a random sampling of 1,005 registered voters in California. Questions about the GOP primary were asked of a random cross section of 373 Republican primary election voters. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between September 18 and October 6, 2009. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize potential respondent fatigue, some of the questions asked in this release were asked of a random sub-sample of either 509 or 496 voters each.

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. 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. 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. 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 sub-sample, as well as the GOP primary, 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 A RANDOM SUB-SAMPLE 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 GOP PRIMARY VOTERS)

There will also be a Republican primary election for U.S. Senate next year. Suppose that in the Republican primary election for U.S. Senate the candidates were (NAMES AND TITLES READ IN RANDOM ORDER). If the Republican primary election for U.S. Senate were being held today and these were the candidates, for whom would you vote... (REPEAT LAST NAMES)? (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES AND TITLES READ)

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUB-SAMPLE OF ALL VOTERS IN RANDOM ORDER)

Suppose in next year's general election for U.S. Senate, Democratic U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer were running against Republican businesswoman Carly Fiorina. If these were the candidates and the election for U.S. Senate was being held today, for whom would you vote – Boxer or Fiorina?

Suppose in next year's general election for U.S. Senate, Democratic U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer were running against Republican Assemblyman Chuck DeVore. If these were the candidates and the election for U.S. Senate was being held today, for whom would you vote – Boxer or DeVore?