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GOVERNOR'S RACE:
WHITMAN WIDENS HER LEAD OVER POIZNER IN GOP PRIMARY AND IS NOW LEADING BROWN IN SIMULATED GENERAL ELECTION MATCH-UPS.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Support for Republican Meg Whitman, the ex-CEO of the eBay company, has surged in her campaign against Insurance Commissioner Steve Poizner for the GOP governor's nomination.

In addition, when paired against Democrat Jerry Brown in a general election match-up she now holds a narrow three-point lead, 46% to 43%, after trailing the Attorney General by double-digit margins in *Field Poll* measurements taken last October and January.

Whitman opens up huge lead over Poizner

Whitman's once large lead over rival Poizner in the Republican primary election has grown in the past two months.

Last January *The Field Poll* found Whitman leading Poizner by twenty-eight points – 45% to 17%, with 38% of likely voters undecided.

Now, in a survey completed this week, Whitman's lead has grown to forty-nine points – 63% to 14%. Those who are undecided or favor other candidates amounts to 23%.

Table 1

Voter preferences in the 2010 Republican primary for governor
(among likely voters in the GOP primary election)

	March	**January**
Meg Whitman	**63%**	45%
Steve Poizner	**14**	17
Other/Undecided	**23**	38

Note: 2% of likely GOP voters said they favored other candidates in the March survey.

Whitman now leads Brown in the general election

The Whitman voter surge is also evident among the broader general electorate.

Last October Whitman trailed Brown by twenty-one points. In January she had cut Brown's lead in half to ten points. Whitman's upward trend in support has continued to where she now holds a three-point lead over Brown – 46% to 43% – among likely voters in this November's general election.

Brown continues to hold a large preference lead over Poizner in a general election match-up. In this setting Brown is preferred by 49% while 32% choose Poizner, similar to what was found last January.

Table 2

Trend of voter preferences in 2010 general election match-ups for governor
(among likely voters in the November general election)

	March 2010	**January 2010**	**October 2009**
Brown (D) vs. Whitman (R)			
Whitman	**46%**	36%	29%
Brown	**43**	46	50
Undecided	**11**	18	21
Brown (D) vs. Poizner (R)			
Brown	**49%**	48%	50%
Poizner	**32**	31	25
Undecided	**19**	21	25

Note: October 2009 preferences asked among all registered voters.
(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican.

Voter sub-group differences between Whitman and Brown

There are many differences in preferences when likely voters in the November general election are subdivided into their respective segments. For example, Brown has a better than three-to-one lead (69% to 20%) over Whitman among Democrats. However, Whitman's lead among Republicans is even larger – 77% to 13%. Non-partisans currently split in Whitman's favor, 50% to 36%.

Whitman has a big lead over Brown among strong conservatives and also leads among moderate conservatives. The opposite pattern holds among moderate and strong liberals, where Brown is ahead by large margins. Middle-of-the-road voters are dividing about evenly.

Whitman holds huge leads over Brown among the approximately one-third of the likely California electorate who identify with the Tea Party movement. Among those strongly identifying with the Tea Party, Whitman leads 87% to 8%. Among those who have some identification with the movement her lead is 75% to 17%. On the other hand, Brown is preferred two to one (58% to 29%) among the two-thirds of the electorate who do not identify with the Tea Party.

Whitman narrowly leads Brown in traditionally Democratic Los Angeles County (45% Whitman and 40% Brown). Whitman has larger leads in the Southern California region outside of Los Angeles as well as in the Central Valley. Brown is way ahead of Whitman in the San Francisco Bay Area and also leads in Northern California areas outside the nine-county Bay Area region.

Small pluralities of both men and women currently favor Whitman over Brown. Whitman also is ahead of Brown among 40-64 year-olds and among those 65 and older. Brown is currently preferred among voters in the 18 to 39 age group.

Whitman leads Brown by nine points (50% to 41%) among white non-Hispanics, while Brown holds a greater than two-to-one lead among Latinos 54% to 25%.

Table 3
Voter preferences in 2010 general election match-ups between Republican Meg Whitman and Democrat Jerry Brown for governor
(among likely voters in the November general election)

	Whitman	Brown	No opinion
Total	**46%**	**43**	**11**
Party registration			
(.45) Democrats	20%	69	11
(.35) Republicans	77%	13	10
(.20) Non-partisans/others	50%	36	14
Political ideology			
(.23) Strongly conservative	84%	11	5
(.12) Moderately conservative*	49%	40	11
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	43%	42	15
(.09) Moderately liberal*	9%	81	10
(.11) Strongly liberal*	5%	85	10
Tea Party identification			
(.15) Identify a lot	87%	8	5
(.18) Identify some	75%	17	8
(.67) No not identify/not aware	29%	58	13
Region			
(.22) Los Angeles County	45%	40	15
(.34) Other Southern California	54%	37	9
(.18) Central Valley	57%	30	13
(.20) San Francisco Bay Area	27%	64	9
(.06) Other Northern California*	30%	49	21
Gender			
(.49) Male	47%	43	10
(.51) Female	45%	43	12
Age			
(.27) 18 – 39	36%	46	18
(.51) 40 – 64	49%	42	9
(.22) 65 or older	50%	40	10
Race/ethnicity			
(.66) White non-Hispanic	50%	41	9
(.17) Latino	25%	54	21
(.06) Black**	42%	58	**
(.11) Asian/other**	55%	33	12

* Small sample base.

** Less than ½ of 1%.

Candidate images

Many more voters now have an opinion of Whitman than did so last January. At present, two in three (67%) can offer an opinion of the former eBay CEO, up from 45% in January, and these voters break 40% to 27% in the positive direction. Among GOP voters Whitman's image is now nearly four to one favorable (56% to 16%).

Brown's image stands at 41% favorable and 37% unfavorable – a more mixed assessment than he has received in the past.

A majority of voters (52%) still do not know enough about Poizner to offer an opinion. Among those who can express an opinion, Poizner is viewed more negatively than positively, both among voters in the overall electorate as well as those within the Republican Party.

Table 4
Voter images of the candidates for governor in the 2010 election
(among likely voters in the November general election)

	Total voters		Democrats	Republicans	Non-partisans/ others
	March	Jan.		– March 2010 –	
Jerry Brown (D)					
Favorable	**41%**	44%	60%	19%	38%
Unfavorable	**37**	32	20	60	34
No opinion	**22**	24	20	21	28
Meg Whitman (R)					
Favorable	**40%**	25%	24%	56%	46%
Unfavorable	**27**	20	36	16	22
No opinion	**33**	55	40	28	32
Steve Poizner (R)					
Favorable	**16%**	16%	12%	20%	17%
Unfavorable	**32**	20	30	34	32
No opinion	**52**	64	58	46	51

(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican.

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Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a Field Poll survey completed March 9-15, 2010 among a random sample of 748 likely voters in the November general election. Additional interviews were conducted among likely voters in the GOP primary to increase this portion of the sample to 353 voters. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish with live interviewers working from Field Research's central location telephone interviewing facility.

Up to eight attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. Interviewing was completed on either a voter's landline phone or a cell phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing, the overall sample was weighted to align it to its proper statewide proportions by party registration, region, and other demographic characteristics of the registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size as well as the percentage distribution being examined. The maximum sampling error estimates for results based on likely voters in the general election is +/- 3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while the maximum sampling error of likely voters in the GOP primary election is +/- 5.5 percentage points.

The maximum sampling error is based on results in the middle of the sampling distribution (i.e., percentages at or near 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (those closer to 10% or 90%) have a smaller margin of error. Findings from subgroups of the overall sample have somewhat larger sampling error levels. There are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error. However, the overall design and execution of the survey sought to minimize these other sources of error.

Questions Asked

(ASKED OF LIKELY GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS)
I am going to read the names of some people who are running for political office in California this year. 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. (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES OF CANDIDATES READ).

(ASKED OF LIKELY GOP PRIMARY ELECTION VOTERS)
Two of the candidates in the June Republican primary election for Governor are (NAMES AND TITLES OF CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER). If the Republican primary election for Governor were being held today, for whom would you vote?

(ASKED OF LIKELY GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS)
I am going to read match-ups between some possible Democratic and Republicans in next November's general election for Governor. For each pairing, please tell me which candidate you would vote for if the election for Governor were being held today. What if the candidates were (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES READ)? If the election for Governor were being held today, for whom would you vote?