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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/3z97f1d8>

Author

DiCamillo, Mark

Publication Date

2017-12-21



Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research
Institute of Governmental Studies
124-126 Moses Hall
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
Tel: 510-642-6835
Email: igs@berkeley.edu

Release #2017-20

For Publication: Thursday, December 21, 2017

***Democrats Newsom and Villaraigosa lead the field in next June's
top two primary election for governor***

Feinstein leads Democratic challenger de Leon, but receives a modest 41% of voter support

By Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
(o) 510-642-6835 (c) 415-602-5594

Two Democrats sit atop the crowded field of candidates vying to succeed Jerry Brown as California's governor in next June's top-two primary election. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom capturing 26% of likely voter preferences, followed by former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, at 17%. Two Republicans, businessman John Cox and Assemblyman Travis Allen, trail with 9% each. If the hierarchy of voter preferences found in this poll continue, it would result in the state's first all-Democratic candidate gubernatorial election in the fall.

One of the major features characterizing preferences in the governor's race is the contrasting demographic profile of the voters backing the two leading Democratic candidates. Newsom's strongest base of support comes from voters living in Northern California, particularly in the San Francisco Bay Area, while Villaraigosa is preferred among voters in Southern California, especially Los Angeles County. Newsom leads among white non-Hispanics and among U.S.-born voters, while Villaraigosa's holds a big edge among the state's rapidly growing Latino voting electorate and among voters of all nationalities born outside the United States. Newsom is also preferred by voters at the upper end of the income scale, while Villaraigosa has the advantage among those at the lower end of the scale.

It is also possible that the fall general election for U.S. Senate will pit two Democrats against one another, since no prominent Republicans have yet to enter the race. However, incumbent Democratic Senator Dianne Feinstein will be facing at least one prominent Democratic challenger, state Senate President Kevin de Leon. When the two are paired in a U.S. Senate trial heat, the current poll finds Feinstein leading de Leon 41% to 27%. Feinstein's relatively modest lead is somewhat surprising given that the Senator is nearly universally known by voters, while relatively few of those polled know enough about de Leon to offer an opinion.

Newsom and Villaraigosa leading the field in top two primary election for governor

In each statewide gubernatorial survey conducted this year by the *Berkeley IGS Poll*, Newsom has been the frontrunner. The latest poll shows Newsom again leading the field, with 26% of the preferences of likely voters. Fellow Democrat Villaraigosa places a strong second, with 17% support. Republicans Cox and Allen follow with 9%, while two other Democrats, state Treasurer John Chiang and former state schools superintendent Delaine Eastin, trail with 5% each. Greater than one in four likely voters (28%) are undecided.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in the June 2018 top two primary election for Governor

	December 2017		September	May
	Likely voters	Registered voters		
	%	%	%	%
Gavin Newsom (D)	26	23	23	22
Antonio Villaraigosa (D)	17	19	12	17
John Cox (R)	9	9	10	9
Travis Allen (R)	9	7	9	NA
John Chiang (D)	5	5	7	5
Delaine Eastin (D)	5	4	4	3
Others	1	1	*	7
Undecided	28	32	35	37

Note: May 2017 survey included Republican David Hadley among the candidates polled. He has since dropped out of the race.

** Less than ½ of 1% NA: Not measured (D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican*

Demographic profile of voters backing Newsom and Villaraigosa differ markedly

The poll finds big differences in voter preferences of Newsom and Villaraigosa across major regional and demographic subgroups of the state's likely voter population.

Newsom's strongest base of support comes from voters living in Northern California, especially voters in the San Francisco Bay Area, where he holds a huge 55% to 6% lead. By contrast, Villaraigosa is preferred over Newsom in Southern California, especially in Los Angeles County, where he leads 31% to 20%. Newsom is heavily favored over the former Los Angeles Mayor by self-described liberals (48%-17%) and moderates (36% to 11%), while Villaraigosa receives greater support among conservative voters (15% to 3%).

Villaraigosa's strongest base of support comes from the state's rapidly growing Latino voter constituency, where he leads Newsom by twenty-three points, 39% to 16%. Villaraigosa is also preferred over Newsom more than two to one (32% to 15%) among voters of all nationalities born outside the United States. On the other hand, Newsom holds a solid lead among white non-Hispanics (32% to 9%) and among U.S.-born voters (29% to 13%).

The poll also finds Newsom heavily favored among voters with incomes of \$100,000 or more (33% to 11%), while Villaraigosa holds the edge among those earning less than \$40,000 (29% to 22%).

Table 2
Likely voter preferences for governor in the June 2018 “top two” primary
across major subgroups of the voting population

	Newsom %	Villa- raigosa %	Cox %	Allen %	Chiang %	Eastin %	Other/ undecided %
Total likely voters	26	17	9	9	5	5	29
Party registration							
Democrats	38	26	1	**	5	8	22
Republicans	6	3	29	20	5	1	36
No party preference/other	26	15	3	14	4	3	35
Political ideology							
Conservative	3	15	19	24	3	1	35
Moderate	36	11	5	5	5	4	34
Liberal	48	17	**	1	6	7	21
Area							
Southern California	18	23	10	8	6	4	30
Northern California	38	8	8	10	3	5	28
Region							
Los Angeles County	20	31	4	2	6	6	29
Other Southern California	18	16	15	12	6	3	30
San Francisco Bay Area	55	6	5	4	1	6	23
Other Northern California	20	11	11	16	5	5	32
Gender							
Male	25	16	10	10	6	3	30
Female	27	18	8	8	4	6	29
Race/ethnicity							
White non-Hispanic	32	9	11	11	3	5	29
Latino	16	39	7	6	4	3	23
African American*	25	23	**	5	14	3	30
Asian American/other	20	13	11	6	9	4	37
Age							
18-39	25	25	4	6	4	4	32
40-49	30	14	7	16	5	9	19
50-64	22	15	10	11	9	3	30
65 or older	30	14	14	5	1	5	31
Nativity							
U.S. born	29	13	11	10	5	5	27
Born outside the U.S.*	15	32	3	4	5	5	36
Annual Household Income							
Less than \$40,000	22	29	6	1	4	6	32
\$40,000-\$99,999	27	12	11	12	4	6	28
\$100,000 or more	33	11	12	10	8	2	24

* small sample base ** less than ½ of 1%

Backers of the two leading Democrats differ sharply with their GOP opponents about whether the next governor should carry on Governor Brown's policies

Voters in the current survey were also asked whether they preferred a gubernatorial candidate in 2018 that would carry on the policies of Governor Jerry Brown, or someone with different policy views. The electorate is about evenly divided about this overall, with 49% preferring a candidate who favors policies different than those of the current governor and 44% favoring someone who would generally carry on Brown's policies.

However, there are wide differences in opinion between voters backing the two leading Democratic candidates for governor and those supporting the two leading GOP candidates. Newsom supporters are strongest in their preference for continuing Brown's policies (77% to 18%), and most backers of Villaraigosa also hold this view (60% to 28%).

On the other hand, voters backing either of the two GOP gubernatorial candidates are nearly unanimous (94%) in preferring a gubernatorial candidate who espouses different policy positions than Brown's. Undecided voters also appear to be looking for change, preferring someone who supports policies different than the sitting governor greater than two to one (62% to 28%).

Table 3

As California's next governor would you prefer someone who generally carries on the policies of Governor Jerry Brown or someone who favors different policies

	Total likely voters %	Newsom supporters %	Villaraigosa supporters %	GOP candidate supporters %	Undec- ided voters %
Supports different policies	49	18	28	94	62
Carry on Brown's policies	44	77	60	3	28
No opinion	7	5	12	3	10

Note: Views of supporters of Chiang and Eastin not shown on this question because of small sample bases.

Feinstein leads de Leon in U.S. Senate trial heat

Likely voters in this survey were also asked their voting preferences if their choices in next year's U.S. Senate election were between Feinstein and her Democratic rival de Leon. In this setting, Feinstein leads de Leon by 14 points, 41% to 27%. However, an unusually large proportion of likely voters (32%) are undecided or say they would support another candidate.

Feinstein's strongest base of support against de Leon is from rank-and-file Democrats, political liberals, African Americans, and voters age 65 or older. By contrast, De Leon leads among Latinos and voters living in Northern California outside the Bay Area. De Leon is also preferred among Republicans and conservatives in the scenario where the only candidates were two Democratic candidates with no Republican alternatives.

Table 4
Voter preferences for U.S. Senate when pairing Democrat Dianne Feinstein against
Democrat Kevin De Leon among likely voters

	Feinstein %	De Leon %	Other/Undecided %
Total likely voters	41	27	32
Party registration			
Democrats	58	22	20
Republicans	15	37	48
No party preference/other	36	25	39
Political ideology			
Conservative	16	35	49
Moderate	44	27	29
Liberal	58	24	18
Region			
Los Angeles County	43	32	25
Other Southern California	40	20	40
San Francisco Bay Area	46	23	31
Other Northern California	33	39	30
Gender			
Male	33	29	38
Female	47	26	27
Age			
18-39	43	29	28
40-49	40	32	28
50-64	33	30	37
65 or older	47	19	34
Race/ethnicity			
White non-Hispanic	43	25	32
Latino	32	41	27
African American*	69	10	21
Asian American/other	33	22	45

* small sample base

Voters' ability to offer an opinion of the candidates vary widely

Feinstein is, by far, the best known of the candidates in next year's elections for governor and U.S. Senate. Nearly nine in ten likely voters (87%) can offer an opinion of Feinstein, with opinions dividing almost evenly, 45% favorable vs. 42% unfavorable. By contrast, just 21% of likely voters have an opinion of de Leon, and they divide 10% positive and 11% negative.

Majorities of likely voters can also offer an opinion of the two leading gubernatorial candidates -- 57% in the case of Newsom and 58% for Villaraigosa. Voter assessments of Newsom are generally positive, 36% favorable vs. 21% unfavorable, while opinions of Villaraigosa are more divided -- 28% favorable vs. 30% unfavorable.

The four other gubernatorial candidates polled are not nearly as well known to voters. Just 26% can offer an opinion of Chiang, and even fewer voters (between 10% and 14%) are able to give an assessment of either Eastin, Cox and Allen.

Table 5
Identification and image ratings of candidates in the June primary elections for
Governor and U.S. Senate (among likely voters)

	Total %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No party preference /other %
Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senator				
Favorable	45	62	16	43
Unfavorable	42	20	77	42
No opinion	13	18	7	17
Gavin Newsom, Lieutenant Governor				
Favorable	36	51	13	34
Unfavorable	21	6	46	23
No opinion	43	43	41	43
Antonio Villaraigosa, former Los Angeles Mayor				
Favorable	28	39	8	28
Unfavorable	30	17	54	29
No opinion	42	44	38	43
John Chiang, State Treasurer				
Favorable	18	22	14	13
Unfavorable	8	3	16	10
No opinion	74	75	70	77
Kevin de Leon, State Senate President				
Favorable	10	14	3	10
Unfavorable	11	5	19	15
No opinion	79	81	78	75
Delaine Eastin, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction				
Favorable	8	12	2	5
Unfavorable	6	5	10	6
No opinion	86	83	88	89
Travis Allen, State Assemblyman				
Favorable	7	6	6	12
Unfavorable	3	2	5	4
No opinion	90	92	89	84
John Cox, businessman and lawyer				
Favorable	6	4	8	6
Unfavorable	4	4	5	6
No opinion	90	92	87	88

About the Survey

The findings in this report come from a survey completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies, at the University of California, Berkeley among 1,000 California registered voters, including 672 likely voters. The survey was conducted between the period December 7-16, 2017 by telephone in English and Spanish by live interviewers. Voters were randomly sampled from listings of registered voters derived from the state's official registered voter rolls. Up to four attempts were made to reach each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

Interviews were administered by professionally trained and supervised interviewers calling from Davis Research's central location call center in Calabasas (Los Angeles County), California. Interviewing was completed on either a voter's cell phone or a household landline phone depending on the source of the telephone listings from the voter file. In this survey 688 interviews were completed with voters on their cell phone, while 312 completed on a landline phone. After the completion of interviewing, the results from the overall registered voter sample were weighted to demographic, regional and political parameters of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size and the percentage distributions being examined. The maximum sampling error for results from the likely voter sample is +/- 3.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Results based on subgroups of the likely voter sample would be subject to larger margins of sampling error.

Questions Asked

Governor Brown will not be allowed to run for re-election next year because of the state's term limits law. When thinking about California's next governor, would you prefer someone who would generally carry on Governor Brown's policies or someone who favors policies that are different than Brown's?

I am going to read some people who are candidates or are considering running for statewide office next year. For each, please tell me whether your opinion of that person is favorable, unfavorable or whether you don't know enough about them to say. Is your opinion of _____ favorable or unfavorable or don't you know enough about (him) (her) to say? (**NAMES AND JOB TITLES READ IN RANDOM ORDER**),

Next year's June primary election for governor will be an open primary, in which all candidates from all parties are listed together on one ballot. I'm going to read the names of some of the candidates. Please tell me who you would vote for if the election for governor were held today. (**NAMES AND PARTIES READ IN RANDOM ORDER**), If these were the candidates, who would you vote for?

There will also be an election for U.S. Senator in California next year. If the election for U.S. Senator were held today and the candidates were Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Kevin de Leon, who would you vote for? (**NAMES AND PARTIES OF THE CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER**)

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within its newly established Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. For a complete listing of stories issued by the poll go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.