

# UC Berkeley

## IGS Poll

### Title

Release #2017-14: Voter Views of California's Three National Leaders in Washington.  
Feinstein: While voters rate her job performance positively, fewer than half are inclined to support a re-election bid. Harris: The freshman Senator's job marks now...

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/8qc9b1z0>

### Author

DiCamillo, Mark

### Publication Date

2017-09-14



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 #2017-14

For Publication: Thursday, September 14, 2017

***Voter Views of California's Three National Leaders in Washington***

*Feinstein: While voters rate her job performance positively, fewer than half are inclined to support a re-election bid.*

*Harris: The freshman Senator's job marks now exceed Feinstein's, but most want her to remain in the Senate rather than run for president in 2020.*

*Pelosi: State Democrats favor their party choosing someone else to serve as House leader after the 2018 elections.*

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

California voters continue to offer generally positive assessments of the job performance of their two U.S. Senators, Democrats Dianne Feinstein and Kamala Harris.

However, when asked whether they would be inclined to support Feinstein were she to seek a fifth full-term to the Senate next year, fewer than half (45%) say they are inclined to do so.

In addition, while many national commentators are including Harris's name on early lists of Democratic Party contenders for president in 2020, by a greater than two-to-one margin voters here would prefer that she remain in the Senate (49%) rather than run for president (22%).

Pluralities of California Democrats also think that their party should choose someone else to replace Nancy Pelosi as their leader in the House of Representatives after next year's congressional elections.

These are the topline findings of the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed online in early September among 1,200 registered voters statewide.

### **Feinstein and Harris both receive positive job performance marks from state voters**

The latest poll finds that 50% of the state's electorate approve of the job Feinstein is doing as Senator, while 36% disapprove. This compares to a 59% positive to 41% negative assessment in March.

Voters offer an even more positive assessment of Harris, and her job marks now exceed those of Feinstein. At present, 52% of voters approve of the job Harris is doing, while just 29% disapprove.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Trend in 2017 job approval ratings for California's two U.S. Senators (among California registered voters)</b>			
	<b>Approve %</b>	<b>Disapprove %</b>	<b>No opinion %</b>
<b><u>Dianne Feinstein (D)</u></b>			
<b>Early September 2017</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>14</b>
March 2017	59	41	n/a
<b><u>Kamala Harris (D)</u></b>			
<b>Early September 2017</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>19</b>
March 2017	53	27	20

*(D) denotes Democrat*

*n/a: not measured*

### **Comparing each Senator's job marks across subgroups of the voting population**

Voter assessments of both Democratic Senators are highly partisan, and generally mirror one another across most major subgroups of the state's registered voter population.

Harris's somewhat better job marks are derived in large part from higher approval scores across two key voter segments. For example, among voters who describe themselves as very liberal in politics, 86% approve of the job Harris is doing, while just 65% say this about Feinstein. In addition, while younger voters under the age of 30 are more likely to approve than disapprove of Harris (46% to 25%), they are evenly divided in their assessments of Feinstein, with 34% approving and 35% disapproving.

**Table 2**  
**Comparing the job ratings of California's two U.S. Senators**  
**across subgroups of the registered voter population**

	Feinstein		Harris	
	Approve %	Disapprove %	Approve %	Disapprove %
<b>Total statewide</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>29</b>
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	73	15	73	10
Republicans	18	74	23	60
No party preference/others	41	36	43	32
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Very liberal	65	21	86	11
Liberal	76	14	74	10
Moderate	54	25	51	21
Conservative	20	75	25	61
Very conservative*	27	70	24	69
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	55	30	58	26
South Coast	44	38	45	30
Other Southern California	40	45	49	30
Central Valley	44	43	44	37
San Francisco Bay Area	61	29	59	25
Other Northern California*	51	34	47	23
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	50	40	55	31
Female	50	32	49	27
<u>Age</u>				
18-29	34	35	46	25
30-39	45	28	47	22
40-49	53	34	57	30
50-64	58	38	58	29
65 or older	55	40	49	37
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White non-Hispanic	49	42	49	35
Latino	53	28	54	22
African American*	55	17	56	14
Asian American/other	45	34	55	26

\* small sample base

Note: Differences between 100% and sum of approve-disapprove percentages equal proportion undecided.

### **Fewer than half are inclined to support Feinstein in a re-election bid**

Despite giving Feinstein generally positive job performance marks, voters are divided when asked whether they would be inclined or not inclined to support her in a re-election bid should she decide to run for a fifth full-term next year. Statewide, 45% of voters say they are inclined to re-elect the Senator in this setting, while 41% are not.

There are large differences in voter support by their party registration and political ideology. For example, while two-thirds of Democrats say they would be inclined to re-elect Feinstein, 77% of Republicans are not. One area of potential weakness for Feinstein relates to the preferences of the segment of voters registered as No Party Preference or with another party, 44% of whom are disinclined to re-elect the Senator than are inclined (37%).

Liberal voters are also much more supportive of Feinstein than conservatives. Also, when subdividing the preferences of liberals, Feinstein receives somewhat lower levels of support from voters considering themselves very liberal in politics than from among those who choose only the liberal designation.

There are also big differences in voter support for Feinstein by age. While a majority of voters age 50 or older are inclined to re-elect the Senator, among voters under age 30, just 30% say this.

When preferences are examined by race/ethnicity, fewer white non-Hispanics are inclined to support Feinstein's re-election (44%) than are disinclined to do so (48%). She fares better among Latino and Asian American voters, who support a potential re-election bid four to three, as well as among the state's African Americans, who back her by a two and one half-to-one margin.

Consistent with past polls, Feinstein's strongest base of voter support comes from the heavily Democratic regions of Los Angeles County and the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. However, one difference found in the latest poll is that a slightly larger proportion of voters in Feinstein's home region of the San Francisco Bay Area say they are not inclined to re-elect her (39%) than say this in Los Angeles County (33%).

<b>Table 3</b> <b>Voter inclination to support Feinstein if she decides to run for re-election next year</b> <b>(among California registered voters)</b>			
	<b>Inclined to re-elect %</b>	<b>Not inclined %</b>	<b>No opinion %</b>
<b>Total statewide</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>14</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	67	20	13
Republicans	16	77	7
No party preference/others	37	44	19
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Very liberal	60	25	15
Liberal	73	18	9
Moderate	47	35	18
Conservative	18	76	6
Very conservative*	25	72	3
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	54	33	13
South Coast	41	45	14
Other Southern California	34	50	16
Central Valley	41	48	11
San Francisco Bay Area	52	39	9
Other Northern California*	48	33	19
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	46	44	10
Female	45	39	16
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	30	42	28
30-39	44	33	23
40-49	47	37	16
50-64	53	43	4
65 or older	50	47	3
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	44	48	8
Latino	46	35	19
African American*	56	22	22
Asian American/other	47	35	18

\* *small sample base*

### **California voters prefer Harris remaining in the Senate than running for president in 2020**

Even though Harris has served less than one year in the U.S. Senate, she has repeatedly been included on early lists of potential Democratic Party candidates for president in 2020. Because of this, the latest poll asked Californians whether they preferred Harris running for president in 2020 or remaining in the Senate.

Despite the considerable high regard that voters have for the freshman Senator, by a greater than two-to-one margin, California voters prefer that she remain in the Senate rather than run seek her party's presidential nomination in 2020.

Views about this span all major segments of registered voter population, with pluralities or majorities preferring that she remain in the Senate rather than run for president. The voter segments where support for Harris running for the presidency is highest include Democrats, liberals, younger voters, African Americans, and voters living in either the San Francisco Bay Area or other parts of Northern California. Yet, even among these subgroups, the proportions favoring Harris to make a presidential bid in 2020 do not exceed one in three.

<b>Table 4</b> <b>Would you prefer Kamala Harris running for the Democratic nomination for</b> <b>president in 2020 or serving out her full term as U.S. Senator</b> <b>(among California registered voters)</b>			
	<b>Run for President %</b>	<b>Remain in the Senate %</b>	<b>No opinion %</b>
<b>Total statewide</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>29</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	29	49	22
Republicans	14	50	36
No party preference/others	17	48	35
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Very liberal	34	51	15
Liberal	29	52	19
Moderate	17	51	32
Conservative	16	50	34
Very conservative*	19	47	34
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	22	50	28
South Coast	19	45	36
Other Southern California	18	46	36
Central Valley	19	54	27
San Francisco Bay Area	26	49	25
Other Northern California*	29	50	21
<u>Gender</u>			
Male	22	46	32
Female	21	52	27
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	28	39	33
30-39	28	35	37
40-49	22	54	24
50-64	21	52	27
65 or older	12	61	27
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	20	51	29
Latino	23	47	30
African American*	30	46	24
Asian American/other	21	50	29

\* small sample base



**California Democrats favor their party choosing someone other than Nancy Pelosi as House leader after the 2018 elections**

California Democrats were also asked their opinions about whether Nancy Pelosi should remain as House leader after next year's elections or whether it would be better for their party to choose someone else. When posing this question, voters were divided into two random subsamples, with half asked the question under the scenario that the Democrats regain control of the House in the 2018 elections, and the other half asked the question assuming the Democrats do not regain control of the House.

In both settings, larger proportions of the state's Democratic rank-and-file prefer their party to choose another Democrat as House leader rather than Pelosi. Were the Democrats to regain control of the House in 2018, 44% prefer their party choosing someone other than Pelosi as Speaker, while just 30% would like Pelosi to serve in that role. If the Democrats don't regain control of the House next year, the proportion favoring the Democrats to choose someone other than Pelosi as their House leader grows to 50%.

---

**Table 5**  
**Should the Democrats choose Nancy Pelosi as their party leader**  
**in the House of Representatives under two different 2018 election scenarios**  
**(among registered Democrats in California)**

---

	<b><u>If, in the 2018 elections, the Democrats . . .</u></b>	
	<b>Regain control of the House %</b>	<b>Don't regain control of the House %</b>
<u>House Democrats should . . .</u>		
Choose another someone else as their party leader	44	50
Choose Pelosi as their leader	30	31
No opinion	26	19

---

## About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of California registered voters conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* was completed online by YouGov August 27-September 5, 2017 in English and Spanish. The survey was completed among a statewide sample of 1,200 registered voters, and included an oversampling of 200 voters who were the parents of children under age 18. According to YouGov, results from the overall sample have a margin of error of +/- 4%.

YouGov administered the survey by inviting California registered voters who are included among its online panel of over 1.5 million Americans to participate in the poll. Panelists were recruited using a variety of methods, including telephone-to-web and mail-to-web recruitment, partner-sponsored solicitations, web-based advertising and email campaigns, as well as through past telephone and mail surveys. Eligible voters were selected to participate in the poll using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking demographic and regional targets, so that the characteristics of those polled approximate the profile of the state's overall registered voter population. After survey administration, YouGov also applied statistical weights to first the statewide voter sample and the parent oversample to their proper population proportions, and following this, to a wide range of political, demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population. IGS was responsible for the development and translation into Spanish of all survey questions.

### Questions asked

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Feinstein's fifth full term as U.S. Senator ends next year. If Feinstein runs for re-election for another term, would you be inclined or not inclined to vote for her if the election were held today?

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Kamala Harris is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

A number of news reports have included Kamala Harris on early lists of possible Democratic candidates for president in 2020. If the opportunity presents itself, do you favor Harris running for the Democratic nomination for president in 2020 or would you rather that she not run and serve out her full term as U.S. Senator?

*(Alternate wordings asked of random subsamples of registered Democrats statewide)* If the Democrats (do not regain) (regain) control of the House of Representatives in next year's congressional elections, should they choose Nancy Pelosi as (House Minority Leader) (Speaker of the House) or should she step down as party leader and have the Democrats choose someone else instead?

### **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 Jack Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. A complete listing of poll stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* can be found at <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.