Title
Release #2018-11: Final pre-election poll in races for Governor, U.S. Senate, Lt. Governor, Insurance Commissioner, State Schools Superintendent, and two high-profile state ballot initiatives, Propositions 6 and 10.

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Author
DiCamillo, Mark

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Final pre-election poll in races for Governor, U.S. Senate, Lt. Governor, Insurance Commissioner, State Schools Superintendent, and two high-profile state ballot initiatives, Propositions 6 and 10.

By Mark DiCamillo, Director, Berkeley IGS Poll  
(c) 415-602-5594

The final pre-election Berkeley IGS Poll finds Democratic Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom poised to become California’s next governor. According to the poll Newsom is comfortably leading his Republican challenger businessman John Cox among the state’s likely voters by a 58% to 40% margin.

In the U.S. Senate race incumbent Democrat Dianne Feinstein also leads, but by a somewhat smaller margin. Her opponent, fellow Democratic state Senator Kevin De Leon, who finished second in the state’s top two primary in June, trails the state’s senior Senator 45% to 36%. Another 19% of likely voters, mostly Republicans, are undecided or say they won’t vote for either Democrat in the Senate race.

Voters will also be asked to make their voting choices without the usual Democratic vs. Republican Party cues to guide them in three other statewide constitutional office races. For example, the race for Lt. Governor features two Democrats, the election for Insurance Commissioner pits a Democrat against an independent candidate, while the contest for State Superintendent of Public Instruction is a non-partisan affair.

For Lt. Governor, the poll finds businesswomen Eleni Kounalakis holding a solid double-digit lead over fellow Democratic state Senator Ed Hernandez, 45% to 31%. In the race for Insurance Commissioner Steve Poisner, running as an independent, is narrowly ahead of his Democratic opponent, state Senator Ricardo Lara, 49% to 44%. And, in the big bucks battle to become the state’s next State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Marshall Tuck is preferred over state legislator Tony Thurmond 48% to 36%.

Voters will also be asked to weigh in on two high profile statewide ballot propositions, Proposition 6, the proposed repeal of the state’s gasoline tax, and Proposition 10, to liberalize state restrictions on local rent control laws. Both are trailing in the poll. Just 40% of likely voters say they intend to vote Yes on Prop 6, while only 35% are supporting Prop. 10.
These are the findings from a Berkeley IGS Poll completed online in English and Spanish October 19-26, 2018 among 1,339 likely voters statewide. Voters were randomly sampled from the state voter rolls by Political Data, Inc., which has been partnering with the Berkeley IGS Poll in its pre-election polling this year.

Preferences for governor
Preferences in the governor’s race are highly partisan, with over nine in ten Democrats (92%) backing Newsom and 93% of Republicans supporting Cox. The state’s fast growing non-partisan voters, who now outnumber the state’s Republicans on the voter rolls, are also backing Newsom by twenty-one points, and are major factor in his eighteen-point statewide lead.

Table 1
Likely voter preferences for Governor in California’s 2018 general election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>No party pref./other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gavin Newsom</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lt. Governor/Businessman, Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John H. Cox</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businessman/Taxpayer Advocate, Republican</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Less than ½ of 1%

Newsom’s sizable lead is also the result of the strong backing of the state’s Latino voters, who support him 73% to 26%. Newsom also holds substantial leads over Cox among women (65% to 34%), college graduates (65% to 33%), voters in Los Angeles County (66% to 32%) and the San Francisco Bay Area (64% to 33%), and voters under age 40 (62% to 37%).

Preferences for U.S. Senate
Feinstein’s narrower lead over fellow Democrat De Leon in the U.S. Senate race is based primarily on her receiving the backing of rank-and-file Democrats, who are supporting her re-election nearly two to one. A plurality of Republican voters (43%) are undecided or say they will not vote for either of the two Democratic Senate candidates. However, among those Republicans who are intending to cast a vote for U.S. Senate more are backing De Leon (34%) than Feinstein (23%). Non-partisans also narrowly prefer De Leon over Feinstein, 44% to 39%.
Table 2  
Likely voter preferences for U.S. Senate in California’s 2018 general election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>No party pref./other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dianne Feinstein</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Senator, Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin DeLeon</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Senator, Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/will not vote in this race</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a sizable gender gap in voter preferences in the Senate race. Female voters back Feinstein 53% to 32%, while male voters narrowly prefer De Leon 41% to 38%. De Leon’s advantage over Feinstein expands to a 46% to 26% margin among men who are non-college graduates. Feinstein also polls better among voters living in the state’s coastal counties (49% to 35%) than among inland county voters who narrowly support De Leon 39% to 37%.

**Voter impressions of the two Senate candidates are mixed**

Likely voters hold very mixed views of the two Senate candidates. In Feinstein’s case, 48% have a favorable opinion of her, while 49% view her negatively. While three in four Democrats (75%) hold Feinstein in high regard, 87% of Republicans view her negatively. A slightly larger proportion of No Party Preference voters offer an unfavorable than favorable opinion of the state’s senior Senator.

Voter impressions of De Leon, while somewhat less well-defined than Feinstein’s, are also highly partisan. Statewide, 39% of likely voters view De Leon positively and 31% hold a negative opinion. Democrats give De Leon a more than five to one favorable rating, while Republicans view him negatively nearly six to one. However, relatively large proportion of likely voters have no opinion of De Leon, including 31% of the state’s Democrats, 25% of Republicans and 34% of independents.
Table 3
Likely voter impressions of the two Democratic U.S. Senate candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Democrat %</th>
<th>Republican %</th>
<th>No party pref./other %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feinstein</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>De Leon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Favorable</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfavorable</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Opinion</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferences for Lt. Governor
Kounalakis’ double-digit lead over fellow Democrat Hernandez in the Lt. Governor’s race is the product of her receiving the backing of both registered Democrats and the state’s independent voters. Similar to preferences in the U.S. Senate race, most Republicans are undecided or say they will not vote for either Democrat.

Table 4
Likely voter preferences for Lieutenant Governor in California’s 2018 general election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total %</th>
<th>Democrat %</th>
<th>Republican %</th>
<th>No party pref./other %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eleni Kounalakis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Businesswoman/Economic Advisor, Democrat</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ed Hernandez</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Senator/Businessman, Democrat</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/ will not vote in this race</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferences for Insurance Commissioner
Poizner, running as an independent, holds a narrow five-point lead, 49% to 44%, over Democratic challenger Lara in the election for Insurance Commissioner. Poizner, who formerly served as the state’s Insurance Commissioner as a Republican, is overwhelmingly backed by the state’s GOP voters. Lara, on the other hand, is strongly preferred by his fellow Democrats. No Party Preference voters are proving to be pivotal to Poizner, as they prefer the independent Poizner over Lara, the Democrat, by a 57% to 31% margin.

Table 5
Likely voter preferences for Insurance Commissioner in California’s 2018 general election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>No party pref./other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Steve Poizner</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonprofit Director, No Party Preference</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ricardo Lara</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>California Senator, Democrat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/will not vote in this race</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Preferences for State Superintendent of Public Instruction
Voter preferences in the non-partisan State Superintendent of Public Instruction’s race also have a partisan cast to them. Tuck’s 48% to 36% poll advantage over Thurmond is underpinned by the strong backing of Republicans, while a majority of Democrats prefer Thurmond. However, No Party Preference voters are backing Tuck five to three. A relatively large 16% of likely voters remained undecided one week before the election.

Table 6
Likely voter preferences for State Superintendent of Public Instruction in California’s 2018 general election

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>No party pref./other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Tuck</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools Improvement Director</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tony K. Thurmond</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educator/State Legislator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided/will not vote in this race</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Preferences on two high profile statewide ballot propositions
The poll finds majorities of voters lining up in opposition to two high-profile propositions appearing on the statewide general election ballot.

Just 40% of the likely voters polled favored Proposition 6, whose official ballot title is “Eliminates Certain Road Repair and Transportation Funding” but is more commonly referred to as the gas tax repeal initiative. A 56% majority are opposed. Similarly, voters are rejecting Proposition 10, an initiative to expand local government authority to enact rent control on residential property, with 60% on the No side and just 35% voting Yes.

Preferences on Prop. 6 divide sharply also partisan lines. Greater than three in four Democrats (77%) are intending to vote No, while 80% of Republicans are on the Yes side. Independent voters are joining Democrats in opposing the initiative nearly two to one.

By contrast, Republican voters are the voting constituency leading the opposition to Prop. 10, with 85% intending to vote No. There is only tepid support for the rent control initiative among Democrats, with 49% in favor and 45% opposed. Independent voters are on the No side 54% to 39%.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Democrat</th>
<th>Republican</th>
<th>No party pref./other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposition 6</strong></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Eliminates Certain Road Repair and Transportation Funding)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Proposition 10</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>(Expands Local Governments’ Authority to Enact Rent Control on Residential Property)</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undecided</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a Berkeley IGS Poll completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was completed online among 1,339 likely voters in California October 19-25, 2018 in English and Spanish.

The survey was administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Each email invitation asked voters to participate in a short non-partisan survey conducted by IGS. Voters were provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters over a seven-day period. An opt out link was provided at the bottom of each invitation for voters not wishing to participate or not wanting to receive future emails from IGS about the survey.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., which is partnering with IGS in its pre-election polling. The email listings were derived from information contained on the official voter registration rolls. The statewide sample was stratified in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population, such as by age, gender and race/ethnicity.

After the completion of data collection, the data files were forwarded to Davis Research, LLC and were edited to verify that the information compiled was complete and was consistent with information about each voter on the voter file. To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters’ email addresses and all other personally identifiable information were purged and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number. After the completion of data collection post-stratification weights were applied to align the statewide sample to the population characteristics of the state’s registered voters. Likely voters were identified based on each voter’s stated intention to vote in this year’s election, and factoring in their history of voting in past elections.

The sampling error associated with the survey results are difficult to calculate precisely because of the effects of sample selection and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that results from overall likely voter sample are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/- 4 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Topline findings of the survey results can be found at the Berkeley IGS Poll website at https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll.

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. The director of the Institute of Governmental Studies is Lisa Garcia Bedolla.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its Berkeley IGS Poll. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the Berkeley IGS Poll is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the Berkeley IGS Poll go to https://igs.berkeley.edu/igs-poll/berkeley-igs-poll.