

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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Release #2300

Release Date and Time: **6:00 a.m., Friday, March 6, 2009**

VOTERS SPLIT ABOUT RE-ELECTING BOXER IN 2010. BUT SHE HOLDS BIG LEADS OVER SCHWARZENEGGER AND FIORINA IN POSSIBLE GENERAL ELECTION MATCH-UPS.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Democrat Barbara Boxer will be ending her third term as U.S. Senator in 2010 and has indicated that she will run for re-election again next year.

The latest *Field Poll* asked a representative cross-section of this state's voters about their inclination to re-elect Boxer to another term. The results show that voters are about evenly divided, with 43% inclined and 44% not inclined to re-elect her. While not a ringing endorsement, this is a slightly better assessment than Boxer received early in each of her two previous re-election runs, both of which she eventually won by comfortable margins.

The same situation may be taking shape in 2010. The current survey finds that when Boxer is paired against each of two possible Republican opponents in simulated 2010 general election match-ups, she leads by big margins. When paired against Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger she has a 54% to 30% lead. She holds an even larger early advantage (55% to 25%) over businesswoman and former Hewlett Packard CEO Carly Fiorina.

The *Poll* also asked Republicans for their primary election preferences for U.S. Senate. When Schwarzenegger is included as a possible candidate, he holds a small lead over Fiorina 31% to 24%, with Republican Assemblyman Chuck DeVore trailing at 9%. If Schwarzenegger is not a candidate, Fiorina tops DeVore 31% to 19%, although half of the GOP electorate are undecided in this setting.

Big partisan divide regarding Boxer's re-election

After first winning election to the Senate in 1992, Boxer ran again and was re-elected in 1998. A *Field Poll* taken in May 1997, more than a year before that election showed that a small plurality of voters were disinclined to support her for a second term. However, eighteen months later she won by a ten-point margin.

A similar pattern was observed in the 2003-04 period. In April 2003, eighteen months before the election, 43% of voters said they were not inclined to re-elect Boxer, while 38% said they were. But as the election unfolded, she won in a landslide, 58% to 38%.

The current poll finds voters evenly split when asked if they are inclined to re-elect Boxer (42% inclined and 43% not inclined). There is a sharp division in how Democratic and Republican voters feel about her re-election. Democrats are initially backing her 66% to 19%. The sentiment among Republicans is just the opposite – 72% disinclined and 14% inclined. There is also a gender gap in preferences, with a plurality of women in support of her re-election, while a majority of men are not.

Table 1
Voter inclination to re-elect Barbara Boxer to the U.S. Senate
(among registered voters)

	Inclined to re-elect	Not inclined to re-elect	No opinion
Total – March 2009	42%	43	15
April 2003	38%	43	19
May 1997	41%	46	13
<u>Party (March 2009)</u>			
Democrats	66%	19	15
Republicans	14%	72	14
Non-partisans/others	36%	46	18
<u>Gender (March 2009)</u>			
Male	37%	51	12
Female	47%	36	17

Schwarzenegger favored over two other possible Republican candidates for U.S. Senate

Next year's Senate race has not received a great deal of attention on the Republican side. Some of the early discussion has been about whether Schwarzenegger, who will be termed out of his office as governor next year, will choose to run for the Senate.

When registered Republicans in this survey are asked their preferences pairing Schwarzenegger against Fiorina and DeVore as his opponents, Schwarzenegger leads with 31%. Fiorina is at 24% and Devore receives 9% support. Another 36% of Republicans are undecided.

If Schwarzenegger does not run and it were a two-way contest between Fiorina and DeVore, Fiorina leads Devore 31% to 19% with a huge 50% undecided.

Table 2
GOP voter preferences between possible candidates
in the 2010 Republican primary for U.S. Senate
(among registered Republicans)

	With Schwarzenegger	Without Schwarzenegger
Arnold Schwarzenegger	31%	--
Carly Fiorina	24	31%
Chuck DeVore	9	19
Undecided	36	50

Boxer tops Schwarzenegger and Fiorina in general election match-ups

When Boxer is paired against Schwarzenegger in a simulated November 2010 general election match-up, she leads by a comfortable 54% to 30% margin. This is quite different from an October 2007 *Field Poll* in which Schwarzenegger held a slight 44% to 43% lead over Boxer.

When Boxer is paired against Fiorina in the current survey, the incumbent is preferred by a greater than two to one margin (55% to 25%).

Table 3
Voter preferences pairing Arnold Schwarzenegger and Carly Fiorina
against Barbara Boxer in a 2010 U.S. Senate race
(among registered voters)

	Boxer	Republican challenger	Undecided
<u>Boxer vs. Schwarzenegger</u>			
March 2009	54%	30	16
October 2007	43%	44	13
<i>Party (March 2009)</i>			
Democrats	79%	12	9
Republicans	22%	51	27
Non-partisans/others*	50%	36	14
<u>Boxer vs. Fiorina</u>			
March 2009	55%	25	20
<i>Party (March 2009)</i>			
Democrats	79%	8	13
Republicans	20%	53	27
Non-partisans/others*	59%	22	19

* Small sample base.

Recognition and image ratings of the potential candidates

Of the four possible 2010 U.S. Senate candidates, 91% of voters have an opinion of Boxer and 93% say this in relation to Schwarzenegger. By contrast, the proportion of voters able to rate Fiorina is just 41%, while only 18% have an opinion of DeVore.

Boxer has an overall positive image rating among all voters statewide (52% favorable and 39% unfavorable) and is viewed very favorably by Democrats (78% favorable vs. 17% unfavorable). Schwarzenegger is viewed more negatively than positively (52% to 41%) overall and has a 51% to 39% unfavorable image among Republicans. Fiorina obtains a mixed assessment among all voters, but is viewed favorably by Republicans 24% to 17%. DeVore holds a mixed image rating among all voters, as well as among GOP voters.

Table 4
Voter recognition and image ratings of possible
candidates for U.S. Senate in 2010
(among registered voters)

	Total voters	Democrats	Republicans	Non-partisans/ others*
Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator (D)				
Favorable	52%	78%	18%	52%
Unfavorable	39	17	70	39
No opinion	9	5	12	9
Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor (R)				
Favorable	41%	35%	39%	55%
Unfavorable	52	60	51	41
No opinion	7	5	10	4
Carly Fiorina, businesswoman (R)				
Favorable	19%	10%	24%	29%
Unfavorable	22	28	17	16
No opinion	59	62	59	55
Chuck DeVore, Assemblyman (R)				
Favorable	8%	8%	8%	8%
Unfavorable	10	9	12	8
No opinion	82	83	80	84

* Small sample base.

(D) denotes Democrat (R) denotes Republican

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings in this report are based on a random sample survey of 761 registered voters in California. Republican primary election preferences are based 298 GOP voters statewide. Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish between the period February 20 and March 1, 2009. 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. In order to cover a broad range of issues and still minimize voter fatigue, the overall voter sample was divided into random subsamples on some of the questions.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. The overall sample was stratified so as to yield interviews with approximately equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans. After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted to return this sample allocation of voters to the actual distribution of registered voters by party and by various other demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depends on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of registered voters is +/- 3.6 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the Republican voter sample has a maximum sampling error of +/- 5.8 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

Barbara Boxer is running for re-election to the U.S. Senate next year. Are you inclined or not inclined to vote for Boxer in next year's November general election for U.S. Senate?

(THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS READ ROTATED)

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

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 were being held today, for whom would you vote – Boxer or Fiorina?

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. (NAME AND TITLE OF EACH PERSON READ IN RANDOM ORDER, ASKING:) Is your opinion of _____ favorable or unfavorable? (SEE RELEASE FOR NAMES READ)

(ASKED OF REPUBLICANS) 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, who would be your first choice... (LAST NAMES REPEATED)? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES READ) IF SCHWARZENEGGER: If Schwarzenegger was not a candidate, who would be your second choice – Carly Fiorina or Chuck DeVore? (NAMES OF OTHER TWO CANDIDATES REPEATED)?