

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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BROWN AND WHITMAN IN A DEAD HEAT IN THE RACE FOR GOVERNOR.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Republican Meg Whitman and Democrat Jerry Brown have been statistically deadlocked in the California governor's race in each of the three *Field Poll* surveys conducted over the past six months.

The latest *Field Poll* finds Brown and Whitman tied, with each obtaining the support of 41% of Californians considered most likely to vote in this year's election.

Despite massive media coverage and unprecedented campaign expenditures made by the candidates, the only statistically significant change in the governor's race since July relates to a slight increase in the proportion (18%) of voters who are undecided or say they are not inclined to vote for either candidate.

Table 1
**Trend of voter preferences in the 2010 general election
for California Governor
(among likely voters)**

	Brown (D)	Whitman (R)	Undecided/ other
September 2010	41%	41	18
July 2010	44%	43	13
March 2010	43%	46	11
January 2010	46%	36	18
October 2009	50%	29	21

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

Preference motivations

Of the voters who are currently supporting Whitman 49% indicate that their choice is more a vote for her candidacy, while 48% say it is more a vote against Brown. Among Brown's supporters, a majority (53%) says their choice is more a vote for his candidacy than a vote against Whitman (45%).

Table 2
**Is your vote preference more a vote for your candidate
or against (his) (her) opponent?**
(among likely voters of each candidate)

	<u>For my candidate</u>	<u>Against the opponent</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Whitman voters	49%	48	3
Brown voters	53%	45	2

Partisan preferences and Tea Party vote

Each candidate exerts strong appeal to his or her fellow party members. Democrats represent 44% of likely voters in the November election and they favor Brown 69% to 15%. Republican likely voters account for 35% of those most likely to vote in November. They split 75% to 9% in favor of Whitman.

The race is even among the 21% of likely voters who are non-partisan or are registered with a minor party, with each candidate polling 38%, and a large 24% are undecided.

About one in six likely voters (18%) in this survey say they identify "a lot" with the Tea Party movement. This group overwhelmingly supports Whitman over Brown, 80% to 2%.

Voters who have "some" identification with the Tea Party represent another 23% of California's likely voters, and they also prefer Whitman 63% to 19%. However, among the 59% of likely voters who do not identify with the Tea Party, Brown is preferred greater than three to one (62% to 20%).

Table 3
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for California Governor
by party registration and identification with the Tea Party movement
(among likely voters)

	Brown	Whitman	Undecided/ other
Total	41%	41	18
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.44) Democrats	69%	15	16
(.35) Republicans	9%	75	16
(.21) Non-partisans/others	38%	38	24
<u>Tea Party identification</u>			
(.18) A lot	2%	80	18
(.23) Somewhat	19%	63	18
(.59) Not at all	62%	20	18

* Small sample base.

Gender, age and racial preferences

Women, a traditionally Democratic-leaning voter segment, are evenly dividing their voting preferences between Whitman and Brown (41% each). Male voters are also closely divided, 41% for Brown and 40% for Whitman.

White non-Hispanics, who comprise 72% of likely voters in this election, are favoring Whitman over Brown by four points (44% to 40%). Latinos, another traditionally Democratic-voting constituency who account for 15% of this year's likely voters, are only slightly favoring Brown (43% to 40%). All other ethnic voters, including African-Americans, Asian-Americans and Native-Americans, account for another 13% of the vote and they are favoring Brown by twenty-two points (48% to 26%), although many (26%) are undecided.

There are no significant differences in voter preferences across the different age segments of the likely voter population.

Table 4
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for California Governor
by gender, age and race/ethnicity
(among likely voters)

	Brown	Whitman	Undecided/ other
Total	41%	41	18
Gender			
(.47) Male	41%	40	19
(.53) Female	41%	41	18
Age			
(.24) 18 – 39	41%	42	17
(.21) 40 – 49	42%	36	22
(.31) 50 – 64	41%	43	16
(.24) 65 or older	42%	42	16
Race/ethnicity			
(.72) White non-Hispanic	40%	44	16
(.15) Latino*	43%	40	17
(.13) African-American/Asian- American/Native-American*	48%	26	26

* Small sample base.

Regional vote preferences

Voters in Los Angeles County, another traditionally Democratic stronghold, are currently backing Whitman over Brown by three points, 41% to 38%. In the nine other Southern California counties combined, where about one-third of state's likely voters reside, Whitman leads Brown 50% to 34%. The 17% of likely voters who live in the Central Valley also favor Whitman 47% to 33%.

About one in five (21%) of the state's likely voters reside in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. This is Brown's strongest region, and he leads Whitman by a two and one-half to one margin (64% to 24%). The race is tied in the relatively sparsely populated areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area.

Likely voters located in counties that touch the Pacific Ocean or the San Francisco Bay (coastal voters) account for 71% of those expected to vote in November, while 29% live in inland counties. Brown holds a nine-point lead over Whitman 46% to 37% in the coastal counties, while Whitman is preferred 49% to 31% among inland county voters.

Table 5
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for California Governor
by regional subgroups
(among likely voters)

	Brown	Whitman	Undecided/ other
Total	41%	41	18
<u>Area of state</u>			
(.71) Coastal counties	46%	37	17
(.29) Inland counties	31%	49	21
<u>Region</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	38%	41	21
(.32) Other Southern California	34%	50	16
(.17) Central Valley	33%	47	20
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	64%	24	10
(.06) Other Northern California*	36%	36	28

* Small sample base.

Mail vs. precinct voters

Slightly more than half (51%) of likely voters say they will be voting by mail in this election, while 49% indicate their vote will be at their local precinct on Election Day.

Whitman holds a four-point lead (44% to 40%) among mail ballot voters, while precinct voters narrowly prefer Brown 42% to 39%.

Table 6
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for California Governor
by voting method
(among likely voters)

	Brown	Whitman	Undecided/ other
Total	41%	41	18
<u>Voting method</u>			
(.51) Mail ballot voters	40%	44	16
(.49) Precinct voters	42%	39	19

Images of the candidates

The overall image that voters have of the two candidates has become more negative in recent months.

Brown has been a prominent California officeholder and political figure for almost four decades. However, over the past eighteen months the proportion of voters holding an unfavorable opinion of him has steadily grown from 25% in March of last year to 47% in the current survey. Over this same period, the proportion of voters holding a positive view of Brown has remained fairly flat and now stands at 44%.

Whitman, who has not held political office before, was relatively unknown when she first began campaigning for governor early last year. In a March 2009 survey greater than seven out of ten voters (71%) had no opinion of the former eBay CEO. However, with each successive poll taken since then, more and more voters have been able to rate Whitman. In the current survey 85% of likely voters offer an opinion of her. As is the case with Brown, voter impressions of Whitman are also slightly more negative (45%) than positive (40%).

Republicans hold Whitman in high regard – 72% have a positive impression and 18% negative. Democrats have opposite perceptions of her – 15% favorable and 69% unfavorable.

Brown is viewed quite favorably by Democrats – 70% positive and 21% negative. Republicans are largely negative in their impression of him – 84% unfavorable and 14% favorable.

Non-partisans and voters registered with another party have generally mixed views about each of the candidates. Among this group Whitman's image is 38% favorable and 39% unfavorable, while perceptions of Brown are 41% favorable and 43% unfavorable.

Table 7
Trend of voter images of Meg Whitman and Jerry Brown
(among likely voters)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Meg Whitman</u>			
September 2010	40%	45	15
July 2010	40%	42	18
March 2010	40%	27	33
January 2010	25%	20	55
October 2009	18%	14	68
March 2009	17%	12	71
<u>Party registration (Sept. 2010)</u>			
Democrats	15%	69	16
Republicans	72%	18	10
Non-partisans/others*	38%	39	23
<u>Jerry Brown</u>			
September 2010	44%	47	9
July 2010	42%	40	18
March 2010	41%	37	22
January 2010	44%	32	24
October 2009	44%	29	27
March 2009	50%	25	25
<u>Party registration (Sept. 2010)</u>			
Democrats	70%	21	9
Republicans	14%	84	2
Non-partisans/others*	41%	43	16

Note: March 2009 and October 2009 ratings taken among all registered voters.

* Small sample base.

Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed September 14-21, 2010 among a random sample of 857 registered voters, of whom 599 were considered likely to vote in California's upcoming general election. In order to cover a broad range of issues and minimize respondent fatigue, some of the questions in this survey were asked of a random subsample of 316 likely voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. 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 registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the characteristics of the registered voter population in California by region, age, gender, race/ethnicity and party registration.

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 the overall likely voters sample is +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings based on the random subsample of likely voters have a sampling error of +/- 5.8 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 possible sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field and has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. The poll receives annual funding from media subscribers of *The Field Poll*, from several California foundations, and from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the raw data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes.

Questions Asked

In the election this year for Governor, Republican Meg Whitman, businesswoman, is running against Democrat Jerry Brown, California Attorney General. If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote for Governor – Republican Meg Whitman, Democrat Jerry Brown or someone else?

(IF WHITMAN:) Is your preference more a vote for Whitman or more a vote against Brown?

(IF BROWN:) Is your preference more a vote for Brown or more a vote against Whitman?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE:) 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 generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or whether you don't know enough about him or her to have an opinion.

(QUESTIONS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

Is your opinion of Jerry Brown, California Attorney General, generally favorable or unfavorable?

Is your opinion of Meg Whitman, businesswoman, generally favorable or unfavorable?