

# 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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**GOVERNOR'S RACE NOW  
A VIRTUAL TIE: BROWN 44%,  
WHITMAN 43%.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

With the California gubernatorial general election formally underway, a new *Field Poll* finds Democrat Jerry Brown holding a statistically insignificant one-point lead – 44% to 43% – over Republican Meg Whitman in this state's upcoming November election.

The closeness of the race is also reflected in the nearly equivalent, mixed image ratings that voters give to the two gubernatorial candidates. About four in ten likely voters now hold positive impressions of each candidate, while about four in ten others hold negative views. The current findings represent a further sag in voter attitudes toward Brown, who possessed a two-to-one favorable image with voters last year.

These are the top line results from the latest *Field Poll* conducted among a random sample of 1,005 likely voters by telephone June 22 – July 5. To enable the poll to more closely examine the preferences of the state's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

### **Trend of voter preferences**

This is the fourth statewide *Field Poll* pairing Brown and Whitman in simulated general election match-ups for governor. The trend shows that Whitman, the former eBay chief executive, started out her gubernatorial campaign far behind Brown in October of last year, but gained ground in early 2010 to where she led the Attorney General by three points in March. The current poll shows the race to now be a statistical tie, with 44% favoring Brown and 43% Whitman.

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

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

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

### **Voters now hold mixed views of both of the candidates**

Brown, the state's current Attorney General, is also a former two-term governor and Mayor of Oakland, and as such is well known to the large majority of this state's voters. Yet, the current poll finds that impressions of Brown have soured from earlier very positive assessments. In March of last 2009 twice as many voters held a favorable view of Brown as an unfavorable view. Now, the proportion rating him positively (42%) is nearly equivalent to the proportion holding a negative view (40%).

Whitman, who has not run for political office before, spent unprecedented amounts of money to win the June Republican primary election in a hard-fought and often bitter campaign against GOP rival Steve Poizner. One byproduct of the primary campaign is that a very large proportion of the state's likely voters (82%) has now formed an initial opinion of her. Yet, like Brown, Whitman emerges from the primary election campaign with a mixed image profile among voters, with 42% rating her negatively and 40% positively.

**Table 2**  
**Trend of voter images of Meg Whitman and Jerry Brown**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Favorable</b>	<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
<u>Jerry Brown</u>			
<b>July 2010</b>	<b>42%</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>18</b>
March 2010	41%	37	22
January 2010	44%	32	24
October 2009	44%	29	27
March 2009	50%	25	25
<u>Meg Whitman</u>			
<b>July 2010</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>18</b>
March 2010	40%	27	33
January 2010	25%	20	55
October 2009	18%	14	68
March 2009	17%	12	71

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

### **Big differences in preferences on political and regional lines**

Democratic and Republican voters in the upcoming gubernatorial election hold virtually polar opposite preferences. Democrats favor Brown 74% to 16%, while Whitman is the choice of GOPers by a 80% to 9% margin. Among non-partisans Whitman currently holds a narrow three-point margin (42% to 39%) over Brown.

Similar wide differences are seen across ideological subgroups of the voting population. Among the 22% of voters who identify themselves as strongly conservative in politics, Whitman is backed overwhelmingly (82% to 7%). Moderate conservatives also prefer the former eBay CEO by a two and one-half to one margin. While liberals are not as numerous as conservative voters in this state, Brown holds similarly large leads among those describing themselves as either strongly or moderately liberal. The largest voter subgroup on the ideological scale (41%) sees themselves as middle-of-the-road in politics. Among this group Brown has a big edge – 49% to 35%.

About one in three likely voters in California (36%) say they identify either a lot or somewhat with the Tea Party protest movement. These voters back Whitman by very large margins. However, among the two-thirds of the electorate who do not identify with the Tea Party, Brown leads Whitman greater than two to one.

Geographically, Brown holds a big 26-point preference advantage over Whitman in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. He also holds a five-to-three lead in the less populated areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area.

Whitman’s largest regional advantage exists in the San Diego/Orange County region and in other areas of Southern California outside of Los Angeles County. Brown leads by eight points in Los Angeles County, while Whitman has a seven-point lead in the Central Valley.

**Table 3**  
**Voter preferences in 2010 general election for**  
**California Governor by political and regional subgroups**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Brown</b>	<b>Whitman</b>	<b>Undecided/ other</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.44) Democrats	74%	16	10
(.34) Republicans	9%	80	11
(.22) Non-partisans/others	39%	42	19
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.22) Strongly conservative	7%	82	11
(.14) Moderately conservative	25%	63	12
(.41) Middle-of-the-road	49%	35	16
(.09) Moderately liberal*	69%	19	12
(.14) Strongly liberal	88%	4	8
<u>Tea Party identification</u>			
(.14) A lot	6%	83	11
(.22) Somewhat	21%	66	13
(.64) Not at all	60%	27	13
<u>Area of state</u>			
(.70) Coastal counties	46%	41	13
(.30) Inland counties	38%	49	13
(.59) Southern California	39%	48	13
(.41) Northern California	51%	37	12
<u>Region</u>			
(.25) Los Angeles County	47%	39	14
(.18) San Diego/Orange	31%	55	14
(.14) Other Southern California	35%	53	12
(.16) Central Valley	40%	47	13
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	58%	32	10
(.06) Other Northern California*	49%	34	17

\* Small sample base.

### **Voters' personal demographics also related to preferences**

White non-Hispanics, who make up 69% of the state's likely voter electorate, are currently favoring Whitman over Brown by a 48% to 40% margin.

Blacks represent 6% of California's likely general election voters and they are overwhelmingly backing Brown (78% to 8%). Latinos are also a traditionally solid Democratic voting bloc and account for 18% of likely voters. However, Brown's lead among this group is just eleven points, 50% to 39%. Asian-American voters are dividing their preferences about evenly.

There are some preference divisions in the governor's race by gender, yet not in the direction of the gender of the candidates. Currently female voters are backing Brown by four points, while males are siding with Whitman by four points. Most of this relates to differences in the party orientations of men and women, as partisanship appears to be a bigger factor in determining vote choices than gender.

For example, female Democrats favor Brown 72% to 14%, while female Republicans favor Whitman 79% to 10%. Female non-partisans are about evenly divided. Because there are many more women in this state that are Democrats than Republicans, this tips the overall preferences of women in Brown's direction.

Similar partisan patterns are seen among male voters. Democratic men prefer Brown 75% to 17%, while Republican men are backing Whitman 80% to 7%. Non-partisan men currently favor Whitman by ten points (45% to 38%), giving Whitman a slight overall lead among men.

Brown currently leads Whitman narrowly among the older voter segments – those age 50-64 and voters age 65 or older. Whitman, on the other hand, holds small leads among younger voters.

Whitman is running ahead of Brown among those with household income levels of \$60,000-\$100,000 and those making \$100,000 or more annually. Brown leads among voters with lower levels of income.

Brown has a six-point lead (47% to 41%) among the 23% of the likely voters who live in households where a union member resides. Voters in non-union households are narrowly backing Whitman 44% to 43%.

**Table 4**  
**Voter preferences in 2010 general election for**  
**California Governor by personal demographic subgroups**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Brown</b>	<b>Whitman</b>	<b>Undecided/ other</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>13</b>
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.69) White non-Hispanic	40%	48	12
(.18) Latino	50%	39	11
(.06) African-American	78%	8	14
(.07) Asian/other	36%	38	26
(.02) Chinese-American*	43%	42	15
(.01) Korean-American*	40%	13	47
(.02) Vietnamese-American*	34%	40	26
<u>Gender</u>			
(.48) Male	42%	46	12
(.52) Female	45%	41	14
<u>Gender/party</u>			
(.25) Female Democrat	72%	14	14
(.19) Male Democrat	75%	17	8
(.17) Female Republican	10%	79	11
(.17) Male Republican	7%	80	13
(.10) Female non-partisan/other	40%	39	21
(.12) Male non-partisan/other	38%	45	17
<u>Age</u>			
(.29) 18 – 39	42%	45	13
(.20) 40 – 49	44%	46	10
(.27) 50 – 64	46%	40	14
(.24) 65 or older	44%	42	14
<u>Household income</u>			
(.29) Less than \$40,000	44%	43	13
(.17) \$40,000 - \$59,999	49%	37	14
(.27) \$60,000 - \$99,999	41%	48	11
(.27) \$100,000 or more	42%	47	11
<u>Union status</u>			
(.23) Union-affiliated household	47%	41	12
(.77) Non-union household	43%	44	13

\* Small sample base.

## **Information About The Survey**

### **Methodological Details**

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed June 22 – July 5, 2010 among a random sample of 1,005 likely voters in California's 2010 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 357 likely voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. To enable the survey to more closely examine the preferences of California's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese. In addition, for questions asked of all likely voters, the main statewide sample was supplemented with additional interviews among Chinese-American, Korean-American, and Vietnamese-American likely voters.

Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. Likely voters were identified after interviews were completed with a random sample of California registered voters and from listings of ethnic surnames of voters targeting Chinese-Americans, Korean-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans. All samples were provided by Voter Contact Services, a leading provider of registered voter samples to the survey research industry.

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 results from the ethnic sample augments were weighted down to bring them into alignment with their proper shares of the state's registered voter population. In addition, 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 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 +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings based on the random subsample of likely voters have a sampling error of +/- 5.5 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 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**

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF LIKELY VOTERS)

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

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

(ASKED OF ALL LIKELY VOTERS)

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