

THE CALIFORNIA POLL

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JOHNSON LEADS GOLDWATER BY UNPRECEDENTED MARGIN OF VOTER POPULARITY

by Mervin D. Field

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President Lyndon B. Johnson commences the 1964 presidential campaign with an unprecedented margin of voter popularity over Senator Barry Goldwater in California.

In a statewide survey just completed, the California Poll interviewed a representative cross section of 1209 potential voters during the first week of September. Johnson is favored by 62%, Goldwater by 33%, and just 5% are undecided.

Today's survey results are remarkable on two counts: first, Johnson has a wider preference margin than any candidate has had in all the years that pre-election polls have been made in this state, and second, the number of "undecided" voters is unusually small for this early stage of the campaign.

The cross section of people interviewed for this survey reflect all sections of the state, and include a properly proportionate number of Democratic, Republican, other party, and "decline to state" voters. (Latest published voter registration figures show 56% Democrat, 41% Republican, and 3% other and decline to state.)

Strength of Commitment

Each voter was also asked to indicate whether he (or she) was "pretty well set in his opinion", or whether he thought he "might still change his mind". The results show that a majority of voters today are strongly committed to Johnson, and they outnumber Goldwater's strong partisans by more than two to one.

Voter commitment:

Strong for Johnson	52%	<i>= 62%</i>
Strong for Goldwater	25	<i>= 33%</i>
May still change, but now for Johnson	10	
May still change, but now for Goldwater	8	
Undecided	5	

Johnson's strong showing is the result of the fact that he receives 90% of Democrats' preference votes, while Goldwater gets just 6%. In addition, 25% of the GOP members have crossed over to Johnson, leaving Goldwater with only 69% of the Republicans. With the large registration bulge in favor of Democrats, a Republican candidate can carry California only by holding virtually all of his own party's votes and making large inroads among Democrats. Goldwater does not do this at the present time.

(MORE)

The California Poll was founded in 1946 as a medium for promoting public opinion research. The California Poll is completely independent of all political parties and candidates. Its sole purpose is to report public opinion accurately and objectively. Most of the financial support for the Poll comes from newspapers and television stations that have exclusive rights within the city of publication. The Poll utilizes accepted scientific sampling and questioning procedures in obtaining the data reported in its releases. Representative samples of adults are interviewed at periodic intervals on election issues and other socially important questions of the day. Proportionate numbers of people of both sexes, from all parts of the state, from different sized communities, and of all age, economic, political, and occupation groups are included in the samples. Major surveys are made with samples of 1,200 or more respondents. Interim surveys sometimes are made with smaller samples but not less than 600 interviews.

Preference Vote Patterns

An analysis of the Johnson-Goldwater preference vote shows the President leading in both sections of the state and among most major segments of the population of the state.

	Preference for --		
	<u>Johnson</u>	<u>Goldwater</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Statewide	62%	33	5
Northern California	67%	27	6
Southern California	59%	37	4
Men	62%	33	5
Women	62%	32	6
Upper income	40%	56	4
Upper middle	58%	38	4
Middle	66%	28	6
Lower income	69%	27	4
Union members	74%	24	2
Non-union	57%	37	6
Voted Nixon 1960	27%	67	6
Voted Kennedy 1960	86%	9	5
Voted Eisenhower 1956	42%	50	8
Voted Stevenson 1956	89%	9	2

Lead unprecedented

Johnson's present lead is unprecedented in recent California history. Only in the presidential campaign of 1952, where Dwight Eisenhower had a 23 percentage point lead over Adlai Stevenson at a comparable time in the campaign, is there any circumstance remotely resembling today's.

In 1956, Eisenhower led Stevenson by only 7 percentage points in September, and in early September of 1960 Richard Nixon led John Kennedy in California by 5 percentage points. Although Kennedy closed the gap as election day approached, Nixon finally carried the state by just one half of one percentage point. Likewise, in 1948 Thomas E. Dewey led Harry Truman by 7 percentage points in September, but Truman staged a comeback and carried the state by two-tenths of one percentage point.

To find a precedent for today's pattern of voter opinion one would have to go back to 1936, when Franklin Roosevelt carried California with 68% of the votes, or to 1928 when Herbert Hoover polled a majority of 66%. If Johnson's present level of support were to hold he would get 65% of the two-party vote.

The data obtained by this survey reflect public thinking a full eight weeks before the election. This campaign promises to be as hard fought as any in recent times, and both sides are well organized and well financed. There will be a massive expenditure of funds by both sides to reach the electorate on television, in newspapers, on radio, in magazines, on billboards, and by direct mail. There will be a multitude of big and small political rallies, and armies of party workers will be in the field working right up through Election Day getting out the vote.

No one can say for certain that today's votes will not change, but it is clearly evident that if Senator Goldwater is to carry California his effort will have to be prodigious, and he will be coming from as far behind as any presidential candidate has been in this generation.

Tomorrow's California Poll will report on the issues the public thinks will have the most effect during the campaign.