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## REAGAN AND KUCHEL BEST KNOWN GOP FIGURES FOR '66 GUBERNATORIAL RACE

by Mervin D. Field

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With jockeying for position among possible Republican candidates for governor in 1966 already beginning, the California Poll's latest survey finds that movie actor Ronald Reagan and Senator Thomas Kuchel are the figures with whom most of the public feels familiar. The survey also reveals that Reagan and Kuchel have markedly different types of appeal to voters: Reagan has many strong admirers, principally among Republicans, but a large number of both Republicans and Democrats also strongly oppose him; Kuchel on the other hand, is somewhat less well favored by Republicans than Reagan is, but he has many admirers among Democratic voters in the state.

Among other prominent Republicans mentioned as possible candidates, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Max Rafferty, and former Assemblyman Joseph Shell are less highly rated for the job than either Reagan or Kuchel, and both generate considerable strong opposition. George Christopher, former Mayor of San Francisco, is rated moderately high by many people, and he is not strongly opposed by many.

### Levels of Awareness

The public's level of awareness of these men was measured by a cross section survey of people throughout the state in which more than 1000 people interviewed were asked to say whether they rated each of the candidates as "an excellent, good, fair, or poor choice as a Republican candidate for governor". The percent of people who offered an opinion about each man is shown below:

Have an opinion about this man as a candidate  
for governor:

Ronald Reagan	76%
Thomas H. Kuchel	70
Max Rafferty	64
George Christopher	57
Joseph Shell	52

### Fitness Ratings

Reagan's head start in public awareness is unusual for a relative newcomer to politics, but is no doubt due to his long career as a Hollywood actor. Offsetting his advantage in visibility, however, is the fact that in his brief political career he has already sharply divided the voting public. While a good many people think he would be an "excellent" Republican choice for governor, a much larger group feel he would be a "poor choice".

(MORE)

By contrast, Senator Kuchel is very seldom rated a "poor choice", and is much more likely to be rated a "good choice" than is Reagan. The following table shows the ratings given to each of the five men by the people who felt they knew enough about him to offer an opinion.

	Rating among general public --			
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Ronald Reagan	12%	24	25	39
Thomas Kuchel	10%	44	32	14
Max Rafferty	7%	21	34	38
George Christopher	6%	38	39	17
Joseph Shell	8%	25	38	29

The above table shows that Rafferty and Shell tend to polarize public opinion, as Reagan does, between strong favorable and unfavorable opinions. Christopher, however, shares with Kuchel a moderately favorable majority and a relatively small unfavorable group.

Republican Rank-and-File

The first hurdle for these men if they are to become candidates is to win the Republican party nomination. Therefore, it is significant that at the present time Reagan's support among Republican rank-and-file voters is somewhat stronger than is Kuchel's. Rafferty and Shell both have a sizeable number of detractors among GOP members, but George Christopher draws little opposition and ranks relatively high in favorable ratings.

	Republican Party Members			
	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Fair</u>	<u>Poor</u>
Reagan	22%	33	22	23
Kuchel	10%	41	26	23
Rafferty	8%	20	36	36
Christopher	8%	44	36	12
Shell	15%	28	32	25

The next California Poll report which will appear exclusively in this newspaper next Tuesday, will show how each of these candidates would fare if he were running against Governor Pat Brown today.