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San Francisco Headquarters
145 Montgomery Street
EX 2-5766

Los Angeles Office
3142 Wilshire Boulevard
DU 5-5259

Mervin D. Field, Director
Robert Heyer, Editor

**SURVEY RESEARCH CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
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REAGAN HAS CONSIDERABLE APPEAL AMONG REPUBLICAN RANK AND FILE

by Mervin D. Field

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Movie actor Ronald Reagan is currently the first choice pick of rank and file Republicans among a field of six men considered in the running for the 1966 GOP gubernatorial nomination.

The California Poll undertook one of its regular statewide cross section measurements earlier this month and asked a series of questions to obtain current voter preferences for possible Republican participants in the 1966 gubernatorial race. A representative cross section of Republicans was asked to designate their first and second choices from a list of six men as candidates for governor in next year's election. The names presented and the proportion of first-choices were as follows:

	<u>First choice Republicans</u>
Ronald Reagan	33%
Thomas Kuchel	18
George Christopher	16
Goodwin Knight	16
Joseph Shell	8
Max Rafferty	4
None of these	4
No opinion	1

The conservative-moderate split among Republicans which has divided the party for some time seems to be in evidence in the way "grass roots" GOPers rate the candidates. Conservative Republicans overwhelmingly pick Reagan. If they can't have Reagan many of them would turn to Rafferty or Shell as their second choice. Moderate Republicans concentrate their first and second choice primarily around Kuchel, Christopher and Knight.

In sum, it appears that Reagan, Shell, and Rafferty account for 45% of the first choice votes, while Kuchel, Christopher, and Knight account for 50%, with 5% of the Republicans uncommitted to any of these men.

(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.

Reagan who has never held political office before came into political prominence during the 1964 presidential contest when he campaigned for Senator Barry Goldwater. He made frequent television and personal appearances in behalf of the Arizona Senator's losing candidacy, and is regarded as an effective speaker and spokesman for the conservative wing of the Republican party. With the election of another movie actor, George Murphy, to the U.S. Senate, the rhetorical question being asked in conservative Republican circles is "Why not Reagan for Governor?"

While Kuchel is quite popular among all voters and is a proven vote-getter as a result of his impressive 1954, 1956, and 1962 Senatorial victories, he faces a unique obstacle: This is the fact that no U.S. Senator in recent California history has been able to win election to the governor's office. In the two most recent gubernatorial elections two formidable and previously successful Republican senators, William Knowland and Richard Nixon, both went down to defeat.

Kuchel may face a similar problem if he decides to make a try for the governorship, since most Californians of both parties express themselves as wanting him to remain in the Senate. The Poll's interviewers asked this question: "As far as you are concerned would you rather see Thomas Kuchel serving in the U.S. Senate as he now is or as Governor of California?"

Would prefer Kuchel to be in --	<u>Republicans</u>	<u>Democrats</u>	<u>All voters</u>
U.S. Senate	62%	65%	62%
Governor	14	13	14
Neither	10	3	6
No opinion	14	19	18

The full significance of this measure cannot be assessed at this time. While the underlying mood of the public might be to keep Kuchel in the Senate, it does not necessarily mean that they would reject him if he should run for Governor. An election is usually a limited choice between just two men. In sizing up candidates voters have to consider how they view each man, his platform, and the particular set of political party principles he espouses. Many things could change voters ideas on this question: For example, would the Republican candidate be facing Governor Brown again or some other Democrat? How are Brown and other Democratic contenders rated at the present time, and how would Brown do against Reagan, Kuchel, and the other Republican possibilities if the election were held now? The next California Poll stories appearing exclusively in the Thursday and Friday issues of this newspaper, will attempt to shed some light on these questions.