

THE CALIFORNIA POLL

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San Francisco Headquarters
145 Montgomery Street
San Francisco 94104
392-5766

Los Angeles Office
3142 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles 90005
385-5259

Mervin D. Field, Director
Robert Heyer, Editor

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REAGAN MAINTAINS LEAD OVER BROWN.
STRONG LATE SURGE FOR FINCH IN LT. GOVERNOR RACE.
INCUMBENTS LEADING IN OTHER RACES.

by Mervin D. Field

With a week to go before election day, Ronald Reagan continued to hold a definite lead over incumbent Governor Edmund G. Brown. If the closing days of the campaign do not see a major alteration in the present mood of the electorate, it appears that Reagan, a relative newcomer to politics, will do what two seasoned Republicans, William Knowland and Richard Nixon, failed to do in 1958 and 1962 -- defeat Brown for the governorship.

The popularity standings of Brown and Reagan were tested by a statewide survey of a cross section of potential registered voters taken on Monday, October 31, and Tuesday, November 1.

Reagan	46%
Brown	41
Undecided	13

The California Poll conducted its final pre-election survey of voter preferences among a carefully balanced sampling of 1,211 potential voters. A corps of 95 trained opinion interviewers in all parts of the state was directed to scientifically selected sampling points designed to represent all economic and social classes of people in the state. Each interviewer visited a series of homes pre-designated to remove any possibility of personal bias. Within the selected homes, a balanced sample consisting of half men and half women adults of all ages was questioned to determine whether they were registered to vote. If they were, and if they did not express a definite intention not to vote on election day, each was questioned further about their candidate choices. Only one potential voter per household was interviewed.

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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. 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 1,000 or more respondents. Interim surveys sometimes are made with smaller samples of not less than 600 interviews.

This process has been demonstrated in countless other surveys to produce an accurate sample of the electorate. Questions on party affiliation show that the sample as drawn tends to underrepresent Democrats slightly, and to overrepresent Republicans. This minor imbalance, which is less than three percentage points, has been corrected in tabulating the combined preference ratios.

Turnout Factor

Voter turnout is often a key factor in the outcome of an election because extra high or low turnout by a candidate's followers can make a difference in the votes that are actually cast in the ballot boxes on election day. Although there is no sure way to predict just which voters will ultimately go out to vote on Tuesday, the California Poll has developed a series of questions inquiring into past voting behavior and the degree of interest which each person has in the current election to identify the most likely voters.

Using these criteria, the California Poll's analysts ranked the sample of registered voters according to their likelihood of voting. The top 77 percent, which is the average level of turnout for a gubernatorial election, were then tabulated to show their preferences between Reagan and Brown. The results show a slight gain for Reagan -- he leads by six points among those most likely to vote, where his lead is five points among all voters.

	<u>Most likely to vote (77%)</u>
Reagan	48%
Brown	42
Undecided	10

The Undecided Vote

All pre-election polls turn up a segment of the electorate who are undecided about their preference at the time of the survey. The size of this group may be relatively small when the candidates are well known and the issues clearly divide people along established lines. At other times, however, the undecided group may be a large share of the electorate right up until the last hour of campaigning. This can happen when many voters are in conflict about their choices, or when they are relatively unconcerned.

Since neither candidate today polls a majority of the vote, it is theoretically possible for the "undecided" voters to swing the election either way. However, it seldom if ever happens that most of the undecided voters go one way. Typically, they will divide fairly closely along the same lines as the voters who have made a commitment, or they will refrain from voting altogether. In either case, this means that the final outcome is very little affected by their actions.

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Among today's undecided likely voters, Democrats outnumber Republicans two to one. Even if all these Democrats were eventually to decide to vote for Brown, however, this would still not be enough to give the Governor the boost he needs to pass Reagan. Brown would need more than 80% of the undecided votes to overcome the lead that Reagan has among ^{eligible} voters who say they have already made a choice.

Of course, assumptions about how the undecided vote may go that are based on traditional patterns of partisanship could be invalid in this election. There is ample evidence that this campaign could be different because of the potent effects of such things as white backlash, fear of right wing extremism, discontent with the quality of life, concern over civil rights and youthful unrest, high taxes, and a multitude of other things that disturb citizens' tranquility in modern day California.

Trends in Voter Preference

Reagan's current lead over Brown is a continuation of his previous dominance. Since last May, before the primary election, Reagan has enjoyed a preference margin ranging between three and 15 percentage points. He has consistently maintained a high level of support among Republicans of the state, and has also drawn heavily among Democratic party members.

Likewise, Reagan has a relatively larger lead in the eight southern counties, which contain 58 percent of the state's registered voters. Thus, it would be possible for him to carry the state even if he were to lose in the Northern section. However, he leads Brown in the North by a slight margin, so his Southern California bulge today represents a substantial cushion.

The following table shows the trend in preferences since May, and the division of preferences by region of the state, political party affiliation, and sex.

	Candidate preference --		
	<u>Reagan</u>	<u>Brown</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
May	44%	41	15
June	52%	37	11
September	46%	43	11
Early October.	46%	39	15
This Poll --			
All eligibles	46%	41	13
Likely voters	48%	42	10
This survey, all eligibles			
Southern California	48%	41	11
Northern California	43%	40	17
Republicans	79%	11	10
Democrats	23%	62	15
Men	46%	43	11
Women	45%	39	16

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Lt. Governor Race

Republican Robert Finch has made dramatic gains in voter favor and, as of a week before the election, had virtually wiped out the large lead that his rival Glenn Anderson enjoyed throughout the early and middle stages of the campaign for Lt. Governor. If Finch maintains this upward movement, he could well unseat incumbent Lt. Governor Anderson next Tuesday.

	<u>All eligibles</u>	<u>Likely voters</u>
Anderson	42%	43%
Finch	41	43
Undecided	17	14

By way of comparison, previous measures taken by the California Poll show that Finch has overcome a 14 percentage point deficit within the last two months.

<u>All eligibles</u>	<u>Voter preference --</u>		
	<u>Anderson</u>	<u>Finch</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
This poll	42%	41	17
Early October	45%	34	21
September	48%	34	18

This race could go either way, depending on how much impact the campaigns for each man have during the final week.

Other Statewide Races

The latest poll shows little change in the four other statewide races where incumbents have led since the early measurements.

	<u>All eligibles</u>	<u>Likely voters</u>
<u>Attorney General:</u>		
Thomas Lynch, Democrat	49%	52%
Spencer Williams, Republican	29	37
Undecided	22	11
<u>State Controller:</u>		
Alan Cranston, Democrat	52%	55%
Houston Flourmoy, Republican	30	35
Undecided	18	10
<u>Secretary of State:</u>		
Frank Jordan, Republican	43%	46%
Norbert Schlei, Democrat	32	32
Undecided	25	22
<u>Treasurer:</u>		
Bert Betts, Democrat	41%	44%
Ivy Baker Priest, Republican	35	36
Undecided	24	20