

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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CALIFORNIA'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY
STRONG LATE SURGE FOR OBAMA.
TRAILS CLINTON BY JUST TWO POINTS.
McCAIN LEADS ROMNEY BY EIGHT
POINTS IN THE GOP PRIMARY.

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

There has been a considerable tightening in the Democratic race for the presidential nomination in California during the past two weeks. Barack Obama, who had been trailing Hillary Clinton by margins ranging from twelve to thirty points in a series of statewide *Field Polls* taken over the last twelve months, is now just two points behind. Clinton is the choice of 36% likely voters in the Democratic primary compared to 34% for Obama. Another 12% of voters already have or intend to vote for other candidates, while a relatively large 18% of voters remain undecided.

On the Republican side, John McCain has opened up an eight-point lead over Mitt Romney. McCain is now supported by 32% of likely voters in the GOP primary, compared to 24% for Romney. Another 13% are supporting Mike Huckabee, 10% are backing Ron Paul, 6% are for other candidates, and 15% are undecided. Two weeks ago *The Field Poll* found McCain holding a four-point lead over Romney in California.

These are the findings from the final pre-election *Field Poll* of 511 likely voters in California's Democratic primary and 481 likely GOP primary voters completed over an eight-day period this past week.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in the California Democratic primary for president
(among likely voters in the CA Democratic primary)

	Late- January <u>2008</u>	Mid- January <u>2008</u>	December <u>2007</u>	October <u>2007</u>	August <u>2007</u>	March <u>2007</u>
Hillary Clinton	36%	39%	36%	45%	49%	41%
Barack Obama	34	27	22	20	19	28
Others	12	14	22	21	20	22
Undecided	18	20	20	14	12	9

Table 2
Trend of voter preferences in the California Republican primary for president
(among likely voters in the CA Republican primary)

	Late- January <u>2008</u>	Mid- January <u>2008</u>	December <u>2007</u>	October <u>2007</u>	August <u>2007</u>	March <u>2007</u>
John McCain	32%	22%	12%	12%	9%	24%
Mitt Romney	24	18	15	13	17	7
Mike Huckabee	13	11	17	4	1	3
Ron Paul	10	7	3	4	1	1
Others	6	21	35	45	52	50
Undecided	15	21	18	22	20	15

Large differences in preference across Democratic voter subgroups

An examination of the preferences of those who have either already voted or are likely to vote in the Democratic primary reveals large dissimilarities across various voting subgroups. For example, the latest survey finds that there is a big difference in preferences between registered Democrats and non-partisans who indicate they will be voting in the Democratic primary election.

Registered Democrats, who the poll finds are accounting for 87% of those likely to vote in the Democratic primary, favor Clinton by six points, 37% to 31%. However, non-partisans who represent another 13% of likely Democratic primary voters now favor Obama by a five to three margin (54% to 32%).

Other large differences in sub-group voting patterns exist by region of the state, gender, race, age, political ideology, education, household income and method of voting.

Los Angeles County voters favor Clinton 42% to 34%. By contrast, voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area support Obama 41% to 31%.

There is also a marked gender gap in preferences. Men now support Obama 44% to 31%, while women, who represent 56% of likely Democratic primary voters, favor Clinton 40% to 27%.

Clinton and Obama are dividing the vote of white non-Hispanics evenly (35% each). Latinos, who represent 20% of the likely Democratic electorate, prefer Clinton overwhelmingly (52% to 19%). African-Americans, who comprise a smaller 12% share of the likely Democratic primary voters, support Obama over Clinton 55% to 19%.

Obama holds the lead among younger voters under age 30 (42% to 31%). Voters age 30-49 and those 50-64 are closely divided. Clinton, however, is favored by seniors age 65 and over by a greater than two to one margin (40% to 18%).

There is strong support for Obama among liberals (42% to 31%), while the less numerous conservatives are solidly behind Clinton (43% to 23%). Clinton has a small edge among moderate or middle-of-the-road voters (39% to 33%).

Among those who have a high school education or less, sentiment is very much in Clinton's favor – 44% to Obama's 19%. Those who have some college or trade school are evenly divided between the two candidates. College graduates are narrowly for Obama 39% to 35%, while those who have completed post-graduate work are supporting Obama by a larger 42% to 31% margin.

Voters living in households with annual incomes of less than \$40,000, as well as those making between \$40,000 and \$80,000, are supporting Clinton by ten to eleven point margins. However, those living in households whose annual income is more than \$80,000 favor Obama 45% to 32%.

There are also differences in preferences by voting method. Precinct voters narrowly favor Clinton 40% to 36%, while those who already have or intend to vote by mail are evenly divided (Obama 32% vs. Clinton 31%).

Table 3
Likely voter preferences in the California Democratic primary
for President – by subgroup

	<u>Clinton</u>	<u>Obama</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Statewide	36%	34	12	18
<u>Party</u>				
(.87) Democrat	37%	31	13	19
(.13) Non-partisan*	32%	54	3	11
<u>Area</u>				
(.76) Coastal	36%	36	10	18
(.24) Inland	37%	28	16	19
<u>Region</u>				
(.29) Los Angeles County	42%	34	6	18
(.26) Other Southern California	36%	34	11	19
(.26) San Francisco Bay Area	31%	41	14	14
(.19) Other Northern California	37%	27	17	19
<u>Gender</u>				
(.44) Men	31%	44	11	14
(.56) Women	40%	27	13	20
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
(.59) White non-Hispanic	35%	35	13	17
(.20) Latino	52%	19	9	20
(.12) Black*	19%	55	7	19
(.09) Asian/other*	32%	36	14	18
<u>Age</u>				
(.13) 18 – 29*	31%	42	**	27
(.36) 30 – 49	38%	39	10	13
(.30) 50 – 64	34%	37	14	15
(.21) 65 or older	40%	18	20	22
<u>Political ideology</u>				
(.38) Liberal	31%	42	11	16
(.45) Middle-of-the-road	39%	33	9	19
(.17) Conservative*	43%	22	20	15
<u>Education</u>				
(.23) High school or less	44%	19	15	22
(.28) Some college/trade school	37%	38	12	13
(.23) College graduate	35%	39	8	18
(.25) Post-graduate work	31%	42	11	16
<u>Household income</u>				
(.27) Less than \$40,000	36%	25	12	27
(.31) \$40,000 – \$79,999	43%	33	8	16
(.42) \$80,000 or more	32%	45	12	11
<u>Voting method</u>				
(.57) Precinct voter	40%	36	6	18
(.43) Mail ballot voter	31%	32	20	17

* Small sample base.

** Less than ½ of 1%.

Republican preference breakdowns

McCain's current eight-point lead over Romney in the GOP primary is attributable to his exceptionally strong support from Republicans who classify themselves as moderately conservative or moderate in politics. Among this group, who account for about half of all likely GOP voters (51%), McCain is preferred by a greater than two to one margin (39% to 16%). By contrast, McCain trails Romney by eight points among strong conservatives (25% to 33%).

McCain holds significant leads across most other Republican sub-groups. One exception is among born-again Christians, where McCain is in a virtual tie with Huckabee (McCain 28% vs. 26% for Huckabee). Romney is running a close third among this segment, with 21% of the vote.

McCain also has a somewhat larger lead among younger voters age 18-49 (9 points) and voters age 50-64 (10 points). Among Republicans age 65 or older, McCain's lead narrows to three points. There are no differences in preferences by gender.

McCain's lead is smaller (6 points) among the very large majority of Republicans (82%) who are white non-Hispanic than among the small proportion of ethnic voters (13 points).

The Arizona Senator's lead is nine points among voters living in California's coastal counties, but just five points than among inland voters. He also holds a larger lead in Northern California (12 points) than in Southern California (6 points).

Voter preferences are also closer among Republicans with household incomes of less than \$80,000 (2 points for McCain) than among those making \$80,000 or more (15 points for McCain).

Republicans planning to vote at their local polling precinct prefer McCain by thirteen points, while among those who either already have or plan to vote by mail, McCain holds a narrow three-point advantage over Romney.

Table 4
Likely voter preferences in the California Republican
primary for president – by subgroup

	<u>McCain</u>	<u>Romney</u>	<u>Huckabee</u>	<u>Paul</u>	<u>Others</u>	<u>Undecided</u>
Statewide	32%	24	13	10	6	15
<u>Political ideology</u>						
(.49) Strongly conservative	25%	33	17	8	7	10
(.51) Moderately conservative/moderate	39%	16	9	11	5	20
<u>Area</u>						
(.65) Coastal	32%	23	12	9	7	17
(.35) Inland	31%	26	15	11	5	20
<u>Region</u>						
(.61) Southern California	32%	26	12	10	6	14
(.39) Northern California	33%	21	14	10	5	17
<u>Gender</u>						
(.50) Male	32%	25	12	11	8	12
(.50) Female	32%	23	14	8	4	19
<u>Age</u>						
(.43) 18-49	32%	23	16	8	4	17
(.32) 50-64	36%	26	9	12	8	9
(.25) 65 or older	27%	24	11	11	10	17
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
(.82) White non-Hispanic	31%	25	14	10	7	13
(.18) All others*	35%	22	7	8	3	25
<u>Household income</u>						
(.49) Less than \$80,000	25%	23	18	10	9	15
(.51) \$80,000 or more	40%	25	9	10	5	11
<u>Religion</u>						
(.56) Protestant	33%	25	17	8	7	10
(.44) All others	30%	24	8	12	5	21
<u>Born-again Christian</u>						
(.31) Yes	28%	21	26	6	9	10
(.69) No	34%	25	8	11	5	17
<u>Voting method</u>						
(.47) Precinct voter	42%	29	9	5	*	15
(.53) Mail ballot voter	23%	20	16	14	12	15

* Small sample base.

** Less than 1/2 of 1%.

General election trial heats

In this and previous surveys, *The Field Poll* paired the leading Democratic and Republican candidates against one another in November general election simulations.

The current poll finds that California voters are closely divided if the choices were Clinton vs. McCain. In this setting, Clinton holds a narrow two-point advantage, 45% to 43%. This is down from a seventeen-point edge in December. Clinton's lead is wider over Romney (15 points), although this is down from a twenty-one point advantage last December.

Obama leads both McCain and Romney by slightly wider margins than does Clinton in each pairing. Against McCain, Obama has a seven-point lead (47% to 40%), down from sixteen points in December, while against Romney he holds a large twenty-five-point lead (56% to 31%), similar to his earlier December margin.

Table 5
Trend of general election pairings between the leading Democratic and Republican contenders for president in California (among likely voters in the November general election)

	Late				
	January	December	October	August	March
<u>Clinton vs. the leading GOP candidates</u>					
Clinton (D)	45%	54%	54%	52%	48%
McCain (R)	43	37	35	35	43
Undecided	12	9	11	13	9
Clinton (D)	53%	55%	53%	55%	
Romney (R)	38	34	33	35	N/A
Undecided	9	11	14	10	
<u>Obama vs. the leading GOP candidates</u>					
Obama (D)	47%	50%	50%	49%	51%
McCain (R)	40	36	33	36	39
Undecided	13	14	17	15	10
Obama (D)	56%	54%	54%	53%	
Romney (R)	31	30	31	31	N/A
Undecided	13	16	15	16	

(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican. N/A: Not asked.

Note: Not asked in mid-January

Delegate allocations

No matter which Democrat comes out on top in the statewide popular vote, both Clinton and Obama should each be awarded a sizeable number of this state's delegates to the August Democratic National Convention.

Three-quarters of this state's Democratic delegates will be elected in Tuesday's election at the local level in California's 53 congressional districts (CD's).

Elected on a "binding" basis will be 241 delegates allocated proportionally to the candidates based on their share of the vote in each CD. Another 81 "at-large" delegates will be allocated to the candidates based on their share of the total vote in that jurisdiction.

In order to be eligible to receive delegates within a CD or from the "at large" statewide delegates, a candidate needs to obtain at least 15% of the statewide vote.

There are from 3 to 6 Democratic delegates awarded in each CD based on a formula of total population and the average vote for the Democratic candidates in the last two presidential elections.

As a result, the proportions of the statewide popular vote obtained by Clinton and Obama may not be the same as the proportion of delegates each receives. While the likelihood may be small, it is possible for a candidate to win the statewide popular vote and not win a majority of the delegates.

The Republican delegate allocation is different and is based on a "winner-take-all" allocation method, with about 90% of the delegates allocated by CD. Each district, no matter what its number of GOP voters, has three delegates at stake. This means the voting preferences of the relatively small proportion of GOP voters in heavily Democratic districts will matter as much as a district that is heavily Republican. Because of this, it is quite possible that the overall popular vote statewide may not correspond to a candidate's distribution of delegates to the Republican National Convention.

A cautionary note

It is standard professional practice for a polling organization to caution that there are many factors that could cause a pre-election poll result to vary from an election outcome. The litany of the most oft-repeated warnings include such things as variations resulting from the poll's sampling error, changes in voter sentiment after the polling data are collected, variations in voter turnout from what the pre-election poll was showing, and the unknown voting preferences of undecided voters.

Both the Democratic and Republican primary campaigns have featured some dynamic changes in recent weeks. In the Democratic contest, Obama's support has been increasing steadily, while support for Clinton has been relatively stagnant. On the GOP side, support for both McCain and Romney have been increasing, although McCain's increase has been steeper.

These shifting preferences raise these questions: Will these increases in support stabilize or continue? Will counter trends develop in the closing days altering the standings found in this report?

Another fact to consider is that 12% of the Democratic voters and 6% of the Republicans either already voted for or expressed a preference for a candidate other than those who remain in the running. According to the poll, over half of these voters were early mail ballot voters, and have already sent them in. Yet, for those voters who haven't yet cast their ballot, there is some uncertainty as to whether they will follow through and support a candidate who has withdrawn from the race. They may not vote at all or switch to another candidate.

In both major party races, there are also unusually large proportions of voters – 18% in the Democratic primary and 15% in the Republican – who were undecided in the final days of the campaign. These voters had indicated in prior questions that they were highly likely to vote. Considering the many months of campaigning, extensive free media coverage, advertising, and recent televised debates, these voters have been exposed to considerable information about the candidates and appear to be in some real conflict as to whom to support. How these voters come to judgment will have a big bearing on the election outcome of both sides.

There is another aspect to the Democratic primary findings that is unique and where there is not much precedence in previous presidential elections. It is the group of non-partisans who say they will vote in the Democratic primary. These voters have candidate preferences that counter those of registered Democrats. The relative size of each eventual voting bloc, therefore, will have a major impact on the outcome.

Further, there are unusually large differences in candidate preferences among some of the standard voter sub-groups of each party. To pose just one example from each of the Democratic and Republican contests: (1) the large divisions in support between men and women voters in the Democratic primary, and (2) the big split in preferences between strong conservatives and Republicans who are not strong conservatives. In each of these examples, it would not take large changes in voter turnout proportions from those shown in this report to produce a very different election outcome.

Information About The Survey

Sample Details

The findings relating to the California primary are based on a random sample survey of 511 likely voters in the Democratic primary election and 481 likely voters in the Republican primary. Survey results relating to the general election trial heats are based on random samples of either 569 or 579 likely voters in the November general election.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish January 25-February 1, 2008. Up to six attempts were made to reach and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

The sample was developed from telephone listings of individual voters selected at random from a statewide list of registered voters in California. After the completion of interviewing, the results were weighted to re-align the sample to characteristics of the state's registered voter population. Once a voter's name and telephone number has been selected, interviews are attempted only with the specified voter. Interviews can be conducted on either the voter's landline or cell phone, depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file.

Sampling error estimates applicable to any probability-based survey depend on the sample size. The maximum sampling error for results based on the overall sample of 511 likely Democratic primary voters is +/- 4.5 percentage points, while results based from the overall sample of 481 likely Republican primary voters is +/- 4.6 percentage points. Sampling error estimates relating to the general election have a maximum sampling error of +/- 4.2 percentage points. The maximum sampling error is based on percentages +/- in the middle of the sampling distribution (percentages around 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (percentages around 10% or around 90%) have a smaller margin of error. While there are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error, the overall design and execution of the survey minimized the potential for these other sources of error. The maximum sampling error will be larger for analyses based on subgroups of the overall sample.

Questions Asked

Democratic Primary Voters

(IF HAVE NOT ALREADY VOTED)

If the Democratic presidential primary election were being held today and the choices were Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, which candidate would you vote for – Clinton, Obama or someone else?

(IF ALREADY VOTED)

For whom did you vote in the Democratic presidential primary election – Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama or someone else?

Republican Primary Voters

(IF HAVE NOT ALREADY VOTED)

I am going to read the names of some Republicans who are running for the Republican presidential nomination this year. For each, please tell me whether there would be a good chance, some chance or no chance that you would vote for that person in California's presidential primary election. You may name as many or as few persons as you like as people you would be inclined to vote for. (NAMES AND TITLES OF CANDIDATES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) I am going to read back the names of the candidates you said you would have at least some chance of voting for. (NAMES OF CANDIDATES READ BACK) Of these persons, who would be your first choice if the California Republican primary election for President were being held today?

(IF ALREADY VOTED)

For whom did you vote in the Republican presidential primary election – (NAMES READ IN RANDOM ORDER) or someone else?

Note: Voters interviewed prior to Wednesday's announcements that Democrat John Edwards and Republican Rudy Giuliani had withdrawn from their respective races, and who had initially stated that they intended to vote for Edwards or Giuliani, were called back in the final days of interviewing. In these callback interviews, voters were asked a second time whom they would support after being informed of their preferred candidate's withdrawal. Their answers were then reallocated to the candidates based on the information obtained during this second interview.

General Election Voters (ASKED OF RANDOM SUBSAMPLES OF LIKELY GENERAL ELECTION VOTERS)

I am going to read some possible match-ups between Democratic and Republican candidates for President in the November 2008 general election. For each pairing, please tell me which candidate you would choose if the election for President were being held today. What about... (PAIRINGS READ IN RANDOM ORDER) If the election were being held today and these were the candidates, for whom would you vote for President?