

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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BOXER LEADS FIORINA NARROWLY – 47% TO 44% – IN SENATE RACE.

By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

Democratic Senator Barbara Boxer is clinging to a narrow three-point lead (47% to 44%) over her Republican opponent, businesswoman Carly Fiorina, among likely voters in California's upcoming November general election for U.S. Senate.

Over the past sixteen months *The Field Poll* has conducted five statewide surveys pairing Boxer and Fiorina in the Senate contest. The results show that Boxer's once sizeable thirty-point advantage over Fiorina in March of last year has narrowed considerably in recent months.

Since January of this year the image that voters have of Boxer has become more negative. More voters now hold an unfavorable (52%) than favorable (41%) view of her. Also, appraisals of the job Boxer is doing have declined and are now close to the lowest ratings she has received in her eighteen-year tenure. At present, 43% of the state's registered voters disapprove of the Senator's performance, while 42% approve. Among likely voters 48% disapprove and 42% approve.

Fiorina is coming off a resounding GOP primary election victory last month. The current poll finds that nearly two in three likely voters in the general election (63%) can now offer an opinion of her, nearly double its January level. Impressions of the former Hewlett-Packard CEO are now slightly more favorable (34%) than unfavorable (29%).

These are the main findings from the latest *Field Poll* conducted by telephone June 22 – July 5 among 1,390 registered voters, of whom 1,005 are considered likely to vote in the upcoming November general election. To enable the poll to more closely examine the preferences of the state's growing ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

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Trend of voter preferences

In March 2009 Boxer was preferred by 55% of voters against Fiorina, the proportion of likely voters favoring the incumbent dropped late last year and has ranged between 45% and 50% in each of the last four *Field Polls*. Currently 47% of voters favor Boxer. Fiorina's support has increased from an initial 25% level sixteen months ago to 44% in each of the last two polls.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in the 2010 general election for U.S. Senate
(among likely voters)

	Boxer (D)	Fiorina (R)	Undecided/ other
July 2010	47%	44	9
March 2010	45%	44	11
January 2010	50%	35	15
October 2009	49%	35	16
March 2009	55%	25	20

(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican.

Note: October 2009 and March 2009 preferences asked of all registered voters.

Political and regional sub-group analysis

Today's survey underlines the very partisan nature of voter preferences in the Senate contest. While Democrats favor Boxer by a greater than four to one margin (75% to 17%), Republicans are backing Fiorina eight to one (83% to 10%). Among non-partisans or voters affiliated with other parties, who collectively represent 22% of likely voters, Boxer leads narrowly 47% to 39%.

Boxer holds a large 57% to 31% advantage over Fiorina among voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. She also holds a substantial lead in Los Angeles County (55% to 35%). Fiorina holds the advantage over Boxer in San Diego/Orange counties (53% to 40%), in other areas of Southern California outside of Los Angeles County (59% to 35%), in the Central Valley (52% to 40%) and in the less populated areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area (50% to 41%).

Voters who identify with the Tea Party protest movement either a lot or some favor Fiorina over Boxer by overwhelming margins. However, Boxer leads by a wide margin (65% to 23%) among the nearly two in three voters who do not identify with the Tea Party movement.

Table 2
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for U.S. Senate
by political and regional subgroups
(among likely voters)

	Boxer	Fiorina	Undecided/ other
Total	47%	44	9
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.44) Democrats	75%	17	8
(.34) Republicans	10%	83	7
(.22) Non-partisans/others	47%	39	14
<u>Political ideology</u>			
(.22) Strongly conservative	8%	88	4
(.14) Moderately conservative	25%	68	7
(.41) Middle-of-the-road	53%	34	13
(.09) Moderately liberal*	72%	16	12
(.14) Strongly liberal	92%	4	4
<u>Tea Party identification</u>			
(.14) A lot	4%	94	2
(.22) Some	19%	76	5
(.64) Not at all	65%	23	12
<u>Area</u>			
(.70) Coastal counties	51%	40	9
(.30) Inland counties	37%	54	9
(.59) Southern California	45%	48	7
(.41) Northern California	50%	40	10
<u>Region</u>			
(.25) Los Angeles County	55%	35	10
(.18) San Diego/Orange	40%	53	7
(.14) Other Southern California	35%	59	6
(.16) Central Valley	40%	52	8
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	57%	31	12
(.06) Other Northern California*	41%	50	9

* Small sample base.

Personal demographics of voters also tied to preferences

White non-Hispanics, who represent 69% of the likely voter electorate, prefer Fiorina to Boxer 52% to 41%. However, Boxer more than offsets this deficit by holding big leads over Fiorina among the state's racial/ethnic voter population, who collectively constitute 31% of all likely voters.

Boxer is the choice of Latino voters by a five to three margin (55% to 32%). She also holds a sizeable lead over Fiorina among Asian-American voters (49% to 35%). Among African-Americans the incumbent's advantage is greater than seven to one (81% to 11%).

There are significant preference divisions by gender in the Senate race. Boxer leads among women by eleven points (51% to 40%), while Fiorina is preferred among men by seven points (49% to 42%). Female Democrats favor Boxer 79% to 21% and the incumbent also has a 49% to 35% lead among female non-partisans. Female Republicans favor Fiorina by a wide 81% to 12% margin.

Male Democrats prefer Boxer 70% to 22%, while Republican males prefer Fiorina by an even larger 86% to 8% margin. Non-partisan men are more closely divided, with 46% favoring Boxer and 42% Fiorina.

Voters under age 40 prefer Boxer 52% to 33%, while voters in all other age brackets favor Fiorina by margins of three to six points.

There are big differences in voting preferences by the education level of voters. Voters who have no more than a high school education currently endorse Fiorina 52% to 39%. Fiorina also holds a narrow three-point lead among those voters who have some college training or attended trade school. By contrast, college graduates narrowly support Boxer, while those who have completed post-graduate work favor the incumbent by a big 60% to 36% margin.

Table 3
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for U.S. Senate
by personal demographic subgroups
(among likely voters)

	Boxer	Fiorina	Undecided/ other
Total	47%	44	9
<u>Gender</u>			
(.48) Male	42%	49	9
(.52) Female	51%	40	9
<u>Gender/party</u>			
(.25) Female Democrat	79%	12	9
(.19) Male Democrat	70%	22	8
(.17) Female Republican	12%	81	7
(.17) Male Republican	8%	86	6
(.10) Female non-partisan/other	49%	35	16
(.12) Male non-partisan/other	46%	42	12
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
(.69) White non-Hispanic	41%	52	7
(.18) Latino	55%	32	13
(.06) African-American	81%	11	8
(.07) Asian/other	53%	27	20
(.02) Chinese-American*	56%	21	23
(.01) Korean-American*	58%	15	27
(.02) Vietnamese-American*	55%	23	22
<u>Age</u>			
(.29) 18 – 39	52%	33	15
(.20) 40 – 49	44%	50	6
(.27) 50 – 64	44%	47	9
(.24) 65 or older	46%	50	4
<u>Age/race</u>			
(.16) 18 – 39 white non-Hispanic	47%	40	13
(.34) 40 – 64 white non-Hispanic	38%	56	6
(.19) 65 or older white non-Hispanic	42%	55	3
(.13) 18 – 39 ethnic voters	58%	26	16
(.13) 40 – 65 ethnic voters	58%	28	14
(.05) 65 or older ethnic voters	65%	30	5
<u>Education</u>			
(.20) High school or less	39%	52	9
(.34) Some college/trade school	44%	47	9
(.23) College graduate	45%	42	13
(.23) Post graduate work	60%	36	4

* Small sample base.

Boxer better known but is viewed more negatively than Fiorina

Nearly all likely voters (93%) hold an opinion of Boxer, although more offer a negative than positive assessment – 52% unfavorable vs. 41% favorable. This represents a significant decline in voter appraisals of Boxer from last year but is similar to what was observed in March.

Fiorina, on the other hand, is less known. Currently 37% of likely voters are unable to offer a positive or negative opinion about her. Yet, the 63% majority of voters able to give an opinion is up from previous measures. Now, 34% have a favorable opinion of Fiorina and 29% hold an unfavorable view – an improvement from earlier measures.

Table 4
Trend of voter images of Barbara Boxer and Carly Fiorina
(among likely voters)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Barbara Boxer</u>			
July 2010	41%	52	7
March 2010	38%	51	11
January 2010	48%	39	13
October 2009	48%	39	13
March 2009	52%	39	9
<u>Carly Fiorina</u>			
July 2010	34%	29	37
March 2010	20%	22	58
January 2010	16%	18	66
October 2009	12%	16	72
March 2009	19%	22	59

Note: March and October 2009 ratings taken among all registered voters.

Boxer’s job ratings among the lowest in her tenure

Boxer was first elected to the U.S. Senate in 1992 and won re-election in 1998 and 2004. Over this period, *The Field Poll* has conducted forty-three separate measures assessing how voters viewed her performance in office. In virtually every previous measure more California voters had approved than disapproved of her performance in office. The current poll finds slightly more registered voters rating her negatively (43%) as positively (42%). Among likely voters in the upcoming November general election, Boxer receives an even more negative appraisal – 48% unfavorable vs. 42% favorable.

Table 5
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(trend among California registered voters)

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
July 2010 – likely voters	42%	48	10
July 2010 – total registered voters	42%	43	15
January 2010	48%	38	14
October 2009	44%	37	19
May 2008	48%	31	21
December 2007	45%	35	19
October 2007	44%	35	21
August 2007	48%	33	19
March 2007	54%	31	15
July 2006	45%	34	21
February 2006	41%	34	25
June 2005	47%	30	23
February 2005	49%	36	15
August 2004	49%	36	15
May 2004	44%	33	23
July 2003	49%	35	16
April 2003	43%	35	22
April 2002	47%	28	25
January 2001	50%	24	26
December 2001	45%	24	31
May 2001	49%	28	23
January 2001	51%	27	22
June 2000	47%	27	26
October 1999	47%	29	24
August 1999	41%	34	25
March 1999	51%	28	21
February 1998	40%	25	35
November 1997	38%	34	28
August 1997	41%	31	28
May 1997	42%	28	30
February 1997	45%	30	25
September 1996	50%	33	17
June 1996	43%	38	19
December 1995	49%	39	12
September 1995	45%	37	18
May 1995	45%	42	13
February 1995	41%	36	23
September 1994	38%	42	20
May 1994	43%	37	20
April 1994	44%	34	22
January 1994	44%	35	21
October 1993	42%	36	22
August 1993	44%	33	23
May 1993	37%	36	27
<u>Party registration</u> (July 2010)			
Democrats	66%	20	14
Republicans	11%	80	9
Non-partisans/others	36%	40	24

Note: For measures conducted prior to 1997, original surveys used a five-point response scale, which has been converted to a two-point approve/disapprove scale for comparative purposes. In addition, surveys prior to 1997 also were conducted among all California adults.

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Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed June 22 – July 5, 2010 among a representative sample of 1,390 registered voters, of whom 1,005 were considered likely to vote in California's 2010 general election. In order to cover a broad range of issues and minimize respondent fatigue, voters' image ratings of the candidates are based on a random subsample of 357 likely voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. To enable the survey to more closely examine the preferences of California's racial/ethnic voter populations, the survey was conducted in six languages and dialects – English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese. In addition, for questions asked of all likely voters, the main statewide sample was supplemented with additional interviews among Chinese-American, Korean-American, and Vietnamese-American likely voters.

Up to six attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period. Likely voters were identified after interviews were completed with a random sample of California registered voters and from listings of ethnic surnames of voters targeting Chinese-Americans, Korean-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans. All samples were provided by Voter Contact Services, a leading provider of registered voter samples to the survey research industry.

Interviewing was completed on either a voter's landline phone or a cell phone depending on the source of the telephone listing from the voter file. After the completion of interviewing results from the ethnic sample augments were weighted down to bring them into alignment with their proper shares of the state's registered voter population. In addition, the overall registered voter sample was weighted to *Field Poll* estimates of the characteristics of the registered voter population in California by region, age, gender and party registration.

Sampling error estimates applicable to the results of any probability-based survey depend on sample size as well as the percentage distribution being examined. Senator Boxer's job performance ratings among all registered voters have a maximum sampling error of +/- 2.8 percentage points. The maximum sampling error estimates for results based on the overall likely voters sample is +/- 3.2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Findings based on the random subsample of likely voters have a sampling error of +/- 5.5 percentage points. The maximum sampling error is based on results in the middle of the sampling distribution (i.e., percentages at or near 50%). Percentages at either end of the distribution (those closer to 10% or 90%) have a smaller margin of error. Findings from subgroups of the overall sample have somewhat larger sampling error levels. There are other potential sources of error in surveys besides sampling error. However, the overall design and execution of the survey sought to minimize these other sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field and has operated continuously since then as an independent, non-partisan survey of California public opinion. The poll receives annual funding from media subscribers of *The Field Poll*, from several California foundations, and from the University of California and California State University systems, who receive the raw data files from each *Field Poll* survey shortly after its completion for teaching and secondary research purposes.

Questions Asked

(ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE OF LIKELY VOTERS)

Is your opinion of Carly Fiorina, businesswoman, generally favorable or unfavorable?

Is your opinion of Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator, generally favorable or unfavorable?

(ASKED OF ALL LIKELY VOTERS)

In the election this year for U.S. Senate, Republican Carly Fiorina is running against Democrat Barbara Boxer. If the election were being held today, for whom would you vote for U.S. Senate – Republican Carly Fiorina or Democrat Barbara Boxer?