

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 HAS SIX-POINT LEAD OVER FIORINA
IN SENATE RACE. MOST VOTERS BASING
THEIR CHOICES ON PRO OR CON FEELINGS
ABOUT BOXER. MANY VOTERS STILL
HAVEN'T FORMED AN OPINION OF FIORINA.**

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By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

In the U.S. Senate race Democrat Barbara Boxer is holding on to a six percentage point lead – 47% to 41% – over her GOP rival Carly Fiorina.

This is a slightly bigger lead than the incumbent had over Fiorina in *Field Poll* surveys taken in July and March of this year.

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

	Boxer (D)	Fiorina (R)	Undecided/ other
September 2010	47%	41	12
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 preferences asked among all registered voters.

Preference motivation

At this point in the campaign majorities of supporters of Boxer and those backing Fiorina appear to concur on one thing about this year’s U.S. Senate contest – the race is primarily about the incumbent.

Two-thirds (65%) of voters who support Fiorina say that their preference is more a vote against Boxer than it is an affirmation of Fiorina’s own candidacy (31%). Among Boxer supporters 67% say their vote is more a vote for Boxer than it is a vote against her opponent (29%).

Table 2
**Is your vote preference more a vote for your candidate
or against her opponent?**
(among likely voters of each candidate)

	<u>For my candidate</u>	<u>Against her opponent</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Boxer voters	67%	29	4
Fiorina voters	31%	65	4

Political and regional differences in voter preferences

Each candidate currently has very strong appeal to her fellow party-members. Democrats, who represent 44% of likely voters in the November election favor Boxer 76% to 11%. Republicans account for 35% of all likely voters and they pick Fiorina 79% to 10%.

The 21% of likely voters who are non-partisan or are registered with a minor party divide Boxer 46% and Fiorina 40%.

About one in six (18%) likely voters say they identify “a lot” with the recently emergent Tea Party populist political movement. These voters heavily favor Fiorina over Boxer, 92% to 2%. Voters reporting “some” identification with the Tea Party represent another 23% of California’s likely voters, and they prefer Fiorina rather than Boxer 66% to 25%. However, Boxer is strongly preferred (69% to 16%) among the 59% of voters who have no identification with the Tea Party movement.

Boxer is supported by a more than two to one margin among voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area (67% to 28%). The incumbent also leads 47% to 38% in Los Angeles County and holds an eight-point advantage in areas of Northern California outside the Bay Area.

Fiorina has a big lead among likely voters in the Central Valley (55% to 31%) and has a slight lead among voters in Southern California outside of Los Angeles County (46% to 43%).

There are large differences in voter preference between voters intending to vote by mail and precinct voters. Fiorina has a one-point lead among mail ballot voters, but Boxer holds a thirteen-point lead (50% to 37%) among voters intending to vote at their local precincts on Election Day.

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

	Boxer	Fiorina	Undecided/ other
Total	47%	41	12
<u>Party registration</u>			
(.44) Democrats	76%	11	13
(.35) Republicans	10%	79	11
(.21) Non-partisans/others	46%	40	14
<u>Tea Party identification</u>			
(.18) A lot	2%	92	6
(.23) Somewhat	25%	66	9
(.59) Not at all	69%	16	15
<u>Area of state</u>			
(.71) Coastal counties	52%	37	11
(.29) Inland counties	33%	51	16
<u>Region</u>			
(.24) Los Angeles County	47%	38	15
(.32) Other Southern California	43%	46	11
(.17) Central Valley	31%	55	14
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	67%	28	5
(.06) Other Northern California*	41%	33	26
<u>Voting method</u>			
(.51) Mail ballot voters	44%	45	11
(.49) Precinct voters	50%	37	13

* Small sample base.

Differences by gender, age, race/ethnicity and education

There are relatively few differences in the voter preferences by gender and age in this race. There are some differences by race/ethnicity. Fiorina has a narrow two-point edge among white non-Hispanics. Boxer is preferred by double-digit margins among Latinos and other ethnic voting constituencies.

There are pronounced demographic differences in preferences by education. Voters who have no more than a high school education are backing Fiorina by eight points (46% to 38%). At the other end of the educational spectrum – voters who have completed post-graduate work – Boxer is preferred by a greater than two to one margin (62% to 28%).

Table 4
Voter preferences in 2010 general election for U.S. Senate
by personal demographic subgroups
(among likely voters)

	Boxer	Fiorina	Undecided/ other
Total	47%	41	12
Gender			
(.47) Male	48%	42	10
(.53) Female	46%	40	14
Race/ethnicity			
(.72) White non-Hispanic	45%	47	8
(.15) Latino*	48%	29	23
(.13) African-American/Asian-American/Native-American*	52%	22	26
Age			
(.24) 18 – 39	44%	33	23
(.21) 40 – 49	45%	40	15
(.31) 50 – 64	48%	46	6
(.24) 65 or older	49%	43	8
Education			
(.17) High school or less	38%	46	16
(.32) Some college/trade school	42%	45	13
(.25) College graduate	44%	45	11
(.26) Post-graduate work	62%	28	10

* Small sample base.

Voter impressions of the candidates

Boxer is seeking her fourth term in the U. S. Senate after representing California’s 6th Congressional District for five terms.

More than nine out of ten (93%) of this state’s likely voters have an opinion of Boxer. Impressions of her are sharply divided and highly partisan. At present, 48% of likely voters view Boxer negatively, while 45% hold a positive opinion.

Likely voter impressions of Boxer are a bit less negative than they were in two *Field Poll* surveys taken earlier this year.

Fiorina, the former CEO of Hewlett-Packard and executive at AT&T and Lucent Technologies, is making her first run for political office.

A March, 2009 *Field Poll* found that just 41% of voters could offer an opinion of Fiorina when she began her Senatorial campaign. While the proportion of likely voters able to rate Fiorina has increased over the past eighteen months to 72%, more than a quarter of likely voters (28%) still have no opinion of her. Fiorina has a mixed image among those voters who can rate her, with 34% holding a positive impression and 38% a negative assessment.

Table 5
Trend of voter images of Barbara Boxer and Carly Fiorina
(among likely voters)

	Favorable	Unfavorable	No opinion
<u>Barbara Boxer</u>			
September 2010	45%	48	7
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>Party registration</u> (Sept. 2010)			
Democrats	72%	21	7
Republicans	14%	84	2
Non-partisans/others	43%	46	11
<u>Carly Fiorina</u>			
September 2010	34%	38	28
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
<u>Party registration</u> (Sept. 2010)			
Democrats	17%	56	27
Republicans	55%	15	30
Non-partisans/others	34%	40	26

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

Boxer's job rating

California voter appraisals of Boxer's job performance as Senator are divided, with slightly more voters giving a negative than positive job appraisal. This contrasts with the period between February 1995 and January 2010 when forty-one separate *Field Poll* surveys found sizeable pluralities of voters giving Boxer positive job marks.

Table 6
Trend of Barbara Boxer's job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(trend among California registered voters)

	Approve	Disapprove	No opinion
September 2010 – Likely voters	43%	47	10
September 2010 – Registered voters	41%	43	16
July 2010	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

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.

Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The findings in this report are based on a *Field Poll* survey completed September 14-21, 2010 among a random sample of 857 registered voters, of whom 599 were considered likely to vote in California's upcoming general election. In order to cover a broad range of issues and minimize respondent fatigue, some of the questions in this report were asked of a random subsample of 316 likely voters.

Interviewing was conducted by telephone in English and Spanish using live interviewers working from Field Research Corporation's central location telephone interviewing facilities. Up to eight attempts were made to reach, screen and interview each randomly selected voter on different days and times of day during the interviewing period.

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, 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, race/ethnicity 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. The maximum sampling error estimates for results based on the overall likely voters sample is +/- 4.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings based on the random subsample of likely voters have a sampling error of +/- 5.8 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 possible sources of error.

The Field Poll was established in 1947 as *The California Poll* by Mervin Field who is still an active advisor. The poll 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

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

Is your preference more a vote for Fiorina or more a vote against Boxer?

Is your preference more a vote for Boxer or more a vote against Fiorina?

(ASKED OF A RANDOM SUBSAMPLE:) I am going to read the names of some people who are running for political office in California this year. For each, please tell me whether you have a generally favorable or unfavorable opinion of that person or whether you don't know enough about him or her to have an opinion.

(QUESTIONS READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

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

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