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Gubernatorial recall election much closer among voters considered most likely to participate than among the overall electorate.

Elder is the early leader in the replacement election, although many are undecided.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds that the proportion of voters in the overall electorate who favor recalling Governor Gavin Newsom has not changed much over the past year. At present 36% of the state's registered voters say that if voting in the recall election they would vote Yes to recall the Governor, while 51% would vote No to retain him.

However, the election will be decided not by the overall electorate, but by only those who choose to take part in the recall. And, when the voting preferences of those considered most likely to participate are examined, the outcome becomes much closer, with 47% favoring Newsom's recall and 50% favoring his retention.

The main factor contributing to these very different distributions is that, if current levels of interest and voting intentions persist, turnout is likely to be far higher among Republicans than Democrats and No Party Preference voters. And, since nearly all Republicans favor Newsom's ouster, a larger proportion of likely voters are voting Yes.

The higher GOP turnout is being driven by several factors. First, Republicans express far greater interest in voting in the recall election than Democrats or No Party Preference voters. Second, there is a widespread expectation among Democrats and No Party Preference voters that Newsom will defeat the recall which may be fostering greater complacency among recall opponents than among supporters. Third, voters in most jurisdictions will see only two questions on the recall ballot, the Yes/No vote on the Governor's recall and who should replace Newsom if he were to be recalled. The very limited nature of the two-question ballot contrasts with other statewide elections in which voters are drawn to the polls by numerous state and local candidate and proposition races. And, when coupled with the fact that many more Democrats than Republicans report not intending to cast a vote on the question of the Governor's replacement due to an absence of well-known Democratic candidates, this also appears to be giving GOP voters a greater incentive to participate.

Observed IGS co-director Eric Schickler, "These results make plain that the big question surrounding the recall will be whether the Newsom campaign and Democratic activists are able to get Democratic voters more engaged and interested in voting in September."

The poll also finds that Republican broadcaster Larry Elder currently leads in the race to replace Newsom should the Governor be recalled, although a large 40% of likely voters remain undecided. When presented with a long list of the candidates running in the replacement election, Elder is the choice of 18%, followed by fellow Republicans John Cox (10%), Kevin Faulconer (10%), and Kevin Kiley (5%). Democrat Kevin Paffrath and Republican Caitlyn Jenner each receive 3% of the vote in this setting.

Trend of voting preferences in the recall election
The current survey is the third time the *Berkeley IGS Poll* has measured voter sentiment in the recall election of Governor Newsom. In each survey, identical proportions of the state's registered voters (36%) report that if they were voting in the election, they would vote Yes to recall the Governor. The latest survey finds that 51% of the overall electorate would vote No to keep Newsom in office, up slightly from previous polls.

However, the September 14 election will be decided not by the overall electorate, but only by those who choose to participate. In its latest survey the poll made a concerted effort to identify which voters among its sample of nearly 6,000 registered voters were most likely to participate in the recall election. This was done by examining voters' self-reported intentions to vote, their level of interest in voting in this election, and their history of voting in past statewide elections.

When the voting preferences of only those considered most likely to participate are examined, the outcome of the recall election becomes closer, with 47% of these voters reporting that they intend to vote Yes to recall the Governor, and only a slightly larger (50%) intending to vote No. Just 3% are undecided.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in the recall election of Governor Newsom

	Yes, to recall %	No, to retain %	Undecided %
Most likely to vote in recall election*			
July 2021	**47**	**50**	**3**
Total registered voters			
July 2021	**36**	**51**	**13**
Late April	36	49	15
Late January	36	45	19

  * NOTE: On a weighted basis, the sample of voters most likely to participate in the recall election
    accounted for slightly less than half of all of the registered voters surveyed in the latest poll.

The demographic characteristics of those most likely to vote in the recall election differs significantly from the state's overall electorate

A primary reason for the much closer preference distributions is that if current levels of interest and voting intentions persist the turnout of Republican voters is likely to be greater than that of Democrats and No Party Preference voters.

While Republicans account for only about one-quarter of all voters in the overall electorate, the poll finds that among those most likely to participate in the recall election their share increases to a third (33%). And, while 46% of voters in the state's overall electorate are registered Democrats and 24% are registered No Party Preference, among those most likely to vote, the share of Democrats declines to 42% and that of No Party Preference voters to 18%.

The narrowing of the Democrats' large numeric advantage over Republican voters has a major impact on the recall election since voting preferences are extremely partisan. According to the poll, greater than nine in ten of the Democrats most likely to vote (91%) intend to vote No to retain Newsom, while an even larger proportion of Republicans (95%) are lining up on the Yes side to recall the Governor. The same huge chasm in voting preferences is observed between the state's liberals and conservatives, who the poll finds account for roughly similar proportions of likely voters.

Voters most likely to participate in the recall election also include a larger share of white voters and fewer voters of color than are found in the overall electorate. Whereas whites account for an estimated 53% of all registered voters and voters of color 47%, the poll indicates that the proportion of whites in the recall may include as many as two in three of the state's recall voters. This is also significant since among white voters who are most likely to participate, preferences on Newsom's recall are about evenly divided, while the state's Latinos, and especially Black voters, are much more inclined to be voting No.

In addition, the poll finds significant differences in voting preferences by region, with voters in the state's two major metropolitan regions of Los Angeles County and the San Francisco Bay Area voting No to retain the Governor nearly two to one, while majorities of voters most likely to participate in the Central Valley, Orange and San Diego counties, and the Inland Empire are now favoring Newsom's recall.

A significant gender gap is also seen in the preferences of those most likely to vote, with male voters favoring Newsom's ouster by seven points, while women are supporting his retention by 13 points. Homeowners, who are likely to outnumber renters among voters most likely to participate, are dividing their votes evenly, whereas renters are backing Newsom by 14 points.

Voting preferences are also very directly tied to the appraisals that voters have of the job Newsom is doing as governor, with nearly all those approving of his performance voting No to retain the Governor and nearly all of those disapproving voting Yes favoring his recall.

Table 2
Comparing voting preferences in the recall election of all registered voters
to those most likely to vote in the recall election across major population subgroups

	Most likely to vote			Total registered voters		
	Yes, to recall %	**No, to retain %**	**Undecided %**	**Yes, to recall %**	**No, to retain %**	**Undecided %**
Total statewide	**47**	**50**	**3**	**36**	**51**	**13**
Party registration						
Democrats	6	91	3	9	79	12
Republicans	95	3	2	87	8	5
No party preference	46	50	4	33	47	20
Minor parties	68	30	2	49	34	17
Political ideology						
Strongly conservative	93	5	2	83	12	5
Somewhat conservative	88	11	1	73	18	9
Moderate	45	50	5	33	50	17
Somewhat liberal	7	91	2	9	76	15
Strongly liberal	2	96	2	4	86	10
Region						
Los Angeles County	39	58	3	29	54	17
San Diego County	54	43	3	39	46	15
Orange County	60	38	2	47	44	9
Inland Empire	60	38	2	46	43	11
Central Coast	46	51	3	37	54	9
Central Valley	56	42	2	47	44	9
San Francisco Bay Area	31	66	3	24	62	14
North Coast/Sierras*	50	47	3	36	51	13
Gender						
Male	53	46	1	40	49	11
Female	42	55	3	32	54	14
Age						
18-39	47	49	4	34	45	21
40-49	50	48	2	36	54	10
50-64	50	47	3	39	51	10
65-74	43	56	1	36	59	5
75 or older	46	53	1	40	56	4
Race/ethnicity						
White	50	49	1	41	52	7
Latino	40	56	4	28	52	20
Asian/Pacific Islander	50	48	2	37	44	19
Black/African American	19	77	4	14	63	23
Tenure						
Homeowners	49	49	2	41	52	7
Renters	41	55	4	29	54	17
Newsom job appraisal						
Approve	1	98	1	2	91	7
Disapprove	91	6	3	81	8	11

Small sample base

Factors contributing to the skew in the election's voting participation

The poll identifies a number of factors contributing to the very different characteristics of voters most likely to be participate in the recall compared to those in the overall electorate. The first relates to voters' self-described interest in voting in the recall election. The poll finds that registered Republicans are nearly thirty points more likely than Democrats or No Party Preference voters to report a high level of interest in voting in the upcoming election. Among registered Republicans 87% offer a high interest score of 8, 9 or 10 on a 10-point interest scale, whereas the proportions of registered Democrats (58%) or No Party Preference voters (53%) reporting this is significantly less.

A second factor relates to voter expectations about the outcome of the recall. When asked whether or not they think Newsom will defeat the recall, Democrats expect him to do so by a huge 70% to 8% margin. By contrast, Republican voters are far more likely to believe that Newsom will be voted out of office, with 53% holding to this view, and just 21% expecting him to survive the recall. This situation may be contributing to greater complacency among Democratic voters, who largely oppose the Governor's recall, than among Republicans, who predominantly favor his ouster.

Third, the recall election is unlike other statewide elections since in most jurisdictions only two questions will appear on the ballot, the Yes/No vote on the Governor's recall and who should replace Newsom should he be recalled. The very limited nature of the two-question ballot contrasts with other statewide elections in which voters are drawn to the polls by numerous state and local candidate and proposition races. In addition, when the poll asked registered voters who they would choose to replace Newsom, very large proportions of Democrats (40%) and No Party Preference registrants (28%) volunteer that they do not expect to cast a vote on that side of the ballot. By contrast, just 6% of registered Republicans say this. Thus, the greater desire of Republicans to vote in the replacement election may also be giving them greater incentive to participate than their Democratic and No Party Preference voter counterparts.

Voter consideration of candidates running in the replacement election

Voters were also asked which candidates they were considering among some of the most talked about candidates running in the replacement election. In this setting Elder receives the greatest consideration (34%). Next most frequently cited are Cox and Faulconer, each of whom are being considered by slightly more than a quarter of those most likely to vote, 28% and 29% respectively. Smaller proportions of voters – between 11% and 19% – report giving consideration to supporting each of six other candidates, Republicans Kiley, Ose, Jenner, Hewitt, and Gaines, and Democrat Paffrath.

Voters' greater consideration of Elder as Newsom's replacement is derived primarily from the fact that he has a very strong following among the Republicans most likely to be voting in the recall, nearly eight in ten of whom (78%) say they are giving consideration to backing his candidacy.

Table 3
Voter consideration of candidates running in the replacement election
for governor in the recall election among those most likely to participate

	Total %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference %	Other parties %
Larry Elder (R)					
Considering supporting	34	2	78	29	49
Not considering	66	98	22	71	51
No opinion	*	*	*	*	*
John Cox (R)					
Considering supporting	28	3	56	28	38
Not considering	54	84	20	52	36
No opinion	18	13	24	20	27
Kevin Faulconer (R)					
Considering supporting	26	6	52	24	28
Not considering	51	79	19	51	38
No opinion	23	15	29	25	34
Kevin Kiley (R)					
Considering supporting	19	3	38	21	25
Not considering	53	81	22	50	37
No opinion	28	16	40	29	38
Doug Ose (R)					
Considering supporting	14	2	28	17	16
Not considering	55	80	27	52	40
No opinion	31	18	45	31	44
Kevin Paffrath (D)					
Considering supporting	14	22	2	17	17
Not considering	54	46	66	50	52
No opinion	32	32	32	33	31
Jeff Hewitt (R)					
Considering supporting	12	2	23	12	23
Not considering	56	81	29	54	39
No opinion	32	17	48	34	38
Caitlyn Jenner (R)					
Considering supporting	12	2	25	12	20
Not considering	71	89	52	72	53
No opinion	17	9	23	16	27
Ted Gaines (R)					
Considering supporting	11	1	20	14	19
Not considering	57	81	30	54	40
No opinion	32	18	50	32	41

(R) indicates Republican and (D) indicates Democrat   * less than ½ of 1%

Elder leads in first-choice preferences in the replacement election, although 40% of voters are undecided

Voters were also presented with a long list of the gubernatorial candidates whom the California Secretary of State reported as being eligible to be included on the state's September 14 recall election ballot* and asked whom they would support if the election were being held today.

By far the most common response is undecided, cited by 40% of those planning to vote in the replacement election. But, Elder is the candidate receiving the most first choice preferences (18%) in this setting, followed by Cox (10%), Faulconer (10%), and Kiley (5%). Paffrath and Jenner are each cited by 3%.

Elder's support is again derived primarily from the strong backing of fellow Republicans, 31% of whom are now supporting his bid to replace Newsom. By contrast, the two next most preferred candidates among GOP voters are Cox and Faulconer, but each receives only about half as many first-choice votes as Elder.

The standings in the replacement election necessarily exclude the approximately one in four likely voters, mostly Democrats, who say they do not intend to vote for any of the candidates in the replacement election, since official vote returns in this race will be based only on those casting a vote on this part of the ballot. This situation creates even greater distortions in the composition of voters who will determine Newsom's successor should the Governor be recalled, as the poll finds Republicans outnumbering Democrats among likely voters who intend to cast a vote in the replacement election.

Table 4
First choice preferences in the replacement election for governor
when presented with a list of the candidates running in the recall election
(among likely voters who say they will cast a vote in the replacement election)

	Total %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference %	Other parties %
Larry Elder (R)	18	1	31	14	24
John Cox (R)	10	1	16	9	4
Kevin Faulconer (R)	10	4	13	10	18
Kevin Kiley (R)	5	1	8	4	5
Kevin Paffrath (D)	3	8	1	4	-
Caitlyn Jenner (R)	3	1	4	4	5
All others (2% or less)	11	18	5	12	20
Undecided	40	66	22	43	24

(R) indicates Republican and (D) indicates Democratic candidates.

* Data collection for this survey began on Sunday, July 18 and included the names, party affiliations and job descriptions of all the candidates listed by the California Secretary of State as being eligible for the ballot as of Saturday evening, July 17, plus the name of broadcaster Larry Elder, whose official eligibility had not yet been determined, but who later was added to the official list of candidates.

Newsom's job ratings while positive among the overall electorate, are slightly underwater among those most likely to vote in the recall election

The poll finds that Newsom's job marks among the overall electorate are generally similar to those he received in late April, the last time the *Berkeley IGS Poll* made such an assessment.

At present, 50% of registered voters approve of Newsom's performance while 42% disapprove, similar to the 52% approve and 43% disapprove job marks he received among registered voters in a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed three months ago.

However, the Governor's job marks are slightly more negative than positive among voters most likely to participate in the recall election, with 48% approving and 51% disapproving. More troubling for the Governor still is the fact that a very large share of likely voters (44%) report that they "strongly disapprove" of Newsom's performance.

Table 5
Comparing the job performance rating of Governor Gavin Newsom among all registered voters to those considered most likely to vote in the recall election

	Most likely to vote	Registered voters				
	July 2021 %	**July 2021 %**	Late April 2021 %	Late-January 2021 %	September 2020 %	June 2019 %
Approve	**48**	**50**	52	46	64	57
Approve strongly	**25**	**20**	21	14	25	15
Approve somewhat	**23**	**30**	31	32	39	42
Disapprove	**51**	**42**	43	48	36	42
Disapprove somewhat	**7**	**12**	13	17	13	17
Disapprove strongly	**44**	**30**	30	31	23	25
No opinion	**1**	**8**	5	6	*	1

Yes voters hold very different views than No voters on many aspects of the recall election

The survey also asked voters whether they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements made about the recall election. In most cases those intending to vote Yes to recall Newsom hold very different views than those intending to vote No to retain the Governor. However, there was one statement in which majorities of both Yes and No voters do agree -- *"The recall election offers the Republican Party its best chance to win back the governorship."* Likely voters statewide agree with this statement nearly two-to-one (54% to 29%) and this includes majorities of both Yes voters (57%) and those intending to vote No in the recall election (52%).

By contrast, voters were more evenly divided when asked their views about two pro-recall statements and three anti-recall statements about the election, with Yes voters and No voters generally taking opposite positions on each issue.

Reactions to pro-recall statements
"Newsom should be recalled because he has failed to adequately address many of the state's longstanding problems, including homelessness, income inequality, energy, wildfires and water." (Yes voters: 94% agree, No voters: 92% disagree).

"Newsom should be recalled because he greatly overstepped his authority as governor when responding to the Covid-19 pandemic." (Yes voters: 90% agree, No voters: 96% disagree).

Reactions to anti-recall statements
"The cost of holding the recall election is a waste of taxpayer money." (Yes voters: 84% disagree, No voters: 93% agree.)

"The recall election is another attempt by the Republican Party to steal elections from Democratic officeholders." (Yes voters: 91% disagree, No voters: 85% agree).

"The recall election is undemocratic because with so many people running, if Newsom is recalled, a new governor could be elected by winning only a small share of the total vote." (Yes voters: 71% disagree, No voters 68% agree).

About the Survey
The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times.*

The poll was administered online in English and Spanish July 18-24, 2021 among a stratified random sample of 5,795 registered voters across California. Results from the sample of voters considered most likely to participate in the election are based on the responses of 3,266 of these voters. The survey distributed email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of registered voters with email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists in California and were derived from information contained on the state's official voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

To protect the anonymity of survey respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. Post-stratification weights were applied to align the overall sample of registered voters to population characteristics of the state's registered voters.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely due to the effects of sample stratification and the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while findings from the sample of

voters most likely to vote in the recall election have an estimated sampling error of +/-2.5 percentage points.

Question wording
A recall election will be held in California on September 14 asking voters whether they want to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office. On a scale of 1 to 10, how much interest do you have in voting in the recall election, where "one" means you are not interested at all and "ten" means you are very interested. Choose any number between one and ten for your answer.

In the recall election, voters will first be asked to vote Yes or No on the question of whether to remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office. If the recall election of Governor Newsom were being held today, how would you vote?

Regardless of how you may vote in the recall election, do you think voters will remove Governor Gavin Newsom from office or do you think Newsom will defeat the recall and remain in office?

In the recall election a second question will ask voters who they would choose to replace Newsom as governor should he be recalled from office. Below are the candidates who are getting most of the media attention in the replacement election for governor. For each please indicate whether you are considering voting for him or her as Newsom's replacement for governor in the recall election. For this question, you may select as many or as few persons as you'd like as candidates you are considering. If you don't know enough about a candidate, select no opinion. (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES.) (NAME, PARTY AFFILIATION AND JOB DESCRIPTION LISTED FOR EACH CANDIDATE)

A large number of candidates have filed papers to run for governor in the recall election should Governor Newsom be removed from office. Below are the names of those intending to run thus far. If the election were held today and these were the candidates, for whom would you vote as Newsom's replacement for governor? (CANDIDATE NAMES, PARTY AFFILIATIONS AND JOB DESCRIPTIONS LISTED) Choose one.

Please indicate whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about the recall election? (SEE RELEASE FOR WORDING OF STATEMENTS)

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Gavin Newsom is handling his job as Governor of California?

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS's co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a copy of the detailed tabulations to this report or a listing of past poll reports issued by the poll, please visit https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll.