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Gavin Newsom remains the early leader for governor in 2018.

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Lieutenant Governor Gavin Newsom continues to hold the early lead in statewide voter preferences for governor in 2018. Newsom is currently the choice of 28% of registered voters when paired against four other announced candidates -- Republican businessman John Cox and three fellow Democrats, former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, state Treasurer John Chiang and former state schools superintendent Delaine Eastin. In this setting, Cox, the Republican, places second with 18%, followed by Villaraigosa at 11%, Chiang at 8% and Eastin 3%. One in three voters (32%) do not offer a preference at this time.

Newsom's early lead is derived from the strong support of voters living in the San Francisco Bay Area and among registered Democrats statewide. Cox's support is derived primarily from members of his own party. Villaraigosa's strongest voter bloc is from fellow Latino voters. Chiang does best among other non-Hispanic ethnic voting constituencies.

Newsom also heads the field when voters are asked to choose from an expanded field of ten potential gubernatorial candidates that also includes Republican San Diego Mayor Kevin Faulconer, and four other Democrats -- Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, Bay Area businessman/environmentalist Tom Steyer, California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de Leon, and former state Controller Steve Westly.

While the proportion of voters supporting Newsom is lower in this setting (24%), his lead over his nearest rival expands to thirteen points, with the two Republicans, Cox and Falconer, dividing the GOP vote, with each receiving 11% support among the overall electorate. They are followed by Garcetti at 9%, Villaraigosa (7%) and Chiang (6%). About one in five voters (21%) do not offer a preference in this setting.

Early gubernatorial preferences among five announced candidates

Newsom leads in early voter preferences when paired against four other announced candidates. In this setting, Newsom is the choice of 28% of voters statewide. Cox, the Republican, places second with 18% of the preferences. Newsom's nearest Democratic rivals are Villaraigosa at 11% and Chiang at 8%. Eastin currently receives just 3% of the preferences, while nearly a third of voters (32%) are undecided.

Table 1
Voter preferences for governor in the 2018 election among five announced candidates

	March 2017 %
Gavin Newsom, Lieutenant Governor, Democrat	28
John Cox, San Diego businessman, Republican	18
Antonio Villaraigosa, former Los Angeles Mayor, Democrat	11
John Chiang, State Treasurer, Democrat	8
Delaine Eastin, former state schools superintendent, Democrat	3
Undecided	32

Distinct voter segments supporting each of the gubernatorial candidates in the early going

About four in ten voters living in the San Francisco Bay Area (42%) and registered Democrats statewide (40%) are currently backing Newsom. Newsom also receives the early support of one in three (33%) white non-Hispanic voters, 31% of voters in the South Coast region and 30% in Northern California outside the San Francisco Bay Area.

As the only Republican candidate included in the mix, Cox's support is derived primarily from members of his own party, 55% of whom back Cox in this setting.

Villaraigosa's strongest bloc of voter support is from Latino voters. Chiang does best among other non-Hispanic ethnic voting constituencies. No Party Preference voters are more likely than other voters to be undecided, with nearly half (47%) not offering a preference for any of the announced gubernatorial candidates, although among voters who do offer a preference, Newsom holds a large lead.

Table 2
Preferences for governor in the 2018 election among five announced candidates across major subgroups of the registered voter population

	Newsom %	Cox %	Villaraigosa %	Chiang %	Eastin %	Undecided %
Total registered voters	**28**	**18**	**11**	**8**	**3**	**32**
Party registration						
Democrats	40	4	15	11	5	25
Republicans	5	55	5	6	1	28
No party preference/other	26	10	9	5	3	47
Region						
Los Angeles County	21	20	14	8	6	31
South Coast	31	19	11	8	**	31
Other Southern CA	17	21	17	11	4	30
Central Valley	24	19	8	10	2	37
San Francisco Bay Area	42	14	7	5	4	28
Other Northern CA*	30	18	4	7	3	38
Race/ethnicity						
White non-Hispanic	33	21	6	7	3	30
Latino	17	16	25	4	5	33
Asian/black/other	24	12	5	17	3	39

* *small sample base*
** *less than ½ of 1%*

Newsom also leads among expanded field of potential candidates

Newsom also is in the lead when the field of potential candidates is broadened to include five other prominent Californians - Faulconer, a Republican, and four other Democrats, Garcetti, Steyer, de Leon, and Westly.

In this setting Newsom is the choice of 24% of voters, followed by the two Republicans, Falconer and Cox, who each receive 11% support. Garcetti, who easily won re-election to a second term as Mayor of Los Angeles earlier this month, is in fourth place at 9%, slightly ahead of Villaraigosa (7%) and Chiang (6%).

Table 3
Voter preferences for governor in the 2018 election among ten possible candidates

	March 2017 %	October 2016* %
Gavin Newsom, Lt. Governor, Democrat	24	23
Kevin Faulconer, San Diego Mayor, Republican	11	16
John Cox, San Diego businessman, Republican	11	N/A
Eric Garcetti, Los Angeles Mayor, Democrat	9	7
Antonio Villaraigosa, former Los Angeles Mayor, Democrat	7	6
John Chiang, State Treasurer, Democrat	6	2
Tom Steyer, Bay Area businessman/environmentalist, Democrat	4	5
Kevin de Leon, California Senate President Pro Tem, Democrat	3	N/A
Steve Westly, former State Controller, Democrat	2	1
Delaine Eastin, former state schools superintendent, Democrat	2	N/A
Others	--	15
Undecided	21	25

* *October 2016 poll results based on a survey of California registered voters conducted jointly by IGS and The Field Poll, published November 15, 2016 by the UC Berkeley, Institute of Governmental Studies and Field Research Corporation. Others included in the October 2016 survey, but not listed in the March 2017 poll were former Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin, Republican, who received 11% of the preferences in October, and California Secretary of State Alex Padilla, Democrat (4%).*

N/A: represents candidates not included in October 2016 survey.

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,000 California registered voters conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at UC, Berkeley. The *Berkeley IGS Poll* was administered online by YouGov March 13-20, 2017 in English and Spanish. According to YouGov, results from the overall sample have a margin of error of +/-3.6%.

YouGov completed the survey by inviting California registered voters who are included among its online panel of over 1.5 million Americans to participate in the poll. Panelists were recruited using a variety of methods, including telephone-to-web and mail-to-web recruitment, partner-sponsored solicitations, web-based advertising and email campaigns, as well as through telephone and mail surveys. Eligible voters were chosen to participate in the poll using a proprietary sampling technology frame that establishes interlocking demographic and regional targets, so that the characteristics of those polled approximate the profile of the state's overall registered voter population. After survey administration, YouGov applied statistical weights to align the sample to demographic and regional characteristics of the state's registered voter population.

IGS was responsible for the development and translation into Spanish of all questions included in the survey. The results in this report are based on answers given by California voters to the following questions:

There will be an election for governor of California next year and incumbent Governor Jerry Brown will not be running. Please indicate who would be your first choice for Governor, and who would be your second choice, from the following list of potential candidates? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES LISTED) (ORDERING OF CANDIDATES RANDOMIZED TO AVOID POSSIBLE SEQUENCE BIAS)

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 (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state.