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***Newsom holds big lead in re-election bid for governor
- His challenger Republican Brian Dahle is unfamiliar to a majority of the state's voters -***

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*
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The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds Governor Gavin Newsom holding a commanding lead in his fall re-election bid against Republican challenger, state Senator Brian Dahle. The poll finds Newsom currently leading by 27 points among the state's registered voters and 24 points among voters considered most likely to vote in the November general election.

Newsom finished first among a field of 26 candidates in the state's June top-two primary for governor, capturing 55.9% of the vote. He will face off in the November general election against second place finisher Dahle, who received 17.7% of the primary vote.

While the incumbent Governor is nearly universally known to the electorate, a majority of voters (58%) is unable to offer an opinion of Dahle. Both candidates are viewed more positively than negatively among those offering an opinion.

The poll also finds that 53% of the state's voters approve of the job Newsom is doing overall while 42% disapprove. This is slightly better than the last time the *Berkeley IGS Poll* asked voters about the Governor's job performance in February. However, more voters continue to believe that things in the state are moving in the wrong direction than those that feel California is heading in the right direction by 52% to 40%.

Opinions about the job Newsom is doing and his re-election bid are highly partisan with Democrats offering a very positive assessment of the job performance and solidly backing his reelection. By contrast, Republicans hold a decidedly negative view of the Governor's performance in office and overwhelmingly oppose his re-election.

Said IGS co-director Eric Schickler of the findings, "Newsom is in a strong position for reelection, with Republicans facing an uphill climb given the huge partisan advantage that the Democrats hold over the GOP in party registration across the state."

Newsom holds big lead over Dahle in the November gubernatorial election

When voters are asked their voting preferences for governor in the fall general election the poll finds Newsom holding a commanding twenty-seven-point lead over Dahle (52% to 25%) among the overall electorate and leading by twenty-four points (55% to 31%) among those considered most likely to participate in the election.

Support for Newsom's reelection is greatest among registered voters in his home region, the San Francisco Bay Area (64%) as well as voters in the state's Central Coast region (55%), Los Angeles County (55%) and San Diego County (54%).

Newsom's support is broad-based across the major demographic subgroups of the state electorate. Newsom holds a huge lead over Dahle among the state's Democratic voters, who outnumber Republicans greater than two to one. Other subgroups where Newsom receives strong backing include voters registered as No Party Preference, liberals, Blacks, and college graduates.

Early vote support for Dahle is coming primarily from fellow Republicans, who back his candidacy 71% to 7%. On a regional basis, Dahle does best among voters in the sparsely populated counties of the North Coast and Sierras, his home region.

Table 1
Voter preferences for Governor in the November 2022 general election
(among California registered voters)

	Newsom %	Dahle %	Other (write-in)	Undecided %
Total registered voters	52	25	4	19
Likely voters	55	31	3	11
<u>Party registration</u>				
Democrats	80	4	2	4
Republicans	7	71	4	18
No Party Preference	47	20	5	28
Other party	36	28	5	31
<u>Political ideology</u>				
Strongly conservative	9	72	4	15
Somewhat conservative	18	58	5	19
Moderate	48	20	4	28
Somewhat liberal	78	4	2	16
Strongly liberal	88	1	3	8
<u>Region</u>				
Los Angeles County	55	19	4	22
San Diego County	54	27	2	17
Orange County	41	28	5	26
Inland Empire	46	32	3	19
Central Coast	55	29	4	12
Central Valley	43	36	4	17
San Francisco Bay Area	64	16	3	17
North Coast/Sierras	38	34	4	24
<u>Gender</u>				
Male	50	29	4	17
Female	54	22	3	21
<u>Age</u>				
18-29	53	16	5	26
30-39	53	22	4	21
40-49	50	23	4	23
50-64	51	31	3	15
65 or older	52	31	3	14
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>				
White non-Hispanic	50	32	3	15
Latino	54	18	4	24
Asian/Pacific Islander	55	18	3	24
Black	69	10	2	19
<u>Education</u>				
High school grad or less	43	26	5	26
Some college/trade school	48	28	3	21
College graduate	57	24	3	16
Post graduate work	63	20	3	14

While Newsom is nearly universally known to the state’s voters, nearly six in ten are unfamiliar with Dahle

Greater than nine in ten of the state’s registered voters (92%) can offer an opinion of Governor Newsom, with positive impressions outnumbering negative impressions 53% to 39%. Just 8% have no opinion. By contrast, nearly six in ten voters (58%) are unable to offer an opinion of Dahle. But, among those who can offer an opinion, more hold a favorable view of the state Senator (24%) than hold an unfavorable opinion (18%).

Partisanship plays a major role in shaping the opinions that voters have of each candidate. Newsom is viewed in a very positive light by the state’s Democrats (80% favorable vs. 12% unfavorable), while Republicans hold a decidedly negative opinion of the Governor (86% unfavorable vs 9% favorable).

Republican Dahle is also rated very positively by members of his own party (61% favorable vs. 4% unfavorable) although about a third of the state’s GOP voters (35%) do not offer an opinion. Two out of three Democrats (67%) have no opinion of Dahle, and among Democrats who offer an opinion he is viewed more negatively than positively 26% to 7%.

Table 2
Overall impressions of the gubernatorial candidates
(among California registered voters)

	Total registered voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference %	Other Party %
<u>Gavin Newsom</u>					
Favorable	<u>53</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>36</u>
Strongly	25	41	3	18	13
Somewhat	28	39	6	32	23
Unfavorable	<u>39</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>86</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>55</u>
Somewhat	11	8	11	14	17
Strongly	28	4	75	25	38
No opinion	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>9</u>
<u>Brian Dahle</u>					
Favorable	<u>24</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>61</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>27</u>
Strongly	9	2	27	5	9
Somewhat	15	5	34	13	18
Unfavorable	<u>18</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>18</u>
Somewhat	6	8	3	7	8
Strongly	12	18	1	8	10
No opinion	<u>58</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>55</u>

Newsom job performance rating among voters is currently five to four positive

The latest poll is the ninth time the *Berkeley IGS Poll* has asked voters to assess the job Newsom is doing as governor. It finds that 53% currently approve of the job the governor is doing overall, while 42% disapprove. This represents an improvement from a February *Berkeley IGS Poll* which found the state’s voters more divided in their assessments of Newsom’s overall performance in office.

Table 3
Trend of the overall job performance of Governor Gavin Newsom
(among California registered voters)

	Approve (total) %	<i>Approve strongly %</i>	<i>Approve somewhat %</i>	Disapprove (total) %	<i>Disapprove somewhat %</i>	<i>Disapprove strongly %</i>
August 2022	53	20	33	42	13	29
February 2022	48	16	32	47	16	31
September 2021	50	20	30	42	11	31
July 2021	50	20	30	42	12	30
April 2021	52	21	31	43	13	30
January 2021	46	14	32	48	17	31
September 2020	64	25	39	36	13	23
September 2019	60	18	42	39	12	27
June 2019	57	15	42	42	17	25

Note: Differences between the sum of percentages and 100% in each poll equal the proportion of voters with no opinion.

More voters continue to believe the state is moving in the wrong direction

The latest poll updates a long 34-year time series first begun by the statewide *Field Poll* in the late 1980’s asking voters whether they believe the state of California is generally moving in the right direction or off on the wrong track.

Results from the poll find more voters saying the state is on the wrong track (52%) than moving in the right direction (40%). However, these findings represent a slight improvement from those found in February when 54% felt the state was on the wrong track and just 36% said it was moving in the right direction.

Table 4
Trend of voter assessments of the overall direction of the state of California (1988-present)

	Right direction %	Wrong track %	No opinion %
August 2022	40	52	8
February 2022	36	54	10
May 2021	46	45	9
January 2021	37	55	8
September 2020	48	52	*
2016 (average)	51	49	*
2015 (average)	45	41	14
2014 (average)	42	43	15
2013 (average)	44	44	12
2012 (average)	30	59	11
2011 (average)	24	66	10
2010 (average)	13	80	7
2009 (average)	17	75	8
2008 (average)	22	69	9
2007 (average)	45	43	12
2006 (average)	37	49	14
2005 (average)	31	58	11
2004 (average)	39	48	13
2003 (average)	20	72	8
2002 (average)	37	52	11
2001 (average)	43	50	7
2000 (average)	58	35	7
1999 (average)	52	34	14
1998 (average)	48	42	10
1997 (average)	36	54	10
1996 (average)	39	49	12
1995 (average)	32	57	11
1994 (average)	21	70	9
1993 (average)	11	83	6
1992 (average)	7	90	3
1989 (average)	50	42	8
1988 (average)	52	43	5

* Less than 1/2 of 1%

Note: 1988-2016 measures are from statewide surveys of The Field Poll, as reported in release #2552, September 29, 2016, by Field Research Corporation.

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. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish August 9-15, 2022 among 9,254 California registered voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

The *Berkeley IGS Poll* is administered by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state's registered voters. The latest poll also included an oversampling of registered voters in Los Angeles County, administered using the same methods, to enable the poll to examine specific issues of interest to voters in Los Angeles and to the *Times*. After the completion of data collection, the results were weighted to realign the Los Angeles County oversample to its actual share of the statewide registered voter population.

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 voter registration rolls. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender 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 original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, post-stratification weights were applied to align the sample of registered voters responding to the survey to population characteristics of the state's registered voters.

The sampling error associated with the results from the survey are difficult to calculate precisely because 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.

Question wording

Do you think things in California are generally going in the right direction or do you feel things are off on the wrong track?

Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way Gavin Newsom is handling his job as Governor of California?

Below are the candidates for Governor in California’s November statewide election. For whom would you vote if the election were held today? (ROTATE ORDERING OF CANDIDATES)

Gavin Newsom, Governor, Democrat

Brian Dahle, Senator/Farmer, Republican

Regardless of whom you intend to vote for in the election for Governor in November, is your opinion of (INSERT NAME AND TITLE), favorable or unfavorable, or don’t you know enough about him to say? (RANDOMIZE ORDER)

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 seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion and generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a complete listing of stories issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll* go to <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.