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Trump in a strong position to capture all of California's 169 delegates to the Republican National Convention.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

Last summer the California GOP changed its rules for awarding delegates to the Republican National Convention so that if any candidate secured more than half of the statewide primary vote he or she would be awarded all of the state's 169 convention delegates, nearly 14% % of the delegates needed to capture the GOP nomination.

In a poll of California Republicans completed last week in advance of today's Iowa caucuses, the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds former President Donald Trump in a strong position to achieve that threshold in the state's upcoming March 5 presidential primary election. The poll finds that two-thirds of those considered most likely to vote in the California Republican primary (66%) now intend to cast their ballot for Trump, up from 57% in late October. His nearest competitor is now former South Carolina Governor Nikki Haley, who is favored by 11%. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who at one time led Trump in California last February, has seen his support steadily decline and is now the choice of just 8% of GOP voters.

Despite the strong backing of his GOP backers, Trump faces long odds in upending President Joe Biden in this deeply blue state should they face each other again in the November presidential election. Yet Biden's current lead over Trump is significantly less than the 30-point victory margin he achieved in California in 2020. When pairing the two in a five-candidate presidential field that also includes Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Cornel West, and Jill Stein, Biden's lead over Trump is now just 16 points. The President's lead expands to 19 points when he is paired against Trump in a head-to-head match-up.

While California voters now hold mixed views of Biden (50% favorable vs. 48% unfavorable), their opinions of Trump are nearly two-to-one negative, 34% favorable vs. 63% unfavorable. Kennedy is also viewed more negatively than positive by the overall electorate, with 48% holding a favorable opinion and 31% unfavorable. Interestingly, opinions of Kennedy are more positive among GOP voters than among Democratic or No Party Preference voters.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online January 4-8 among a random sample of 6,199 registered voters, including a weighted subsample of 4,470 likely voters, of whom 1,351 were deemed likely to vote in the March 5 Republican primary election.

IGS Co-Director G. Cristina Mora notes that the "the findings show that California Republicans are not unlike those in other states, with a strong majority expressing a preference for Trump as their GOP candidate for president."

Trump in a strong position to capture all of California's GOP convention delegates

The latest poll finds GOP voter support for Trump at 66%, far surpassing the 50% threshold needed to capture all of California's 169 delegates to the Republican National Convention. Support for Trump has steadily increased over the past year, rising from 29% last February to 44% in May, 55% in August, 57% in late October, to its current 66% level.

By contrast, voter preferences for DeSantis, who at one time was favored over Trump in California last February, have declined dramatically over this period and he now receives just 8% of the preferences. Support for Haley has risen modestly, from 3% last August to 11% at present. Entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy polls just 3%, while former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, who announced last week that he was dropping out of the race, received just 2%.

Table 1
Trend of voter preferences in California's 2024 GOP presidential primary election
(among Republicans likely voters)

	Current (Early Jan. 2024) %	Late Oct. 2023 %	August 2023 %	May 2023 %	Feb. 2023 %	August 2022 %
Donald Trump	**66**	57	55	44	29	38
Nikki Haley	**11**	9	7	3	7	3
Ron DeSantis	**8**	12	16	26	37	27
Vivek Ramaswamy	**3**	3	4	2	*NA*	*NA*
Chris Christie	**2**	2	3	1	*NA*	*NA*
Others*	**--**	5	5	10	16	19
Undecided	**10**	11	8	13	10	13

* In the latest poll, "others" included Asa Hutchinson, Ryan L. Binkley, David Stuckenberg, and Rachel Swift, whose names will also appear on California's March 2024 Republican presidential primary ballot. Each received 0% support in the latest survey. Previous measures included other Republicans who have since dropped out of the race and whose names will not appear on the California election ballot. NA: Not asked

Trump's support among GOP voters is very broad-based

Trump is now receiving majority support across virtually all major demographic and regional subgroups of the state's Republican primary voter electorate and now exceeds 70% among GOP voters who supported him in 2020, as well as among strongly conservative voters, Latino Republicans, voters under age 40, and GOP voters in the Inland Empire.

Haley does best among the relatively small segments of California Republicans who describe themselves as moderate or liberal in politics, those with a post graduate education and GOP voters living in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area.

Table 2
GOP voter preferences in California's 2024 GOP presidential primary election across subgroups of the likely voter population

	Trump %	Haley %	DeSantis %	Ramaswamy %	Christie %	Undecided %
Total registered voters	66	11	8	3	2	10
Trump voter in 2020	72	9	8	2	1	8
Political ideology	51	22	6	2	4	15
Strongly conservative	78	5	9	1	-	7
Somewhat conservative	64	12	8	6	3	7
Moderate/liberal	51	22	6	2	4	15
Region						
Los Angeles County	69	11	8	2	4	6
San Diego County	69	12	8	3	1	7
Orange County	62	12	9	-	2	15
Inland Empire	73	7	7	2	1	10
Central Coast*	64	11	8	6	2	9
Central Valley	68	11	7	5	2	7
San Francisco Bay Area	53	21	10	3	3	10
North Coast/Sierras*	65	8	9	-	-	18
Gender						
Female	67	9	8	2	2	12
Male	65	14	8	4	3	6
Age						
18-39	70	4	8	10	1	7
40-49	73	9	7	1	3	7
50-64	66	12	7	1	3	11
65 or older	63	15	9	2	2	9
Race/ethnicity						
White	63	14	9	2	3	9
Latino	77	5	6	3	1	8
Asian/Pacific Islander*	69	10	4	6	3	8
Education						
High school or less	80	3	4	1	-	12
Some college/trade school	73	9	6	3	2	7
College graduate (BA/BS)	53	16	13	5	2	11
Post graduate work	51	22	10	3	7	7

small sample bases

Biden leads Trump by much smaller margins than he did in 2020 when he carried the state by 30 points

The poll tested the strength of the President's re-election bid in a possible Trump rematch in both a five-candidate field and in a two-candidate pairing. While Biden remains ahead of Trump in both settings, his lead is 16 points in a five-candidate field and 19 points in a head-to-head match-up. This is considerably less than his 30-point victory over Trump here in 2020.

Biden's lead is derived from the strong support of Democratic and liberal voters. He also polls better in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County than in other areas. Besides Trump's core Republican and conservative base, he polls best in the Inland Empire and the Central Valley.

When examining preferences across other major voter subgroups, two striking differences stand out from those observed in 2020. Among Latino voters Biden is now running even with Trump in a five-candidate field and leads by a modest 10 points in a head-to-head match-up. By contrast, in 2020 the President defeated Trump among Latino voters in California by greater than 50 points according to exit polls taken at the time. In addition, the President's lead over Trump is now just 8 point among voters ages 18-29 in a five-candidate race and 15 points in a two-candidate pairing, down from to a greater than 30-point margin that Biden achieved in 2020.

Table 3
General election preferences for president pairing Biden and Trump in a 5-candidate field vs. a 2-candidate head-to-head match-up (among likely voters in California)

	5-candidate field					2-candidate pairing	
	Biden %	Trump %	Kennedy %	West %	Stein %	Biden %	Trump %
Total registered voters	**47**	**31**	**7**	**2**	**2**	**56**	**37**
Party registration							
Democrats	76	3	5	3	2	89	5
Republicans	5	80	7	-	-	7	88
No party preference	45	24	7	3	1	56	33
Other parties	25	31	15	4	5	42	42
Region							
Los Angeles County	52	24	5	3	1	62	29
San Diego County	43	32	9	3	1	54	38
Orange County	40	41	7	1	3	46	45
Inland Empire	35	40	6	1	1	43	47
Central Coast*	48	31	8	1	1	56	37
Central Valley	36	44	7	2	1	45	49
San Francisco Bay Area	61	18	6	3	1	72	22
North Coast/Sierras*	43	41	5	1	2	54	44
Political ideology							
Strongly conservative	6	84	4	-	-	7	88
Somewhat conservative	12	61	10	1	-	18	74
Moderate	45	26	11	-	1	57	33
Somewhat liberal	81	2	3	2	1	92	3
Strongly liberal	79	-	1	6	5	93	2
Gender							
Female	47	28	7	2	2	59	33
Male	46	35	6	2	1	53	40
Age							
18-29	39	31	5	4	4	53	38
30-39	42	26	8	5	3	58	31
40-49	43	32	6	4	2	53	39
50-64	46	34	8	1	1	54	39
65 or older	53	31	6	-	1	59	36
Race/ethnicity							
White	51	32	6	1	1	57	37
Latino	35	34	8	3	2	50	40
Asian/Pacific Islander	50	26	5	2	1	62	31
Black	60	14	5	4	-	73	16

Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages in both measures equals the proportion of voters undecided.

Comparing the image ratings of the likely general election candidates for president

When asked their overall impressions of Biden, 50% of the state's voters now say they view him favorably, while 48% hold an unfavorable opinion. Yet, this mixed assessment is far more positive that how Californians view former President Trump, whom just 34% view positively and 63% negatively. Kennedy is also viewed unfavorably by the overall electorate 48% to 31%. While majorities of Californians are unable to rate either West or Stein, they too receive more negative than positive appraisals from those offering an opinion.

Predictably, opinions of Biden and Trump are highly partisan, with large majorities describing their party's own likely presidential standard bearer very positively while offering highly negative appraisals of the opposing party's candidate. The poll finds a few deviations from these purely party line appraisals, as 17% of Democratic voters report having an unfavorable opinion of Biden and 15% of Republicans hold a negative opinion of Trump.

Interestingly, Kennedy is viewed much more positively by the state's Republican voters than by either its Democrats or independent voters registered as No Party Preference. He is also viewed more favorably than unfavorably by the relatively small proportion of voters affiliated with a minor party.

While West and Stein are both viewed more unfavorably than favorably by the state's Democratic, Republican and No Party Preference voters, California Republicans hold particularly negative opinions in their opinions of both candidates.

Table 4
Image ratings of likely general elections candidates for president in 2024
(among likely voters in California)

	Total likely voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Preference %	Other parties %
Joe Biden					
Favorable	**50**	78	6	51	40
Unfavorable	**48**	17	91	45	58
No opinion	**2**	5	3	4	2
Donald Trump					
Favorable	**34**	4	83	27	43
Unfavorable	**63**	91	15	71	53
No opinion	**3**	5	2	2	4
Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.					
Favorable	**31**	16	50	32	50
Unfavorable	**48**	64	26	50	31
No opinion	**21**	20	24	18	19
Cornel West					
Favorable	**15**	19	5	17	22
Unfavorable	**27**	25	28	30	22
No opinion	**58**	56	67	53	56
Jill Stein					
Favorable	**13**	17	3	19	19
Unfavorable	**30**	31	32	28	23
No opinion	**57**	52	65	53	58

Biden's job approval rating in California remains underwater

When the state's registered voter are asked to appraise Biden's overall job performance as president, 44% approve, while 53% approve. This assessment is similar to what the *Berkeley IGS Poll* found in late October, which was the first time Biden's ratings were underwater in this state by a significant margin.

The current poll also finds that most of those who disapprove of the job the President is doing disapprove strongly, again similar to what was found in October.

Table 5
Trend of voter appraisals of the job Joe Biden is doing as President
(among California registered voters)

	Approve (total) %	*Approve strongly %*	*Approve somewhat %*	**Disapprove (total) %**	*Disapprove somewhat %*	*Disapprove strongly %*	No opinion %
Early Jan. 2024	**44**	*18*	*26*	**53**	*16*	*37*	**3**
Late Oct. 2023	44	*17*	*27*	52	*14*	*38*	4
May 2023	48	*17*	*31*	46	*12*	*34*	6
February 2023	57	*23*	*34*	39	*9*	*30*	4
September 2022	52	*18*	*34*	43	*12*	*31*	5
August 2022	48	*16*	*32*	48	*16*	*32*	4
April 2022	50	*17*	*33*	46	*14*	*32*	4
February 2022	47	*17*	*30*	48	*14*	*34*	5
July 2021	59	*30*	*29*	37	*10*	*27*	4
April 2021	62	*39*	*23*	34	*8*	*26*	4

About the Survey

Data collection for the poll was completed by distributing 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 California registered voters with email addresses were derived from information contained on the official voter registration rolls and provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from their voter listing were purged from the data file during data processing and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number. After the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the survey data file to align the sample of registered voters to population characteristics of the registered voters statewide and within major regions of the state.

The sampling error associated with the survey results is difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and 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 +/-1.5 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. Sampling error estimates for results from the total likely voter subsample would be approximately +/- 2 percentage points, while findings based on likely voters in the Republican presidential primary would be approximately +/- 3.5 percentage points. For a more complete description of the survey methods used by the Berkeley IGS Poll, visit https://igs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/survey_methods_of_the_berkeley_igs_poll_updated_1_3_24.pdf

Question wording

ASKED OF LIKELY VOTERS
(IF REPUBLICAN) Suppose you were voting in California's Republican primary for President and the following Republicans were listed on the ballot. If the election were held today for whom would you vote? **(NAMES OF THE NINE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO APPEAR ON THE STATE'S GOP PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION BALLOT DISPLAYED IN RANDOM ORDER)**

If the November 2024 general election for President were held today and the following candidates were listed on the ballot, for whom would you vote? **(NAMES LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)**

What if the choices in the November 2024 presidential election were only between President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump? If the election were held today for whom would you vote?

Please indicate whether your opinion of the following political figures is favorable or unfavorable, or whether you don't yet know enough about them to offer an opinion. **(NAMES OF CANDIDATES LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)**

ASKED OF ALL REGISTERED VOTERS
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Joe Biden is handling his job as President?

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 all past poll reports issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll,* please visit the poll's website at https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll.