FEINSTEIN GETS BETTER JOB PERFORMANCE MARKS THAN BOXER. NARROW PLURALITY INCLINED TO RE-ELECT FEINSTEIN IN 2012.

By Mark DiCamillo and Mervin Field

California voters hold somewhat different impressions of the job performance of the state’s two U.S. Senators. By a three to two margin (48% to 33%), more voters approve than disapprove of the job Senator Dianne Feinstein is doing in Washington. Californians have more divided opinions of Senator Barbara Boxer, with about as many rating her positively (42%) as negatively (40%).

When asked whether they would be inclined or not inclined to re-elect Feinstein should she decide to seek another term next year, slightly more voters say they would be supportive (46%) than not (42%). This is a somewhat lower re-elect percentage than Feinstein has received in the year prior to each of her previous re-election bids in Field Polls conducted in the year prior to each election.

These are the findings from the latest Field Poll completed last week.

Feinstein’s job rating

California voters have held consistently positive views of Feinstein’s performance as U.S. Senator throughout her long tenure. At present, 48% approve of the job she is doing, while 33% disapprove. Another 19% have no opinion. These are very similar to the ratings she has received in Field Poll surveys conducted over the past three years.

Democrats view Feinstein approvingly by a four to one margin. Non-partisans also rate Feinstein positively, two to one. By contrast, Republicans offer a much more negative appraisal of the Senator’s performance, with 61% disapproving and just 16% approving.
### Table 1

**Trend of Dianne Feinstein’s job performance ratings as U.S. Senator**  
(among California registered voters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>March 2011</strong></td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2010</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 (Average)</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>2006 (Average)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005 (Average)</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004 (Average)</td>
<td>54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003 (Average)</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002 (Average)</td>
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<td>2001 (Average)</td>
<td>57%</td>
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<td>1999 (Average)</td>
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<td>46%</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>1995 (Average)</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994 (Average)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993 (Average)</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Party (March 2011)</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-partisans/others</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*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.*

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**Boxer’s job rating**

Boxer, who was first elected to the Senate in 1992, had received largely positive job ratings from this state’s voters until last year when she was seeking re-election to her fourth term. But while she out-polled Republican Carly Fiorina in that election, Boxer’s negatives increased during the campaign, as the proportion of voters disapproving of her job performance increased.

Today’s poll report shows that voters give Boxer mixed job ratings, with 42% approving of the job that she is doing and 40% disapproving. These results are very close to what was found during last year’s Senatorial campaign.

Democrats hold Boxer in high regard, with 64% approving and 17% disapproving. Republicans take a completely opposite view. Greater than three in four (78%) disapprove of Boxer, while just 7% approve. Non-partisans rate the Senator positively by a 49% to 35% ratio.
Table 2
Trend of Barbara Boxer’s job performance ratings as U.S. Senator
(among California registered voters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Approve</th>
<th>Disapprove</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>September 2010</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2010</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>38</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 2009</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007 (Average)</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Party (March 2011)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-partisans/others</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

Inclination to re-elect Feinstein in 2012

Feinstein was first elected to the Senate in 1992 to serve out the term of Republican Pete Wilson, who left the office to become California’s Governor. She has since been re-elected three times in 1994, 2000, and 2006, and will be up for re-election again next year, should she decide to run.

Voters in this survey were asked whether they would be inclined or not inclined to support Feinstein if she were to run for re-election in 2012. The results show that 46% say they would be inclined to elect her for another term and 42% say they would not be inclined.
This is a less positive assessment than voters have given Feinstein in *Field Polls* conducted in the year prior to her three previous re-election bids. In each of those measures majorities of between 53% and 59% said they were inclined to back her.

There is a heavy inclination (67% to 22%) among Democratic voters for re-electing Feinstein. But, Republicans by an even greater margin (73% to 12%) are disinclined to have her serve another term in the Senate. Among non-partisans 51% say they are inclined to vote for her while 39% would not be.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party registration (March 2011)</th>
<th>Inclined</th>
<th>Not inclined</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Democrats</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republicans</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-partisans/others</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3

**Voter inclination to re-elect Dianne Feinstein to the U.S. Senate**

(among registered voters)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total registered voters</th>
<th>Inclined</th>
<th>Not inclined</th>
<th>No opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 2011</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2005</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1999</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1993</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Information About The Survey

Methodological Details

The survey was completed February 28 – March 14, 2011 among a random sample of 444 registered voters in California.

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 six 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 registered voters sample is +/- 4.8 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. 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

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Dianne Feinstein’s term in the U.S. Senate ends in 2012. Suppose Senator Feinstein runs for re-election next year. If the election were being held today, would you be inclined or not inclined to vote to re-elect Feinstein to the U.S. Senate?

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Barbara Boxer is handling her job as U.S. Senator?