

The California Poll

Kennedy Still Is Favorite

By Mervin D. Field

Senator Edward Kennedy remains the overwhelming favorite of California's rank and file Democrats for the 1976 presidential nomination.

For the Republican presidential nomination, Governor Ronald Reagan is favored by this state's Republicans but Vice President Gerald Ford is narrowing the gap.

The youngest Kennedy brother maintains a very large margin of preference in California over a field of nine other Democrats who have received prominent mention as possible 1976 contenders. His brothers were also popular with the state's Democrats. Robert Kennedy, carried the 1968 Democratic presidential California primary, and although President John Kennedy did not run in the California primary election in 1960, he was preferred over a number of other Democrats in California Poll surveys taken at the time.

Senator Kennedy clearly outdistances Alabama Governor George Wallace by 42 per cent vs. 13 per cent. Farther down the scale, Senators Henry Jackson, Edmund Muskie and George McGovern follow at the 7 to 9 per cent level. Other possible candidates such as Senators Birch Bayh, Adlai Stevenson, III, Walter Mondale,

Lloyd Bentsen and Florida Governor Reuben Askew yet receive only nominal support for the nomination.

Some preference trends in the 1976 Democratic presidential nomination race found by The California Poll in its surveys of current public opinion in this state are shown below.

	May 1974	Nov. 1973
Kennedy	42	46
Wallace	13	10
Jackson	9	8
Muskie	9	14
McGovern	7	13
Bayh	4	**
Stevenson	3	1
Mondale	1	2
Askew	1	**
Bentsen	*	*
None of these, didn't know	11	7

*Less than one-half of one per cent.
**Not measured.

Among California Republicans, Ronald Reagan leads Vice President Ford, ex-New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Senators Charles Percy and Howard Baker, and former Nixon cabinet members, John Connally and Elliot Richardson. The latest rankings compare with those taken November 1973 are shown below:

	May 1974	Nov. 1973
Reagan	34	41
Ford	18	13
Rockefeller	13	15
Percy	11	9
Connally	8	8
Baker	4	9
Richardson	3	**
None of these, don't know	10	5

Despite Reagan's large following among this state's Republicans, he does not fare well when matched against each of the three

leading Democrats in simulated tests of strength among all voters in California.

Reagan trails Kennedy 20 percentage points (56 per cent to 36 per cent and Jackson by 16 percentage points (52 per cent to 36 cent. He bests Wallace in a possible 1976 pairing 43 per cent to 38 per cent.

Both Ford and Rockefeller do better than Reagan does against the three leading Democrats. While they trail Democrats Kennedy and Jackson, their deficits are smaller than that of Reagan's. Ford and Rockefeller also do better against Wallace than does Reagan.

The primary reason for this is that Reagan does not command the same level of

support among Democrats as Ford and Rockefeller do.

1976 Presidential Pairings			
	Total %	Demos %	Repubs %
Kennedy-Reagan			
Kennedy	56	77	25
Reagan	36	17	67
Undecided	8	6	8
Kennedy-Ford			
Kennedy	53	74	21
Ford	40	21	70
Undecided	7	5	9
Kennedy-Rockefeller			
Kennedy	54	74	22
Rockefeller	36	18	65
Undecided	10	8	13
Jackson-Reagan			
Jackson	52	71	27
Reagan	36	19	65
Undecided	12	11	8
Jackson-Ford			
Jackson	43	58	24
Ford	39	24	63
Undecided	18	18	13
Jackson-Rockefeller			
Jackson	48	64	25
Rockefeller	37	23	61
Undecided	15	14	14
Reagan-Wallace			
Reagan	43	26	71
Wallace	38	52	19
Undecided	19	23	10
Ford-Wallace			
Ford	52	42	69
Wallace	34	43	22
Undecided	14	15	9
Rockefeller-Wallace			
Rockefeller	46	39	60
Wallace	37	44	27
Undecided	17	18	13

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