

KN Method Cuts through Confusion of California Special Election

Menlo Park, CA; November 9, 2005: With many voters confused by the complexity of the ballot measures in California's November 8 special election, predicting the outcome of the elections also became a special challenge. Conducted in partnership with Stanford University and the Hoover Institution, a Knowledge Networks poll remedied the problem by simulating what voters would experience when they actually cast their ballots. This procedure offers more anonymity and a better chance of reflecting the choice voters may actually make in the voting booth. It also results in fewer 'undecideds' than are recorded in conventional polls.

The unique methodology helped political scientists at Stanford University's Hoover Institution of Public Affairs and Stanford political scientists get an accurate picture of voters' mindset during the weekend leading up to Election Day. The Stanford/Hoover/Knowledge Networks poll closely matched actual vote totals, with an average error of 3 percentage points. The S/H/KN internet poll differs from conventional telephone polls in having respondents fill out a replica of the actual ballot.

Table: Comparison of Actual Vote to Nov. 3 – 6 Poll

	Actual Vote Nov. 8 (%)	S/H/KN Poll Nov. 3-6 (%)	Difference (% points)
Proposition 73: Minor's Pregnancy			
Yes	47.4	43.9	3.5
No	52.6	56.1	3.5
Proposition 74: Teacher Tenure			
Yes	44.9	46.4	1.5
No	55.1	53.6	1.5
Proposition 75: Public Union Dues			
Yes	46.5	52.3	5.8
No	53.5	47.7	5.8
Proposition 76: Spending/Funding			
Yes	37.9	33.8	4.1
No	62.1	66.2	4.1
Proposition 77: Redistricting			
Yes	40.5	39.6	0.9
No	59.5	60.4	0.9

After a barrage of campaign messages on both sides of each measure, California voters rejected all 8 measures on the statewide ballot. Reports filed the day before the election showed that the campaigns spent around \$262 million to persuade voters. Two of the measures – Proposition 73 (Minor's Pregnancy) and Proposition 75 (Teacher Tenure) – came within just a few percentage point of passing. Prop. 73 would have required parental notification before a minor could obtain an abortion, while Prop. 75 would have

extended the probationary period before a public school teacher could receive tenure from 2 years to 5 years.

Knowledge Networks is going back to panel members who participated in the pre-election poll to find out if and how they actually voted in the California special election. This post-election survey will find out when voters made up their mind about the propositions and what sources of information helped them make their decisions. The follow-up survey presents several other research opportunities, such as predicting likely voters and making comparisons between absentee and in-person voters.

For more information about this research, please visit our website at www.knowledgenetworks.com/ganp, where complete results are posted.

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