

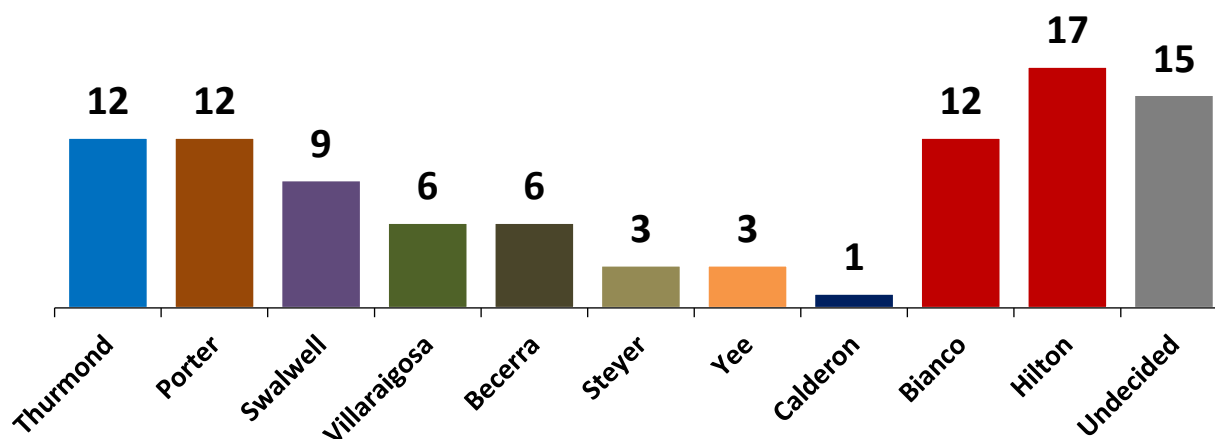
To: Interested Parties
Fr: David Mermin, Emily Garner, and Connor Olio, Lake Research Partners
Re: New Polling Shows Tony Thurmond a Strong Contender in California Governor's Race
Date: November 24, 2025

A new Lake Research Partners poll of likely 2026 primary election voters in California¹ shows that Tony Thurmond's positive messaging boosts him into a tie for top Democrat in the gubernatorial primary.

On an initial ballot with no information about the candidates besides party affiliation, this crowded field has no clear frontrunner. Steve Hilton (R) (17%) and Katie Porter (D) (15%) are currently the top two candidates, followed by Republican Chad Bianco (10%) and Democrats Eric Swalwell (10%), Antonio Villaraigosa (7%), Xavier Becerra (6%), Tom Steyer (4%), Tony Thurmond (3%), Betty Yee (3%), and Ian Calderon (1%). Over one in five (22%) voters are undecided.

On an informed ballot after positive messaging, Thurmond (12%) vaults into a tie with Porter (12%) as the top Democrat, followed by Swalwell (9%). Hilton (17%) and Bianco (12%) hold the Republican vote, with the rest of the Democratic candidates trailing behind, and 15% of voters remaining undecided. The increase in Thurmond's support shows that his introduction and positive messages resonate with voters, and, with enough resources to communicate, Thurmond could be positioned to advance to the general election.

Informed Ballot: Post-Thurmond Positives



Democratic and NPP voters respond strongly to Thurmond's message, especially his commitment to single-payer healthcare, his record of standing up to Trump and winning, and his plan to tax billionaires to fund services for Californians.

When given a battery of traits of what Californians most want in their next Governor, the top two traits California voters prefer are a governor who will tax billionaires & the ultra-wealthy to invest in more nurses, teachers, firefighters, & mental health workers (29%) and who has stood up to Donald Trump (28%). Tony Thurmond has the profile and effective messaging to provide what voters are looking for in 2026.

Critically, the informed ballot result assumes that Thurmond has the opportunity to introduce himself and get his message out. Our data show that voters respond very positively to Thurmond's message. With enough resources to communicate, the powerful frame of Thurmond's values and successful record would vault him into contention to reach the general election next November.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to David Mermin (dmermin@lakeresearch.com) at (510) 379-5180 with any questions or comments about this memo.

¹ Lake Research Partners conducted a poll of 600 likely 2026 primary election voters in California in English and Spanish. Live telephone interviews (cell and landline) and text-to-online interviews were conducted from November 17-20, 2025. Data are weighted slightly to reflect the likely demographic profile of the likely 2026 primary electorate. The margin of error for the poll is +/- 4.0%.