

To: Interested Parties
Fr: Lake Research Partners
Re: CA-04 Poll Results¹
Date: July 28, 2020

Our recent survey of likely November 2020 general election voters in California's 4th Congressional District shows a statistical dead heat in the race between businesswoman Brynne Kennedy, the Democratic challenger, and incumbent Republican Congressman Tom McClintock. The poll of 650 likely November 2020 voters shows significant movement toward Kennedy since research using similar methods was conducted in November 2019, and a Qualtrics Modeling Survey was conducted in May 2020.

The Key Findings

Kennedy, who is not as well-known as McClintock, is in a statistical dead heat with McClintock, trailing him 42% to 45% in the initial trial heat where voters are provided with only the candidates' ballot designations and party affiliations. After hearing positive information about the two candidates based on voter handbook descriptions which are mailed to every voter in the district, the gap narrows further to a single point, with Kennedy trailing 46% to 47% behind McClintock. At the conclusion of the survey, after unbalanced positive and negative messaging on both Kennedy and McClintock, Kennedy takes the lead 45% to 43%, with 13% undecided.

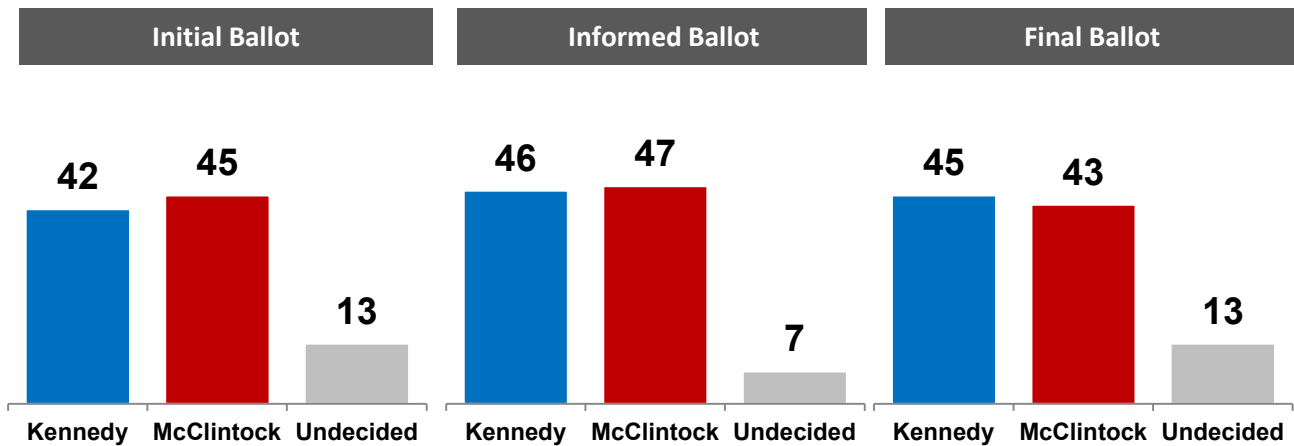
The Context

For a number of reasons, McClintock is far more vulnerable he has been than in his previous races. The federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the poor state of the economy in conjunction with McClintock's votes which fail to address the district's COVID-related problems have altered the political landscape in CA-04. Voters say the country is on the wrong track by an overwhelming 3-to-1 margin, with 64% indicating things are on the wrong track and only 21% saying they are on the right track. McClintock's favorability has declined since November, with voters now evenly divided between having a favorable and unfavorable opinion of him (39% favorable, 38% unfavorable). Kennedy is lesser known but more favorably evaluated by those who know her (27% favorable, 9% unfavorable). McClintock's views on the proper responses to COVID-19 with respect to virtually every issue, from wearing masks and schools re-opening for in-person classes, to his position on bi-partisan economic relief legislation, are opposed by his constituents. McClintock also cannot rely on riding any coattails from Trump at the top of the ticket. Despite a 13-point Republican registration edge over Democratic registration in the district, Trump and Biden are also in a dead heat, with Trump at 46% and Biden at 45%. The district itself is trending suburban, particularly in fast-growing Placer and El Dorado counties that have become destinations for voters moving from other parts of California. Of note, this polling reflects current partisan registration numbers, not the likely November partisan ratios as the district is continuing to trend both Democratic and independent (No Party Preference) with new voter registrations.

¹ Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey that was conducted from July 22-25, 2020 by interactive voice recording (75%) and live cell phone interviews (25%). The survey was conducted with 650 likely 2020 general election voters in California's 4th Congressional District drawn from the voter file, and include an oversample of Placer and El Dorado counties. The data was weighted by gender, age, party registration, and region to reflect the actual demographics of the likely voter universe. The margin for error ranges between approximately 5% to 6% for the full and oversampled data.

The Ballots

The graphs below show the results for the initial, informed, and final trial election heats.



Conclusion

Data from our most recent IVR survey, consistent with both earlier IVR research and election modeling surveys, continue to show a very competitive race in CA-04 and further weakening of support for Tom McClintock since his 2018 re-election. Despite being well-known to the voters, McClintock's level of support falls well below the 50% mark. The political climate has also worsened for him as Trump's level of support in the district has declined, resulting from the continuing health and economic fallout from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Kennedy is essentially tied with McClintock even before she has had a chance to fully introduce herself to the voters. McClintock's vote appears to have a ceiling below 50% and Kennedy is on a path to a win in November.