Strategy • Precision • Impact

To: Interested Parties
From: Bob Meadow, David Mermin and Emily Garner
Re: Results from Qualtrics Modeling Survey of Congressional District CA-04[i]
Date: May 28, 2020

We have just reviewed and analyzed data from an online Qualtrics Modeling Survey of 2,196 voters in CA-04, conducted April 26 to May 4, 2020. The data are weighted to reflect a likely November 2020 electorate. The data show a highly competitive race, confirming findings from an August 2019 Qualtrics Modeling Survey and a November 2019 IVR poll. Key findings from the most recent Modeling Survey are below.

The Bottom Line

Businesswoman Brynne Kennedy begins the General Election just 6 points behind incumbent Tom McClintock, with Kennedy at 40%, McClintock at 46% and 14% undecided. After respondents are read a summary of the candidates' ballot handbook statements, which are mailed to every voter in California, Kennedy leads McClintock 46% to 44% with 10% undecided.

The Context

California District 4 is a fast growing and increasingly suburban community, that attracts retirees and others from across the state. With 39 percent of likely voters age 65 or older it contains one of the oldest concentrations of senior citizens in California, a vital fact considering the incumbent's more than 30-year history of opposing Social Security and Medicare. Alongside this demographic shift, the registration gap between Republicans and Democrats in the district continues to narrow, but even more important is the fact that McClintock has performed significantly below the top of the ticket. In 2008, for example, McCain defeated Obama by ten points while McClintock led his opponent by less than one point. In the 2018 election for Governor, Cox led Newsom by 19 points, yet McClintock prevailed in his election by only 8 points. Evidence from the modeling data shows Trump holding a narrow 6-point lead over Biden, 49% to 43%, (Trump won in 2016 by 15 points with 54% of the vote) indicating there are no Trump coattails to carry McClintock. Additional data, such as the equal favorability ratings of Trump (50% favorable, 49% unfavorable) and Obama (50% favorable and 50% unfavorable) indicate a very competitive ideological environment. Tom McClintock, while well known, is a polarizing figure with 50% holding a favorable opinion and 44% unfavorable (including 13% of Republicans and 53% of independents with an unfavorable opinion of him). Also notable is the limited enthusiasm for McClintock; fully 32% have a strongly unfavorable view of him compared to 24% with a strongly favorable opinion of him. Brynne Kennedy, in contrast, as she continues to gain visibility in the district, holds a 2 to 1 favorability ratio, with 24% favorable and 12% unfavorable.
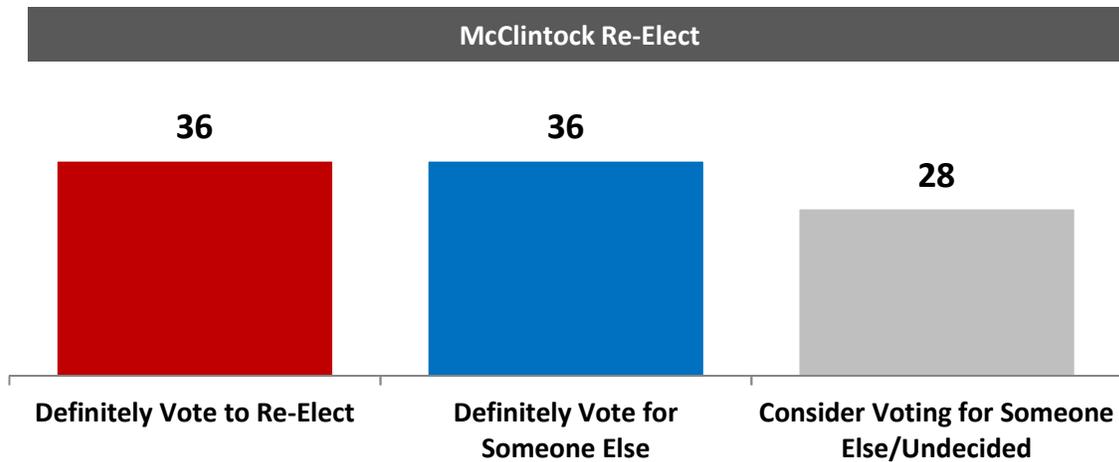
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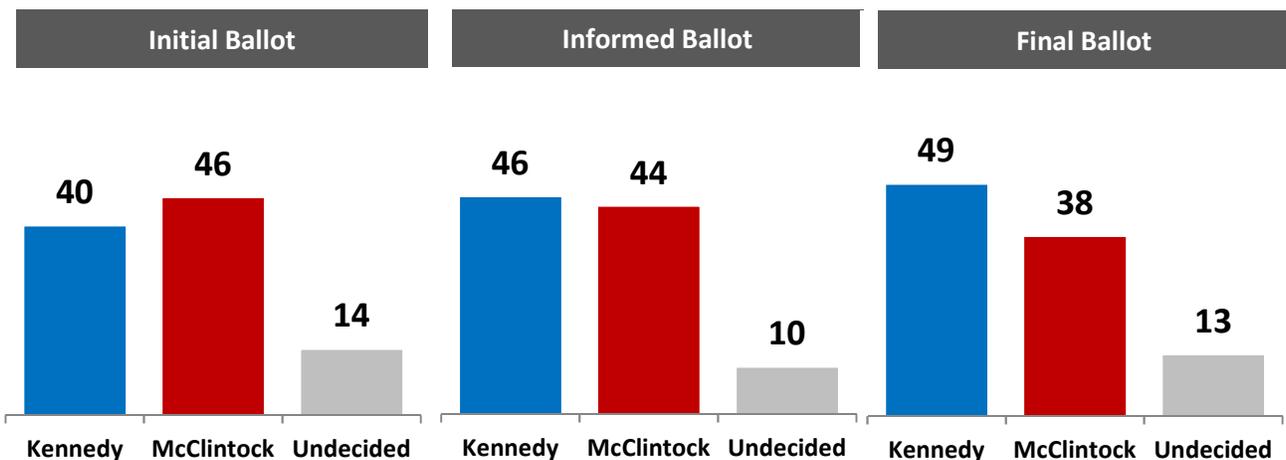
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The Election

The data show a weak incumbent and only limited support for McClintock. Only 36% of voters indicate they definitely will vote to re-elect him, with 36% just as firmly indicating they will definitely vote for someone else (28% are unsure or open to voting for someone else).

McClintock Re-Elect

36	36	28
Definitely Vote to Re-Elect	**Definitely Vote for Someone Else**	**Consider Voting for Someone Else/Undecided**

Further evidence of McClintock's declining support in the district since his 2018 re-election is that in an initial trial heat, he falls well below 50%, leading the far lesser known Kennedy by only 6 points, 46% to 40% with 14% undecided, a decline from his 10-point lead (48% to 38%) in the November 2019 IVR poll against a generic "Democratic candidate." When voters are provided with additional balanced, positive information on both candidates (condensed versions of the candidates' own ballot statements), Kennedy takes the lead 46% to 44%, with 10% undecided- driven by a double-digit lead among independents in addition to her solid Democratic base . Additional positive information on Kennedy, accompanied by unanswered attacks on McClintock, yield even more support for Kennedy, resulting in her leading 49% to 38%.   These data underscore the softness of McClintock's support.

Initial Ballot			Informed Ballot			Final Ballot		
40	46	14	46	44	10	49	38	13
Kennedy	**McClintock**	**Undecided**	**Kennedy**	**McClintock**	**Undecided**	**Kennedy**	**McClintock**	**Undecided**

Conclusion

While the data from modeling have limitations, the data show that McClintock is quite vulnerable for a number of reasons. First, in the most recent elections, his support has dropped significantly from 2016, when he captured 63% of the vote, to 54% in 2018. IVR polling from 2019, as well as the current modeling data show his support, whether tested against a generic Democrat or Brynne Kennedy, to be below 50% and declining even before any messaging. Second, McClintock trails Kennedy in a balanced, head-to-head engaged debate, and trails by a wider margin after aggressive messaging. Kennedy, in May of 2020, six months out from the election, is ahead of where McClintock's last competitor, Jessica Morse, was in both name recognition and in the initial, profile and final trial heats as late as September 2018. In summary, the modeling data broadly indicate that Kennedy can prevail.

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[i] **Method:** A sample of 2,196 CD-4 voters recruited via email and administered through the Qualtrics platform. Interviews were conducted from April 26 to May 4 with registered voters with a valid email. Sample was down weighted to reflect the demographics of likely November 2020 electorate.