USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences
Voter Opinion Poll Q and A

What are the similarities in methodology between the modes?

- Both samples were large (1,874 likely registered voters online and 1,500 likely registered voters for phone), which provides statistical confidence in percentages for each mode.
- The online poll data has similar demographic percentages to the phone poll on the following key demographics (education, party, age, ethnicity, gender, and geography). After weighting, both polls have key demographic percentages that are similar to the likely voting population in California.
- Both surveys were administered to English- and Spanish-speaking respondents. Seven percent of Californians completed the phone survey in Spanish, as compared to 13 percent of Californians who completed the online survey in Spanish.

What are the differences in methodology between the modes?

- The phone survey was administered from March 14-19, while the online survey was administered from March 19-21. There may have been an issue or issues in the news that differed within the week and affected responses differentially by mode.
- The phone poll used a method of randomly dialing registered voters, and then weighted key demographic percentages after the survey was fielded to ensure demographics were in line with the likely registered voting population in California. The online poll methodology recruited from a pool of online survey panelists. Panelists were recruited from a reputable panel provider and invited to complete surveys typically by email notification in exchange for minimal monetary compensation (i.e., less than a dollar), in the form of redeemable points. The panel provider ensures panelist identity and that IP addresses are legitimate from people wishing to become panelists. Also, panelists are screened for completing a large number of surveys and showing undesirable behavior such as inconsistent responding or “speeding” through surveys. The online poll also weighted the data by key demographics in a similar manner to the phone. When the phone and online surveys were introduced, respondents were not told who was sponsoring the poll.
- The online sample is slightly more moderate in ideology than the phone poll (36% moderate on the phone and 44% moderate online), which may account for lower favorables online compared to phone for some of the more conservative Republican candidates (e.g., Santorum, Gingrich). In general, the phone poll has higher percentages of favorability and lower percentages of unfavorability, which may result from less understanding on the phone and the creation of more polarized views.
What is the margin of error (MOE)?

For the entire online survey, the margin of error is +/- 2.3%, meaning there is a 95 percent chance that any percentage reported using the entire sample of survey data is at most 2.3% lower or higher than the true population percentage. Some questions in the online poll were administered to roughly equal halves of the sample, i.e. split samples. The margin of error for Split A is 3.1% and it is 3.3% for Split B. The margin of error for data reported for registered Republicans is 3.8%. The phone poll has a margin of error of +/- 2.5% at the 95\textsuperscript{th} percent confidence interval.