

To: Interested Parties  
From: Bob Meadow, David Mermin, and Jacklyn Juetten, Lake Research Partners  
Re: California Recall and Medicare for All  
Date: May 3, 2021

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**A new Lake Research Partners poll\* shows that likely voters in California strongly support a state Medicare for All healthcare system, and that Governor Newsom seeking permission from the Biden Administration to fund the new system with federal dollars would strengthen his support in the upcoming recall election and among his potential supporters in the regularly scheduled re-election next year. The electorate is highly polarized and partisan, with approximately one-third (comprised almost exclusively of Republicans and conservative independents) of the electorate unavailable to Newsom, so this memo focuses primarily on those voters available to Newsom and other Democrats.**

**Key findings:**

- **Voters available to Newsom – and other Democratic candidates as well – overwhelmingly support Medicare for All, with registered Democrats supporting the universal healthcare effort by an enormous margin of 84% in favor to just 11% opposed.**
- **All voters, but particularly progressives and liberals, who comprise a majority of Democratic voters, support Newsom taking action right now to seek permission from the Biden Administration to use federal dollars to fund a state Medicare for All healthcare system. Support for this effort is most intense among progressive and liberal voters – who support the strategy to seek federal funding first by a margin of over 3 to 1.**
- **The overwhelming popularity of Medicare for All among Democrats, as well as its support among independent voters, would help Governor Newsom defeat the recall, and would significantly strengthen his position among the self-identified progressives in the electorate. Newsom taking action to advance Medicare for All is overwhelmingly popular among those voting “No” on the recall, but just as importantly it drives swing voters on the recall to be more likely to vote “No” on the recall by a margin of more than 5 to 1.**

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**A State Medicare for All System and How it Affects Support for Newsom**

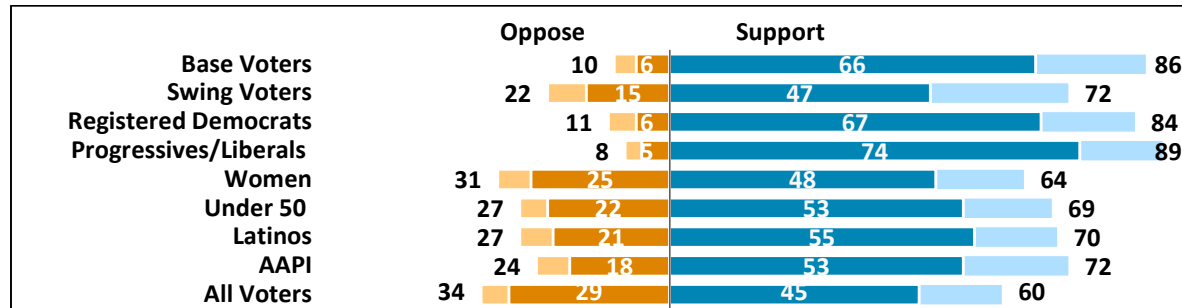
Overall, **likely voters in California support a state Medicare for All system by a +26-point margin**, with 60% of voters supporting it and 34% (comprised largely of Republicans) opposing it. Among “base” voters (those voting strongly or not-so-strongly “No” on the recall), 86% support Medicare for All (a +76-point margin of support). Core constituencies important to Governor Newsom’s recall effort also support Medicare for All at high margins, including registered Democrats (+73), women

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\* Lake Research Partners designed and administered this survey of 800 likely November 2022 California voters. The survey, conducted between April 24 and April 27, 2021 was in English or Spanish, included live landline and cell interviews as well as text-to-online interviews drawn from the statewide voter files. Data were weighted slightly by gender, age, party registration, region and race to mirror the likely electorate. The margin of error for a sample of 800 voters is +/- 3.5% and higher for any split-sampled questions and subgroups.

(+33), voters under 50 (+42), Latinos (+43), and AAPI voters (+48). Support for Medicare for All remains strong (52% to 34%) even when a comparative message is tested attacking Medicare for All, with the new system maintaining extremely high support (75%) among those who would vote “No” on the recall, and strong majority support (62%) among swing voters.

**Support for Medicare For All<sup>†‡</sup>**

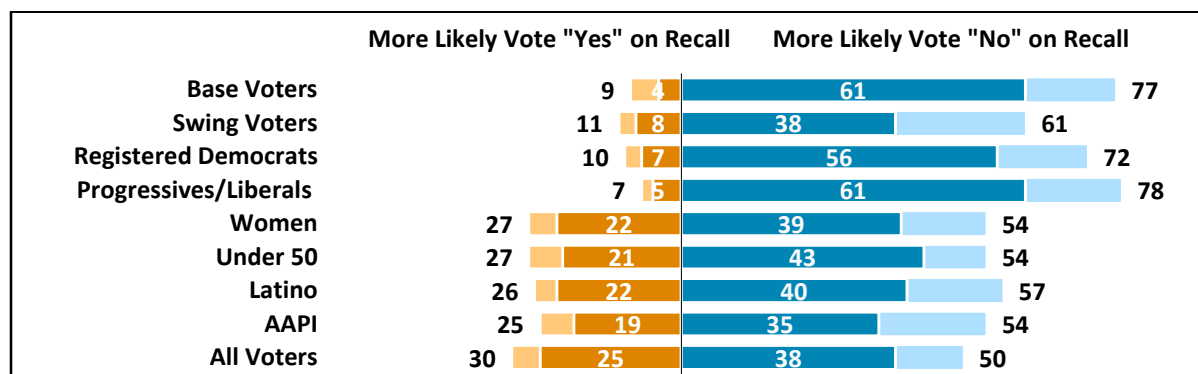


When asked directly if voters would be more likely to vote “Yes” or “No” on the recall if Governor Newsom supported “Building toward a Medicare for All healthcare system in which California government would pay for all healthcare, but the care would be delivered by private doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals,” **voters say they would be more likely to vote “No” on the recall by a +20 point margin.** Seventy-two percent of registered Democrats would be more likely to vote “No” on the recall if Newsom worked toward Medicare for All. Among other demographic groups, women are more likely to oppose the recall if Newsom builds toward Medicare for All by +27 points, voters under 50 by +27 points, voters under 30 by +40 points, Latino voters by +31 points, and AAPI voters by +29 points. Taken all together, voters who are against the recall say that if Newsom took action in support of Medicare for All, it would make them more likely to vote “No” to keep him in office by +68 points. Notably, this is true among both soft and strong “No” voters. Medicare for All is more salient to the recall election overall than increasing the minimum wage, banning fracking, or strengthening rent control in the state. Furthermore, **among the group of all voters who would be considered persuadable on the recall because they are neither strongly “Yes” nor strongly “No” on the recall, support for Medicare for All would make them more likely to keep Newsom in office by a net of +51 points** (64% more likely “No” to 13% more likely “Yes”).

<sup>†</sup> Darker color indicates intensity.

<sup>‡</sup> Base voters are defined as those who are strong or not-so-strong “No” on the recall. Swing voters are defined as undecided on the recall or undecided lean “Yes” or “No.”

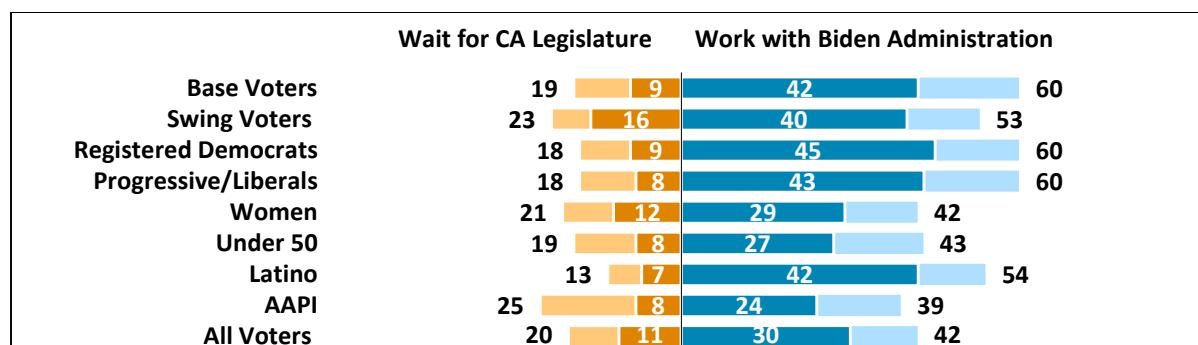
**More or Less Likely to Recall Governor Newsom if He Worked Toward Medicare For All**



**Approaches to Passing Medicare for All**

Regarding two possible approaches to bringing Medicare for All to California – a) taking advantage of Californian Xavier Becerra’s role as the official in charge of federal healthcare financing (and by implication, the leadership role of Vice President Kamala Harris as well) to work now with Washington on a plan that would win permission to use federal dollars for a state Medicare for All system; or b) waiting for the state legislature to pass the framework and state financing plan for a state Medicare for All system before seeking permission to use federal dollars for it – voters are more supportive of working with the Biden Administration as the first step by a +22 point margin (42% prefer to work with the Biden Administration versus 20% who want to wait for the CA legislature, with the balance volunteering both [5%], neither [22%] or undecided [10%]). Democrats prefer to work with the Biden Administration first by a +42-point margin, NPP/other voters by a +15-point margin, people of color by a +31 point margin, progressive/liberal voters by +42 point margin, and base “No” on the recall voters by +41 points with even swing voters preferring working with the Biden Administration by +30 points. Support for waiting for the California legislature is driven mostly by Republicans (11% work with Biden Administration compared to 22% wait for the California legislature, -11 points) who presumably hope that Medicare for All will get lost in the legislative process.

**Best Way to Approach Medicare For All**



## **The Recall Election**

Today, 38% of voters would vote “Yes” on the recall to remove Newsom from office, compared with 55% who would vote “No”, with only a handful of voters purely undecided (6%). However, “Yes” voters are more motivated. Fully 91% of “Yes” voters indicate they are almost certain to vote in the recall, compared to only 78% of “No” voters. Moreover, “Yes” voters are intensely committed to their position (of the “Yes” voters, nearly 90% feel strongly about their vote to recall the governor, compared to 82% of “No” voters who feel strongly about their intended vote). Among those who favor Medicare for All, 14% would vote “Yes” on the recall, showing that a small but meaningful minority on the liberal to progressive end of the Democratic party is inclined to look for alternative leadership.

## **Summary**

Our polling shows that a state Medicare for All system has strong majority support overall, and has especially deep appeal among Newsom’s current and potential coalition of voters. Unsurprisingly, we are in a hyper-partisan environment, with the California issue agenda driven largely by partisanship. While there is reason to believe Newsom will emerge victorious from the recall effort as it stands today, aggressively taking initial steps toward Medicare for All by pursuing permission to fund the new system with federal dollars would help Newsom to strengthen his base of support, particularly among progressives and liberals.

Governor Newsom ran for office promising progressive policies including Medicare for All. Voters favor Medicare for All as a way to end the extreme health care inequities exposed by COVID-19, and voters strongly support Newsom pursuing a state Medicare for All system and advancing universal access to health care now. The political climate is ripe for Newsom to seek the permission needed to use federal funds for a California Medicare for All system, and to lead the legislature in taking action on an issue that three-in-five California voters – and even more among those voting “No” on the recall – support.

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