

POLITICS **EXCLUSIVE**

# Steve Hilton tied with Tom Steyer despite billionaire's \$200M ad blitz, California Post poll shows

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Steve Hilton and Tom Steyer lead in California governors race in new California Post poll



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The results were bad news for Democrat Xavier Becerra, who's been considered a favorite to win: The former Health and Human Services secretary came in third at 19%.

A distant third is **Republican Chad Bianco** on 10%, followed by **Dem. Katie Porter** on 7%, and San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan on just 6%.

The poll carries a margin of error of 3.5% and was conducted with a high 95% confidence level.



Josh Edelson for CA Post

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15% of those surveyed chose to complete their interviews in Spanish.

The poll surveyed 800 likely voters by cellphone, text and landline.



AP Photo/Terry Chea

Steyer, a hedge fund founder, has poured **more than \$200 million** into his campaign, blanketing airwaves **and social media** with ads casting himself as a progressive populist determined to raise taxes on the wealthy.

The poll also suggests Hilton is in a strong position to advance to the November runoff.

“Republicans and independents have put Steve Hilton among the leaders, but the real battle is among Steyer and Becerra for Democratic votes,” said John McLaughlin, from McLaughlin & Associates, who conducted the poll.

“The lack of Democratic support for Hilton has him frozen. Democrats make up about half the electorate.

”This is the real primary within the primary, and Tom Steyer appears to be surging among Democrats.”

Voters were largely down on every candidate in the race – but Porter fared worst of all, posting a favorability rating that was 17 points underwater.

More than half of respondents, 51%, viewed her negatively, compared with just 24% who had a favorable opinion.



AFP via Getty Images

Steyer was two points underwater, with 43% viewing him favorably and 45% unfavorably. Hilton was six points in the red at 36% to 42%, while Becerra trailed at negative 11 points, with 38% favorable and 49% unfavorable.

Among independent voters, Hilton drew the strongest support at 24%.

Steyer followed with 17%, while Becerra picked up 14%.



Getty Images

The survey also found deep dissatisfaction with the direction of the state.

A majority of voters, 56%, said California is on the wrong track, with half disapproving of the job Newsom is doing as governor.

Economic issues were most important to those surveyed, with 23% citing the cost of living as the most important issue, followed by affordable housing (10%), government and politics (8%), taxes (8%), the economy and jobs (7%), homelessness (6%) and fiscal responsibility (6%).

“Gavin Newsom is polarizing. Only 49% of all voters approve of the job Gavin Newsom is doing, while 50% disapprove of the job he’s done, including 22% among Democrats.

“Most Californians want change,” McLaughlin added.

The poll suggests Xavier Becerra is struggling to lock down the Hispanic voting bloc that strategists had predicted he’d win.

Among Hispanic voters overall, Becerra leads with 27%, but his advantage is slim.

Steve Hilton and Tom Steyer are tied at 23% each, while Chad Bianco picks up 12%. Katie Porter trails at 3%, with Matt Mahan at 4%.

The numbers suggest Hilton, Steyer, and Bianco are all cutting into the Hispanic support that Becerra was expected to dominate.

Becerra performs better among voters who completed the survey in Spanish, winning 36% support compared to 29% for Steyer and 12% for Hilton.

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Even there, however, he falls short of the commanding lead many political observers would have expected.

Overall, 4% of Hispanic voters remain undecided, while 1% had already voted or declined to answer.

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