

## MEMORANDUM

**TO: Interested Parties**  
**FROM: Garin-Hart-Yang Research Group**  
**DATE: October 5, 2015**  
**RE: Recent Survey in California's 39th Senate District**

From September 22 to 24, 2015, Garin-Hart-Yang interviewed a representative sample of 401 likely 39th Senate district primary voters. The survey, which was fully representative of the district by geography and key variables such as race and partisanship, has a margin of error of  $\pm 5.0$  percentage points.

*[Garin-Hart-Yang is the political division of Hart Research Associates, which is one of America's leading public opinion research firms. Currently in its 44th year of operation, the firm has conducted well over 8,000 public opinion surveys and has administered and analyzed interviews among more than three million individuals in that time. Since 1989, a highlight of Hart Research's work has been our regular public opinion polling for NBC News and The Wall Street Journal. Garin-Hart-Yang has been involved in hundreds of election campaigns throughout all 50 states, and has extensive California experience, including among its clients the Mayor of Los Angeles, and several members of Congress and the state legislature.]*

The following provides some key findings from the 39th SD survey:

**Assembly Speaker Toni Atkins has slightly higher name ID than Senator Marty Block (68% Atkins, 64% Block)**, which in some respects is due to the former's longer tenure in San Diego politics (elected to the City Council in 2000). Also she has slightly better ratings (30% positive, 19% negative) than the incumbent (21% positive, 18% negative), although we note that his "neutral" rating is higher (25% to 19% Atkins), which signifies that he has less substantive recognition than Atkins.

**As such, it is not surprising that Atkins holds a 40-to-26 lead over Block in the initial trial heat.** But not only is it important to note the high proportion of undecided respondents (34%), but also the low degree of COMMITTED support for

both candidates; fully 60% of Atkins voters and 67% of Block voters say they do not support their choice for state senator STRONGLY.

**However, the election for State Senate shifts in Marty Block's favor once survey respondents receive more information about BOTH candidates.**

First we provided voters with positive, similarly long descriptions of both candidates.

MARTY BLOCK is a dedicated educator who worked for nearly 30 years as a professor and dean at San Diego State University. In 2008, he was elected to the State Assembly, and then in 2012 elected to the State Senate. In Sacramento, Block has been a tireless advocate for improving the quality and affordability of higher education. He serves as the chair for the Senate Education Budget Subcommittee, and authored legislation that increases in-state student enrollment in the UC and Cal State systems, helps stop UC tuition hikes, and increases the number of Cal Grants available to students. And, along with Governor Jerry Brown, Block has worked to ensure that California colleges get the funding they need and deserve. (119 words)

TONI ATKINS has served in the California State Assembly since 2010 and as Speaker since 2014. Prior to her time in the Assembly, Atkins served on the San Diego City Council and provided a stabilizing force in 2005 by stepping in as acting mayor when the mayor resigned. She is a coalition-builder who believes that government policies can improve people's lives. As Speaker of the Assembly, Atkins has worked with Governor Brown and leaders through the state government to address California's budget, while also providing a leading voice for important causes such as affordable housing and homelessness, the environment and water conservation, as well as raising the minimum wage to eleven dollars. (112 words)

**After hearing this information, the race narrows considerably with Block trailing Atkins in the "informed" trial heat by just 42% to 36%.** In addition to the positive movement in the trial heat, there are encouraging trends about Block's ability to move further among key swing groups; for example, Block's bio tests 10 points higher than Atkins's among undecided voters (54% to 44%) and union households (65% to 58%), while both candidates are on nearly equal footing among women voters (56% Block, 58% Atkins).

**Finally, when we present brief COMPARATIVE information about the candidates, including Atkins's willingness to ease CEQA challenges to the proposed publicly subsidized NFL stadium, voter preferences again shift notably, with the senator holding a 46-to-35 advantage over Atkins.**