



13 FEBRUARY 2012

## McKenna Leads Inslee in Race for Governor

For the political cognoscenti, like people reading this, the race for governor has been going on for nearly a year already. Attorney General Rob McKenna and Congressman Jay Inslee have been campaigning for months (years, actually). For most voters, however, the campaign is just getting under way.

In a race widely expected to be close, Republican McKenna had a 9-point lead over Democrat Inslee among the 405 voters interviewed for *The Elway Poll*. In this survey:

- 28% said they were “definitely” voting for McKenna and another 17% were “probably” doing so.
- 24% were “definitely” voting for Inslee, plus 12% “probably.”

Both candidates’ names were recognized by respondents, but the candidates were less well-known than might be expected.

85% of voters interviewed last week had heard of Rob McKenna, but only 56% had any impression of him.

81% had heard of Jay Inslee, but only 50% had any impression of him.

77% had heard of both men, but only 41% knew enough about them to have an impression of both.

So both candidates have work to do.

McKenna has made a more favorable impression on voters to date:

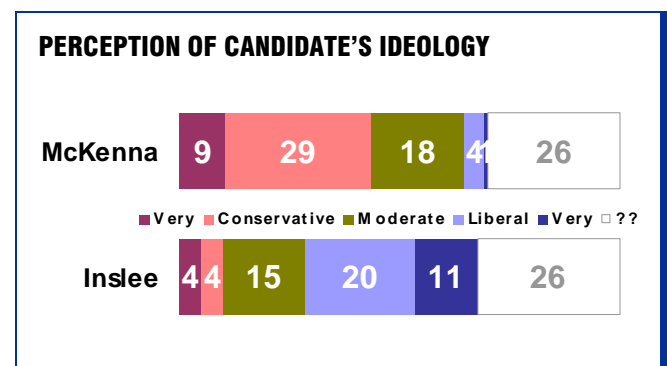
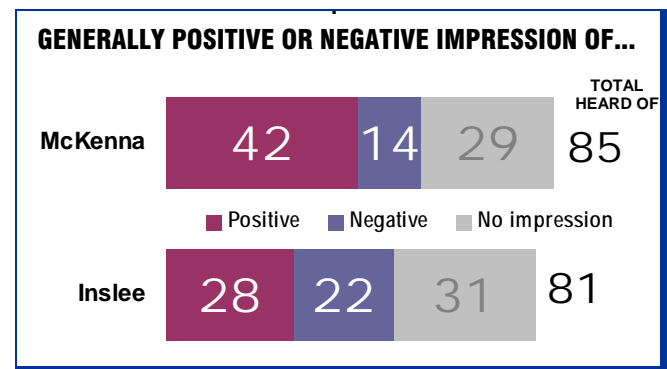
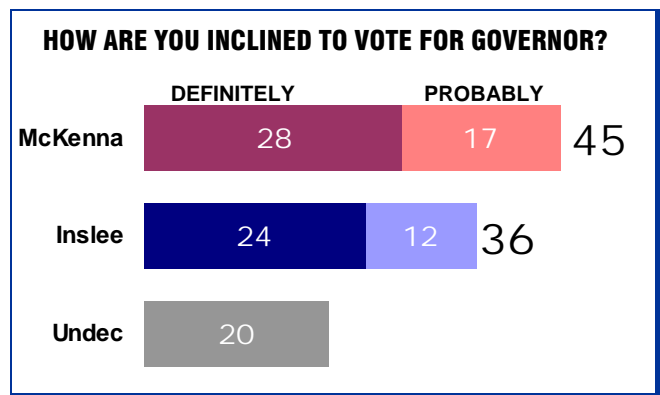
- 42% had a generally positive impression of McKenna, compared to only 28% with a positive impression of Inslee.

More ominous for Inslee, the proportion of voters who had negative impression of him (22%) was nearly equal to the positive impressions (28%). In contrast, McKenna enjoyed a 3:1 positive to negative impression ratio among these voters.

The race promises to be highly partisan, and the ideological lines are already being sharply drawn. Asked where they would place the candidates on a scale:

- 38% described McKenna as conservative (29%) or “very conservative” (9%); and
- 34% described Inslee as liberal (20%) or “very liberal” (11%).

In a state that has prided itself on moderate politics, no more than 1 in 6 respondents described either candidate as “moderate.” McKenna had a slight edge (18% to 15%), but the difference is not statistically significant.



Respondents were also asked to place themselves on a ideological scales of “very conservative” to “very liberal” on: 1) social issues and 2) fiscal issues “like taxes and the budget.” The results were somewhat more conservative than the conventional image of the Washington electorate. For a blue state, the results tilted noticeably rightward:

38% identified themselves as socially conservative;  
36% as socially moderate; and  
24% as socially liberal.

When it came to fiscal issues:

51% said they were fiscally conservative;  
32% moderate; and  
14% called themselves liberal .

When voter’s placement of themselves on the liberal-conservative scale is compared to their placement of the candidates, about 1 in 5 respondents thought that McKenna was ideologically similar to themselves and only about 1 in 8 thought Inslee’s philosophy was similar to their own:

43% thought McKenna was more fiscally conservative than they are;  
38% thought he was more socially conservative than they are.  
58% thought Inslee was more fiscally liberal than they are; and  
52% thought he was more liberal on social issue than they are.

One obvious task for any campaign is to align voters’ perceptions of the candidates’ philosophy and values with those of the most voters. That typically means moving to the center of the philosophical spectrum. In this case, Rob McKenna will be coming from the right of most voters and Jay Inslee will be coming from their left. McKenna appears to have the shorter distance to go.

Independent voters have always held the keys the keys to the kingdom in Washington state. How do these Independents view the men who would be governor?

**Among Independents in this survey:**

- 49% were inclined to vote for McKenna (26% “definitely”) vs. 24% for Inslee (13% “definitely”).
- 57% knew McKenna well enough to have an impression and 45% had a positive impression of him.
- 44% knew Inslee well enough to have an impression, but only 20% had a positive impression, vs. 24% with a negative impression.
- 25% said McKenna was moderate and 33% said conservative, but only 8% said “very conservative.”
- 21% said Inslee was moderate, 19% said liberal and 12% said “very liberal.”

Besides trailing by 25 points among Independents, Inslee was losing 13% of Democrats to his Republican rival, with another 15% of Democrats undecided. McKenna had 83% of the Republican support, with only 3% crossing over for Inslee.

Elsewhere, McKenna led across every demographic category, with a couple of expected exceptions (like Democrats and Seattle voters). For example, McKenna led by:

12 among men and 7 points among women;  
16 among those without a college degree and by 3 among those with a college degree;  
18 among those under age 50 and by 3 among those over 50;  
13 in King County outside Seattle, although Inslee led by 25 in Seattle.

Overall, these results indicate a significant early advantage for McKenna. He is running strongly among Independents and King County voters—cornerstones of past Democratic victories. Inslee has a partisan advantage but is not well known outside the Democratic base, and thus far his negative impressions almost equal his positive. McKenna does even better among voters who are familiar with both candidates, suggesting that he will get stronger as the campaign unfolds. But there are many miles to go before we vote.



# Sample Profile

405 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed Feb. 7-9, 2012 by live, professional interviewers. The margin of sampling error is ±5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

**REGION**

King County.....31%  
 Pierce + Kitsap.....14%  
 North Sound (Snohomish to Whatcom).....17%  
 Western Washington (Clallam to Clark).....18%  
 Eastern Washington.....20%

**GENDER**

Male.....50%  
 Female.....50%

**AGE**

18-35.....9%  
 36-50.....23%  
 51-64.....40%  
 65+.....27%

**PARTY IDENTIFICATION**

Democrat.....35%  
 Republican.....25%  
 Independent.....40%

**EDUCATION LEVEL**

High School or less.....19%  
 Some College.....30%  
 College (4yr) Degree.....30%  
 Post Graduate School.....21%

**HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

<\$25,000.....13%  
 \$25-50,000.....16%  
 \$50-75,000.....22%  
 \$75,000+.....35%  
 No Answer.....15%

**VOTE HISTORY (Last 4 Elections)**

0 - 1 votes cast.....29%  
 2.....20%  
 3.....16%  
 4 of 4 ("Perfect Voters").....35%

# The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest available exclusively to subscribers.

**SUBSCRIPTION:** An annual subscription is \$250.

**PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS:** Each month, space is reserved in the questionnaire to allow subscribers to insert proprietary questions. The fee for proprietary questions is \$600 per question. You will receive the results of your question(s) with full crosstabulations within three days.

**CROSSTABS:** A full set of cross-tabulation tables for any survey is available for \$100.

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**IDEOLOGICAL COMPARISONS: CANDIDATES TO VOTERS**

Compared to Respondent		FISCAL	SOCIAL
<b>McKenna is</b>	More Conservative	43%	38%
	Same	23%	22%
	More Liberal	19%	26%
<b>Inslee is</b>	More Conservative	10%	14%
	Same	13%	15%
	More Liberal	58%	52%

## What does the public think about your issue?

### THE ELWAY POLL CAN TELL YOU

- The Elway Poll reserves space in its monthly survey for private questions
- Your questions and data are proprietary - no one sees them but you
- Measure public opinion for a fraction of the cost of doing your own full survey

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