

Public Opinion  
Research & Strategy

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** David Metz and Curtis Below  
Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates

**RE:** The Santa Clara County District Attorney Race

**DATE:** February 15, 2010

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Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates (FM3) recently completed a countywide voter survey to gauge voter opinions in the upcoming June election for Santa Clara County District Attorney.<sup>1</sup> The results show that a plurality of voters disapprove of the performance of District Attorney Dolores Carr, and that fewer than one in five intend to vote to re-elect her. Consequently, though many voters are unfamiliar with her opponent – Deputy District Attorney Jeff Rosen – he only trails Carr by seven percent (18% to 25%). Furthermore, after hearing more information about both candidates, voters prefer Rosen to Carr 34 percent to 26 percent, suggesting that with a strong campaign **Rosen is well-positioned to unseat Dolores Carr in the June election for Santa Clara District Attorney.**

Among the key specific findings of the survey were the following:

- **A plurality of likely voters disapprove of Carr’s performance as District Attorney.** As shown in **Figure 1** on the following page, when asked to rate the job Carr is doing as District Attorney, more than one-third of voters (34%) gave Carr “only fair” or “poor” ratings, compared to just one-quarter (25%) that give her “excellent” or “good” ratings.

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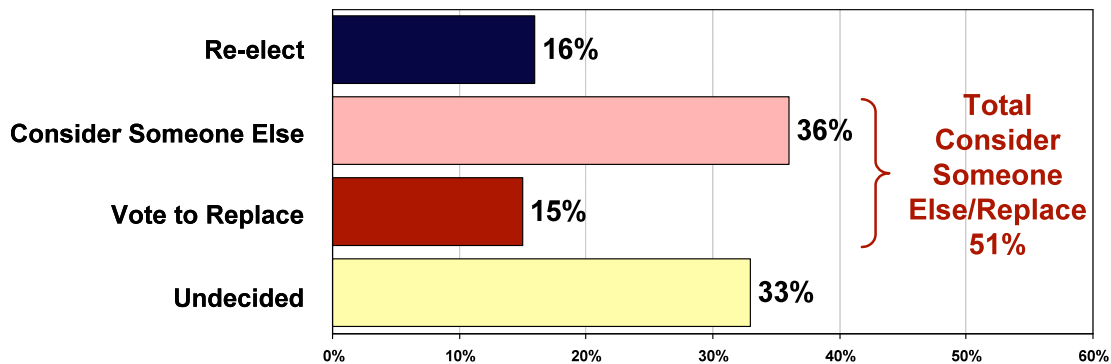
<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** From February 10-14, 2010, FM3 completed a telephone survey of 500 registered voters likely to cast ballots in the June 2010 primary election. The margin of sampling error for the survey is +/- 4.4%; margins of error for subgroups within the sample will be higher.

**FIGURE 1:  
Evaluations of Carr’s Performance as District Attorney**

Rating	%
Excellent	4%
Good	21%
<b>TOTAL POSITIVE</b>	<b>25%</b>
Only Fair	20%
Poor	14%
<b>TOTAL NEGATIVE</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>DON’T KNOW</b>	<b>41%</b>

- Fewer than one in five voters say they will vote to re-elect Carr.** When asked to indicate whether they would vote to re-elect Carr, only 16 percent indicated they would, with an equal proportion (15%) indicating they would vote to replace her (**Figure 2**). Further, more than one-third (36%) said they would consider voting for someone else (33% were unsure). Combined, one-half of voters (51%) would either consider voting for or would definitely vote for someone else, suggesting that despite Carr’s incumbency, few voters feel strongly that she should remain the County’s District Attorney.

**FIGURE 2:  
Re-Elect Ratings for Dolores Carr**



- Despite low name identification, Deputy District Attorney Jeff Rosen is only seven percent behind the incumbent Carr in a hypothetical match-up.** When asked to share their impressions of Deputy District Attorney Jeff Rosen, three-quarters of voters (75%) had either never heard of him or did not feel they knew enough about him to venture an opinion – not at all surprising, given that this is his first run for elected office. Nevertheless, Rosen only trails the incumbent Carr by seven percent – 25 to 18 percent (as shown in **Figure 3** on the following page). Though more than one-half of voters (57%) are undecided – as is typical with down-ballot elections – it is atypical to see an incumbent elected official with such a small lead over a challenger who is essentially unknown to the electorate.

- **As voters learn more about the candidates, Rosen’s support increases dramatically.** Survey respondents were read positive information about both candidates and asked again to indicate their voting preferences between the two candidates for District Attorney. As shown in **Figure 3**, this information moves Rosen into the lead 29 percent to 28 percent. And after voters hear both pro and con information about the candidates, Rosen’s lead expands to eight points (34% to 26%). The data shows that the more voters hear about the two candidates, the more Rosen’s support expands.

**FIGURE 3:  
Impact of Additional Information on Vote Preferences**

Candidate	Initial Vote	After Positive Information	After Both Pro and Con Statements	Change
Rosen	18%	29%	34%	+16%
Carr	25%	28%	26%	+1%
Undecided	57%	43%	40%	-17%

Taken together, the survey results suggest an electorate that is troubled with the performance of the current District Attorney and eager to explore possible alternatives. The survey results also show that voters view high standards of ethics and integrity as the essential quality they would like their District Attorney to have. The more voters learn about Jeff Rosen – including his qualifications, experience and vision for the office – and the more they learn about the conduct of the incumbent, the more they embrace the opportunity to make a change. In summary, the survey results show that given a strong campaign and sufficient resources to introduce himself to Santa Clara County voters, Jeff Rosen is well-positioned to unseat Dolores Carr in the election for District Attorney.