

MEMORANDUM

TO: Friends of Lucy Flores
FROM: Geoff Garin and Mark Bunge, Garin-Hart-Yang Research
DATE: November 27, 2013
RE: Key Findings from Statewide Polling on the 2014 Nevada Lieutenant Governor's Race

From November 8 to November 11, Garin-Hart-Yang Research surveyed a representative cross section of 618 Nevadans who are likely to cast ballots in next year's statewide elections. The survey results indicate that Lucy Flores has strong potential to be a compelling candidate in the 2014 race for lieutenant governor, and would have a good chance of winning an election against Mark Hutchison. Overwhelmingly, Nevadans respond positively to Lucy's life story and say it demonstrates that she has the character, work ethic, and determination the state needs in its elected officials. Voters express greater concerns about criticisms of Hutchison's record than they do about criticisms of Flores' record. Indeed, after thoroughly testing the positives and negatives of both candidates, Lucy Flores holds a 46% to 43% lead over Mark Hutchison in a head-to-head trial heat.

1. Very few Nevada voters have a distinct impression of either Lucy Flores or Mark Hutchison at this stage, but voters respond more favorably to Lucy's profile after hearing descriptions of both candidates.

Mark Hutchison's name ID among Nevadans is 31%. Of those, only half know Hutchison well enough to express a clear opinion of him. Lucy Flores starts out with an even lower name ID than Hutchison, at just 19%. As with Hutchison, only half of those who say they recognize Lucy's name know her well enough to express a clear opinion about her.

Given this, the ultimate outcome of the lieutenant governor's race will largely be determined by how the candidates come to be known by the voters in the coming 11 months. The encouraging news for Lucy Flores in this regard is that a clear majority of Nevadans respond positively to her profile, and that her profile evokes a significantly more favorable response than Mark Hutchison's. Lucy's advantage is especially pronounced with nonpartisan voters.

Appeal of Lucy Flores and Mark Hutchison as Candidates for Lieutenant Governor
Proportion saying each candidate is very/fairly appealing

	<u>All</u> <u>Voters</u> %	<u>Dem</u> %	<u>Indep</u> %	<u>GOP</u> %
<p>Lucy Flores is a 34-year-old Democrat who represents northeast Las Vegas in the state assembly, and was one of the first Hispanic women elected to the Nevada legislature. Ms. Flores grew up in a tough neighborhood in north Las Vegas. Her family struggled financially and she had a difficult childhood, including getting into trouble with the law and dropping out of high school at age 16. Ms. Flores overcame those challenges--eventually graduating from USC while working to help pay her way, and earning a law degree from UNLV. In the legislature, Ms. Flores is a strong advocate for economic opportunity and policies to help Nevada's working-class families, and puts a high priority on improving Nevada's public schools.</p>	55	75	60	31
<p>Mark Hutchison is a 50-year-old Republican who represents northwest Las Vegas in the state Senate. He graduated from UNLV, earned a law degree from Brigham Young, and has operated a successful Las Vegas law firm since 1996. Mr. Hutchison led Nevada's lawsuit to stop Obamacare, volunteering to work on the case for free. As lieutenant governor he would work alongside Governor Brian Sandoval to promote economic growth and job creation, improve educational opportunities for students, and get more value from government for all Nevadans. Mr. Hutchison has been married for 28 years and has six children and two grandchildren.</p>	45	21	41	72

2. One of the key empirical questions we sought to answer with this research is how Nevadans would respond to aspects of Lucy's early life, including her involvement with gangs, her troubles with the law, and her acknowledgement that she had an abortion as a teenager. Our finding is abundantly and overwhelmingly clear: across party lines, Nevadans see Lucy's story as one of triumph over adversity and believe that it reflects well on both her character and her suitability to elected leadership.

We read voters the following description of Lucy Flores' experiences as a young person:

Lucy grew up as one of 13 children in a low-income Hispanic family. Her mother left home when she was nine years old, and she was raised by her father. Lucy got involved with gangs and was sentenced to juvenile detention for stealing a car. She dropped out of high school, and at age 16 she became pregnant and had an abortion because she did not want to be a teenage mother like her sisters. Lucy decided to turn her life around, earned her GED, attended community college, earned a scholarship to the University of Southern California, and graduated from law school at UNLV.

Overall, 59% of voters say these details about her life story make them more favorable toward electing her as lieutenant governor, while only 17% say they make them less favorable. In response to open-ended probing, respondents express admiration for the fact that she overcame adversity and turned her life around—describing her as “strong,” “determined,” and “a go getter.”

And when asked to choose which conclusion about Lucy’s background comes closer to their own opinion, there is an overwhelming consensus that Lucy has the character that Nevada needs in its elected officials.

Nevada Voters’ Reaction to Lucy Flores’s Background

	All Voters	Dem	Indep	GOP
	%	%	%	%
The fact that she overcame very difficult circumstances to become a success in school and life shows that she has the character, work ethic, and determination we need in our elected officials.	73	86	73	58
The fact that she dropped out of high school, was involved in gangs, stole cars, and had an abortion when she was a teenager shows that she doesn't have the right character and background to serve in Nevada's second highest office.	10	6	9	17

3. In addition to extensively testing positives about each candidate, we asked respondents for their reactions to five hard-hitting criticisms of both Flores and Hutchison. Voters respond more strongly to the criticisms of Hutchinson, in ways that reveal important dimensions of the issue environment in the state. To the extent that Republicans want to focus the race on ethics, our test indicates that this would be no worse than a level playing field when all is said and done.

Two key points are worth emphasizing with regard to the issues:

First, this poll was conducted during the white heat of the negative response to the rollout of the Affordable Care Act. Not surprisingly, voters in Nevada, like voters elsewhere, are more unfavorable than favorable in their opinions of Obamacare. What is somewhat surprising, however, is the negative reaction voters have to Mark Hutchison’s hardline opposition to the Affordable Care Act. Indeed, this turns out to be one of the most significant negative arguments against him we tested.

Second, Nevada continues to be a socially tolerant state, and voters continue to express a clear preference for candidates who support marriage equality for same-sex couples. Moreover, Nevada remains a pro-choice state, and by a substantial margin, voters prefer a candidate who favors keeping abortion legal and who opposes new restrictions on abortion.

4. Despite the fact that Mark Hutchison starts with an advantage in the initial trial heat, Lucy Flores leads in the trial heat at the end of the poll, after voters have heard both the positives and negatives on each candidate.

As noted previously, Mark Hutchison would start a campaign with slightly higher name recognition than Lucy Flores, and as a result he has a 41% to 35% head start in the initial trial heat, with 5% saying they would not vote for either candidate and 19% undecided between the two.

By the end of the survey, after equal numbers of positives and negatives have been read to respondents about each candidate, it is Lucy Flores who has the advantage. Overall, 46% say they will vote for Flores, 43% say they will vote for Hutchison, 5% say they will vote for none of the above, and 6% are still undecided. In an encouraging sign for Lucy, there are more Democrats than Republicans among the remaining undecided voters. It also is encouraging that she widens her lead among nonpartisan voters over the course of the survey, from +5 percentage points to +12.