

TULCHIN RESEARCH

To: Interested Parties

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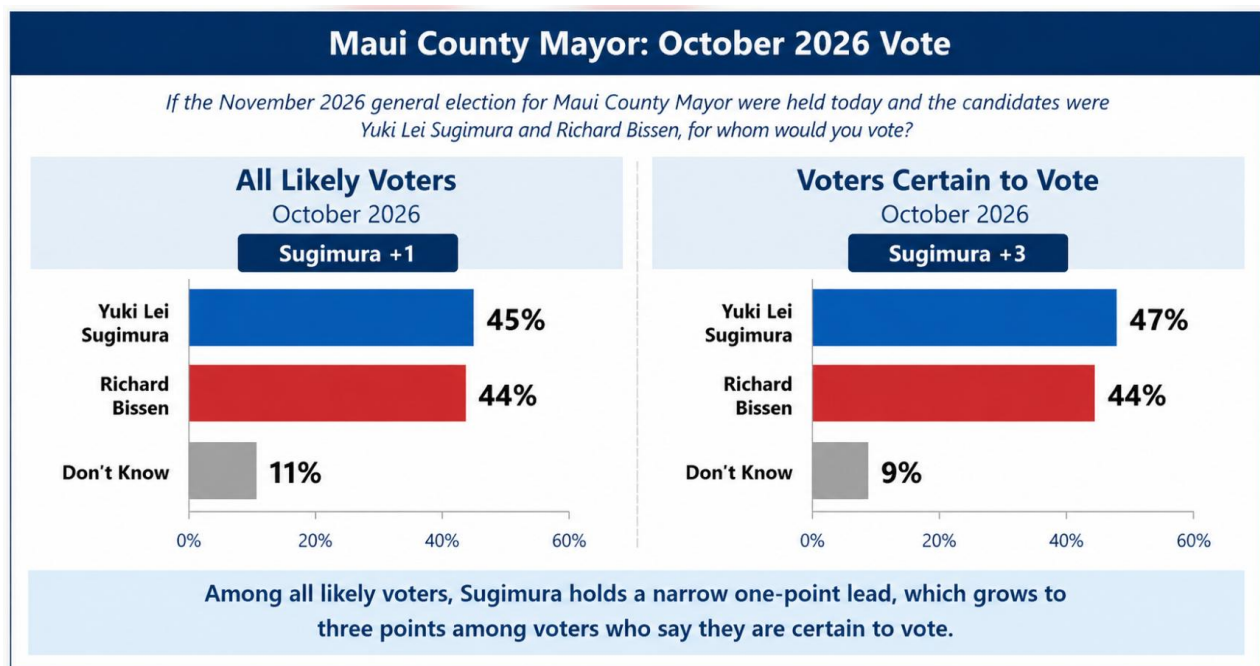
New Poll Finds Tight Maui Mayoral Race as Bissen's Job Approval Drops Sharply

A new Tulchin Research survey of likely November 2026 general election voters in Maui County finds the race for Mayor remains extremely competitive, with Yuki Lei Sugimura and incumbent Mayor Richard Bissen virtually tied just weeks before Election Day. Sugimura holds a narrow 45%-44% lead in the latest poll, which grows to 47%-44% among voters who say they are definitely voting, suggesting some momentum heading into the final weeks of the campaign.

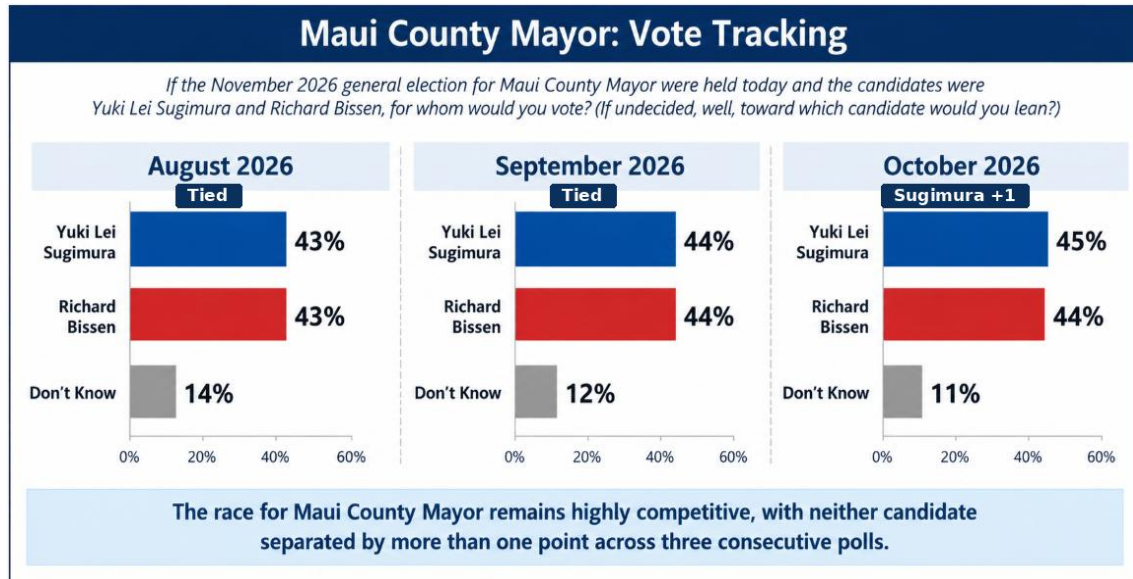
At the same time, Bissen's job approval has deteriorated sharply, shifting from positive territory in August to eight points underwater in October. This decline comes amid growing scrutiny of his administration, with nearly eight in ten voters reporting they have recently heard information about Bissen. Among those voters, the information made them less favorable toward the mayor by a two-to-one margin. Together, these findings point to an increasingly challenging political environment for Bissen in the closing weeks.

Mayoral Race Remains Extremely Competitive Heading into Election Day

Our latest poll of likely voters in Maui County finds a closely contested race for Mayor, with Councilwoman Yuki Lei Sugimura and incumbent Mayor Richard Bissen virtually tied just weeks before Election Day. Sugimura holds a narrow one-point lead over Bissen, 45%-44%, with 11% still undecided. However, among voters who say they are definitely voting in the upcoming election, Sugimura's lead grows to three points, 47%-44%, suggesting she has some momentum heading into the final weeks of the campaign.

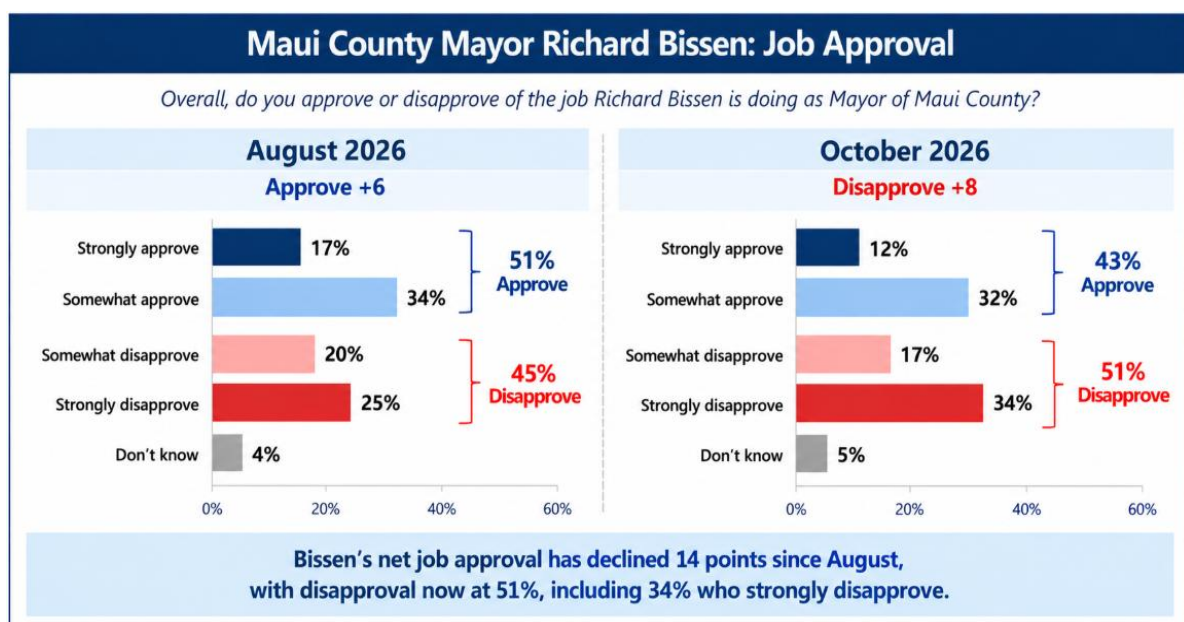


The latest results continue a remarkably consistent trend across three consecutive polls. Sugimura and Bissen were tied at 43% each in August and remained deadlocked at 44% apiece in September. With Sugimura now holding a narrow 45%-44% lead in October, neither candidate has been separated by more than a single point in any of the three surveys, underscoring just how competitive the race has remained heading into the final weeks of the campaign.

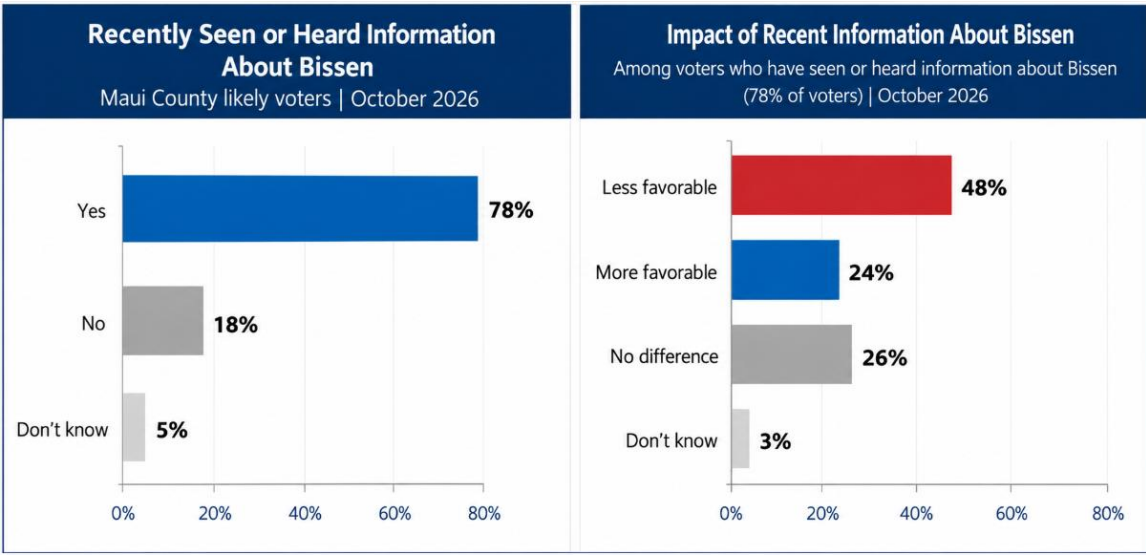


Bissen's Job Approval Has Declined Sharply Since August

While the mayoral race has remained unchanged over three polls, voters' assessments of Mayor Richard Bissen's job performance have grown considerably more negative. In October, a majority of Maui County voters (51%) disapprove of Bissen's performance, compared with 43% who approve, a reversal from August when 51% approved and 45% disapproved. Bissen's net job approval has fallen 14 points, from six points positive to eight points negative, while strong disapproval has increased from 25% to 34%.



Notably, the decline in the Mayor's job performance ratings comes amid growing scrutiny of Bissen's administration, with the October survey fielded around the time [news emerged](#) about criminal investigations involving Maui County officials and allegations concerning the mayor. The poll also finds that 78% of voters have recently seen or heard information about Bissen. Among those voters, 48% say what they learned made them less favorable toward the mayor, compared with 24% who say it made them more favorable, a two-to-one margin.



Conclusion

With just weeks remaining until Election Day, the race for Maui County Mayor remains highly competitive, with neither candidate establishing a clear lead across three consecutive polls. Voter preferences have remained remarkably stable since August, with Sugimura and Bissen separated by no more than a single point in any survey. However, Sugimura's slightly larger lead among voters who say they are definitely voting suggests she has some momentum heading into the final weeks of the campaign.

At the same time, Bissen's declining job approval and the negative response to recent information about his administration point to a more challenging political environment for the incumbent. A majority of voters now disapprove of his job performance, marking a significant reversal since August, while voters who have recently heard information about Bissen report becoming less favorable toward him by a two-to-one margin. Together, these findings underscore the challenges facing Bissen as the closely contested race enters its final stretch.

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Survey Methodology: The findings in this memo are based on a survey of 400 likely November 2026 general election voters in Maui County, conducted October 6–10, 2026. The margin of error for the full sample is ± 4.9 percentage points. The survey was administered using a multi-modal approach, including landline and cellphone interviews as well as online data collection via email and text-to-web.