

To: Interested Parties

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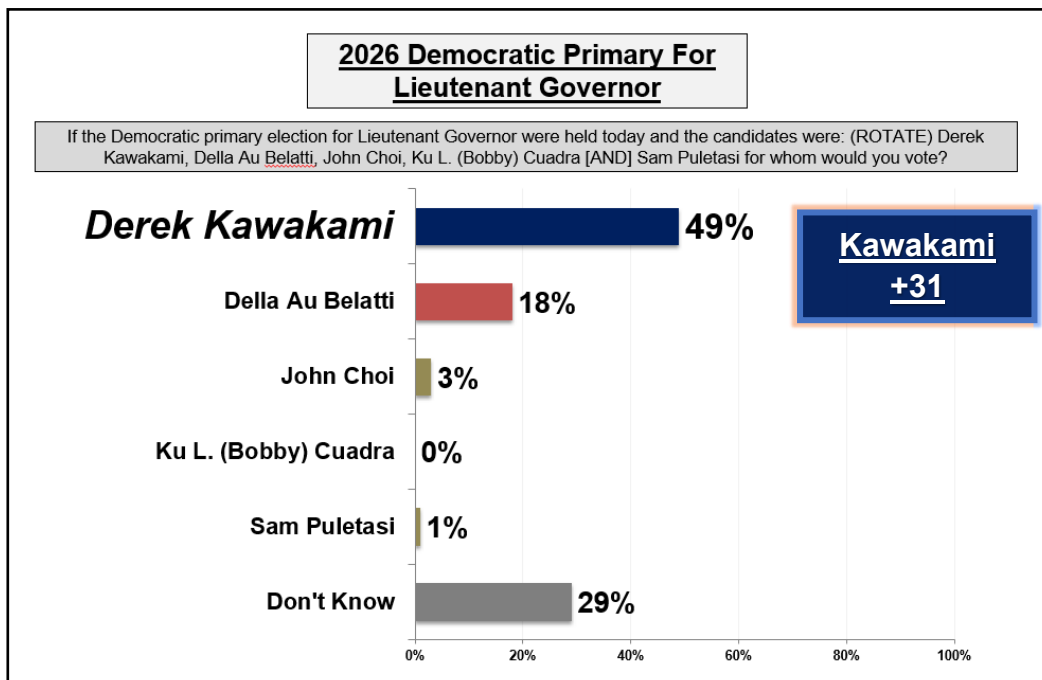
June 24, 2026

## ■ Poll Shows Derek Kawakami Building Strength in Democratic Primary for Lieutenant Governor

A recent Tulchin Research statewide survey of likely Democratic primary voters in Hawai'i finds Kaua'i Mayor Derek Kawakami in a commanding position in the Democratic primary for Lieutenant Governor. Kawakami begins the race with a decisive lead over his opponents, including Della Au Belatti and John Choi, and his voters are more certain in their support of him than those of his opponents. Kawakami's advantage is reinforced by a strong and improving personal profile, including growing name identification and favorability over time. Furthermore, recent information about Kawakami is breaking through with voters and making them feel more favorable toward him by a wide margin, suggesting that as voters hear more about him, his standing in the race continues to strengthen. Detailed findings from the poll are outlined below.

### Kawakami Holds a Commanding Lead in the Democratic Primary

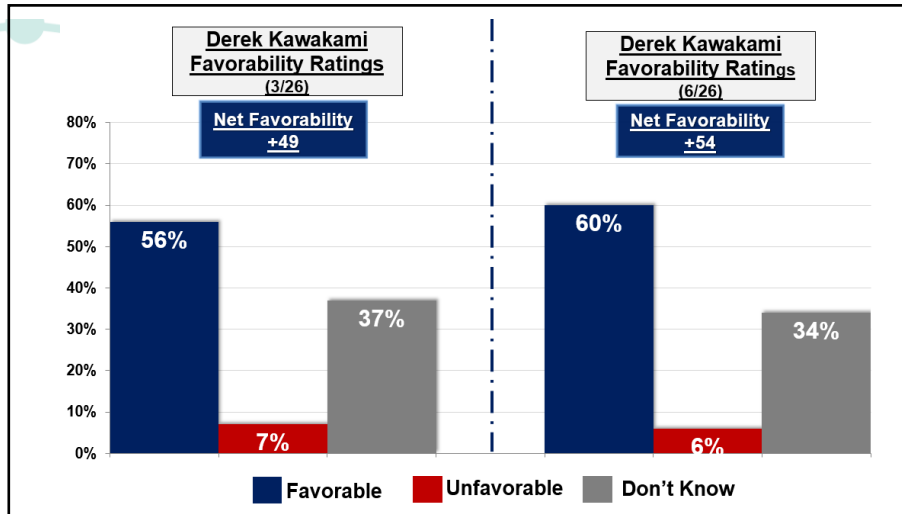
The poll shows Derek Kawakami with a decisive advantage in the Democratic primary for Lieutenant Governor. On the initial ballot, Kawakami earns support from a near majority of voters (49%), compared to 18% for Della Au Belatti and 3% for John Choi. All other candidates have minimal to no support and close to a third of voters (29%) are undecided initially. This gives Kawakami a substantial 32-point lead over Belatti, his nearest opponent.



## Strong and Improving Personal Profile Reinforces Kawakami’s Lead

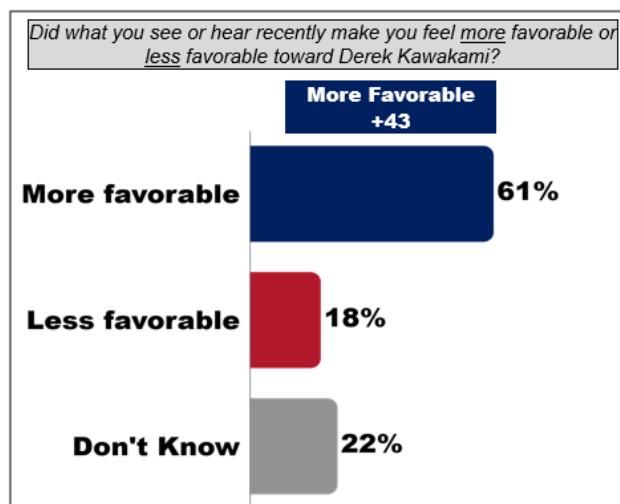
Kawakami’s advantage in the race is underpinned by his strong personal standing with Democratic primary voters. He is viewed favorably by 60% of voters, while just 6% view him unfavorably, giving him an impressive +53 net favorability rating. By comparison, Belatti is viewed favorably by 28% of voters and unfavorably by 9% (+18 net favorability).

Kawakami’s image has grown stronger over time. The tracking data show his favorable rating increasing from 56% in March to 60% in this more recent June survey. Over that same period, his unfavorable rating has remained in single digits, helping boost his net favorability rating from +49 to +54.



## Voters Are Hearing More About Kawakami, And Like What They Hear

The poll also shows that recent information about Kawakami is reaching a majority of Democratic primary voters. Overall, 57% of voters say they have recently heard, read, or seen information about Kawakami, including 22% who have heard a lot and 26% who have heard some. Just 40% say they have not recently heard anything about him. More importantly, this information is helping Kawakami. Among those who have received information about him, 61% say it made them feel more favorable toward Kawakami, compared to just 18% who say it made them feel less favorable (+43 more favorable).



By comparison, recent information about Belatti has reached a much smaller share of the electorate. Just 29% of voters say they have recently received information about Belatti, while nearly two-thirds (70%) say they have not or are unsure. While the information voters have received about Belatti is also net positive among those exposed to it (51%), Kawakami's recent information footprint is nearly twice as large and has a stronger net positive impact.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the poll shows Derek Kawakami in a strong position in the Democratic primary for Lieutenant Governor. He holds a commanding lead on the ballot, and his personal standing with voters is both strong and improving. Kawakami is better known and more popular than Belatti, and recent information about him is reaching a majority of voters while making them feel notably more favorable toward him. These dynamics position Kawakami as the clear frontrunner in the race and suggest he is well positioned to maintain and build on his advantage as voters hear more about him.

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**Survey Methodology:** *The survey findings in this memo are based on a statewide survey of 600 likely Democratic primary voters in Hawai'i, conducted June 15-18, 2026. 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. The margin of error for the full sample is  $\pm 4$  percentage points.*

### **About Tulchin Research:**

*Tulchin Research is a leading national polling and strategic consulting firm with over four decades of experience conducting accurate and impactful public opinion research, including conducting more public opinion research in Hawaii since 2010 than any other pollster.*

*Recently named Pollster of the Year® by the American Association of Political Consultants, our firm specializes in helping state and local governments and advocacy coalitions drive meaningful change for their communities through telephone surveys, online surveys, both in-person and online focus groups, on-line ad testing, modelling and other forms of public opinion research.*

*Whether it is providing messaging guidance to help bring a once unknown federal candidate like U.S. Senator Bernie Sanders to the brink of the Presidential nomination, or helping to make change in local policy that increases opportunities for local working families, Tulchin Research has been there time and again to help our clients turn complex issues and data insights into actionable strategy that delivers results.*