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Schiff continues to hold big lead over Garvey in U.S. Senate race.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff is maintaining a large lead over former baseball player Republican Steve Garvey in the state's upcoming November election for U.S. Senate. Schiff is currently the choice of 53% of Californians considered likely to vote, while Garvey is preferred by 33%. Schiff's current 20-point advantage is slightly larger than the 15-point lead (53% to 38%) he held in a late February *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted prior to the March primary election.

Candidate preferences in the Senate race are highly partisan and correlate strongly with voters' political ideology. For example, Schiff leads Garvey 84% to 5% among Democrats and is receiving the support of about nine in ten self-described liberals. On the other hand, Garvey is preferred by about nine in ten Republicans as well as voters identifying themselves as strongly conservative in politics. Schiff also holds the lead among voters not affiliated with either major party greater than two to one (54% to 25%). However, because Democrats and liberals outnumber Republicans and conservatives in California by wide margins, this gives Schiff a considerable edge in the race.

Voters' overall impressions of the candidates are not that different from those found prior to the primary. Currently, 45% of likely voters report having a favorable opinion of Schiff overall, while 32% view him unfavorably. This represents a slightly better assessment than the 47% to 37% positive to negative ratings he received in late February. Voter views of Garvey are more divided, with 32% viewing him favorably and 36% unfavorably, similar to his 36% positive to 37% negative rating in late February.

When voters are presented with various candidate attributes and asked how important each is to them when deciding whom to support in the Senate race, a majority (52%) rates the attribute "*would be a strong voice in defending abortion rights in the Senate*" as very important. This appears to be attracting voters to Schiff, as 84% of his backers consider this attribute very important to their voting decision, compared to just 8% of Garvey's supporters.

The attribute "*supports tougher immigration laws,*" is considered very important to 44% of the state's likely voters. This appears to be a main factor attracting voters to Garvey, as 84% of his supporters cite this as being very important to their voting decision vs. 21% among Schiff's backers.

These findings come from the latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted online July 31-August 11 in English and Spanish among a random sample of 3,765 Californians considered likely to vote in the state's November 2024 general election.

IGS Co-Director Eric Schickler said, “The results suggest Schiff continues to be in a strong position for the Senate race. This is setting up to be a fairly typical Democratic versus Republican contest, at the state level in California, which tends to favor the Democratic candidate.”

Schiff continues to hold large lead over Garvey in the U.S. Senate race

The latest poll finds Schiff maintaining a large lead over Garvey, with 53% backing the Democrat to 33% supporting the Republican. This 20-point Schiff advantage is slightly larger than the 15-point lead (53% to 38%) he held in late February prior to the primary. In that election Schiff and Garvey finished one-two, which advanced the two to a run-off in the November general election under the state’s top two primary election system.

Voter preferences continue to be highly partisan and ideological. In the current survey Schiff leads among Democrats 84% to 5% and he also has the backing of about nine in ten liberals. Garvey holds similar large leads over Schiff among the state’s Republican and conservative voters. Schiff is also the choice of 54% of the state’s voters unaffiliated with either major party, while Garvey receives 25% of their support.

Schiff also holds preference leads over Garvey across most of the major demographic subgroups of the state’s electorate, including both men and women, and among voters of all ages and ethnic backgrounds.

On a regional basis, Schiff holds his largest leads among voters in the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area and the Central Coast, where he is favored by greater than two-to-one margins. Garvey does best among voters in the Central Valley and the Inland Empire, where he is running about evenly with Schiff.

Table 1
Current voter preferences for U.S. Senate between
Democrat Adam Schiff and Republican Steve Garvey
(among likely voters in California)

	Schiff (D) %	Garvey (R) %	Undecide d %
Total likely voters - August	53	33	14
late February	53	38	9
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	84	5	11
Republicans	3	88	9
No party preference/other	54	25	21
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Strongly conservative	6	88	6
Somewhat conservative	12	76	12
Moderate	51	30	19
Somewhat liberal	84	1	15
Strongly liberal	94	1	5
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	53	29	18
San Diego County	54	34	12
Orange County	50	41	9
Inland Empire	40	42	18
Central Coast	60	29	11
Central Valley	44	45	11
San Francisco Bay Area	67	21	12
North Coast/Sierras*	58	38	4
<u>Gender</u>			
Female	58	29	13
Male	52	38	10
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	58	21	21
30-39	46	29	25
40-49	51	32	17
50-64	55	35	10
65 or older	56	41	3
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	57	38	5
Latino	47	32	21
Asian/Pacific Islander	55	24	21
Black/African American	62	13	25

* small sample size

Voter views of the two candidates have not changed much since the primary

Voters' assessments of the two Senate candidates are not a lot different than those observed prior to the primary. At present, 45% of the electorate view Schiff favorably and 32% unfavorably, slightly

better than the 47% to 37% positive to negative rating he received in late February. Voter views of Garvey are more divided, with 32% viewing him favorably and 36% unfavorably, similar to a 36% favorable to 37% unfavorable rating in late February.

Democrats continue to view Schiff in very high regard, while their opinions of Garvey remain very negative. The opposite is true among Republicans, three in four of whom view Garvey positively, while about as many hold negative opinions of Schiff.

Table 2
Trend of voter impressions of the Senate candidates
(among likely voters in California)

	Total likely voters		Party registration					
	August	February	Democrats		Republicans		No Party Pref/other	
			August	Feb.	August	Feb.	August	Feb.
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Adam Schiff (D)</u>								
Favorable	45	47	70	74	7	8	43	44
Unfavorable	32	37	9	10	73	77	30	37
No opinion	23	16	21	16	20	15	27	19
<u>Steve Garvey (R)</u>								
Favorable	32	36	11	8	74	78	23	33
Unfavorable	36	37	54	56	7	7	37	37
No opinion	32	27	35	36	19	15	40	30

(D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican

Candidate attributes voters consider important to their voting decisions in the Senate race

The poll also repeated a question series that it posed in late February asking voters how important various candidate attributes were to them when deciding whom to support in the Senate election.

Similar to the findings in late February, the attribute that the largest proportion of voters (52%) rates very important the attribute “*would be a strong voice in defending abortion rights in the Senate.*” This is attracting voters to Schiff, as 84% of his supporters consider this attribute to be very important to their voting decision. By contrast, just 8% of Garvey supporters consider this to be a very important attribute to them when deciding whom to support. Women voters are also somewhat more likely than men to say this attribute is important to their voting decision in the Senate race.

The next largest proportion of voters (44%) rates the attribute “*supports tougher immigration laws,*” as being very important to their Senate voting decision. This attribute appears to be a main factor attracting voters to Garvey, as 84% of his backers rate it very important to their vote choice, compared just 21% among those supporting Schiff.

Two other attributes are rated as very important by about three in ten likely voters. They include “*has extensive experience in government*” (31%), which a larger proportion of Schiff voters (42%) considers a very important candidate attribute, and “*is a strong supporter of Israel*” (29%), which about twice as many Garvey supporters than Schiff backers rate this a very important attribute.

Relatively few likely voters (8%) rate the attribute, “*is a political outsider*” very important to them when deciding whom to support in the Senate race.

Table 3
Importance of candidate attributes when deciding whom to support for U.S. Senate
(among likely voters in California)

	August	February	Schiff voters		Garvey voters		Undecided	
			August	February	August	February	August	February
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
<u>Would be a strong voice in defending abortion rights for women in the Senate</u>								
Very important	52	55	84	84	8	16	36	53
Somewhat important	15	11	10	8	17	14	30	14
Not a reason/undecided	33	34	6	8	75	70	34	33
<u>Supports tougher immigration laws</u>								
Very important	44	46	21	16	84	91	37	35
Somewhat important	26	23	36	36	11	6	25	20
Not a reason/undecided	30	31	43	48	5	3	38	45
<u>Has extensive experience in government</u>								
Very important	31	30	42	45	18	12	24	21
Somewhat important	40	38	48	44	29	29	35	40
Not a reason/undecided	29	32	10	11	53	59	41	39
<u>Is a strong supporter of Israel</u>								
Very important	29	27	21	15	44	45	26	17
Somewhat important	24	24	28	26	22	23	15	11
Not a reason/undecided	47	49	51	59	34	32	59	72
<u>Is a political outsider</u>								
Very important	8	13	5	4	13	25	10	11
Somewhat important	18	23	13	15	28	34	15	22
Not a reason/undecided	74	64	82	81	59	41	75	67

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was administered online in English and Spanish July 31-August 11, 2024 among 3,765 California considered likely to vote in the 2024 November general election.

The poll was conducted by distributing email invitations to stratified random samples of the state’s registered voters. Each email invited voters to participate in a non-partisan survey conducted by the University and provided a link to the IGS website where the survey was housed. Reminder emails were distributed to non-responding voters, and an opt out link was provided for voters not wishing to receive further email invitations.

Samples of California registered voters with email addresses were derived from information contained on the official voter registration rolls provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of registered voter lists.

To protect the anonymity of respondents, voters' email addresses and all other personally identifiable information derived from the original voter listing were purged from the data file and replaced with a unique and anonymous identification number during data processing. In addition, after the completion of data collection, post-stratification weights were applied to the survey data file to align the sample of registered voters to population characteristics of all registered voters statewide and within major regions of the state.

The sampling error associated with the survey results is difficult to calculate precisely because of sample stratification and post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of likely voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

Question wording

There will also be an election for U.S. Senate on the November general election ballot, pitting Democrat Adam Schiff against Republican Steve Garvey. If the election for U.S. Senate were held today, for whom would you vote?

Regardless of whom you intend to support for U.S. Senate, what is your overall opinion of each of the candidates? ORDERING RANDOMIZED

For each of the following attributes please indicate how important each will be to you when considering whom to support in the U.S. Senate election. SEE RELEASE FOR WORDING OF ATTRIBUTES; ORDERING RANDOMIZED

About the Institute of Governmental Studies

The Institute of Governmental studies (IGS) is an interdisciplinary organized research unit that pursues a vigorous program of research, education, publication and public service. A component of the University of California system's flagship Berkeley campus, IGS is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS's co-directors are Professor Eric Schickler and Associate Professor G. Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll seeks to provide broad measures of contemporary public opinion and generate data for scholarly analysis. Veteran pollster Mark DiCamillo serves as director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll*. For a complete listing of reports issued by the poll, please visit <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.