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No change in Schiff's sizable lead over Garvey in U.S. Senate race.

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff continues to maintain a sizable lead over former baseball player Republican Steve Garvey in the state's November election for U.S. Senate. The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds Schiff preferred by 53% of the state's likely voters, while Garvey is backed by 36%. Another 11% are undecided.

There has been virtually no change in voter preferences in the Senate race since the March primary election. Schiff's continuing lead in this deeply blue state underscores the fact that no Republican has won a California Senate seat since 1988.

Voter appraisals of the candidates are primarily driven by party loyalties. Schiff is receiving the support of about nine out of ten of the state's Democrats, liberals and voters identifying as progressive in politics, while Garvey receives equally large shares of support from the state's Republicans, conservatives and voters identifying with MAGA.

Regionally, Schiff's main base of support is among voters in the San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County where he holds sizable leads. Garvey leads Schiff by small margins among voters in the Inland Empire and the Central Valley and runs about even with Schiff in Orange County and the state's sparsely populated North Coast/Sierras region.

Schiff is maintaining a 44% favorable and 34% unfavorable among the overall electorate. Among Democrats he is viewed favorably 67% to 8%, while Republicans rate him unfavorably 79% to 9%. Opinions of Garvey are evenly divided among the overall electorate with 35% holding favorable opinion and 35% unfavorable. Republicans view him favorably 82% to 6%, but Democrats rate him negatively 54% to 9%.

Voters were asked their opinions of the priorities that the state's next U.S. Senator should take if either Donald Trump or Kamala Harris is elected president. If Trump wins the presidency, a 59% majority of voters would want their next Senator to prioritize protecting California's interests and opposing legislation that would undercut existing state laws and policies. Another 49% would want their Senator to also prioritize standing up to Trump and challenge his executive orders.

If Harris were to win the presidency, a 56% majority feel a top priority should be to work to help pass legislation that would provide maximum benefit to Californians, while 48% would prioritize working with the administration to enact Harris's legislative agenda.

IGS Co-Director G. Cristina Mora notes, “the strong support for Schiff suggests that his toughest race was really in the Spring, when he won out against the other Democratic contenders. Still, shoring up more support in the Central Valley and in parts of Southern California beyond Los Angeles County should be a concern as he heads into November.”

Table 1
Trend of the general election preferences in the U.S. Senate race
(among likely voters in California)

	Late September %	Early August %	Late February %
Adam Schiff, Democrat	53	53	53
Steve Garvey, Republican	36	33	38
Undecided	11	14	9

How Schiff and Garvey are faring across major subgroups of the voting electorate

Schiff is maintaining significant leads over Garvey across all age, gender and racial/ethnic subgroups of the electorate and polls strongest among the state’s Black voters and among voters ages 65 or older.

However, the poll does find some significant regional differences in voter preferences. Schiff’s main base of support is among voters in the state’s two largest population centers, the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, where he is receiving 69% of the preferences, and Los Angeles County, where he receives 59%. These two regions collectively account for nearly half of the state’s voting electorate.

By contrast, Garvey holds narrow leads over Schiff in the Inland Empire and the Central Valley and is very competitive with Schiff in Orange County and among voters in the state’s large but sparsely populated North Coast/Sierras region.

Preferences in the Senate race also vary between voters who are college graduates and those who do not hold a bachelor’s degree. Among college graduates Schiff holds a large 32-point lead over Garvey, whereas the preferences of those who do not hold a college degree are more closely divided.

Table 2
Preferences in the general election for U.S. Senate across major subgroups of the likely voter population

	Schiff %	Garvey %	Undecided %
Total likely voters	53	36	11
<u>Party registration</u>			
Democrats	85	6	9
Republicans	4	88	8
No party preference/other	48	35	17
<u>Political ideology</u>			
Strongly conservative	6	90	4
Somewhat conservative	12	85	3
Moderate	49	32	19
Somewhat liberal	89	4	7
Strongly liberal	93	--	7
<u>Other political descriptors</u>			
Progressive	89	6	5
Pro-choice	79	12	9
Libertarian	27	68	5
Evangelical Christian	12	80	8
MAGA	2	92	6
<u>Region</u>			
Los Angeles County	59	32	9
San Diego County	50	40	10
Orange County	46	46	8
Inland Empire	41	48	11
Central Coast	54	35	11
Central Valley	41	47	12
San Francisco Bay Area	69	19	12
North Coast/Sierras*	44	44	12
<u>Gender</u>			
Female	55	32	13
Male	51	41	8
<u>Age</u>			
18-29	52	29	19
30-39	51	34	15
40-49	49	39	12
50-64	53	36	11
65 or older	58	38	4
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>			
White non-Hispanic	54	39	7
Latino	47	37	16
Asian/Pacific Islander	52	29	19
Black/African American	69	13	18
<u>Education</u>			
Not a college graduate	46	43	11
College graduate	62	29	9

* small sample size

Voter opinions of the Senate candidates divide along partisan lines

California opinions of the two candidates are primarily driven by party loyalties. Schiff’s image among the overall electorate is 44% favorable and 34% unfavorable, with another 22% of voters having no opinion. Yet, among Democratic voters Schiff is viewed favorably 67% to 8%, while among Republicans he is rated unfavorably 79% to 9%.

Garvey’s image among the overall electorate is mixed, with 35% rating him positively and 35% negatively, although another 30% offer no opinion. Republicans give an overwhelmingly positive assessment of Garvey, with 82% viewing him favorably and 6% unfavorably. By contrast, Democrats view him negatively 54% to 9%, although more than a third (37%) have no opinion.

The state’s independents registered in California as No Party Preference voters hold generally similar views of both candidates, with about a third rating each positively, a third negatively and another third having no opinion.

Table 3
Image ratings of the U.S. Senate candidates
(among likely voters in California)

	Total likely voters %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Pref./others %
<u>Adam Schiff</u>				
Favorable	<u>44</u>	<u>67</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>38</u>
Strongly favorable	27	46	3	16
Somewhat favorable	17	21	6	22
Unfavorable	<u>34</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>33</u>
Somewhat unfavorable	7	6	8	8
Strongly unfavorable	27	2	71	25
No opinion	22	25	12	29
<u>Steve Garvey</u>				
Favorable	<u>35</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>82</u>	<u>31</u>
Strongly favorable	18	4	47	10
Somewhat favorable	17	5	35	21
Unfavorable	<u>35</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>32</u>
Somewhat unfavorable	12	16	4	13
Strongly unfavorable	23	38	2	19
No opinion	30	37	12	37

Priorities for California’s next U.S. Senator should Trump win the presidency

Voters in this survey were also asked to respond to statements about the priorities they feel the state’s next U.S. Senator should take in representing the state first if Donald Trump was elected president, and then if Kamala Harris won the presidency this year.

Were Trump to win the presidency, a 59% majority of the state’s voters would attach a top priority to protecting California’s interests and opposing federal legislation that would undercut existing state laws and policies. This is especially important to Schiff voters, with 82% giving top priority to this, compared to just 28% among Garvey’s supporters. Half of the voters who remain undecided in the Senate race (51%) also say they would attach a high priority to this.

Another 50% also say that if Trump is elected president, they would want their next U.S. Senator to give high priority to working together with the President to pass bipartisan legislation. This view is held by 67% of Garvey’s voters and 41% of Schiff’s supporters. But a similar proportion (49%) would also want their next Senator to prioritize standing up to the President and challenging his executive orders. This is rated as a top priority by 74% of Schiff’s voters, but by just 15% of those backing Garvey.

Table 4
Priorities that voters think their next U.S. Senator should be taking
when representing the state if Donald Trump is elected President
(among likely voters in California)

	Total likely voters %	Schiff voters %	Garvey voters %	Undecided voters %
<i>“Protect California’s interests and oppose legislation that would undercut existing state laws and policies”</i>				
A top priority	59	82	28	51
Important but not a top priority	18	12	27	22
Not important	15	2	37	6
No opinion	8	4	8	21
<i>“Work together with the President to pass bipartisan legislation”</i>				
A top priority	50	41	67	38
Important but not a top priority	31	36	26	21
Not important	11	15	5	16
No opinion	8	8	2	26
<i>“Stand up to the President and challenge his executive orders”</i>				
A top priority	49	74	15	39
Important but not a top priority	18	16	20	21
Not important	25	6	58	11
No opinion	8	4	7	29

Priorities for the state’s next U.S. Senator should Harris win the presidency

Should Harris be elected, a 56% majority of voters say that a top priority for the state’s next Senator should be to work to pass legislation that would deliver maximum benefits to the people of California.

Another 48% would give priority to working with the Harris administration to enact her legislative agenda, while fewer (31%) say he should prioritize defending President Harris from partisan attacks in the Senate.

Much larger proportions of the state’s Democrats than its Republicans attach a high priority to each statement. The widest differences relate to working with the president to pass Harris’s legislative agenda, which 77% of Schiff voters would prioritize, compared to just 11% among Garvey’s supporters.

Table 5
Priorities that voters think their next U.S. Senator should be taking
when representing the state if Kamala Harris is elected President
(among likely voters in California)

	Total likely voters %	Schiff voters %	Garvey voters %	Undecided voters %
<i>“Prioritize legislation and policy positions that deliver maximum benefits to California and its people”</i>				
A top priority	56	67	41	53
Important but not a top priority	27	30	27	18
Not important	8	2	19	7
No opinion	9	1	13	22
<i>“Work together with the President to pass her legislative agenda”</i>				
A top priority	48	77	11	27
Important but not a top priority	21	20	19	32
Not important	22	1	56	12
No opinion	10	2	14	29
<i>“Defend the President from partisan attacks in the Senate”</i>				
A top priority	31	47	11	23
Important but not a top priority	32	41	16	29
Not important	28	9	58	22
No opinion	9	3	15	26

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 September 25 - October 1, 2024, among 3,045 Californians 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 and 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 the 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 +/-2.5 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.**

If (Donald Trump) (Kamala Harris) is elected president this year, how much of a priority do you feel it should be for California's next U.S. Senator to represent the state by taking the following positions? **SEE RELEASE FOR WORDING OF EACH. 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's mission is to provide objective, non-partisan survey data for public release and for scholarly analysis. A complete listing of its reports can be found by visiting the weblink: <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.