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Release #2024-01

Friday, January 12, 2024

## **Schiff holds narrow lead in Senate primary for full-term seat. *Closer race forecast for partial term Senate seat.***

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

In the closely contested full-term primary election for U.S. Senate, Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff has opened up a narrow 4-point lead over his main rivals, Democratic Congresswomen Katie Porter and Barbara Lee, and former baseball star Republican Steve Garvey. The two top finishers will face against one another in the November general election.

The latest *Berkeley IGS Poll* presented voters with the complete list of the 27 candidates whose names will appear on the primary election ballot for the full-term Senate seat, along with their official ballot designation and party. In this setting Schiff is the choice of 21%, Porter receives 17% support, Garvey 13%, and Lee 9%. A relatively large 21% of likely voters remain undecided, while another 19% divide their preferences among the 23 other candidates, none of whom receive the backing of more than 3%.

Voters in the primary will also be asked to vote a second time in the Senate race to elect someone to serve out the remaining months of the current term left by the death of Senator Dianne Feinstein, which is being temporarily filled by Laphonza Butler. Just seven candidates have filed to compete in that election, including all four of the major contenders. In the partial term election, the poll finds Schiff at 21%, but with both Porter and Garvey closely behind at 18% and 17%, respectively. Another 12% select Lee and 11% favor the only other Republican in the race, attorney Eric Early. With just two Republican candidates on the partial term Senate ballot, compared to ten on the full-term ballot, support for both Garvey and Early increases among GOP primary voters making each of them more competitive.

Schiff owes much of his lead from the support of voters ages 65 or older, where he holds a nearly three to one advantage over Porter in the full-term election. By contrast, Porter is favored over Schiff among voters under age 40 two to one. Porter also holds the advantage among strongly liberal voters, while Schiff is preferred among voters identifying as somewhat liberal or moderate in politics. Garvey's support is largely derived from the votes of the state's registered Republicans and conservatives.

### **The impact of the Israel-Hamas war on the Senate race**

A major issue dividing the Senate candidates relates to their positions about the war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. These differences are manifested in the views that their supporters have about the war. For example, Schiff's backers approve of the President's handling of the conflict 69% to 26%, while voters backing Garvey on the right and Lee on the left offer highly negative appraisals of the President's performance in this area.

While large proportions of the supporters of the three leading Democrats say they sympathize with both the Israeli and the Palestinians in the current situation, backers of Porter and Lee express greater sympathy for the Palestinian people than Schiff’s supporters. On the other hand, voters backing Garvey overwhelmingly sympathize with the Israelis in the conflict.

Most of the backers of the three leading Democrats feel that Israel’s response to the Hamas attack has been too much and that Israel should accept a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if it means Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza. By contrast, most of Garvey’s supporters describe Israel’s military response as being about right and overwhelmingly feel the best course of action for Israel is to continue fighting until Hamas is no longer a viable force.

Observed IGS co-director Eric Schickler, “Representative Schiff appears to be in a good position with respect to the top two primary, but it will be a very different race in November if his opponent is another Democrat, like Porter or Lee, who receive greater support among strong liberals and young voters, or if he opposes conservative Republican Garvey. With so many voters undecided, there is still considerable space for a range of outcomes in the primary.”

**Schiff holds narrow lead the March primary election for full-term U.S. Senate seat**

Likely voter support for Schiff has increased over the past few months and he now holds a narrow four-point lead over Porter in the election for the full-term Senate seat. The latest poll finds Schiff receiving the backing of 21% of likely voters, up from 16% in late October. Meanwhile, support his two fellow Democrats, Porter, and Lee, remains unchanged from October, with Porter at 17% and Lee at 9%. However, support for Garvey has grown with each successive poll, increasing from 7% in August to 10% in late October to 13% at present.

The current poll presented voters with a complete list of all 27 candidates whose names will appear on the full-term Senate election ballot, along with their official ballot designation and party affiliation. In this setting the 23 other candidates collectively receive 19% of the preferences, although none receives more than 3% support. A sizable 21% remain undecided.

**Table 1**  
**Trend of voter preferences in the March 2024 full-term election**  
**for U.S. Senate (among likely voters)**

	<b>Current (early Jan.) %</b>	<b>Late October %</b>	<b>August %</b>
Adam Schiff, United States Representative (D)	<b>21</b>	16	20
Katie Porter, U.S. Representative (D)	<b>17</b>	17	17
Steve Garvey, Professional Baseball Representative (R)	<b>13</b>	10	7
Barbara Lee, Congresswoman/Mother (D)	<b>9</b>	9	7
Eric Early, Business Owner/Attorney (R)	<b>3</b>	4	5
James Bradley, Chief Executive Officer (R)	<b>3</b>	7	7
Sharleta Bassett, Businesswoman/Mother/Farmer (R)	<b>3</b>	NA	NA
Jonathan Reiss, no ballot designation (R)	<b>2</b>	NA	NA
All others (each with 1% or less)	<b>8</b>	6	5
Undecided	<b>21</b>	30	32

*Note: Results include voters supporting or leaning toward supporting each of the candidates in the full-term election. (D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican, NA: Not measured.*

**Schiff also leads in the partial-term primary election but Porter and Garvey are both within striking distance**

Californians will be asked to vote a second time in the primary election for U.S. Senate to select someone to complete the remaining months of the current term left by the death of Senator Dianne Feinstein and which is currently being filled by Butler. There are just seven candidates running in this race, only two of whom are Republicans. In this setting Schiff is again selected by 21%, with both Porter at 18% and Garvey at 17% closely behind.

With only two GOP candidates on the partial term election ballot, compared to ten on the full-term Senate ballot, both Garvey and Early receive greater support from the state’s Republican voters as they gravitate more toward the two GOP candidates. This appears to offer Garvey an even better opportunity to advance to the November general election in the partial term election than in the full-term election.

**Table 2**  
**Voter preferences in the March 2024 partial-term election for U.S. Senate**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Early January %</b>
Adam Schiff, United States Representative (D)	<b>21</b>
Katie Porter, U.S. Representative (D)	<b>18</b>
Steve Garvey, Professional Baseball Representative (R)	<b>17</b>
Barbara Lee, Congresswoman/Mother (D)	<b>12</b>
Eric Early, Business Owner/Attorney (R)	<b>11</b>
Sepi Gilani, Physician/Surgeon/Professor (D)	<b>2</b>
Christina Pascucci, no ballot designation (D)	<b>2</b>
Undecided	<b>17</b>

*Note: Results include voters supporting or leaning toward supporting each of the candidates. (D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican. Partial term preferences not measured in previous polls.*

**Differences in preferences for the full-term seat across major subgroups of the electorate**

Schiff owes much of his lead over the field from the support of voters ages 65 or older, where he holds a nearly three to one advantage over Porter in the full-term election. Garvey also polls significantly better among older voters than younger voters, while Porter leads among voters under age 40.

Registered Democrats, who comprise nearly half of the likely primary electorate, favor Schiff over Porter by 10 points and Lee by 21 points. On the other hand, Porter holds the advantage over Schiff among voters identifying as strongly liberal in politics, while Schiff is preferred over Porter among voters identifying as somewhat liberal or moderate in politics.

Garvey’s support is derived largely from the strong support he is receiving from the state’s Republicans and conservative voters.

Schiff leads the field across most of the state’s major regions, but trails both Porter and Garvey in Orange County. Garvey also holds greater appeal to voters living in rural areas of the state and does particularly well among those living in the San Joaquin Valley. Lee does best among the state’s Black voters, where she receives 22% support.

**Table 3**  
**Voter preferences in the March 2024 full-term election for U.S. Senate**  
**across major subgroups of the likely voter population**

	Schiff %	Porter %	Garvey %	Lee %	All others %	Undecided %
<b>Total statewide</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>21</b>
<u>Party registration</u>						
Democrats	35	25	1	14	10	15
Republicans	3	2	34	1	31	29
No party preference	19	20	8	10	25	18
Other parties	13	18	9	7	24	29
<u>Region</u>						
Los Angeles County	24	20	9	7	18	22
San Diego County	19	16	16	9	22	18
Orange County	12	25	20	4	21	18
Inland Empire	16	15	16	7	22	24
Central Coast	24	19	10	2	25	20
Sacramento/North Valley	20	12	13	8	22	25
San Joaquin Valley	19	10	22	8	22	19
San Francisco Bay Area	26	16	6	19	14	19
North Coast/Sierras*	28	8	11	4	16	33
<u>Political ideology</u>						
Strongly conservative	1	1	36	3	31	28
Somewhat conservative	8	2	26	4	33	27
Moderate	24	15	8	8	23	22
Somewhat liberal	39	26	-	11	9	15
Strongly liberal	29	35	-	17	4	15
<u>Age</u>						
18-29	8	19	2	8	25	38
30-39	10	23	3	11	21	32
40-49	16	18	8	12	19	27
50-64	20	16	16	8	23	17
65 or older	32	13	18	8	16	13
<u>Gender</u>						
Female	20	18	9	10	21	22
Male	23	15	17	8	18	19
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
White non-Hispanic	24	18	16	7	16	19
Latino	14	15	9	11	29	22
Asian/Pacific Islander	24	17	7	8	15	29
Black	24	18	5	22	13	18

\* small sample base

## **Supporters of the Senate candidates hold very different views of the Israel-Hamas war**

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One of major issues dividing likely voters in the Senate race relates to their views about the ongoing war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. These differences are manifested in the views that each of the major candidates' supporters have about the war.

For example, greater than two in three voters supporting Schiff (69%) approve of President Biden's handling of the conflict, while just 26% disapprove. This contrasts with the largely negative view that supporters of Democrat Lee and Republican Garvey have of the President's handling of the situation, with 55% of Lee's backers and 65% of Garvey's supporters disapproving of Biden's performance. Backers of Porter are about evenly divided in their appraisals of the President in this area.

Yet, backers of Lee and Garvey diverge considerably when asked where their sympathies lie in the conflict. Greater than eight in ten of Garvey supporters (81%) report having greater sympathy for the Israelis than the Palestinians, whereas among voters backing Lee just 14% express greater sympathy for the Israelis, while 37% side with the Palestinians and 41% say they sympathize equally with the Israeli people as with the Palestinians. This latter view is also the dominant position of voters backing Schiff or Porter, with 49% of Schiff voters and 41% of Porter supporters saying they sympathize with both the Israelis and the Palestinians equally. However among those who feel otherwise, more of Porter's backers express greater sympathy for the Palestinians than the Israelis, while more of Schiff's supporters sympathize more with the Israelis.

Backers of each of the three leading Democratic candidates are in general agreement that the Israel military's response to the Hamas attack on Israel has been too much. However, Garvey supporters disagree, with 55% describing the Israeli response as about right and 26% saying it has been too little.

Voters supporting the three leading Democratic Senate candidates are also more likely to agree that the best course of action for Israel to take in the current situation is to declare a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if it leaves Hamas as a viable force in Gaza. This contrasts sharply with the views of Garvey's backers, 85% of whom feel Israel should continue its military actions against Hamas until Hamas is no longer viable.

About two thirds of the voters backing Schiff and Porter and about half of those supporting Lee also believe that the best long-term resolution of the Israel-Palestinian conflict would be the creation of two separate and independent Jewish and Palestinian states in the region with very few supporting the creation a single Israeli state encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. By contrast, a plurality of Garvey's supporters (41%) favors creating a single Israeli state encompassing the entire region, compared to 37% who back a two-state solution.

One area in which supporters of all of the candidates are in general agreement relates to concerns about the threat of increasing hate incidents and violence against both Jewish Americans and Muslim and Arab Americans here in the United States. Nearly nine in ten voters (87%) express concerns about threats of violence against Jewish Americans, while 77% say this in relation to Muslim and Arab Americans.

**Table 4**  
**How views of the Israel-Hamas conflict vary among supporters of the Senate candidates**  
**(among likely voters)**

	<b>Total likely voters %</b>	<b>Schiff voters %</b>	<b>Porter voters %</b>	<b>Garvey voters %</b>	<b>Lee voters %</b>
<b><i>Biden job performance in handling Israel-Hamas war</i></b>					
Approve	40	69	46	28	34
Disapprove	52	26	49	65	55
No opinion	8	5	5	7	11
<b><i>Voter sympathies in current situation</i></b>					
More with Israelis	37	25	14	81	15
More with Palestinians	20	19	37	1	37
About equal	29	49	41	9	34
No opinion	14	7	8	9	14
<b><i>Israel military response to Hamas attack</i></b>					
Too much	42	59	73	6	63
Too little	10	3	1	31	2
About right	28	23	13	52	14
No opinion	20	15	13	11	21
<b><i>Best course of action for Israel now</i></b>					
Continue military actions until Hamas is no longer a viable force in Gaza	43	38	24	85	21
Accept a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza	38	45	63	6	59
No opinion	19	17	13	9	20
<b><i>Best long-term resolution of Israel-Palestine conflict</i></b>					
Two separate states, with a Jewish state and an independent Palestinian state	50	70	63	37	49
One single Israeli state encompassing Israel, West Bank and Gaza	15	3	4	41	2
One single state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian	12	11	17	7	23
One single Palestinian state encompassing Israel, West Bank and Gaza	2	1	3	-	5
No opinion	21	15	13	15	21
<b><i>Threats of increased hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans in the U.S.</i></b>					
Concerned	87	92	91	91	77
Not concerned	8	5	6	6	8
No opinion	5	3	3	3	3
<b><i>Threats of increased hate incidents and violence against Muslim or Arab Americans in the U.S.</i></b>					
Concerned	77	91	92	60	92
Not concerned	16	6	4	33	4
No opinion	7	3	4	7	4

### **Little change in voters' overall opinions of the leading Senate candidates**

The poll also finds that overall voter opinions of the leading Senate candidates have not changed much since late October.

Schiff remains the best known of the four, with 74% of likely voters offering an opinion, 43% viewing him positively and 31% negatively. Greater than half of likely voters (55%) offer an opinion of Porter, with 39% holding a favorable opinion and 16% unfavorable.

About half of the likely voting public can rate Lee (49%) or Garvey (45%). Overall impressions of Lee are more positive (31%) than negative (18%), while views of Garvey are more evenly divided, with 24% viewing him favorably and 21% unfavorably.

Not surprisingly, opinions of the candidates are highly partisan, with large proportions of Democratic voters offering very favorable assessments of Porter, Schiff, and Lee, while Republicans view each in a negative light, especially with respect to Schiff. Conversely, Republican Garvey is viewed very favorably by rank-and-file Republicans, but in a negative light by the state's Democratic voters.

**Table 5**  
**Trend of image ratings of the leading candidates for U.S. Senate**  
**(among likely voters)**

	Total likely voters			Current poll (Early January)		
	Current (Early Jan.) %	Late October %	August %	Democrats %	Republicans %	No Party Pref./others %
<b><u>Adam Schiff</u></b>						
Favorable	43	40	43	67	6	42
Unfavorable	31	29	32	8	68	30
No opinion	26	31	25	25	26	28
<b><u>Katie Porter</u></b>						
Favorable	39	38	38	60	7	38
Unfavorable	16	17	19	5	32	16
No opinion	45	45	43	35	61	46
<b><u>Steve Garvey</u></b>						
Favorable	24	20	19	4	55	25
Unfavorable	21	22	22	30	6	20
No opinion	55	58	59	66	39	55
<b><u>Barbara Lee</u></b>						
Favorable	31	30	29	49	4	29
Unfavorable	18	19	19	8	33	21
No opinion	51	51	52	43	62	50

### **About the Survey**

The findings in this report are based on a *Berkeley IGS Poll* conducted by the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. The poll was done online in English and Spanish January 4-8, 2024, among 8,199 California registered voters, including a weighted subsample of 4,470 likely voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

Data collection was completed 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. Prior to the distribution of emails, the overall sample was stratified by age and gender in an attempt to obtain a proper balance of survey respondents across major segments of the registered voter population.

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 sample of likely voters are subject to an estimated sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

For a more complete description of the survey methods used by the Berkeley IGS Poll, visit [https://igs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/survey\\_methods\\_of\\_the\\_berkeley\\_igs\\_poll\\_update\\_d\\_1\\_3\\_24.pdf](https://igs.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/survey_methods_of_the_berkeley_igs_poll_update_d_1_3_24.pdf)

### **Question wording**

Voters will be asked to vote twice in the primary election for U.S. Senator. Once to elect someone to serve a full six-year term beginning next year, and a second time to elect someone to complete the remainder of the current term left by the death of Senator Dianne Feinstein.

In the full-term election for U.S. Senate, the following 27 candidates will be listed on the March primary election ballot. If you were voting today, for whom would you vote? (**IF UNDECIDED**): If you had to choose today, which candidate would you lean toward? (**CANDIDATE ORDERING RANDOMIZED**)

In the partial-term election for U.S. Senate to serve out the remainder of the current term, the following 7 candidates will be listed on the March primary election ballot. If you were voting today, for whom would you vote? (**IF UNDECIDED**): If you had to choose today, which candidate would you lean toward? (**CANDIDATE ORDERING RANDOMIZED**)

Please indicate whether your opinion of the following candidates for U.S. Senate is favorable or unfavorable, or whether you don't yet know enough about them to offer an opinion. (**CANDIDATE ORDERING RANDOMIZED**)

Do you approve or disapprove of the job President Biden is doing with regard to the fighting between Israel and Hamas?

In the current situation in Gaza and the West Bank, are your sympathies more with the Israelis or more with the Palestinians (or about equal)?



Do you think the Israeli military response to Hamas's attack on Israel has been too much, too little, or about right?

What do you feel would be the best course of action for Israel to take in the current situation?

- (1) Israel should continue its military actions against Hamas until Hamas is no longer a viable force in Gaza.
- (2) Israel should agree to a cease fire and negotiate an end to the war even if Hamas remains a viable force in Gaza

Which of the following do you think would be the best resolution of the Israel - Palestine conflict?

- (1) Two separate states, a Jewish state alongside an independent Palestinian state.
- (2) A single Palestinian state encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- (3) A single Israeli state encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.
- (4) A single state that is neither Jewish nor Palestinian, encompassing all of the territory that is currently Israel, the West Bank and Gaza.

How concerned are you about increases in hate incidents and violence against Jewish Americans in the United States?

How concerned are you about increases in hate incidents and violence against Muslim or Arab Americans in the United States?

#### **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 Cristina Mora.

IGS conducts periodic surveys of public opinion in California on matters of politics and public policy through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*. The poll, which is disseminated widely, seeks to provide a broad measure of contemporary public opinion, and to generate data for subsequent scholarly analysis. The director of the *Berkeley IGS Poll* is Mark DiCamillo. For a copy of the detailed tabulations to this report or a listing of all past poll reports issued by the *Berkeley IGS Poll*, please visit the poll's website at <https://www.igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.