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## IGS Poll

### Title

Release #2023-01: Schiff and Porter hold early lead over Lee (and Khanna) in potential matchups to succeed Feinstein for U.S. Senate

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***Schiff and Porter hold early lead over Lee (and Khanna)  
in potential matchups to succeed Feinstein for U.S. Senate.***  
*- Large proportions undecided; many are unfamiliar with the candidates -*

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, *Berkeley IGS Poll*

Following last week's announcement that Dianne Feinstein will not be seeking re-election to the U.S. Senate next year, the campaign to succeed her now begins in earnest. Two Southern California Democrats, Congressman Adam Schiff and Congresswoman Katie Porter, and one Bay Area Democrat, Congresswoman Barbara Lee, have already declared their candidacies. Another prominent Democrat, Silicon Valley Congressman Ro Khanna, has also expressed interest and said he will announce his intentions by April.

Besides these four Democrats, no prominent GOP or third-party personalities have yet to emerge as possible U.S. Senate candidates. Because of this, in its latest survey the *Berkeley IGS Poll* limited its current preference measure to the state's registered Democrats and No Party Preference voters. In this setting Schiff at 22% and Porter at 20% hold the early lead over Lee and Khanna, who receive 6% and 4%, respectively. A large proportion (39%) remains undecided, while 8% say they'll support someone other than these candidates. In a three-candidate race excluding Khanna the standings are similar --Schiff 23%, Porter 20%, Lee 8%, 10% someone else and 39% undecided.

Underlying the large proportions of undecideds is the fact that many voters are unfamiliar with the Senate candidates. When asked their opinion of Schiff 39% of Democratic and No Party Preferences voters cannot offer an opinion, while 47% say this with regard to Porter. Even larger proportions, greater than six in ten, have no opinion of Lee or Khanna.

When asked their opinion of Senator Feinstein's decision not to seek re-election, majorities of voters of all political stripes – Democrats, Republicans, and non-partisans -- say this is a good thing for California. The latest poll also finds Feinstein's job marks remaining underwater, with 41% disapproving and 35% approving of her performance.

Observed IGS Co-Director Eric Schickler, "The results give good reason to expect a relatively wide-open race. Since so many voters are unfamiliar with the candidates, there is

much potential for movement. It will likely be several months before most voters tune into the race, and a key challenge for each candidate will be to build a statewide following.”

**Table 1**  
**Voting preferences for U.S. Senate**  
**(among California Democrats and No Party Preference voters)**

	<u>(including</u> <u>Khanna)</u>	<u>(excluding</u> <u>Khanna)</u>
	%	%
Adam Schiff, Congressman	22	23
Katie Porter, Congresswoman	20	20
Barbara Lee, Congresswoman	6	8
Ro Khanna, Congressman	4	--
Someone else	9	10
Undecided	39	39

**Voting preferences for U.S. Senate across major subgroups**

An analysis of Democratic and No Party Preference voter support across demographic subgroups shows fairly wide differences in support by age, with voters under age 40 preferring Porter over Schiff more than two to one, while older voters favor Schiff greater than two to one.

Preferences in the Senate race are also related to the political ideology of the voter. Democrats and No Party Preference voters who identify themselves as strongly liberal in politics prefer Porter over Schiff by 11 points, whereas voters identifying as moderates favor Schiff by 12 points.

Schiff also narrowly leads Porter among whites, Blacks, and voters in the Central Coast, the San Francisco Bay Area, and across the numerous yet sparsely populated counties comprising the Sacramento/North Valley/North Coast/Sierras region. Porter leads Schiff by 11 points in Orange County, her home region, and also holds a narrower lead among Latino voters. Los Angeles and San Diego County voters are about evenly divided as are voters in the San Joaquin Valley.

Interestingly, the poll finds no significant differences in voting preferences between Schiff and Porter by gender at this stage of the campaign.

**Table 2**  
**Preferences in a four-candidate field for U.S. Senate across major voter subgroups**  
**(among California Democrats and No Party Preference voters)**

	Schiff %	Porter %	Lee %	Khanna %	Others %	Undecided %
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>39</b>
<u>Party registration</u>						
(.66) Democrats	25	23	8	5	4	35
(.34) No party preference	15	12	4	3	19	47
<u>Political ideology</u>						
(.27) Strongly liberal	20	31	11	5	5	28
(.26) Somewhat liberal	27	26	4	4	2	37
(.35) Moderate	22	10	4	4	13	47
(.12) Conservative	11	7	8	3	23	48
<u>Age</u>						
(.19) 18-29	8	20	6	4	7	55
(.18) 30-39	8	22	6	5	10	49
(.17) 40-49	17	21	6	5	10	41
(.22) 50-64	27	19	6	3	11	34
(.24) 65 or older	42	17	8	4	8	21
<u>Gender</u>						
(.53) Female	20	19	7	3	7	44
(.47) Male	23	21	6	6	12	32
<u>Race/ethnicity</u>						
(.48) White non-Hispanic	29	22	5	4	8	32
(.29) Latino	10	17	7	5	12	49
(.14) Asian/Pacific Islander	19	19	6	5	9	42
(.07) Black	27	18	14	2	4	35
<u>Region</u>						
(.27) Los Angeles County	23	22	4	5	9	37
(.09) San Diego County	20	18	7	2	7	46
(.07) Orange County	24	33	1	*	13	28
(.10) Inland Empire	13	27	5	4	13	39
(.08) San Joaquin Valley	16	14	8	4	8	50
(.06) Central Coast	25	16	4	2	9	44
(.24) San Francisco Bay Area	23	16	11	6	7	37
(.09) Sacramento /North Valley/ North Coast/Sierras	27	13	6	4	12	38

**Many voters are unfamiliar with the candidates**

One of the factors underlying the large proportions undecided in the Senate race is that many voters are unfamiliar with the candidates. For example, when asked their opinion of Schiff 39% of the Democratic and No Party Preference voters surveyed have no opinion, while 47% say this with regard to Porter. Nearly two in three voters also say they do not know enough about Lee or Khanna to offer an opinion. However, among the Democrats and No Party

Preference voters able to offer an assessment, the impressions that voters have of each of the Senate candidates is highly favorable.

<b>Table 3</b>			
<b>Image ratings of the four current and potential Democratic candidates for U.S. Senate (among California Democrats and No Party Preference voters)</b>			
	<b>Favorable</b>	<b>Unfavorable</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<u>Adam Schiff, Congressman</u>	<b>48</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>39</b>
Democrats	57	8	35
No Party Preference	30	23	47
<u>Katie Porter, Congresswoman</u>	<b>45</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>47</b>
Democrats	52	5	43
No Party Preference	32	14	54
<u>Barbara Lee, Congresswoman</u>	<b>29</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>62</b>
Democrats	35	6	59
No Party Preference	18	16	66
<u>Ro Khanna, Congressman</u>	<b>26</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>65</b>
Democrats	30	6	64
No Party Preference	16	16	68

**Importance of candidate attributes**

The poll also sought to assess the importance that voters attach to eight candidate attributes when considering whom to support in the Senate race. Among the Democratic and No Party Preference voters polled, a willingness to negotiate and work collaboratively with others to get things done is rated highest in importance, with 69% describing this very important. However, a second attribute that would appear to be in conflict with this characteristic, a willingness to fight uncompromisingly for what they believe in, is also rated as very important by 47%. Another 45% of the Democratic and No Party Preference voters polled consider being a progressive in politics very important. On the other hand, much smaller proportions rate each of five other candidate attributes as very important. These include being a woman, a person of color, a political moderate, or being from Southern California or the San Francisco Bay Area.

Voters backing Schiff are more likely than Porter’s supporters to attach high importance to being willing to negotiate and being a political moderate. By contrast Porter’s backers are more likely than Schiff’s supporters to attach high importance to being a progressive in politics and being willing to fight uncompromisingly for what they believe in. Voters supporting Lee are more likely than those supporting Schiff or Porter to attach high importance to being a woman, a person of color and coming from the San Francisco Bay Area. Backers of Khanna are somewhat less defined with regard to the candidate attributes.

**Table 4**  
**Importance of candidate attributes when deciding whom to support for U.S. Senate**  
**(among California Democrats and No Party Preference voters)**

	<b>Very important</b>	<b>Somewhat important</b>	<b>Not important</b>	<b>No opinion</b>
	<b>t</b>		<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>		
<u>Willing to negotiate and work collaboratively with others to get things done (total)</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Schiff voters	77	20	2	1
Porter voters	67	28	4	1
Lee voters	60	32	7	1
Khanna voters	72	21	6	1
<u>Willing to fight uncompromisingly for what they believe in (total)</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>
Schiff voters	47	38	12	2
Porter voters	57	33	7	3
Lee voters	60	31	8	1
Khanna voters	56	27	14	3
<u>Is progressive in politics (total)</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>6</u>
Schiff voters	41	33	22	4
Porter voters	60	28	11	1
Lee voters	65	22	12	1
Khanna voters	51	32	14	3
<u>Is a political moderate (total)</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>33</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>9</u>
Schiff voters	26	41	28	5
Porter voters	17	28	51	4
Lee voters	23	28	45	4
Khanna voters	33	25	41	1
<u>Is a woman (total)</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>9</u>
Schiff voters	8	32	53	7
Porter voters	18	37	41	4
Lee voters	30	39	24	7
Khanna voters	26	15	54	5
<u>Is a person of color (total)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>53</u>	<u>10</u>
Schiff voters	7	20	64	9
Porter voters	13	33	48	7
Lee voters	27	34	30	9
Khanna voters	28	17	50	5
<u>Is from Southern California (total)</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>10</u>
Schiff voters	11	11	71	7
Porter voters	13	13	68	6
Lee voters	19	10	67	4
Khanna voters	17	9	66	8
<u>Is from the SF Bay Area (total)</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>10</u>
Schiff voters	8	11	73	8
Porter voters	7	6	80	7

Lee voters	21	27	50	2
Khanna voters	17	16	66	1

**Bipartisan agreement with Feinstein’s decision not to seek re-election**

Feinstein was first elected to the Senate in 1992, the so-called “year of the woman” in California politics, when both she and fellow Democrat Barbara Boxer won election as the first women ever to represent California in that body. She is completing her fifth full term in the U.S. Senate, is now the longest-serving Democrat in the Senate and will be 91 years old next year. Feinstein’s decision not to run for re-election was widely expected.

When voters are asked their opinion of Feinstein’s decision not to seek re-election, large majorities of all political stripes believe this is a good thing for California. Sixty-four percent of voters overall say this, including 60% of Democrats, 77% of Republicans and 61% of non-partisan voters. Just 8% consider her decision not to run for re-election a bad thing for the state, while 28% offer no opinion.

**Table 5**  
**Was Feinstein’s decision not to seek re-election to the U.S. Senate next year**  
**a good thing or bad thing for California**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	<b>Total registered voters</b>	<b>Democrats</b>	<b>Republicans</b>	<b>No Party Preference /other</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
Good thing	<b>64</b>	60	77	61
Bad thing	<b>8</b>	9	6	8
No opinion	<b>28</b>	31	17	31

**Trend of Feinstein’s job performance ratings over the years**

Throughout most of her long tenure in the Senate Feinstein has received highly positive job performance marks from the state’s registered voters, and in some years achieved approval ratings of greater than two to one. However, more recently she has come under increasing criticism and her job ratings have declined.

The latest poll finds the Senator’s job marks remaining underwater, with a 41% plurality of voters now offering a negative assessment of her performance, while 35% offer a positive rating.

**Table 6**  
**Trend of Dianne Feinstein job approval ratings as U.S. Senator**  
**(among California registered voters)**

	Approve %	Disapprove %	No opinion %
<b>February 2023</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>24</b>
2021 (average)	35	45	20
2017 (average)	48	37	15
2015 (average)	44	29	27
2014 (average)	44	35	21
2013 (average)	47	33	20
2012 (average)	49	30	21
2011 (average)	45	34	21
2010 (average)	46	37	17
2009 (average)	46	35	19
2008 (average)	48	32	20
2007 (average)	54	30	16
2006 (average)	51	31	18
2005 (average)	52	27	21
2004 (average)	54	26	20
2003 (average)	52	32	16
2002 (average)	49	26	25
2001 (average)	57	27	16
2000 (average)	57	27	16
1999 (average)	51	28	21
1998 (average)	56	27	17
1997 (average)	47	35	18
1996 (average)	46	36	18
1995 (average)	50	40	10
1994 (average)	47	39	14
1993 (average)	47	32	21

Note: Surveys prior to 2017 conducted by The Field Poll, as reported in release #2519, published October 14, 2015, by Field Research Corporation.

**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 February 14-20, 2023 among 7,512 California registered voters, of whom 5,681 were registered Democrats or No Party Preference voters. Funding for the poll was provided in part by the *Los Angeles Times*.

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 the post-stratification weighting. Nevertheless, it is likely that findings based on the overall sample of registered voters are subject to a sampling error of approximately +/-2 percentage points at the 95% confidence level, while the approximate sampling error of findings from the Democratic and No Party Preference voter subsample is +/- 2.5 percentage points.

#### **Question wording**

Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the way Dianne Feinstein is handling her job as U.S. Senator?

Senator Feinstein just announced that she has decided not to run for re-election next year. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for California?

Suppose the following four Democrats were running for Feinstein's U.S. Senate seat in the March 2024 primary election. If the election were held today for whom would you vote? (IF FIRST CHOICE OFFERED) Who would be your second choice? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES LISTED)

Please indicate whether your opinion of each of these possible candidates for U.S. Senate is favorable, unfavorable or whether you don't know enough about him or her to have an opinion?

When considering whom to support for U.S. Senate in 2024, how important would each of the following candidate attributes be to you? (SEE RELEASE FOR LIST OF STATEMENTS)

#### **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>.