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Garvey Now in a Statistical Tie with Schiff in Full-Term U.S. Senate Primary

by Mark DiCamillo, Director, Berkeley IGS Poll

In the backdrop of what is shaping up to be an historically low turnout for a California primary election, former baseball slugger Republican Steve Garvey is now in a statistical tie with Democratic Congressman Adam Schiff atop a crowded field of 27 candidates running in next week's full-term election for U.S. Senate. The latest Berkeley IGS Poll completed one week before Election Day finds Garvey the choice of 27% of likely voters, while Schiff receives the backing of 25%. Democratic Congresswoman Katie Porter is in third at 19%, Democratic Congresswoman Barbara Lee trails with 8%, another 12% are supporting other candidates, and 9% are undecided.

The large increase in voter support for Garvey over the past six weeks has occurred mainly by consolidating the support of Republican and strong conservative voters, 67% of whom now back Garvey in the full-term U.S. Senate race.

Garvey's support among strongly conservative and Republican voters is even more prominent in second Senate election that voters will be asked to vote on in the primary, the partial term election to fill out the remaining few months of former Senator Dianne Feinstein's unexpired term. In that race Garvey is now the leader, receiving 29% of the preferences, while Schiff and Porter trail with 23% and 20%, respectively. The difference in Garvey's support in this race appears to be due to the fact that the names of only two Republicans appear on the partial term ballot as compared to 10 on the full-term Senate ballot, with Garvey capturing a larger share of GOP and conservative voters in that setting.

These findings represent a dramatic change in the standings when compared to earlier polls in the Senate race. For example, just six weeks ago the Berkeley IGS Poll had Schiff leading both Senate elections, with Garvey trailing behind Porter in third. A big part of Garvey's appeal to primary election voters relates to voter perceptions that he will be tougher on the nation's immigration problem than the other candidates. Nearly all of his supporters (94%) say this attribute was very important to them in deciding whom to support in the Senate race.

If the standings in this poll are reflected in next week's elections, the fall run-off elections for U.S. Senate will feature Garvey competing against Schiff. When likely voters in the current poll were asked their preferences in a general election run-off between the two, Garvey would start out as the clear underdog, as he trails Schiff by fifteen points, 53% to 38%, in this setting.

One of the most striking features of the latest poll is the unusual composition of the likely electorate. According to the poll nearly two thirds of those taking part will be voters ages 50 or older, more than three times the proportion under age 40. In addition, the primary appears likely to include unusually large numbers of homeowners (63%) and white non-Hispanics (61%). Also, the poll finds nearly a third of likely voters in the primary are Republicans (32%), a third higher than their 24% share of the state's overall registered voter population.

Garvey is the chief beneficiary in a low turnout election scenario, as he holds a huge advantage over the field among fellow Republicans and both he and Schiff are the two most preferred candidates among older voters, whites, and homeowners.

Another statewide contest on the primary election ballot that could be affected by a low turnout is Proposition 1, the \$6.38 billion bond measure to build mental health treatment facilities and provide housing for homeless Californians. While the poll finds supporters outnumbering opponents 50% to 34%, with 16% undecided, the fact that Yes side support stood at just 50% one week before the election adds a measure of uncertainty to its outcome as, historically, most undecided voters in the late stages of a bond campaign tend to vote No.

Observed IGS Co-Director Eric Schickler, "The results suggest that Schiff's strategy of boosting Garvey's candidacy to allow an easier race in the November run-off election appears to have worked, perhaps even better than Schiff's campaign had envisioned. Reversing the recent trend will depend on last-minute changes in turnout dynamics, which currently greatly benefit Garvey."

Garvey and Schiff now in a statistical tie in the full-term U.S. Senate election and holds the lead in the partial term Senate race

When Californians who had either already voted or were considered likely to vote in the next week's primary were asked who they'd be supporting in the full-term election for U.S. Senate Republican Garvey at 27% is now in a statistical tie with Democrat Schiff at 25%. The other major Democratic candidates, Porter and Lee, trail with 19% and 8% of the vote, respectively.

Support for Garvey has steadily risen over the course of the campaign. In an August *Berkeley IGS Poll* completed shortly before Garvey formally announced his candidacy, just 7% of likely voters backed him. However, in each successive poll preferences for Garvey have grown. Voter support for Schiff has increased more modestly over this period, while there has been little change in Porter's or Lee's base of support.

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

	Late	Early		
	February	January	October	August
	2024	2024	2023	2023
	%	%	%	%
Steve Garvey, Professional Baseball Representative (R)	27	13	10	7
Adam Schiff, United States Representative (D)	25	21	16	20
Katie Porter, U.S. Representative (D)	19	17	17	17
Barbara Lee, Congresswoman/Mother (D)	8	9	9	7
Eric Early, Business Owner/Attorney (R)	2	3	4	5
James Bradley, Chief Executive Officer (R)	2	3	7	7
All others (at 1% or less in latest poll)	8	13	6	5
Undecided /not reported	9	21	30	32

Note: Voters were presented with the complete list of 27 candidates in the full-term election, along with party affiliation and their official ballot designation. (D) denotes Democrat, (R) denotes Republican.

When voters are asked about their voting preferences in the partial term election for U.S. Senate to fill out the remaining few months of former Senator Feinstein's unexpired term, Garvey leads Schiff by six points, 29% to 23%, with Porter closely behind at 20%.

The differences in Garvey's level of support in the two Senate elections appears to be due to the fact that only 7 candidates are competing in the partial-term Senate election, while there are 27 in the full-term race. This gives voters, and especially Republicans, fewer options to choose from as only two Republicans, Garvey and attorney Eric Early, appear on the partial term ballot, while there are 10 Republicans competing for the full-term Senate seat. This has the effect of increasing both Garvey's and Early's share of the vote in the partial term election.

Table 2
Voter preferences in the March 2024 <u>partial-term election</u> for U.S. Senate (among likely voters in the March primary)

	Late	Early
	February	<u>January</u>
	%	<u>%</u>
Steve Garvey, Professional Baseball Representative (R)	29	17
Adam Schiff, United States Representative (D)	23	21
Katie Porter, U.S. Representative (D)	20	18
Barbara Lee, Congresswoman/Mother (D)	10	12
Eric Early, Business Owner/Attorney (R)	8	11
Sepi Gilani, Physician/Surgeon/Professor (D)	1	2
Christina Pascucci, (D)	1	2
Undecided /not reported	8	17

Note: This contest was not measured in polls conducted prior to early January 2024.

Garvey has consolidated the support of Republican and conservative voters

The large increase in voter support for Garvey over the past six weeks is due to his consolidating the support of Republican and conservative voters. In the full-term Senate election Garvey now receives of 67% of the votes of Republicans and strongly conservative voters, and garners greater than seventy percent support among these groups in the partial term election.

Regionally, Garvey holds the lead among voters in Orange County, the Inland Empire, San Diego County, and the Central Valley. Schiff leads Porter, his main Democratic rival, among rank-and-file Democrats in the survey and largely because of this leads the field in the Democratic heavy voter regions of Los Angeles County, the San Francisco Bay Area, and the Central Coast.

There continues to be a significant generational divide in voter preferences in the Senate race, with both Garvey and Schiff running strongly among older voters, while Porter leads by a wide margin among voters under age 40. However, because older voters are likely to represent a much larger share of the primary vote, this works to the benefit of both Garvey and Schiff and to the detriment of Porter.

About 20% of likely voters had already voted at the time the poll was conducted. Among these voters Schiff is receiving 35% of their votes in the full-term election, compared to 28% for Garvey and 20% for Porter. The poll also finds that 15% of likely voters say they will cast their vote in-person at voting centers across the state on Election Day. Garvey's lead in the Senate elections depends on these voters turning out on Election Day, as Garvey is receiving nearly half of their votes.

Table 3
Comparing changes in likely voter preferences in the full-term primary election for U.S. Senate over the past six weeks

	Late February Early January					
	Garvey Schiff Porter			Garvey Schiff		
	%	%	%	%	%	Porter %
Total likely voters	27	25	19	13	21	17
Party registration						
(.48)* Democrats	2	40	30	1	35	25
(.18) Progressive Democrats		35	38	NA	NA	NA
(.30) Mainstream Democrats	3	43	25	NA	NA	NA
(.32) Republicans	67	4	1	34	3	2
(.20) No Party Preference/other	22	23	19	8	16	18
Political ideology						
(.15) Strongly conservative	67	3		36	1	1
(.19) Somewhat conservative	57	5	4	26	8	2
(.26) Moderate	21	30	17	8	24	15
(.19) Somewhat liberal		47	31	_	39	26
(.21) Strongly liberal		33	38	_	29	35
Region						
(.22) Los Angeles County	22	28	18	9	24	20
(.09) San Diego County	32	23	17	16	19	16
(.09) Orange County	34	16	30	20	12	25
(.11) Inland Empire	33	20	16	16	16	15
(.07) Central Coast	25	32	20	10	24	19
(.18) Central Valley	37	22	12	14	19	10
(.21) San Francisco Bay Area	16	28	24	6	26	16
(.03) North Coast/Sierras**	26	30	15	11	28	8
Age						
(.07) 18-29	10	8	30	2	8	19
(.13) 30-39	11	11	25	3	10	23
(.15) 40-49	22	17	25	8	16	18
(.28) 50-64	32	26	18	16	20	16
(.37) 65 or older	34	35	13	18	32	13
Tenure						
(.63) Homeowners	32	28	16	15	24	13
(.37) Renters/other	19	19	23	7	15	19
Gender						
(.52) Female	21	26	20	9	20	18
(.48) Male	33	24	17	17	23	15
Race/ethnicity						
(.61) White non-Hispanic	31	28	19	16	24	18
(.21) Latino	24	21	17	9	14	15
(.10) Asian/Pacific Islander	14	18	25	7	24	17
(.05) Black**	14	28	14	5	24	18
When votes cast						
(.20) Already voted (as of Feb. 27)	28	35	20	NA	NA	NA
(.63) By mail /drop off by March 5	21	26	22	NA	NA	NA
(.15) At polls on Election Day	48	9	4	NA	NA	NA

^{*} figures in parens are the shares of likely voters each subgroup comprises in the latest poll. ** small sample, NA: Not Asked

Increasing proportions now able to offer opinions of the leading candidates

Larger proportions of the state's likely voters are now able to offer assessments of the four leading Senate candidates than could do so six weeks ago. While Schiff still remains the best known of the candidates, with 84% of likely voters offering an opinion, greater than seven in ten are now able to rate Garvey and Porter, compared to only about half who could do so in early January. Lee continues to be known to fewer likely voters statewide, with only about six in ten offering an opinion.

Among voters able to rate the candidates, larger proportions offer positive than negative appraisals of Schiff and Porter. By contrast, voter opinions of Garvey and Lee are more evenly divided among voters about to voice an opinion.

Views of each of the leading Senate candidates are highly partisan, with large majorities of Democrats offering positive assessments of the three leading Democratic candidates, while Republicans view each much more negatively. Conversely, Republican voters view Garvey in a very favorable light, with 78% now rating him positively, up from 55% six weeks ago, while he is viewed very negatively by Democratic voters who can offer an opinion.

Table 4
Trend of image of the leading candidates for U.S. Senate (among likely voters in the March primary)

(among fixely voters in the Warth primary)								
	Total likely	Party registration						
	Late	Demo	Democrats Republicans			No Party Pref/other		
	February	Early January		eb Jan.	Late Feb Jan.		Late Feb Jan.	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Adam Schiff (D)								
Favorable	47	43	74	67	8	6	44	42
Unfavorable	37	31	10	8	77	68	37	30
No opinion	16	26	16	25	15	26	19	28
Steve Garvey (R)								
Favorable	36	24	8	4	78	55	33	25
Unfavorable	37	21	56	30	7	6	37	20
No opinion	27	55	36	66	15	39	30	55
Katie Porter (D)								
Favorable	45	39	70	60	10	7	39	38
Unfavorable	27	16	11	5	49	32	29	16
No opinion	28	45	19	35	41	61	32	46
Barbara Lee (D)								
Favorable	32	31	52	49	5	4	30	29
Unfavorable	27	18	12	8	47	33	31	21
No opinion	41	51	36	43	48	62	39	50

Preferences in the Senate run-off election under different scenarios

The latest poll asked voters who they would support in a November general election run-off for U.S. Senate under three possible candidate pairings. The results indicate that both Democrats Schiff and Porter would hold early double-digit leads over Republican Garvey if either were to make it to the November run-off election along with Garvey. In a Schiff-Garvey run-off election, Schiff leads by fifteen points (53% to 38%), while Porter leads by fourteen points (52% to 38%) when facing Garvey in the run-off election.

Interestingly, if the November general election run-off were between the two leading Democrats, Schiff and Porter, voter preferences divide evenly at this stage, with 30% choosing Schiff, 30% backing Porter, and 40% undecided, with most of the state's Republicans and a large proportion of non-partisans undecided in this scenario.

Table 5
Likely voter preferences in the November run-off election for the full-term Senate seat between three possible candidate pairings

	Total		-	No Party
	likely voters	Democrats	Republicans	Pref./other
	%	%	%	%
Schiff vs. Garvey				
Schiff (D)	53	87	6	49
Garvey (R)	38	5	89	37
Undecided	9	8	5	14
Schiff vs. Porter				
Schiff (D)	30	47	7	27
Porter (D)	30	39	16	30
Undecided	40	14	77	43
Porter vs. Garvey				
Porter (D)	52	86	5	48
Garvey (R)	38	5	88	37
Undecided	10	9	7	15

Garvey's tough stance on immigration a big factor among his supporters

The poll also asked likely voters how important each of ten candidate attributes were to them when making up their minds about whom to support for U.S. Senate. For voters now supporting Garvey the attribute that stands out most is the attribute, "supports tougher immigration laws." Nearly all of his supporters (94%) say this attribute was very important to them in deciding whom to support. In addition, about half of Garvey's backers also rated the attributes, "is a strong supporter of Israel" and "is a supporter of Donald Trump" as being very important to them in deciding whom to support.

Greater than eight in ten of the voters supporting Schiff cite the attributes, "would be a strong voice in defending abortion rights for women in the Senate" and "is a strong opponent of Donald Trump" as very important reasons for supporting his candidacy. Yet there is relatively little differentiation among backers of the two other leading Democrats on these attributes, with very large majorities of their supporters considering these attributes very important as well.

The attribute where Schiff stands out most from his Democratic rivals relates to the attribute "has extensive experience in government", which 58% of his supporters rate as very important, compared to only about a third of voters backing Porter or Lee saying this.

"Is progressive in politics" is a distinguishing attribute to the backers of both Porter and Lee, while Lee's supporters also cite the attribute, "supports an immediate cease fire in the war in Gaza" as very important to them in deciding whom to vote for in the Senate election.

Table 6
Importance of candidate attributes when make decisions about whom to for U.S. Senate (among likely voters in the March primary)

	Total likely	Schiff	Garvey	Porter	Lee
	voters	voters	voters	voters	voters
	%	%	%	%	%
Would be a strong voice in defending					
abortion rights for women in the Senate					
Very important	55	84	15	84	84
Somewhat important	11	8	13	9	8
Not a reason/not applicable	26	5	59	4	4
Is a strong opponent of Donald Trump					
Very important	51	87	9	80	73
Somewhat important	8	5	7	10	14
Not a reason/not applicable	33	5	72	7	10
Supports tougher immigration laws					
Very important	46	22	94	13	7
Somewhat important	23	40	4	33	29
Not a reason/not applicable	26	33	1	49	54
Is progressive in politics					
Very important	35	44	12	58	67
Somewhat important	25	39	11	31	25
Not a reason/not applicable	32	13	67	8	5
Supports an immediate cease fire					
in the war in Gaza					
Very important	31	33	13	42	63
Somewhat important	23	33	12	31	20
Not a reason/not applicable	35	25	62	20	11
Has extensive experience in government					
Very important	30	58	8	33	38
Somewhat important	38	36	27	53	47
Not a reason/not applicable	26	5	57	10	9
<u>Is a strong supporter of Israel</u>					
Very important	27	20	48	10	10
Somewhat important	24	31	23	26	15
Not a reason/not applicable	37	39	20	52	62
Is a supporter of Donald Trump					
Very important	25	11	48	9	9
Somewhat important	11	2	23	2	4
Not a reason/not applicable	57	78	25	82	80
Will oppose abortion in the Senate					
Very important	25	25	26	22	22
Somewhat important	9	5	16	4	5
Not a reason/not applicable	55	62	46	67	67
Is a political outsider			-		
Very important	13	4	27	6	3
Somewhat important	23	13	33	17	15
Not a reason/not applicable	50	68	28	64	65

Differences between 100% and the sum of percentages for each attribute equal proportion not offering an opinion.

While Proposition 1 leads, but only half of likely voters were supporting it one week before the election

Another statewide election contest that could be affected by an historically low voter turnout is Proposition 1, the \$6.38 billion bond measure to build mental health treatment facilities and provide housing for homeless Californians. One week before the election the *Berkeley IGS Poll* finds supporters outnumbering opponents 50% to 34%, with 16% undecided. While still leading, Proposition 1's 50% Yes side support in the latest poll adds a measure of uncertainty to its outcome as, historically, most undecided voters in the late stages of a bond campaign tend to vote No.

There is a huge partisan divide in voting preferences on the proposition. While seven in ten Democratic voters (70%) are supporting Proposition 1, just 22% of Republicans are, while 49% of the state's non-partisans were backing the measure. Voter support for Proposition 1 is also lower among the state's homeowners (46%) than among renters (58%). This is significant since turnout is expected to be skewed heavily toward homeowners in the primary election.

Table 7
Likely voter preferences on Proposition 1 to authorize \$6.38 billion in bonds
to build mental health treatment facilities and provide housing for homeless Californians

	Yes	No	Undecided/ not reported		
	% %	%	%		
Total likely voters	50	34	16		
Party registration					
Democrats	70	14	16		
Republicans	22	63	15		
No Party Preference/other	49	36	15		
Tenure					
Homeowners	46	40	14		
Renters/other	58	24	18		

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 completed online in English and Spanish February 22-27, 2024, among 6,536 California registered voters, of whom a weighted subsample of 3,304 had either already voted or were considered likely to vote in the state's March 2024 primary election. 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 included on the state's voter registration rolls and was provided to IGS by Political Data, Inc., a leading supplier of voter lists in California. 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 state's registered voters both overall and within major regions of the state.

Likely voters were identified through voter testimony about their likelihood of voting in the primary election, their recall of receiving of voting materials from their local registrar of voters and factoring in their history of voting in past statewide elections. Voters who said they had already voted were included in the sample only after being verified that their ballot had been received by their local county registrar at the close of data collection.

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 likely voter sample 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_updatedd1324.pdf

Question wording

Voters will be asked to vote twice in the March 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 <u>full-term election</u> for U.S. Senate, the following 27 candidates (were) (will be) listed on the March primary election ballot. (CANDIDATES LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)

IF ALREADY VOTED: For whom did you vote in the full-term election for U.S. Senate?

IF LIKELY TO VOTE: If you were voting today, for whom would you vote in the full-term election for U.S. Senate? **IF UNDECIDED:** If you had to choose today, which candidate would you lean toward?

The following 7 candidates (were) (will be) listed on the March primary election ballot In the partial-term election for U.S. Senate. (CANDIDATES LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)

IF ALREADY VOTED: For whom did you vote in the partial term election for U.S. Senate?

IF LIKELY TO VOTE: If you were voting today, for whom would you vote in the partial-term election for U.S. Senate? **IF UNDECIDED:** If you had to choose today, which candidate would you lean toward?

Regardless of (how you voted for) (whom you may support) in the elections for U.S. Senate, please indicate whether your opinion of the following U.S. Senate candidates is generally favorable or unfavorable, or don't you know enough about him or her to say? (SEE RELEASE FOR CANDIDATES)

For each of the following attributes please indicate how important each (was to you in your decision to support) (is to you in supporting) your preferred candidate in the U.S. Senate election. (ATTRIBUTES LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)

California's primary election ballot (also included) (will also include) a statewide constitutional amendment, Proposition 1. The following is a summary of Proposition 1 exactly as it (appeared) (will

appear) on the ballot. Please indicate how you (voted on Proposition 1) (would vote on Proposition 1 (if the election were held today).

PROPOSITION 1: AUTHORIZES \$6.38 BLLION IN BONDS TO BUILD MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT FACILITIES FOR THOSE WITH MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE CHALLENGES; PROVIDES HOUSING FOR THE HOMELESS. LEGISLATIVE STATUTE. Amends Mental Health Services Act to provide additional behavioral health services. Fiscal Impact: Shift roughly \$140 million annually of existing tax revenue for mental health, drug, and alcohol treatment from counties to the state. Increased state bond repayment costs of \$310 million annually for 30 years. Supporters: California Professional Firefighters; CA Assoc. of Veteran Service Agencies; National Alliance on Mental Illness - CA Opponents: Mental Health America of California; Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association; CalVoices.. IF ALREADY VOTED: How did you vote on Proposition 1? IF LIKELY TO VOTE: If you were voting today, how would you vote on Proposition 1?

Looking ahead to the November general election for U.S. Senate. The following are some possible match ups for the full-term election for U.S. Senate in the state's November general election. What if the candidates for U.S. Senate in the November general election were (Democrat Adam Schiff and Democrat Katie Porter) (Democrat Adam Schiff and Republican Steve Garvey) (Democrat Katie Porter and Republican Steve Garvey). If the election were held today for whom would you vote? (PAIRINGS LISTED IN RANDOM ORDER)

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.