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California's competitive congressional elections
Likely voters in the 48th congressional district are disinclined to re-elect Dana Rohrabacher to another term this year

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According to a new *Berkeley IGS Poll*, by a 51% to 41% margin, likely voters in the state's 48th congressional district say they are not inclined to re-elect Republican Congressman Dana Rohrabacher to another term. Opinions are highly partisan, with 73% of Republicans supporting the incumbent's re-election, compared to just 4% of Democrats and 30% of No Party Preference voters.

The state's 48th congressional district in coastal Orange County is one of 16 Republican-held House districts across the country currently categorized by non-partisan observers as a "toss-up" election contest this year (1). While the GOP holds an eleven-point registration advantage in the district, Democrats believe Rohrabacher is vulnerable and are targeting it as one of the seats they think they can flip in hopes of regaining majority control of the House of Representatives.

The poll finds that half of 48th district voters (50%) currently disapprove of the job Rohrabacher is doing, while just 38% approve. District voters are even more critical of the overall performance of Congress, with 78% disapproving and just 20% approving. Ratings of President Donald Trump's performance are more divided – 53% disapprove and 47% approve.

Views about Rohrabacher's re-election are highly correlated with voter opinions about the President's job approval, and their presidential vote choice in 2016, as well as their views about GOP control of Congress. Voters who disapprove of Trump's performance in office or who voted for Hillary Clinton in 2016, or feel GOP control of both houses of Congress is a bad thing for the country are disinclined to support Rohrabacher's re-election by huge margins. Conversely, large majorities of voters who approve of Trump's performance, or who voted for him in 2016, or who think Republican control of Congress is a good thing are inclined to back Rohrabacher's re-election this year.

(1) 2018 House Race Ratings, *Cook Political Report*, published January 24, 2018.

These findings come from a survey of 1,310 likely voters in California's 48th congressional district by the non-partisan *Berkeley IGS Poll* in mid-January. The survey was part of a larger study examining the vulnerability of incumbents in three of the state's most competitive House districts. Other districts polled include the state's 7th district, held by Democrat Ami Bera in suburban Sacramento County, and the 25th district, held by Republican Steve Knight in Los Angeles County. Because the polls only attempted to assess district voter views of the incumbent and did not make reference to any named opponents, voter preferences can change once their general election opponent becomes known and voters compare one candidate against the other.

Voters disinclined to re-elect Rohrabacher 51% to 41%

When likely voters districtwide are asked whether they are inclined or not inclined to re-elect Rohrabacher to another term in Congress, 51% say they are not, while 41% are inclined to do so. In addition, of those disinclined to support Rohrabacher's re-election, 44% feel this way strongly.

Table 1	
Voter inclination to re-elect Republican Dana Rohrabacher to another term in Congress (among likely voters in the 48th Congressional District)	
	Total Likely voters %
Inclined to re-elect	41
Strongly	28
Somewhat	13
Not inclined to re-elect	51
Somewhat	7
Strongly	44
Undecided	8

Large differences in voter preferences across likely voter subgroups

While the poll finds Republicans outnumbering Democrats among those mostly to vote, GOP voter backing of Rohrabacher is more than offset by Democratic opposition, 90% of whom are disinclined to support the incumbent's re-election. No Party Preference voters also report being disinclined to re-elect Rohrabacher two to one, 61% to 30%.

Support for the Rohrabacher's re-election is closely tied to voter views about President Trump. The poll finds that 53% of district voters disapprove of the job the President is doing, and they overwhelmingly oppose Rohrabacher's re-election 86% to 6%. Similarly, voters who say they voted for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election are disinclined to back Rohrabacher's re-election 88% to 7%. The opposite is true of voters who approve of Trump's performance or who voted for him in the 2016 election, with large majorities backing Rohrabacher's re-election.

Opinions about Republican control of Congress are also closely tied to voter support for Rohrabacher. District voters divide evenly between those that think GOP control of both houses

of Congress is a good thing for the country (47%) and voters who see it as a bad thing (47%). Among district voters who see GOP control as a good thing, Rohrabacher is backed 79% to 10%. However, voters who view GOP control of both houses of Congress as a bad thing are nearly unanimous in their opposition to Rohrabacher's re-election, 90% to 3%.

There are also differences in support for Rohrabacher's re-election by gender and age. A 55%-34% majority of women are disinclined to back the Congressman, while men are about evenly divided. Younger voters are also less inclined to back Rohrabacher's re-election than older voters.

Table 2 Voter inclination to re-elect Republican Dana Rohrabacher across subgroups of likely voters in the 48th Congressional District			
	Inclined to Re-Elect %	Not Inclined %	Undecided %
Total likely voters	41	51	8
Party registration			
(30%)* Democrats	4	90	6
(43%) Republicans	73	16	11
(27%) No party preference/other	30	61	9
Gender			
(48%) Male	47	46	7
(52%) Female	34	55	11
Age			
(10%) 18-29**	20	59	21
(13%) 30-39	35	55	10
(16%) 40-49	41	48	11
(30%) 50-64	45	49	6
(31%) 65 or older	46	49	5
Job performance of President Trump			
(47%) Approve	80	10	10
(53%) Disapprove	6	86	8
Opinion of GOP control of Congress			
(47%) Good thing	79	10	11
(47%) Bad thing	3	90	7
2016 vote for President			
(46%) Clinton	7	88	5
(42%) Trump	78	12	10
(12%) Other/ did not vote	41	43	16

* Represents proportion of all likely voters that this subgroup represents. ** Small sample base.

Half of likely voters disapprove of the job Rohrabacher is doing

Likely voters in the 48th district offer a more negative than positive assessment of the job Rohrabacher is doing as their representative in Congress. Districtwide, just 38% say they approve of Rohrabacher's job performance, while 50% disapprove.

District voters hold an even more negative view of the job performance of Congress overall, with just 20% approving and 78% disapproving, 55% strongly.

Table 3		
Job performance of Congressman Rohrabacher vs. job performance of the U.S. Congress (among likely voters in the 48th Congressional District)		
	Congressman Rohrabacher	Overall U.S. Congress
	%	%
Approve	38	20
Strongly	18	2
Somewhat	20	18
Disapprove	50	78
Somewhat	12	23
Strongly	38	55
No opinion	12	2

Impact of Rohrabacher's votes on the tax bill and repeal of ObamaCare

Rohrabacher was among only a handful of Republicans in the House who voted against the recently enacted tax bill. On the other hand, Rohrabacher did join with most of his Republican colleagues in supporting the unsuccessful attempt to repeal and replace ObamaCare last summer.

Likely voters in the 48th congressional district hold mixed views of Rohrabacher's votes on these two major bills. While 32% say the Congressman's No vote on the tax bill makes them more inclined to support his re-election, 29% say it makes them less inclined to do so, and another 34% say it has no effect. When asked about his Yes vote on the bill to repeal and replace ObamaCare, 43% say this makes them more likely to support his re-election, but an even larger proportion (48%) say it makes them less likely to do so.

Table 4
Impact of Rohrabacher's votes on the tax bill and the bill to repeal ObamaCare
on voter inclination to re-elect him to another term this year
(among likely voters in the 48th Congressional District)

	Impact of Rohrabacher's . . .	
	"No" vote on the tax bill %	"Yes" vote on repeal of ObamaCare %
More inclined to re-elect him	32	43
Less inclined to re-elect him	29	48
No effect	34	8
No opinion	5	1

District voter views about five prominently discussed in Washington

Voters in the 48th congressional district were also asked their opinions about five prominent issues that have been much in the news in Washington in recent months.

The poll finds solid voter support for one of them, strong opposition to a second, and mostly divided opinions about the other three. The issue that receives the strongest backing is the proposal to provide legal status to undocumented immigrants brought to this country illegally by their parents, which is backed by a 66% to 33% margin. On the other hand, district voters oppose by a 61% to 37% margin the recent Trump administration proposal to allow offshore oil drilling off the California coast.

Voter opinions on the three other issues polled are more divided. About half (47%) of district voters say they support repealing and replacing the ObamaCare health insurance law, but 51% are opposed. Voters were similarly divided, 47% in favor and 49% opposed, when asked their position on the recently enacted tax bill. There is also no clear consensus among voters about the proposal to build a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, with 46% in favor and 53% opposed.

Table 5
Voter opinion of a number of prominent issues facing the nation and the state
(among likely voters in the 48th Congressional District)

	Favor %	Oppose %	No opinion %
Providing legal status to undocumented immigrants brought to this country illegally by their parents	66	33	1
Repealing and replacing the ObamaCare health care law	47	51	2
Building a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border	46	53	1
The recently enacted tax reform bill	47	49	4
Allowing offshore oil drilling off the California coast	37	61	2

About the Survey

The findings in this report are based on a survey of 1,310 likely voters in California's 48th congressional district by the Institute of Governmental Studies (IGS) at the University of California, Berkeley. The survey was administered by email among random samples of voters January 11–21, 2018 in English and Spanish. Results are subject to a sampling error of +/- 3.0 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

IGS administered the survey by sending an email invitation to randomly selected voters living in the 48th congressional district, asking them to participate in a short non-partisan survey conducted for the University. The sample and accompanying email addresses were provided to IGS by Political Data Inc., and were derived from information contained on voters' official voting record.

During the data processing phase, post-stratification weights were applied to align the larger sample of registered voters responding to the survey to the political and demographic characteristics of the 48th congressional district's registered voter population. Likely voters were then identified, based on each voter's stated likelihood of voting in this year's November congressional elections and on their past voting history as listed on their voting record, and the results in this report are based on this subset of voters.

The IGS study director was responsible for overseeing all phases of the research, including the development of the survey questionnaire and email scripts, its translation into Spanish, sample selection, development of the post-stratification weights, oversight of data processing and the identification of likely voters.

Questions asked

Do you approve or disapprove of the way Donald Trump is handling his job as President?

Overall, do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is doing its job?

Do you approve or disapprove of the job being done by your own representative in Congress, Dana Rohrabacher?

There will be an election for Congress in your district in 2018, and Dana Rohrabacher will be running for re-election. If the election were being held today, would you be inclined or not inclined to vote to re-elect Republican Dana Rohrabacher to another term in Congress?

The Republicans now hold a majority of the seats in both houses of Congress. Do you think this is a good thing or a bad thing for the country?

Do you favor or oppose each of the following bills that the U.S. Congress has voted on this year or may soon come before Congress? (ISSUES READ IN RANDOM ORDER)

- The bill to repeal and replace the nation's health insurance law, referred to as ObamaCare.
- The tax reform bill recently enacted by the Congress.
- A bill to provide legal status to undocumented immigrants brought to this country illegally as children by their parents, referred to as the Dream Act.
- A bill to fund the building of a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border.
- A bill to allow offshore oil drilling off the California coast.

When the vote was taken earlier in 2017 on the bill to repeal and replace the ObamaCare health insurance law, your representative in Congress, Dana Rohrabacher, voted Yes to repeal the law. Does Dana Rohrabacher's Yes vote on the bill to repeal and replace ObamaCare make you more inclined or less inclined to support his re-election, or have no effect on how you will vote for Congress in 2018?

Recently, when the final vote was taken on the tax reform bill, your representative in Congress, Dana Rohrabacher, voted No. Does Dana Rohrabacher's No vote on the tax reform bill make you more inclined or less inclined to support his re-election or have no effect on how you will vote for Congress in 2018?

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 (UC) system's flagship Berkeley campus, it is the oldest organized research unit in the UC system and the oldest public policy research center in the state. IGS conducts periodic surveys of California public opinion on matters of politics, public policy and public issues through its *Berkeley IGS Poll*, housed within its newly established Citrin Center for Public Opinion Research. For a complete listing of stories issued by the poll go to <https://igs.berkeley.edu/research/berkeley-igs-poll>.