



Control of House Could Be Decided by Close California Races

Description

USA: Control of the U.S. House of Representatives could be decided by a handful of close races in California — which could take weeks to determine, thanks to the state's heavy reliance on vote-by-mail and its liberal voting rules.

In Orange County, two incumbent Democrats, Reps. Katie Porter (47th district) and Mike Levin (49th district), are holding onto slim leads. In Ventura County's 26th district, Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA) has been reelected despite a last-minute scare from Republican Matt Jacobs. Elsewhere, in closely-contested races in the Central Valley, the results are too close to call, and each new batch of counted ballots brings potential lead changes.

The *Fresno Bee* reports:

Two of the nation's closest congressional races that will determine control of the U.S. House of Representatives drew even closer, updated returns released Friday evening show.

Assemblyman Adam Gray, D-Merced, caught up with farmer John Duarte, a Republican, in California's 13th Congressional District. Assemblyman Rudy Salas, D-Bakersfield, shortened the lead of Congressman David Valadao, R-Hanford, in the 22nd.

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The races in the 13th and 22nd were considered toss-ups by independent analysts leading up to the November midterms. With control of the House in the balance, a win for either party in the Central Valley could determine whether a Democrat or Republican holds the speaker's gavel.

Valadao was one of ten Republicans who voted to impeach President Donald Trump. He has long succeeded in a majority-Latino district. California allows the practice of “ballot harvesting,” in which unverified third parties may return unlimited numbers of mail-in ballots. Republicans have been forced to adopt it to stay competitive.

Currently, Republicans are a few seats shy of a House majority of 218, but Democrats could catch up to them.

by Joel B. Pollak

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