

Control of the U.S. House doesn't seem to be in play this year, but there are a lot of individual districts across the country that could flip. Cook Political lists 28 toss-up races and another 28 that lean one way or the other but are still competitive. Obviously, I'm not going to try to talk about all these races here. There are three in California, however, that deserve some attention.

**CA-21. Cox v. Valadao.** Here, incumbent TJ Cox (D) faces David Valadao (R). The 21<sup>st</sup> District is in the Central Valley, running from Bakersfield up Interstate 5 toward the Bay Area. Prior to entering politics, Cox started a fund for projects in disadvantaged areas of the Central Valley. His biggest vulnerability relates to financial issues, including a tax dispute with the IRS. Valadao, his opponent, held the seat until 2018 and is mounting a comeback. Despite the pressing environmental problems of the Central Valley, Valadao had a 4% lifetime score from the League of Conservation Voters. In contrast, in the short time he's been there, Cox's LCV score is 97%.

**CA-25. Garcia v. Smith.** The 25th District is due north of Los Angeles on the far side of the Angeles National Forest. Incumbent Mike Garcia (R) faces Christy Smith (D) in this race. Garcia has been the incumbent for less than a year, having won a special election to replace Katie Hill. (Hill, as you may recall, resigned after her relationship with a staffer became public along with photos.) Garcia is a former fighter pilot who pledges to "fight against Democrats' dangerous socialist agenda and restore our country's guiding principles."

Smith was a member of the California Assembly. Her site says that "here in the 25th District, we are all too familiar with the emerging threat of the climate crisis — experiencing wildfires in nearly every part of the district, air and water pollution, drought, and more."

She calls for "building a fully renewable and clean energy infrastructure using wind and solar to create good mortgage-paying jobs and combat the climate crisis so we can ensure our community is a place where families can live and thrive for generations to come, before it's too late." Democrats are hoping to regain this seat.

**CA-48 Rouda v. Steel.** Republicans are hoping to flip this Orange Country district where incumbent Harley Rouda (D) defends his seat against Michelle Steel (R). Rouda had been a moderate Republican but switched parties in 2016, when he beat Dana Rohrabacher. Harley's website highlights his environmental role in Congress: "As the Chair of the Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Environment, I've been one of Congress' biggest environmental leaders. I've protected our pristine coastlines from new offshore drilling. I've held the Trump Administration accountable, as they work to remove common sense environmental protections. I've pushed for solutions to address the climate crisis while incentivizing economic growth in Southern California."

In her campaign site's only mention of the environment, Steel pledges to "fight for common-sense and science-based policies to ensure our beaches and bays are clean for all Californians to enjoy." In her previous roles on the California State Board of Equalization as an Orange County supervisor, she has focused on cutting taxes. She [reports](#) having pulled her daughter out of UC Santa Cruz after the duty expressed support for same-sex marriage, which may give an indication of her general political stance.

These races are only a microcosm of the national picture. Even though the House isn't in play, the 46 competitive races are still important. They will help determine the Democratic margin in the House and thus how much leeway the Speaker has.