

CALIFORNIA CONGRESS, DISTRICT 13

Question 1) What are your Qualifications?

John Duarte (R) – Incumbent

I'm a fourth-generation farmer and small business owner who knows what it means to work hard and get my hands dirty. As your Congressman, I'm working hard in Washington to bring down the cost of gas, groceries, and housing for the Valley.

Adam Gray (D) – Candidate

I was born and raised in the district and put myself through college working at my family's dairy supply. After school, I got a job in the State Legislature where I fought to eliminate the Tractor Tax on farm equipment. Eventually, I returned home to teach a class on the State Legislature at UC Merced. When the Great Recession hit, I chose to step up to help rebuild the San Joaquin Valley. For 10 years in the State Assembly, I worked hard for you and always put our community first.

I founded the bipartisan Problem Solvers Caucus and worked with both parties on the Valley's most pressing issues. I bucked my own party when their priorities were wrong for the Valley like when I fought back the state water grab and opposed weakening our local water rights. I voted against expanding frivolous PAGA lawsuits and new taxes. I was against Prop 47 and zero-bail from the start.

I know when to say no, but I also know how to deliver real results for the Valley.

I secured nearly \$3 billion to build California's first new water storage projects in decades and clean up contaminated drinking water supplies. I brought in \$250 million to build the new UC Merced medical school. I passed new laws that expand affordable health care options and doubled the operating hours of local health clinics. I delivered the funding to establish the gang violence task force that locked up more than 50 cartel leaders and cut the homicide rate in half.

I'm running for Congress to work for you, not the party bosses. I will work every day to lower your costs, make sure every child has a quality education, reduce crime, and make healthcare more affordable.

I'd be honored to earn your vote for Congress.



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Question 2) What Would be your top priorities?

John Duarte (R) – Incumbent

My top priority is to lower the cost of living and protect the pay of working people. Valley families shouldn't have to choose between putting food on the table or gas in their car. We need to make essentials like groceries more affordable so people can cover the basics.

Adam Gray (D) – Candidate

My top priorities are water, health care access, the cost of living, and public safety.

Democrats and Republicans have both had control of the White House and Congress over the last four decades. Both parties have failed to deliver more water for California farmers. We need representatives who know how to work across the aisle to deliver results instead of relying on finger-pointing as their favorite public policy.

I worked with Republicans and Democrats in the State Legislature to deliver more than \$3 billion for water storage and other water infrastructure improvements. In Congress, I will work to expand California's antiquated water infrastructure. That means more water for farmers and better access to clean drinking water for everyone.

The Central Valley has fewer doctors than any other part of the state. I will work to lift federal funding caps on residency programs and direct additional resources to underserved regions. I will continue my work to create the UC Merced medical school, because we must recruit and train future doctors in the communities that need them most. UC Merced has already enrolled the first class of future doctors, but we need also need to train more local nurses, therapists, and specialists.

To bring down the cost of living, I will cut through onerous red tape and streamline supply chain bottlenecks at our ports and logistics networks. I support expanding domestic energy production so our economy is not dependent on foreign dictators. I will also prioritize tax cuts and tax credits that make it easier for parents to raise a child, entrepreneurs to start a small business, and seniors living on a fixed income.

Finally, I will always fight to fully fund our police and firefighters, so they have the resources they need to keep our neighborhoods, businesses, and schools safe.



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Question 3) How do you evaluate the impact to business when making voting decisions?

John Duarte (R) – Incumbent

As a small business owner, I joined the Main Street Caucus in Congress to push for policies that cut regulations and provide tax incentives to support small businesses. It's getting harder to run a business; my voting decisions are based on helping future generations have the same opportunities to start a business and live the American dream.

Adam Gray (D) – Candidate

The US Chamber of Commerce has repeatedly ranked California as the #1 "Judicial Hellhole" in the nation because California business owners are constantly harassed by frivolous Prop 65, ADA, and PAGA lawsuits among others. California has also received an F grade for our overall business friendliness, ease of starting a business, business regulations, labor regulations, taxes, licensing forms, and environmental regulations. California business owners already face an uphill battle as they try to compete without the benefit of a level playing field.

I always consider California's current business climate when evaluating new pieces of legislation. Most importantly, I listen to what local business owners are telling me about how new laws and regulations will impact their ability to run their businesses.

For example, AB 5 has decimated independent contractor jobs including exacerbating the supply chain crisis by disrupting employment in the trucking industry. The bill was rife with political favoritism and ignored the wishes of employers and employees alike. I was the only Democrat in the State Legislature to oppose the bill, and the problems it has caused since it was passed have only strengthened my resolve against the bill. I also stood up for Valley businesses by opposing SGMA, card-check, and restrictions on domestic energy production.

I teamed up with Republicans and Democrats from the Valley when local business owners reported a spike in frivolous ADA lawsuits. We wrote bills to shield small businesses from extortion and provide an opportunity to cure any valid violations before being subjected to litigation.

I also passed new laws to crack down on workers' compensation fraud and expanded business tax credits to reward business owners who create more jobs in California.



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Question 4) What are your plans to make government more transparent, responsive, and effective?

John Duarte (R) – Incumbent

As your Valley Congressman, it's my duty to serve you. I've worked hard to make government as responsive as possible for the Valley. Our office is active in the community and always available at a moment's notice to help anyone who needs it.

Adam Gray (D) – Candidate

Accountability is a core principle of democracy. No decision should be made without the ability of the public to hold decision makers accountable. Some of the worst government actions come from systems that limit accountability such as the water grab from the State Water Board or the ban on gas powered cars from the Air Resources Board.

Too much power has been handed over to government agencies, commissions, and departments. Instead of acting as regulators that ensure compliance with the laws written by elected officials, these unaccountable bureaucrats increasingly write their own laws and enforce them without any outside input.

Congress must do a better job of reining in excessive bureaucratic power and create accountability by conducting oversight hearings and slashing department budgets when they get out of control. The power to make decisions must be returned to the people who are directly accountable to the public.

Even when decision makers are directly elected, partisanship often leads elected officials to vote with their party instead of their district and constituents. Party leaders on both sides of the aisle are quick to punish those who don't toe the party line, and too many elected officials are quick to forget who put them on the job.

I have repeatedly bucked party leaders in my fight against the state water grab. I have been stripped of committee assignments and faced political repercussions, but I have refused to back down. It takes strong determination, but you must be willing to stand alone when it's the right thing to do.



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Question 5) Is the organization for which you seek office operating with a balanced budget? If not, what are your plans to make the organization more sustainable?

John Duarte (R) – Incumbent

Congress is not operating on a balanced budget, and wasteful government spending is driving the terrible inflation we see today. As a business owner, I've had to tighten my belt and make cuts a few times. We need this same fiscal responsibility in Washington.

Adam Gray (D) – Candidate

The last time Congress had a balanced budget was under President Clinton in 2001. President Bush returned the US to deficit spending in 2002 and no President, Democrat or Republican, has balanced the budget since that time.

Government expenditures that expand economic opportunities like infrastructure, education, and job creation are worthwhile investments, as are investments in services that support veterans, health care, and public safety.

Unfortunately, the US has sunk deeper into debt despite a prolonged period of record economic expansion. Without any reserves, Congress has few tools to weather a moderate to severe recession without imposing significant cuts on vital services like our schools or supercharging inflation by printing money.

California was in a similar situation when I was first elected to office during the latter parts of the Great Recession. Since then, I have fought to increase our financial reserves with every budget cycle. In just ten years, the state has gone from running a significant deficit to having nearly \$40 billion saved in

