

CA-45 District Primer

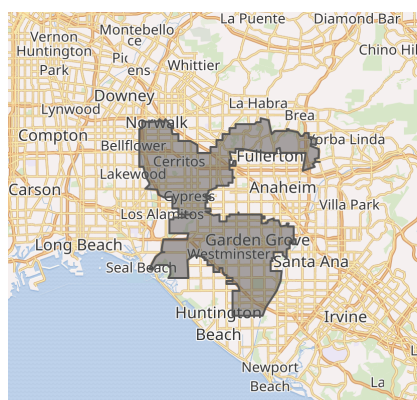
In 2024, Democrat Derek Tran won this seat by 653 votes. *That's close!* Dems won this district by *just one vote per precinct*. If we can persuade just two voters per precinct, we can win again this year. With your help, we're going to **HOLD** this key seat and secure a Democratic House majority in 2026.

Key dates
Filing Deadline: March 6
Primary: June 2
Midterms: November 3

Recent election results

2024 Presidential Election	2024 House Election	2022 House Election
Harris: 159,879 (49.3%) Trump: 154,900 (47.8%)	Derek Tran (D): 158,264 (49.3%) Michelle Steel (R): 157,611 (49.9%)	Michelle Steel (R): 115,960 (52.4%) Jay Chen (D): 104,436 (47.6%)

District Facts & Stats



Largest Cities

- Garden Grove: 172,361
- Westminister: 88,729
- Fullerton (parts): 140,054

Geography

CA-45 is located between western Orange and eastern LA counties, extending south to Fountain Valley and west to Rossmoor. It bisects Fullerton. Northern Fullerton is in the district, north of Chapman and Malvern; southern Fullerton is not. In the part of LACounty encompassed by the district, Cerritos (pop. 50k) is the largest city.

Citizenry

Of the ~760k people who live in the district, 88.1% are citizens. 36% were born outside the US. Approximately 290k people in this district are Asian; 230k are Latino. Known as Little Saigon, the city of Westminister, in Orange County, is almost 49% Vietnamese. Garden Grove, also in Orange County, is 42% Asian and is called Little Seoul or Koreatown, and is also 37% Latino. Cerritos has a large Asian population. Median household income is \$105k. A little over half of households own their own homes. More than eighteen thousand veterans live in the district.

The Local Vibe

The Garden Grove Home Depot has seen much ICE activity. In February 2025, hundreds gathered in Garden Grove to protest ICE activities there. Protests also occurred in Fullerton. The National Guard troops deployed to LA were from Fullerton.

In October 2025, Garden Grove city councilors posted a resource page for residents affected by ICE raids on a city website, a move that drew praise as well as criticism.

In January, 2026, at a rally to protest the killing, by a federal ICE agent, of American citizen and legal observer Renée Good in Minneapolis, a federal agent fired a projectile at close range on protester in Santa Ana, located southwest of Garden Grove. The protester was hit in the face and is now blind in one eye.

Key Issues

- **Homelessness:** Increasing homelessness is a concern for residents of Garden Grove and Westminster.
 - **Crime:** Westminster residents worry as well about increased crime, especially in the center of town.
 - **Immigration:** Federal immigration enforcement activities have residents on edge and angry.
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About the Candidates

Derek Tran | Democratic Incumbent

Born and raised in Southern California, **Derek Tran** is a forty-five year-old Vietnamese American, a veteran, a workers' rights attorney, and a father of three. He and his wife own a pharmacy in their community. He has served on the boards of the Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles and of California; worked on public safety policy for the mayor of Los Angeles; and was a traffic commissioner for the City of Orange. Tran speaks openly about his difficult family history. His father lost his family in Vietnam before meeting Tran's mother while escaping the war. After settling in the US, the Tran family depended on public assistance programs such as Medicaid and food stamps. Tran joined the Army Reserves at age 18 and served for eight years before going to college and law school. Tran is on the House Armed Services and the Small Business Committees. He is the first Vietnamese American to be elected to the House of Representatives.

Issues: Tran has introduced legislation—the Protect Veteran Jobs Act—to reinstate jobs of veterans furloughed due to DOGE cuts; the act is still in play in the House and the Senate. He also introduced legislation to improve workplace participation of women and graduates of vocational programs; and to insist on plain, clear, and concise language, free of government jargon, in federal contracting. He represents a truly purple district and is praised for having a bipartisan voting record, including voting for the Deterrent Act, which seeks to reduce foreign donations to U.S. academic institutions. His opponents are attacking his opposition to Trump's Big Ugly Bill, claiming that he wants to raise taxes in order to provide food and housing to new immigrants.

The contrast: Rep. Tran has already shown himself to be a talented legislator who can effectively represent the people of CA-45 in Washington. His opponents, in contrast, have proven themselves to be easily distracted by personal vendettas and prone to embrace a politics of grievance that is becoming ever less appealing to vast swathes of the electorate. Unlike both of his front-runner opponents, Tran is a serious candidate who has proven to be an effective legislator from his very first term in Congress.

Republican Challenger(s)

There are several possible candidates; we'll know more after the primary election on June 2. Until then, we've identified these front runners:

Chi Charlie Nguyen is a Vietnamese American who since 2022 has been Westminster's mayor. He refuses to acknowledge the climate effects of greenhouse gas emissions, opposes limiting the use of force by police to enforce immigration laws, and quashed plans for a Westminster cannabis dispensary. He supports incentives for developers to solve the housing crisis. He voted to sue his opponent, Amy Phan West, for disrupting City Council meetings and proposed re-naming a Westminster street "Charlie Kirk Way."

Amy Phan West, a forty-five year old Vietnamese American and daughter of Vietnamese immigrants, was narrowly elected to Westminster's City Council in 2022. She gained notoriety for being unruly during meetings; in January 2025, she was charged with attempting to bribe a parking officer and was ordered to complete ethics training and twenty hours of community service as part of a misdemeanor diversion program.

Sign up for another event: mobilize.us/swingleft

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