

# Know Before You Go: CA-10 District Primer

*June 2018 • Researched, summarized, and edited by Swing Left's all-volunteer research team!*

**In the last election, Republican Jeff Denham won this district by only 8,201 votes (3.4%).**

That's close! With your help, we're going to win this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

## About the Incumbent

**Introduction:** Republican Jeff Denham is CA-10's representative. An Air Force veteran, former farmer, and staunch fiscal conservative, Denham was first elected in 2010 after the incumbent for CA-19 retired. In 2012, Denham ran and won in California's newly redrawn 10th district. He is currently serving his fourth term.

**Issues:** Denham is a fiscal and social conservative but has crossed party lines to support legislation close to his personal interests. He focuses on small business and agriculture, comprehensive immigration reform, and veterans affairs. Denham sponsored legislation to allow undocumented enlisted service members to attain legal permanent-resident status. He has been critical of both the Affordable Care Act and the attempts to repeal and replace it. After initially supporting California's High-Speed Rail project when he was a state senator, he recently soured on it, citing budget concerns.

**Recent Elections:** Denham won in 2012 by 5.4% and was reelected in 2014 by 12.2%. His 2016 election margin (against the same opponent as in 2014, Michael Eggman) was narrow, only 3.4%.

**Strengths:** Denham has deep roots in his community. A long political career and ability to work with Democrats (especially on immigration) has served him well. His wife is Hispanic, and in 2012 he ran against former NASA astronaut Jose Hernandez—and won even in a district with a large Hispanic population. Ties to the business community and his anti-regulation positions have garnered financial support from the district's largest employers.

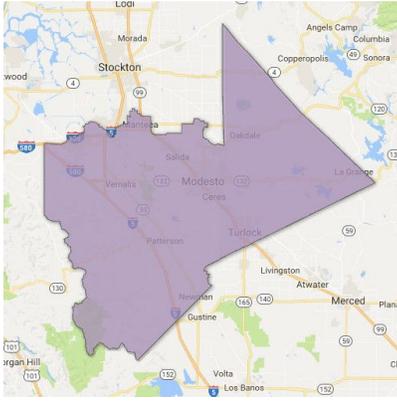
**Potential Weaknesses:** Denham's general opposition to regulation is in conflict with the needs of a district vulnerable due to drought, flooding, unemployment, and schools in need of repair. Though he vehemently opposes the Affordable Care Act, many of his constituents rely on it for coverage.

## About the Challenger

**Introduction:** Democrat Josh Harder placed second in the June primary, garnering 16% of the vote. Born and raised in Turlock, he is a first-time candidate who attended Modesto High School, then went to Stanford on a scholarship, then on to Harvard and a successful career in consulting and venture capital, working with nonprofits and entrepreneurs. He teaches at Modesto Junior College and is focused on bringing jobs and investment to the Central Valley.

**Issues:** The Medicare of 100,000 CA-10 residents was put at risk by Denham's vote to repeal the Affordable Care Act. Harder will push for Medicare for all, as well as making commonsense fixes to improve the ACA like letting people buy into Medicare, lowering drug prices by allowing imports of prescription drugs from Canada and increasing enrollment. Harder is focused on comprehensive immigration reform; getting the DREAM Act passed, and clear and simple pathways to citizenship. Denham has recently pushed for a vote on the DREAM Act saying "It's time for us to have a full debate in front of the American public." Pointing to his background in venture and entrepreneurship, Harder wants to make the Central Valley the agriculture technology capital of the USA, while also advocating for apprenticeship programs and affordable college and technical programs to help people get more applicable skills.

**Strengths:** Raised in Turlock, Harder has deep roots in the community. The 30-year-old teaches at Modesto Junior College and attends a local church. He's innovative and his priorities are jobs, health care, and immigration. Harder raised four times as much funding as any other Democratic candidates, and will be able to fundraise from his network and the strong Democratic presence in the Bay Area.



## CA-10: Better Know the District

### Geography & Environment

CA-10 is made up of northern San Joaquin Valley and is centered on Modesto. The area's soil variety is suitable for a range of farming practices, from fruits and nuts to livestock and dairy production. The area is prone to periodic flooding and drought, which has intensified with global warming. Recent floods threaten parts of CA-10's infrastructure, including roads and the extensive dam system, which raises concerns for the Valley's water supply and farmland—critical components of the district's economic stability. Modesto is the gateway to Yosemite: many people head to the foothills and mountains to hike, fish, ski, and go boating.

### CA-10: Facts & Stats

#### Population Centers

- Modesto, 207,000
- Tracy, 85,000
- Turlock, 71,000
- Manteca, 72,000
- Ceres, 47,000
- Riverbank, 24,000

#### 2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 116K (49%)
- Trump: 109K (46%)

#### 2016 House Results

- Eggman (D): 116K (48%)
- Denham (R): 125K (52%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 96K
- Eligible, not registered: 146K

#### 2014 House Results

- Eggman (D): 55K (44%)
- Denham (R): 71K (56%)
- Registered, didn't vote: 172K

### Citizenry

The median age of residents is 35, and females make up over half the population. A majority of the district is white and Hispanic/Latino, with sizable Asian, black, and mixed-race populations. Much of the district is lower to middle class; the median income is \$56,368. A high percentage of residents live with a chronic disease, particularly heart disease and obesity. Poor air quality has caused an epidemic of childhood asthma. Many residents rely on state- and government-funded programs like Social Security, Medi-Cal, the Affordable Care Act, and SNAP. The area has benefited greatly from Medicaid expansion.

### Elections

Democrats have a 2.6% advantage over Republicans in registered voters, up from 1.1% in 2012. Hillary Clinton won Stanislaus County (81,647 to 78,494) and San Joaquin County (121,124 to 88,936). But locals are skeptical of the wealthy Bay Area Democrats based in for GOTV efforts and dislike Democratic representative challengers who lack real ties to the community.

### Education

Portions of the district rank among the least-educated metropolitan areas nationwide. Although over three-quarters of residents have high school degrees, almost one-quarter are high school dropouts; only 18% have a bachelor's degree or higher. Lack of diversity within public schools (teachers and school boards) has resulted in chronic bullying, racism, and over-discipline. The school system is in need of repair, but there is no consensus for how to pay the estimated \$1 billion in renovations. Modesto Junior College (24,000 students) and California State University Stanislaus in Turlock (9,000) are two voter registration targets.

### Economy

Many residents of CA-10 feel left behind in relation to the economic gains made elsewhere in California. The unemployment rate is 10.9%, and 17.6% of residents live at or below the national poverty level. Retail, education, health services, and manufacturing employ the largest numbers of people. Significant conflict has arisen over whether to preserve farmland for farms or allow further urbanization.