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# Contra Costa Times (Walnut Creek, CA){PUBLICATION2}

## BOTH SIDES BRACE FOR BATTLE

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Lisa Vorderbrueggen Staff Writer

**Caption:** PHOTO 1: Garamendi mug. PHOTO 2: Harmer mug.

California's lieutenant governor and the son of a former lieutenant governor, two candidates at deeply opposed ends of the political spectrum, set out Tuesday on a highly uneven contest for the 10th Congressional District seat.

Lt. Gov. John Garamendi, a rancher from Walnut Grove, won the Democratic party's nomination in Tuesday's special election. The liberal Democrat will face Republican attorney David Harmer, of Alamo, and three minor party candidates in the Nov. 3 runoff.

The two have no common ground on the most contentious issues in the national debate. Garamendi undeniably sits atop the pack.

The 64-year-old has held public office for three decades, including two stints as state insurance commissioner, seats in both houses of the Legislature, and was deputy secretary of the Interior Department in the Clinton administration.

Garamendi is a prodigious fundraiser running in a heavily Democratic district that political experts on both sides of the aisle view as virtually unwinnable for a Republican, especially an unknown candidate such as Harmer.

Harmer, whose father, John, was a state senator and appointed by Gov. Ronald Reagan to an open lieutenant governor's seat in 1973, has no illusions about the odds.

"I recognize that I will have to outperform Garamendi 7-to-1 at the polls," Harmer said. "I think I can do that."

The 46-year-old attorney said he will focus on his qualifications for the job, and reach out to independents and moderate Democrats dissatisfied with federal health care reform proposals and the faltering economy.



Harmer has never held elected office -- he lost his 1996 Utah congressional primary race -- but he points to his public policy experience.

He was a management-level staff member in both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives and spent time writing and researching for two conservative think-tanks, the Cato Institute and the Heritage Foundation.

Harmer moved to Dougherty Valley in 2001 to take a job as first vice president and assistant general counsel for the credit card division of Provident. He lost his job in January after JPMorgan Chase acquired the company and dissolved his department.

On the issues, voters will have no trouble telling the two men apart. They agree on almost nothing.

Garamendi supports single-payer health insurance. Harmer does not.

Harmer opposed the federal stimulus package. Garamendi supported it.

Garamendi wants a strong cap-and-trade system to help cut greenhouse gas emissions. Harmer calls it an onerous burden on consumers.

Harmer said he will continue to deliver a message focused on reducing the federal deficit and reviving the economy with tax cuts.

"Mr. Garamendi has a program for every problem and that's great, but I'm saying, 'Who is paying the bill?'" Harmer said. "All (Garamendi's) ideas come with a big price tag attached, and it's my kids who are carrying the freight."

Garamendi may have the upper hand when it comes to fame and party registration, but he says he will mount an aggressive general election campaign.

Not only does Garamendi want to win in November, but he wants a strong showing, chiefly to ward off 2010 challengers. Members of Congress stand for re-election every two years, creating an almost nonstop re-election cycle.

"We are going to run a very comprehensive campaign," Garamendi said. "It's what I have always done and what I will continue to do."

He described Harmer as a "very conservative, right-wing Republican who mouths the same philosophy that has gotten this nation into the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression."

As for voter angst over health care reform -- likely to be a major campaign issue -- Garamendi said that media coverage of raucous protests has created a false impression of voters' views.

"What I see in this district are people who are desperate for health care reform," he said. "I have been at this for 35 years, and I will not give an inch toward what the Republican Party is doing, which is to kowtow to the profiteers of the insurance industry."

"If the Republicans want a fight, come on down, boys."

Reach Lisa Vorderbrueggen at 925-945-4773 or [www.ibabuzz.com/politics](http://www.ibabuzz.com/politics).

#### WHERE THEY STAND

John Garamendi, Democrat

Health care: Supports universal, affordable single-payer health care.

Immigration: Supports a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants along with reasonable penalties for failure to abide by

U.S. law.

Federal stimulus package: Supported it. Thinks it requires significant government oversight to ensure that the dollars are spent properly.

National security: Supports bilateral reduction of nuclear weapon stockpiles but recognizes their interim value as a deterrent to war.

Energy policy: Supports a cap-and-trade system but seeks one far stronger than that spelled out in the recently passed House bill. Opposes offshore oil drilling. Would advocate for alternative energy development. As a state senator, he wrote some of the state's first solar, wind and energy conservation tax credit laws,

Transportation: Cannot yet state a committee preference but says he has strong relationships in Washington that would help him pursue goals of the district.

Gay rights: Supports the repeal of "**Don't Ask, Don't Tell**" and a change in the law to allow same-sex couples to legally marry.

Education: Would advocate for higher levels of public investments in education at all levels, including K-12 and colleges.

David Harmer, Republican

Health care: Opposes government-run health insurance but favors regulatory reforms -- chiefly, less government control and bureaucracy -- designed to improve access and affordability.

Immigration: Supports foreign policy to improve lives of poor and oppressed people in nations where conditions drive them to illegally enter the United States. Opposes new path to citizenship for illegal immigrants already in the country. Supports investment in border control, strict enforcement of immigration laws.

Federal stimulus package: Opposed it. Views direct tax breaks as a more effective tool to stimulate the economy.

National security: Supports the continued move of U.S. troops from Iraq. Seeks clearer declaration of U.S. goals for troops in Afghanistan. Favors a comprehensive evaluation of all overseas U.S. military bases.

Energy policy: Opposes the House cap-and-trade legislation as too costly for consumers. Supports "all of the above" approach to energy policy, including expanded nuclear power, alternative fuels that make economic and environmental sense, and more domestic oil drilling.

Transportation: Would seek seat on the House Transportation Committee. Generally opposes earmarks but would not let district suffer as long as the system remains in place.

Gay rights: Declined to state positions on "**Don't Ask, Don't Tell**" or same-sex marriage because no voters have asked him about gay rights or other social issues.

Education: Supports more money for education but thinks money and policy control belong at the local and state level. Opposes unfunded federal testing mandates.

Congressional District 10.

With 100 percent of the precincts reporting\*, the results of the 14 candidates in Tuesday's 10th Congressional District special primary are below. The top vote-getter in each party will advance to the Nov. 3 runoff election.

Candidate Votes Percent\*\*

John Garamendi (D) 25,329 26.1

David Harmer (R) 19,932 20.6

Mark DeSaulnier (D) 17,001 17.5

Joan Buchanan (D) 11,625 12.0

Anthony Woods (D) 8,217 8.5

Chris Bunch (R) 4,445 4.6

Gary Clift (R) 3,862 4.0

John Toth (R) 3,123 3.2

David Peterson (R) 1,541 1.6

Jeremy Cloward (G) 506 0.5

Adriel Hampton (D) 350 0.4

Mark Loos (R) 382 0.4

Jerome Denham (AI) 279 0.3

Mary McIlroy (PF) 259 0.3

\* The final numbers will change after election officials complete counts of ballots received in the mail on Election Day and provisional ballots. The counties will certify the final election results Friday.

\*\*Numbers will not add up to 100 percent due to rounding.

Source: California Secretary of State

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