

Fresno County 16th Congressional vote update pushes Costa lead to 700 over Tacherra

By John
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Rep. Jim Costa, D-Fresno, and GOP challenger Johnny Tacherra in the House District 16 race.

Fresno Democrat Jim Costa, who is in the midst of his second re-election battle in the past four years, on Friday surged to a 700-vote lead over upstart Republican challenger Johnny Tacherra in the 16th Congressional District race.

Costa won 72% of 1,415 new votes that were counted and announced by Fresno County officials. The vote-count update pushed Costa's lead from 75 votes to 700 votes.

Given current trends, it looks like Costa will win a sixth term in Congress.

Fresno County Clerk Brandi Orth said around 2,000 provisional ballots remain to be counted in the 16th District. (Overall, Fresno County has 8,500 provisional ballots to count.) To date, Costa is winning around 64% of the Fresno County vote. Orth said she plans to finish counting the remaining 16th District ballots by Wednesday, when the next Fresno County update is scheduled.

At the same time, Madera County has 722 provisional ballots remaining, and Merced County around 1,370. Tacherra

has been winning two-thirds of the Madera County vote and 55% of Merced County so far, but would likely have to win around 80% of the remaining votes in those two counties to close the lead Costa will likely continue to build on in Fresno County.

It will be a Herculean task.

Neither Merced nor Madera updated their vote counts on Friday.

“As I like to say, I put my faith and trust in the people of our Valley,” Costa said on Friday. “The latest tally of votes is clearly indicating that they continue to want me to work on their behalf. We believe this will be brought to a close next week when the remaining ballots have been counted. I look forward to continuing to fight for our Valley in the 114th Congress.”

Tacherra did not return a phone call seeking comment.

The way the 16th Congressional District race is progressing looks very similar to 2010, though if Costa wins, it will be by a much smaller margin.

On election night, Tacherra had a surprising 736-vote lead over Costa. Back in 2010, Costa was down on election night to now-state Sen. Andy Vidak.

Friday turned out to be a wild day. A Madera County update pushed Tacherra’s lead to 1,775. But then Fresno County, which is the heart of Costa’s power, updated its count and Tacherra’s lead shrunk to just 78 votes. After a Merced County update ended the day, Tacherra’s lead was 741.

Then came this past Wednesday, when Costa — behind since election night — took a slim, 86-vote lead over Tacherra. That lead then dipped to 75 votes after Merced County made a small update on Thursday.

It all led to Friday, when Fresno election officials added 1,415 votes to the total. Of that, Costa won 1,020 and Tacherra just 395.

Districtwide, Costa now has 44,252, or 50.4% of the vote, and Tacherra 43,552, which is 49.6%.

In 2010, Costa turned that election night 1,823-vote deficit to Vidak into an eventual 3,031-vote victory. This year, the outcome is looking more and more like it will be the same, though many political watchers are saying the victory margin will be below 1,000 votes.

Other Fresno County races:

- Esmeralda Soria increased her lead over Cary Catalano to 422 votes in the Fresno City Council District 1 race. Soria had a 369-vote lead on Wednesday. Catalano has said it’s almost impossible for him to catch Soria in their battle to succeed the termed-out Blong Xiong.
- In the Fresno County Superior Court judge race, Lisa Gamoian now leads Rachel Hill by 4,769 votes. On Wednesday, Gamoian’s lead was 4,597 votes.

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