

'A normal person would not behave that way'

A Profile of California Senate Candidate Adam Schiff

by Daniel Platt

Sept. 25—Having been one of the top two vote-getters in the March 2024 California Senate primary election, Rep. Adam Schiff is now within spitting distance of becoming a U.S. Senator. Since this would have significant consequences for the U.S., we review here what is known about the man and his career.

Schiff has served in the U.S. House of Representatives for twelve consecutive terms, in a district along the northern border of Los Angeles which has continually changed shape and been assigned new numbers, due to demographic shifts. After his initial victory over Republican Jim Rogan in 2000, he has never faced a serious opponent.

Schiff will be remembered by historians primarily for his continual and brazen lying. For example, he has claimed to be the descendent of Jews who fled Europe to escape the Holocaust, a claim that has been dutifully repeated in his Wikipedia biography, despite the source being a deleted post on Twitter in which Schiff tweeted, “My grandfather immigrated here. My great grandparents immigrated here. My family came fleeing the Holocaust, in search of the American dream.”

Early life and education

Schiff was born on June 22, 1960, in Framingham, Massachusetts, the son of Edward and Sherrill Ann (née Glovsky) Schiff.^[5] He was raised in a Jewish family that fled the Holocaust.^[6] Schiff moved with his parents to Scottsdale, Arizona, in 1970 and

This claim was challenged by right-wing talk-show host Charlie Kirk, who tweeted in response, “Schiff’s father, Edward Schiff was born in Massachusetts in 1928, and his mother, Sherrill Schiff née Glovsky was born in Massachusetts in 1933. Hitler didn’t take power in Germany until 1933.” Schiff answered Kirk by tweeting that his “remarks are dis-



CC/Gage Skidmore

Lying ex-Congressman Adam Schiff, now running for Senate from California.

graceful,” but made no attempt to refute them.

Russiagate Follies

Schiff’s ecstatic moment in the spotlight was his role as the ranking member on the House Select Intelligence Committee, which was tasked with conducting inquiries related to purported Russian interference in the 2016 United States elections, aka “Russiagate.” During this period, he was ubiquitous on national news media, giving, by [one account](#), 25 interviews to National Public Radio (NPR) alone. A former NPR journalist wrote that Schiff “...became NPR’s guiding hand, its ever-present muse.... The Schiff talking points became the drumbeat of NPR news reports.”

Schiff’s favorite talking point was the charge of “collusion” between the Russian government and President Donald Trump, and specifically that Russia had hacked and made public, with the intention of aiding Trump’s campaign, emails that were embarrassing to the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, from the account of Democratic Party luminary John Podesta. These allegations were made repeatedly by Schiff,

without evidence. As time went on and Schiff continued to speak of sinister Russian plots, insinuating that his opponents were traitors, it became inevitable that there would be increasingly frequent comparisons of Schiff with the famous red-baiting Sen. Joe McCarthy in the 1950s, including by Republican Congressman Kevin McCarthy during a Fox News interview in 2019.

Schiff himself was interviewed on Dec. 7, 2016, by Tucker Carlson, who asked him: “Can you look right into the camera and say, ‘I know for a fact that the government of Vladimir Putin was behind the hacks of John Podesta’s email?’” Schiff attempted to evade the question, and when further challenged, accused Carlson of “carrying water for the Kremlin.” Reflecting on this incident five years later, [Carlson said](#), “A normal person would not behave that way, could not behave that way. Conscience would prevent it. Adam Schiff is a sociopath. He will do or say anything to achieve power.”

Trump Impeachment, Schiff Censure

On Jan. 15, 2020, came a moment of high drama for Schiff, what the *Washington Post* called “the rare and bizarre ritual of marching the impeachment articles from the House to the Senate,” as Schiff and six other Impeachment Managers solemnly trudged through the halls of the Congress like a troop of druids, with dumbfounded spectators looking on. Technically, this was done simply to notify the Senate of the delivery of the articles for Donald Trump’s impeachment, which was scheduled to happen later.

Of course, this was partisan theater. Baseless impeachments have become more or less de rigueur since the Bill Clinton administration. Schiff basked in the glory of being the lead prosecutor, a role that was familiar to him, as he had earlier served as an Assistant U.S. Attorney. (It was during that period that he had burnished his right-wing credentials by prosecuting Richard Miller, a former FBI agent, who was convicted of spying for the Soviets, after which Schiff successfully ran for State Senate on a platform of support for California’s Three Strikes law and the death penalty. He unsuccessfully introduced a bill to allow minors who were 14 or older to be tried as adults



Public domain

John Podesta

if they were accused of serious crimes, and a bill that would have made it a felony to hire an undocumented immigrant.)

Trump, who was impeached in a party-line vote in the House, was acquitted in a party-line vote in the Senate. The failed impeachment effort came on the heels of the report released in 2019 by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, which found that his investigation “did not establish that members of the Trump campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities.” But two years earlier, Shawn Henry, president of the IT firm CrowdStrike, which had supposedly discovered the hack of the Podesta emails, had testified before Schiff’s committee that there was no proof that Russia was involved—and Schiff kept that testimony classified so that he and his collaborators in the corporate media could continue to treat the allegations of “Russiagate” as legitimate. And although it has subsequently been declassified, as recently as August of this year Schiff continued to [hold forth on Twitter/X](#) with the same talking points he had used in 2016, insisting that the “Trump campaign welcomed Russian interference, took advantage of it, and then sought to deny it, much to the detriment of the country.”

When the article on the contents of Hunter Biden’s laptop appeared in the *New York Post* in October 2020, Schiff was one of the loudest voices proclaiming it to be Russian disinformation. He was sued for defamation by Mac Isaac, the computer repairman who had alerted authorities to the laptop’s existence.

Following the 2022 congressional elections, in which the Republicans gained a slight majority, Schiff was promptly removed from the House Intelligence Committee by the new Speaker, Kevin McCarthy.

On June 21, 2023, there was another party-line vote to censure Schiff for lying to the public about Russiagate collusion. The first version of the censure resolution was voted down, because it included \$16 million in fines, which was too much for some Republicans, but a second version without the fines passed. Schiff immediately depicted himself as a martyr, persecuted by the evil followers of Trump, and was able to parlay this into a spectacular fundraising success, raising over \$8.1 million in the second quarter of 2023.

Support for Kamala Harris's Candidacy

Schiff is intent upon attaining a higher position within the Democratic Party hierarchy. With his nose to the wind, he was an early supporter of the DNC's decidedly undemocratic move to pull Biden from the presidential race and replace him with Kamala Harris. Schiff also devised a clever, if convoluted, maneuver to [excuse Harris' new-found support for frack-ing](#), while continuing to express his own opposition to it.

Romancing the Military-Industrial Complex

Schiff is an ardent supporter of U.S. military interventions abroad. He has voted for them all: Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya and Syria. He has voted for every increase in the defense budget over the course of his career. He votes enthusiastically to send more weapons to Ukraine and Israel. Schiff's super PAC, Standing Strong, received \$5 million from the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) super PAC, United Democracy Project, during the 2024 Senate primary campaign.

Despite his many proclamations about his opposition to anti-Semitism (and his aforementioned claim to be the descendant of Holocaust refugees), Schiff went so far as to greet a delegation from the unabashedly neo-Nazi Azov Battalion of Ukraine's armed forces, which was visiting the U.S. Congress to lobby for more weapons for the war. The meeting took place in September of 2022, just a few days before the start of Jewish High Holy Days.

Schiff's neocon credentials are impeccable, including his animosity toward Julian Assange. Wikileaks founder Assange, who was finally released from a British prison earlier this year, is hated by neocons because of the publication by the Wikileaks organization of the "Vault 7" material exposing CIA electronic warfare and surveillance activities, and the "Collateral Murder" video, which documents the killing of a group of civilians in Iraq by the crews of two U.S. Apache helicopters. Ironically, in 2006 Schiff had introduced the Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act, which requires the United States Department of State to expand its scrutiny of news media intimidation and freedom of the press restrictions during its annual report on human

rights in each country. However, this scrutiny is usually reserved for journalists who are neocon-friendly.

A key element of the elaborate conspiracy theory that became known as "Russiagate" was the allegation that when Wikileaks published the incriminating emails, they had been provided by Russian hackers. Assange denied that the Podesta emails came from Russian sources or "any state actor." He went on to [tweet](#), "Neither Robert Mueller's team nor the U.S.

Senate Intelligence Committee has bothered to contact WikiLeaks or me, in any manner, ever."

When Schiff's office was queried about this apparent oversight, it responded, "Our committee would be willing to interview Julian Assange when he is in U.S. custody, not before." Australian journalist Caitlin Johnstone, in a commentary from 2018 with the carefully nuanced title "[Adam Schiff is an Evil Bug-Eyed Fascist](#)," denounced Schiff for this refusal. Further commenting on Schiff's enthusiasm for "regime change" wars, Johnstone wrote, "Adam Schiff would like nothing better than to see U.S. soldiers goose-stepping victoriously into the capital of every nation on earth, switching out their flags, and throwing their dissident journalists into prison."

One of the characteristic traits of the neocons is their incessant "virtue signaling" for "democracy," "human rights," and "freedom of the press," which is



Julian Assange

Council of Europe

frequently belied by their tactics towards their chosen opponents. In addition to Schiff's 2006 Daniel Pearl Freedom of the Press Act, he recently introduced the Transnational Repression Reporting Act of 2024, which would require the Attorney General, in coordination with other relevant Federal agencies, to submit a report of cases of transnational repression against U.S. citizens or people in the United States. In theory, either piece of legislation could result in penalties against those U.S.-funded Ukrainian "kill list" agencies, such as Myrotvorets or the Center for Countering Disinformation (CCD), which incite violence against those in the U.S. whom they deem "information terrorists" (see "[Demand the UN Defend Journalists from the Illegal Actions of Myrotvorets](#)," *EIR*, Sept. 30, 2022). However, Schiff's vociferous support for the Ukraine war, to the point of willingness to publicly fraternize with the Azov Battalion, suggests that he would be unlikely to seek such an application of his Act.

Earmarking for Dollars

Another sensitively titled commentary, "[Adam Schiff: Grifter, Racketeer, Warmonger](#)," was written for Antiwar.com by the late Justin Raimondo, who was its founder and chief editor. Raimondo reports:

...on July 18, 2013, a fundraiser for Schiff's re-election campaign was held at the home of Ukrainian arms dealer Igor Pasternak in Washington, D.C. Price of admission: \$2,500 a head, and \$1,000 for guests. Why is Pasternak such a fan of Schiff's?

The answer may be found in a *Washington Times* story published in January, headlined "Ukraine Desperate for Surveillance Equipment in Stand Off With Russia," which details the efforts of the Ukrainian government to get around the Obama administration's reluctance to provide them with the "defensive weapons" Schiff is so eager to shower them with.

Schiff is not content to simply cheer for the Military-Industrial Complex. He is also ready, willing, and able to profit from it.

"Earmarks" are defined by the Office of Management and Budget as "funds provided by the Congress for projects or programs where the congressional direction (in bill or report language) circumvents the merit-based or competitive allocation process, or

specifies the location or recipient, or otherwise curtails the ability of the Administration to control critical aspects of the funds allocation process." They are the kissing cousin of "pork barrel" expenditures, government spending for localized projects secured solely or primarily to direct spending to a representative's district.

Schiff has said that he supports the use of earmarks for programs to address social needs like homelessness and drug treatment. This is not exactly the whole story. Politico [studied](#) the publicly available records and found, for example, that Schiff had earmarked \$9 million to Smiths Detection for chemical weapons sensors, and to Phasebridge Inc., which was developing a radar frequency distribution system for the Navy. These firms were part of a pay-to-play arrangement run by one Paul Magliocchetti and his PMA group, which then arranged contributions of \$8,500 to Schiff's campaign fund. Magliocchetti later pled guilty to the charge of running a scheme to make make an illegal conduit for corporate federal campaign contributions.

Schiff earmarked \$1 million each to Eureka Aerospace, for military technology to stop vehicles that ignored checkpoints, and to Tanner Research Inc. for detecting IEDs. His campaign fund received \$24,600 from Eureka's CEO and \$15,800 from Tanner's CEO. Politico requested access to non-public records on earmarks, and Schiff's office responded that they didn't have any.

Where Does He Go from Here?

So, despite being exposed as a liar, a sociopath, a war pig, and a pay-to-play politician, Schiff won his Senate primary with a substantial campaign war chest and endorsements from all the usual suspects in the Democratic Party pantheon. Is there any hope for the Democratic Party at this point?

Possibly. On March 5 of this year, Schiff's Senate primary victory speech was disrupted by a large number of young and energetic protestors chanting "Cease-fire now!," drowning out Schiff's remarks. The protests were led by two Jewish organizations, IfNotNow and Jewish Voice for Peace.

Could it be that we are on the verge of a new era, where brazenly corrupt and cynical politicians like Adam Schiff, instead of being rewarded with long and lucrative careers as elected officials, will receive the scorn that they deserve?