Dr. Steven Choi

California State Senator | District 37 (Orange County)

1. Executive Summary & Profile Overview

Current Role: California State Senator, District 37

Tenure in Current Role: Nearly 2 years

Last General Election Result:

- **Dr. Steven Choi (R):** 50.7% (232,345 votes) — *Elected*
- **Josh Newman (D):** 49.3% (226,270 votes)

2. Personal & Professional Background

Background & Philosophy: Dr. Steven Choi is a First Lieutenant, former educator, and current conservative Republican politician. Born and raised in Naju, South Korea, he graduated from Kyung Hee University in Seoul before immigrating to the United States. He is a firm believer in the "American Dream."

Non-Political Career & Education

College Education: Earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Kyung Hee University in Seoul (1966).

- **Military Service:** Served in the South Korean military as an Artillery Lieutenant in the 3rd Infantry Division along the 38th Parallel; honorably discharged as a First Lieutenant.
- **Early Career & Transition:** Worked early service jobs during his transition to the U.S., including washing dishes in a restaurant and working as a hotel busboy in New York City.
- **Peace Corps & Federal Service:** Immigrated to the U.S. in 1968 as a Peace Corps language instructor and translator for the U.S. Department of State.
- **Higher Education & Advanced Degrees:** Earned a Master's degree in Library Science from Louisiana State University (1971) and a Ph.D. in Library and Information Science from the University of Pittsburgh (1976).
- **Teaching Experience:** Academic educator across higher education institutions including the University of Southern California (USC), University of California, Irvine (UCI), Saddleback College, and Coastline College.

3. Political Career & Governance Record

Political Gateway & Public Service Timeline:

- **Local Education (1998–2004):** Served as the first Asian-American elected to the Irvine Unified School District Board of Education.
- **Local Government (2004–2012):** Served on the Irvine City Council.
- **Mayor of Irvine (2012–2016):** Served two terms as Mayor of Irvine.
- **California State Assembly (2016–2022):** Represented the 68th Assembly District.
- **California State Senate (2024–Present):** Serves the 37th Senate District.

Key Legislative & Issue Priorities

1. **Fiscal Conservatism & Opposing New Taxes:** Focuses on tax relief, public expenditure accountability, and fiscal discipline.
2. **Education Reform & Accountability:** Supports workforce development, career-focused hands-on training, expanding STEM programs, and academic competitiveness.
3. **Healthcare Reform:** Focuses on mental health resources and healthy aging initiatives.

4. Campaign Finance & Coalition Base

Senator Choi's campaign support relies on a diverse coalition of industry, regional leadership, and community networks:

Sector / Category	Key Donors & Stakeholders
Insurance & Financial Sector	Zurich North America, Personal Insurance Federation of California
Real Estate & Development	National Association of Realtors, Apartment Association of Orange County, R&M Pacific Rim Inc., RD Olson Development
Industry & Commerce	Southern California Contractors

Sector / Category	Key Donors & Stakeholders
	Association, California New Car Dealers Association, Altria Client Services
Republican Leadership PACs	GOP Leaders (e.g., Assemblymembers Vince Fong, James Gallagher), New Majority California PAC
Korean-American Business Base	MBN Joy Korea, Shiki Sushi, Korean Plaza Market Sacramento, BCD Tofu House
Civic & Labor Organizations	Korean American Leaders, Heritage of Korean Independence, Korean American Political Alliance, AFSCME Local 3299

5. Constituent & District Profile: Senate District 37

Economic Overview & Key Indicators

District Wealth & Income Levels: Median household income is approximately 25% to 30% higher than the California state average (~$99,122) and 1.4 to 1.5 times higher than the U.S. national average.

Economic Indicator	District Value / Stat	Context & Benchmark
Median Household Income	$128,888 / year	30% above CA average (~$99,122); 1.5x national average
Per Capita Income	$62,950	High purchasing power & concentrated professional earnings
Unemployment Rate	4.2%	Tighter job market than CA statewide average (~5.0%)
Poverty Rate	12.0%	Socioeconomic spread across suburban centers
Urban/Rural Status	100% Urban	U.S. Census Bureau classification

Income Distribution Breakdown

- **Over $200,000:** ~30% of households
- **$100,000 to $200,000:** ~32% of households
- **$50,000 to $100,000:** ~21% of households
- **Under $50,000:** ~17% of households

Prominent District Industries

- **Medical Technology & Life Sciences:** Key hub featuring Edwards Lifesciences, Allergan (AbbVie), and Inari Medical.
- **Information Technology & Digital Media:** Industry leaders including Blizzard Entertainment, Google, Amazon, and Rivian (automotive tech).
- **Higher Education & Research:** UC Irvine (UCI), one of the area's largest employers and startup incubators, bringing in billions in federal research grants.
- **Financial Services & Professional Headquarters:** PIMCO, Pacific Life, and major regional

banking centers (adjacent to Newport Beach & Costa Mesa).
- **Premium Retail & Hospitality:** High-revenue commercial hubs including South Coast Plaza in Costa Mesa and Irvine Spectrum Center.

6. Demographics

Total Population: 989,419

Racial & Ethnic Breakdown

Demographic Group	Percentage
White (Non-Hispanic)	43%
Asian	25%
Hispanic or Latino	23%
Two or More Races	6%
Black or African American	2%
Other / Native American / Pacific Islander	1%

Age Distribution

- **Under 18 years:** ~20%
- **18 to 64 years:** ~63%
- **65 years and older:** ~17%

7. Political Landscape & Voting History

Partisan Voter Registration

Total Registered Voters: 621,008

Party Affiliation	Registered Voters	Percentage
Democratic Party	223,329	35.96%
Republican Party	205,589	33.11%
No Party Preference (Independent)	152,355	24.53%
American Independent Party	26,402	4.25%
Libertarian Party	6,876	1.11%
Green Party	2,717	0.42%
Peace and Freedom Party	2,577	0.41%
Miscellaneous	1,163	0.19%

Historical General Election Performance

- **2020 Election Results:**

  Presidential: Joe Biden (D) 54.3% vs. Donald Trump (R) 43.6%

  State Senate: Dave Min (D) 51.1% vs. John Moorlach (R) 48.9%

- **2016 Election Results:**

  Presidential: Hillary Clinton (D) 50.0% vs. Donald Trump (R) 44.0%

  State Senate: John Moorlach (R) 57.0% vs. Ari Grayson (D) 43.0%

- **2012 Election Results:**

  Presidential: Mitt Romney (R) 53.7% vs. Barack Obama (D) 43.9%

State Senate: Mimi Walters (R) 57.0% vs. Steve Young (D) 43.0%

8. Constituent Policy Positions & Priorities

Top 3 Issues Important to Constituents

1. **Cost of Living, Housing Affordability & Taxes:** Managing high real estate costs, supporting low income and property taxes, and increasing affordable housing options.
2. **Public Education Excellence & Funding:** Prioritizing efficient allocation of state funds to K-12 public schools, expanding STEM programs, and maintaining transparent, academic merit-based university admissions.
3. **Public Safety & Crime Prevention:** Addressing concerns around property crime, theft at commercial hubs (e.g., Irvine Spectrum, South Coast Plaza), and high-profile incidents like "follow-home robberies."

General Stances on Major Issues

- **Economic Stance:** Strong preference for fiscal conservatism, pro-business policies, debt reduction, tax oversight, and opposition to new tax hikes.
- **Social Stance:** Moderate progressivism combined with quality-of-life priorities. Strong support for civil rights, gender equality, and cultural diversity paired with firm stances on public safety, mental health infrastructure, and merit-based academic achievement.
- **Environmental Stance:** Pragmatic conservation supporting local parks, coastal/beach preservation, smart drought resilience, water recycling, and a steady transition to clean energy and electric vehicles.