Lesson learned: Yes, every vote really does matter

The decisions made by 182,134 voters lead to unexpectedly tie in Congressional 16th District race

By Ethan Varian

To understand the mind-bending, consummational passion of just one vote in this year’s historic District 16 congressional primary, take a stroll through downtown Saratoga, the heart of the 16th Congressional District. On a cold, gray morning in late March, you might bump into Linda Schaefer walking her shih tzu down Big Basin Way. She’s a conservative Republican who usually votes for life-affirming candidates but she’s had a lot on her mind lately, and when she filled out her ballot in the primary race to replace retiring Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, she buckled in the circle next to “Don’t know.”

“Don’t ask me why, I just did,” Schaefer said when we last talked. “Don’t even ask me if I was a Democrat or Republican. I don’t even remember!”

The impact of Schaefer’s single vote — just like the random or calculated decisions of the Linda Schaefer and Tami Rule stand outside the vehicle they live in along Sandpebble Drive in San Jose on Wednesday. The city has launched a pilot program to use technology with another goal in mind: detecting homeless encampments.

The program, first made public by The Guardian, comes as we can manage them.”

The race for Congressional District 16 is officially a three-way battle among candidates Sam Liccardo, Evan Low and Joe Simitian, a 75-year-old Santa Clara County supervisor.

When the vote count was finally completed last week after nearly a month of tallying ballots...