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TO: Larry Joe Doherty for Congress Campaign  
FROM: Donna Victoria, Goodwin Simon Victoria Research  
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It has become very clear in this election cycle that many Congressional seats formerly considered “Republican” seats are now in play; very little is safe for the GOP at present. Our recent poll results indicate that **voters in Texas’ 10<sup>th</sup> Congressional District may be willing to head in a different direction in 2008.** Democratic candidate Larry Joe Doherty has a compelling personal narrative, incumbent Republican Mike McCaul is vulnerable because he has failed to make any meaningful connection with his constituents, and Democrats have a real chance to take this district in November. Key results are as follows:

- This district may have been gerrymandered to be a safe Republican seat, but it certainly does not look like one any longer. In the initial trial heat, McCaul gets 43% of the vote to Doherty’s 34% **a scant nine percentage-point lead** that shows McCaul starting out well short of the 50% mark – and as the incumbent, he should be starting this race at or above the winning percentage. In addition, in a generic trial heat that just asks voter preference on voting for a Democrat or Republican for Congress, the generic Democrat gets 41% of the vote, and the Republican garners 45%, only a 4-point difference.
- **McCaul has failed to capitalize on the biggest advantages of incumbency:** despite serving two terms in Congress, nearly half of all likely voters do not even recognize his name (47% don’t recognize), the most basic measure of a politician’s strength. His job rating is utterly anemic at 28% positive, 29% negative, and 42% unsure – and this is when McCaul is identified as their current Congressman.
- Doherty is a strong candidate with the right message at the right time. After hearing one positive statement about Doherty and nothing critical of McCaul, voters are quickly able to reevaluate the congressional race, preferring Doherty over McCaul by 46% to 38%. After hearing considerable information about both candidates voters **prefer Larry Joe Doherty by a 50% to 36% margin over McCaul.** This again underscores how potentially fluid this electorate is.
- **Voters are moving to the center and more receptive to Democratic solutions to the nation’s problems at the same time that McCaul has aligned himself solidly with a failed President.** Bush’s job rating is 70% negative here (in Texas) and 69% of C.D. 10 voters think the country is seriously off on the wrong track. Furthermore, the data shows that many of the tired, traditional attacks on a Democratic candidate will work no better in this district than they did in Mississippi or Louisiana. In addition, the economy and high food and gas prices, tough issues for incumbents, are increasingly the top concerns for voters.
- McCaul is saddled with a party that is sinking like a stone and a résumé and political history filled with the type of highlights that are *precisely the reasons why* voters are turning away from the Republicans. Larry Joe Doherty represents a new voice and new direction to voters, and he believes passionately in his ability to do a better job representing this district’s needs. It’s a formidable combination.

This memorandum reports on the findings of a poll taken in the Tenth Congressional District of Texas May 27-31, 2008. Four hundred registered, likely 2008 voters were interviewed. All questions about this memo should be referred to Goodwin Simon Victoria Research ([donna@gsvresearch.com](mailto:donna@gsvresearch.com)). Donna Victoria has been conducting polls in congressional races since 1989. In 2006, she helped Dave Loebsack (IA-CD2) engineer a victory over a 32-year incumbent, one of only two victorious Democratic challengers in the country who were not targeted by the DCCC’s Red to Blue campaign.