

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Hamilton Campaigns
DATE: November 2, 2007
RE: Texas Senate District 11 Polling¹

After nearly two decades in Austin, Mike Jackson launches his 2008 re-election campaign from one of the weakest positions imaginable. In addition to low name identification and a surprisingly weak image, voters also react negatively to the State Legislature and positively to information about challenger Joe Jaworski. These factors combine to make SD 11 the most competitive state Senate district in Texas in 2008 — and one of the most competitive anywhere in the country.

- **Mike Jackson's job rating in the State Senate is an abysmal 28% positive – 23% negative.** Perhaps more telling than his low positive job rating is the fact that nearly half (49%) of the voters Jackson represents have no opinion about the job he has done in the Senate.
- **Similarly, Mike Jackson's personal favorability rating is extremely low, with half of voters unable to rate him (32% favorable – 18% unfavorable – 50% cannot rate).** Only 4% of voters in the district rate Jackson as "very favorable". Interestingly, Jackson's name identification is lower with self-identifying Republicans (43%) than with self-identifying Democrats (57%).
- **Mike Jackson's image is weak even among the voters who *do* recognize him.** Less than half of voters who recognize Mike Jackson say the phrases "shares your values" (40%) and "cares about people like you" (41%) describe him — a weak position for an incumbent that will be very difficult to overcome.
- **Less than half of voters (48%) say they would re-elect Mike Jackson if the election were held today.** Traditionally, it is a strong sign of vulnerability when less than 50% of voters say they are willing to re-elect an incumbent — especially one who has represented an area for almost two decades.

¹ This memo is based on a survey of 400 registered, likely voters in Texas Senate District 11. Hamilton Campaigns conducted telephone interviewing October 27-29, 2007. The margin of error for a sample of this size is ± 4.9 percentage points, at the 95% confidence level.

- **Mike Jackson leads in the initial vote preference. However, after being read short paragraphs about each candidate, the race for State Senator is statistically tied (44% Jaworski – 48% Jackson – 8% undecided).** In this vote preference, Jaworski has a stronger base of support with Democrats (84%) than Jackson has with Republicans (77%). Jaworski also has a +20 percentage point lead among Independent voters (49% Jaworski – 29% Jackson).

Here is some additional information about the two potential candidates in the general election for State Senate next year... **(READ AND ROTATE)** :

- Joe Jaworski is a 45 year old attorney from Galveston. Jaworski is a former city council member and is the grandson of famed Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski. Jaworski's leadership was touted in helping this area safely prepare for and respond to Hurricane Rita and he has been a strong environmental advocate for the Gulf Coast region of Texas. Jaworski was born and raised in this part of Texas, and will continue looking out for this area when he gets to Austin.
- Mike Jackson is a 54 year old president of a family-run construction company and incumbent State Senator from La Porte. Jackson has been one of the most conservative voices in the legislature for the last 20 years. Jackson has worked to lower insurance rates and has been recognized for his pro-business voting record in the legislature. If re-elected, Jackson will continue to fight for conservative principles in the legislature and will use his experience to get things done for this part of Texas.

Hearing all of this, who do you think you will vote for in the general election for State Senate from your area -- **(ROTATE)** Joe Jaworski, the Democrat or Mike Jackson, the Republican? **(IF UNDECIDED)** Well, which one do you lean toward at this time? **(asked only of one-half sample; n=200)*

Joe Jaworski, the Democrat.....	44
Mike Jackson, the Republican.....	48
Undecided.....	8

- **A strong majority of voters give the State Legislature a negative rating (35% positive – 57% negative).** Even Republican voters in the district give the Republican-controlled Legislature a net negative rating (44% positive – 49% negative).
- **Voters in the district are also negative toward Republican Governor Rick Perry (46% favorable – 52% unfavorable).** Almost three-quarters of self-identifying Independent voters in the district rate Rick Perry as “unfavorable”.
- **A plurality of voters in the district favor an outsider who would lead the state in a new direction over an experienced candidate who knows how the system works and can get things done (37% experience – 45% outsider).**
Two-thirds of Independent voters favor a candidate who is an outsider to lead the state in a new direction.

Bottom Line

A confluence of factors, including Mike Jackson's low name identification and extremely weak image, plus a political environment in which voters are unhappy with the Legislature and are looking for an outsider, combine to create a unique opportunity for a credible, well-funded Democrat to pick up this State Senate seat. Voters react positively to Joe Jaworski's biography and relevant experience. If he has the resources to introduce himself, he can win this competitive race.