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CONGRESSIONAL BATTLEFIELD GROWS

*New Poll of 3 Strong GOP Incumbents
Shows Democrats in Striking Position*

Democracy Corps conducted surveys of likely voters May 10-16, 2006 in three congressional districts which respected political observers like Charlie Cook, Stuart Rothenberg, and Larry Sabato have rated in the middle or lowest tier in their assessments of the 50-60 races in play this election cycle.¹ **The Democracy Corps surveys show each of the Democratic challengers are highly competitive in these tough races, indicating that the battlefield is growing and a Democratic House is very possible.**

In Pennsylvania 7, where Republican Representative Curt Weldon faces Democrat Joe Sestak, the Republican leads 51-41 in the initial vote which narrows to a 49-45 race when both candidates' biographies are presented to the voters.

In the Ohio 1 race between Republican Representative Steve Chabot and Democrat John Cranley, the initial vote is 52-43 for Chabot. The horserace becomes 49-47 after voters hear the candidates' biographies.

In New Jersey 7, which pits Republican Representative Mike Ferguson against Democrat Linda Stender, Ferguson has a 54-35 lead. When presented with the candidates' biographies, the race is cut to 50-41.

Other indicators like the incumbents' re-elect numbers suggest difficulties for the Republican incumbents across all three districts in this volatile change atmosphere.

¹ The results are based on interviews with 609 likely voters in New Jersey 7, 607 likely voters in Pennsylvania 7 and 700 interviews in Ohio 1.

District	Re-elect vs. Someone New	Initial Vote (using names)	Post-Bio Vote (using names)	Post-Attack Vote (using names)
PA 7	47-39	51 R – 41 D	49 R – 45 D	46 R – 46 D
OH 1	49-41	52 R – 43 D	49 R – 47 D	51 R – 43 D
NJ 7	44-39	54 R – 35 D	50 R – 41 D	51 R – 42 D

The survey reveals the strong change environment in these districts, reflecting what is happening throughout America. In NJ-7 and OH-1, 64 percent think the country is going in the wrong direction, while 71 percent in PA-7 share that view. President Bush performs dismally in these districts with approval ratings that should make each of these loyal Republicans uncomfortable (29 percent Bush approval in PA-7, 36 percent in NJ-7, and 40 percent in OH-1).

In this mid-term election, who turns out to vote will obviously make the difference between Republican and Democratic control of Congress. In each of the three races surveyed by Democracy Corps, the evidence indicates that Republicans are demoralized. The percentage that strongly disapproves of Bush is more than twice the size the percentage who strongly approve of him. And on our 1 to 10 scale on interest in the election, the number of those supporting the Republican who say their interest in the election is a ten lags behind the number of Democratic supporters who indicate that level of serious interest.

DISTRICT	PARTY SUPPORT	PERCENTAGE OF “10” INTEREST IN THE ELECTION
PA 7	Voting for Democrat	70
	Voting for Republican	52
OH 1	Voting for Democrat	58
	Voting for Republican	49
NJ 7	Voting for Democrat	55
	Voting for Republican	43

Among independents, the Republican and Democratic candidates are running even but the data suggests they could break against incumbents as they strongly prefer a Democrat who would provide balance to Bush’s agenda to a Republican who would support it.

America wants change. Republicans who have not faced real challenges in years past now find themselves on new terrain.

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