

To: Interested Parties

From: GBA Strategies

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Bustos Surging in IL-17

Democrat Cheri Bustos is surging in her race against incumbent Republican Congressman Bobby Schilling in Illinois' new 17th congressional district. A new survey¹ of 600 likely voters shows Bustos has closed the gap dramatically since advertising in the campaign began, pulling to within 45 – 47 percent—well within the survey's margin of error. In a vote simulation where undecided voters are allocated by their partisanship, Bustos and Schilling are completely tied 49 - 49 percent.

Last month, before Bustos introduced herself in television commercials, Congressman Schilling released a poll indicating he held a 13-point, 50 – 37 percent² lead. Earlier this year, our poll also observed the better-known Schilling holding an early 10-point lead³. That advantage is now effectively gone, as voters are finding out more about both candidates. In August, Schilling's campaign said that Bustos was “quickly running out of time” to change the race. But the race is changing—quickly.

Not only has Bustos moved to within the margin of error against Schilling, but the environment favors Democrats in the 17th. President Obama leads Governor Mitt Romney by a wide 54 – 41 percent margin in this race.

Despite a wave of negative ads from Schilling and Washington Republicans that the *Quad-City Times* called “reckless, irresponsible fiction,” this race is moving in Bustos' direction and with less than 6 weeks remaining she has the clear momentum.

¹ Survey of 600 likely voters conducted by GBA Strategies September 24-26, 2012. Respondents were reached on land lines and cell phones. Results have a margin of error of +/- 4.0 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval.

² Survey of 400 likely voters was conducted by Public Opinion Strategies on behalf of the Schilling campaign between August 8-9, 2012. Results have a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval.

³ Survey of 400 likely voters conducted by GBA Strategies January 30-February 1, 2012. Respondents were reached on land lines and cell phones. Results have a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points at the 95 percent confidence interval.