



MEMORANDUM

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES
FROM: GLEN BOLGER/JIM HOBART
RE: KEY FINDINGS –IL CD 17 SURVEY
DATE: MAY 29, 2012

Methodology

Public Opinion Strategies completed a survey of 400 likely voters May 20-22, 2012 in Illinois' 17th Congressional District. The survey has a margin of error of $\pm 4.9\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

Key Findings

1. ***Bobby Schilling has worked very hard in his freshman year in Congress, and it shows in the Congressman's image rating.***

In a redrawn district that is approximately half the district Schilling currently represents and half new territory for him, the Congressman has strong name ID (86%) and a solid image of 42% fav/22% unfav. Most encouragingly, Schilling enjoys a 54% fav/28% unfav image in the portions of the new district that he already represents, demonstrating that those who know him best, like him best.

2. ***Cheri Bustos begins the campaign with a very weak image.***

Cheri Bustos' name ID in the district is at just 51% and her hard name ID is a lackluster 28% (16% fav/12% unfav). In a sprawling district that covers three different media markets, Bustos will have a difficult time increasing her name ID and favorables without a significant investment from her campaign.

3. ***President Obama leads Mitt Romney by ten points on the Presidential ballot.***

President Obama is over 50% and has a double-digit lead (51% Obama/41% Romney) on the Presidential ballot. This margin is down a bit from 2008 when the President won this redrawn district by more than 20 points, but his current ten point advantage demonstrates that, at least at the Presidential level, this new district tilts Democratic.

4. ***Schilling enjoys a double-digit lead on the ballot and intensity also favors him.***

Schilling leads Bustos by 16 points (51% Schilling/35% Bustos) on the ballot. To already be over 50% in a district that is half new to him is a very good sign for Schilling early in this race. Another positive sign for the incumbent is that he also has a double-digit lead on intensity, with 34% of voters saying they would definitely vote for him and just 22% definitely voting for Bustos. Perhaps most impressively, Schilling receives the same level of support in this district as the President. Clearly, while voters in the district are inclined to re-elect President Obama, they also love the job their Republican Congressman is doing and also want to see him re-elected.

The Bottom Line

Despite running in a district that was drawn to favor Democrats and where the President leads by ten points, Bobby Schilling begins this race in a strong position. Schilling has a solid image and a 16 point lead on the ballot, all good signs for the incumbent Congressman. However, make no mistake, Democrats drew this seat with the goal of making Schilling a one-term Congressman and will presumably invest significant resources to do so. In order for Schilling to maintain his double-digit lead, the key will be to have the financial resources to define Bustos before she (and her national Democratic allies) can define herself.