



Tom Leatherwood Gaining Rapidly in 7th District Republican Race Opens Big Lead in Shelby County, Closing Gap Districtwide

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ARLINGTON, TN – Tom Leatherwood is gaining rapidly in his campaign for the Republican nomination for Congress in Tennessee's 7th District, cutting the incumbent's lead to just 11 points, according to a survey conducted by Ethridge and Associates, LLC. Leatherwood is challenging Congressman Marsha Blackburn in the August 7 Primary.

According to the results of a districtwide poll taken on June 28 and 29, Leatherwood trails 37% to 48% districtwide. This shows a net gain for Leatherwood of 16 points compared to a March survey in which he trailed by 30% to 57%. In Shelby County, where both candidates are well known, Leatherwood leads 55% to 30%, a positive swing of 29 points from the March poll that showed him trailing 40% to 44%.

"Tom Leatherwood has the potential to defeat Marsha Blackburn, and his campaign message of public service, not self-service, is resonating with voters," according to Ethridge. "When an incumbent with name I.D. of more than 90% has locked up less than half the vote five weeks before the election, that incumbent clearly is in trouble," Ethridge added.

"After talking to voters throughout the district, these numbers don't surprise me," said Leatherwood. "Republicans are ready for a change in Washington and that includes someone who will address high gas and grocery prices, the economy and illegal immigration. They are upset when they hear that special interests paid for her to take more than 20 trips to resort locations. They don't like that she failed to report over \$400,000 in campaign contributions and expenditures. And, they know it is wrong when they hear the incumbent has funneled more than \$350,000 in campaign and PAC funds to her family.

"We still have a lot to do," Leatherwood said. "The incumbent has a war chest filled with special interest money, and we already see she's not hesitating to spend it. Fortunately, money isn't everything. Last month, a Republican challenger in Utah, outspent by almost \$500,000, defeated the incumbent 60% to 40%. I believe, and the numbers back me up, that we're putting together the campaign we need to win."

Leatherwood presently serves as Register of Deeds for Shelby County. In this capacity, he has returned money to the Shelby County budget every year, while serving as a leader in making information available at no cost to the public. He began his career in elective politics in 1992 when he defeated incumbent State Senator Leonard Dunavant, an advocate for a state income tax, in the Republican primary. Leatherwood went on to win in November and played a leading roll in opposing a state income tax.

A geology graduate of the University of Memphis, he worked in energy exploration and as a Shelby County school teacher. Leatherwood is married to the former Melissa Mills, the daughter of educators who served in Hardin and McNairy Counties. They have four daughters.

The scientific survey of 300 likely Republican Primary voters was conducted June 28-29 and is projectable within plus or minus 5.6 percentage points with a confidence level of 95%.

Additional information is available at www.votetomleatherwood.com, by calling 901-867-7780 or by emailing Leatherwood at tomleatherwood@bellsouth.net.

About Ethridge and Associates

Ethridge & Associates, L.L.C. is a nationally recognized polling firm whose founder, veteran pollster Steven C. Ethridge, among other accomplishments, was the first polling firm in America to foresee in 1993 that then U.S. Senator Jim Sasser would be defeated in 1994. Ethridge has 28 years of political polling experience and has been polling in Tennessee's U.S. House District 7 for 25 years.