

**TO:** Interested Parties **FR:** Lincoln Park  
Strategies **RE:** Texas' 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional  
District Survey Results **DATE:** August 28, 2020

In a district where 56 percent of voters supported President Donald Trump in 2016, Democratic congressional candidate Rick Kennedy is in a strong position to challenge the Republican control of Texas' 17<sup>th</sup> Congressional district. Our recent survey of likely 2020 voters<sup>1</sup> finds that Kennedy is within striking distance of former Congressman Pete Sessions who moved to the district last year after losing a race in his former Dallas based congressional district.

While Kennedy is fairly well-known and well-liked for a challenger in this traditional Republican stronghold (41% know enough about him to have an opinion and 63% of this cohort have a favorable opinion of him), he is clearly being helped by two factors: 1) Sessions is bringing a lot of baggage with him from northern Texas and 2) Democratic nominee Joe Biden is only trailing by 1 point in his race against the sitting President.

Normally running against someone who spent close to 20 years in Washington DC would be a challenge but that is not the case in this race. Sessions is known by 69 percent of likely voters and among these voters, 57 percent have a negative opinion of the former Congressman. This includes 21 percent of Republican voters who are familiar with Sessions. When it comes to the top of the ticket, statewide numbers in Texas have shown a close race between Biden and Trump, and the 17<sup>th</sup> district is following this trend with Biden receiving the support of 47 percent of voters in the district while Trump just one point ahead with just five percent undecided.

Given the state of the Presidential race, and the negative views surrounding Session's connection to the Ukraine scandal that the President was impeached over, it is not surprising to see such close numbers in the congressional race. Indeed, Kennedy is only trailing Sessions by 3 points (42% to 45%) with 13% of voters undecided.

In general, Democrats have a perfect storm developing: An incumbent President who has lost popularity coupled with a congressional candidate who is not from the area and who came to town with a lot of negative history. We have no doubt that if he has the funding he needs to fully communicate with voters and share his vision for the district and the state, Rick Kennedy has an excellent and unique opportunity to make this race one to watch on

November 3<sup>rd</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> 1160 interviews among likely voters were conducted from August 22-23, 2020 using both land line and cell phone numbers and the results were weighted to ensure proportional responses. The margin of error is  $\pm 4.38$  percent at the 95% confidence level.