



MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties
FROM: Jeffrey Pollock
 Global Strategy Group
RE: Survey of Likely Special Election Voters in Texas
DATE: April 12, 2009

David Dewhurst and John Sharp emerge as the strongest candidates in a hypothetical special election to replace Kay Bailey Hutchison in the U.S. Senate should she step down to run for Governor. The Lieutenant Governor (55% familiar) and the former State Comptroller (41% familiar) enjoy the highest name recognition of any of the candidates in the field and receive the highest net favorable ratings from voters, +25 points and + 23 points, respectively. Houston Mayor Bill White surfaces as the third-place candidate in the queue.

CANDIDATE FAVORABILITY		
	Net Favorable	Familiar
David Dewhurst	+25	55%
John Sharp	+23	41%
Bill White	+16	30%
Kay Granger	+15	25%
Florence Shaprio	+8	25%
Tom Leppert	+5	23%
Michael Williams	+4	11%
Elizabeth Ames Jones	+5	8%
Roger Williams	+3	9%

But while David Dewhurst and John Sharp are familiar to voters in every corner of the state, Bill White appears to be a one-market candidate, drawing support almost exclusively from the Houston area.

CANDIDATE FAMILIARITY			
	Dewhurst	Sharp	White
Total	55%	41%	30%
Dallas-Ft. Worth	56%	41%	13%
Houston	61%	39%	83%
Central Texas	62%	46%	10%
San Antonio/Valley	47%	44%	28%
West Panhandle	48%	40%	7%

Furthermore, these data suggest that Bill White has several flaws that are quite damaging to his candidacy and may ultimately prevent him from winning this election. Having tested several negative messages against both of the candidates, the most damaging hit in the survey comes at the expense of White and centers on the decreased property assessment of his Houston home, thanks to the Harris County District Appraisal's office. While all of White's neighbors were getting hit with property tax increases, White was getting a huge tax break (74% doubts, 53% major doubts).

Other powerful critiques include White's failure to screen and identify illegal immigrants for prior criminal records jeopardizing police officers' safety (70% doubts, 53% major doubts) and his preferential treatment of campaign contributors, in particular wealthy developers (75% doubts, 50% major doubts).

Attacks on Sharp are less effective. Sharp's decision to increase taxes on some Texas businesses driving companies out of state raises major doubts among 45% of special election voters and a message that suggests Sharp is just shopping for a new political office since losing 2 races for Lieutenant Governor raises doubts among less than one-third (31% major doubts) of special election voters.

METHODOLOGICAL NOTE: This memorandum summarizes results from a telephone poll among 603 randomly selected voters likely to participate in a special election for United States Senate. Interviewing was conducted in between March 30-April 1, 2009. The interviews were conducted with a CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interview) system. Special care was taken to ensure that the geographic and demographic divisions of the actual electorate are properly represented in the sample. The estimation error associated with a sample of 603 is 4.0% at the 95% confidence interval. This means that in 95 of 100 cases, the results of this poll are within 4.0 points, plus or minus, of the results that would have been obtained if all probable voters had been interviewed.

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