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To: Friends of Democracy Corps and Greenberg Quinlan Rosner  
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## **GEORGIA: THE UNLIKELY NEW FRONTIER**

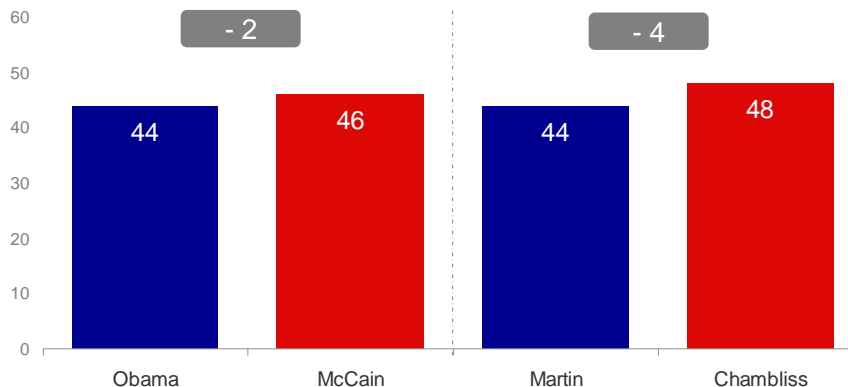
*Why Democrats Can Win in Georgia this Year*

Barack Obama has no business winning in Georgia this year. Neither does U.S. Senate candidate Jim Martin. Yet both Democrats are within striking range in a state President Bush carried by 17 points in 2004, and where in the last six years Republicans replaced Democrats in both Senate seats, and won the governor's office for the first time since Reconstruction.

Despite John McCain's popularity in Georgia (54 percent favorable – 30 percent unfavorable), he leads Obama by just two points, 46 – 44 percent. Despite Jim Martin's lack of name recognition (55 percent name identification), he trails incumbent Senator Saxby Chambliss by just 4 points, 44 – 48 percent. The Republican brand is tarnished in Georgia and a national wave threatens to carry the state to Democratic shores. Obama and Martin still trail and must make gains to win here, but the fact that Georgia is even close speaks to powerful political currents across the country.

### **Obama and Martin competitive in Georgia**

*Now thinking about the election for president / U.S. Senate, if the election for president / U.S. Senate were held today and the candidates were: Democratic candidate Barack Obama / Jim Martin, and Republican candidate John McCain / Saxby Chambliss, for whom would you vote \*...*



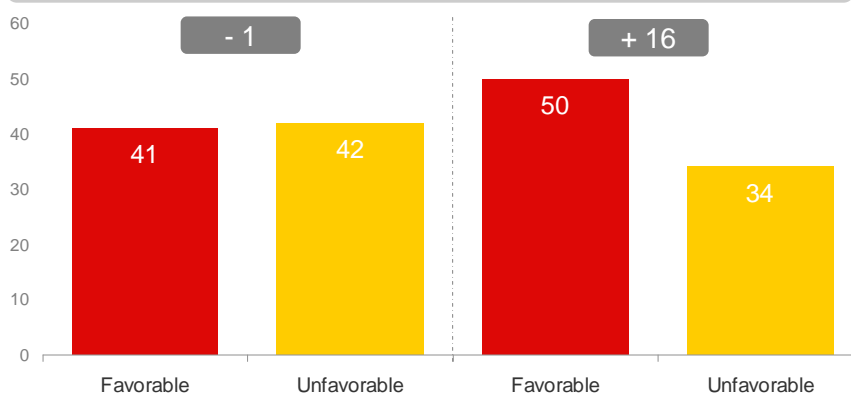


A new Democracy Corps survey highlights the state of play in the unlikely new frontier, Georgia:<sup>1</sup>

- 1) **A tarnished Republican brand.** After six years of ascendancy, the Republican Party brand is losing its strength in Georgia. In fact, voters in Georgia now hold the Democratic Party (41 – 39 percent favorable-unfavorable) in higher regard than the Republican Party (41 – 42 percent favorable-unfavorable).

### Republican Party's favorability has collapsed in Georgia

*I'd like to rate your feelings toward some people and organizations, with one hundred meaning a VERY WARM, FAVORABLE feeling; zero meaning a VERY COLD, UNFAVORABLE feeling; and fifty meaning not particularly warm or cold.*



In a state he carried by 17 points in 2004, President Bush now suffers from an anemic job performance rating (28 percent excellent/good) and low personal favorability (37 percent favorable – 48 percent unfavorable).

- 2) **Economic focus and desire for change make Obama competitive with the popular McCain.** John McCain's standing is quite strong in Georgia (54 – 30 percent favorable-unfavorable compared to 47 – 39 percent in the latest national Democracy Corps survey).<sup>2</sup> He enjoys positive reviews from independents (56 – 24 percent favorable-unfavorable) and from white voters (71 – 16 percent). Obama's standing is also impressive in what should be a tough state for him (47 – 37 percent favorable unfavorable similar to his 50 – 40 percent nationally), but still well behind McCain's. More than two-thirds of white voters give McCain a higher rating than Obama, while just 25 percent give Obama the higher rating. Despite all this, Obama trails McCain by just 2 points. Two factors put Obama in contention here:

<sup>1</sup> Democracy Corps Georgia survey of 600 likely voters conducted October 16 – 19, 2008. Survey is subject to margin of error  $\pm$  4 percent.

<sup>2</sup> Democracy Corps survey of 1,000 likely voters conducted October 15 – 19, 2008.



- **An economically focused electorate opened the door for Obama's strong positioning on the economy.** Obama leads McCain by 14 percentage points on *standing up for the middle class*, by 5 on which candidate will better handle the economy and 6 on the economic crisis. He only trails by 3 points on taxes, which is remarkable for a Democrat in Georgia given the centrality of tax cuts to the Republican identity. Obama trails by 31 points on national security and 11 on Iraq, but those are not the issues that define this election.
- **A state looking for change.** Voters here are not happy with Republicans (see first point above) and want real change. Obama leads by 7 percentage points on *bringing the right kind of change*, and by 4 on which candidate is the *reformer*.

To win in Georgia (which would mean a landslide nationally), Obama must expand his support among white seniors and among white voters in the state's rural areas. He already leads overwhelmingly among African Americans (90 – 2 percent), performs well with white Democrats (83 – 11 percent) and meets partisan expectations among white exurban voters, a very Republican group.

- 3) **Jim Martin is being carried by a national wave.** Republican Senator Saxby Chambliss faces a real battle against little known challenger Jim Martin. Chambliss suffers from a lackluster 38 percent excellent/good job performance rating, while 39 percent view him favorably and 28 percent view him unfavorably personally. These lackluster ratings make him vulnerable to a challenge, even from a Democrat who is not well known and not well defined among those who know him. Only 55 percent of voters can identify Jim Martin and only 21 percent view him favorably, while 20 percent view him unfavorably. The candidates are deadlocked among independent voters (44 percent Martin – 43 percent Chambliss). Meanwhile, Martin has an opportunity to gain ground as this race approaches the finish line:

- **Closing the name ID gap.** Among voters who can identify both candidates, Martin leads 51 – 45 percent. Among voters who only know Chambliss, the incumbent leads 61 – 35 percent, while Obama trails by just 9 points among this same group.
- **Shoring up African American base supporters.** Martin receives 81 percent of African American voters, a respectable number, but he can add 2-3 percentage points to his vote total if he can reach the 90 percent threshold Obama achieves with African Americans. Furthermore, this survey assumes African Americans comprise 26 percent of the electorate. It would not be unreasonable for that to reach 27-28 percent in this year's election.