

To: Interested Parties

From: GBA Strategies

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Bustos Has What it Takes to Win IL-17

Cheri Bustos has the right profile, the right positions and the right message to win her election for the U.S. House of Representatives in Illinois' 17th district against Republican Congressman Bobby Schilling. Bustos begins the race within striking distance of Schilling, despite being much less well known at the outset, and she quickly catapults into the lead.

A survey conducted for the Bustos campaign shows that Congressman Schilling's initial advantage in this new district is built on sand. Voters here respond well to Bustos' profile and when she is able to introduce herself, the race will change quickly.¹

A Strong Democratic District

- **Democrats hold a double-digit partisan advantage in IL-17.** Thirty-eight percent of voters consider themselves Democrats compared to just 27 percent Republican.
- **President Obama performs well here.** A majority of voters (53 percent) approve of the job Barack Obama is doing as President here, leading him to a 52 – 39 percent advantage over Mitt Romney.

A Strong Message Catapults Bustos into the Lead

- **Despite being less well known, Bustos is not far behind the incumbent congressman.** Congressman Schilling starts the race with a 9-point, 44 – 35 percent lead over Bustos. As the incumbent Congressman, Schilling is much better known than newcomer Bustos, so his lead is very soft.
- **Bustos gains the lead after voters learn about the candidates.** After hearing positive information on both candidates (slightly more on Bustos than Schilling), the Congressman's lead evaporates and Bustos opens up a 45 – 41 percent lead. In other words, Bustos gains the lead before voters even hear about Schilling's vulnerabilities.

President Obama's lead, the Democratic advantage in this district, and voters' positive reactions to Bustos indicate she will quickly erode any lead Schilling has based on name identification alone.

¹ Survey conducted January 29-February 1, 2012 among 400 likely general election voters in Illinois' new 17th Congressional District. Interviews were conducted with respondents on both landlines and cell phones. Findings include a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percent at the 95 percent confidence interval.