

MEMO

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Corry Bliss, Executive Director, Congressional Leadership Fund

DATE: June 21, 2016

RE: CLF's GA-06 Impact

SUMMARY

After the 2017 special elections, a Democrat can now be defined as someone who complains about the President, supports tax increases and loses elections. Thanks to the efforts of the Congressional Leadership Fund (CLF) and numerous Republican groups, Jon Ossoff will go down as the biggest loser in the history of Congress. CLF was proud to be the first and biggest outside entity to invest resources in the Georgia special election leading the way in defining Ossoff.

Ossoff's unprecedented \$25 million fundraising and a fractured Republican primary field presented unique challenges. From the beginning, polling showed that Ossoff would not be victorious if voters were aware his national security "experience" was fiction, while his liberal ideology and loyalty to Nancy Pelosi was genuine. When asked, over 60 percent of voters preferred a congressman who would work with Paul Ryan, while only 28 percent chose Nancy Pelosi. This became a focal point in our messaging, as well as other outside groups and the Handel campaign itself. CLF never deviated from the goal of defining Ossoff as a dishonest liberal.

In addition to showing Pelosi's unpopularity, polling also showed Democrats had a clear and significant enthusiasm advantage. With that in mind, CLF invested heavily in door-to-door and phone GOTV efforts to motivate Republicans ahead of the primary and the runoff. CLF knocked on 300,000 doors in the runoff alone. Our GOTV goals were twofold: cut into Ossoff's early vote lead after reaching 64 percent in the primary, and bring Republicans back to the polls on June 20. In total, CLF spent \$2 million on GOTV efforts.

What did CLF do in GA-06 race?

Early investment

Jon Ossoff announced his candidacy in Georgia's 6th Congressional District in January 2017. By the end of February, Ossoff raised \$1 million fueled by a "Make Trump Furious" online campaign strategy. CLF recognized Ossoff's fundraising success and a fractured GOP field would likely guarantee Ossoff a spot in the runoff. On March 2, CLF announced an initial \$1.1 million independent expenditure against Ossoff, which would increase sevenfold by June 20. Leading up to the primary, CLF ran a \$3 million campaign that included television, radio and online advertising, as well as a mail and field program. Comparing the hard-fought Republican primary with Jon Ossoff's massive war chest, CLF knew it would need to double-down on its investment and maintain its field staff in GA-06 for the runoff. In total, CLF spent more than \$7 million to stop Jon Ossoff on April 18 and again on June 20.

Define Jon Ossoff

CLF's priority was to define Jon Ossoff and expose his dishonesty to Sixth District voters.

First, CLF exposed Ossoff's exaggerated national security credentials – an issue that [plagued](#) his campaign and eventually forced Ossoff to respond with a series of direct-to-camera ads. Worse, independent fact checkers rated Ossoff's resume claims as 'half true' and even earning 'a [Pinocchio](#)' for misleading voters.

Second, CLF worked to inform voters about Ossoff's blatant attempt to hide his support for the highly unpopular Pelosi and out-of-the-mainstream views on key issues.

CLF tied Ossoff to Pelosi and her liberal agenda early and often, echoing the message on television, digital and radio advertising, as well as campaign literature and direct mail.

Beyond TV advertising, CLF's robust campaign

While continuing to allocate significant resources to paid media, CLF deployed its data director and deputy national field director to Georgia to oversee a team of 135 door knockers engaging Republican voters. In total, CLF spent \$2 million on GOTV efforts.

Ahead of the primary, CLF identified a universe of 95,000 Republican voters and immediately began engaging each in-person, online and with direct mail. CLF ensured its GOTV efforts including mail, online, and door-to-door programs were completely integrated focusing on very reliable Republican voters and keeping them engaged on April 18.

For the runoff, CLF charted a different strategy than in the first round. In order to beat Ossoff in a head-to-head, CLF identified 75,000 low propensity Republican voters, including 38,000 Republicans who skipped the April 18 primary election. CLF immediately began engaged these voters online, in-person, by phone and with direct mail campaigns. CLF's targeted universe of 23,000 regular GOP early voters to ensure that summer vacation did not prevent them from voting in the runoff.

CLF's digital advertising included heavy pre-roll on YouTube to GOP and Independent voters in the district, video ads on Facebook, search ads and display ads targeted to people who had already visited our two micro-sites, [TheTruthStrikesBack.com](#) and [JonOssoffAgenda.com](#). CLF focused its digital micro-targeting on early voters, absentee voters and high-propensity Republican-leaning independents. Lastly, longtime GA-06 residents received a heavy dose of specific messages about Ossoff's controversial residency problem.

CONCLUSION

Jon Ossoff is officially the biggest loser in the history of Congress. It is remarkable that Ossoff had no primary, benefitted from a massive cash advantage, outraised Karen Handel by \$20 million, but still couldn't win a district that Hillary Clinton lost by 1.5 percent. Democrats spent an unprecedented amount of money in a race that resulted in nothing more than another "moral victory," amounting to a loss despite 11,000 volunteers, 200 full-time staff and spending over \$30 million combined. Along with the Handel campaign, NRCC, Chamber of Commerce and America First Policies, CLF's comprehensive efforts played a decisive role in keeping Ossoff from reaching 50 percent in round one and obtaining a Republican victory in the runoff. As we look to 2018, CLF is prepared to continue defending and strengthening the House GOP Majority – in fact, our work has already [begun](#).