



Efficacy of the Efforts by Independent Women's Voice

Hawaii 1st Congressional District - Special Election

Executive Summary

Independent Women's Voice (IWV) commissioned a survey in April 2010 to determine whether or not it would be worthwhile to engage in some form of electioneering activity in the special election in Hawaii's First Congressional District.

The survey showed that Democrat Ed Case was leading a three-way election. Republican Charles Djou trailed him, and Democrat Colleen Hanabusa trailed the two of them. Moreover, the survey revealed -- not surprisingly -- that the second choice of Hanabusa voters was Case (he was perceived as more liberal than Djou), and the second choice of Djou voters was Case (he was perceived as more conservative than Hanabusa). And the second choice of Case voters? When asked for whom they would vote if they couldn't vote for Case, Case's supporters split almost down the middle -- 40 percent went left, to Hanabusa, while 39 percent went right, to Djou.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) faced a conundrum: Its leadership and top strategists believed that Case was the more electable of the two Democrats in the race; but the Committee could not simply declare itself in favor of Case, given Hanabusa's strong support from Senators Inouye and Akaka and many key Hawaii labor unions.

So instead of choosing between Case and Hanabusa, the DCCC decided to spend heavily on the air with negative ads designed to drive voters away from Djou.

The survey revealed that the DCCC strategy was working -- and likely would have continued to work, had it been allowed to play out without any other outside input. Because the second choice for Djou voters was Case, DCCC advertising designed to raise Djou's negatives worked to drive Djou voters to their second choice -- Case. So even as the DCCC was publicly remaining "neutral" in the race, not choosing between Case and Hanabusa, in practice, their advertising campaign was benefiting Case by driving voters his way.

IWV determined to engage with an Electioneering Communication designed to inform voters of three key data points: First, that Case had voted 72 times for higher taxes

during his four-year tenure representing Hawaii's Second Congressional District; second, that Case had received three "F" ratings from the nonpartisan National Taxpayers Union; and, third, that Case had recently hired indicted former Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich's political consultant, better known to the FBI as "Advisor B" on their surveillance tapes of Blagojevich -- and that this advisor had counseled the disgraced former governor to try to swap Barack Obama's Senate seat.

Unlike many third-party Independent Expenditure efforts, this ad was not a video press release with a fake or a minimal time buy behind it; it was a serious communication, produced by BrabenderCox, a well-regarded media consulting firm. With 2,000 Gross Ratings Points behind it, the ad was designed to inform voters of Case's voting record and political behavior.

When the IWV ad went on the air, Case was leading and the DCCC was pushing more and more voters every day away from Djou and toward Case. But within 24 hours of the launch of the IWV advertising campaign, according to press reports, the DCCC was publicly backtracking on its commitment to the special election; a few days later, DCCC Chairman Chris Van Hollen announced the DCCC's withdrawal from the race.

Just as importantly, once Djou saw the IWV ad go on the air, he revised his own advertising campaign. His campaign pulled down the contrast ad it was running, and replaced it with a positive ad featuring Djou's wife making a direct appeal to the camera. So beginning in early May, the only ad on the air informing voters of Ed Case's flaws as a candidate was the IWV ad.

Data collected in rolling tracking surveys since the launch of the IWV advertising campaign makes clear that the IWV ad campaign did its job: Case's image -- which had been firmly set in the minds of Hawaii voters -- began to change perceptibly. His negatives began to rise among key targeted groups, and his share of the vote began to fall back. By the end of IWV's ad campaign, Case's numbers had moved significantly, and Djou had overtaken him on the ballot.

What follows is a detailed case study of the IWV ad campaign in Hawaii's First Congressional District.

Overview

On April 20, 2010, GEB International Inc. presented the findings of a benchmark survey conducted on behalf of Independent Women's Voice. The main purpose of this survey was to "determine the nature of the current political environment and to check to see the chances of IWV being able to exert its influence on the outcome of the election."

IWV believed that while much of the country was focused on special elections such as the one in Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District, the special election in Hawaii's 1st Congressional district had the potential to be extremely symbolic -- perhaps even as symbolic as Scott Brown's winning the Senate seat previously held by Edward Kennedy. And since none of the national groups seemed to be focused on HI-01, IWV felt it important to at least check the potential for increasing the likelihood of a Republican victory.

At the time of the initial benchmark survey (April 18-20), GEB International Inc. looked at the three main candidates in the race: Colleen Hanabusa and Ed Case, the Democrats, and Charles Djou the sole Republican running. The race at that time was very close. Ed Case was getting 32 percent of the likely voters surveyed, while Charles Djou was getting 31 percent and Colleen Hanabusa was receiving 18 percent.

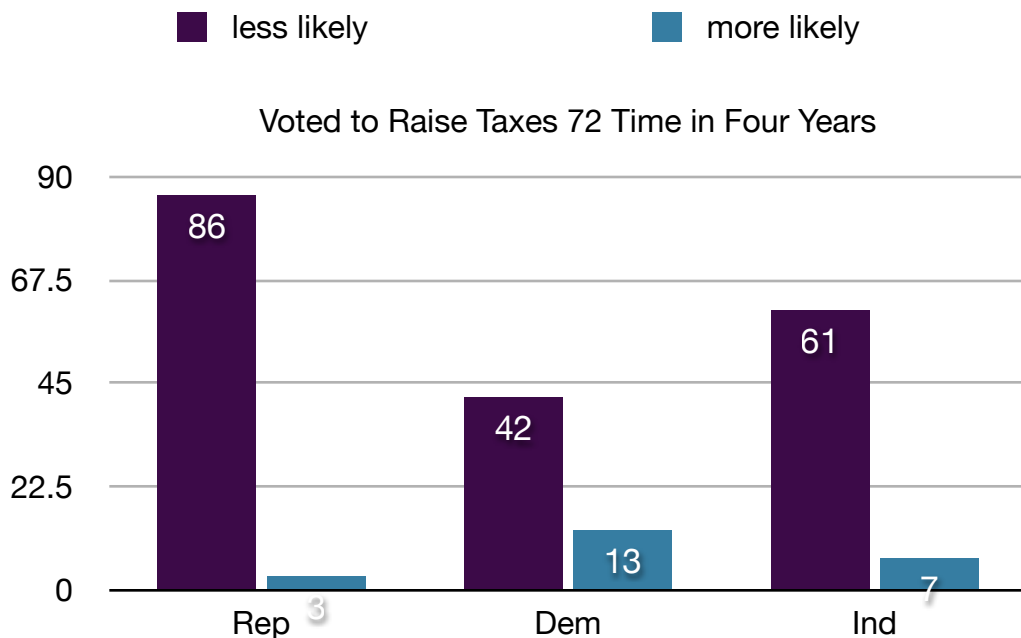
In terms of the candidates' overall favorable ratings, Ed Case had a 61/16 Favorable to unfavorable ratio, Charles Djou had a 51/31 and Colleen Hanabusa had a 37/44. What is important to note here is that all of the candidates had very defined images in the eyes of the voters, with an average of about 80 percent having either a favorable or unfavorable opinion of each. This meant that to be successful in changing the course of the election, the effort put forth by IWV would have the challenge of not *creating* a negative opinion of Ed Case, but rather *changing* the public's opinion of Ed Case -- not an easy task, given the limited timeframe and budget.

It should be noted that given how tight the race actually was at the time of the benchmark survey, GEB International Inc. suggested through the analysis of the survey data that in order to be successful in affecting the outcome of the election, IWV's

messaging would need to be precisely targeted in order to sway the vote just 2-3 points away from Ed Case and 2-3 point towards Charles Djou.

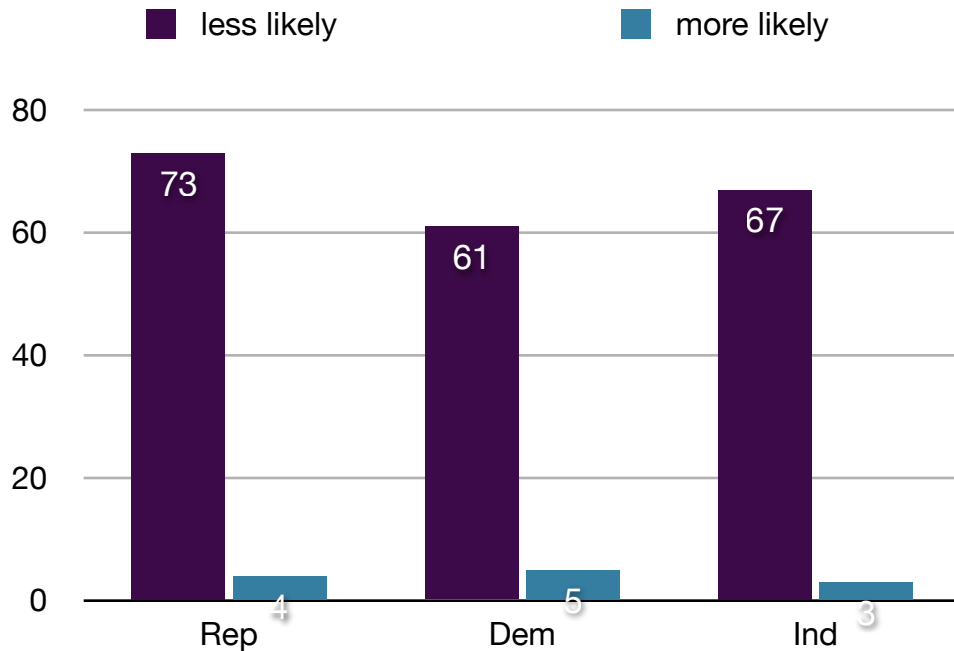
With the information provided from the data set of April 20, 2010, IWV decided to fund an advertising campaign in HI-01 with the purpose of weakening Ed Case. Based on the data analysis it was clear that the best way to move the numbers quickly was not to focus on healthcare, President Obama or the Democrats in general, but rather use some very good opposition research that had tested very strongly in the survey. Namely, IWV decided to focus on Ed Case's voting record for higher taxes, his F-ratings from the nonpartisan National Taxpayers Union, and his decision to hire former Governor Blagojevich's political consultant.

I am including here two of the original data sets to illustrate the power of the messages IWV decided to use in its ad campaign:



As can be seen above, the votes to raise taxes cut against Case by tremendous margins among Republicans and Independents. Even among Democrats it cut against him by a 3:1 ratio. And among people who said they were already voting for Case, 49 percent compared to 9 percent said they were less likely to support a candidate who voted to raise taxes 72 times in four years.

Even stronger than the tax votes was the issue of Case hiring Rod Blagojevich's political consultant. The numbers on this issue were through the roof:

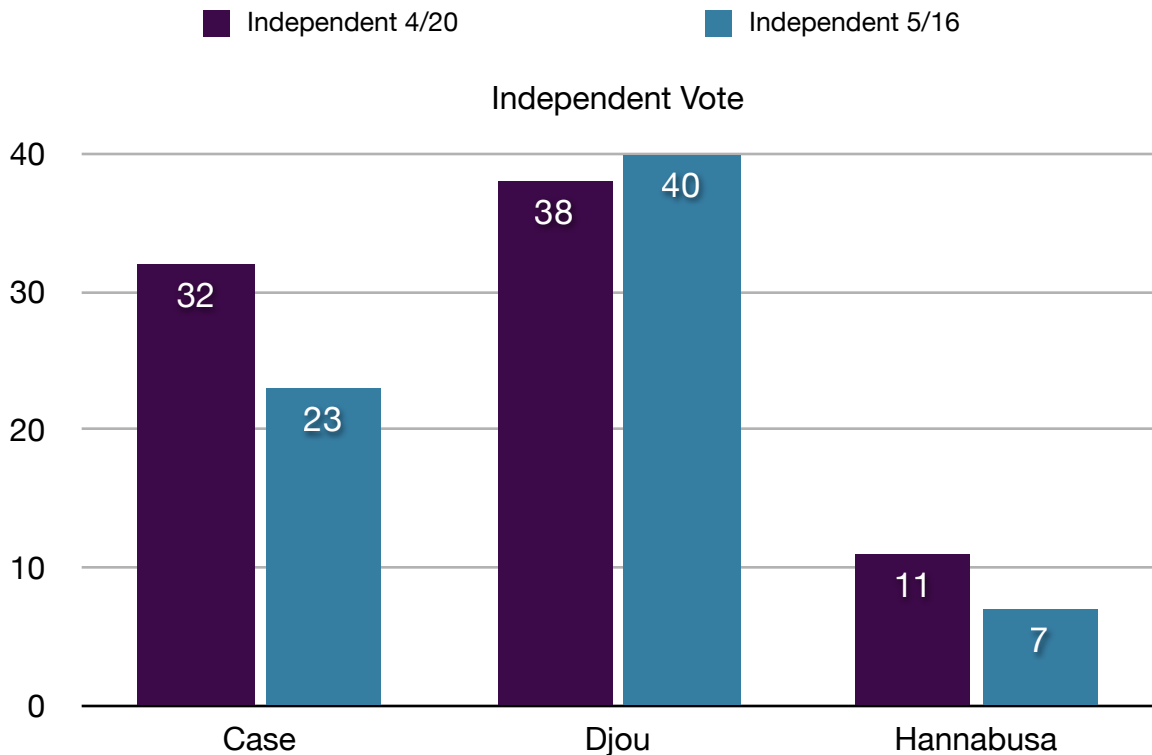


The surprising number here is how much this also affected Democrat voters. Actually, only 3 percent of Case voters said they would be more likely to support a candidate who hired Blagojevich's consultant, while 70 percent of Case voters said they would be less likely to support a candidate if they knew this information. In fact, among every key demographic, the Blagojevich number popped with an intensity rarely seen across such a spectrum of voters.

The ad campaign activities -- which included a 2000 GRP TV buy -- began within a few days of the mail-in ballots being sent out to the voters. GEB International conducted a tracking program within a few days of the start of the ad campaign, and the data discussed in this memo compared the original benchmark data with the final two samples of the tracking data.

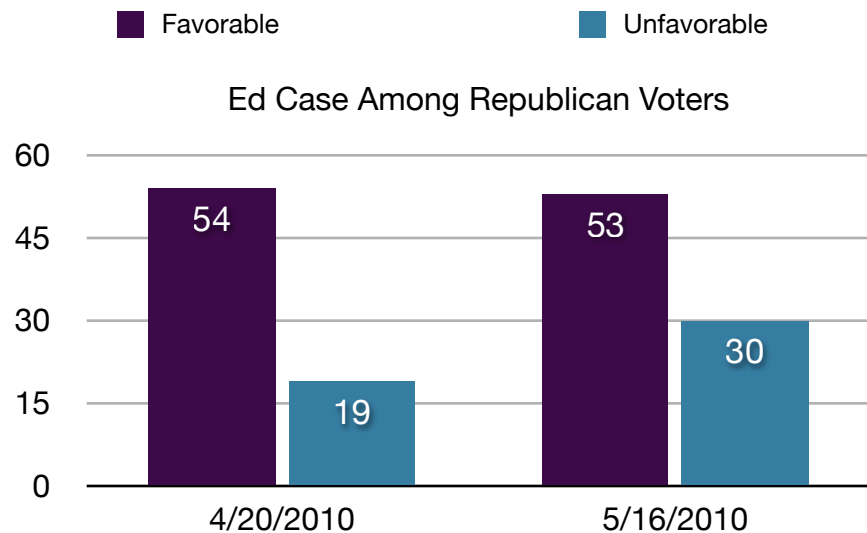
What follows is a brief series of graphs that show the race on April 20, 2010 and then again on May 16, 2010.

This first graph shows the movement of the race among Independents. Ed Case had very good numbers among most Independents when the race started -- he had been branded as a moderate. This is how he and much of the media branded his positions. IWV's ad campaign exposed Case's record as being anything but that.



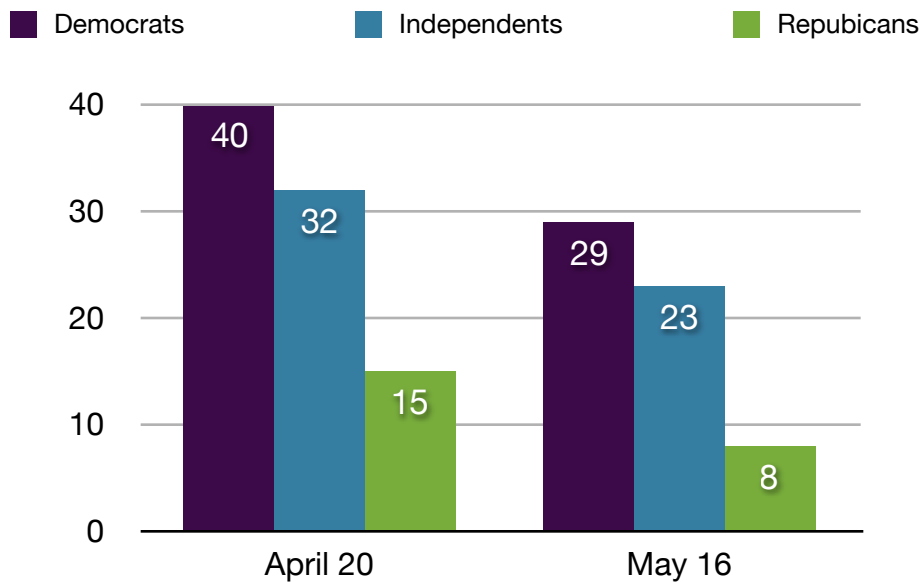
One of the several challenges faced by IWV was to break off some of the vote Ed Case was getting from Republicans. In the data of April 20, Ed Case was receiving 15 percent of the Republican vote. Clearly, Djou would have difficulty winning if Case continued to pull one out of every six Republican votes; stripping these votes from Case and moving them to Djou became an essential element of the ad campaign.

Below is a graph showing the movement of Case's favorable to unfavorable rating among Republicans:



As can be seen from the above data set, Ed Case's unfavorable increased by 50 percent between the time of the benchmark data and after the ad campaign had been running for two weeks. The data from May 16 shows that among the Republicans who said they "saw, read or heard" something to make them less likely to vote for Ed Case (26 percent of the Republicans interviewed), nearly fifty percent (48.5) said they had seen a TV ad in the past two weeks. Since the Djou advertising was only positive during the time of IWV's ad campaign, the only TV ad they could have seen to make them less likely to support case was IWV ad.

The net result of how the vote breaks down for Ed Case in terms of party affiliations is as follows



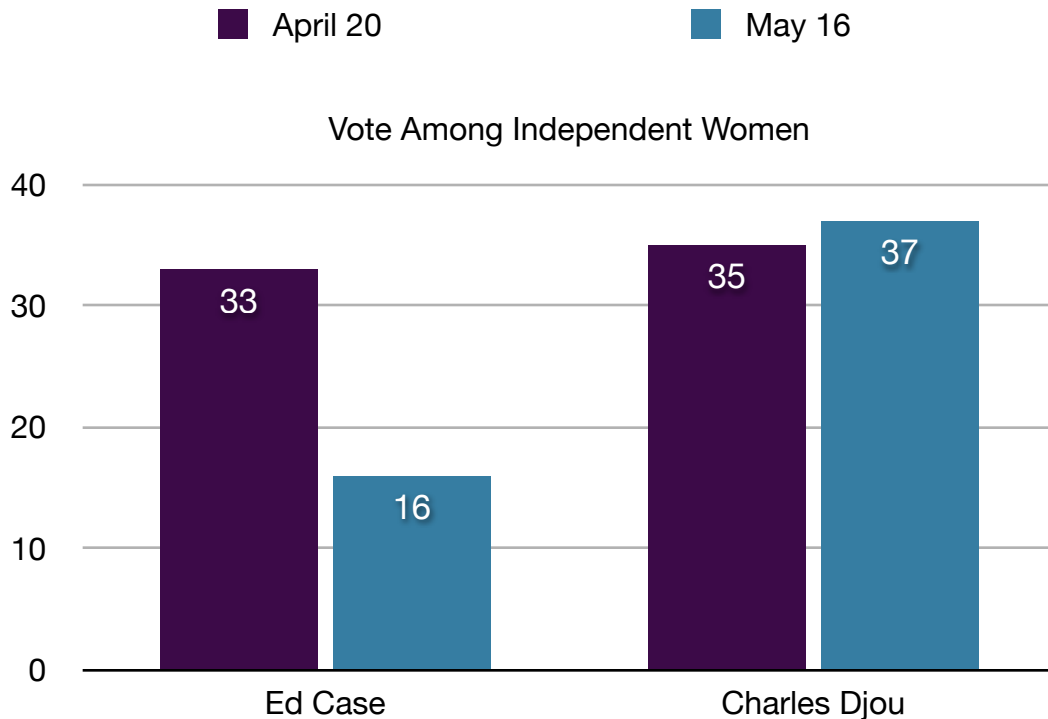
The above data set is of critical importance. As stated earlier, Case’s vote among Independent voters fell from 32 to 23 percent. Now it is also evident that among Republican voters, his support fell by almost 50 percent, from 15 to 8 percent, and it even fell among Democrats from 40 to 29 percent.

As was stated earlier in this memo, the message of hiring Rod Blagojevich’s political consultant broke hard against Ed Case even among Democrats. In the April 20th data, 61 percent of Democrat voters said they would be less likely to support a candidate for Congress if they knew he or she hired Blagojevich’s political consultant. It is quite possible that since 19 percent of Democrat voters said they “saw, read or heard” something in past few days that made them less likely to vote for Ed Case, and of these 19 percent, 67 percent said they saw a TV ad, that the IWV Independent Expenditure had an important effect on Democratic voters as well.

Conclusions

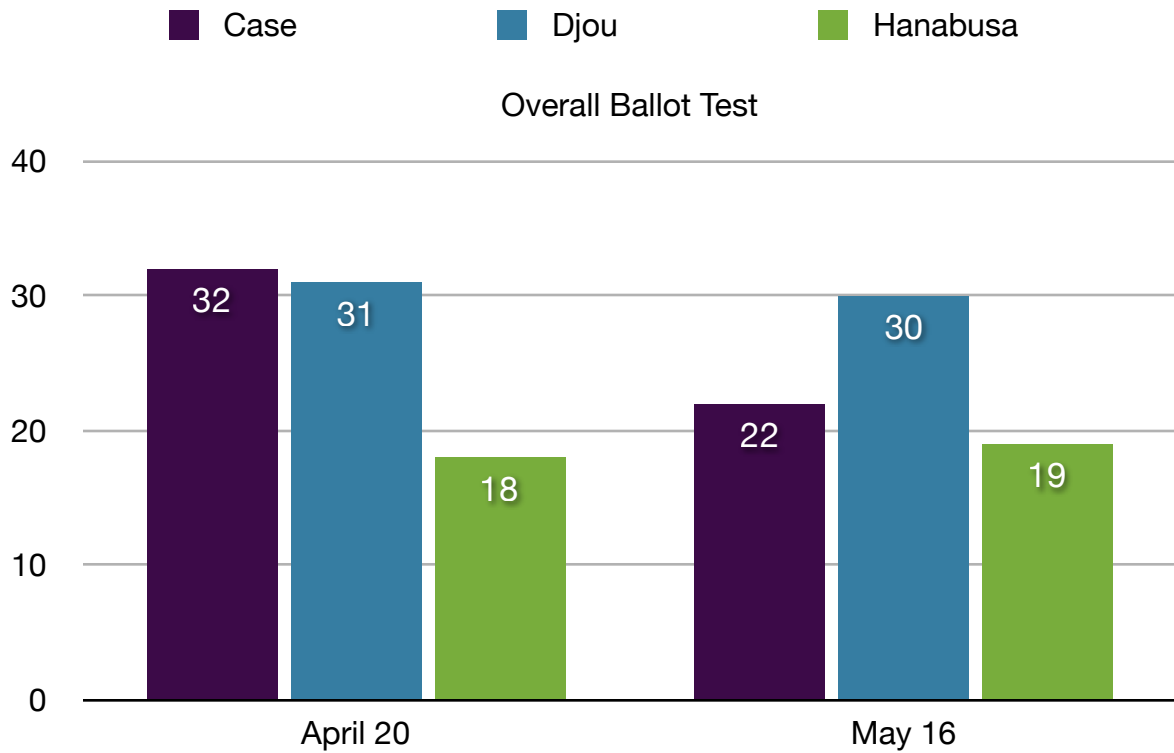
Upon learning of the closeness of the race in Hawaii's special election for the 1st Congressional district, and of the opportunity to alter the outcome in favor of Charles Djou, Independent Women's Voice decided to run an ad campaign exposing Ed Case. The purpose of the ad campaign was to shift Independent and Republican votes away from Ed Case and to Charles Djou. It was decided that the best way to do this was to target the voters with a very limited number, but very effective set of messages that would erode his support among Independents and Republicans as well as quite possibly hurt him among Democrats as well. The data above clearly shows that over the time the IWW ad campaign ran, Ed Case weakened among the two key target groups and even among his Democrat base.

IWW sees itself as a vehicle for targeting both independents (male and female) and women (of all center-right flavors). The recent experience in HI-01 proves beyond a doubt that this goal is achievable. A simple look at the vote among Independent Women tells the whole story:



As can be seen by the previous chart, Case fell by 17 points (a 50 percent drop) among Independent Women, and Djou went up by 2 percent for a 19 point swing.

And the final data shows the race as follows, as of May 16:



About GEB International Inc.

For well over a decade, GEB International Inc. has been electing leaders around the world. Founded on the principle of providing the best quality turnkey solution for survey research, polling, and strategic communication services, GEB has distinguished itself as a leader in the area of campaign and political consulting

All our experience has been applied to dozens of political campaigns in the U.S. and around the world, including Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Albania, the Czech Republic, The Ukraine, Israel, Serbia, and Kosovo.

Given the new dynamics in U.S. campaigns, with many third-party and independent challenges as well as multi-candidate primaries against incumbents, GEB International is uniquely qualified to analyze these situations. Every President and Prime Minister we have helped elect has been done within the context of a multi-candidate/multi-party environment.

GEB International is well positioned to offer strategic advice in this new era of campaign environments.

About the Data

April 20 Benchmark

The benchmark survey GEB International conducted was fielded over the two night period of April 19th and April 20th. 800 respondents were interviewed from a list of voters who had voted in at least two of the past three national/federal elections and who were screened in the initial questions to ensure they were “likely voters”. Thus, the sample of 800 represents a universe of likely voters intending to vote in the special election.

Since voters do not register by party in Hawaii, it was difficult to determine the actual breakdown by voter registration in the district. However, thanks to previous research and information gathered from various sources in Hawaii, the approximate breakdown in the 1st Congressional district is as follows: 20% Republican, 35% Independent and 40% Democrat.

Our random sampling methods resulted in a universe that was 53% female to 47% male. The universe was also made up of 28% McCain voters and 62% Obama voter. In addition, the party self-identification resulted in a universe of 18% Republican, 38%

Independent and 41% Democrat. Given the proximity to the actual numbers with all three of these demographics there was no need for weighting the sample and the overall accuracy of the survey was +/- 3.46%.

Tracking

The tracking survey began on May 4th with baseline sample of 300. Starting on May 6th, GEB International performed a tracking survey of 200 interviews with subsequent interviews of 200 interviews on May 10th and May 12th. This meant that on May 6th we had a combined sample of 500 interviews (May 4th plus May 6th), on May 10th 400 interviews (May 6th plus May 10th) and on May 12th 400 interviews (May 10th plus May 12th). On May 16th we interviewed 300 respondents so that we would finish with another combined 500 person sample (May 12th plus May 16th).

Interviews were conducted from the same list of voters as the benchmark (voters who had voted in at least two of the past three national/federal elections and who were screened in the initial questions to ensure they were “likely voters”).

The margin of error for the combined 500 samples was ± 4.4 and for the combined 400 samples it was ± 4.9 .