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*Number 715, December 31, 2007*

## Updates: Senate, House & Governors

### US Senate Updates

#### Georgia: Chambliss Strong as Onions

US Sen. **Saxby Chambliss** (R), elected in 2002, looks like a solid re-election bet for 2008. A poll released this month by Strategic Vision showed Chambliss leading all four of his declared Democratic opponents by wide margins. He beats DeKalb County CEO **Vernon Jones** by 57% to 27%; ex-TV news reporter **Dale Cardwell** by 57% to 25%; engineer **Rand Knight** by 58% to 23% and businessman **Josh Lanier** by 58% to 22%.

#### Kentucky: Horne Announces

Iraq War veteran **Andrew Horne**, a Democrat, officially entered Kentucky's 2008 US Senate race in December with a blast at Senate Minority Leader **Mitch McConnell** (R). Calling McConnell "fully complicit in this culture of corruption," he charged that the incumbent "rewards his big money donors with his votes... big business, large insurance companies and lobbyist friends." Horne, 46, spent 27 years in the Marine Corps. He lost (32% in a four-way race) a 2006 Democratic Primary for congress in the 3<sup>rd</sup> District (Louisville).

Three other well-known Democrats -- all Louisville millionaires -- are considering the race, **Greg Fischer**, **Bruce Lunsford** and **Charlie Owen**, as is outgoing Attorney General **Greg Stumbo**. Two other Democrats have already filed for the race, **Michael Cassaro**, MD, who has not sought public office before, and perennial candidate **David L. Williams**. As of Sept. 30, McConnell had \$6.8 million on hand. The primary is in May.

#### Louisiana: Dardenne in Senate Race?

Secretary of State **Jay Dardenne** (R) is the second Pelican State Republican to consider running against US Sen. **Mary Landrieu** (D) in 2008. Dardenne, who served 15 years in the state senate and was re-elected to his current post unopposed in November, has not yet made a decision. If he does run, it would set up a primary between Dardenne and state Treasurer **John Kennedy** (R), who switched parties last year and announced his senate candidacy in mid-December. Kennedy has released a poll, taken for him by Zogby International in mid-October, which showed he would defeat Landrieu 45% to 38%, with 18% undecided. In an early December poll taken by Survey USA, Landrieu had an unimpressive 46% to 42% lead over Kennedy (R).



### Oklahoma: Inhofe Holds Big Early Lead

US Sen. **Jim Inhofe** (R) has a big lead over his major announced opponent, state Sen. **Andrew Rice** (D), according to the *Tulsa World*'s Oklahoma Poll. Inhofe had 60%, Rice 19%. Inhofe won the support of three-fourths of Republicans and almost half of Democrats.

### Tennessee: Alexander Losing Opponents

His election as Conference chairman was not the only good news Sen. **Lamar Alexander** (R-TN) got this month. During December, two likely challengers announced they would not run against Alexander.

The first Democrat to exit the race was **Mike McWherter**, 51, a Jackson businessman (beer wholesaler) and son of popular former governor. While McWherter cited the tried-and-true need to spend more time with his family, political observers believe the difficulty of defeating the popular Alexander was a major factor in McWherter's decision, which was praised by Gov. **Phil Bredesen** (D), who publicly urged McWherter to wait for a race he could win. Following McWherter's withdrawal, Nashville attorney and former state Democratic chair **Bob Tuke** announced that he would not challenge Alexander either.

Only one Democratic name remains in circulation as a potential foe for Alexander, that of Nashville lawyer **Kevin Doherty**, who hasn't said yea or nay on the race.

### Virginia: Marshall Forms Exploratory

Delegate **Bob Marshall**, one of Virginia's leading Republican conservatives, formed an exploratory committee in mid-December to help him decide whether he will enter the contest for the GOP's 2008 US Senate nomination. He is expected to make his final decision -- go or no-go -- in the near future.

The race for retiring US Sen. **John Warner**'s (R-VA) seat already has one Republican, former Gov. **Jim Gilmore**. At the Virginia GOP's State Central Committee meeting in December, Del. **Christopher Saxman** (R), and up-and-coming figure in the party, announced that he would not challenge Gilmore. **Larry Sabato**, the University of Virginia's widely respected political scientist, points out that Marshall is widely respected as a "conviction politician and for his sense of humor." Nevertheless, the odds are heavily in Gilmore's corner for the GOP nomination. "Most Republicans understand that Gilmore has an uphill battle at best against (likely Democratic nominee) **Mark Warner**," says Sabato. "That hill would turn into Mt. Everest with Bob Marshall as the nominee."

### US House Updates

#### Florida 14: State Senator Challenges Mack

State Sen. **Burt Saunders** (R), a veteran of 11 years in the Florida legislature, has announced that he will run as an independent against third-term US Rep. **Connie Mack** (R) in the 2008 General Election. If elected, Saunders would caucus with the GOP in Congress.

Saunders, 59, served in the county attorney's office and on the Collier County Board of Commissioners prior to his election to the Florida House in 1994. In 1998, he was elected to the state senate and has been re-elected since. However, Saunders is term-limited, which may have affected his decision to run for Congress. In the legislature, he served on committees dealing with education, health, and the environment, concerns he cited as priorities -- along with terrorism and taxes -- should he be elected to Congress.

In an interview with Washington's *The Hill* newspaper, Saunders noted Mack's marriage



to US Rep. **Mary Bono** (R-CA) as a reason to replace Mack. "Our current congressman really isn't living in southwest Florida; he's getting married to a congresswoman from California and he's going to be spending, presumably, a lot of time there."

Saunders "is pretty respected," acknowledges University of South Florida political scientist **Susan MacManus**. He probably "senses a dissatisfaction with incumbents in Washington," says MacManus; "he can probably give [Mack] a scare."

Mack, 40, however, will not be an easy target. "The Mack family is so beloved" in the district, notes MacManus. Mack -- officially, **Connie Mack IV** -- is the son of **former US Sen. Connie Mack** (R-FL) and the grandson of Philadelphia baseball great **Connie Mack**. Like Saunders, Mack served in the legislature prior to his election to Congress. His issues have included lower taxes and limiting attorneys' fees in personal injury and malpractice cases. The state's Republican establishment is likely to get behind Mack. Gov. **Charlie Crist** (R) has already endorsed Mack's re-election. As of Sept. 30, Mack had \$401,000 on hand in his campaign fund.

The 14<sup>th</sup> District (Fort Myers, etc.) is solid Republican territory. Mack was re-elected with 64% of the vote in 2006 and 68% in 2004; President Bush carried the district with 62% in 2004 and 61% in 2000. If the GOP congressional vote should divide fairly evenly, however, it might be possible for the Democrats to take advantage of the Republican split and sneak in a Democrat, at least for one term. Education professor **Larry Byrnes** has announced as a Democrat. Improving education is one of his top issues, but so far, has not established a major political presence in the district.

## Georgia: Mosley Won't Challenge Barrow

**Wayne Mosley**, an orthopedic surgeon and a veteran of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, announced that he will not run against second-term 12<sup>th</sup> District (Augusta to Savannah) Congressman **John Barrow** (D) in 2008. Mosley had not officially entered the race, but had the early backing of the NRCC and had already begun to stump the district. Three other GOPers are seeking the Republican nomination: former congressional staffer **John Stone** of Augusta, who was recruited by the NRCC; mechanical engineer **Ray McKinney**; and **Chris Edenfield** of Savannah. Several other Republicans could enter the race, including **Karen Bogans**, formerly an aide to US Rep. **Jack Kingston**; and former Augusta Mayor **Bob Young**. Although Barrow won by a whisper -- 50.3% -- in 2006, he had a hefty \$945,000 on hand as of Sept. 30. Moreover, 41% of the district's registered voters are African Americans, who might turn out at a higher rate in a presidential year. Favoring the GOP, however, Gov. **Sonny Perdue** got 51.7% in the district in 2006.

## Louisiana: Lively Contest in 4<sup>th</sup> District

The surprise announcement by ten-term US Rep. **Jim McCrery** (R) that he will not seek re-election next year is creating interest among a large number of potential candidates in both parties in the Shreveport area district.

On the GOP side, at least eight potential candidates have expressed interest in the race or are being mentioned as likely candidates. Louisiana has reverted to party primaries for federal offices, so these candidates will first run for the Republican nomination, and then the winner will run in the General Election as the party nominee. The three most electable GOPers, say several insiders (R), are:



**Steve Prator**, popular Sheriff of Caddo Parish (Shreveport), the district's most populous parish; "I think the strongest guy is Prator," says one insider [R]; "if he runs he would win it hands down;"

State Rep. **Mike Powell**, who has a strong following in the Shreveport area;

**Jerry Jones**, a businessman who ran a strong but losing (46%) 2006 race for mayor of Shreveport; some observers deem Jones one of the top two contenders, but others say he should have won his mayoral bid.

In addition, at least five other possible contenders would bring some strength to a primary campaign:

State Sen. **Robert Adley**, who recently switched from the Democratic to the Republican Party;

**Richard Hunt**, a former member of McCrery's staff who is now a lobbyist; if he runs with McCrery's backing, he would move up fast;

**Cliff Gorman**, a wealthy and respected businessman, who has already formed an exploratory committee;

Former congressional aide **Royal Alexander**, who recently lost (33%) a runoff for state attorney general;

**Chester Kelly**, who got some name I.D. running a losing race against McCrery last year; Kelly got 12% to McCrery's 57% in a four-way contest.

A number of high-profile Democrats are also receiving attention for the race. Democratic insiders say the top two are former Shreveport Mayor **Keith Hightower** and state Rep. **Taylor Townsend**.

Hightower has indicated that he wants to run and has already talked with the folks at the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee in Washington. "He's the kind of Democrat who would do well," says one insider (D), "he's a moderate and people know and like him."

Townsend, who recently lost a state senate bid, said earlier this week that he is running for the congressional seat; observers rate him a strong contender.

At least three other prominent Democrats are getting attention for the race, including:

**Cedric Glover**, the first African-American mayor of Shreveport who has been in office for one year and has become a popular public official;

State Sen. **Lydia Jackson**, also African American, who recently won awards from three different Louisiana associations for her legislative work -- the Technology Access Network, the Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, and the Public Defenders Association; and

Public Service Commissioner **Foster Campbell**, who recently lost a bid for governor; he got 12% in a twelve-man race.

While some GOPers believe the district is a solid Republican one, citing **President Bush's** 59% there in 2004, population trends have recently favored the Democrats. About 31% of the registered voters are African Americans, which gives the Democrats a solid base if they nominate a candidate who can get significant white support. Moreover, the district may have become home to a larger number of black voters as a result of Hurricane Katrina, after which an unknown number of displaced residents of the New Orleans area -- a majority of them black -- moved to North Louisiana.



And the white population in the rural parishes has been shrinking as available jobs declined.

Republicans, on the other hand, note that 2008 will be a presidential year, and that with either **Hillary Clinton** or **Barack Obama** at the top of the Democratic ticket, it will be difficult for a Democratic congressional candidate to overcome the normal conservative tide of the district's majority. A majority of the voters in the Democratic Primary are likely to be African-American, which could result in the nomination of a black candidate, who would very likely have a tough time in this district.

### **North Carolina: Taylor Won't Run**

Former Congressman **Charles Taylor** (R), who served nine terms representing North Carolina's 11th District (Asheville, etc.) until he lost to ex-football pro **Health Shuler** in 2006, announced last weekend that he will not run for his old office again in 2008. Taylor received 46% to Shuler's 54%. In addition to his name ID and political connections from his incumbency, Taylor is independently wealthy, so party officials, as well as other GOP contenders, who would necessarily need more time to pursue their candidacies, were understandably concerned that Taylor say yea or nay on the race. Three Republicans have announced for the nomination: Highlands attorney **John Armor**, who ran unsuccessfully against Taylor in the 2006 primary; Henderson County former GOP Chairman **Spence Campbell**, a retired Army officer and a businessman (insurance agency); and Asheville City Councilman **Carl Mumpower**. With Taylor out of the way, other GOPers may enter the race. Shuler had \$523,000 on hand as of September 30, 2007.

### **Virginia: GOP Holds 1<sup>st</sup> District with Ease**

In the December 11 special election to fill the congressional seat of the late Jo Ann Davis (R), Republican state Del. **Rob Wittman** defeated Democratic school teacher **Philip Forgit** by 42,767 votes (61%) to 26,275 (37%), with 1,310 (2%) for independent **Lucky Narain**. The vote totals are unofficial but complete, with 100% of precincts reporting.

Democrats had hoped that Forgit's military background, coupled with their party's victories in several legislative races last month, might give them a shot in this admittedly Republican district -- **President Bush** got 60% here in 2004. But the Republican Wittman, stressing opposition to higher taxes and to illegal immigration, won an easy victory.

### **Gubernatorial Updates**

#### **Georgia: Isakson for Governor?**

In 2010, Gov. **Sonny Perdue** (R) will be term-limited, leaving an open shot at the Georgia governor's mansion. The talk in the Peach State is that Sen. **Johnny Isakson** (R), who has long wanted to be his state's CEO (he ran a serious but losing gubernatorial race [45%-53%] against **Zell Miller** (D) in 1990), will step down after his one term in the US Senate and seek the governorship. An Atlanta insider says that Isakson "is not doing anything to discourage the speculation." Stay tuned.

#### **North Carolina: McCrory for Governor**

**Pat McCrory** (R), recently elected to a seventh term as mayor of Charlotte, is considering joining the 2008 race for governor of North Carolina. If McCrory, 51, an executive with the Duke Energy Company, runs, he will join three fairly unknown Republicans who have been campaigning for



months -- wealthy lawyer **Bill Graham**, former state Supreme Court Justice **Bob Orr** and state Sen. **Fred Smith**. According to press reports, McCrory recently had a poll conducted which showed he would be competitive. And a poll taken on December 3 by Public Policy Polling (D) showed that among likely Republican Primary voters, Smith was in first place with 20% to 14% for Graham, 14% for McCrory and 4% for Orr. His Honor was to make a decision by the end of the year. The filing deadline is in February, the primary in May.

The Public Policy poll also showed that, on the Democratic side, Lt. Gov. **Mary Beverly Perdue** had the support of 41% of likely primary voters to 32% for state Treasurer **Richard Moore**; 27% were undecided.

### **Virginia: Deeds Announces for Governor**

State Sen. **Creigh Deeds** (D) announced on December 13 that he will run for governor of Virginia in 2009, hoping to succeed his fellow Democrat **Tim Kaine**, who is limited by law to one term. Deeds, who has spent the past 16 years in the General Assembly, ran unsuccessfully for attorney general in 2005, but lost 49.94% to 49.96% to **Bob McDonnell** (R). Deeds' opponent for the Democratic nomination is likely to be House Democratic Leader **Brian Moran**; others could enter the race. The gubernatorial contest could get more crowded on the Republican side, with both Attorney General McDonnell and Lt. Gov. **Bill Bolling** expected to run. Two other GOPers are also getting mentioned, former US Senator and former Governor **George Allen**, who has been making speeches across Virginia, and former Gov. **Jim Gilmore**, currently running for the US Senate.

## **Grits**

### **? Texas: Democrats Gain in Legislature.**

Democrat **Dan Barrett** won a special election for a seat in the Texas House of Representatives in the normally Republican 97<sup>th</sup> District in the Fort Worth suburbs. Barrett's December 18 win with 52% came in a district that gave **John Kerry** merely 36% of the vote in 2004. His win brings the Democrats to within five seats of a majority in the Texas House.

**? Louisiana: Jefferson Trial Postponed.** A mid-December ruling by a federal district judge postponed US Rep. **William Jefferson's** (D-LA) trial on bribery-related charges to February 25. The postponement should not interfere with the 2008 election schedule. If the trial takes no more than six weeks, as expected, then it should be over before Louisiana's congressional filing dates -- from July 9 to 11. Thus, the charges against the nine-term Jefferson should be resolved, either knocking him out of the race, or giving him a shot in the arm.

### **? Florida's Klein Gets Top Rookie Nod.**

Freshman Congressman **Ron Klein** (D) was named the House "Rookie of the Year" by Washington's *Politico* newspaper. The publication, widely circulated on Capitol Hill, noted that Klein "showed early on that he could take on big tasks and get them done. And he proved a power-house fundraiser as well, an always-welcome attribute in Washington."

**? Mistletoe in DC.** US Rep. **Connie Mack** (R-FL) got some favorable ink for his mid-December wedding to Congresswoman **Mary Bono** (R-CA), widow of the late Congressman **Sonny Bono** (R-CA). Mack and Bono were married in Asheville, North Carolina, the home-town of the congresswoman's father. But the focus in Washington was, naturally, political; *The Hill* noted that the Mack-Bono honeymoon was on hold pending possible roll call votes in the House.