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Jindal's Impressive Victory

Republican **Bobby Jindal**, 36, a second-term congressman and son of immigrants from India, won the governorship of Louisiana in Saturday's open primary. With 100% of precincts reporting, Jindal had 699,672 votes (54%) to 226,364 (17%) for state Sen. **Walter Boasso** (D), 186,800 (14%) for businessman **John Georges**, and 161,425 (12%) for Public Service Commissioner **Foster Campbell** (D). Eight other candidates were in the race, but none received a significant number of votes.

Jindal, who becomes the nation's youngest governor and the first of Indian American descent, presented himself as a reform candidate in a state where resentment of corrupt government has become a raw nerve. He advocated a stringent revamping of the ethics law for state legislators and lobbyists.

Jindal was making his second race for governor, having narrowly lost a runoff to **Kathleen Blanco** (D) in 2003. In this campaign, however, he was more aggressive; one of his TV spots portrayed his major foes as corrupt clowns. Jindal was also viewed by many voters as having earned the office, both by his close race four years ago and by his assiduous courting of North Louisiana voters,

who did not support his 2003 bid. He was also endorsed by the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*.

Boasso, 47, who founded a successful shipping container cleaning business, and Georges, also 47, a convenience store magnate, were registered Republicans who left the GOP when Jindal sewed up his party's support. Campbell, 60, a populist in the **Huey Long** tradition, was a state senator for 26 years before getting elected to his current post regulating utilities.

The Democratic Party endorsed no candidate, but ran ads attacking Jindal. However, Jindal responded quickly to each charge. For example, in answer to the Democrats' characterization of Oxford-educated Jindal as "big brain, small heart" for voting against the Democratic plan for children's health care, a Jindal spot featured him with his wife and children talking about health care and education. The state GOP ran ads attacking the top two Democratic contenders as well as independent Georges, citing his business interests in video poker machines.

On the money front, Jindal raised some \$11 million; Campbell raised more than \$2 million. Millionaires Boasso and Georges trailed in



fundraising, but paid for their well-financed campaigns out of their own pockets.

Jindal's election gives the GOP control of all five Deep South states, with Louisiana joining Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina in having a Republican in the governor's mansion.

Party registration in Louisiana is about 50% Democratic, 25% Republican and 25% independent or other, but voters -- and even politicians -- are very fluid in their party loyalties in this state. Four years ago, for example, New Orleans Mayor **Ray Nagin**, a Democrat and an African American, endorsed Jindal over Blanco. This year, however, Nagin endorsed Georges, praising him as the only candidate who went to Jena, Louisiana, to protest the prosecutor's treatment of six black students charged in the beating of a white student during a series of racially charged events. Nagin recorded a telephone message supporting Georges that was used in calls to voters. However, press reports suggest that turn-out was low among black voters, who make up some 29% of the state's electorate.

The Down-Ballot Contests

It was not all bad news for the Democrats. In the race for lieutenant governor, incumbent **Mitch Landrieu** (D), brother of US Sen. **Mary Landrieu** (D), won re-election with room to spare. Landrieu had 701,777 votes (57%) to 375,964 (30%) for country music star **Sammy Kershaw** (R) and 130,935 (11%) for state Rep. **Gary Beard**. The state GOP did not endorse either Republican contender.

In the race for attorney general, incumbent **Charles Foti** (D), who has been under fire for prosecuting medical personnel for alleged "mercy killings" following Hurricane Katrina, failed to make the runoff. On Nov. 17, District

Attorney **Buddy Caldwell** (D), who had 434,111 (36%), will face Shreveport attorney **Royal Alexander**, who had 395,649 (32%); he had been endorsed by the state Republican Party. Foti was third with 389,568 (32%).

Commissioner of Agriculture **Bob Odom** (D), a major Republican target, is also in a runoff. Odom had 505,154 (41%) to state Rep. **Mike Strain**'s (R) 495,082 (40%). Zachary Metro Councilman **Wayne Carter** (R) was third with 152,934 (13%) and **Don Johnson** (R) trailed with 69,525 (6%).

Insurance Commissioner **Jim Donelon** (R), considered the favorite for re-election, won a bare majority, with 606,534 votes (51%) to 423,722 (36%) for **Jim Crowley** (D), 105,981 (9%) for **Robert Lansden** (R), and 55,400 (5%) for **Jerilyn Schneider-Kneale** (R).

Secretary of State **Jay Dardenne** (R), another early favorite, easily won his race over weak opposition, with 758,156 (63%) to "**R**" **Wooley**'s (D) 373,956 (31%) and **Scott Lewis**'s 64,704 (5%).

State Treasurer **John Kennedy**, (R) who recently switched to the GOP, had no opposition, guaranteeing the Republicans will hold this office. Kennedy is widely viewed as a likely challenger to US Sen. Landrieu (D) next year. However, Mitch Landrieu's strong win in the race for lieutenant governor bodes well for his sister, Mary, in 2008.

Mississippi: Democrats Back Barbour

Four prominent Democrats -- two of them African Americans -- have endorsed Republican Gov. **Haley Barbour** for re-election. The biggest surprise was former Congressman **Mike Espy**'s (D) support for Barbour. Espy, one of the leading figures in Mississippi's black political community,



served as secretary of agriculture under **President Clinton**. Appearing with Espy and Barbour at a news conference were former Gov. **Bill Waller** (D), former Lt. Gov. **Brad Dye** (D) and Moss Point's African American mayor, **Xavier Bishop** (D).

While no polls have been published on the race, other indications suggest Barbour is a heavy favorite in the Nov. 6 election over Democratic trial lawyer **John Arthur Eaves Jr.** In the Oct. 10 financial reports, Barbour had \$5,940,000 on hand to Eaves' \$24,000 (though Eaves is largely a self-funder). Says veteran Jackson journalist **Bill Minor**, "The way it's being treated in the press... it's not an election, it's a coronation." Meanwhile, Eaves, who has conducted a series of hard-hitting attacks on Barbour, released a new TV spot last week accusing Barbour of being soft on illegal aliens, a charge Barbour's headquarters denies. Minor concludes that though Eaves is unlikely to win, he's "good at the counter-punching." **Safe Republican.**

Kentucky: GOPers Boost Beshear

In mirror image of Mississippi, Democratic challenger **Steve Beshear** is getting significant support from Republicans in his race against scandal-plagued incumbent Gov. **Ernie Fletcher** (R). Two long-time Republicans, former state legislators **Lindy Casebier** and **Bill Lile**, have announced they're backing Democrat Beshear. They joined ex-state Rep. **Steve Nunn** (R) and ex-Congressman **Larry Hopkins** (R), who announced they were supporting Beshear earlier in the campaign. Perhaps more costly to the Fletcher campaign - - which has consistently run 15 to 20 points behind in the polls -- the Lexington *Herald-Leader* reports that some 250 people who gave money to Fletcher in 2003 have donated to Beshear instead this year, boosting the Democrats' campaign by some \$300,000. In

addition, another 95 who gave to Fletcher last time are giving to both sides this year, providing another \$80,000 to Beshear. **Safe Democratic.**

Virginia: Davis Bid Won't Clear Field

Charles E. "Chuck" Davis, the widower of the late US Rep. **Jo Ann Davis** (R), who died two weeks ago, announced last week that he will run in the special election to fill out the remainder of her fourth term in Congress. "Chuck" Davis, 58, is a retired battalion chief for the Hampton fire department. He will have significant support from voters who admired his late wife, as well as the possible use of the \$96,000 in her campaign account. In his early statements to the press, Davis stressed expanded health insurance coverage, support for the military and opposition to abortion.

"Davis is the frontrunner," one GOP insider tells SPR; "he is the widower. But people who know him have no feeling at all that he's a politician," and thus may not be an effective campaigner. In any case, Davis's candidacy is not expected to discourage all of the large number of political figures in the district who are interested in running for the seat.

Because incumbents are re-elected routinely, especially in districts that lean strongly toward one party or the other, a vacant congressional seat is a relatively rare political opportunity. So in addition to Davis, more than a few Republicans have said publicly that they will probably run for the seat. **David Caprara**, a former housing official in Gov. **George Allen's** (R) administration, has already announced. District GOP chair **Jim Bowden** plans to announce his candidacy as soon as the dates for the special election and the GOP nominating convention have been set. Former Del. **Richard Black** of Loudon County has rented a house in Fredericksburg and



announced he may seek the seat. And **Paul Jost**, a millionaire who lost a primary to Jo Ann Davis in 2000, is also a likely contender.

Other Republicans from a long list of local officials who are being mentioned in the press are also possible contenders. Gov. **Tim Kaine** (D) has not yet set a date for the special election; if he chooses a December date, it will effectively rule out a number of contenders who are currently running for re-election to the state legislature. If he chooses a March date, the next available time slot, more candidates are likely to sign up.

Several potential candidates have already taken their names out of consideration, including Lt. Gov. **Bill Bolling** (R) and state Sen. **Ryan McDougal** (R).

The district has a Republican voting history and the GOP nominee will be a heavy favorite. **President Bush** got 60% of the vote here in 2004, George Allen (R) carried it in his unsuccessful re-election bid in 2006, and most of the elected local officials are Republicans.

On the Democratic side, the most likely nominee will be **Phil Forgit**, who ran a losing but strong race for delegate in a heavily Republican district in 2003. Forgit has won a National Education Association “teacher-of-the-year” award and has a Bronze Star for his service in Iraq. While Democratic prospects here are not bright, if the GOP should nominate a candidate from the outlying Washington, DC, suburbs, far from the main population base on the Virginia Peninsula, Forgit could win votes based on geography. “The Peninsula folks are worried that if the congressman doesn’t come from the Peninsula, it will hurt this area in the long run,” says **John McGlennon** (D), a county commissioner and political science professor.

The late Congresswoman Davis, who died of breast cancer at age 57, grew up in a mobile home and performed in a country music group with her family, went to business school, founded a successful real estate firm and served in the Virginia House of Delegates before winning election to Congress in 2000. She was conservative on a wide range of issues, but made her most notable contribution in advancing the interests of military personnel and their families, who constitute a major presence in the 1st District.

Dixie Democrats Rolling in Dough

The money numbers for the US House for the third quarter portend a good 2008 for the Democrats, another bad year for the GOP. The ten Southern Democratic members of Congress most vulnerable to a GOP challenge had an average of \$813,000 cash on hand as of Sept. 30, according to reports from the Federal Election Commission (FEC). The ten potentially most vulnerable Republicans had an average of \$422,000.

The Democratic war chests range from a high of \$1,407,000 for Florida freshman **Ron Klein** to a low of \$536,000 for Kentucky freshman **John Yarmuth** (but millionaire Yarmuth can write checks, if he has too).

On the GOP side, of those who could lose to a Democrat next year, the big money raiser is freshman **Vern Buchanan**, another Floridian, with \$1,228,000 on hand (and he can write checks, too), down to a mere \$186,000 in the kitty of North Carolina’s **Walter Jones**, an anti-war Republican who faces opposition in both the primary and the General.

While the list for both parties is somewhat subjective, the bottom line is clear: The Republican congressional candidates, who are supposedly carrying water for big business and



for the rich and successful, are raising just over half as much as their Democratic counterparts, the advocates of the poor and needy.

Philosophy aside, money tends to flow toward the party that stands the best chance in the next election, and right now -- as is also reflected in presidential fundraising -- the tea leaves show a great big donkey in the bottom of the cup.

Here's the financial scorecard for the twenty Southern members of Congress who are most likely to have a competitive race next year.

Democrats

Tim Mahoney (Florida 16), a freshman who got elected (49%) mainly because disgraced **Mark Foley's** (R) name was still on the ballot, has a very impressive \$1,148,000 on hand. His three GOP foes are in the hunt, however; Palm Beach Gardens Councilman **Hal Valeche** has \$243,000, state Rep. **Gayle Harrell** has \$251,000 and attorney **Tom Rooney** \$337,000.

Ron Klein (Florida 22), another freshman, is achieving unbeatable status, with \$1,407,000 on hand; Republican **Allen West** has \$13,000.

Jim Marshall (Georgia 8) slipped by with 51% last year, but he's already got a hefty \$724,000. His Republican opponent, retired General **Rick Goddard** is picking up steam, however, with \$227,000.

John Barrow (Georgia 12) edged in with 50.3% in 2006, but he's already got a whopping \$945,000 on hand.

John Yarmuth (Kentucky 3) has \$536,000 on hand to \$64,000 for his GOP challenger, ex-US Attorney **Erwin Roberts**.

Charlie Melancon (Louisiana 3) could face a tough race next year, if the GOP wins this

year's governor's race, but he won't be a push-over: He's got \$646,000 on hand.

Heath Shuler (North Carolina 11), another freshman, is getting ready for a significant challenge, with \$532,000 on hand.

Chet Edwards (Texas 17) escaped a major battle last year (he won with 58%), but if the GOP looks strong in Texas, he could have a serious contest; the moderate Democrat will be more than ready: \$921,000 on hand.

Nick Lampson (Texas 22) is a freshman in **Tom DeLay's** old GOP-leaning district, but he's suiting up for the fray, with \$679,000 on hand. His GOP foes, however, also have some money: **Shelly Sekula-Gibbs** has \$465,000; **Pete Olson** \$181,000, **Dean Hrbacek** \$120,000 and **Robert Talton** a mere \$225.

Ciro Rodriguez (Texas 23), another Lone Star freshman, used to be known as a poor fundraiser, but he's poor no more: \$592,000 on hand. His Republican foe, lawyer/banker **Quico Canseco**, has \$299,000.

Republicans

Ric Keller (Florida 8), re-elected with 53% in 2006, has \$466,000 on hand, but needs more. He has two primary foes with at least nuisance value, and two Democrats vying to oppose him, attorney **Mike Smith** with \$187,000 and 2006 nominee **Charlie Stuart**, with \$186,000.

Vern Buchanan (Florida 13) won with 50.07%, followed by charges of bug-ridden voting machines, but he's got \$1,228,000 on hand, to \$216,000 for **Christine Jennings** (D).

Dave Weldon (Florida 15) won in 2006 with a smaller-than-usual 56%. Challenger **Paul Rancatore** (D) withdrew due to family illness, but Weldon could still draw an opponent. He



has \$454,000 on hand, which might -- or might not -- scare off potential foes.

Tom Feeney (Florida 24) got a lot of bad ink in recent months and has a tepid \$380,000 on hand. Meanwhile, Democrats are excited about Feeney's foe, ex-state Rep. **Suzanne Kosmas**, who announced last week

Walter Jones (North Carolina 3), who might get kicked off the House Armed Services Committee for opposing the war in Iraq, has \$186,000. His primary foe has \$35,000; the Democrat in the race has a mere \$4,000.

Robin Hayes (North Carolina 8) is getting ready for another close one in this competitive district; he has \$521,000 to feisty challenger **Larry Kissell's** not-too-hefty \$103,000.

Ron Paul (Texas 14) is catching flak for his presidential ambitions and has only \$80,000 in his congressional campaign account. His primary foe, however, has a mere \$360. And a serious Democratic effort could surface here.

Thelma Drake (Virginia 2) squeaked by with 51% in 2006 and has \$324,000 on hand. That's not much compared to Georgia's Marshall and Barrow, two similarly situated Democrats.

Virgil Goode (Virginia 5) has recently been more controversial than usual; his \$352,000 isn't huge, but **David Shreve**, one of two Democratic challengers, has only \$10,000.

Frank Wolf (Virginia 10) has only \$230,000 on hand to \$295,000 for his 2006 foe **Judy Feder** and \$45,000 for more recent challenger **Mike Turner**, an Air Force veteran. Wolf, who won by 57% last year, always looks vulnerable until Election Night, but his district

is trending Democratic and the state looks ripe for GOP losses in 2008.

For FEC numbers for more Southern districts, see www.southernpoliticalreport.com; click on Resources, then, under Campaign Updates, on FEC reports.

Grits

? Warner (D) Strong in Virginia. A new poll commissioned by the *Washington Post* shows that former Gov. **Mark Warner** (D) is a heavy favorite to win the 2008 US Senate race. Warner led former Gov. **Jim Gilmore** (R) by 61% to 31% and led Congressman **Tom Davis** (R) by 63% to 28%. The survey, taken Oct. 4-8, also showed that among Republican voters Gilmore is more popular by 48% to 29% for Davis. In presidential politics, **Hillary Clinton** led Democrats with 49% to **Barack Obama's** 25% and **John Edwards** 11%; **Rudy Giuliani** led among Republicans, with 34% to **John McCain's** 20%, **Fred Thompson's** 19% and **Mitt Romney's** 9%. Finally, 52% of all voters prefer that the next president be a Democrat, to 41% who prefer a Republican.

? Sabato's Constitution. Preeminent political scientist **Larry Sabato** of the University of Virginia has a new book out, "A More Perfect Constitution," that proposes 23 ways to improve the US Constitution. The proposals include a 136-member Senate, with more members for the bigger states, with former presidents and vice-presidents also added to the upper chamber; a 1,000-member House holding three-year terms; term limits for all of congress; one six-year term for the president; a balanced budget amendment; 15-year terms for the Supreme Court; a more equitable Electoral College; and a ban on wealthy candidates financing their own campaigns. "A More Perfect Constitution" was published by Walker & Company in New York City; \$25.95 hardcover. For more information, see www.centerforpolitics.org.