

Tom Leatherwood

Congress

March 21, 2008

Dear Fellow Tennesseans,

Do you believe that one reason Republicans lost control of Congress in 2006 is because they became self-serving and lost touch with our conservative principles? Our Republican incumbents kept “talking the talk”, but stopped “walking the walk”. Our country deserves better than our Congress has given us. *If you want a change in Congress, then I ask for your support in the Seventh Congressional District Republican primary.*

Consider the Ineffectiveness of Congress:

There is a justified cynicism toward today’s Congress. Under the watch of fellow Republicans, government has grown astronomically. Many members of Congress have been more concerned with arranging their next fundraising party than with being good stewards of our trust.

- Pro-life and family values legislation is continually sidelined.
- Illegal immigration is worse than ever.
- The federal deficit has soared to \$9 trillion.
- Our debt to China has ballooned.

Today I feel compelled to point out that our own incumbent Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn from Williamson County has been “talking the talk” but not “walking the walk”. I served in the State Senate with Marsha and I consider her a friend but she has not been effective or focused on the job we elected her to do. It is time for her to come home and let someone else represent the needs of our district effectively.

A Few Facts You Need to Know:

- Blackburn has *raised huge amounts of money from lobbyists and then funneled this campaign money to her family.* The Commercial Appeal reported, “The company, Political Concepts LLC, was founded by Paul J. Ketchel III and operates from his and Blackburn’s daughter’s home in suburban Nashville. It received \$46,935 for campaign work leading up to Blackburn’s 2004 victory, in which she didn’t have an opponent in the primary or general elections.” Since that report, she has gone on to **funnel over \$120,000 in PAC and campaign money to her family.**

- Incumbent Blackburn exceeded the federal limits for transferring money from her PAC bank account to her campaign bank account. She was also caught under-reporting contributions by over \$61,000 and failing to accurately report over \$50,000 in disbursements. She has been **fined at least \$1,500 by the Federal Election Commission.**
- While the incumbent was trying to rise in the ranks of Congress, deficits were rising to record levels: from \$6.2 trillion to \$9 trillion. She was *not an observer* of this rise; she *was a contributor*. Blackburn sponsored and supported earmarks and pork-barrel spending from the Appalachians to the Houston Zoo.
- Incumbent Blackburn **has allowed special interest to “privately finance” over \$100,000 of travel** during her tenure . . . trips to the sands of Ft. Walton Beach, to the ski slopes of Aspen, to Las Vegas, Chicago, California and more. This is another way that special interest groups gain influence in Washington.
- As Governor Don Sundquist’s appointed director of the Film, Tape, and Music Commission, Blackburn took state funded trips to France, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles and other locations. The Knoxville News-Sentinel reported that after one trip, she “was asked to justify her travel expenses” after they were questioned as “excessive”. Blackburn apparently became upset about having her reimbursement request questioned, burned her travel-related receipts, and turned in the ashes in a baggie with an attached note, “Copy of LA expense report as requested”.

Let’s take this opportunity to say “no more business as usual”. It’s time for a Congressman who will focus on implementing smaller government, having an open political agenda, and actually passing legislation based on family-friendly, conservative principles. I would be honored if you allowed me to serve you as this kind of Congressman.

My Background:

In 1992, I was elected to the Tennessee State Senate. My opponent was a powerful incumbent Republican Senator of 27 years, who sponsored a state income tax bill. With the help of many Tennesseans, he and the income tax bill were defeated. For 8 years I offered strong leadership and advanced pro-family legislation, conservative ideals and fiscal responsibility. I fulfilled my term limits campaign promise and did not run for a third term to the State Senate.

Since my election as Shelby County Register of Deeds in 2000, I have worked diligently to increase the efficiency of the office. While cutting costs, we have digitized property records back to the early 1800’s and made our records available for free via the website, <http://register.shelby.tn.us>. We also expanded our data to include aerial photos and genealogical information. **Effective management has allowed a reduction in customer fees and we operate at no cost to the taxpayers and send surpluses to the county treasury.**

My record as a public servant illustrates my sincerity and dedication to Tennesseans. My fellow citizens elect me not only to do a job; they elect me to do it well. And that brings me back to the purpose of this letter. Just as I could not sit idly by in 1992 while a state income tax was well on its way to passage, I cannot sit idly by in 2008 while congressional ethics and conservative leadership are well on their way to a total meltdown.

My Positions on the Most Pressing Issues:

- Make current tax cuts permanent and then further reduce taxes to truly stimulate the economy
- Stop spending money the U.S. does not have, and therefore must borrow from foreign countries like China (the top holder of U.S. debt)
- Stop earmarks and pork-barrel spending that help create huge deficits
- Support a constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn
- Support the surge and insist on winning the war on terror
- Close borders to illegal immigration and drugs
- Support enforcement of existing immigration laws
- Support our right to keep and bear arms

We need to become the majority party again, one that Ronald Reagan would recognize. I will work to implement those conservative principles which aim for a smaller, less intrusive government. If you agree with me, I hope you will support my efforts to challenge the status quo.

Your Support is Important:

My wife, Melissa, and I have been very prayerful about this political leap. I am humbly asking you to help me win this primary election. To win against a wealthy and powerful incumbent, your positive and timely response is vital. I need your thoughts, prayers, financial support and your time. Please complete and return the support form to me in the enclosed envelope.

Thank you very much for your consideration. I look forward to hearing from you and discussing the issues.

Sincerely,



Tom Leatherwood

P. S. I believe the United States of America is the greatest country on Earth, and I want it to continue to be so for generations to come. The principles that made America great will keep America great. Let's get back to it.

Name: _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ (H) _____ (O)

You can count on me to do the following:

Display a yard sign Ask ten people to vote for Tom Leatherwood

Distribute literature Host a neighborhood social or "meet & greet"

Hold a sign at polls Make a financial contribution

Other _____

What are the top two issues facing our country today? _____

Contributions to **Tom Leatherwood for Congress** are limited by Federal law to \$2,300 per individual (\$4,600 per couple). Contributions are not tax deductible as charitable contributions for income tax purposes. Contributions are prohibited from corporations and foreign nationals. It is illegal for any person to reimburse another for making a contribution to a political campaign. Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect the name, mailing address, occupation, and employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in an election cycle. Please complete the following information:

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Occupation: _____

Employer: _____

Paid for by Tom Leatherwood for Congress

P.O. Box 738 Arlington, TN 38002 ~ 901-867-7780

tomleatherwood@bellsouth.net