



# THE FELDMAN GROUP, INC.

September 19, 2008

TO: Himes for Congress

FR: Diane Feldman

RE: Tracking Poll

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The campaign's tracking poll, fielded September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, shows that Democratic challenger Jim Himes has pulled even with Republican Congressman Christopher Shays. Each candidate has 45 percent support. Additionally, their support is equally strong with 27 percent certain to support Himes and 28 percent certain to support Shays. An even contest six weeks before Election Day means that the contest now favors Himes.

Our last poll, shortly before the Democratic convention in August, showed Shays in the lead. In the interim, however, Democrats have moved decisively toward Himes to give him a 69 percent to 23 percent lead among registered Democrats. Additionally, independents, who remain a plurality in this district, now break almost evenly between the candidates, with 45 percent for Shays and 43 percent for Himes.

In a district notoriously difficult to communicate in due to the dominance of the New York City media market, familiarity with Himes has continued to climb. Now, 60 percent of voters say they are familiar with Himes, compared to 49 percent in August. Meanwhile, 36 percent of voters feel Chris Shays deserves re-election, while 46 percent believe someone else deserves a chance. Only 43 percent of voters believe he is doing a good job in Congress and only a third reject the description that he is too close to unpopular President George W. Bush while 44 percent believe that is at least partly true. Bush's own job performance rating is only 18 percent positive.

Himes' growth is largely due to raising his own profile but the presidential dynamics and issue atmospherics have aided him as well. Voters in Connecticut's 4<sup>th</sup> congressional district favor Democratic presidential nominee Barack Obama over John McCain by 56 percent to 33 percent. Deepening concerns about the economy -- now the overwhelming issue -- mean that voters are even more likely to reject the Shays assessment that the economy is fundamentally strong. Himes' expertise on economic issues is also a growing asset.

Indeed, in a comparison of the two candidates, Himes has a double-digit advantage on being able to help find new solutions to problems and bringing new energy to the job.

The combination of Himes' personal appeal and the presidential dynamics and issue atmosphere of the district make him the current favorite in this race.