



August 28, 2009

TO: Interested Parties

FR: Cornell Belcher

RE: Key findings from Atlanta Mayoral tracking poll

Three months out from the election, our recent poll¹ reveals that Atlanta's mayoral race remains up for grabs as none of the major candidates have locked up a strong base of support and the race is growing increasingly tight as Reed begins to introduce himself and his vision to the voters of the city (Norwood 33 percent, Borders 19 percent, Reed 16 percent and 28 percent remain undecided). Despite two long time establishment candidates in the race, Norwood and Borders have been unable to translate their broader name identification and establishment credentials into a broad and reliable base of support as the vast majority of voters (73 percent) remain fluid or uncertain about who to support and a plurality are completely undecided. It is clear that voters have tired of the establishment's politics as usual and are looking for new a new direction. Indeed, the long established members of the city council have not only failed to capitalize on their familiarity with voters, given how hungry voters are for change, their leadership positions on the City Council may in fact prove to be a drain as voters grow more disapproving of the council's job performance (August: 39 percent approve; 45 percent disapprove). Atlanta's voters are sending a clear signal that they reject the status quo and are clamoring for a new brand of leadership. State Senator Kasim Reed is answering the call with a message that appeals to Atlanta's voters.

Although Norwood currently leads the pack, she has not managed to make any statistically meaningful progress since she began her campaign (Norwood support -- May: 32 percent; August: 33 percent). With the so-called front-runner stalled in a going nowhere fast campaign and the second place candidate losing ground (Borders support -- May: 25 percent; August: 19 percent) and poised to fall even further behind, it is clear that the dynamic of this race has changed. Currently, Kasim Reed is the only candidate with a positive trend. Unlike the rest of the field, as voters get to know him they are becoming more open to supporting his candidacy. If he continues on his current path there is little doubt that at the very least he will be in a superior position for a run-off election.

Reed is the only top tier candidate with real room to grow given the name identification of Norwood and Borders. As voters get to know Reed better they move readily towards supporting him. Conversely, over the same period, voters' feelings about Borders and Norwood have remained stagnate.

Reed's appeal continues to cut across geographical and racial lines. With continued resources, Reed is well positioned to deflect any desperate negative campaigning that is likely to be waged against him and give the people of Atlanta the change they want and need.

¹ 580 likely voters were surveyed August 26 - August 27, 2009. Margin of error is +/- 4.1 percent.