FL-07 Campaign Overview

April 1, 2016

**District Summary**

**THE CANDIDATES**

***John Mica (R)***

Congressman John L. Mica was first elected to the House of Representatives in 1992 to represent Florida’s 7th Congressional District which includes Orange, Seminole and Volusia Counties. He currently serves as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations in the Oversight and Government Reform Committee.

Last term, Mica served as the Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. He remains as a senior member of that panel and will continue to provide leadership in setting sound national infrastructure policy. In that role as the leader of one of the largest committees in Congress with broad legislative jurisdiction, Mica was responsible for developing and overseeing federal policy and projects relating to aviation, highways, transit, rail transportation, pipelines, the Coast Guard, maritime transportation, water infrastructure and resources, economic development, public buildings and emergency management issues.

***Susannah Randolph (D)***

**As of 4/8 Susannah is a candidate in FL-09 but the DCCC has had ongoing conversations with her about moving to FL-07 where she was raised. Backgrounder is available in the candidate information folder in the FL-09 District by District folder.**

Susannah Randolph, née Lindberg, started working as a political activist in college and has been doing so ever since. After holding a series of positions with consumer protection and environmental advocacy organizations, she took a job with the controversial political organizing group ACORN. Randolph served as both a Florida political director and legislative director for ACORN. Randolph and her husband, Scott Randolph, were the subject of controversy in 2009, when it was revealed that her husband – then a state representative – had sought funds for an ACORN affiliate at the same time Susannah was registered to lobby on the group’s behalf.

Randolph later went on to serve as an aide to U.S Rep. Alan Grayson. She worked in his district office and managed his unsuccessful 2010 campaign. While serving as campaign manager, Randolph defended a Grayson campaign ad that compared his opponent, Daniel Webster, to the Taliban and used out of context video footage to accuse Webster of commanding wives to submit to their husbands. After Grayson lost his reelection bid, Randolph went to work as executive director of the liberal advocacy group Florida Watch Now. Randolph was heavily involved in the group’s “Pink Slip Rick” campaign, which sought to highlight the Governor’s deleterious effect on Florida public sector jobs. Randolph returned to Grayson’s office after he was elected to represent Florida’s 9th District in 2012. She was still on Grayson’s official payroll as of January 2014.

***Bob Poe (D)***

**As of 4/8 Bob is a candidate in FL-10 but the DCCC has had ongoing conversations with him about moving to FL-07. Backgrounder is available in the candidate information folder in the FL-10 District by District folder.**

Robert Joseph Poe is a potential Democratic candidate for Florida’s Tenth Congressional District, a seat currently held by Rep. Daniel Webster. Poe is currently helping Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign in a volunteer fundraiser capacity after serving as the campaign chairman for Charlie Crist’s 2014 gubernatorial bid.

An Orlando native, Poe spent more than 20 years in the broadcast industry, most notably working as station manager of WKIS and VMMO. Poe was also was part of the management team that helped market and secure television contracts for the Orlando Magic, central Florida’s professional basketball team. Active in Democratic politics since he was a boy, Poe unsuccessfully ran for state senate in 1980 while remaining involved behind the scenes. In March 2000, he was elected Chairman of the Florida Democratic Party, a post he held until he was pressured to resign in the aftermath of 2002’s disastrous election results. Following his resignation, Poe joined the Emergency Communications Network as President, where he stayed until 2011.

Poe has been sober for more than two decades after struggling with alcoholism in the late 1980’s, an addiction fueled in part by his guilt from same-sex encounters and coming to terms with his own identity while married to a woman. In 2011, Poe and his wife of 30 years, who were already separated, divorced as part of a difficult but “mutually supportive” process, after which Poe’s daughter said she and her father had never been closer. On July 4, 2015, Poe married Ken Brown, his partner of 7 years, in Los Angeles. Since coming out, Poe has been actively involved in raising and contributing funds for national and Florida LGBTQ political organizations.

In 2014, Poe chaired Charlie Crist’s gubernatorial campaign and in 2015 he began raising money for Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, further building on his long history as a major Democratic contributor and fundraiser. Poe also founded and funded a nonprofit which has contributed more than $40,000 to churches, health programs and LGBTQ organizations. As Chairman of the Florida Democratic Party, Poe built a record as an outspoken critic of Jeb Bush’s administration’s policies and conduct of the presidential recount in 2000, but his tenure also represented a low point for the state party. Florida Democrats lost ground at every level of government in the 2002 election, leading Poe to initially give up his salary before ultimately being pushed to resign in 2003. The year before the disastrous elections, Poe had accepted a 300 percent raise of his salary as party chairman, increasing it to $100,000 per year. A year after Poe’s resignation, the IRS filed a lien against the Florida Democratic Party as the committee also faced a $900,000 shortfall (though those troubles may have occurred after Poe resigned as Chair). Despite having grown up in the Orlando area and lived there almost continuously from his childhood through to the mid 2000’s, Poe split time between Florida and California from the late 2000’s through at least 2014. Poe’s Beverly Hills home includes a large water display which led it to be featured in a home décor magazine, while his Orlando penthouse has been described in profiles as “tastefully extravagant.”

**THE DISTRICT**

Following Judge Terry Lewis’ recommendation that the Florida Supreme Court adopt a new plan for the state’s congressional lines, Florida’s 7th Congressional district emerged as the most statistically competitive congressional race in Florida.

Redistricting makes the Florida 7th more Democratic and significantly more competitive from the outset. The redrawn district becomes 2-3 points more Democratic, and President Obama carried the new district in 2008 with 51.6 percent of the vote. In 2012, President Obama and Mitt Romney were tied in the new district. It gains African American voters with the addition of Sanford (7.9% of voting age population to 9.4%). While it loses the heavily Hispanic/Latino city of Deltona, this loss is more than made up for with the addition of the new northeast Orlando section.

Puerto Ricans make up significant population of the electorate and the group is growing as many are fleeing the island for the Orlando and registering to vote.

Orlando Media Market

The print environment is real challenge. The district is covered entirely by the Orlando Media Market, with the Orlando Sentinel being the most vital print paper in the district. The Sentinel political reporters/editors have made clear they have no interest in covering hits from political parties, citing time and capacity. They have also given the impression of an unwillingness to say anything negative about John Mica in their original reporting.

Former Orlando Sentinel Political reporter Scott Powers, who now writes for Florida Politics, is a secondary option for press opportunities, though he works for a Republican consultant -owned online newspaper, he is fair and wants to make this blog viable and prominent online presence.

The TV side is more vibrant. The reporters are highly sophisticated and aggressive.

**OTHER BALLOT ACTIVITY POL**

The Presidential campaign will likely have a large turnout effort in this district. In addition, c3/c4 organizations have discussed doing a voter registration program targeting the Hispanic community.

**THE CAMPAIGN TEAM POL**

* Media:
* Mail:
* Polling:
* Online/Digital:
* Self-research:

**RETREAT SCHEDULE POL**

**N/A**

**LOCAL CONTACTS POL**

* Mitch Emerson, local activist

Cell: 805-427-4183

E-mail: mitch.r.emerson@gmail.com

**MEDIA PLANS POL**

**N/A**

**POLLING TIMELINE POL**

**N/A**

**MAIL PLANS POL**

N/A

**MESSAGE AND vulnerabilities**

**MESSAGE SUMMARY**

Topline:

**John Mica** has a 20 year conservative record of voting to cut vital programs for working class Americans like Medicare and Pell Grant funding, while voting to increase his own pay eight times. John Mica has consistently made racially insensitive remarks, expressing a potentially offensive viewpoint that is out of touch with his newly drawn diverse district.

Overview:

Mica has a long conservative voting record, for nearly 20 years, John Mica voted to raise his own pay while voting to cut vital programs for working class Americans. Mica has voted eight times to raise his own pay, accepting a 30 percent salary increase over his time in Congress. During the same span, Mica has voted for Republican measures that would cut critical programs like Medicare, Pell Grant funding, and Social Security – and with his votes on dozens of Republican budgets.

John Mica has never had to defend a competitive district. Mica could be headed into what would clearly be the most challenging political battle of his career, if he has competent primary challenger.

* His fundraising was lackluster prior to redistricting but has started to pick up ahead of 2016.
* His campaign finance reports have been scrutinized for raising concerns of personal use. A tactic would be

Also, Congressman Mica has made numerous racially insensitive remarks that will offend immigrants and African Americans. Even more, John Mica doesn’t realize when his remarks are offensive and is incapable of responding to direct questions on his rhetoric.

**VULNERABILITIES (SELF) RESEARCH**

**PRESS HITS (2016 CYCLE) RESEARCH**

* **Has misused more than $230K in campaign funds in “**[**meals with constituents**](http://thehill.com/homenews/house/272975-gop-lawmakers-meals-with-constituents-draw-scrutiny)**” including near his vacation home in Blowing Rock, North Carolina and states like Arizona, New York, and Illinois.**
* **Mica** [**said**](http://www.orlandosentinel.com/news/taking-names-scott-maxwell/os-mica-to-obama-spend-time-with-thugs-not-on-cnn-20160107-post.html) **that President Obama instead of holding a televised town hall on gun violence would be better of holding a town hall with “young thugs in homicide prone cities like Chicago, Baltimore, Detroit, and New Orleans.”**

**UNLANDED HITS RESEARCH**

* **Mica has paid taxes late 22 times on his DC properties, and has paid interest of $202.99 and $1,071.81 in penalties**
* **In 1980 said he supported abolishing marital rape exemption because the bible didn’t allow the state to “to meddlin’ in the marriage bedroom.”**

**OTHER TOP HITS RESEARCH**

* **Voted against original Violence Against Women Act (1994) and reauthorization in 2013**
* **Has voted 8 times to raise his own pay and has accepted more than $40,000 in pay raises**
* **Has taken several taxpayer funded trips costing nearly $100,000 to travel across the world to places like Italy, Paris, and China**
* **Signed Contract for America which contained a term limit pledge of 12 years of service, but has served in the House of Representatives since 1993**
* **Strong advocate for Social Security privatization and raising Social Security retirement age**
* **Presented “grievances” of Orlando Tea Party on floor of U.S. House**
* **Attacked immigrants and said that “people who come here illegally should not have any rights”**
* **Mica: “Some of the finest folks I’ve met are lobbyists”**
* **Listed in 2012** [**CREW report**](http://www.citizensforethics.org/pages/family-affair-findings) **as the person with the most family members registered to lobby or employed in government affairs**

**TRACKING FOOTAGE RESEARCH**

**STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES POL**

Strengths: Weak incumbent who is vulnerable to being tied to Trump and Presidential level turnout.

Weaknesses: Both of our top recruits are currently running in other districts and have bio’s that might not fit in with the moderate district. Orlando market is expensive.

**HISTORICAL CONCERNS POL**

Because John Mica has gone so long without a legitimate challenge very few leaders locally actually believe he is vulnerable. This mindset has made our top recruits believe that the district is out of reach.

**FUNDRAISING Candidate fundraising**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **DEMOCRAT** | **Q1 2015** | **Q2 2015** | **Q3 2015** | **Q4 2015** | **Q1 2016** |
| **Goal** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Actual Raised** |  |  |  |  |  |
| ***Difference*** |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **REPUBLICAN** | **Q1 2015** | **Q2 2015** | **Q3 2015** | **Q4 2015** | **Q1 2016** |
| **Actual Raised** |  |  |  |  |  |
| **COH** |  |  |  |  |  |