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Poll Results in California's 11th CD: Richard Pombo Remains In Serious Trouble

To: Interested Parties

From: Ben Tulchin and Katie Muehlenkamp, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner

In an election cycle where voters are looking for change and incumbent Congressmen are in trouble across the country, that trend is clearly evident in California's 11th Congressional district. Based on a recent survey conducted among likely voters in California's 11th Congressional District,¹ Republican Congressman Richard Pombo remains unpopular with voters and continues to be in real jeopardy of losing his seat. With less than six weeks left to go before Election Day and only two weeks before absentee ballots are mailed, Pombo continues to trail his Democratic opponent, Jerry McNerney, in a head-to-head vote. Furthermore, voters dislike Pombo personally and many believe he puts corporate interests over the public interests.

Despite being heavily outspent by Pombo and getting attacked in recent weeks, Jerry McNerney has successfully maintained his lead over Pombo since the last poll we conducted in May for Defenders of Wildlife Action Fund. Currently, McNerney garners the support of nearly half the electorate (48 percent) and continues to lead Pombo, who only attracts 46 percent of the vote. The race is essentially unchanged from our May survey, though there are now even fewer undecided voters (only 6 percent), leaving Pombo with very little room to increase his support.

11th CD Vote Over Time

	May 2006	September 2006
Jerry McNerney (D)	46%	48%
Richard Pombo (R)	42%	46%
Undecided	12%	6%

The main reason voters are not supporting Pombo is because they fundamentally do not like him on a personal level. Virtually all voters in the district now know who he is (91 percent name identification). A plurality of all voters in the district have an unfavorable opinion of Pombo (45 percent unfavorable) whereas only a third (36 percent) have a favorable opinion of their Congressman. In addition, there are nearly twice as many voters who *strongly* dislike Pombo than who like him a lot (40 percent to 22 percent).

Voters also have overwhelmingly negative opinions of Pombo on specific attributes:

- A solid majority of voters believes Pombo “puts corporate interests over the people’s interests” (52 percent say this describes him well, with 35 percent saying it describes him very well, and 33 percent say it does not describe him well);
- Voters also believe Pombo “is too close to lobbyists” (46 percent describes him well, 29 percent does not describe him well); and
- Voters think Pombo “is too close to oil and gas companies” (43 percent well, 31 percent not well).

In sum, this poll shows that Pombo remains in poor standing with voters in his district. Voters in California’s 11th Congressional district do not like their Congressman. As a result, they continue to support the Democratic challenger over the incumbent. With time running out, Pombo is in real jeopardy of losing his seat.

Survey Methodology: From September 24-26, 2006, Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research conducted a survey by telephone among 413 likely voters in California Congressional District 11. The survey’s margin of error is approximately plus or minus 4.9 percent.