



To: Interested Parties
From: Patrick Ruffini, Advisor to Charles Djou for Hawaii
RE: Our Next Opportunity: HI-1 and Charles Djou
Date: February 1, 2010

Republicans have an opportunity to once again shock the political world with a victory in Hawaii's 1st district special election. We will do this with a great candidate with a record of winning elections in the district, an energized grassroots movement, and a political environment that has turned toxic for Democrats in all 50 states.

In HI-1, Honolulu City Councilman and Army Reserve officer Charles Djou is already mounting a strong, well-funded campaign to capture the seat being vacated by Rep. Neil Abercrombie in his run for Governor. The 1st is also the district Barack Obama grew up in; a victory here would once again drive home the message that "no Democrat is safe."

As in Massachusetts, Charles Djou is strongly positioned to benefit from "perfect storm" conditions that include a great candidate, message, and organization, the district's recent history of Republican voting, and Hawaii's unique special election rules.

The Right Candidate: Charles Djou

As we learned from Massachusetts, the key to flipping Democratic seats is to run great candidates in tune with their communities. By that yardstick, Charles Djou is the best candidate we could ask for in HI-1.

Here are some facts you should know about Charles Djou:

- Represents over 100,000 people on the Hawaii City Council, where he's served since 2003
- Former State Representative and Republican floor leader
- First elected to the State House by beating an incumbent Democrat.
- Officer in the U.S. Army Reserve
- Attorney in business law and law professor at the University of Hawaii
- Right on the issues: For tax relief, against Obamacare, committed to fighting earmarks, for a strong national defense
- Recently helped stop an effort to rename a Honolulu park for Barack Obama

Charles Djou is an impressive candidate, a fact reflected in the strength of his campaign, which has raised over \$400,000 with \$363,000 cash on hand. To date, Djou has banked more money than both of his main Democratic opponents.



HI-1: A Track Record of Republican Success

Hawaii's 1st district is the most Republican of the state's two Congressional districts by a decent margin. HI-1 challenges the conventional wisdom of Hawaii as a Democratic lock for numerous reasons, among them:

- President George W. Bush won 47 percent of the vote in HI-1 in 2004, capturing 9 of the 25 state legislative districts within HI-1
- In 2006, Republican Governor Linda Lingle won 65 percent of the vote in HI-1, carrying every single State House district
- The Republican gubernatorial candidate has carried HI-1 four times in a row
- The average percentage for the top of the ticket Republican candidate in the last three general elections was 46 percent; this includes the 2008 presidential race.
- Charles Djou currently represents a City Council district 100,000 constituents entirely contained within HI-1. 20% of the land area and almost 30% of the electorate in a typical Congressional race live in Djou's City Council district.
- Five of the six Republicans in the Hawaii state house hail from HI-1, as do both Republican State Senators
- Rep. Neil Abercrombie's immediate predecessor was Republican Pat Saiki, who served two terms before running for Senate.

By any measure, the numbers make this a strong pickup opportunity and an attractive district for the right Republican candidate. However, Barack Obama's strong hometown performance in Hawaii in 2008 is likely to cause some in the media to underestimate Charles Djou's prospects. We believe that Barack Obama's personal ties to the district will have little impact on this race -- or any race -- in 2010. Indeed, Obama's *own Senate seat* in Illinois is rated a tossup, and Joe Biden's old Senate seat leans Republican. Moreover, in each of the states where Obama has personally campaigned, the Democratic candidate has lost. Barack Obama's ability to impact an election in a district as far removed from Washington as you can get is highly suspect in this difficult political environment.

A Divided Democratic Field Paves the Way

In most special elections, there is a primary with a Republican and a Democrat advancing to the general election. Not in Hawaii.

Hawaii has no special primary elections, and all candidates run in the general election. A simple plurality is required to win. Currently, the HI-1 field features two well-known Democratic candidates (with another on the way in), and one competitive Republican candidate, Charles Djou.

National Democrats have already conceded that a split Democratic vote is extremely problematic for them, and have already begun attacking Charles Djou. Just last week, [Politico reported](#) that, "The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee doesn't want Hawaii's upcoming special election,



with its unique rules, to become another Massachusetts disaster for the party — especially since it's taking place in President Barack Obama's home congressional district."

The Djou campaign is taking nothing for granted and has a vote goal of 50.1%. Charles Djou is prepared to take on a single major Democratic candidate. But we do note that the Democrats' ability to consolidate around a single candidate is clouded by the presence of two well-known Democrats from different factions of the party who are unlikely to drop out and endorse the other. In the Blue Dog corner is former 2nd District Rep. Ed Case, and representing the liberal base is State Sen. Colleen Hanabusa who has been resoundingly endorsed by organized labor and EMILY's List. A third candidate has recently emerged, State Sen. Will Espero, who is likely to further split the Democratic vote.

In effect, the HI-1 special can be likened to NY-23 in reverse, with Ed Case occupying the unenviable "Scozzafava" position and Hanabusa representing the base of the party. Like Scozzafava, Case has depended on crossover Republican votes to win elections in the past, support that is likely to evaporate once voters know there is a real, electable Republican candidate in the race. Also like Scozzafava, the most loyal members of Case's party intensely dislike him for his voting record and his primary challenge to liberal Sen. Daniel Akaka.

Looking Ahead

Charles Djou is strongly positioned to be the next Congressman from Hawaii's 1st Congressional district, but unlike in Massachusetts, we can't count on Democrats to be asleep at the switch. We have already seen that they will throw the kitchen sink at Djou in an attempt to avoid another embarrassing defeat. Charles Djou can fight back against these attacks, but only with a strong base of financial support and Republican enthusiasm for capturing Barack Obama's home district. With mail-in voting likely to begin in just over two months, April 10th, an all-out campaign will be required starting now to elect Charles Djou and capture Obama's district.