



Case Study

Victory VoIP™ Enabled Volunteer Phone Bank to Effectively Target Widely-Disbursed Primary Voters and Aided the Campaign's Come-From-Behind Win

- With lackluster results early in the Canseco Campaign, Victory VoIP's superior technology was strategically deployed to target known supporters in Campaign's 5-week runoff phase to ensure supporters made it to the polls.

Abstract – Francisco "Quico" Canseco Wins Primary Runoff with Victory VoIP – April 13, 2010

The Victory VoIP (voice over internet protocol) phone system has proven its ability to support pinpointed call strategies in congressional campaigns with a conservative electorate widely-disbursed over an enormous geographic area. Its user-friendly technology empowered volunteers to achieve and exceed essential voter contact goals in the 5 weeks of Francisco Canseco's Texas Congressional primary runoff win.



In the March 2, 2010 five-candidate Republican primary¹ a total of 28,683 votes were cast; Francisco Canseco placed 2nd with 9,222 votes (32%), only 442 votes behind ex-CIA official Will Hurd, who narrowly led Canseco with 9,664 votes (33.7%). The lack of an outright majority winner among the five candidates triggered the April 13 runoff between Hurd and Canseco.²

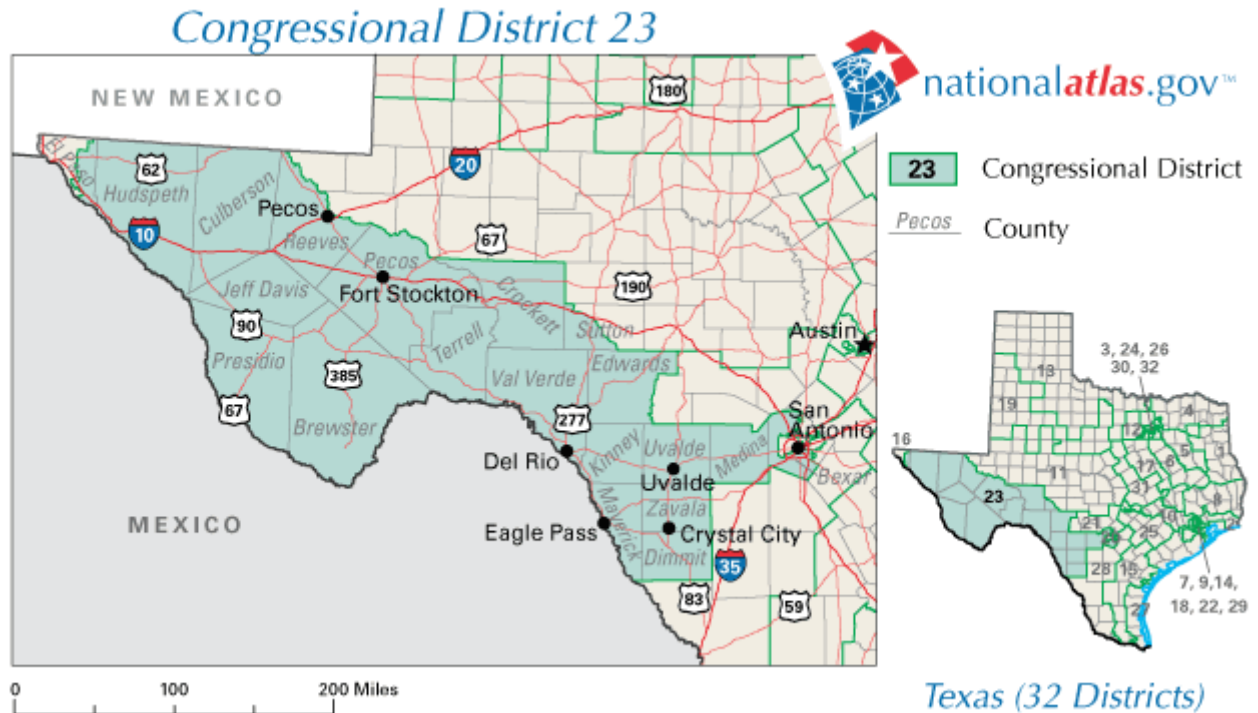
1. Victory VoIP Played a Key Role in Enabling Francisco Canseco to Harness Communication in a Very Large Texas District.

Perched along a majority of the state's border with Mexico, just north of the Rio Grande, Texas' 23rd congressional district is the largest district in the state, covering most of West-Central Texas from San Antonio to El Paso (a 20-county district, and the 8th largest district in the U.S.). Predominantly rural, Texas' 23rd has no major urban areas other than the Northwest and South side of San Antonio (about 25% of the city), though it encompasses numerous county seats and several towns of regional economic importance. It abuts El Paso at its western point and San Antonio at its eastern point, but doesn't include those cities. Its large size is due to its low population density--one of the lowest in the country. With 785 miles of border and 7 National Park Sites the district is known for its natural beauty.

¹ The 23rd District March 2, 2010 Primary race included the following candidates: Francisco Canseco, Will Hurd, Robert Lowry (6,358 votes), Mike Kueber (1,983 votes), and Joseph Gould (1,456 votes). Data source: <http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/house/texas/23>.

² Since no candidate received the required 50 percent of votes in the Republican primary, Texas law provides that the two candidates with the most votes advance to a runoff election.

The District's principal economic activities include farming, ranching, oil and mineral extraction, and tourism.



District 23's geographic nature and its low population density led Canseco Campaign Manager Scott Yeldell and Consultant Chris Homan to seek and deploy Victory VoIP's phone banking technology; they had both witnessed Victory VoIP's efficiency while acting as field marshals in the 2009 Bob McDonnell Virginia gubernatorial campaign victory. Using Victory VoIP made sense in District 23, precisely because the population density is very low and the area covers over 58,000 square miles.

It is simply not possible to rely on block-walking operations in these rural counties to reach voters. Yeldell and Homan knew they needed a strong, high-efficiency phone system to reach out to the primary electorate in the outlying counties and gated communities where neighborhood walking was not feasible (roughly 45% of electorate lives in gated communities). Campaign success therefore would depend on telephones as the principal means of direct voter communication.

The entire campaign (5-way primary and 2-way runoff) was conducted over approximately 5 months, from mid-November 2009 through April 13, 2010. The Canseco team ordered one Victory VoIP unit and 10 phones in late November; the VoIP unit and phones arrived on schedule and were set up and deployed in the campaign's only office, located in Northwest San Antonio, immediately on arrival.

"After working with the Victory Solutions phones at a phone bank with 50 volunteers during the Bob McDonnell 2009 Virginia gubernatorial race, we knew we *had* to bring it to our race in TX-23."

- Scott Yeldell, Canseco Campaign Manager

2. Limited Volunteer Pool Required Best Use of Volunteer Time

Because the March 2, 2010 Republican primary was a 5-candidate race, the overall republican volunteer pool in the 23rd District was being tapped by all five candidates – and the Canseco campaign was faced with a volunteer shortage. This posed a problem. With fewer volunteers, how could the campaign still make the same number of calls it would have been able to make in a 2-way race with more volunteers? With four other candidates drawing from the same volunteer pool, the Canseco campaign needed an upper hand to maximize its call quantity, speed, and connection rate. Victory VoIP provided the campaign with that edge over its opponents, who were still manually dialing for votes.

Through the five-month primary and run-off election cycle, Canseco's campaign was entirely volunteer driven – 217 volunteers made use of the Victory VoIP phone system, logging a minimum of 15 call hours per day, and a peak of 80 hours per day during the GOTV effort. Scott Yeldell estimates that volunteers logged a minimum of 3,000 call hours during the 3-month primary phase, and 1,500 during the 6-week run-off phase. Runoff opponent Will Hurd was not phone banking; he had deployed only a couple of live, paid phone banks.

The Canseco campaign's use of Victory VoIP enabled it to move the average volunteer closer to 100 calls per hour, instead of the average of less than 30 calls per hour volunteers typically make when manually dialing and personally leaving messages (both time killers). With Victory VoIP's auto-dialing and auto-messaging features the Canseco campaign, by minimizing lost time, also attained its goal of maximizing the time volunteers spent speaking with live voters. Additionally, volunteers saved significant time and resources by avoiding the need to print call lists, and by having automatic and real-time data tracking of call progress. The best aspect of the Victory VoIP system in accomplishing the campaign's objective was its combination of call efficiency and list / data management. These capabilities were all invaluable.

With a smaller-than-usual volunteer base the campaign recognized that the call system would need to fulfill a second mission: be user-friendly for volunteers who didn't want to volunteer in any other capacity. The campaign couldn't afford to alienate volunteers by using a complicated, cumbersome, or difficult-to-learn call system, but needed to keep volunteers present and enjoying the experience. Scott Yeldell concluded that "volunteers who had never phone banked before due to the burdens of dialing, leaving messages, and recording call data were drawn to using the Victory VoIP system. It made competition fun among

Francisco Canseco Wins Decisively with Victory VoIP!

Overcoming Issues Presented by a Widely Dispersed Electorate as a Tactical Advantage. Needing to efficiently reach voters spread through a 58,000 square mile district, the Francisco Canseco campaign turned to Victory VoIP for efficient canvassing and maximum results. This tactical advantage was unanticipated and unmatched by Canseco's opponent. The result was clear.

"Phone calls had everything to do with it. We pounded the phones to our base. Our strategy for the runoff was 'we're not going after new voters. We're going after the people we talked to before, and we're going to talk to them over and over, week after week, 9000 households about 3 times during a 4 week stretch.' We didn't go where we didn't have support. We were just going to talk to our voters. The phones were crucial in this because of our inability to get to them on foot."

- Scott Yeldell, Campaign Manager
Francisco Canseco for Congress

the volunteers as they easily tracked their progress against the person sitting next to them or across the room.”

The Campaign and its volunteers preferred the Victory VoIP system by far over the older basic systems used by other campaigns, primarily because of Victory VoIP’s volunteer-focused ease of use, low-fatigue, low-frustration experience, and very short learning curve. Volunteers using Victory VoIP experienced eye-friendly LCD screens and large, easy buttons (aiding the minimal learning curve), and were capable of stepping into action almost immediately. The Victory VoIP phone banks are intuitive enough that anyone can be an expert in 15 minutes.

3. Identifying and Focusing on Supporters

During the 5-way primary campaign (from mid-November 2009 through March 2, 2010), the Canseco team used Victory VoIP’s speed and efficiency to build a stout favorable-ID universe. Taking a 3-pronged approach to identifying supporters, in January 2010, during the primary contest, the campaign conducted an auto-id survey and isolated 2,173 voters supportive of Canseco. Another 3,098 supporters were identified using Victory VoIP, and block walkers identified yet another 2,620. Total identified supporters: 7,891. With supporters identified early on, the campaign quickly determined who to contact again, and who to remove from the contact list to avoid wasting volunteers’ limited time. According to Scott Yeldell, “Without the [Victory VoIP system], we wouldn’t have been able to build the base in the first place.”

Going into the runoff primary, the Canseco team knew that winning was a long shot, perhaps in part because many in the general electorate were inclined to view Canseco as the “establishment” candidate (in a political era in which “vote the bums out” is a popular sentiment). With only six weeks to prepare for the runoff, the Canseco team needed a superior strategy to ensure a victory.

A week into the runoff phase, the Canseco campaign conducted a poll (administered by Wes Anderson at OnMessage, Inc.) of 400 Likely Republican Run-Off Election voters, which revealed that Francisco Canseco was down 10 points, 43% to 33%. The remaining 24% were undecided. As a result of that poll, a key change in strategy occurred as the Campaign’s 2-way runoff phase commenced.

Ordinarily, a traditional strategy would have courted undecided voters, and attempted persuasion, for three of the remaining five weeks, and then focused on GOTV during the final two weeks. But, having identified supporters and built that base during the first phase, the campaign decided that its “priority number one” was turning out the base. It therefore chose to focus on reaching out to that “known” group in a “hard push,” urging them to “Get Out and Vote” as the campaign progressed from early March to April 13. The phone strategy was changed to drive an increase in turnout in key parts of the district (target areas) where Canseco was more popular; that is, in historically favorable precincts where Francisco Canseco performed best during the primary.

Runoff opponent Will Hurd didn’t do this, choosing instead to pursue Canseco’s voters in precincts heavy with Canseco supporters.

By using all five weeks of the runoff for GOTV and targeting the known base with repeated contact, the Canseco campaign sought to ensure high supporter turnout. Given the short time frame, educating, persuading, and converting non-supporters in a low density district was deemed a poor use of time and technology. These tactical changes made after the 5-way primary also permitted a doubling of the number of calls into gated communities not suited to block-walking. While the 23rd District’s general

electorate is over 70% Hispanic, the Republican primary electorate is approximately 90% Anglo. Even so, language was an issue when calling into the district's heavily Hispanic areas such as Del Rio and San Antonio's South Side. Because Francisco Canseco and up to 15 of the volunteers are bi-lingual, the campaign was able to produce lists targeted to likely Spanish-speaking-only homes.

Connecting with supporters spread over a very broad geographic area requires the ability to clearly present real, relevant facts to voters, which in turn requires an opportunity to be heard. Francisco Canseco's volunteer callers had the tools needed to seize that opportunity by connecting with voters, particularly targeted supporters, efficiently. Victory VoIP enabled caller volunteers to quickly take advantage of statistics, facts, and detailed information compiled on the fly as events were unfolding, by accurately and swiftly relaying it to supporters. Managing the call strategy to core supporters and delivering the information necessary to get them to the polls in a compelling format empowered Canseco's callers.

Victory VoIP's impressive calls per volunteer hour enabled the campaign to quickly identify supporters and reach significantly more people than other systems; by targeting supportive voters, and reaching larger numbers of people, the campaign had more opportunity to push supporters to the polls. The campaign also identified a statistically significant number of Republicans who weren't planning on voting because they presumed Francisco Canseco would win the race, and persuaded them to get out to the polls and vote.

As it turned out, these tactical changes were *very* effective in getting out the vote among supporters, and were critical to Canseco's runoff win. Having focused on "firing up the base," and increasing chatter among that group, by Election Night, the 24% undecided voters who went to the polls ended up breaking 20% to 4% in Canseco's favor (i.e., 83% of undecideds who voted went with Canseco). Turnout in northwest Bear County clearly increased – in the runoff Canseco won by over 1300 votes in Bear County, whereas in the primary he had won that county by only 1000 votes. Similarly, in the primary, Medina County handed Canseco a significant 43% to 20% loss, but in the runoff that gap had been narrowed to only 23 votes. The Victory VoIP phones were essential in these counties.

On Election Day, as events were unfolding, the Canseco campaign shifted its entire phone bank operation into precincts with low turnout. This ability to "shift-on-the-fly" was critical. Quickly moving resources to low-turnout districts was very successful and dramatically increased the votes occurring in those districts.

Volunteers Focused on Driving Supporters to the Polls.

Here's how the Canseco campaign did it:

Using Victory VoIP's cutting-edge technology instead of less efficient traditional methods, volunteers connected directly with existing identified supporters in an effort to ensure they made it to the polls to vote for Francisco Canseco. The superior phone bank technology enabled volunteers to make over 90 GOTV calls an hour, reaching 5,000 households with approximately 8,500 voters.

In a race with a 704-vote margin of victory out of 13,722 ballots cast, these empowered volunteers made a real difference in bringing Francisco Canseco to victory.

"Victory VoIP's unique technology increased volunteers' efficiency over cell phones and other VoIP systems. In this election, Canseco's phone program was essential to encouraging identified supporters voters to get to the polls and vote for Francisco."

- Scott Yeldell, Campaign Manager
Francisco Canseco for Congress

Lesson: Even though campaigns traditionally haven't focused on GOTV through an entire runoff cycle, volunteers *can* efficiently target core supporters and motivate them, and Victory VoIP helps them do that efficiently, and very successfully. Victory VoIP's flexibility permits campaigns to develop unique or unconventional strategies, and implement them successfully.

Results / Outcome

How did Victory VoIP perform? It enabled the Canseco campaign to take full advantage of a limited number of volunteers, and effectively communicate with voters. Victory VoIP's high-utility features provided mission-critical functionality for Francisco Canseco's campaign team, and leveraged their successful direct mail, online, fundraising, and advertising strategies. Canseco's primary election demonstrated that widely dispersed voters respond when good candidates *effectively* deliver a strong "get out the vote" message.

Despite the internal polling a week into the runoff phase revealing that Canseco was 10 points behind Hurd, in a strong come-from-behind primary runoff victory, the people of Texas' 23rd District stood behind Francisco Canseco and, in a 16-point swing, he won the runoff against Hurd by six points: 52.6% / 47.4%. Out of 13,722 votes cast in the runoff, Canseco received 7,213 votes; Hurd received 6,509.³ The highly effectual voter communication enabled by Victory VoIP was essential in seizing the momentum and turning the tide for Francisco Canseco. Victory VoIP was again able to meet and exceed all phone bank performance expectations.

Francisco Canseco will face Democratic Incumbent Ciro Rodriguez in the November 2010 general election, and will be using even more Victory VoIP phone systems in all three (Northwest, Southside and Del Rio) of its offices. Rodriguez, a Texas Congressman since April 1997 (28th District), won the 23rd District seat in 2006, and won District 23's 2010 Democratic primary (83%) against primary opponent Miguel Ortiz (17%). The 23rd is a Democratic seat that can be retaken by a Republican candidate. Republicans controlled the district's seat from 1993 until 2006 when Rodriguez defeated Republican Henry Bonilla 54% to 46%.

For Additional Information, contact:

Victory Solutions, LLC

22299 Calverton Road

Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122

Tel: 216.539.0169

Email: info@victorysolutions.us



³

Source: <http://elections.nytimes.com/2010/house/texas/23>.