

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **SHELBY COUNTY REGISTER TOM LEATHERWOOD TO RUN FOR TENNESSEE DISTRICT 7 SEAT**

TENNESSEE- Tom Leatherwood has entered the race for the Republican primary in the 7<sup>th</sup> congressional district. Leatherwood, a former state senator, is currently serving as the Shelby County Register.

The seat is currently held by Marsha Blackburn, elected in 2002. Leatherwood, first elected to the Tennessee State Senate in 1992, has served as Register since 2000, and decided to run for several reasons. "This race is something I began to consider because of disappointment with Blackburn and other Republicans in Congress. Until the congressional defeats of 2006, we had it all -- a majority in the House and in the Senate and the Presidency. Blackburn and the Republican Congress had an opportunity to change the course of the country for good and this opportunity was squandered," Leatherwood said.

"Today I feel compelled to point out that Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn has been 'talking the talk' but not 'walking the walk'. I served in the State Senate with Marsha and consider her a friend but she has not been effective or focused on the job we elected her to do. It is time for her to come home and let someone else represent the needs of our district effectively."

**Citing his concerns about Congresswoman Marsha Blackburn's performance, Leatherwood said, "She's been ineffective resolving or even improving critical issues facing our country such as the economy, illegal immigration, the deficit, and family values legislation."**

During Blackburn's tenure, deficits have risen to record levels: from \$6.2 trillion to \$9 trillion. Blackburn contributed to this overspending by sponsoring and supporting earmarks and pork-barrel spending from the Appalachians to the Houston Zoo.

Leatherwood also expressed concerns about ethical issues that have plagued her office since her election, including staggering amounts of money raised, then distributed to her own family. As reported by the Memphis *Commercial Appeal*, a company founded in her son-in-law's name and based in his home has received over \$120,000 in PAC and campaign money since 2002. In the 2004 election cycle, \$46,935 was paid to her family, when Blackburn did not have a primary or general election opponent.

In addition, Blackburn was fined by the Federal Election Commission for exceeding the federal limits for transferring money from her PAC bank account to her campaign bank account. She was also caught under-reporting contributions by over \$61,000 and failing to accurately report over \$50,000 in disbursements.

Concerns were also raised over Incumbent Blackburn's decision to accept over \$100,000 in travel expenses, paid for by special interest groups. These various lobbyists have paid for trips to destinations ranging from Aspen to Fort Walton Beach, Florida. Blackburn also took lobbyist-funded trips to Chicago, Las Vegas, and California. **According to Leatherwood, "I know Rep. Blackburn has the support of the Washington insiders; however, on Election Day, it's the folks who live here**

**in Tennessee who vote at the polls. I'm confident that people in the 7<sup>th</sup> District are ready for a change."**

As a congressman, Leatherwood will work to:

- Make current tax cuts permanent and then further reduce taxes to truly stimulate the economy
- Stop spending money the U.S. does not have, and therefore must borrow from foreign countries like China (the top holder of U.S. debt)
- Stop earmarks and pork-barrel spending that help create huge deficits
- Support a constitutional amendment to protect the life of the unborn
- Insist on winning the war on terror
- Close borders to illegal immigration and drugs
- Support enforcement of existing immigration laws
- Support our right to keep and bear arms

Leatherwood cited his own effective management style and political track record as a blueprint for a successful Congressman. As a state senator, Leatherwood helped defeat the state income tax in 1992 and 2000. He advanced fiscal responsibility and held to his campaign promise of only running for two terms. As Register of Shelby County, Leatherwood has streamlined the office, cut expenses, and reduced customer fees. The office runs on fees at no cost to the taxpayer and produces surpluses for the county.

Tom Leatherwood is married to Melissa Mills Leatherwood of McNairy County. They have four daughters and are active members of Faith Baptist Church in Bartlett. Anyone interested in helping with the campaign may contact Tom at 901-867-7780 or [tomleatherwood@bellsouth.net](mailto:tomleatherwood@bellsouth.net) or may write to: Tom Leatherwood for Congress, P.O. Box 738, Arlington, TN 38002.