

gains in 2006. Below is how much Hackett outperformed Sen. John Kerry in these suburban and exurban counties:

Adams County

Bush: 64 percent
Kerry: 36 percent
Hackett: 52 percent

Clermont County

Bush: 71 percent
Kerry: 29 percent
Hackett: 42 percent

Brown County

Bush: 64 percent
Kerry: 36 percent
Hackett: 56 percent

Pike County

Bush: 48 percent
Kerry: 48 percent
Hackett: 63 percent

A WAKE-UP CALL:

In nearly the biggest political upset in recent history, Democrat Paul Hackett came within just a few thousand votes of defeating Republican Jean Schmidt in Ohio's Second Congressional District. Paul Hackett is a veteran and a great candidate for public service. I was proud that in this race we were able to stand by a man who stood by his country in battle. This election is a shockwave of voter discontent that will be felt all across the country.

We knew if this race simply became weeks and weeks of NRCC vs. DCCC, it would become a Republican smear campaign of national liberal vs. Bush conservative, and we would lose that fight. This needed to be a local race about local issues – pitting a principled Iraq War veteran against an ethically-challenged typical politician. So the Committee tracked, worked under the radar, and planned for a last-minute television and mail campaign.

The NRCC was so worried about defections from the base that they spent half a million dollars and even took the extraordinary step of contacting every Republican household with robocalls from President Bush.

Last night, we saw independents and rock solid Republicans say that they have had enough of a Congress that is in the grips of the special interests, roiled by ethics investigations and doing nothing to help solve the pressing challenges facing the middle class. This race puts every single Republican in Congress on notice. Last night's special election was a wake up call.