

JOE CUNNINGHAM CASE STUDY

Congressman representing
South Carolina's first
congressional district since 2018



OVERVIEW

Joe Cunningham, an attorney and ocean engineer, announced his candidacy for SC-01 in 2017. This R+10 district had been held by Republicans since 1981.

South Carolina's first congressional district is coastal, with most of it stretching along the southeastern part of the state. Historically based in Charleston, the district also includes Hilton Head, and parts of Berkeley, Dorchester and Beaufort counties.

- ✓ Trump won SC-01 53.5 – 40.4% in 2016
- ✓ Cunningham flipped seat in 2018 by 4,000 votes (50.6 – 49.2%)

CHALLENGE

Many donors saw SC-01 as too red for a Democrat to win. Despite winning in 2018, many donors still shrugged off Cunningham's re-election chances.

Trump's popularity



Trump is still very well liked in the district, and has the ability to turn out voters in a presidential election year.

Focus on Senate race



Re-election was overshadowed by a political environment that saw donors focusing their giving on the presidency and flipping the Senate.



SOLUTION

Grassroots Analytics developed and implemented several creative solutions to expand Cunningham's donor pool and reach more people nationwide

▶ Yoga studio + brewery owners

Cunningham's wife owns a yoga studio and runs a popular yoga blog. GA developed lists of yoga studio owners who are known Dems with a capacity to give \$250+. Cunningham is also a well known craft beer enthusiast. GA used similar identifying tactics to find craft brewery owners with high capacity and propensity to give.

▶ Offshore drilling opposition

GA identified and targeted beach front property owners who had a personal interest in offshore drilling legislation.

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He is one of the better fundraisers out of all the freshmen Democrats in a wave year, in a class that's just absolutely loaded with money-printing machines.
– POLITICO

RESULTS

Utilizing a combination of donor research projects, match lists, and creative solutions to develop call time lists, low dollar email acquisition, and direct mail initiatives, GA helped Cunningham and his team achieve the following:

- ✓ Consistently ranked in the top 10% of House incumbent fundraisers for every quarter of the 2020 election cycle
- ✓ Among the top 20 House Democrats in the 2020 cycle for total raised, amounting \$4.3 million raised at the end of Q3 (June 2020)
- ✓ Consistently outraised his Republican challengers – as of June 30, 2020, Cunningham had more than **four times** the cash on hand than his GOP opponent



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