



David Vitter acknowledges prostitution scandal in new TV ad gubernatorial bid

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BATON ROUGE, La. — After months of attacks about his prostitution scandal, Republican candidate for governor David Vitter is addressing the issue in a new television ad — though without using the word prostitution.

The 30-second spot, released Monday, features Vitter sitting at a kitchen table as he talks to the camera, saying: “Fifteen years ago, I failed my family but found forgiveness and love.”

“I learned that our falls aren’t what define us but rather how we get up, accept responsibility and earn redemption,” Vitter says, as the ad next shows him eating dinner with his family.

Then, he pivots to Louisiana’s budget and education problems and tells viewers that he’s a “fighter” who will work to fix the state’s woes if elected in the Nov. 21 runoff.

Outside groups and other candidates have repeatedly hit Vitter about the scandal this election cycle. Vitter, a U.S. senator, apologized in 2007 for a “very serious sin” after he was linked through phone records to Washington’s “D.C. Madam.”

Most recently, his Democratic rival in the runoff, state Rep. John Bel Edwards, released his first direct attack ad against Vitter for the scandal. In it, Edwards seeks to contrast his military experience as an Army Ranger with Vitter, describing Edwards “who answered our country’s call” and Vitter “who answered a prostitute’s call.”

But Vitter campaign spokesman Luke Bolar said the new Vitter spot isn’t in response to Edwards’ strike against him.

“This is an ad we’ve been planning to run for a while,” Bolar said Monday.

After a massive fundraising effort, Vitter started the election cycle as the favorite to follow term-limited Gov. Bobby Jindal into office in January.

His poll numbers fell, however, amid revived talk of his prostitution scandal and a blistering primary battle with his Republican opponents. He’s been criticized for a negative campaign tone and misleading attack ads, and Edwards has taken the lead in a state that hasn’t elected a Democrat statewide since 2008.

By — Melinda Deslatte, Associated Press