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Senator's ad says Mark Warner used 'loopholes'

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Virginia Sen. John W. **Warner's** re-election campaign turned harsh yesterday, as he accused his Democratic challenger of raising his \$100 million personal fortune "from his political connections."

In a television **ad** titled "Connected" airing in Richmond, Roanoke and Norfolk - but not Northern Virginia - John **Warner** also accuses the telecommunications mogul of "taking advantage of big government loopholes not available to average working people."

"**Mark Warner** made his money by working his tail off," countered Eric Hoffman, a spokesman for the Democrat.

"We have not attacked John **Warner** for how he got his money," Mr. Hoffman said, taking a veiled swipe at the **senator's** first marriage to heiress Catherine Mellon.

The new **ad** is a sharp change by the Republican incumbent. John **Warner**, 69, for months has radiated confidence, assuring reporters that voters "know their **senator.**"

The **ad** could backfire on John **Warner** if it provokes sympathy for the challenger. But the incumbent appears insulated, holding a 20-point lead less than a month before the election.

Mark Warner, 41, who trails despite his own \$5 million **ad** blitz, accused the 18-year incumbent of trying to divert attention from his record.

"I'm sure the people of Virginia will join me in rejecting these kinds of personal attacks," the Alexandria resident said in a statement his campaign staff released.

"His commercial says nothing about John **Warner's** stance on the issues but [says] everything about the real John **Warner.**"

Mr. Hoffman charged that the **ad** is not running in Northern Virginia because "those types of personal attacks offend independent voters."

Eric Peterson, a spokesman for John **Warner**, said that assumption is inaccurate, but he would not say why the **ad** is not running here.

The **ad** cites a Sept. 2 story in The Washington Post as the source for its charge that the telecommunications executive profited from his political connections.

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The paper reported that in 1982, **Mark Warner** convinced Edward J. Stockton, Connecticut's commissioner of economic development, to set up a pivotal meeting between **Mark Warner** and David T. Chase, a wealthy investor. Mr. **Warner** and Mr. Stockton had met during an earlier political campaign.

Mark Warner pitched the possibilities of cellular telephones and Mr. Chase agreed to invest \$1 million in the venture.

"The point is that we have asked **Mark** to tell us who he is. He has refused to do that. So we are doing it for him," said Mr. Peterson, the **senator's** spokesman.

Mark Warner's campaign disputes that the Democrat made his money due to any government "loophole."

The availability of cellular telephone licenses was public record, said Anita A. Rimler, the Democrat's campaign manager.

Mark Warner has flooded Virginia's airwaves with 10 ads in recent months. He first introduced himself to voters, then charged that John **Warner** voted to balance the federal budget by slashing funds for Medicare and education. John **Warner** says those charges are distortions and that he only voted to reduce the growth of spending.

John **Warner's** new **ad** calls **Mark Warner**, a former Democratic fund-raiser, a "political insider" who raised millions "to elect the country's most liberal politicians."

The **ad** features photographs of prominent Democrats such as President Clinton, former Virginia Gov. L. Douglas Wilder, Sens. Christopher J. Dodd of Connecticut and Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, and Rep. Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri.

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GRAPHIC: Photos, A) John W. **Warner**; B) **Mark Warner**

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