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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Bush Popularity Surges on Several Levels after Thanksgiving, Annenberg Survey Shows**

President Bush appears to have received a substantial immediate boost in his popularity since Thanksgiving Day, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

The improvement came in the wake of his surprise visit to American troops in Baghdad and continuing good economic news, along with the passage of the Medicare prescription drug bill which he strongly supported.

Polling on the four days following Thanksgiving, compared to the four days before, showed increases in approval of his handling his job as president, liking for him personally, for his handling of Iraq and even for his handling of the economy. Overall approval of Mr. Bush's handling of his job went from 56 to 61 percent, while disapproval went from 41 to 36 percent.

Moreover, the public's rating of Mr. Bush on a variety of personal traits also improved, especially on the question of whether it was correct to say he "cares about people like me" and whether he was "knowledgeable."

The polling also showed that 41 percent of the public, compared to 35 percent before his visit, thought that things were generally going in the right direction in the country. The percentage saying "things are seriously off on the wrong track" dropped, marginally, from 53 to 51 percent.

However, one major indicator on Iraq remained basically unchanged. Asked whether the war in Iraq was worth it, 49 percent of the post-Thanksgiving sample said it was and 46 percent said it was not. Before Thanksgiving, 48 percent said it was worth it and 49 percent said it was not. The change was not statistically significant.

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While overall approval of Mr. Bush's handling of his job as President was climbing, people were also asked how they felt about Mr. Bush as a person, as distinguished from how he was doing his job. On this issue his popularity increased from 65 to 72 percent. Before Thanksgiving, 44 percent approved of his handling of the situation in Iraq and 53 percent disapproved. That changed to 49 percent approval and 48 percent disapproval. And while 45 percent of the pre-Thanksgiving sample approved of his handling of the economy and 51 percent disapproved, the post-Thanksgiving sample, perhaps buoyed by more economic good news, approved by a 50 to 48 percent margin.

The margin of sampling error for both the 789 people interviewed before Thanksgiving and the 847 interviewed afterwards was plus or minus three percentage points.

The changes in some groups, especially respondents 45 to 64, were particularly strong. On overall approval of Mr. Bush's handling his job as president, approval among people 45 to 64 went from 49 to 62 percent.

On liking Mr. Bush as a person, Republican support went from 83 to 94 percent, and Democrats increased from 46 to 55 percent. The 45 to 64 year-olds went from 59 to 74 percent, and conservatives went from 74 to 87 percent approving. And men were especially impressed; their liking of him went from 61 to 75 percent.

On his handling of the economy, the political outliers were the independents, whose approval increased from 38 to 51 percent. Older people were also more satisfied, with the 45 to 64 year-old group going from 38 to 51 percent approval, and those 65 and over going from 39 to 50 percent.

Approval of his handling of Iraq went up by nine points for both Democrats (19 to 28 percent) and independents (41 to 50 percent). Again, the older respondents were most pleased. The 45 to 64 year-old group went from 41 percent approving and 55 percent disapproving to 56 percent approving and 43 percent disapproving. Those 65 and older went from 37 percent approving and 56 percent disapproving to 51 percent approving and 46 percent disapproving. Moderates went from 36 to 46 percent approving, and liberals went from 20 to 28 percent approving.

While men's approval of his handling of the war in Iraq went from 46 percent approving and 51 percent disapproving, to 53 percent approving and 43 percent disapproving, women shifted much less. Before Thanksgiving, they had disapproved by a 55 to 41 percent majority; it declined to a 52 to 45 percent majority.

On the question of whether the war in Iraq was worth it, women's support actually declined, going from 50 percent saying it was worth it and 48 percent saying it was not to 46 percent saying it was worthwhile afterwards and 50 percent saying it was not. The women's shifts were not statistically significant, but their direction suggested that women did not share men's level of enthusiasm. Men went from 45 percent saying worth it and 51 percent saying it was not, to 53 percent saying worth it and 42 percent not worth it.

Independents changed the most on the question of whether the country was on the right track, going from 31 to 46 percent saying it was. Republicans went from 56 to 66 percent. Adults between 45 and 64 showed the greatest change, going from 30 to 42 percent. People with a bachelor's degree or more went from 43 percent saying "right direction" and 51 percent saying "wrong track," to 54 percent saying "right direction" and 39 percent saying "wrong track."

The National Annenberg Election Survey is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. It tracks the presidential campaign. Interviewing began in October, 2003, and will continue until after Election Day.

### **Survey Methodology**

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election year by the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The 2004 National Annenberg Election Survey is based on telephone interviews which began October 7, 2003 and will continue past Election Day. Interviewing is conducted by Schulman, Ronca, Bucuvalas, Inc.

The sample of telephone exchanges called was randomly selected by a computer from a complete list of thousands of active residential exchanges across the country. Within each exchange, random digits were added to form a complete telephone number, thus permitting access to both listed and unlisted numbers. Within each household, one adult was designated by a random procedure to be the respondent for the survey.

The results have been weighted to take account of household size and number of telephone lines into the residence and to adjust for variation in the sample relating to geographic region, sex, race, age and education.

This report deals with the four days before and the four days after Thanksgiving. From November 23 through November 26, 789 people were interviewed. There was no interviewing on Thanksgiving Day. From November 28 through December 1, 847 people were interviewed.

In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results for each group will differ by no more than three percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error would be higher. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which could lead to a larger potential sampling error.

In addition to sampling error, the practical difficulties of conducting any survey of public opinion may introduce other sources of error into the poll. Variations in the wording and order of questions, for example, may lead to somewhat different results.

## Questions

**Question 1:** Do you feel things in this country are generally going in the right direction, or do you think things are seriously off on the wrong track?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Right Direction</b>	35%	41%
<b>Wrong Track</b>	53%	51%

**Question 2:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Approve</b>	56%	61%
<b>Disapprove</b>	41%	36%

**Question 3:** Now I'd like to ask you how you feel about George W. Bush, as a person, as opposed to how you feel about the job he is doing. Do you have a favorable or unfavorable opinion of him as a person?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Favorable</b>	65%	72%
<b>Unfavorable</b>	24%	19%

**Question 4:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is currently handling the situation in Iraq?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Approve</b>	44%	49%
<b>Disapprove</b>	53%	48%

**Question 5:** All in all, do you think the situation in Iraq was worth going to war over, or not?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Worth it</b>	48%	49%
<b>Not worth it</b>	49%	46%

**Question 6:** Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling the nation's economy?

	11/23-11/26	11/28-12/01
<b>Approve</b>	45%	50%
<b>Disapprove</b>	51%	48%

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**Question 7:** I am going to read you some phrases. For each one, please tell me how well that phrase applies to George W. Bush. Please use a scale from 0 to 10, where “zero” means it does not apply at all and 10 means it applies extremely well.

	11/23-11/26 (mean)	11/28-12/01 (mean)
<b>Cares about people like me</b>	5.14	5.57
<b>Inspiring</b>	5.09	5.45
<b>Strong Leader</b>	6.21	6.49
<b>Reckless</b>	4.61	4.56
<b>Knowledgeable</b>	5.83	6.38
<b>Shares my values</b>	5.18	5.36
<b>Trustworthy</b>	5.66	5.78

\*Note: Those who did not answer or said they did not know are not included in tables.

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