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**Kerry Gains On Economy and Other Domestic Issues;
Bush Stronger On Terrorism, Annenberg Data Show**

Since the presidential debates, John Kerry has emerged with a clear advantage on economic issues among the general public and with political independents in particular, but George W. Bush maintained his edge on terrorism and as Commander-in-Chief, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

The survey also found higher hopes for Kerry on energy independence and preventing outsourcing of U.S. jobs. More respondents feared Kerry, rather than Bush, would raise taxes. But they worried more about a military draft if Bush was re-elected.

The polling showed strong support for Kerry's advocacy of raising the minimum wage, making additional stem cell lines available for federally-funded research and allowing the importation of prescription drugs from Canada.

But the public was behind Bush on allowing individuals to invest some of their Social Security contributions in the stock market and on making all recent tax cuts permanent.

The Bush campaign appeared to be making headway in its campaign to argue -- in the debates, on the campaign trail and in television ads -- that Kerry is too liberal. In pre-debate polling, 18 percent of the public termed Kerry "very liberal," and after the debates, the percentage reached 27.

Polling of 1,979 registered voters conducted from October 14 (the day after the third debate) through October 20, showed that 50 percent of the public and 51 percent of independents said they thought Kerry would do a better job of handling the economy, while 43 percent of the public and 39 percent of independents said Bush would do better. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus two percentage points.

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They had been basically tied before the first debate on September 30. Polling of 1,492 registered voters from September 21 through 26 found 46 percent of the public and 41 percent of independents saying Kerry would do better on the economy and 44 percent of the independents saying Bush.

There was no overall change in comparisons on the war on terrorism, though Kerry improved among independents. Now, 52 percent of the public and 49 percent of independents say they trust Bush more to conduct the war on terrorism, and 40 percent of the public and 38 percent of independents say Kerry. In September, 52 percent of the public and 56 percent of independents preferred Bush, while 38 percent of the public and 30 percent of independents chose Kerry.

When it came to whom the respondents trusted more to be Commander-in-Chief of the military, the latest polling has a 51 to 44 percent Bush advantage with the public, and a 49 to 42 percent edge with independents. The pre-debate data gave Bush a 50 to 41 percent advantage with the public, and a 52 to 36 percent lead among independents.

The candidate comparison questions on energy and outsourcing had not been asked by Annenberg before the debates, so no comparison was possible.

Forty percent of the public said Kerry would do more than Bush to “reduce the United States’ dependence on foreign oil,” while 26 percent said Bush would do more. Fifty-seven percent said Kerry “would do a better job of preventing U.S. corporations from outsourcing jobs to other countries,” while 28 percent said Bush would do a better job.

Both candidates have insisted they will not reinstitute the military draft, though Kerry has suggested that Bush might do so, regardless of what Bush says now. But both candidates had many doubters.

Thirty-three percent of the public, including 53 percent of Democrats and 40 percent of 18-29 year-old respondents, said Bush would resume the draft. Twenty-three percent of the public, including 26 percent of Republicans and 17 percent of the 18-29-year-olds, said Kerry would.

Respondents were asked what would happen to their taxes if each candidate was elected. Forty-six percent said their taxes would go up if Kerry was elected, and 27 percent said their taxes would rise if Bush was elected.

But even with the fear of higher taxes in the future and wanted recent cuts made permanent (by a 55 to 35 percent margin), not many respondents thought they had been helped substantially by the Bush tax cuts. Five percent said they had been helped “a great deal” and 29 percent said “some.” But another 29 percent said “not much” and 35 percent said “not at all.”

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The public sided with Bush, by a 57 to 38 percent margin, on his proposal to allow workers to invest some of their Social Security contributions in the stock market. But despite his insistence that benefits to those now on Social Security would not be cut, 57 percent of those 65 and over opposed the idea, while 35 percent supported it.

Kerry found considerable Republican support on several issue positions. Eighty-two percent of registered voters, and 70 percent of Republicans, favored increasing the \$5.15 percent minimum wage, an issue that House Republicans have kept from coming to a vote. Seventy-seven percent of the public and 67 percent of Republicans wanted the recent Medicare drug law changed to allow importation of drugs from Canada. And 62 percent of the public, including 41 percent of Republicans, favored making additional stem cell lines available for federally funded research on diseases like Parkinson's.

One other matter of contention between the candidates showed the importance how an issue is framed. In the September 21-26 polling, respondents were asked whether they favored or opposed "completely eliminating the estate tax, that is, the tax on property left by people who die?" Sixty-eight percent favored eliminating the tax, while 28 percent did not.

In the latest polling, the question was changed to include the dollar level at which estates are now taxed by the federal government. Respondents were asked if they favored or opposed "completely eliminating the estate tax, that is, the tax on property left by people worth more than one and a half million dollars who die?" When put that way, the question produced about an even split, with 47 percent saying they favored eliminating the tax and 44 percent opposing elimination, a difference that was not statistically significant.

Two other traditionally important measures for a president seeking re-election were basically unchanged since September. Approval of Bush's handling of his job as president remained at 51 percent approve, 47 percent disapprove.

Forty percent of registered voters in the latest polling said the country was "generally going in the right direction," while 54 percent said it was "seriously off on the wrong track." In September, 39 percent said "right direction" and 54 percent said "wrong track."

The National Annenberg Election Survey is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania (www.AnnenbergPublicPolicyCenter.org). Dr. Kathleen Hall Jamieson is the director of the survey. Ken Winneg is the managing director of the survey. Adam Clymer is the political director of the survey.

Another major election project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center is FactCheck.org, a project that tries to hold politicians accountable by exposing false or misleading campaign statements. It is available online at www.FactCheck.Org.

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Table A

September 21 - 26		October 14 - 20			
	Total	Total	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
Who do you trust more to handle the responsibilities of commander in chief of the military: George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
Bush	50%	51%	92%	13%	49%
Kerry	41%	44%	6%	83%	42%
Who do you trust to do a better job handling the U.S. war on terrorism? George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
Bush	52%	52%	92%	14%	49%
Kerry	38%	40%	6%	78%	38%
Who do you trust to do a better job handling the economy? George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
Bush	45%	43%	87%	6%	39%
Kerry	46%	50%	10%	91%	51%
**Who do you think would do more to reduce the United States' dependence on foreign oil George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
Bush	*	26%	49%	8%	19%
Kerry	*	40%	17%	64%	38%
**Who would do a better job of preventing U.S. corporations from outsourcing jobs to other countries? George W. Bush or John Kerry?					
Bush	*	28%	58%	6%	21%
Kerry	*	57%	26%	87%	59%
Do you approve or disapprove of the way George W. Bush is handling his job as president?					
Approve	51%	51%	91%	13%	50%
Disapprove	47%	47%	8%	86%	47%
Please tell me if your opinion of George W. Bush is favorable or unfavorable.					
Favorable	50%	50%	90%	16%	48%
Unfavorable	41%	40%	6%	71%	43%
Please tell me if your opinion of John Kerry is favorable or unfavorable.					
Favorable	41%	46%	9%	85%	46%
Unfavorable	42%	41%	78%	7%	37%
**If John Kerry were to win the 2004 presidential election in November, do you think your federal income taxes will go up, down, or remain the same?					
Go up	*	46%	70%	26%	45%
Go down	*	9%	3%	12%	9%
Remain the same	*	40%	24%	57%	40%
**If George W. Bush were to win the 2004 presidential election in November, do you think your federal income taxes will go up, down, or remain the same?					
Go up	*	27%	8%	40%	31%
Go down	*	10%	17%	7%	6%
Remain the same	*	59%	73%	48%	59%
**If George W. Bush is re-elected do you think he will reinstate the military draft or not?					
Yes	*	33%	11%	53%	34%
No	*	57%	82%	37%	58%
**If John Kerry is elected do you think he will reinstate the military draft or not?					
Yes	*	23%	26%	19%	27%
No	*	65%	64%	68%	61%

* Indicates that the question was not asked.

**Indicates questions that were asked starting October 14th.

Table B

%	September 21-26	October 14 – 20			
	Total	Total	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
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?					
Right direction	39%	40%	75%	13%	35%
Wrong track	54%	54%	20%	83%	55%
Would you oppose or favor an amendment to the U. S. Constitution saying that NO state can allow two men to marry each other or two women to marry each other?					
Favor	40%	42%	58%	28%	39%
Oppose	49%	49%	37%	63%	49%
Do you favor or oppose the allowing workers to invest some of their Social Security contributions in the stock market?					
Favor	54%	57%	74%	41%	59%
Oppose	39%	38%	22%	53%	37%
Do you favor or oppose the extending the federal law banning assault weapons?					
Favor	67%	64%	50%	75%	68%
Oppose	29%	32%	44%	22%	28%
Do you favor or oppose completely eliminating the estate tax, that is the tax on property left by people who die?					
Favor	68%	*	*	*	*
Oppose	28%	*	*	*	*
**Do you favor or oppose completely eliminating the estate tax, that is the tax on property left by people worth more than one and a half million dollars who die?					
Favor	*	47%	62%	36%	47%
Oppose	*	44%	31%	55%	44%
Do you favor or oppose the changing the recently passed Medicare prescription drug law to allow re-importing drugs from Canada ?					
Favor	78%	77%	67%	87%	80%
Oppose	15%	16%	24%	9%	16%
Do you favor or oppose the federal government helping to pay for health insurance for all children?					
Favor	82%	79%	62%	91%	81%
Oppose	15%	19%	34%	7%	16%
Do you favor or oppose the federal government helping employers pay the cost of their workers' health insurance?					
Favor	70%	71%	55%	85%	75%
Oppose	25%	24%	41%	11%	21%
Do you favor or oppose the Making recent federal tax cuts permanent?					
Favor	56%	55%	80%	38%	48%
Oppose	35%	35%	16%	51%	40%
Do you favor or oppose federal funding of research on diseases like Parkinsons using stem cells taken from human embryos?					
Favor	67%	*	*	*	*
Oppose	26%	*	*	*	*
**Do you favor or oppose making additional stem cell lines from human embryos available for federally funded research on diseases like Parkinsons?					
Favor	*	62%	41%	79%	66%
Oppose	*	32%	52%	16%	29%
**Do you favor or oppose the government placing limits on how much people could collect when a jury finds that a doctor has committed medical malpractice?					
Favor	*	64%	76%	55%	66%
Oppose	*	31%	22%	38%	30%

September 21-26		October 14 – 20			
Total		Total	Republicans	Democrats	Independents
**Do you favor or oppose increasing the five dollar and fifteen cent minimum wage employers now must pay their workers?					
Favor	*	82%	70%	91%	87%
Oppose	*	16%	27%	8%	12%
Would you say that the economic policies of the Bush administration are making the economy better or worse?					
Better	32%	34%	68%	7%	27%
Worse	39%	41%	9%	72%	44%
Which of the following best describes the views of George W Bush:					
Very Conservative	23%	25%	17%	37%	22%
Conservative	41%	43%	57%	30%	42%
Moderate	19%	18%	18%	15%	23%
Liberal	8%	8%	5%	9%	8%
Very Liberal	4%	2%	0.5%	3%	2%
Which of the following best describes the views of John Kerry:					
Very Conservative	3%	3%	2%	4%	3%
Conservative	8%	8%	3%	13%	7%
Moderate	29%	24%	10%	34%	29%
Liberal	35%	32%	30%	38%	32%
Very Liberal	18%	27%	51%	8%	23%
Now I'd like to talk to you about the state of the economy. How would you rate economic conditions in this country today? Would you say they are:					
Excellent	2%	3%	6%	2%	0.4%
Good	24%	25%	50%	6%	22%
Fair	42%	41%	36%	42%	46%
Poor	31%	31%	8%	51%	33%
How would you rate your own personal economic situation today?					
Excellent	8%	9%	15%	5%	7%
Good	38%	45%	56%	35%	46%
Fair	37%	35%	24%	44%	36%
Poor	16%	11%	4%	15%	11%
Thinking about one year from now, do you think economic conditions in the country will be much better than they are right now, better, the same, or worse?					
Better	52%	57%	70%	52%	48%
Same	28%	26%	22%	25%	32%
Worse	13%	8%	3%	11%	9%
How much have you benefited from the tax cuts proposed by George W. Bush and passed by Congress?					
Great Deal	4%	5%	12%	1%	4%
Some	27%	29%	48%	12%	29%
Not Much	31%	29%	19%	34%	33%
Not at all	37%	35%	19%	53%	32%

* Indicates that the question was not asked.

**Indicates questions that were asked starting October 14th

Survey Methodology

The National Annenberg Election Survey (NAES) is a survey conducted each presidential election 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.

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 interviewing is conducted by Schulman, Ronca, Bucuvalas, Inc.

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 two interviewing periods. From October 14 through 20, 2,265 adults were interviewed, of whom 1,979 said they were registered voters. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for all registered voters will differ by no more than two percentage points, up or down, from what would have been obtained by interviewing all American adults over the same time periods. From September 21 through 26, 1,759 adults were interviewed, of whom 1,492 said they were registered voters. The sampling error for that data set is plus or minus three percentage points. For smaller subgroups, the margin of sampling error would be higher. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would also lead to higher 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.

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