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**Two Thirds of Public, One Third of NRA Members Support
Extending Assault Weapons Ban, Annenberg Data Show**

Sixty-eight percent of the American public wants Congress to extend the ten-year old ban on assault weapons, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey has found.

Congress comes back into session Tuesday with only six days remaining before the ban expires on September 13 and with no plans to consider an extension. Both supporters and opponents of the ban issued last-minute appeals in recent days calling for grass-roots lobbying.

Support for extending the 2004 prohibition on manufacturing 19 types of semi-automatic rifles and shotguns and on ammunition clips holding more than ten rounds was also registered by 57 percent of people with a gun in their household and even by 32 percent of members of the National Rifle Association, the politically influential organization which adamantly opposes the ban.

The findings were derived from interviews with 4,959 adults interviewed from August 10 through Saturday, September 4. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus one percentage point.

The highest levels of support for extending the ban were registered by women, at 71 percent, people with college degrees or more (75 percent), liberals (75 percent), Northeasterners (73 percent), Hispanics (75 percent) and Democrats (73 percent).

But in no ordinary demographic group did support go below 60 percent. The lowest levels were recorded by Republicans (61 percent), residents of rural areas (61 percent), conservatives (62 percent), and 18 to 29 year-olds (63 percent).

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President Bush said during the 2000 campaign that he would sign an extension if it came to his desk, and the Brady Campaign called Friday on the public to besiege the White House with telephone calls, warning that “our nation will face a new era of criminal and terrorist attacks with assault weapons” unless Bush “gets the law renewed.”

But the NRA said the Brady Campaign was blaming “inanimate objects for the acts of criminals.” It told its supporters Friday “to keep the heat on your lawmakers to ensure they know that their voting constituents do not want this ban extended even one second longer than its scheduled demise on September 13.”

The survey did show that 63 percent of NRA members in the poll opposed an extension of the ban, but 32 percent disagreed with their leaders, and another 5 percent had no answer to the question. The margin of sampling error for the NRA members in the survey was plus or minus seven percentage points.

The poll also showed that NRA members ranked higher than the public in knowing the presidential candidates’ role in the debate. The poll asked “Who urges Congress to extend the federal law banning assault weapons—George W. Bush, John Kerry, both or neither?”

Bush has not called on Congress to act, while Kerry and the Democratic platform have done so, though Kerry did not mention it in his acceptance address.

Among NRA members, 59 percent answered Kerry, 10 percent said Bush, 13 percent said both and 11 percent said neither. In the general public, 42 percent said Kerry, 17 percent said Bush, 13 percent said both and 10 percent said neither.

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

Respondents were asked: Do you favor or oppose extending the federal law banning assault weapons?

%	Favor	Oppose
Total	68%	28%
Men	65%	32%
Women	71%	24%
Whites	68%	28%
African Americans	67%	29%
Latinos	75%	23%
High school or less	64%	31%
Some college	68%	27%
College degree or more	75%	22%
18-29 years old	63%	34%
30-44	68%	28%
45-64	70%	26%
65 and over	69%	23%
Household income below \$35,000	68%	27%
\$35,000 to less than \$75,000	67%	29%
\$75,000 and over	71%	26%
Northeast	73%	23%
Midwest	66%	29%
South	67%	28%
West	67%	29%
Urban	69%	26%
Suburban	71%	26%
Rural	61%	33%
Republican	61%	34%
Democrat	73%	23%
Independent	69%	27%
Conservative	62%	33%
Moderate	70%	26%
Liberal	75%	22%
Gun owner in household	57%	38%
NRA member	32%	63%

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 interviewing from August 10 through September 4. In that period 4,959 adults were asked if they favored extending the assault weapons ban. In theory, in 19 out of 20 cases, results for all registered voters will differ by no more than one percentage point, 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. For people with guns in their households, it would be plus or minus two percentage points, and for NRA members, seven percentage points.

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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