



HOLD FOR RELEASE
Tuesday, July 11, 2000, 10:00 AM

CONTACT: Lorie Slass
202-879-6701

Endorsements Were A Two-Edged Sword in 2000 Primaries – While They Attracted Some Voters to Candidates, They Drove Others Away From Candidates

(Washington, DC) While an endorsement from a politician, newspaper or interest group helped candidates attract voters in the 2000 primaries, endorsements also had a ricochet effect of driving voters to other candidates, according to a new report released from the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. The report also found that advertising an endorsement substantially enhances the endorsement's potential to influence voters.

The 2000 Nominating Campaign: Endorsements, Attacks, And Debates, the latest research from the Annenberg 2000 survey, found that endorsements were powerful tools in the primaries, especially for targeting specific groups of voters.

“Highlighting endorsements could be a gamble for politicians. While endorsements can be effective in influencing targeted constituencies, they have the possibility of driving others into the arms of a rival,” said Kathleen Hall Jamieson, Dean of the Annenberg School for Communication and Director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center.

The Annenberg researchers found:

- Knowledge of the *Manchester Union Leader* endorsement of Forbes raised the likelihood of voting for Forbes among the very conservative Republicans in New Hampshire by a factor of five, while it reduced the likelihood of voting for Forbes among liberal Republican Primary voters.
- In New Hampshire, Senator Edward Kennedy's endorsement of Al Gore reduced the vote for Bradley considerably among liberal Democrats, but slightly increased Bradley's share among conservative Democrats.
- Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan's endorsement of Bradley appealed more to conservative Democrats in New Hampshire than liberal Democrats.
- In South Carolina, evangelical protestants who knew of ex-candidate and member of the evangelical Christian community Gary Bauer's endorsement of John McCain were much more likely to vote for McCain than those who did not.

-- MORE --



Endorsements...2

- The National Right to Life Committee endorsement of George Bush had an impact on McCain and Bush voters. Those who knew of the endorsement and who opposed abortion were much less likely to vote for McCain than those who oppose abortion, but didn't know about the endorsement. Defenders of abortion rights who knew of the endorsement were more likely to vote for McCain.

“Endorsements serve as a short list for voters seeking information about candidate stands,” said Jamieson.

Voters in the primaries in New Hampshire and South Carolina were more likely to know about endorsements than those who didn't vote. For example, 62 percent of New Hampshire residents interviewed after the primary knew that Kennedy endorsed Gore compared to 78 percent of New Hampshire residents who voted in the primary. While 65 percent of voters in the South Carolina primary knew Senator Strom Thurmond had endorsed Bush, only 47 percent of South Carolinians knew of the endorsement. In addition, 41 percent of those who voted in Super Tuesday states knew of the Christian Coalition support for Bush, only 26 percent of the residents of those states knew of the endorsement.

The Annenberg researchers found that advertising an endorsement substantially enhanced the endorsement's potential to influence voters. In Iowa, Senator Tom Harkin's endorsement of Al Gore was featured in Gore television and radio spots that ran heavily in the weeks before the caucus. Seventy-five percent of Democratic caucus participants knew of the Harkin endorsement. On the other hand, the *Des Moines Register's* endorsement of Bill Bradley was the subject of an ad that ran only on the day of the caucus. Only 30 percent of the Democratic Caucus participants knew of the *Register* endorsement. And only 19 percent of those who participated in the Democratic caucuses in Iowa knew that Senator Paul Wellstone had endorsed Bradley. Wellstone was not featured in Bradley advertising.

To date, interviews have been conducted with nearly 43,000 randomly selected U.S. residents. The survey uses a rolling cross-sectional design, continuously interviewing throughout the campaign season. The results reported here are based on interviews completed December 14, 1999 through March 6, 2000.

The Annenberg 2000 Survey will be the largest survey of the American electorate ever conducted. By the end of 2000, over 100,000 interviews will have been conducted on Americans' political knowledge, media use, and opinions about candidates and issues. Reports will be released regularly. Margin of error for a weekly average is +/- 3.5%.

###

The Annenberg Public Policy Center was established by publisher and philanthropist Walter Annenberg in 1994 to create a community of scholars within the University of Pennsylvania that would examine the role of communications in public policy issues at the local, state and federal levels. The Center has four ongoing research

THE ANNENBERG
PUBLIC POLICY CENTER
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

foci: Information and Society; Media and the Developing Mind; Media and the Dialogue of Democracy; Health Communications. The Annenberg Public Policy Center supports research and sponsors lectures and conferences in these areas.