



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: May 26, 2004

CONTACT: Adam Clymer at 202-879-6757 or 202 549-7161 (cell)

VISIT: www.naes04.org

Kerry's Standing Improves in Battleground States After His Positive TV Ads, Annenberg Data Show

Since John Kerry began showing positive biographical television ads about himself in early May, he appears to have reversed a slide in public impressions of him in the battleground states, the University of Pennsylvania's National Annenberg Election Survey shows.

In the 20 states which both presidential campaigns consider tight enough to warrant spending on television advertising, Kerry is now viewed favorably by 44 percent and unfavorably by 32 percent, based on polling of 800 people from May 17 through 23. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus three percentage points.

Kerry's standing in those states improved from late April, when 36 percent viewed him favorably and 35 percent unfavorably, and from the first two weeks in May, when 39 percent had a favorable view and 33 percent a negative opinion.

President Bush, who had held an advantage over Kerry in perceptions in those states, does so no longer. Forty-four percent now view him favorable and forty-four percent unfavorably. That is a drop from the first two weeks of May, when 48 percent viewed him favorably and 38 percent unfavorably, about the same standing as he had in late April.

Adam Clymer, political director of the survey, said "Polling cannot prove what causes changes like these, but the most likely cause of Kerry's boost is the impact of his advertising in these states. Nationally, there has been no real change in his favorable-unfavorable balance, but where the ads have been intense, there has been a change."

-More-

“Bush’s slippage, on the other hand, is happening nationally; he has lost about as much in the country generally as he has in the battleground states,” Clymer said. “The most likely inference to draw is that the troubles in Iraq which have dominated the news, have been a strong factor. Nor are there any significant differences between battleground states and the others in the way the economy has been playing.”

Nationally, 51 percent of the public had a favorable opinion of Bush in late April, while 36 percent had a negative view. Now 47 percent are favorable and 40 percent unfavorable. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus two percentage points.

For Kerry, 38 percent nationally had a favorable view in late April, while 33 percent were unfavorable. Now 40 percent are favorable and 33 percent unfavorable.

The latest polling also reflected several advantages for Kerry over Bush on specific traits in those 20 states. Kerry was seen as more caring and knowledgeable than Bush and less reckless, stubborn or arrogant. One weakness for Kerry was that he was seen as more likely than Bush to change his mind for political reasons.

On one measure that traditionally favors incumbent, the question of who had the right kind of experience to be president, Kerry ranked even with Bush.

The 20 battleground states are Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin. Before May 4, neither Bush nor Kerry advertised on television in Colorado or Louisiana.

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.

-More-

Question

A. Please tell me if your opinion is favorable or unfavorable, using a scale from zero to ten. Zero means very unfavorable, and ten means very favorable. Five means you do not feel favorable or unfavorable toward that person. Of course you can use any number between zero and ten. The person is George W. Bush/John Kerry. On a scale of zero to ten, how would you rate George W. Bush/John Kerry?

A. Results Nationally

| | Bush | | | Kerry | | |
|----------------|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral |
| May 17-May 23 | 47% | 40% | 12% | 40% | 33% | 21% |
| May 3- May 16 | 48% | 38% | 13% | 39% | 33% | 22% |
| April 15-May 2 | 51% | 36% | 12% | 38% | 33% | 22% |
| April 1-14 | 49% | 37% | 12% | 40% | 30% | 20% |
| March 16-31 | 47% | 38% | 13% | 39% | 28% | 21% |
| March 1-15 | 50% | 37% | 12% | 40% | 24% | 23% |
| February 16-29 | 49% | 38% | 11% | 39% | 23% | 22% |
| February 1-15 | 52% | 36% | 11% | 38% | 20% | 24% |
| January 16-31 | 52% | 35% | 12% | 34% | 17% | 26% |
| January 1-15 | 55% | 33% | 11% | 19% | 21% | 28% |

Those with no opinion are not shown.

-More-

B. Results in Battleground States

| Bush | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Other | | | Battleground States | | |
| | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral |
| May 17-May 23 | 49% | 36% | 14% | 44% | 44% | 10% |
| May 3- May 16 | 48% | 38% | 13% | 48% | 38% | 13% |
| April 15-May 2 | 52% | 34% | 13% | 48% | 39% | 12% |
| April 1-14 | 51% | 37% | 11% | 46% | 37% | 14% |
| March 16-31 | 47% | 38% | 14% | 49% | 39% | 11% |
| March 1-15 | 50% | 37% | 12% | 49% | 39% | 11% |

| Kerry | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|----------------|----------------------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | Other | | | Battleground States | | |
| | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral |
| May 17-May 23 | 38% | 34% | 22% | 44% | 32% | 18% |
| May 3- May 16 | 40% | 33% | 21% | 39% | 33% | 23% |
| April 15-May 2 | 39% | 31% | 21% | 36% | 35% | 24% |
| April 1-14 | 42% | 29% | 19% | 36% | 31% | 21% |
| March 16-31 | 39% | 27% | 21% | 40% | 28% | 22% |
| March 1-15 | 39% | 22% | 24% | 41% | 27% | 22% |

"Battleground States" are the 20 states the Bush and Kerry campaigns consider closely contested and where they show television commercials. The states are: Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Missouri, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Washington, West Virginia and Wisconsin.

-More-

C. Results Nationally

| | Bush | | | Kerry | | |
|--|-----------|-------------|---------|-----------|-------------|---------|
| | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral | Favorable | Unfavorable | Neutral |
| Total | 47% | 40% | 12% | 40% | 33% | 21% |
| Republicans | 85% | 9% | 5% | 18% | 63% | 16% |
| Democrats | 19% | 67% | 13% | 68% | 11% | 18% |
| Independents | 43% | 38% | 18% | 36% | 30% | 25% |
| Men | 52% | 37% | 10% | 40% | 36% | 21% |
| Women | 43% | 42% | 14% | 41% | 30% | 21% |
| Whites | 52% | 35% | 11% | 38% | 37% | 20% |
| African-Americans | 18% | 68% | 14% | 52% | 17% | 24% |
| Latinos | 46% | 26% | 23% | 42% | 16% | 25% |
| High school graduate or less | 49% | 35% | 14% | 35% | 31% | 25% |
| Some college | 44% | 42% | 14% | 42% | 36% | 18% |
| College degree or more | 47% | 45% | 7% | 48% | 34% | 17% |
| 18-29 years old | 44% | 43% | 11% | 46% | 24% | 22% |
| 30-44 | 50% | 35% | 14% | 35% | 36% | 22% |
| 45-64 | 48% | 39% | 12% | 40% | 35% | 20% |
| 65 and over | 42% | 46% | 11% | 42% | 36% | 18% |
| Household income below \$35,000 | 41% | 41% | 15% | 45% | 22% | 22% |
| \$35,000 to less than \$75,000 | 49% | 38% | 13% | 37% | 40% | 21% |
| \$75,000 and over | 53% | 41% | 6% | 43% | 38% | 18% |
| Union household | 39% | 47% | 13% | 41% | 35% | 21% |
| Conservatives | 66% | 23% | 10% | 23% | 55% | 17% |
| Moderates | 43% | 42% | 14% | 45% | 25% | 25% |
| Liberals | 26% | 62% | 12% | 63% | 13% | 20% |
| Northeast | 39% | 47% | 14% | 43% | 28% | 24% |
| Midwest | 46% | 42% | 11% | 43% | 35% | 16% |
| South | 56% | 31% | 11% | 35% | 35% | 24% |
| West | 43% | 43% | 13% | 43% | 32% | 17% |

-More-

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 interviewing conducted from May 17 through May 23, when 1,997 people were interviewed. In theory, in 19 cases out of 20 the results will differ by no more than two 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; for the 800 people in the 20 battleground states, it would be plus or minus three percentage points. Moreover, some questions were not asked of all respondents, which would also result in a 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.

###